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ADDRESSES AT THE PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS

RESPONSE TO WELCOME

At the World's Parliament of Religions, Chicago, 11th September, 1893

Sisters and Brothers of America,

It fills my heart with joy unspeakable to rise in response to the warm and cordial welcome which you have given us. I thank you in the name of the most ancient order of monks in the world; I thank you in the name of the mother of religions; and I thank you in the name of millions and millions of Hindu people of all classes and sects.

My thanks, also, to some of the speakers on this platform who, referring to the delegates from the Orient, have told you that these men from far-off nations may well claim the honour of bearing to different lands the idea of toleration. I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept all religions as true. I am proud to belong to a nation which has sheltered the persecuted and the refugees of all religions and all nations of the earth. I am proud to tell you that we have gathered in our bosom the purest remnant of the Israelites, who came to Southern India and took refuge with us in the very year in which their holy temple was shattered to pieces by Roman tyranny. I am proud to belong to the religion which has sheltered and is still fostering the remnant of the grand Zoroastrian nation. I will quote to you, brethren, a few lines from a hymn which I remember to have repeated from my earliest boyhood, which is every day repeated by millions of human beings: "*As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee.*"

The present convention, which is one of the most august assemblies ever held, is in itself a vindication, a declaration to the world of the wonderful doctrine preached in the Gita: "*Whosoever comes to Me, through whatsoever form, I reach him; all men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to me.*" Sectarianism, bigotry, and its horrible descendant, fanaticism, have long possessed this beautiful earth. They have filled the earth with violence, drenched it often and often with human blood, destroyed civilisation and sent whole nations to despair. Had it not been for these horrible demons, human society would be far more advanced than it is now. But their time is come; and I fervently hope that the bell that tolled this morning in honour of this convention may be the death-knell of all fanaticism, of all persecutions with the sword or

1 with the pen, and of all uncharitable feelings between persons
2 wending their way to the same goal.

3 4 5 **WHY WE DISAGREE**

6 *15th September, 1893*

7 I will tell you a little story. You have heard the eloquent
8 speaker who has just finished say, "Let us cease from abusing each
9 other," and he was very sorry that there should be always so much
10 variance.

11 But I think I should tell you a story which would illustrate the
12 cause of this variance. A frog lived in a well. It had lived there for a
13 long time. It was born there and brought up there, and yet was a
14 little, small frog. Of course the evolutionists were not there then to
15 tell us whether the frog lost its eyes or not, but, for our story's sake,
16 we must take it for granted that it had its eyes, and that it every day
17 cleansed the water of all the worms and bacilli that lived in it with
18 an energy that would do credit to our modern bacteriologists. In
19 this way it went on and became a little sleek and fat. Well, one day
20 another frog that lived in the sea came and fell into the well.

21 "Where are you from?"

22 "I am from the sea."

23 "The sea! How big is that? Is it as big as my well?" and he
24 took a leap from one side of the well to the other.

25 "My friend," said the frog of the sea, "how do you compare
26 the sea with your little well?"

27 Then the frog took another leap and asked, "Is your sea so
28 big?"

29 "What nonsense you speak, to compare the sea with your
30 well!"

31 "Well, then," said the frog of the well, "nothing can be bigger
32 than my well; there can be nothing bigger than this; this fellow is a
33 liar, so turn him out."

34 That has been the difficulty all the while.

35 I am a Hindu. I am sitting in my own little well and thinking
36 that the whole world is my little well. The Christian sits in his little
37 well and thinks the whole world is his well. The Mohammedan sits
38 in his little well and thinks that is the whole world. I have to thank
39 you of America for the great attempt you are making to break down
40 the barriers of this little world of ours, and hope that, in the future,
41 the Lord will help you to accomplish your purpose.

42
43

PAPER ON HINDUISM

Read at the Parliament on 19th September, 1893

Three religions now stand in the world which have come down to us from time prehistoric--Hinduism, Zoroastrianism and Judaism. They have all received tremendous shocks and all of them prove by their survival their internal strength. But while Judaism failed to absorb Christianity and was driven out of its place of birth by its all-conquering daughter, and a handful of Parsees is all that remains to tell the tale of their grand religion, sect after sect arose in India and seemed to shake the religion of the Vedas to its very foundations, but like the waters of the seashore in a tremendous earthquake it receded only for a while, only to return in an all-absorbing flood, a thousand times more vigorous, and when the tumult of the rush was over, these sects were all sucked in, absorbed, and assimilated into the immense body of the mother faith.

From the high spiritual flights of the Vedanta philosophy, of which the latest discoveries of science seem like echoes, to the low ideas of idolatry with its multifarious mythology, the agnosticism of the Buddhists, and the atheism of the Jains, each and all have a place in the Hindu's religion.

Where then, the question arises, where is the common centre to which all these widely diverging radii converge? Where is the common basis upon which all these seemingly hopeless contradictions rest? And this is the question I shall attempt to answer.

The Hindus have received their religion through revelation, the Vedas. They hold that the Vedas are without beginning and without end. It may sound ludicrous to this audience, how a book can be without beginning or end. But by the Vedas no books are meant. They mean the accumulated treasury of spiritual laws discovered by different persons in different times. Just as the law of gravitation existed before its discovery, and would exist if all humanity forgot it, so is it with the laws that govern the spiritual world. The moral, ethical, and spiritual relations between soul and soul and between individual spirits and the Father of all spirits, were there before their discovery, and would remain even if we forgot them.

The discoverers of these laws are called Rishis, and we honour them as perfected beings. I am glad to tell this audience that some of the very greatest of them were women. Here it may be said that these laws as laws may be without end, but they must have had a beginning. The Vedas teach us that creation is without beginning or end. Science is said to have proved that the sum total of cosmic energy is always the same. Then, if there was a time when nothing existed, where was all this manifested energy? Some say it was in a potential form in God. In that case God is sometimes potential and sometimes kinetic, which would make Him mutable. Everything mutable is a compound, and everything compound must undergo that change which is called destruction. So God would die,

1 which is absurd. Therefore there never was a time when there was
2 no creation.

3 If I may be allowed to use a simile, creation and creator are
4 two lines, without beginning and without end, running parallel to
5 each other. God is the ever active providence, by whose power
6 systems after systems are being evolved out of chaos, made to run
7 for a time and again destroyed. This is what the Brahmin boy
8 repeats every day: "*The sun and the moon, the Lord created like the*
9 *suns and moons of previous cycles.*" And this agrees with modern
10 science.

11 Here I stand and if I shut my eyes, and try to conceive my
12 existence, "I", "I", "I", what is the idea before me? The idea of a
13 body. Am I, then, nothing but a combination of material substances?
14 The Vedas declare, "No". I am a spirit living in a body. I am not the
15 body. The body will die, but I shall not die. Here am I in this body; it
16 will fall, but I shall go on living. I had also a past. The soul was not
17 created, for creation means a combination which means a certain
18 future dissolution. If then the soul was created, it must die. Some
19 are born happy, enjoy perfect health, with beautiful body, mental
20 vigour and all wants supplied. Others are born miserable, some are
21 without hands or feet, others again are idiots and only drag on a
22 wretched existence. Why, if they are all created, why does a just
23 and merciful God create one happy and another unhappy, why is He
24 so partial? Nor would it mend matters in the least to hold that those
25 who are miserable in this life will be happy in a future one. Why
26 should a man be miserable even here in the reign of a just and
27 merciful God?

28 In the second place, the idea of a creator God does not
29 explain the anomaly, but simply expresses the cruel fiat of an all-
30 powerful being. There must have been causes, then, before his
31 birth, to make a man miserable or happy and those were his past
32 actions.

33 Are not all the tendencies of the mind and the body accounted
34 for by inherited aptitude? Here are two parallel lines of existence--
35 one of the mind, the other of matter. If matter and its
36 transformations answer for all that we have, there is no necessity
37 for supposing the existence of a soul. But it cannot be proved that
38 thought has been evolved out of matter, and if a philosophical
39 monism is inevitable, spiritual monism is certainly logical and no
40 less desirable than a materialistic monism; but neither of these is
41 necessary here.

42 We cannot deny that bodies acquire certain tendencies from
43 heredity, but those tendencies only mean the physical configuration,
44 through which a peculiar mind alone can act in a peculiar way.
45 There are other tendencies peculiar to a soul caused by its past
46 actions. And a soul with a certain tendency would by the laws of
47 affinity take birth in a body which is the fittest instrument for the
48 display of that tendency. This is in accord with science, for science
49 wants to explain everything by habit, and habit is got through
50 repetitions. So repetitions are necessary to explain the natural
51 habits of a new-born soul. And since they were not obtained in this

1 present life, they must have come down from past lives.

2 There is another suggestion. Taking all these for granted, how
3 is it that I do not remember anything of my past life? This can be
4 easily explained. I am now speaking English. It is not my mother
5 tongue, in fact no words of my mother tongue are now present in
6 my consciousness; but let me try to bring them up, and they rush in.
7 That shows that consciousness is only the surface of the mental
8 ocean, and within its depths are stored up all our experiences. Try
9 and struggle, they would come up and you would be conscious even
10 of your past life.

11 This is direct and demonstrative evidence. Verification is the
12 perfect proof of a theory, and here is the challenge thrown to the
13 world by the Rishis. We have discovered the secret by which the
14 very depths of the ocean of memory can be stirred up--try it and you
15 would get a complete reminiscence of your past life.

16 So then the Hindu believes that he is a spirit. Him the sword
17 cannot pierce--him the fire cannot burn--him the water cannot
18 melt--him the air cannot dry. The Hindu believes that every soul is a
19 circle whose circumference is nowhere, but whose centre is located
20 in the body, and that death means the change of this centre from
21 body to body. Nor is the soul bound by the conditions of matter. In
22 its very essence it is free, unbounded, holy, pure, and perfect. But
23 somehow or other it finds itself tied down to matter, and thinks of
24 itself as matter.

25 Why should the free, perfect, and pure being be thus under
26 the thralldom of matter, is the next question. How can the perfect
27 soul be deluded into the belief that it is imperfect? We have been
28 told that the Hindus shirk the question and say that no such
29 question can be there. Some thinkers want to answer it by positing
30 one or more quasi-perfect beings, and use big scientific names to
31 fill up the gap. But naming is not explaining. The question remains
32 the same. How can the perfect become the quasi-perfect; how can
33 the pure, the absolute, change even a microscopic particle of its
34 nature? But the Hindu is sincere. He does not want to take shelter
35 under sophistry. He is brave enough to face the question in a manly
36 fashion; and his answer is: "I do not know. I do not know how the
37 perfect being, the soul, came to think of itself as imperfect, as
38 joined to and conditioned by matter." But the fact is a fact for all
39 that. It is a fact in everybody's consciousness that one thinks of
40 oneself as the body. The Hindu does not attempt to explain why one
41 thinks one is the body. The answer that it is the will of God is no
42 explanation. This is nothing more than what the Hindu says, "I do
43 not know."

44 Well, then, the human soul is eternal and immortal, perfect
45 and infinite, and death means only a change of centre from one
46 body to another. The present is determined by our past actions, and
47 the future by the present. The soul will go on evolving up or
48 reverting back from birth to birth and death to death. But here is
49 another question: Is man a tiny boat in a tempest, raised one
50 moment on the foamy crest of a billow and dashed down into a
51 yawning chasm the next, rolling to and fro at the mercy of good and

1 bad actions--a powerless, helpless wreck in an ever-raging, ever-
2 rushing, uncompromising current of cause and effect; a little moth
3 placed under the wheel of causation which rolls on crushing
4 everything in its way and waits not for the widow's tears or the
5 orphan's cry? The heart sinks at the idea, yet this is the law of
6 Nature. Is there no hope? Is there no escape?--was the cry that
7 went up from the bottom of the heart of despair. It reached the
8 throne of mercy, and words of hope and consolation came down and
9 inspired a Vedic sage, and he stood up before the world and in
10 trumpet voice proclaimed the glad tidings: "Hear, ye children of
11 immortal bliss! even ye that reside in higher spheres! I have found
12 the Ancient One who is beyond all darkness, all delusion: knowing
13 Him alone you shall be saved from death over again." "Children of
14 immortal bliss" --what a sweet, what a hopeful name! Allow me to
15 call you, brethren, by that sweet name--heirs of immortal bliss--yea,
16 the Hindu refuses to call you sinners. Ye are the Children of God,
17 the sharers of immortal bliss, holy and perfect beings. Ye divinities
18 on earth--sinners! It is a sin to call a man so; it is a standing libel on
19 human nature. Come up, O lions, and shake off the delusion that
20 you are sheep; you are souls immortal, spirits free, blest and
21 eternal; ye are not matter, ye are not bodies; matter is your servant,
22 not you the servant of matter.

23 Thus it is that the Vedas proclaim not a dreadful combination
24 of unforgiving laws, not an endless prison of cause and effect, but
25 that at the head of all these laws, in and through every particle of
26 matter and force, stands One "by whose command the wind blows,
27 the fire burns, the clouds rain, and death stalks upon the earth."

28 And what is His nature?

29 He is everywhere, the pure and formless One, the Almighty
30 and the All-merciful. "Thou art our father, Thou art our mother,
31 Thou art our beloved friend, Thou art the source of all strength;
32 give us strength. Thou art He that beareth the burdens of the
33 universe; help me bear the little burden of this life." Thus sang the
34 Rishis of the Vedas. And how to worship Him? Through love. "He is
35 to be worshipped as the one beloved, dearer than everything in this
36 and the next life."

37 This is the doctrine of love declared in the Vedas, and let us
38 see how it is fully developed and taught by Krishna, whom the
39 Hindus believe to have been God incarnate on earth.

40 He taught that a man ought to live in this world like a lotus
41 leaf, which grows in water but is never moistened by water; so a
42 man ought to live in the world--his heart to God and his hands to
43 work.

44 It is good to love God for hope of reward in this or the next
45 world, but it is better to love God for love's sake, and the prayer
46 goes: "Lord, I do not want wealth, nor children, nor learning. If it be
47 Thy will, I shall go from birth to birth, but grant me this, that I may
48 love Thee without the hope of reward--love unselfishly for love's
49 sake." One of the disciples of Krishna, the then Emperor of India,
50 was driven from his kingdom by his enemies and had to take shelter
51 with his queen in a forest in the Himalayas, and there one day the

1 queen asked him how it was that he, the most virtuous of men,
2 should suffer so much misery. Yudhishtira answered, "Behold, my
3 queen, the Himalayas, how grand and beautiful they are; I love
4 them. They do not give me anything, but my nature is to love the
5 grand, the beautiful, therefore I love them. Similarly, I love the
6 Lord. He is the source of all beauty, of all sublimity. He is the only
7 object to be loved; my nature is to love Him, and therefore I love. I
8 do not pray for anything; I do not ask for anything. Let Him place
9 me wherever He likes. I must love Him for love's sake. I cannot
10 trade love."

11 The Vedas teach that the soul is divine, only held in the
12 bondage of matter; perfection will be reached when this bond will
13 burst, and the word they use for it is therefore, Mukti--freedom,
14 freedom from the bonds of imperfection, freedom from death and
15 misery.

16 And this bondage can only fall off through the mercy of God,
17 and this mercy comes on the pure. So purity is the condition of His
18 mercy. How does that mercy act? He reveals Himself to the pure
19 heart; the pure and the stainless see God, yea, even in this life; then
20 and then only all the crookedness of the heart is made straight.
21 Then all doubt ceases. He is no more the freak of a terrible law of
22 causation. This is the very centre, the very vital conception of
23 Hinduism. The Hindu does not want to live upon words and
24 theories. If there are existences beyond the ordinary sensuous
25 existence, he wants to come face to face with them. If there is a
26 soul in him which is not matter, if there is an all-merciful universal
27 Soul, he will go to Him direct. He must see Him, and that alone can
28 destroy all doubts. So the best proof a Hindu sage gives about the
29 soul, about God, is: "I have seen the soul; I have seen God." And
30 that is the only condition of perfection. The Hindu religion does not
31 consist in struggles and attempts to believe a certain doctrine or
32 dogma, but in realising--not in believing, but in being and
33 becoming.

34 Thus the whole object of their system is by constant struggle
35 to become perfect, to become divine, to reach God and see God,
36 and this reaching God, seeing God, becoming perfect even as the
37 Father in Heaven is perfect, constitutes the religion of the Hindus.

38 And what becomes of a man when he attains perfection? He
39 lives a life of bliss infinite. He enjoys infinite and perfect bliss,
40 having obtained the only thing in which man ought to have
41 pleasure, namely God, and enjoys the bliss with God.

42 So far all the Hindus are agreed. This is the common religion
43 of all the sects of India; but, then, perfection is absolute, and the
44 absolute cannot be two or three. It cannot have any qualities. It
45 cannot be an individual. And so when a soul becomes perfect and
46 absolute, it must become one with Brahman, and it would only
47 realise the Lord as the perfection, the reality, of its own nature and
48 existence, the existence absolute, knowledge absolute, and bliss
49 absolute. We have often and often read this called the losing of
50 individuality and becoming a stock or a stone.

51 "He jests at scars that never felt a wound."

1 I tell you it is nothing of the kind. If it is happiness to enjoy
2 the consciousness of this small body, it must be greater happiness
3 to enjoy the consciousness of two bodies, the measure of happiness
4 increasing with the consciousness of an increasing number of
5 bodies, the aim, the ultimate of happiness being reached when it
6 would become a universal consciousness.

7 Therefore, to gain this infinite universal individuality, this
8 miserable little prison-individuality must go. Then alone can death
9 cease when I am one with life, then alone can misery cease when I
10 am one with happiness itself, then alone can all errors cease when I
11 am one with knowledge itself; and this is the necessary scientific
12 conclusion. Science has proved to me that physical individuality is a
13 delusion, that really my body is one little continuously changing
14 body in an unbroken ocean of matter; and Advaita (unity) is the
15 necessary conclusion with my other counterpart, soul.

16 Science is nothing but the finding of unity. As soon as science
17 would reach perfect unity, it would stop from further progress,
18 because it would reach the goal. Thus Chemistry could not progress
19 farther when it would discover one element out of which all others
20 could be made. Physics would stop when it would be able to fulfil its
21 services in discovering one energy of which all the others are but
22 manifestations, and the science of religion becomes perfect when it
23 would discover Him who is the one life in a universe of death, Him
24 who is the constant basis of an ever-changing world. One who is the
25 only Soul of which all souls are but delusive manifestations. Thus is
26 it, through multiplicity and duality, that the ultimate unity is
27 reached. Religion can go no farther. This is the goal of all science.

28 All science is bound to come to this conclusion in the long
29 run. Manifestation, and not creation, is the word of science today,
30 and the Hindu is only glad that what he has been cherishing in his
31 bosom for ages is going to be taught in more forcible language, and
32 with further light from the latest conclusions of science.

33 Descend we now from the aspirations of philosophy to the
34 religion of the ignorant. At the very outset, I may tell you that there
35 is no *polytheism* in India. In every temple, if one stands by and
36 listens, one will find the worshippers applying all the attributes of
37 God, including omnipresence, to the images. It is not polytheism,
38 nor would the name henotheism explain the situation. "The rose
39 called by any other name would smell as sweet." Names are not
40 explanations.

41 I remember, as a boy, hearing a Christian missionary preach
42 to a crowd in India. Among other sweet things he was telling them
43 was that if he gave a blow to their idol with his stick, what could it
44 do? One of his hearers sharply answered, "If I abuse your God,
45 what can He do?" "You would be punished," said the preacher,
46 "when you die." "So my idol will punish you when you die," retorted
47 the Hindu.

48 The tree is known by its fruits. When I have seen amongst
49 them that are called idolaters, men, the like of whom in morality
50 and spirituality and love I have never seen anywhere, I stop and ask
51 myself, "Can sin beget holiness?"

1 Superstition is a great enemy of man, but bigotry is worse.
2 Why does a Christian go to church? Why is the cross holy? Why is
3 the face turned toward the sky in prayer? Why are there so many
4 images in them Catholic Church? Why are there so many images in
5 the minds of Protestants when they pray? My brethren, we can no
6 more think about anything without a mental image than we can live
7 without breathing. By the law of association, the material image
8 calls up the mental idea and *vice versa*. This is why the Hindu uses
9 an external symbol when he worships. He will tell you, it helps to
10 keep his mind fixed on the Being to whom he prays. He knows as
11 well as you do that the image is not God, is not omnipresent. After
12 all, how much does omnipresence mean to almost the whole world?
13 It stands merely as a word, a symbol. Has God superficial area? If
14 not, when we repeat that word "omnipresent", we think of the
15 extended sky or of space, that is all.

16 As we find that somehow or other, by the laws of our mental
17 constitution, we have to associate our ideas of infinity with the
18 image of the blue sky, or of the sea, so we naturally connect our
19 idea of holiness with the image of a church, a mosque, or a cross.
20 The Hindus have associated the idea of holiness, purity, truth,
21 omnipresence, and such other ideas with different images and
22 forms. But with this difference that while some people devote their
23 whole lives to their idol of a church and never rise higher, because
24 with them religion means an intellectual assent to certain doctrines
25 and doing good to their fellows, the whole religion of the Hindu is
26 centred in realisation. Man is to become divine by realising the
27 divine. Idols or temples or churches or books are only the supports,
28 the helps, of his spiritual childhood: but on and on he must
29 progress.

30 He must not stop anywhere. "*External worship, material*
31 *worship,*" say the scriptures, "*is the lowest stage; struggling to rise*
32 *high, mental prayer is the next stage, but the highest stage is when*
33 *the Lord has been realised.*" Mark, the same earnest man who is
34 kneeling before the idol tells you, "*Him the sun cannot express, nor*
35 *the moon, nor the stars, the lightning cannot express Him, nor what*
36 *we speak of as fire; through Him they shine.*" But he does not
37 abuse any one's idol or call its worship sin. He recognises in it a
38 necessary stage of life. "*The child is father of the man.*" Would it be
39 right for an old man to say that childhood is a sin or youth a sin?

40 If a man can realise his divine nature with the help of an
41 image, would it be right to call that a sin? Nor even when he has
42 passed that stage, should he call it an error. To the Hindu, man is
43 not travelling from error to truth, but from truth to truth, from
44 lower to higher truth. To him all the religions, from the lowest
45 fetishism to the highest absolutism, mean so many attempts of the
46 human soul to grasp and realise the Infinite, each determined by
47 the conditions of its birth and association, and each of these marks
48 a stage of progress; and every soul is a young eagle soaring higher
49 and higher, gathering more and more strength, till it reaches the
50 Glorious Sun.

51 Unity in variety is the plan of nature, and the Hindu has
52 recognised it. Every other religion lays down certain fixed dogmas,

1 and tries to force society to adopt them. It places before society
2 only one coat which must fit Jack and John and Henry, all alike. If it
3 does not fit John or Henry, he must go without a coat to cover his
4 body. The Hindus have discovered that the absolute can only be
5 realised, or thought of, or stated, through the relative, and the
6 images, crosses, and crescents are simply so many symbols--so
7 many pegs to hang the spiritual ideas on. It is not that this help is
8 necessary for every one, but those that do not need it have no right
9 to say that it is wrong. Nor is it compulsory in Hinduism.

10 One thing I must tell you. Idolatry in India does not mean
11 anything horrible. It is not the mother of harlots. On the other hand,
12 it is the attempt of undeveloped minds to grasp high spiritual
13 truths. The Hindus have their faults, they sometimes have their
14 exceptions; but mark this, they are always for punishing their own
15 bodies, and never for cutting the throats of their neighbours. If the
16 Hindu fanatic burns himself on the pyre, he never lights the fire of
17 Inquisition. And even this cannot be laid at the door of his religion
18 any more than the burning of witches can be laid at the door of
19 Christianity.

20 To the Hindu, then, the whole world of religions is only a
21 travelling, a coming up, of different men and women, through
22 various conditions and circumstances, to the same goal. Every
23 religion is only evolving a God out of the material man, and the
24 same God is the inspirer of all of them. Why, then, are there so
25 many contradictions? They are only apparent, says the Hindu. The
26 contradictions come from the same truth adapting itself to the
27 varying circumstances of different natures.

28 It is the same light coming through glasses of different
29 colours. And these little variations are necessary for purposes of
30 adaptation. But in the heart of everything the same truth reigns.
31 The Lord has declared to the Hindu in His incarnation as Krishna,
32 "*I am in every religion as the thread through a string of pearls.*
33 *Wherever thou seest extraordinary holiness and extraordinary*
34 *power raising and purifying humanity, know thou that I am there ."*
35 And what has been the result? I challenge the world to find,
36 throughout the whole system of Sanskrit philosophy, any such
37 expression as that the Hindu alone will be saved and not others.
38 Says Vyasa, "*We find perfect men even beyond the pale of our caste*
39 *and creed. "* One thing more. How, then, can the Hindu, whose
40 whole fabric of thought centres in God, believe in Buddhism which
41 is agnostic, or in Jainism which is atheistic? The Buddhists or the
42 Jains do not depend upon God; but the whole force of their religion
43 is directed to the great central truth in every religion, to evolve a
44 God out of man. They have not seen the Father, but they have seen
45 the Son. And he that hath seen the Son hath seen the Father also.

46 This, brethren, is a short sketch of the religious ideas of the
47 Hindus. The Hindu may have failed to carry out all his plans, but if
48 there is ever to be a universal religion, it must be one which will
49 have no location in place or time; which will be infinite like the God
50 it will preach, and whose sun will shine upon the followers of
51 Krishna and of Christ, on saints and sinners alike; which will not be
52 Brahminic or Buddhistic, Christian or Mohammedan, but the sum

1 total of all these, and still have infinite space for development;
2 which in its catholicity will embrace in its infinite arms, and find a
3 place for, every human being, from the lowest grovelling savage not
4 far removed from the brute, to the highest man towering by the
5 virtues of his head and heart almost above humanity, making
6 society stand in awe of him and doubt his human nature. It will be a
7 religion which will have no place for persecution or intolerance in
8 its polity, which will recognise divinity in every man and woman,
9 and whose whole scope, whose whole force, will be created in
10 aiding humanity to realise its own true, divine nature.

11 Offer such a religion, and all the nations will follow you.
12 Asoka's council was a council of the Buddhist faith. Akbar's, though
13 more to the purpose, was only a parlour-meeting. It was reserved
14 for America to proclaim to all quarters of the globe that the Lord is
15 in every religion.

16 May He who is the Brahman of the Hindus, the Ahura-Mazda
17 of the Zoroastrians, the Buddha of the Buddhists, the Jehovah of the
18 Jews, the Father in Heaven of the Christians, give strength to you to
19 carry out your noble idea! The star arose in the East; it travelled
20 steadily towards the West, sometimes dimmed and sometimes
21 effulgent, till it made a circuit of the world; and now it is again
22 rising on the very horizon of the East, the borders of the Sanpo, a
23 thousandfold more effulgent than it ever was before.

24 Hail, Columbia, motherland of liberty! It has been given to
25 thee, who never dipped her hand in her neighbour's blood, who
26 never found out that the shortest way of becoming rich was by
27 robbing one's neighbours, it has been given to thee to march at the
28 vanguard of civilisation with the flag of harmony.

RELIGION NOT THE CRYING NEED OF INDIA

20th September, 1893

Christians must always be ready for good criticism, and I hardly think that you will mind if I make a little criticism. You Christians, who are so fond of sending out missionaries to save the soul of the heathen--why do you not try to save their bodies from starvation? In India, during the terrible famines, thousands died from hunger, yet you Christians did nothing. You erect churches all through India, but the crying evil in the East is not religion--they have religion enough--but it is bread that the suffering millions of burning India cry out for with parched throats. They ask us for bread, but we give them stones. It is an insult to a starving people to offer them religion; it is an insult to a starving man to teach him metaphysics. In India a priest that preached for money would lose caste and be spat upon by the people. I came here to seek aid for my impoverished people, and I fully realised how difficult it was to get help for heathens from Christians in a Christian land.

BUDDHISM, THE FULFILMENT OF HINDUISM

26th September, 1893

I am not a Buddhist, as you have heard, and yet I am. If China, or Japan, or Ceylon follow the teachings of the Great Master, India worships him as God incarnate on earth. You have just now heard that I am going to criticise Buddhism, but by that I wish you to understand only this. Far be it from me to criticise him whom I worship as God incarnate on earth. But our views about Buddha are that he was not understood properly by his disciples. The relation between Hinduism (by Hinduism, I mean the religion of the Vedas) and what is called Buddhism at the present day is nearly the same as between Judaism and Christianity. Jesus Christ was a Jew, and Shakya Muni was a Hindu. The Jews rejected Jesus Christ, nay, crucified him, and the Hindus have accepted Shakya Muni as God and worship him. But the real difference that we Hindus want to show between modern Buddhism and what we should understand as the teachings of Lord Buddha lies principally in this: Shakya Muni came to preach nothing new. He also, like Jesus, came to fulfil and not to destroy. Only, in the case of Jesus, it was the old people, the Jews, who did not understand him, while in the case of Buddha, it was his own followers who did not realise the import of this teachings. As the Jew did not understand the fulfilment of the Old Testament, so the Buddhist did not understand the fulfilment of the truths of the Hindu religion. Again, I repeat, Shakya Muni came not to destroy, but he was the fulfilment, the logical conclusion, the logical development of the religion of the Hindus.

The religion of the Hindus is divided into two parts: the

ceremonial and the spiritual. The spiritual portion is specially studied by the monks. In that there is no caste. A man from the highest caste and a man from the lowest may become a monk in India, and the two castes become equal. In religion there is no caste; caste is simply a social institution. Shakya Muni himself was a monk, and it was his glory that he had the large-heartedness to bring out the truths from the hidden Vedas and throw them broadcast all over the world. He was the first being in the world who brought missionarising into practice--nay, he was the first to conceive the idea of proselytising.

The great glory of the Master lay in his wonderful sympathy for everybody, especially for the ignorant and the poor. Some of his disciples were Brahmins. When Buddha was teaching, Sanskrit was no more the spoken language in India. It was then only in the books of the learned. Some of Buddha's Brahmin disciples wanted to translate his teachings into Sanskrit, but he distinctly told them, "I am for the poor, for the people; let me speak in the tongue of the people." And so to this day the great bulk of his teachings are in the vernacular of that day in India.

Whatever may be the position of philosophy, whatever may be the position of metaphysics, so long as there is such a thing as death in the world, so long as there is such a thing as weakness in the human heart, so long as there is a cry going out of the heart of man in his very weakness, there shall be a faith in God.

On the philosophic side the disciples of the Great Master dashed themselves against the eternal rocks of the Vedas and could not crush them, and on the other side they took away from the nation that eternal God to which every one, man or woman, clings so fondly. And the result was that Buddhism had to die a natural death in India. At the present day there is not one who calls oneself a Buddhist in India, the land of its birth.

But at the same time, Brahminism lost something--that reforming zeal, that wonderful sympathy and charity for everybody, that wonderful leaven which Buddhism had brought to the masses and which had rendered Indian society so great that a Greek historian who wrote about India of that time was led to say that no Hindu was known to tell an untruth and no Hindu woman was known to be unchaste.

Hinduism cannot live without Buddhism, nor Buddhism without Hinduism. Then realise what the separation has shown to us, that the Buddhists cannot stand without the brain and philosophy of the Brahmins, nor the Brahmin without the heart of the Buddhist. This separation between the Buddhists and the Brahmins is the cause of the downfall of India. That is why India is populated by three hundred millions of beggars, and that is why India has been the slave of conquerors for the last thousand years. Let us then join the wonderful intellect of the Brahmins with the heart, the noble soul, the wonderful humanising power of the Great Master.

ADDRESS AT THE FINAL SESSION

27th September, 1893

The World's Parliament of Religions has become an accomplished fact, and the merciful Father has helped those who laboured to bring it into existence, and crowned with success their most unselfish labour.

My thanks to those noble souls whose large hearts and love of truth first dreamed this wonderful dream and then realised it. My thanks to the shower of liberal sentiments that has overflowed this platform. My thanks to this enlightened audience for their uniform kindness to me and for their appreciation of every thought that tends to smooth the friction of religions. A few jarring notes were heard from time to time in this harmony. My special thanks to them, for they have, by their striking contrast, made general harmony the sweeter.

Much has been said of the common ground of religious unity. I am not going just now to venture my own theory. But if any one here hopes that this unity will come by the triumph of any one of the religions and the destruction of the other, to him I say, "Brother, yours is an impossible hope." Do I wish that the Christian would become Hindu? God forbid. Do I wish that the Hindu or Buddhist would become Christian? God forbid.

The seed is put in the ground, and earth and air and water are placed around it. Does the seed become the earth, or the air, or the water? No. It becomes a plant, it develops after the law of its own growth, assimilates the air, the earth, and the water, converts them into plant substance, and grows into a plant.

Similar is the case with religion. The Christian is not to become a Hindu or a Buddhist, nor a Hindu or a Buddhist to become a Christian. But each must assimilate the spirit of the others and yet preserve his individuality and grow according to his own law of growth.

If the Parliament of Religions has shown anything to the world it is this: It has proved to the world that holiness, purity and charity are not the exclusive possessions of any church in the world, and that every system has produced men and women of the most exalted character. In the face of this evidence, if anybody dreams of the exclusive survival of his own religion and the destruction of the others, I pity him from the bottom of my heart, and point out to him that upon the banner of every religion will soon be written, in spite of resistance: "Help and not Fight," "Assimilation and not Destruction," "Harmony and Peace and not Dissension."

KARMA-YOGA

KARMA IN ITS EFFECT ON CHARACTER

The word Karma is derived from the Sanskrit Kri, to do; all action is Karma. Technically, this word also means the effects of actions. In connection with metaphysics, it sometimes means the effects, of which our past actions were the causes. But in Karma-Yoga we have simply to do with the word Karma as meaning work. The goal of mankind is knowledge. That is the one ideal placed before us by Eastern philosophy. Pleasure is not the goal of man, but knowledge. Pleasure and happiness come to an end. It is a mistake to suppose that pleasure is the goal. The cause of all the miseries we have in the world is that men foolishly think pleasure to be the ideal to strive for. After a time man finds that it is not happiness, but knowledge, towards which he is going, and that both pleasure and pain are great teachers, and that he learns as much from evil as from good. As pleasure and pain pass before his soul they have upon it different pictures, and the result of these combined impressions is what is called man's "character". If you take the character of any man, it really is but the aggregate of tendencies, the sum total of the bent of his mind; you will find that misery and happiness are equal factors in the formation of that character. Good and evil have an equal share in moulding character, and in some instances misery is a greater teacher than happiness. In studying the great characters the world has produced, I dare say, in the vast majority of cases, it would be found that it was misery that taught more than happiness, it was poverty that taught more than wealth, it was blows that brought out their inner fire more than praise.

Now this knowledge, again, is inherent in man. No knowledge comes from outside; it is all inside. What we say a man "knows", should, in strict psychological language, be what he "discovers" or "unveils"; what a man "learns" is really what he "discovers", by taking the cover off his own soul, which is a mine of infinite knowledge.

We say Newton discovered gravitation. Was it sitting anywhere in a corner waiting for him? It was in his own mind; the time came and he found it out. All knowledge that the world has ever received comes from the mind; the infinite library of the universe is in your own mind. The external world is simply the suggestion, the occasion, which sets you to study your own mind, but the object of your study is always your own mind. The falling of an apple gave the suggestion to Newton, and he studied his own mind. He rearranged all the previous links of thought in his mind and discovered a new link among them, which we call the law of gravitation. It was not in the apple nor in anything in the centre of the earth.

All knowledge, therefore, secular or spiritual, is in the human mind. In many cases it is not discovered, but remains covered, and

1 when the covering is being slowly taken off, we say, "We are
2 learning," and the advance of knowledge is made by the advance of
3 this process of uncovering. The man from whom this veil is being
4 lifted is the more knowing man, the man upon whom it lies thick is
5 ignorant, and the man from whom it has entirely gone is all-
6 knowing, omniscient. There have been omniscient men, and, I
7 believe, there will be yet; and that there will be myriads of them in
8 the cycles to come. Like fire in a piece of flint, knowledge exists in
9 the mind; suggestion is the friction which brings it out. So with all
10 our feelings and actions--our tears and our smiles, our joys and our
11 griefs, our weeping and our laughter, our curses and our blessings,
12 our praises and our blames--every one of these we may find, if we
13 calmly study our own selves, to have been brought out from within
14 ourselves by so many blows. The result is what we are. All these
15 blows taken together are called Karma--work, action. Every mental
16 and physical blow that is given to the soul, by which, as it were, fire
17 is struck from it, and by which its own power and knowledge are
18 discovered, is Karma, this word being used in its widest sense. Thus
19 we are all doing Karma all the time. I am talking to you: that is
20 Karma. You are listening: that is Karma. We breathe: that is Karma.
21 We walk: Karma. Everything we do, physical or mental, is Karma,
22 and it leaves its marks on us.

23 There are certain works which are, as it were, the aggregate,
24 the sum total, of a large number of smaller works. If we stand near
25 the seashore and hear the waves dashing against the shingle, we
26 think it is such a great noise, and yet we know that one wave is
27 really composed of millions and millions of minute waves. Each one
28 of these is making a noise, and yet we do not catch it; it is only
29 when they become the big aggregate that we hear. Similarly, every
30 pulsation of the heart is work. Certain kinds of work we feel and
31 they become tangible to us; they are, at the same time, the
32 aggregate of a number of small works. If you really want to judge of
33 the character of a man, look not at his great performances. Every
34 fool may become a hero at one time or another. Watch a man do his
35 most common actions; those are indeed the things which will tell
36 you the real character of a great man. Great occasions rouse even
37 the lowest of human beings to some kind of greatness, but he alone
38 is the really great man whose character is great always, the same
39 wherever he be.

40 Karma in its effect on character is the most tremendous
41 power than man has to deal with. Man is, as it were, a centre, and
42 is attracting all the powers of the universe towards himself, and in
43 this centre is fusing them all and again sending them off in a big
44 current. Such a centre is the *real* man--the almighty, the
45 omniscient--and he draws the whole universe towards him. Good
46 and bad, misery and happiness, all are running towards him and
47 clinging round him; and out of them he fashions the mighty stream
48 of tendency called character and throws it outwards. As he has the
49 power of drawing in anything, so has he the power of throwing it
50 out.

51 All the actions that we see in the world, all the movements in
52 human society, all the works that we have around us, are simply the

1 display of thought, the manifestation of the will of man. Machines
2 or instruments, cities, ships, or men-of-war, all these are simply the
3 manifestation of the will of man; and this will is caused by
4 character, and character is manufactured by Karma. As is Karma,
5 so is the manifestation of the will. The men of mighty will the world
6 has produced have all been tremendous workers--gigantic souls,
7 with wills powerful enough to overturn worlds, wills they got by
8 persistent work, through ages, and ages. Such a gigantic will as
9 that of a Buddha or a Jesus could not be obtained in one life, for we
10 know who their fathers were. It is not known that their fathers ever
11 spoke a word for the good of mankind. Millions and millions of
12 carpenters like Joseph had gone; millions are still living. Millions
13 and millions of petty kings like Buddha's father had been in the
14 world. If it was only a case of hereditary transmission, how do you
15 account for this petty prince, who was not, perhaps, obeyed by his
16 own servants, producing this son, whom half a world worships?
17 How do you explain the gulf between the carpenter and his son,
18 whom millions of human beings worship as God? It cannot be
19 solved by the theory of heredity. The gigantic will which Buddha
20 and Jesus threw over the world, whence did it come? Whence came
21 this accumulation of power? It must have been there through ages
22 and ages, continually growing bigger and bigger, until it burst on
23 society in a Buddha or a Jesus, even rolling down to the present day.

24 All this is determined by Karma, work. No one can get
25 anything unless he earns it. This is an eternal law. We may
26 sometimes think it is not so, but in the long run we become
27 convinced of it. A man may struggle all his life for riches; he may
28 cheat thousands, but he finds at last that he did not deserve to
29 become rich, and his life becomes a trouble and a nuisance to him.
30 We may go on accumulating things for our physical enjoyment, but
31 only what we earn is really ours. A fool may buy all the books in the
32 world, and they will be in his library; but he will be able to read
33 only those that he deserves to; and this deserving is produced by
34 Karma. Our Karma determines what we deserve and what we can
35 assimilate. We are responsible for what we are; and whatever we
36 wish ourselves to be, we have the power to make ourselves. If what
37 we are now has been the result of our own past actions, it certainly
38 follows that whatever we wish to be in future can be produced by
39 our present actions; so we have to know how to act. You will say,
40 "What is the use of learning how to work? Everyone works in some
41 way or other in this world." But there is such a thing as frittering
42 away our energies. With regard to Karma-Yoga, the Gita says that it
43 is doing work with cleverness and as a science; by knowing how to
44 work, one can obtain the greatest results. You must remember that
45 all work is simply to bring out the power of the mind which is
46 already there, to wake up the soul. The power is inside every man,
47 so is knowing; the different works are like blows to bring them out,
48 to cause these giants to wake up.

49 Man works with various motives. There cannot be work
50 without motive. Some people want to get fame, and they work for
51 fame. Others want money, and they work for money. Others want to
52 have power, and they work for power. Others want to get to heaven,

1 and they work for the same. Others want to leave a name when
2 they die, as they do in China, where no man gets a title until he is
3 dead; and that is a better way, after all, than with us. When a man
4 does something very good there, they give a title of nobility to his
5 father, who is dead, or to his grandfather. Some people work for
6 that. Some of the followers of certain Mohammedan sects work all
7 their lives to have a big tomb built for them when they die. I know
8 sects among whom, as soon as a child is born, a tomb is prepared
9 for it; that is among them the most important work a man has to do,
10 and the bigger and the finer the tomb, the better off the man is
11 supposed to be. Others work as a penance; do all sorts of wicked
12 things, then erect a temple, or give something to the priests to buy
13 them off and obtain from them a passport to heaven. They think
14 that this kind of beneficence will clear them and they will go scot-
15 free in spite of their sinfulness. Such are some of the various
16 motives for work.

17 Work for work's sake. There are some who are really the salt
18 of the earth in every country and who work for work's sake, who do
19 not care for name, or fame, or even to go to heaven. They work just
20 because good will come of it. There are others who do good to the
21 poor and help mankind from still higher motives, because they
22 believe in doing good and love good. The motive for name and fame
23 seldom brings immediate results, as a rule; they come to us when
24 we are old and have almost done with life. If a man works without
25 any selfish motive in view, does he not gain anything? Yes, he gains
26 the highest. Unselfishness is more paying, only people have not the
27 patience to practise it. It is more paying from the point of view of
28 health also. Love, truth and unselfishness are not merely moral
29 figures of speech, but they form our highest ideal, because in them
30 lies such a manifestation of power. In the first place, a man who can
31 work for five days, or even for five minutes, without any selfish
32 motive whatever, without thinking of future, of heaven, of
33 punishment, or anything of the kind, has in him the capacity to
34 become a powerful moral giant. It is hard to do it, but in the heart
35 of our hearts we know its value, and the good it brings. It is the
36 greatest manifestation of power--this tremendous restraint; self-
37 restraint is a manifestation of greater power than all outgoing
38 action. A carriage with four horses may rush down a hill
39 unrestrained, or the coachman may curb the horses. Which is the
40 greater manifestation of power, to let them go or to hold them? A
41 cannon-ball flying through the air goes a long distance and falls.
42 Another is cut short in its flight by striking against a wall, and the
43 impact generates intense heat. All outgoing energy following a
44 selfish motive is frittered away; it will not cause power to return to
45 you; but if restrained, it will result in development of power. This
46 self-control will tend to produce a mighty will, a character which
47 makes a Christ or a Buddha. Foolish men do not know this secret;
48 they nevertheless want to rule mankind. Even a fool may rule the
49 whole world if he works and waits. Let him wait a few years,
50 restrain that foolish idea of governing; and when that idea is wholly
51 gone, he will be a power in the world. The majority of us cannot see
52 beyond a few years, just as some animals cannot see beyond a few
53 steps. Just a little narrow circle--that is our world. We have not the

1 patience to look beyond, and thus become immoral and wicked.
2 This is our weakness, our powerlessness.

3 Even the lowest forms of work are not to be despised. Let the
4 man, who knows no better, work for selfish ends, for name and
5 fame; but everyone should always try to get towards higher and
6 higher motives and to understand them. "To work we have the
7 right, but not to the fruits thereof." Leave the fruits alone. Why care
8 for results? If you wish to help a man, never think what that man's
9 attitude should be towards you. If you want to do a great or a good
10 work, do not trouble to think what the result will be.

11 There arises a difficult question in this ideal of work. Intense
12 activity is necessary; we must always work. We cannot live a minute
13 without work. What then becomes of rest? Here is one side of the
14 life-struggle--work, in which we are whirled rapidly round. And here
15 is the other--that of calm, retiring renunciation: everything is
16 peaceful around, there is very little of noise and show, only nature
17 with her animals and flowers and mountains. Neither of them is a
18 perfect picture. A man used to solitude, if brought in contact with
19 the surging whirlpool of the world, will be crushed by it; just as the
20 fish that lives in the deep sea water, as soon as it is brought to the
21 surface, breaks into pieces, deprived of the weight of water on it
22 that had kept it together. Can a man who has been used to the
23 turmoil and the rush of life live at ease if he comes to a quiet place?
24 He suffers and perchance may lose his mind. The ideal man is he
25 who, in the midst of the greatest silence and solitude, finds the
26 intensest activity, and in the midst of the intensest activity finds the
27 silence and solitude of the desert. He has learnt the secret of
28 restraint, he has controlled himself. He goes through the streets of
29 a big city with all its traffic, and his mind is as calm as if he were in
30 a cave, where not a sound could reach him; and he is intensely
31 working all the time. That is the ideal of Karma- Yoga, and if you
32 have attained to that you have really learnt the secret of work.

33 But we have to begin from the beginning, to take up the
34 works as they come to us and slowly make ourselves more unselfish
35 every day. We must do the work and find out the motive power that
36 prompts us; and, almost without exception, in the first years, we
37 shall find that our motives are always selfish; but gradually this
38 selfishness will melt by persistence, till at last will come the time
39 when we shall be able to do really unselfish work. We may all hope
40 that some day or other, as we struggle through the paths of life,
41 there will come a time when we shall become perfectly unselfish;
42 and the moment we attain to that, all our powers will be
43 concentrated, and the knowledge which is ours will be manifest.

EACH IS GREAT IN HIS OWN PLACE

According to the Sankhya philosophy, nature is composed of three forces called, in Sanskrit, Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas. These as manifested in the physical world are what we may call equilibrium, activity, and inertness. Tamas is typified as darkness or inactivity; Rajas is activity, expressed as attraction or repulsion; and Sattva is the equilibrium of the two.

In every man there are these three forces. Sometimes Tamas prevails. We become lazy, we cannot move, we are inactive, bound down by certain ideas or by mere dullness. At other times activity prevails, and at still other times that calm balancing of both. Again, in different men, one of these forces is generally predominant. The characteristic of one man is inactivity, dullness and laziness; that of another, activity, power, manifestation of energy; and in still another we find the sweetness, calmness, and gentleness, which are due to the balancing of both action and inaction. So in all creation--in animals, plants, and men--we find the more or less typical manifestation of all these different forces.

Karma-Yoga has specially to deal with these three factors. By teaching what they are and how to employ them, it helps us to do our work better. Human society is a graded organisation. We all know about morality, and we all know about duty, but at the same time we find that in different countries the significance of morality varies greatly. What is regarded as moral in one country may in another be considered perfectly immoral. For instance, in one country cousins may marry; in another, it is thought to be very immoral; in one, men may marry their sisters-in-law; in another, it is regarded as immoral; in one country people may marry only once; in another, many times; and so forth. Similarly, in all other departments of morality, we find the standard varies greatly- yet we have the idea that there must be a universal standard of morality.

So it is with duty. The idea of duty varies much among different nations. In one country, if a man does not do certain things, people will say he has acted wrongly; while if he does those very things in another country, people will say that he did not act rightly--and yet we know that there must be some universal idea of duty. In the same way, one class of society thinks that certain things are among its duty, while another class thinks quite the opposite and would be horrified if it had to do those things. Two ways are left open to us--the way of the ignorant, who think that there is only one way to truth and that all the rest are wrong, and the way of the wise, who admit that, according to our mental constitution or the different planes of existence in which we are, duty and morality may vary. The important thing is to know that there are gradations of duty and of morality--that the duty of one state of life, in one set of circumstances, will not and cannot be that of another.

To illustrate: All great teachers have taught, "Resist not evil," that non-resistance is the highest moral ideal. We all know that, if a certain number of us attempted to put that maxim fully into

1 practice, the whole social fabric would fall to pieces, the wicked
2 would take possession of our properties and our lives, and would do
3 whatever they like with us. Even if only one day of such non-
4 resistance were practised, it would lead to disaster. Yet, intuitively,
5 in our heart of hearts we feel the truth of the teaching "Resist not
6 evil." This seems to us to be the highest ideal; yet to teach this
7 doctrine only would be equivalent to condemning a vast portion of
8 mankind. Not only so, it would be making men feel that they were
9 always doing wrong, and cause in them scruples of conscience in all
10 their actions; it would weaken them, and that constant self-
11 disapproval would breed more vice than any other weakness would.
12 To the man who has begun to hate himself the gate to degeneration
13 has already opened; and the same is true of a nation.

14 Our first duty is not to hate ourselves, because to advance we
15 must have faith in ourselves first and then in God. He who has no
16 faith in himself can never have faith in God. Therefore, the only
17 alternative remaining to us is to recognise that duty and morality
18 vary under different circumstances; not that the man who resists
19 evil is doing what is always and in itself wrong, but that in the
20 different circumstances in which he is placed it may become even
21 his duty to resist evil.

22 In reading the Bhagavad-Gita, many of you in Western
23 countries may have felt astonished at the second chapter, wherein
24 Sri Krishna calls Arjuna a hypocrite and a coward because of his
25 refusal to fight, or offer resistance, on account of his adversaries
26 being his friends and relatives, making the plea that non-resistance
27 was the highest ideal of love. This is a great lesson for us all to
28 learn, that in all matters the two extremes are alike. The extreme
29 positive and the extreme negative are always similar. When the
30 vibrations of light are too slow, we do not see them, nor do we see
31 them when they are too rapid. So with sound; when very low in
32 pitch, we do not hear it; when very high, we do not hear it either. Of
33 like nature is the difference between resistance and non-resistance.
34 One man does not resist because he is weak, lazy, and cannot, not
35 because he will not; the other man knows that he can strike an
36 irresistible blow if he likes; yet he not only does not strike, but
37 blesses his enemies. The one who from weakness resists not
38 commits a sin, and as such cannot receive any benefit from the non-
39 resistance; while the other would commit a sin by offering
40 resistance. Buddha gave up his throne and renounced his position,
41 that was true renunciation; but there cannot be any question of
42 renunciation in the case of a beggar who has nothing to renounce.
43 So we must always be careful about what we really mean when we
44 speak of this non-resistance and ideal love. We must first take care
45 to understand whether we have the power of resistance or not.
46 Then, having the power, if we renounce it and do not resist, we are
47 doing a grand act of love; but if we cannot resist, and yet, at the
48 same time, try to deceive ourselves into the belief that we are
49 actuated by motives of the highest love, we are doing the exact
50 opposite. Arjuna became a coward at the sight of the mighty array
51 against him; his "love" make him forget his duty towards his
52 country and king. That is why Sri Krishna told him that he was a

1 hypocrite; Thou talkest like a wise man, but thy actions betray thee
2 to be a coward; therefore stand up and fight!

3 Such is the central idea of Karma-Yoga. The Karma-Yogi is the
4 man who understands that the highest ideal is non-resistance, and
5 who also knows that this non-resistance is the highest manifestation
6 of power in actual possession, and also what is called the resisting
7 of evil is but a step on the way towards the manifestation of this
8 highest power, namely, non-resistance. Before reaching this highest
9 ideal, man's duty is to resist evil; let him work, let him fight, let him
10 strike straight from the shoulder. Then only, when he has gained the
11 power to resist, will non-resistance be a virtue.

12 I once met a man in my country whom I had known before as
13 a very stupid, dull person, who knew nothing and had not the desire
14 to know anything, and was living the life of a brute. He asked me
15 what he should do to know God, how he was to get free. "Can you
16 tell a lie?" I asked him. "No," he replied. "Then you must learn to do
17 so. It is better to tell a lie than to be a brute, or a log of wood. You
18 are inactive; you have not certainly reached the highest state,
19 which is beyond all actions, calm and serene; you are too dull even
20 to do something wicked." That was an extreme case, of course, and
21 I was joking with him; but what I meant was that a man must be
22 active in order to pass through activity to perfect calmness.

23 Inactivity should be avoided by all means. Activity always
24 means resistance. Resist all evils, mental and physical; and when
25 you have succeeded in resisting, then will calmness come. It is very
26 easy to say, "Hate nobody, resist not evil," but we know what that
27 kind of thing generally means in practice. When the eyes of society
28 are turned towards us, we may make a show of non-resistance, but
29 in our hearts it is canker all the time. We feel the utter want of the
30 calm of non-resistance; we feel that it would be better for us to
31 resist. If you desire wealth, and know at the same time that the
32 whole world regards him who aims at wealth as a very wicked man,
33 you, perhaps, will not dare to plunge into the struggle for wealth,
34 yet your mind will be running day and night after money. This is
35 hypocrisy and will serve no purpose. Plunge into the world, and
36 then, after a time, when you have suffered and enjoyed all that is in
37 it, will renunciation come; then will calmness come. So fulfil your
38 desire for power and everything else, and after you have fulfilled
39 the desire, will come the time when you will know that they are all
40 very little things; but until you have fulfilled this desire, until you
41 have passed through that activity, it is impossible for you to come to
42 the state of calmness, serenity, and self-surrender. These ideas of
43 serenity and renunciation have been preached for thousands of
44 years; everybody has heard of them from childhood, and yet we see
45 very few in the world who have really reached that stage. I do not
46 know if I have seen twenty persons in my life who are really calm
47 and non-resisting, and I have travelled over half the world.

48 Every man should take up his own ideal and endeavour to
49 accomplish it. That is a surer way of progress than taking up other
50 men's ideals, which he can never hope to accomplish. For instance,
51 we take a child and at once give him the task of walking twenty
52 miles. Either the little one dies, or one in a thousand crawls the

1 twenty miles, to reach the end exhausted and half-dead. That is like
2 what we generally try to do with the world. All the men and women,
3 in any society, are not of the same mind, capacity, or of the same
4 power to do things; they must have different ideals, and we have no
5 right to sneer at any ideal. Let every one do the best he can for
6 realising his own ideal. Nor is it right that I should be judged by
7 your standard or you by mine. The apple tree should not be judged
8 by the standard of the oak, nor the oak by that of the apple. To
9 judge the apple tree you must take the apple standard, and for the
10 oak, its own standard.

11 Unity in variety is the plan of creation. However men and
12 women may vary individually, there is unity in the background. The
13 different individual characters and classes of men and women are
14 natural variations in creation. Hence, we ought not to judge them
15 by the same standard or put the same ideal before them. Such a
16 course creates only an unnatural struggle, and the result is that
17 man begins to hate himself and is hindered from becoming religious
18 and good. Our duty is to encourage every one in his struggle to live
19 up to his own highest ideal, and strive at the same time to make the
20 ideal as near as possible to the truth.

21 In the Hindu system of morality we find that this fact has
22 been recognised from very ancient times; and in their scriptures
23 and books on ethics different rules are laid down for the different
24 classes of men--the householder, the Sannyasin (the man who has
25 renounced the world), and the student.

26 The life of every individual, according to the Hindu scriptures,
27 has its peculiar duties apart from what belongs in common to
28 universal humanity. The Hindu begins life as a student; then he
29 marries and becomes a householder; in old age he retires; and
30 lastly he gives up the world and becomes a Sannyasin. To each of
31 these stages of life certain duties are attached. No one of these
32 stages is intrinsically superior to another. The life of the married
33 man is quite as great as that of the celibate who has devoted
34 himself to religious work. The scavenger in the street is quite as
35 great and glorious as the king on his throne. Take him off his
36 throne, make him do the work of the scavenger, and see how he
37 fares. Take up the scavenger and see how he will rule. It is useless
38 to say that the man who lives out of the world is a greater man than
39 he who lives in the world; it is much more difficult to live in the
40 world and worship God than to give it up and live a free and easy
41 life. The four stages of life in India have in later times been reduced
42 to two--that of the householder and of the monk. The householder
43 marries and carries on his duties as a citizen, and the duty of the
44 other is to devote his energies wholly to religion, to preach and to
45 worship God. I shall read to you a few passages from the Maha-
46 Nirvana-Tantra, which treats of this subject, and you will see that it
47 is a very difficult task for a man to be a householder, and perform
48 all his duties perfectly:

49 The householder should be devoted to God; the knowledge of
50 God should be his goal of life. Yet he must work constantly, perform
51 all his duties; he must give up the fruits of his actions to God.

1 It is the most difficult thing in this world to work and not care
2 for the result, to help a man and never think that he ought to be
3 grateful, to do some good work and at the same time never look to
4 see whether it brings you name or fame, or nothing at all. Even the
5 most arrant coward becomes brave when the world praises him. A
6 fool can do heroic deeds when the approbation of society is upon
7 him, but for a man to constantly do good without caring for the
8 approbation of his fellow men is indeed the highest sacrifice man
9 can perform. The great duty of the householder is to earn a living,
10 but he must take care that he does not do it by telling lies, or by
11 cheating, or by robbing others; and he must remember that his life
12 is for the service of God, and the poor.

13 Knowing that mother and father are the visible
14 representatives of God, the householder, always and by all means,
15 must please them. If the mother is pleased, and the father, God is
16 pleased with the man. That child is really a good child who never
17 speaks harsh words to his parents.

18 Before parents one must not utter jokes, must not show
19 restlessness, must not show anger or temper. Before mother or
20 father, a child must bow down low, and stand up in their presence,
21 and must not take a seat until they order him to sit.

22 If the householder has food and drink and clothes without
23 first seeing that his mother and his father, his children, his wife,
24 and the poor, are supplied, he is committing a sin. The mother and
25 the father are the causes of this body; so a man must undergo a
26 thousand troubles in order to do good to them.

27 Even so is his duty to his wife. No man should scold his wife,
28 and he must always maintain her as if she were his own mother.
29 And even when he is in the greatest difficulties and troubles, he
30 must not show anger to his wife.

31 He who thinks of another woman besides his wife, if he
32 touches her even with his mind--that man goes to dark hell.

33 Before women he must not talk improper language, and never
34 brag of his powers. He must not say, "I have done this, and I have
35 done that."

36 The householder must always please his wife with money,
37 clothes, love, faith, and words like nectar, and never do anything to
38 disturb her. That man who has succeeded in getting the love of a
39 chaste wife has succeeded in his religion and has all the virtues.

40 The following are duties towards children:

41 A son should be lovingly reared up to his fourth year; he
42 should be educated till he is sixteen. When he is twenty years of
43 age he should be employed in some work; he should then be treated
44 affectionately by his father as his equal. Exactly in the same manner
45 the daughter should be brought up, and should be educated with
46 the greatest care. And when she marries, the father ought to give
47 her jewels and wealth.

48 Then the duty of the man is towards his brothers and sisters,
49 and towards the children of his brothers and sisters, if they are

1 poor, and towards his other relatives, his friends and his servants.
2 Then his duties are towards the people of the same village, and the
3 poor, and any one that comes to him for help. Having sufficient
4 means, if the householder does not take care to give to his relatives
5 and to the poor, know him to be only a brute; his is not a human
6 being.

7 Excessive attachment to food, clothes, and the tending of the
8 body, and dressing of the hair should be avoided. The householder
9 must be pure in heart and clean in body, always active and always
10 ready for work.

11 To his enemies the householder must be a hero. Then he
12 must resist. That is the duty of the householder. He must not sit
13 down in a corner and weep, and talk nonsense about non-
14 resistance. If he does not show himself a hero to his enemies he has
15 not done his duty. And to his friends and relatives he must be as
16 gentle as a lamb.

17 It is the duty of the householder not to pay reverence to the
18 wicked; because, if he reverences the wicked people of the world,
19 he patronises wickedness; and it will be a great mistake if he
20 disregards those who are worthy of respect, the good people. He
21 must not be gushing in his friendship; he must not go out of the way
22 making friends everywhere; he must watch the actions of the men
23 he wants to make friends with, and their dealings with other men,
24 reason upon them, and then make friends.

25 These three things he must not talk of. He must not talk in
26 public of his own fame; he must not preach his own name or his
27 own powers; he must not talk of his wealth, or of anything that has
28 been told to him privately.

29 A man must not say he is poor, or that he is wealthy--he must
30 not brag of his wealth. Let him keep his own counsel; this is his
31 religious duty. This is not mere worldly wisdom; if a man does not
32 do so, he may be held to be immoral.

33 The householder is the basis, the prop, of the whole society.
34 He is the principal earner. The poor, the weak, the children and the
35 women who do not work--all live upon the householder; so there
36 must be certain duties that he has to perform, and these duties
37 must make him feel strong to perform them, and not make him
38 think that he is doing things beneath his ideal. Therefore, if he has
39 done something weak, or has made some mistake, he must not say
40 so in public; and if he is engaged in some enterprise and knows he
41 is sure to fail in it, he must not speak of it. Such self-exposure is not
42 only uncalled for, but also unnerves the man and makes him unfit
43 for the performance of his legitimate duties in life. At the same
44 time, he must struggle hard to acquire these things--firstly,
45 knowledge, and secondly, wealth. It is his duty, and if he does not do
46 his duty, he is nobody. A householder who does not struggle to get
47 wealth is immoral. If he is lazy and content to lead an idle life, he is
48 immoral, because upon him depend hundreds. If he gets riches,
49 hundreds of others will be thereby supported.

50 If there were not in this city hundreds who had striven to

1 become rich, and who had acquired wealth, where would all this
2 civilisation, and these alms-houses and great houses be?

3 Going after wealth in such a case is not bad, because that
4 wealth is for distribution. The householder is the centre of life and
5 society. It is a worship for him to acquire and spend wealth nobly,
6 for the householder who struggles to become rich by good means
7 and for good purposes is doing practically the same thing for the
8 attainment of salvation as the anchorite does in his cell when he is
9 praying; for in them we see only the different aspects of the same
10 virtue of self-surrender and self-sacrifice prompted by the feeling of
11 devotion to God and to all that is His.

12 He must struggle to acquire a good name by all means. He
13 must not gamble, he must not move in the company of the wicked,
14 he must not tell lies, and must not be the cause of trouble to others.

15 Often people enter into things they have not the means to
16 accomplish, with the result that they cheat others to attain their
17 own ends. Then there is in all things the time factor to be taken into
18 consideration; what at one time might be a failure, would perhaps
19 at another time be a very great success.

20 The householder must speak the truth, and speak gently,
21 using words which people like, which will do good to others; nor
22 should he talk of the business of other men.

23 The householder by digging tanks, by planting trees on the
24 roadsides, by establishing rest-houses for men and animals, by
25 making roads and building bridges, goes towards the same goal as
26 the greatest Yogi.

27 This is one part of the doctrine of Karma-Yoga--activity, the
28 duty of the householder. There is a passage later on, where it says
29 that "if the householder dies in battle, fighting for his country or his
30 religion, he comes to the same goal as the Yogi by meditation,"
31 showing thereby that what is duty for one is not duty for another. At
32 the same time, it does not say that this duty is lowering and the
33 other elevating. Each duty has its own place, and according to the
34 circumstances in which we are placed, must we perform our duties.

35 One idea comes out of all this--the condemnation of all
36 weakness. This is a particular idea in all our teachings which I like,
37 either in philosophy, or in religion, or in work. If you read the Vedas,
38 you will find this word always repeated--fearlessness--fear nothing.
39 Fear is a sign of weakness. A man must go about his duties without
40 taking notice of the sneers and the ridicule of the world.

41 If a man retires from the world to worship God, he must not
42 think that those who live in the world and work for the good of the
43 world are not worshipping God: neither must those who live in the
44 world, for wife and children, think that those who give up the world
45 are low vagabonds. Each is great in his own place. This thought I
46 will illustrate by a story.

47 A certain king used to inquire of all the Sannyasins that came
48 to his country, "Which is the greater man--he who gives up the
49 world and becomes a Sannyasin, or he who lives in the world and

1 performs his duties as a householder?" Many wise men sought to
2 solve the problem. Some asserted that the Sannyasin was the
3 greater, upon which the king demanded that they should prove their
4 assertion. When they could not, he ordered them to marry and
5 become householders. Then others came and said, "The
6 householder who performs his duties is the greater man." Of them,
7 too the king demanded proofs. When they could not give them, he
8 made them also settle down as householders.

9 At last there came a young Sannyasin, and the king similarly
10 inquired of him also. He answered, "Each, O king, is equally great
11 in his place." "Prove this to me," asked the king. "I will prove it to
12 you," said the Sannyasin, "but you must first come and live as I do
13 for a few days, that I may be able to prove to you what I say." The
14 king consented and followed the Sannyasin out of his own territory
15 and passed through many other countries until they came to a great
16 kingdom. In the capital of that kingdom a great ceremony was
17 going on. The king and the Sannyasin heard the noise of drums and
18 music, and heard also the criers; the people were assembled in the
19 streets in gala dress, and a great proclamation was being made.
20 The king and the Sannyasin stood there to see what was going on.
21 The crier was proclaiming loudly that the princess, daughter of the
22 king of that country, was about to choose a husband from among
23 those assembled before her.

24 It was an old custom in India for princesses to choose
25 husbands in this way. Each princess had certain ideas of the sort of
26 man she wanted for a husband. Some would have the handsomest
27 man, others would have only the most learned, others again the
28 richest, and so on. All the princes of the neighbourhood put on their
29 bravest attire and presented themselves before her. Sometimes
30 they too had their own criers to enumerate their advantages and
31 the reasons why they hoped the princess would choose them. The
32 princess was taken round on a throne, in the most splendid array,
33 and looked at and heard about them. If she was not pleased with
34 what she saw and heard, she said to her bearers, "Move on," and no
35 more notice was taken of the rejected suitors. If, however, the
36 princess was pleased with any one of them, she threw a garland of
37 flowers over him and he became her husband.

38 The princess of the country to which our king and the
39 Sannyasin had come was having one of these interesting
40 ceremonies. She was the most beautiful princess in the world, and
41 the husband of the princess would be ruler of the kingdom after her
42 father's death. The idea of this princess was to marry the
43 handsomest man, but she could not find the right one to please her.
44 Several times these meetings had taken place, but the princess
45 could not select a husband. This meeting was the most splendid of
46 all; more people than ever had come to it. The princess came in on a
47 throne, and the bearers carried her from place to place. She did not
48 seem to care for any one, and every one became disappointed that
49 this meeting also was going to be a failure. Just then came a young
50 man, a Sannyasin, handsome as if the sun had come down to the
51 earth, and stood in one corner of the assembly, watching what was
52 going on. The throne with the princess came near him, and as soon

1 as she saw the beautiful Sannyasin, she stopped and threw the
2 garland over him. The young Sannyasin seized the garland and
3 threw it off, exclaiming, "What nonsense is this? I am a Sannyasin.
4 What is marriage to me?" The king of that country thought that
5 perhaps this man was poor and so dared not marry the princess,
6 and said to him, "With my daughter goes half my kingdom now, and
7 the whole kingdom after my death!" and put the garland again on
8 the Sannyasin. The young man threw it off once more, saying,
9 "Nonsense! I do not want to marry," and walked quickly away from
10 the assembly.

11 Now the princess had fallen so much in love with this young
12 man that she said, "I must marry this man or I shall die"; and she
13 went after him to bring him back. Then our other Sannyasin, who
14 had brought the king there, said to him, "King, let us follow this
15 pair"; so they walked after them, but at a good distance behind. The
16 young Sannyasin who had refused to marry the princess walked out
17 into the country for several miles. When he came to a forest and
18 entered into it, the princess followed him, and the other two
19 followed them. Now this young Sannyasin was well acquainted with
20 that forest and knew all the intricate paths in it. He suddenly
21 passed into one of these and disappeared, and the princess could
22 not discover him. After trying for a long time to find him she sat
23 down under a tree and began to weep, for she did not know the way
24 out. Then our king and the other Sannyasin came up to her and
25 said, "Do not weep; we will show you the way out of this forest, but
26 it is too dark for us to find it now. Here is a big tree; let us rest
27 under it, and in the morning we will go early and show you the
28 road."

29 Now a little bird and his wife and their three little ones lived
30 on that tree, in a nest. This little bird looked down and saw the
31 three people under the tree and said to his wife, "My dear, what
32 shall we do? Here are some guests in the house, and it is winter,
33 and we have no fire." So he flew away and got a bit of burning
34 firewood in his beak and dropped it before the guests, to which they
35 added fuel and made a blazing fire. But the little bird was not
36 satisfied. He said again to his wife, "My dear, what shall we do?
37 There is nothing to give these people to eat, and they are hungry.
38 We are householders; it is our duty to feed any one who comes to
39 the house. I must do what I can, I will give them my body." So he
40 plunged into the midst of the fire and perished. The guests saw him
41 falling and tried to save him, but he was too quick for them.

42 The little bird's wife saw what her husband did, and she said,
43 "Here are three persons and only one little bird for them to eat. It is
44 not enough; it is my duty as a wife not to let my husband's effort go
45 in vain; let them have my body also." Then she fell into the fire and
46 was burned to death.

47 Then the three baby-birds, when they saw what was done and
48 that there was still not enough food for the three guests, said, "Our
49 parents have done what they could and still it is not enough. It is
50 our duty to carry on the work of our parents; let our bodies go too."
51 And they all dashed down into the fire also.

1 Amazed at what they saw, the three people could not of
2 course eat these birds. They passed the night without food, and in
3 the morning the king and the Sannyasin showed the princess the
4 way, and she went back to her father.

5 Then the Sannyasin said to the king, "King, you have seen
6 that each is great in his own place. If you want to live in the world,
7 live like those birds, ready at any moment to sacrifice yourself for
8 others. If you want to renounce the world, be like that young man to
9 whom the most beautiful woman and a kingdom were as nothing. If
10 you want to be a householder, hold your life a sacrifice for the
11 welfare of others; and if you choose the life of renunciation, do not
12 even look at beauty and money and power. Each is great in his own
13 place, but the duty of the one is not the duty of the other."

1

2

THE SECRET OF WORK

3

4 Helping others physically by removing their physical needs, is
5 indeed great, but the help is great according as the need is greater
6 and according as the help is far-reaching. If a man's wants can be
7 removed for an hour, it is helping him indeed; if his wants can be
8 removed for a year, it will be more help to him; but if his wants can
9 be removed for ever, it is surely the greatest help that can be given
10 him. Spiritual knowledge is the only thing that can destroy our
11 miseries for ever; any other knowledge satisfies wants only for a
12 time. It is only with the knowledge of the spirit that the faculty of
13 want is annihilated for ever; so helping man spiritually is the
14 highest help that can be given to him. He who gives man spiritual
15 knowledge is the greatest benefactor of mankind and as such we
16 always find that those were the most powerful of men who helped
17 man in his spiritual needs, because spirituality is the true basis of
18 all our activities in life. A spiritually strong and sound man will be
19 strong in every other respect, if he so wishes. Until there is spiritual
20 strength in man even physical needs cannot be well satisfied. Next
21 to spiritual comes intellectual help. The gift of knowledge is a far
22 higher gift than that of food and clothes; it is even higher than
23 giving life to a man, because the real life of man consists of
24 knowledge. Ignorance is death, knowledge is life. Life is of very
25 little value, if it is a life in the dark, groping through ignorance and
26 misery. Next in order comes, of course, helping a man physically.
27 Therefore, in considering the question of helping others, we must
28 always strive not to commit the mistake of thinking that physical
29 help is the only help that can be given. It is not only the last but the
30 least, because it cannot bring about permanent satisfaction. The
31 misery that I feel when I am hungry is satisfied by eating, but
32 hunger returns; my misery can cease only when I am satisfied
33 beyond all want. Then hunger will not make me miserable; no
34 distress, no sorrow will be able to move me. So, that help which
35 tends to make us strong spiritually is the highest, next to it comes
36 intellectual help, and after that physical help.

37 The miseries of the world cannot be cured by physical help
38 only. Until man's nature changes, these physical needs will always
39 arise, and miseries will always be felt, and no amount of physical
40 help will cure them completely. The only solution of this problem is
41 to make mankind pure. Ignorance is the mother of all the evil and
42 all the misery we see. Let men have light, let them be pure and
43 spiritually strong and educated, then alone will misery cease in the
44 world, not before. We may convert every house in the country into a
45 charity asylum, we may fill the land with hospitals, but the misery of
46 man will still continue to exist until man's character changes.

47 We read in the Bhagavad Gita again and again that we must
48 all work incessantly. All work is by nature composed of good and
49 evil. We cannot do any work which will not do some good
50 somewhere; there cannot be any work which will not cause some
51 harm somewhere. Every work must necessarily be a mixture of

1 good and evil; yet we are commanded to work incessantly. Good
2 and evil will both have their results, will produce their Karma. Good
3 action will entail upon us good effect; bad action, bad. But good and
4 bad are both bondages of the soul. The solution reached in the Gita
5 in regard to this bondage-producing nature of work is that, if we do
6 not attach ourselves to the work we do, it will not have any binding
7 effect on our soul. We shall try to understand what is meant by this
8 "non-attachment" to work.

9 This is the one central idea in the Gita: work incessantly, but
10 be not attached to it. Samskara can be translated very nearly by
11 "inherent tendency". Using the simile of a lake for the mind, every
12 ripple, every wave that rises in the mind, when it subsides, does not
13 die out entirely, but leaves a mark and a future possibility of that
14 wave coming out again. This mark, with the possibility of the wave
15 reappearing, is what is called Samskara. Every work that we do,
16 every movement of the body, every thought that we think, leaves
17 such an impression on the mind-stuff, and even when such
18 impressions are not obvious on the surface, they are sufficiently
19 strong to work beneath the surface, subconsciously. What we are
20 every moment is determined by the sum total of these impressions
21 on the mind. What I am just at this moment is the effect of the sum
22 total of all the impressions of my past life. This is really what is
23 meant by character; each man's character is determined by the sum
24 total of these impressions. If good impressions prevail, the
25 character becomes good; if bad, it becomes bad. If a man
26 continuously hears bad words, thinks bad thoughts, does bad
27 actions, his mind will be full of bad impressions; and they will
28 influence his thought and work without his being conscious of the
29 fact. In fact, these bad impressions are always working, and their
30 resultant must be evil, and that man will be a bad man; he cannot
31 help it. The sum total of these impressions in him will create the
32 strong motive power for doing bad actions. He will be like a
33 machine in the hand of his impressions, and they will force him to
34 do evil. Similarly, if a man thinks good thoughts and does good
35 works, the sum total of these impressions will be good; and they, in
36 a similar manner, will force him to do good even in spite of himself.
37 When a man has done so much good work and thought so many
38 good thoughts that there is an irresistible tendency in him to do
39 good, in spite of himself and even if he wishes to do evil, his mind,
40 as the sum total of his tendencies, will not allow him to do so; the
41 tendencies will turn him back; he is completely under the influence
42 of the good tendencies. When such is the case, a man's good
43 character is said to be established.

44 As the tortoise tucks its feet and head inside the shell, and
45 you may kill it and break it in pieces, and yet it will not come out,
46 even so the character of that man who has control over his motives
47 and organs is unchangeably established. He controls his own inner
48 forces, and nothing can draw them out against his will. By this
49 continuous reflex of good thoughts, good impressions moving over
50 the surface of the mind, the tendency for doing good becomes
51 strong, and as the result we feel able to control the Indriyas (the
52 sense-organs, the nerve-centres). Thus alone will character be

1 established, then alone a man gets to truth. Such a man is safe for
2 ever; he cannot do any evil. You may place him in any company,
3 there will be no danger for him. There is a still higher state than
4 having this good tendency, and that is the desire for liberation. You
5 must remember that freedom of the soul is the goal of all Yogas,
6 and each one equally leads to the same result. By work alone men
7 may get to where Buddha got largely by meditation or Christ by
8 prayer. Buddha was a working Jnani, Christ was a Bhakta, but the
9 same goal was reached by both of them. The difficulty is here.
10 Liberation means entire freedom--freedom from the bondage of
11 good, as well as from the bondage of evil. A golden chain is as much
12 a chain as an iron one. There is a thorn in my finger, and I use
13 another to take the first one out; and when I have taken it out, I
14 throw both of them aside; I have no necessity for keeping the
15 second thorn, because both are thorns after all. So the bad
16 tendencies are to be counteracted by the good ones, and the bad
17 impressions on the mind should be removed by the fresh waves of
18 good ones, until all that is evil almost disappears, or is subdued and
19 held in control in a corner of the mind; but after that, the good
20 tendencies have also to be conquered. Thus the "attached" becomes
21 the "unattached". Work, but let not the action or the thought
22 produce a deep impression on the mind. Let the ripples come and
23 go, let huge actions proceed from the muscles and the brain, but let
24 them not make any deep impression on the soul.

25 How can this be done? We see that the impression of any
26 action, to which we attach ourselves, remains. I may meet hundred
27 of persons during the day, and among them meet also one whom I
28 love; and when I retire at night, I may try to think of all the faces I
29 saw, but only that face comes before the mind--the face which I met
30 perhaps only for one minute, and which I loved; all the others have
31 vanished. My attachment to this particular person caused a deeper
32 impression on my mind than all the other faces. Physiologically the
33 impressions have all been the same; every one of the faces that I
34 saw pictured itself on the retina, and the brain took the pictures in,
35 and yet there was no similarity of effect upon the mind. Most of the
36 faces, perhaps, were entirely new faces, about which I had never
37 thought before, but that one face of which I got only a glimpse
38 found associations inside. Perhaps I had pictured him in my mind
39 for years, knew hundreds of things about him, and this one new
40 vision of him awakened hundreds of sleeping memories in my mind;
41 and this one impression having been repeated perhaps a hundred
42 times more than those of the different faces together, will produce a
43 great effect on the mind.

44 Therefore, be "unattached"; let things work; let brain centres
45 work; work incessantly, but let not a ripple conquer the mind. Work
46 as if you were a stranger in this land, a sojourner; work incessantly,
47 but do not bind yourselves; bondage is terrible. This world is not
48 our habitation, it is only one of the many stages through which we
49 are passing. Remember that great saying of the Sankhya, "The
50 whole of nature is for the soul, not the soul for nature." The very
51 reason of nature's existence is for the education of the soul; it has
52 no other meaning; it is there because the soul must have

1 knowledge, and through knowledge free itself. If we remember this
2 always, we shall never be attached to nature; we shall know that
3 nature is a book in which we are to read, and that when we have
4 gained the required knowledge, the book is of no more value to us.
5 Instead of that, however, we are identifying ourselves with nature;
6 we are thinking that the soul is for nature, that the spirit is for the
7 flesh, and, as the common saying has it, we think that man "lives to
8 eat" and not "eats to live". We are continually making this mistake;
9 we are regarding nature as ourselves and are becoming attached to
10 it; and as soon as this attachment comes, there is the deep
11 impression on the soul, which binds us down and makes us work
12 not from freedom but like slaves.

13 The whole gist of this teaching is that you should work like a
14 *master* and not as a *slave*; work incessantly, but do not do slave's
15 work. Do you not see how everybody works? Nobody can be
16 altogether at rest; ninety-nine per cent of mankind work like slaves,
17 and the result is misery; it is all selfish work. Work through
18 freedom! Work through love! The word "love" is very difficult to
19 understand; love never comes until there is freedom. There is no
20 true love possible in the slave. If you buy a slave and tie him down
21 in chains and make him work for you, he will work like a drudge,
22 but there will be no love in him. So when we ourselves work for the
23 things of the world as slaves, there can be no love in us, and our
24 work is not true work. This is true of work done for relatives and
25 friends, and is true of work done for our own selves. Selfish work is
26 slave's work; and here is a test. Every act of love brings happiness;
27 there is no act of love which does not bring peace and blessedness
28 as its reaction. Real existence, real knowledge, and real love are
29 eternally connected with one another, the three in one: where one
30 of them is, the others also must be; they are the three aspects of
31 the One without a second--the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. When
32 that existence becomes relative, we see it as the world; that
33 knowledge becomes in its turn modified into the knowledge of the
34 things of the world; and that bliss forms the foundation of all true
35 love known to the heart of man. Therefore true love can never react
36 so as to cause pain either to the lover or to the beloved. Suppose a
37 man loves a woman; he wishes to have her all to himself and feels
38 extremely jealous about her every movement; he wants her to sit
39 near him, to stand near him, and to eat and move at his bidding. He
40 is a slave to her and wishes to have her as his slave. That is not
41 love; it is a kind of morbid affection of the slave, insinuating itself as
42 love. It cannot be love, because it is painful; if she does not do what
43 he wants, it brings him pain. With love there is no painful reaction;
44 love only brings a reaction of bliss; if it does not, it is not love; it is
45 mistaking something else for love. When you have succeeded in
46 loving your husband, your wife, your children, the whole world, the
47 universe, in such a manner that there is no reaction of pain or
48 jealousy, no selfish feeling, then you are in a fit state to be
49 unattached.

50 Krishna says, "Look at Me, Arjuna! If I stop from work for one
51 moment, the whole universe will die. I have nothing to gain from
52 work; I am the one Lord, but why do I work? Because I love the

1 world." God is unattached because He loves; that real love makes
2 us unattached. Wherever there is attachment, the clinging to the
3 things of the world, you must know that it is all physical attraction
4 between sets of particles of matter--something that attracts two
5 bodies nearer and nearer all the time and, if they cannot get near
6 enough, produces pain; but where there is *real* love, it does not
7 rest on physical attachment at all. Such lovers may be a thousand
8 miles away from one another, but their love will be all the same; it
9 does not die, and will never produce any painful reaction.

10 To attain this unattachment is almost a life-work, but as soon
11 as we have reached this point, we have attained the goal of love
12 and become free; the bondage of nature falls from us, and we see
13 nature as she is; she forges no more chains for us; we stand entirely
14 free and take not the results of work into consideration; who then
15 cares for what the results may be?

16 Do you ask anything from your children in return for what you
17 have given them? It is your duty to work for them, and there the
18 matter ends. In whatever you do for a particular person, a city, or a
19 state, assume the same attitude towards it as you have towards
20 your children--expect nothing in return. If you can invariably take
21 the position of a giver, in which everything given by you is a free
22 offering to the world, without any thought of return, then will your
23 work bring you no attachment. Attachment comes only where we
24 expect a return.

25 If working like slaves results in selfishness and attachment,
26 working as master of our own mind gives rise to the bliss of non-
27 attachment. We often talk of right and justice, but we find that in
28 the world right and justice are mere baby's talk. There are two
29 things which guide the conduct of men: might and mercy. The
30 exercise of might is invariably the exercise of selfishness. All men
31 and women try to make the most of whatever power or advantage
32 they have. Mercy is heaven itself; to be good, we have all to be
33 merciful. Even justice and right should stand on mercy. All thought
34 of obtaining return for the work we do hinders our spiritual
35 progress; nay, in the end it brings misery. There is another way in
36 which this idea of mercy and selfless charity can be put into
37 practice; that is, by looking upon work as "worship" in case we
38 believe in a Personal God. Here we give up all the fruits of our work
39 unto the Lord, and worshipping Him thus, we have no right to
40 expect anything from mankind for the work we do. The Lord
41 Himself works incessantly and is ever without attachment. Just as
42 water cannot wet the lotus leaf, so work cannot bind the unselfish
43 man by giving rise to attachment to results. The selfless and
44 unattached man may live in the very heart of a crowded and sinful
45 city; he will not be touched by sin.

46 This idea of complete self-sacrifice is illustrated in the
47 following story: After the battle of Kurukshetra the five Pandava
48 brothers performed a great sacrifice and made very large gifts to
49 the poor. All people expressed amazement at the greatness and
50 richness of the sacrifice, and said that such a sacrifice the world
51 had never seen before. But, after the ceremony, there came a little
52 mongoose, half of whose body was golden, and the other half

1 brown; and he began to roll on the floor of the sacrificial hall. He
2 said to those around, "You are all liars; this is no sacrifice." "What!"
3 they exclaimed, "you say this is no sacrifice; do you not know how
4 money and jewels were poured out to the poor and every one
5 became rich and happy? This was the most wonderful sacrifice any
6 man every performed." But the mongoose said, "There was once a
7 little village, and in it there dwelt a poor Brahmin with his wife, his
8 son, and his son's wife. They were very poor and lived on small gifts
9 made to them for preaching and teaching. There came in that land
10 a three years' famine, and the poor Brahmin suffered more than
11 ever. At last when the family had starved for days, the father
12 brought home one morning a little barley flour, which he had been
13 fortunate enough to obtain, and he divided it into four parts, one for
14 each member of the family. They prepared it for their meal, and just
15 as they were about to eat, there was a knock at the door. The father
16 opened it, and there stood a guest. Now in India a guest is a sacred
17 person; he is as a god for the time being, and must be treated as
18 such. So the poor Brahmin said, "Come in, sir; you are welcome."
19 He set before the guest his own portion of the food, which the guest
20 quickly ate and said, "Oh, sir, you have killed me; I have been
21 starving for ten days, and this little bit has but increased my
22 hunger." Then the wife said to her husband, "Give him my share,"
23 but the husband said, "Not so." The wife however insisted, saying,
24 "Here is a poor man, and it is our duty as householders to see that
25 he is fed, and it is my duty as a wife to give him my portion, seeing
26 that you have no more to offer him." Then she gave her share to the
27 guest, which he ate, and said he was still burning with hunger. So
28 the son said, "Take my portion also; it is the duty of a son to help his
29 father to fulfil his obligation." The guest ate that, but remained still
30 unsatisfied; so the son's wife gave him her portion also. That was
31 sufficient, and the guest departed, blessing them. That night those
32 four people died of starvation. A few granules of that flour had
33 fallen on the floor; and when I rolled my body on them, half of it
34 became golden, as you see. Since then I have been travelling all
35 over the world, hoping to find another sacrifice like that, but
36 nowhere have I found one; nowhere else has the other half of my
37 body been turned into gold. That is why I say this is no sacrifice."

38 This idea of charity is going out of India; great men are
39 becoming fewer and fewer. When I was first learning English, I read
40 an English story book in which there was a story about a dutiful boy
41 who had gone out to work and had given some of his money to his
42 old mother, and this was praised in three or four pages. What was
43 that? No Hindu boy can ever understand the moral of that story.
44 Now I understand it when I hear the Western idea--every man for
45 himself. And some men take everything for themselves, and fathers
46 and mothers and wives and children go to the wall. That should
47 never and nowhere be the ideal of the householder.

48 Now you see what Karma-Yoga means; even at the point of
49 death to help any one, without asking questions. Be cheated
50 millions of times and never ask a question, and never think of what
51 you are doing. Never vaunt of your gifts to the poor or expect their
52 gratitude, but rather be grateful to them for giving you the occasion

1 of practising charity to them. Thus it is plain that to be an ideal
2 householder is a much more difficult task than to be an ideal
3 Sannyasin; the true life of work is indeed as hard as, if not harder
4 than, the equally true life of renunciation.

WHAT IS DUTY?

It is necessary in the study of Karma-Yoga to know what duty is. If I have to do something I must first know that it is my duty, and then I can do it. The idea of duty again is different in different nations. The Mohammedan says what is written in his book, the Koran, is his duty; the Hindu says what is in the Vedas is his duty; and the Christian says what is in the Bible is his duty. We find that there are varied ideas of duty, differing according to different states in life, different historical periods and different nations. The term "duty", like every other universal abstract term, is impossible clearly to define; we can only get an idea of it by knowing its practical operations and results. When certain things occur before us, we have all a natural or trained impulse to act in a certain manner towards them; when this impulse comes, the mind begins to think about the situation. Sometimes it thinks that it is good to act in a particular manner under the given conditions; at other times it thinks that it is wrong to act in the same manner even in the very same circumstances. The ordinary idea of duty everywhere is that every good man follows the dictates of his conscience. But what is it that makes an act a duty? If a Christian finds a piece of beef before him and does not eat it to save his own life, or will not give it to save the life of another man, he is sure to feel that he has not done his duty. But if a Hindu dares to eat that piece of beef or to give it to another Hindu, he is equally sure to feel that he too has not done his duty; the Hindu's training and education make him feel that way. In the last century there were notorious bands of robbers in India called thugs; they thought it their duty to kill any man they could and take away his money; the larger the number of men they killed, the better they thought they were. Ordinarily if a man goes out into the street and shoots down another man, he is apt to feel sorry for it, thinking that he has done wrong. But if the very same man, as a soldier in his regiment, kills not one but twenty, he is certain to feel glad and think that he has done his duty remarkable well. Therefore we see that it is not the thing done that defines a duty. To give an objective definition of duty is thus entirely impossible. Yet there is duty from the subjective side. Any action that makes us go Godward is a good action, and is our duty; any action that makes us go downward is evil, and is not our duty. From the subjective standpoint we may see that certain acts have a tendency to exalt and ennoble us, while certain other acts have a tendency to degrade and to brutalise us. But it is not possible to make out with certainty which acts have which kind of tendency in relation to all persons, of all sorts and conditions. There is, however, only one idea of duty which has been universally accepted by all mankind, of all ages and sects and countries, and that has been summed up in a Sanskrit aphorism thus: "Do not injure any being; not injuring any being is virtue, injuring any being is sin."

The Bhagavad Gita frequently alludes to duties dependent upon birth and position in life. Birth and position in life and in

1 society largely determine the mental and moral attitude of
2 individuals towards the various activities of life. It is therefore our
3 duty to do that work which will exalt and ennoble us in accordance
4 with the ideals and activities of the society in which we are born.
5 But it must be particularly remembered that the same ideals and
6 activities do not prevail in all societies and countries; our ignorance
7 of this is the main cause of much of the hatred of one nation
8 towards another. An American thinks that whatever an American
9 does in accordance with the custom of his country is the best thing
10 to do, and that whoever does not follow his custom must be a very
11 wicked man. A Hindu thinks that his customs are the only right
12 ones and are the best in the world, and that whosoever does not
13 obey them must be the most wicked man living. This is quite a
14 natural mistake which all of us are apt to make. But it is very
15 harmful; it is the cause of half the uncharitableness found in the
16 world. When I came to this country and was going through the
17 Chicago Fair, a man from behind pulled at my turban. I looked back
18 and saw that he was a very gentlemanly-looking man, neatly
19 dressed. I spoke to him; and when he found that I knew English, he
20 became very much abashed. On another occasion in the same Fair
21 another man gave me a push. When I asked him the reason, he also
22 was ashamed and stammered out an apology saying, "Why do you
23 dress that way?" The sympathies of these men were limited within
24 the range of their own language and their own fashion of dress.
25 Much of the oppression of powerful nations on weaker ones is
26 caused by this prejudice. It dries up their fellow-feeling for fellow
27 men. That very man who asked me why I did not dress as he did
28 and wanted to ill-treat me because of my dress may have been a
29 very good man, a good father, and a good citizen; but the kindness
30 of his nature died out as soon as he saw a man in a different dress.
31 Strangers are exploited in all countries, because they do not know
32 how to defend themselves; thus they carry home false impressions
33 of the peoples they have seen. Sailors, soldiers, and traders behave
34 in foreign lands in very queer ways, although they would not dream
35 of doing so in their own country; perhaps this is why the Chinese
36 call Europeans and Americans "foreign devils". They could not have
37 done this if they had met the good, the kindly sides of Western life.

38 Therefore the one point we ought to remember is that we
39 should always try to see the duty of others through their own eyes,
40 and never judge the customs of other peoples by our own standard.
41 I am not the standard of the universe. I have to accommodate
42 myself to the world, and not the world to me. So we see that
43 environments change the nature of our duties, and doing the duty
44 which is ours at any particular time is the best thing we can do in
45 this world. Let us do that duty which is ours by birth; and when we
46 have done that, let us do the duty which is ours by our position in
47 life and in society. There is, however, one great danger in human
48 nature, viz. that man never examines himself. He thinks he is quite
49 as fit to be on the throne as the king. Even if he is, he must first
50 show that he has done the duty of his own position; and then higher
51 duties will come to him. When we begin to work earnestly in the
52 world, nature gives us blows right and left and soon enables us to
53 find out our position. No man can long occupy satisfactorily a

1 position for which he is not fit. There is no use in grumbling against
2 nature's adjustment. He who does the lower work is not therefore a
3 lower man. No man is to be judged by the mere nature of his duties,
4 but all should be judged by the manner and the spirit in which they
5 perform them.

6 Later on we shall find that even this idea of duty undergoes
7 change, and that the greatest work is done only when there is no
8 selfish motive to prompt it. Yet it is work through the sense of duty
9 that leads us to work without any idea of duty; when work will
10 become worship--nay, something higher--then will work be done for
11 its own sake. We shall find that the philosophy of duty, whether it be
12 in the form of ethics or of love, is the same as in every other Yoga--
13 the object being the attenuating of the lower self, so that the real
14 higher Self may shine forth--the lessening of the frittering away of
15 energies on the lower plane of existence, so that the soul may
16 manifest itself on the higher ones. This is accomplished by the
17 continuous denial of low desires, which duty rigorously requires.
18 The whole organisation of society has thus been developed,
19 consciously or unconsciously, in the realms of action and
20 experience, where, by limiting selfishness, we open the way to an
21 unlimited expansion of the real nature of man.

22 Duty is seldom sweet. It is only when love greases its wheels
23 that it runs smoothly; it is a continuous friction otherwise. How else
24 could parents do their duties to their children, husbands to their
25 wives, and vice versa? Do we not meet with cases of friction every
26 day in our lives? Duty is sweet only through love, and love shines in
27 freedom alone. Yet is it freedom to be a slave to the senses, to
28 anger, to jealousies and a hundred other petty things that must
29 occur every day in human life? In all these little roughnesses that
30 we meet with in life, the highest expression of freedom is to
31 forbear. Women, slaves to their own irritable, jealous tempers, are
32 apt to blame their husbands, and assert their own "freedom", as
33 they think, not knowing that thereby they only prove that they are
34 slaves. So it is with husbands who eternally find fault with their
35 wives.

36 Chastity is the first virtue in man or woman, and the man
37 who, however he may have strayed away, cannot be brought to the
38 right path by a gentle and loving and chaste wife is indeed very
39 rare. The world is not yet as bad as that. We hear much about
40 brutal husbands all over the world and about the impurity of men,
41 but is it not true that there are quite as many brutal and impure
42 women as men? If all women were as good and pure as their own
43 constant assertions would lead one to believe, I am perfectly
44 satisfied that there would not be one impure man in the world.
45 What brutality is there which purity and chastity cannot conquer? A
46 good, chaste wife, who thinks of every other man except her own
47 husband as her child and has the attitude of a mother towards all
48 men, will grow so great in the power of her purity that there cannot
49 be a single man, however brutal, who will not breathe an
50 atmosphere of holiness in her presence. Similarly, every husband
51 must look upon all women, except his own wife, in the light of his
52 own mother or daughter or sister. That man, again, who wants to be

1 a teacher of religion must look upon every woman as his mother,
2 and always behave towards her as such.

3 The position of the mother is the highest in the world, as it is
4 the one place in which to learn and exercise the greatest
5 unselfishness. The love of God is the only love that is higher than a
6 mother's love; all others are lower. It is the duty of the mother to
7 think of her children first and then of herself. But, instead of that, if
8 the parents are always thinking of themselves first, the result is
9 that the relation between parents and children becomes the same
10 as that between birds and their offspring which, as soon as they are
11 fledged, do not recognise any parents. Blessed, indeed, is the man
12 who is able to look upon woman as the representative of the
13 motherhood of God. Blessed, indeed, is the woman to whom man
14 represents the fatherhood of God. Blessed are the children who
15 look upon their parents as Divinity manifested on earth.

16 The only way to rise is by doing the duty next to us, and thus
17 gathering strength go on until we reach the highest state. A young
18 Sannyasin went to a forest; there he meditated, worshipped, and
19 practised Yoga for a long time. After years of hard work and
20 practice, he was one day sitting under a tree, when some dry leaves
21 fell upon his head. He looked up and saw a crow and a crane
22 fighting on the top of the tree, which made him very angry. He said,
23 "What! Dare you throw these dry leaves upon my head!" As with
24 these words he angrily glanced at them, a flash of fire went out of
25 his head--such was the Yogi's power--and burnt the birds to ashes.
26 He was very glad, almost overjoyed at this development of power--
27 he could burn the crow and the crane by a look. After a time he had
28 to go to the town to beg his bread. He went, stood at a door, and
29 said, "Mother, give me food." A voice came from inside the house,
30 "Wait a little, my son." The young man thought, "You wretched
31 woman, how dare you make me wait! You do not know my power
32 yet." While he was thinking thus the voice came again: "Boy, don't
33 be thinking too much of yourself. Here is neither crow nor crane."
34 He was astonished; still he had to wait. At last the woman came,
35 and he fell at her feet and said, "Mother, how did you know that?"
36 She said, "My boy, I do not know your Yoga or your practices. I am a
37 common everyday woman. I made you wait because my husband is
38 ill, and I was nursing him. All my life I have struggled to do my duty.
39 When I was unmarried, I did my duty to my parents; now that I am
40 married, I do my duty to my husband; that is all the Yoga I practise.
41 But by doing my duty I have become illumined; thus I could read
42 your thoughts and know what you had done in the forest. If you
43 want to know something higher than this, go to the market of such
44 and such a town where you will find a Vyadha who will tell you
45 something that you will be very glad to learn." The Sannyasin
46 thought, "Why should I go to that town and to a Vyadha?" But after
47 what he had seen, his mind opened a little, so he went. When he
48 came near the town, he found the market and there saw, at a
49 distance, a big fat Vyadha cutting meat with big knives, talking and
50 bargaining with different people. The young man said, "Lord help
51 me! Is this the man from whom I am going to learn? He is the
52 incarnation of a demon, if he is anything." In the meantime this man

1 looked up and said, "O Swami, did that lady send you here? Take a
2 seat until I have done my business." The Sannyasin thought, "What
3 comes to me here?" He took his seat; the man went on with his
4 work, and after he had finished he took his money and said to the
5 Sannyasin, "Come sir, come to my home." On reaching home the
6 Vyadha gave him a seat, saying, "Wait here," and went into the
7 house. He then washed his old father and mother, fed them, and did
8 all he could to please them, after which he came to the Sannyasin
9 and said, "Now, sir, you have come here to see me; what can I do for
10 you?" The Sannyasin asked him a few questions about soul and
11 about God, and the Vyadha gave him a lecture which forms a part of
12 the Mahabharata, called the *Vyadha Gita* . It contains one of the
13 highest flights of the Vedanta. When the Vyadha finished his
14 teaching, the Sannyasin felt astonished. He said, "Why are you in
15 that body? With such knowledge as yours why are you in a Vyadha's
16 body, and doing such filthy, ugly work?" "My son," replied the
17 Vyadha, "no duty is ugly, no duty is impure. My birth placed me in
18 these circumstances and environments. In my boyhood I learnt the
19 trade; I am unattached, and I try to do my duty well. I try to do my
20 duty as a householder, and I try to do all I can to make my father
21 and mother happy. I neither know your Yoga, nor have I become a
22 Sannyasin, nor did I go out of the world into a forest; nevertheless,
23 all that you have heard and seen has come to me through the
24 unattached doing of the duty which belongs to my position."

25 There is a sage in India, a great Yogi, one of the most
26 wonderful men I have ever seen in my life. He is a peculiar man, he
27 will not teach any one; if you ask him a question he will not answer.
28 It is too much for him to take up the position of a teacher, he will
29 not do it. If you ask a question, and wait for some days, in the
30 course of conversation he will bring up the subject, and wonderful
31 light will he throw on it. He told me once the secret of work, "Let
32 the end and the means be joined into one." When you are doing any
33 work, do not think of anything beyond. Do it as worship, as the
34 highest worship, and devote your whole life to it for the time being.
35 Thus, in the story, the Vyadha and the woman did their duty with
36 cheerfulness and whole-heartedness; and the result was that they
37 become illuminated, clearly showing that the right performance of
38 the duties of any station in life, without attachment to results, leads
39 us to the highest realisation of the perfection of the soul.

40 It is the worker who is attached to results that grumbles
41 about the nature of the duty which has fallen to his lot; to the
42 unattached worker all duties are equally good, and form efficient
43 instruments with which selfishness and sensuality may be killed,
44 and the freedom of the soul secured. We are all apt to think too
45 highly of ourselves. Our duties are determined by our deserts to a
46 much larger extent than we are willing to grant. Competition rouses
47 envy, and it kills the kindliness of the heart. To the grumbler all
48 duties are distasteful; nothing will ever satisfy him, and his whole
49 life is doomed to prove a failure. Let us work on, doing as we go
50 whatever happens to be our duty, and being ever ready to put our
51 shoulders to the wheel. Then surely shall we see the Light!

WE HELP OURSELVES, NOT THE WORLD

Before considering further how devotion to duty helps us in our spiritual progress, let me place before you in a brief compass another aspect of what we in India mean by Karma. In every religion there are three parts: philosophy, mythology, and ritual. Philosophy of course is the essence of every religion; mythology explains and illustrates it by means of the more or less legendary lives of great men, stories and fables of wonderful things, and so on; ritual gives to that philosophy a still more concrete form, so that every one may grasp it--ritual is in fact concretised philosophy. This ritual is Karma; it is necessary in every religion, because most of us cannot understand abstract spiritual things until we grow much spiritually. It is easy for men to think that they can understand anything; but when it comes to practical experience, they find that abstract ideas are often very hard to comprehend. Therefore symbols are of great help, and we cannot dispense with the symbolical method of putting things before us. From time immemorial symbols have been used by all kinds of religions. In one sense we cannot think but in symbols; words themselves are symbols of thought. In another sense everything in the universe may be looked upon as a symbol. The whole universe is a symbol, and God is the essence behind. This kind of symbology is not simply the creation of man; it is not that certain people belonging to a religion sit down together and think out certain symbols, and bring them into existence out of their own minds. The symbols of religion have a natural growth. Otherwise, why is it that certain symbols are associated with certain ideas in the mind of almost every one? Certain symbols are universally prevalent. Many of you may think that the cross first came into existence as a symbol in connection with the Christian religion, but as a matter of fact it existed before Christianity was, before Moses was born, before the Vedas were given out, before there was any human record of human things. The cross may be found to have been in existence among the Aztecs and the Phoenicians; every race seems to have had the cross. Again, the symbol of the crucified Savior, of a man crucified upon a cross, appears to have been known to almost every nation. The circle has been a great symbol throughout the world. Then there is the most universal of all symbols, the Swastika {pictured}. At one time it was thought that the Buddhists carried it all over the world with them, but it has been found out that ages before Buddhism it was used among nations. In Old Babylon and in Egypt it was to be found. What does this show? All these symbols could not have been purely conventional. There must be some reason for them; some natural association between them and the human mind. Language is not the result of convention; it is not that people ever agreed to represent certain ideas by certain words; there never was an idea without a corresponding word or a word without a corresponding idea; ideas and words are in their nature inseparable. The symbols to represent ideas may be sound symbols or colour symbols. Deaf and dumb people have to think with other than sound symbols. Every

1 thought in the mind has a form as its counterpart. This is called in
2 Sanskrit philosophy Nama-Rupa--name and form. It is as impossible
3 to create by convention a system of symbols as it is to create a
4 language. In the world's ritualistic symbols we have an expression
5 of the religious thought of humanity. It is easy to say that there is no
6 use of rituals and temples and all such paraphernalia; every baby
7 says that in modern times. But it must be easy for all to see that
8 those who worship inside a temple are in many respects different
9 from those who will not worship there. Therefore the association of
10 particular temples, rituals, and other concrete forms with particular
11 religions has a tendency to bring into the minds of the followers of
12 those religions the thoughts for which those concrete things stand
13 as symbols; and it is not wise to ignore rituals and symbology
14 altogether. The study and practice of these things form naturally a
15 part of Karma-Yoga.

16 There are many other aspects of this science of work. One
17 among them is to know the relation between thought and word and
18 what can be achieved by the power of the word. In every religion
19 the power of the word is recognised, so much so that in some of
20 them creation itself is said to have come out of the word. The
21 external aspect of the thought of God is the Word, and as God
22 thought and willed before He created, creation came out of the
23 Word. In this stress and hurry of our materialistic life, our nerves
24 lose sensibility and become hardened. The older we grow, the
25 longer we are knocked about in the world, the more callous we
26 become; and we are apt to neglect things that even happen
27 persistently and prominently around us. Human nature, however,
28 asserts itself sometimes, and we are led to inquire into and wonder
29 at some of these common occurrences; wondering thus is the first
30 step in the acquisition of light. Apart from the higher philosophic
31 and religious value of the Word, we may see that sound symbols
32 play a prominent part in the drama of human life. I am talking to
33 you. I am not touching you; the pulsations of the air caused by my
34 speaking go into your ear, they touch your nerves and produce
35 effects in your minds. You cannot resist this. What can be more
36 wonderful than this? One man calls another a fool, and at this the
37 other stands up and clenches his fist and lands a blow on his nose.
38 Look at the power of the word! There is a woman weeping and
39 miserable; another woman comes along and speaks to her a few
40 gentle words, the doubled up frame of the weeping woman
41 becomes straightened at once, her sorrow is gone and she already
42 begins to smile. Think of the power of words! They are a great force
43 in higher philosophy as well as in common life. Day and night we
44 manipulate this force without thought and without inquiry. To know
45 the nature of this force and to use it well is also a part of Karma-
46 Yoga.

47 Our duty to others means helping others; doing good to the
48 world. Why should we do good to the world? Apparently to help the
49 world, but really to help ourselves. We should always try to help the
50 world, that should be the highest motive in us; but if we consider
51 well, we find that the world does not require our help at all. This
52 world was not made that you or I should come and help it. I once

1 read a sermon in which it was said, "All this beautiful world is very
2 good, because it gives us time and opportunity to help others."
3 Apparently, this is a very beautiful sentiment, but is it not a
4 blasphemy to say that the world needs our help? We cannot deny
5 that there is much misery in it; to go out and help others is,
6 therefore, the best thing we can do, although in the long run, we
7 shall find that helping others is only helping ourselves. As a boy I
8 had some white mice. They were kept in a little box in which there
9 were little wheels, and when the mice tried to cross the wheels, the
10 wheels turned and turned, and the mice never got anywhere. So it
11 is with the world and our helping it. The only help is that we get
12 moral exercise. This world is neither good nor evil; each man
13 manufactures a world for himself. If a blind man begins to think of
14 the world, it is either as soft or hard, or as cold or hot. We are a
15 mass of happiness or misery; we have seen that hundreds of times
16 in our lives. As a rule, the young are optimistic and the old
17 pessimistic. The young have life before them; the old complain their
18 day is gone; hundreds of desires, which they cannot fulfil struggle
19 in their hearts. Both are foolish nevertheless. Life is good or evil
20 according to the state of mind in which we look at it, it is neither by
21 itself. Fire, by itself, is neither good nor evil. When it keeps us warm
22 we say, "How beautiful is fire!" When it burns our fingers, we blame
23 it. Still, in itself it is neither good nor bad. According as we use it, it
24 produces in us the feeling of good or bad; so also is this world. It is
25 perfect. By perfection is meant that it is perfectly fitted to meet its
26 ends. We may all be perfectly sure that it will go on beautifully well
27 without us, and we need not bother our heads wishing to help it.

28 Yet we must do good; the desire to do good is the highest
29 motive power we have, if we know all the time that it is a privilege
30 to help others. Do not stand on a high pedestal and take five cents
31 in your hand and say, "Here, my poor man," but be grateful that the
32 poor man is there, so that by making a gift to him you are able to
33 help yourself. It is not the receiver that is blessed, but it is the giver.
34 Be thankful that you are allowed to exercise your power of
35 benevolence and mercy in the world, and thus become pure and
36 perfect. All good acts tend to make us pure and perfect. What can
37 we do at best? Build a hospital, make roads, or erect charity
38 asylums. We may organise a charity and collect two or three
39 millions of dollars, build a hospital with one million, with the second
40 give balls and drink champagne, and of the third let the officers
41 steal half, and leave the rest finally to reach the poor; but what are
42 all these? One mighty wind in five minutes can break all your
43 buildings up. What shall we do then? One volcanic eruption may
44 sweep away all our roads and hospitals and cities and buildings. Let
45 us give up all this foolish talk of doing good to the world. It is not
46 waiting for your or my help; yet we must work and constantly do
47 good, because it is a blessing to ourselves. That is the only way we
48 can become perfect. No beggar whom we have helped has ever
49 owed a single cent to us; we owe everything to him, because he has
50 allowed us to exercise our charity on him. It is entirely wrong to
51 think that we have done, or can do, good to the world, or to think
52 that we have helped such and such people. It is a foolish thought,
53 and all foolish thoughts bring misery. We think that we have helped

1 some man and expect him to thank us, and because he does not,
2 unhappiness comes to us. Why should we expect anything in return
3 for what we do? Be grateful to the man you help, think of him as
4 God. Is it not a great privilege to be allowed to worship God by
5 helping our fellow men? If we were really unattached, we should
6 escape all this pain of vain expectation, and could cheerfully do
7 good work in the world. Never will unhappiness or misery come
8 through work done without attachment. The world will go on with
9 its happiness and misery through eternity.

10 There was a poor man who wanted some money; and
11 somehow he had heard that if he could get hold of a ghost, he might
12 command him to bring money or anything else he liked; so he was
13 very anxious to get hold of a ghost. He went about searching for a
14 man who would give him a ghost, and at last he found a sage with
15 great powers, and besought his help. The sage asked him what he
16 would do with a ghost. "I want a ghost to work for me; teach me
17 how to get hold of one, sir; I desire it very much," replied the man.
18 But the sage said, "Don't disturb yourself, go home." The next day
19 the man went again to the sage and began to weep and pray, "Give
20 me a ghost; I must have a ghost, sir, to help me." At last the sage
21 was disgusted, and said, "Take this charm, repeat this magic word,
22 and a ghost will come, and whatever you say to him he will do. But
23 beware; they are terrible beings, and must be kept continually busy.
24 If you fail to give him work, he will take your life." The man replied,
25 "That is easy; I can give him work for all his life." Then he went to a
26 forest, and after long repetition of the magic word, a huge ghost
27 appeared before him, and said, "I am a ghost. I have been
28 conquered by your magic; but you must keep me constantly
29 employed. The moment you fail to give me work I will kill you." The
30 man said, "Build me a palace," and the ghost said, "It is done; the
31 palace is built." "Bring me money," said the man. "Here is your
32 money," said the ghost. "Cut this forest down, and build a city in its
33 place." "That is done," said the ghost, "anything more?" Now the
34 man began to be frightened and thought he could give him nothing
35 more to do; he did everything in a trice. The ghost said, "Give me
36 something to do or I will eat you up." The poor man could find no
37 further occupation for him, and was frightened. So he ran and ran
38 and at last reached the sage, and said, "Oh, sir, protect my life!"
39 The sage asked him what the matter was, and the man replied, "I
40 have nothing to give the ghost to do. Everything I tell him to do he
41 does in a moment, and he threatens to eat me up if I do not give
42 him work." Just then the ghost arrived, saying, "I'll eat you up," and
43 he would have swallowed the man. The man began to shake, and
44 begged the sage to save his life. The sage said, "I will find you a
45 way out. Look at that dog with a curly tail. Draw your sword quickly
46 and cut the tail off and give it to the ghost to straighten out." The
47 man cut off the dog's tail and gave it to the ghost, saying,
48 "Straighten that out for me." The ghost took it and slowly and
49 carefully straightened it out, but as soon as he let it go, it instantly
50 curled up again. Once more he laboriously straightened it out, only
51 to find it again curled up as soon as he attempted to let go of it.
52 Again he patiently straightened it out, but as soon as he let it go, it
53 curled up again. So he went on for days and days, until he was

1 exhausted and said, "I was never in such trouble before in my life. I
2 am an old veteran ghost, but never before was I in such trouble." "I
3 will make a compromise with you;" he said to the man, "you let me
4 off and I will let you keep all I have given you and will promise not
5 to harm you." The man was much pleased, and accepted the offer
6 gladly.

7 This world is like a dog's curly tail, and people have been
8 striving to straighten it out for hundreds of years; but when they let
9 it go, it has curled up again. How could it be otherwise? One must
10 first know how to work without attachment, then one will not be a
11 fanatic. When we know that this world is like a dog's curly tail and
12 will never get straightened, we shall not become fanatics. If there
13 were no fanaticism in the world, it would make much more progress
14 than it does now. It is a mistake to think that fanaticism can make
15 for the progress of mankind. On the contrary, it is a retarding
16 element creating hatred and anger, and causing people to fight
17 each other, and making them unsympathetic. We think that
18 whatever we do or possess is the best in the world, and what we do
19 not do or possess is of no value. So, always remember the instance
20 of the curly tail of the dog whenever you have a tendency to
21 become a fanatic. You need not worry or make yourself sleepless
22 about the world; it will go on without you. When you have avoided
23 fanaticism, then alone will you work well. It is the level-headed
24 man, the calm man, of good judgment and cool nerves, of great
25 sympathy and love, who does good work and so does good to
26 himself. The fanatic is foolish and has no sympathy; he can never
27 straighten the world, nor himself become pure and perfect.

28 To recapitulate the chief points in today's lecture: First, we
29 have to bear in mind that we are all debtors to the world and the
30 world does not owe us anything. It is a great privilege for all of us
31 to be allowed to do anything for the world. In helping the world we
32 really help ourselves. The second point is that there is a God in this
33 universe. It is not true that this universe is drifting and stands in
34 need of help from you and me. God is ever present therein, He is
35 undying and eternally active and infinitely watchful. When the
36 whole universe sleeps, He sleeps not; He is working incessantly; all
37 the changes and manifestations of the world are His. Thirdly, we
38 ought not to hate anyone. This world will always continue to be a
39 mixture of good and evil. Our duty is to sympathise with the weak
40 and to love even the wrongdoer. The world is a grand moral
41 gymnasium wherein we have all to take exercise so as to become
42 stronger and stronger spiritually. Fourthly, we ought not to be
43 fanatics of any kind, because fanaticism is opposed to love. You
44 hear fanatics glibly saying, "I do not hate the sinner. I hate the sin,"
45 but I am prepared to go any distance to see the face of that man
46 who can really make a distinction between the sin and the sinner. It
47 is easy to say so. If we can distinguish well between quality and
48 substance, we may become perfect men. It is not easy to do this.
49 And further, the calmer we are and the less disturbed our nerves,
50 the more shall we love and the better will our work be.

NON-ATTACHMENT IS COMPLETE SELF-ABNEGATION

Just as every action that emanates from us comes back to us as reaction, even so our actions may act on other people and theirs on us. Perhaps all of you have observed it as a fact that when persons do evil actions, they become more and more evil, and when they begin to do good, they become stronger and stronger and learn to do good at all times. This intensification of the influence of action cannot be explained on any other ground than that we can act and react upon each other. To take an illustration from physical science, when I am doing a certain action, my mind may be said to be in a certain state of vibration; all minds which are in similar circumstances will have the tendency to be affected by my mind. If there are different musical instruments tuned alike in one room, all of you may have noticed that when one is struck, the others have the tendency to vibrate so as to give the same note. So all minds that have the same tension, so to say, will be equally affected by the same thought. Of course, this influence of thought on mind will vary according to distance and other causes, but the mind is always open to affection. Suppose I am doing an evil act, my mind is in a certain state of vibration, and all minds in the universe, which are in a similar state, have the possibility of being affected by the vibration of my mind. So, when I am doing a good action, my mind is in another state of vibration; and all minds similarly strung have the possibility of being affected by my mind; and this power of mind upon mind is more or less according as the force of the tension is greater or less.

Following this simile further, it is quite possible that, just as light waves may travel for millions of years before they reach any object, so thought waves may also travel hundreds of years before they meet an object with which they vibrate in unison. It is quite possible, therefore, that this atmosphere of ours is full of such thought pulsations, both good and evil. Every thought projected from every brain goes on pulsating, as it were, until it meets a fit object that will receive it. Any mind which is open to receive some of these impulses will take them immediately. So, when a man is doing evil actions, he has brought his mind to a certain state of tension and all the waves which correspond to that state of tension, and which may be said to be already in the atmosphere, will struggle to enter into his mind. That is why an evil-doer generally goes on doing more and more evil. His actions become intensified. Such, also will be the case with the doer of good; he will open himself to all the good waves that are in the atmosphere, and his good actions also will become intensified. We run, therefore, a twofold danger in doing evil: first, we open ourselves to all the evil influences surrounding us; secondly, we create evil which affects others, may be hundreds of years hence. In doing evil we injure ourselves and others also. In doing good we do good to ourselves and to others as well; and, like all other forces in man, these forces

1 of good and evil also gather strength from outside.

2 According to Karma-Yoga, the action one has done cannot be
3 destroyed until it has borne its fruit; no power in nature can stop it
4 from yielding its results. If I do an evil action, I must suffer for it;
5 there is no power in this universe to stop or stay it. Similarly, if I do
6 a good action, there is no power in the universe which can stop its
7 bearing good results. The cause must have its effect; nothing can
8 prevent or restrain this. Now comes a very fine and serious
9 question about Karma-Yoga--namely, that these actions of ours, both
10 good and evil, are intimately connected with each other. We cannot
11 put a line of demarcation and say, this action is entirely good and
12 this entirely evil. There is no action which does not bear good and
13 evil fruits at the same time. To take the nearest example: I am
14 talking to you, and some of you, perhaps, think I am doing good;
15 and at the same time I am, perhaps, killing thousands of microbes
16 in the atmosphere; I am thus doing evil to something else. When it
17 is very near to us and affects those we know, we say that it is very
18 good action if it affects them in a good manner. For instance, you
19 may call my speaking to you very good, but the microbes will not;
20 the microbes you do not see, but yourselves you do see. The way in
21 which my talk affects you is obvious to you, but how it affects the
22 microbes is not so obvious. And so, if we analyse our evil actions
23 also, we may find that some good possibly results from them
24 somewhere. He who in good action sees that there is something evil
25 in it, and in the midst of evil sees that there is something good in it
26 somewhere, has known the secret of work.

27 But what follows from it? That, howsoever we may try, there
28 cannot be any action which is perfectly pure, or any which is
29 perfectly impure, taking purity and impurity in the sense of injury
30 and non-injury. We cannot breathe or live without injuring others,
31 and every bit of the food we eat is taken away from another's
32 mouth. Our very lives are crowding out other lives. It may be men,
33 or animals, or small microbes, but some one or other of these we
34 have to crowd out. That being the case, it naturally follows that
35 perfection can never be attained by work. We may work through all
36 eternity, but there will be no way out of this intricate maze. You may
37 work on, and on, and on; there will be no end to this inevitable
38 association of good and evil in the results of work.

39 The second point to consider is, what is the end of work? We
40 find the vast majority of people in every country believing that there
41 will be a time when this world will become perfect, when there will
42 be no disease, nor death, nor unhappiness, nor wickedness. That is
43 a very good idea, a very good motive power to inspire and uplift the
44 ignorant; but if we think for a moment, we shall find on the very
45 face of it that it cannot be so. How can it be, seeing that good and
46 evil are the obverse and reverse of the same coin? How can you
47 have good without evil at the same time? What is meant by
48 perfection? A perfect life is a contradiction in terms. Life itself is a
49 state of continuous struggle between ourselves and everything
50 outside. Every moment we are fighting actually with external
51 nature, and if we are defeated, our life has to go. It is, for instance,
52 a continuous struggle for food and air. If food or air fails, we die.

1 Life is not a simple and smoothly flowing thing, but it is a compound
2 effect. This complex struggle between something inside and the
3 external world is what we call life. So it is clear that when this
4 struggle ceases, there will be an end of life.

5 What is meant by ideal happiness is the cessation of this
6 struggle. But then life will cease, for the struggle can only cease
7 when life itself has ceased. We have seen already that in helping
8 the world we help ourselves. The main effect of work done for
9 others is to purify ourselves. By means of the constant effort to do
10 good to others we are trying to forget ourselves; this forgetfulness
11 of self is the one great lesson we have to learn in life. Man thinks
12 foolishly that he can make himself happy, and after years of
13 struggle finds out at last that true happiness consists in killing
14 selfishness and that no one can make him happy except himself.
15 Every act of charity, every thought of sympathy, every action of
16 help, every good deed, is taking so much of self-importance away
17 from our little selves and making us think of ourselves as the lowest
18 and the least, and, therefore, it is all good. Here we find that Jnana,
19 Bhakti, and Karma--all come to one point. The highest ideal is
20 eternal and entire self-abnegation, where there is no "I", but all is
21 "Thou"; and whether he is conscious or unconscious of it, Karma-
22 Yoga leads man to that end. A religious preacher may become
23 horrified at the idea of an Impersonal God; he may insist on a
24 Personal God and wish to keep up his own identity and individuality,
25 whatever he may mean by that. But his ideas of ethics, if they are
26 really good, cannot but be based on the highest self-abnegation. It
27 is the basis of all morality; you may extend it to men, or animals, or
28 angels, it is the one basic idea, the one fundamental principle
29 running through all ethical systems.

30 You will find various classes of men in this world. First, there
31 are the God-men, whose self-abnegation is complete, and who do
32 only good to others even at the sacrifice of their own lives. These
33 are the highest of men. If there are a hundred of such in any
34 country, that country need never despair. But they are unfortunately
35 too few. Then there are the good men who do good to others so long
36 as it does not injure themselves. And there is a third class who, to
37 do good to themselves, injure others. It is said by a Sanskrit poet
38 that there is a fourth unnamable class of people who injure others
39 merely for injury's sake. Just as there are at one pole of existence
40 the highest good men, who do good for the sake of doing good, so,
41 at the other pole, there are others who injure others just for the
42 sake of the injury. They do not gain anything thereby, but it is their
43 nature to do evil.

44 Here are two Sanskrit words. The one is Pravritti, which
45 means revolving towards, and the other is Nivritti, which means
46 revolving away. The "revolving towards" is what we call the world,
47 the "I and mine"; it includes all those things which are always
48 enriching that "me" by wealth and money and power, and name and
49 fame, and which are of a grasping nature, always tending to
50 accumulate everything in one centre, that centre being "myself".
51 That is the Pravritti, the natural tendency of every human being;
52 taking everything from everywhere and heaping it around one

1 centre, that centre being man's own sweet self. When this tendency
2 begins to break, when it is Nivritti or "going away from," then begin
3 morality and religion. Both Pravritti and Nivritti are of the nature of
4 work: the former is evil work, and the latter is good work. This
5 Nivritti is the fundamental basis of all morality and all religion, and
6 the very perfection of it is entire self-abnegation, readiness to
7 sacrifice mind and body and everything for another being. When a
8 man has reached that state, he has attained to the perfection of
9 Karma-Yoga. This is the highest result of good works. Although a
10 man has not studied a single system of philosophy, although he does
11 not believe in any God, and never has believed, although he has not
12 prayed even once in his whole life, if the simple power of good
13 actions has brought him to that state where he is ready to give up
14 his life and all else for others, he has arrived at the same point to
15 which the religious man will come through his prayers and the
16 philosopher through his knowledge; and so you may find that the
17 philosopher, the worker, and the devotee, all meet at one point, that
18 one point being self-abnegation. However much their systems of
19 philosophy and religion may differ, all mankind stand in reverence
20 and awe before the man who is ready to sacrifice himself for others.
21 Here, it is not at all any question of creed, or doctrine- even men
22 who are very much opposed to all religious ideas, when they see
23 one of these acts of complete self-sacrifice, feel that they must
24 revere it. Have you not seen even a most bigoted Christian, when
25 he reads Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia*, stand in reverence of
26 Buddha, who preached no God, preached nothing but self-sacrifice?
27 The only thing is that the bigot does not know that his own end and
28 aim in life is exactly the same as that of those from whom he differs.
29 The worshipper, by keeping constantly before him the idea of God
30 and a surrounding of good, comes to the same point at last and
31 says, "Thy will be done," and keeps nothing to himself. That is self-
32 abnegation. The philosopher, with his knowledge, sees that the
33 seeming self is a delusion and easily gives it up. It is self-
34 abnegation. So Karma, Bhakti, and Jnana all meet here; and this is
35 what was meant by all the great preachers of ancient times, when
36 they taught that God is not the world. There is one thing which is
37 the world and another which is God; and this distinction is very
38 true. What they mean by world is selfishness. Unselfishness is God.
39 One may live on a throne, in a golden palace, and be perfectly
40 unselfish; and then he is in God. Another may live in a hut and wear
41 rags, and have nothing in the world; yet, if he is selfish, he is
42 intensely merged in the world.

43 To come back to one of our main points, we say that we
44 cannot do good without at the same time doing some evil, or do evil
45 without doing some good. Knowing this, how can we work? There
46 have, therefore, been sects in this world who have in an
47 astoundingly preposterous way preached slow suicide as the only
48 means to get out of the world, because if a man lives, he has to kill
49 poor little animals and plants or do injury to something or some
50 one. So according to them the only way out of the world is to die.
51 The Jains have preached this doctrine as their highest ideal. This
52 teaching seems to be very logical. But the true solution is found in
53 the Gita. It is the theory of non-attachment, to be attached to

1 nothing while doing our work of life. Know that you are separated
2 entirely from the world, though you are in the world, and that
3 whatever you may be doing in it, you are not doing that for your
4 own sake. Any action that you do for yourself will bring its effect to
5 bear upon you. If it is a good action, you will have to take the good
6 effect, and if bad, you will have to take the bad effect; but any
7 action that is not done for your own sake, whatever it be, will have
8 no effect on you. There is to be found a very expressive sentence in
9 our scriptures embodying this idea: "Even if he kill the whole
10 universe (or be himself killed), he is neither the killer nor the killed,
11 when he knows that he is not acting for himself at all." Therefore
12 Karma-Yoga teaches, "Do not give up the world; live in the world,
13 imbibe its influences as much as you can; but if it be for your own
14 enjoyment's sake, work not at all." Enjoyment should not be the
15 goal. First kill your self and then take the whole world as yourself;
16 as the old Christians used to say, "The old man must die." This old
17 man is the selfish idea that the whole world is made for our
18 enjoyment. Foolish parents teach their children to pray, "O Lord,
19 Thou hast created this sun for me and this moon for me," as if the
20 Lord has had nothing else to do than to create everything for these
21 babies. Do not teach your children such nonsense. Then again,
22 there are people who are foolish in another way: they teach us that
23 all these animals were created for us to kill and eat, and that this
24 universe is for the enjoyment of men. That is all foolishness. A tiger
25 may say, "Man was created for me," and pray, "O Lord, how wicked
26 are these men who do not come and place themselves before me to
27 be eaten; they are breaking Your law." If the world is created for us,
28 we are also created for the world. That this world is created for our
29 enjoyment is the most wicked idea that holds us down. This world is
30 not for our sake. Millions pass out of it every year; the world does
31 not feel it; millions of others are supplied in their place. Just as
32 much as the world is for us, so we also are for the world.

33 To work properly, therefore, you have first to give up the idea
34 of attachment. Secondly, do not mix in the fray, hold yourself as a
35 witness and go on working. My master used to say, "Look upon your
36 children as a nurse does." The nurse will take your baby and fondle
37 it and play with it and behave towards it as gently as if it were her
38 own child; but as soon as you give her notice to quit, she is ready to
39 start off bag and baggage from the house. Everything in the shape
40 of attachment is forgotten; it will not give the ordinary nurse the
41 least pang to leave your children and take up other children. Even
42 so are you to be with all that you consider your own. You are the
43 nurse, and if you believe in God, believe that all these things which
44 you consider yours are really His. The greatest weakness often
45 insinuates itself as the greatest good and strength. It is a weakness
46 to think that any one is dependent on me, and that I can do good to
47 another. This belief is the mother of all our attachment, and through
48 this attachment comes all our pain. We must inform our minds that
49 no one in this universe depends upon us; not one beggar depends
50 on our charity; not one soul on our kindness; not one living thing on
51 our help. All are helped on by nature, and will be so helped even
52 though millions of us were not here. The course of nature will not
53 stop for such as you and me; it is, as already pointed out, only a

1 blessed privilege to you and to me that we are allowed, in the way
2 of helping others, to educate ourselves. This is a great lesson to
3 learn in life, and when we have learned it fully, we shall never be
4 unhappy; we can go and mix without harm in society anywhere and
5 everywhere. You may have wives and husbands, and regiments of
6 servants, and kingdoms to govern; if only you act on the principle
7 that the world is not for you and does not inevitably need you, they
8 can do you no harm. This very year some of your friends may have
9 died. Is the world waiting without going on, for them to come
10 again? Is its current stopped? No, it goes on. So drive out of your
11 mind the idea that you have to do something for the world; the
12 world does not require any help from you. It is sheer nonsense on
13 the part of any man to think that he is born to help the world; it is
14 simply pride, it is selfishness insinuating itself in the form of virtue.
15 When you have trained your mind and your nerves to realise this
16 idea of the world's non-dependence on you or on anybody, there will
17 then be no reaction in the form of pain resulting from work. When
18 you give something to a man and expect nothing--do not even
19 expect the man to be grateful--his ingratitude will not tell upon you,
20 because you never expected anything, never thought you had any
21 right to anything in the way of a return. You gave him what he
22 deserved; his own Karma got it for him; your Karma made you the
23 carrier thereof. Why should you be proud of having given away
24 something? You are the porter that carried the money or other kind
25 of gift, and the world deserved it by its own Karma. Where is then
26 the reason for pride in you? There is nothing very great in what you
27 give to the world. When you have acquired the feeling of non-
28 attachment, there will then be neither good nor evil for you. It is
29 only selfishness that causes the difference between good and evil. It
30 is a very hard thing to understand, but you will come to learn in
31 time that nothing in the universe has power over you until you allow
32 it to exercise such a power. Nothing has power over the Self of
33 man, until the Self becomes a fool and loses independence. So, by
34 non-attachment, you overcome and deny the power of anything to
35 act upon you. It is very easy to say that nothing has the right to act
36 upon you until you allow it to do so; but what is the true sign of the
37 man who really does not allow anything to work upon him, who is
38 neither happy nor unhappy when acted upon by the external world?
39 The sign is that good or ill fortune causes no change in his mind: in
40 all conditions he continues to remain the same.

41 There was a great sage in India called Vyasa. This Vyasa is
42 known as the author of the Vedanta aphorisms, and was a holy man.
43 His father had tried to become a very perfect man and had failed.
44 His grandfather had also tried and failed. His great-grandfather
45 had similarly tried and failed. He himself did not succeed perfectly,
46 but his son, Shuka, was born perfect. Vyasa taught his son wisdom;
47 and after teaching him the knowledge of truth himself, he sent him
48 to the court of King Janaka. He was a great king and was called
49 Janaka Videha. Videha means "without a body". Although a king, he
50 had entirely forgotten that he was a body; he felt that he was a
51 spirit all the time. This boy Shuka was sent to be taught by him. The
52 king knew that Vyasa's son was coming to him to learn wisdom: so
53 he made certain arrangements beforehand. And when the boy

1 presented himself at the gates of the palace, the guards took no
2 notice of him whatsoever. They only gave him a seat, and he sat
3 there for three days and nights, nobody speaking to him, nobody
4 asking him who he was or whence he was. He was the son of a very
5 great sage, his father was honoured by the whole country, and he
6 himself was a most respectable person; yet the low, vulgar guards
7 of the palace would take no notice of him. After that, suddenly, the
8 ministers of the king and all the big officials came there and
9 received him with the greatest honours. They conducted him in and
10 showed him into splendid rooms, gave him the most fragrant baths
11 and wonderful dresses, and for eight days they kept him there in all
12 kinds of luxury. That solemnly serene face of Shuka did not change
13 even to the smallest extent by the change in the treatment
14 accorded to him; he was the same in the midst of this luxury as
15 when waiting at the door. Then he was brought before the king. The
16 king was on his throne, music was playing, and dancing and other
17 amusements were going on. The king then gave him a cup of milk,
18 full to the brim, and asked him to go seven times round the hall
19 without spilling even a drop. The boy took the cup and proceeded in
20 the midst of the music and the attraction of the beautiful faces. As
21 desired by the king, seven times did he go round, and not a drop of
22 the milk was spilt. The boy's mind could not be attracted by
23 anything in the world, unless he allowed it to affect him. And when
24 he brought the cup to the king, the king said to him, "What your
25 father has taught you, and what you have learned yourself, I can
26 only repeat. You have known the Truth; go home."

27 Thus the man that has practised control over himself cannot
28 be acted upon by anything outside; there is no more slavery for him.
29 His mind has become free. Such a man alone is fit to live well in the
30 world. We generally find men holding two opinions regarding the
31 world. Some are pessimists and say, "How horrible this world is,
32 how wicked!" Some others are optimists and say, "How beautiful
33 this world is, how wonderful!" To those who have not controlled
34 their own minds, the world is either full of evil or at best a mixture
35 of good and evil. This very world will become to us an optimistic
36 world when we become masters of our own minds. Nothing will
37 then work upon us as good or evil; we shall find everything to be in
38 its proper place, to be harmonious. Some men, who begin by saying
39 that the world is a hell, often end by saying that it is a heaven when
40 they succeed in the practice of self-control. If we are genuine
41 Karma Yogis and wish to train ourselves to that attainment of this
42 state, wherever we may begin we are sure to end in perfect self-
43 abnegation; and as soon as this seeming self has gone, the whole
44 world, which at first appears to us to be filled with evil, will appear
45 to be heaven itself and full of blessedness. Its very atmosphere will
46 be blessed; every human face there will be god. Such is the end and
47 aim of Karma-Yoga, and such is its perfection in practical life.

48 Our various Yogas do not conflict with each other; each of
49 them leads us to the same goal and makes us perfect. Only each has
50 to be strenuously practised. The whole secret is in practising. First
51 you have to hear, then think, and then practise. This is true of every
52 Yoga. You have first to hear about it and understand what it is; and

1 many things which you do not understand will be made clear to you
2 by constant hearing and thinking. It is hard to understand
3 everything at once. The explanation of everything is after all in
4 yourself. No one was ever really taught by another; each of us has
5 to teach himself. The external teacher offers only the suggestion
6 which rouses the internal teacher to work to understand things.
7 Then things will be made clearer to us by our own power of
8 perception and thought, and we shall realise them in our own souls;
9 and that realisation will grow into the intense power of will. First it
10 is feeling, then it becomes willing, and out of that willing comes the
11 tremendous force for work that will go through every vein and
12 nerve and muscle, until the whole mass of your body is changed
13 into an instrument of the unselfish Yoga of work, and the desired
14 result of perfect self-abnegation and utter unselfishness is duly
15 attained. This attainment does not depend on any dogma, or
16 doctrine, or belief. Whether one is Christian, or Jew, or Gentile, it
17 does not matter. Are you unselfish? That is the question. If you are,
18 you will be perfect without reading a single religious book, without
19 going into a single church or temple. Each one of our Yogas is fitted
20 to make man perfect even without the help of the others, because
21 they have all the same goal in view. The Yogas of work, of wisdom,
22 and of devotion are all capable of serving as direct and independent
23 means for the attainment of Moksha. "Fools alone say that work and
24 philosophy are different, not the learned." The learned know that,
25 though apparently different from each other, they at last lead to the
26 same goal of human perfection.

FREEDOM

In addition to meaning work, we have stated that psychologically the word Karma also implies causation. Any work, any action, any thought that produces an effect is called a Karma. Thus the law of Karma means the law of causation, of inevitable cause and sequence. Wheresoever there is a cause, there an effect must be produced; this necessity cannot be resisted, and this law of Karma, according to our philosophy, is true throughout the whole universe. Whatever we see, or feel, or do, whatever action there is anywhere in the universe, while being the effect of past work on the one hand, becomes, on the other, a cause in its turn, and produces its own effect. It is necessary, together with this, to consider what is meant by the word "law". By law is meant the tendency of a series to repeat itself. When we see one event followed by another, or sometimes happening simultaneously with another, we expect this sequence or co-existence to recur. Our old logicians and philosophers of the Nyaya school call this law by the name of Vyapti. According to them, all our ideas of law are due to association. A series of phenomena becomes associated with things in our mind in a sort of invariable order, so that whatever we perceive at any time is immediately referred to other facts in the mind. Any one idea or, according to our psychology, any one wave that is produced in the mind-stuff, Chitta, must always give rise to many similar waves. This is the psychological idea of association, and causation is only as aspect of this grand pervasive principle of association. This pervasiveness of association is what is, in Sanskrit, called Vyapti. In the external world the idea of law is the same as in the internal--the expectation that a particular phenomenon will be followed by another, and that the series will repeat itself. Really speaking, therefore, law does not exist in nature. Practically it is an error to say that gravitation exists in the earth, or that there is any law existing objectively anywhere in nature. Law is the method, the manner in which our mind grasps a series of phenomena; it is all in the mind. Certain phenomena, happening one after another or together, and followed by the conviction of the regularity of their recurrence--thus enabling our minds to grasp the method of the whole series--constitute what we call law.

The next question for consideration is what we mean by law being universal. Our universe is that portion of existence which is characterised by what the Sanskrit psychologists call Desha-kala-nimitta, or what is known to European psychology as space, time, and causation. This universe is only a part of infinite existence, thrown into a peculiar mould, composed of space, time, and causation. It necessarily follows that law is possible only within this conditioned universe; beyond it there cannot be any law. When we speak of the universe, we only mean that portion of existence which is limited by our mind--the universe of the senses, which we can see, feel, touch, hear, think of, imagine. This alone is under law; but beyond it existence cannot be subject to law, because causation does not extend beyond the world of our minds. Anything beyond

1 the range of our mind and our senses is not bound by the law of
2 causation, as there is no mental association of things in the region
3 beyond the senses, and no causation without association of ideas. It
4 is only when "being" or existence gets moulded into name and form
5 that it obeys the law of causation, and is said to be under law;
6 because all law has its essence in causation. Therefore we see at
7 once that there cannot be any such thing as free will; the very
8 words are a contradiction, because will is what we know and
9 everything that we know is within our universe, and everything
10 within our universe is moulded by the conditions of space, time, and
11 causation. Everything that we know, or can possibly know, must be
12 subject to causation, and that which obeys the law of causation
13 cannot be free. It is acted upon by other agents, and becomes a
14 cause in its turn. But that which has become converted into the will,
15 which was not the will before, but which, when it fell into this
16 mould of space, time, and causation, became converted into the
17 human will, is free; and when this will gets out of this mould of
18 space, time, and causation, it will be free again. From freedom it
19 comes, and becomes moulded into this bondage, and it gets out and
20 goes back to freedom again.

21 The question has been raised as to from whom this universe
22 comes, in whom it rests, and to whom it goes; and the answer has
23 been given that from freedom it comes, in bondage it rests, and
24 goes back into that freedom again. So, when we speak of man as no
25 other than that infinite being which is manifesting itself, we mean
26 that only one very small part thereof is man; this body and this
27 mind which we see are only one part of the whole, only one spot of
28 the infinite being. This whole universe is only one speck of the
29 infinite being; and all our laws, our bondages, our joys and our
30 sorrows, our happinesses and our expectations, are only within this
31 small universe; all our progression and digression are within its
32 small compass. So you see how childish it is to expect a
33 continuation of this universe--the creation of our minds--and to
34 expect to go to heaven, which after all must mean only a repetition
35 of this world that we know. You see at once that it is an impossible
36 and childish desire to make the whole of infinite existence conform
37 to the limited and conditioned existence which we know. When a
38 man says that he will have again and again this same thing which
39 he is having now, or, as I sometimes put it, when he asks for a
40 *comfortable* religion, you may know that he has become so
41 degenerate that he cannot think of anything higher than what he is
42 now; he is just his little present surroundings and nothing more. He
43 has forgotten his infinite nature, and his whole idea is confined to
44 these little joys, and sorrows, and heart-jealousies of the moment.
45 He thinks that this finite thing is the infinite; and not only so, he will
46 not let this foolishness go. He clings on desperately unto Trishna,
47 and the thirst after life, what the Buddhists call Tanha and Tissa.
48 There may be millions of kinds of happiness, and beings, and laws,
49 and progress, and causation, all acting outside the little universe
50 that we know; and, after all, the whole of this comprises but one
51 section of our infinite nature.

52 To acquire freedom we have to get beyond the limitations of

1 this universe; it cannot be found here. Perfect equilibrium, or what
2 the Christians call the peace that passeth all understanding, cannot
3 be had in this universe, nor in heaven, nor in any place where our
4 mind and thoughts can go, where the senses can feel, or which the
5 imagination can conceive. No such place can give us that freedom,
6 because all such places would be within our universe, and it is
7 limited by space, time, and causation. There may be places that are
8 more ethereal than this earth of ours, where enjoyments may be
9 keener, but even those places must be in the universe and,
10 therefore, in bondage to law; so we have to go beyond, and real
11 religion begins where this little universe ends. These little joys, and
12 sorrows, and knowledge of things end there, and the reality begins.
13 Until we give up the thirst after life, the strong attachment to this
14 our transient conditioned existence, we have no hope of catching
15 even a glimpse of that infinite freedom beyond. It stands to reason
16 then that there is only one way to attain to that freedom which is
17 the goal of all the noblest aspirations of mankind, and that is by
18 giving up this little life, giving up this little universe, giving up this
19 earth, giving up heaven, giving up the body, giving up the mind,
20 giving up everything that is limited and conditioned. If we give up
21 our attachment to this little universe of the senses or of the mind,
22 we shall be free immediately. The only way to come out of bondage
23 is to go beyond the limitations of law, to go beyond causation.

24 But it is a most difficult thing to give up the clinging to this
25 universe; few ever attain to that. There are two ways to do that
26 mentioned in our books. One is called the "Neti, Neti" (not this, not
27 this), the other is called "iti" (this); the former is the negative, and
28 the latter is the positive way. The negative way is the most difficult.
29 It is only possible to the men of the very highest, exceptional minds
30 and gigantic wills who simply stand up and say, "No, I will not have
31 this," and the mind and body obey their will, and they come out
32 successful. But such people are very rare. The vast majority of
33 mankind choose the positive way, the way through the world,
34 making use of all the bondages themselves to break those very
35 bondages. This is also a kind of giving up; only it is done slowly and
36 gradually, by knowing things, enjoying things and thus obtaining
37 experience, and knowing the nature of things until the mind lets
38 them all go at last and becomes unattached. The former way of
39 obtaining non-attachment is by reasoning, and the latter way is
40 through work and experience. The first is the path of Jnana-Yoga
41 and is characterised by the refusal to do any work; the second is
42 that of Karma-Yoga, in which there is no cessation from work. Every
43 one must work in the universe. Only those who are perfectly
44 satisfied with the Self, whose desires do not go beyond the Self,
45 whose mind never strays out of the Self, to whom the Self is all in
46 all, only those do not work. The rest must work. A current rushing
47 down of its own nature falls into a hollow and makes a whirlpool,
48 and, after running a little in that whirlpool, it emerges again in the
49 form of the free current to go on unchecked. Each human life is like
50 that current. It gets into the whirl, gets involved in this world of
51 space, time, and causation, whirls round a little, crying out, "my
52 father, my brother, my name, my fame," and so on, and at last
53 emerges out of it and regains its original freedom. The whole

1 universe is doing that. Whether we know it or not, whether we are
2 conscious or unconscious of it, we are all working to get out of the
3 dream of the world. Man's experience in the world is to enable him
4 to get out of its whirlpool.

5 What is Karma-Yoga? The knowledge of the secret of work.
6 We see that the whole universe is working. For what? For salvation,
7 for liberty; from the atom to the highest being, working for the one
8 end, liberty for the mind, for the body, for the spirit. All things are
9 always trying to get freedom, flying away from bondage. The sun,
10 the moon, the earth, the planets, all are trying to fly away from
11 bondage. The centrifugal and the centripetal forces of nature are
12 indeed typical of our universe. Instead of being knocked about in
13 this universe, and after long delay and thrashing, getting to know
14 things as they are, we learn from Karma-Yoga the secret of work,
15 the method of work, the organising power of work. A vast mass of
16 energy may be spent in vain if we do not know how to utilise it.
17 Karma- Yoga makes a science of work; you learn by it how best to
18 utilise all the workings of this world. Work is inevitable, it must be
19 so; but we should work to the highest purpose. Karma-Yoga makes
20 us admit that this world is a world of five minutes, that it is a
21 something we have to pass through; and that freedom is not here,
22 but is only to be found beyond. To find the way out of the bondages
23 of the world we have to go through it slowly and surely. There may
24 be those exceptional persons about whom I just spoke, those who
25 can stand aside and give up the world, as a snake casts off its skin
26 and stands aside and looks at it. There are no doubt these
27 exceptional beings; but the rest of mankind have to go slowing
28 through the world of work. Karma-Yoga shows the process, the
29 secret, and the method of doing it to the best advantage.

30 What does it say? "Work incessantly, but give up all
31 attachment to work." Do not identify yourself with anything. Hold
32 your mind free. All this that you see, the pains and the miseries, are
33 but the necessary conditions of this world; poverty and wealth and
34 happiness are but momentary; they do not belong to our real nature
35 at all. Our nature is far beyond misery and happiness, beyond every
36 object of the senses, beyond the imagination; and yet we must go
37 on working all the time. "Misery comes through attachment, not
38 through work." As soon as we identify ourselves with the work we
39 do, we feel miserable; but if we do not identify ourselves with it, we
40 do not feel that misery. If a beautiful picture belonging to another is
41 burnt, a man does not generally become miserable; but when his
42 own picture is burnt, how miserable he feels! Why? Both were
43 beautiful pictures, perhaps copies of the same original; but in one
44 case very much more misery is felt than in the other. It is because
45 in one case he identifies himself with the picture, and not in the
46 other. This "I and mine" causes the whole misery. With the sense of
47 possession comes selfishness, and selfishness brings on misery.
48 Every act of selfishness or thought of selfishness makes us attached
49 to something, and immediately we are made slaves. Each wave in
50 the Chitta that says "I and mine" immediately puts a chain round us
51 and makes us slaves; and the more we say "I and mine", the more
52 slavery grows, the more misery increases. Therefore Karma-Yoga

1 tells us to enjoy the beauty of all the pictures in the world, but not
2 to identify ourselves with any of them. Never say "mine". Whenever
3 we say a thing is "mine", misery will immediately come. Do not even
4 say "my child" in your mind. Possess the child, but do not say
5 "mine". If you do, then will come the misery. Do not say "my house,"
6 do not say "my body". The whole difficulty is there. The body is
7 neither yours, nor mine, nor anybody's. These bodies are coming
8 and going by the laws of nature, but we are free, standing as
9 witness. This body is no more free than a picture or a wall. Why
10 should we be attached so much to a body? If somebody paints a
11 picture, he does it and passes on. Do not project that tentacle of
12 selfishness, "I must possess it". As soon as that is projected, misery
13 will begin.

14 So Karma-Yoga says, first destroy the tendency to project this
15 tentacle of selfishness, and when you have the power of checking it,
16 hold it in and do not allow the mind to get into the ways of
17 selfishness. Then you may go out into the world and work as much
18 as you can. Mix everywhere, go where you please; you will never be
19 contaminated with evil. There is the lotus leaf in the water; the
20 water cannot touch and adhere to it; so will you be in the world.
21 This is called "Vairagya", dispassion or non-attachment. I believe I
22 have told you that without non-attachment there cannot be any kind
23 of Yoga. Non-attachment is the basis of all the Yogas. The man who
24 gives up living in houses, wearing fine clothes, and eating good
25 food, and goes into the desert, may be a most attached person. His
26 only possession, his own body, may become everything to him; and
27 as he lives he will be simply struggling for the sake of his body.
28 Non-attachment does not mean anything that we may do in relation
29 to our external body, it is all in the mind. The binding link of "I and
30 mine" is in the mind. If we have not this link with the body and with
31 the things of the senses, we are non-attached, wherever and
32 whatever we may be. A man may be on a throne and perfectly non-
33 attached; another man may be in rags and still very much attached.
34 First, we have to attain this state of non-attachment and then to
35 work incessantly. Karma-Yoga gives us the method that will help us
36 in giving up all attachment, though it is indeed very hard.

37 Here are the two ways of giving up all attachment. The one is
38 for those who do not believe in God, or in any outside help. They
39 are left to their own devices; they have simply to work with their
40 own will, with the powers of their mind and discrimination, saying,
41 "I must be non-attached". For those who believe in God there is
42 another way, which is much less difficult. They give up the fruits of
43 work unto the Lord; they work and are never attached to the
44 results. Whatever they see, feel, hear, or do, is for Him. For
45 whatever good work we may do, let us not claim any praise or
46 benefit. It is the Lord's; give up the fruits unto Him. Let us stand
47 aside and think that we are only servants obeying the Lord, our
48 Master, and that every impulse for action comes from Him every
49 moment. Whatever thou worshipping, whatever thou perceivest,
50 whatever thou doest, give up all unto Him and be at rest. Let us be
51 at peace, perfect peace, with ourselves, and give up our whole body
52 and mind and everything as an eternal sacrifice unto the Lord.

1 Instead of the sacrifice of pouring oblations into the fire, perform
2 this one great sacrifice day and night--the sacrifice of your little self.
3 "In search of wealth in this world, Thou art the only wealth I have
4 found; I sacrifice myself unto Thee. In search of some one to be
5 loved, Thou art the only one beloved I have found; I sacrifice myself
6 unto Thee." Let us repeat this day and night, and say, "Nothing for
7 me; no matter whether the thing is good, bad, or indifferent; I do
8 not care for it; I sacrifice all unto Thee." Day and night let us
9 renounce our seeming self until it becomes a habit with us to do so,
10 until it gets into the blood, the nerves, and the brain, and the whole
11 body is every moment obedient to this idea of self-renunciation. Go
12 then into the midst of the battlefield, with the roaring cannon and
13 the din of war, and you will find yourself to be free and at peace.

14 Karma-Yoga teaches us that the ordinary idea of duty is on the
15 lower plane; nevertheless, all of us have to do our duty. Yet we may
16 see that this peculiar sense of duty is very often a great cause of
17 misery. Duty becomes a disease with us; it drags us ever forward. It
18 catches hold of us and makes our whole life miserable. It is the
19 bane of human life. This duty, this idea of duty is the midday
20 summer sun which scorches the innermost soul of mankind. Look at
21 those poor slaves to duty! Duty leaves them no time to say prayers,
22 no time to bathe. Duty is ever on them. They go out and work. Duty
23 is on them! They come home and think of the work for the next day.
24 Duty is on them! It is living a slave's life, at last dropping down in
25 the street and dying in harness, like a horse. This is duty as it is
26 understood. The only true duty is to be unattached and to work as
27 free beings, to give up all work unto God. All our duties are His.
28 Blessed are we that we are ordered out here. We serve our time;
29 whether we do it ill or well, who knows? If we do it well, we do not
30 get the fruits. If we do it ill, neither do we get the care. Be at rest,
31 be free, and work. This kind of freedom is a very hard thing to
32 attain. How easy it is to interpret slavery as duty--the morbid
33 attachment of flesh for flesh as duty! Men go out into the world and
34 struggle and fight for money or for any other thing to which they
35 get attached. Ask them why they do it. They say, "It is a duty." It is
36 the absurd greed for gold and gain, and they try to cover it with a
37 few flowers.

38 What is duty after all? It is really the impulsion of the flesh, of
39 our attachment; and when an attachment has become established,
40 we call it duty. For instance, in countries where there is no
41 marriage, there is no duty between husband and wife; when
42 marriage comes, husband and wife live together on account of
43 attachment; and that kind of living together becomes settled after
44 generations; and when it becomes so settled, it becomes a duty. It
45 is, so to say, a sort of chronic disease. When it is acute, we call it
46 disease; when it is chronic, we call it nature. It is a disease. So
47 when attachment becomes chronic, we baptise it with the high-
48 sounding name of duty. We strew flowers upon it, trumpets sound
49 for it, sacred texts are said over it, and then the whole world fights,
50 and men earnestly rob each other for this duty's sake. Duty is good
51 to the extent that it checks brutality. To the lowest kinds of men,
52 who cannot have any other ideal, it is of some good; but those who

1 want to be Karma Yogis must throw this idea of duty overboard.
2 There is no duty for you and me. Whatever you have to give to the
3 world, do give by all means, but not as a duty. Do not take any
4 thought of that. Be not compelled. Why should you be compelled?
5 *Everything that you do under compulsion goes to build up*
6 *attachment.* Why should you have any duty? Resign everything unto
7 God. In this tremendous fiery furnace where the fire of duty
8 scorches everybody, drink this cup of nectar and be happy. We are
9 all simply working out His will, and have nothing to do with rewards
10 and punishments. If you want the reward, you must also have the
11 punishment; the only way to get out of the punishment is to give up
12 the reward. The only way of getting out of misery is by giving up
13 the idea of happiness, because these two are linked to each other.
14 On one side there is happiness, on the other there is misery. On one
15 side there is life, on the other there is death. The only way to get
16 beyond death is to give up the love of life. Life and death are the
17 same thing, looked at from different points. So the idea of
18 happiness without misery, or of life without death, is very good for
19 school-boys and children; but the thinker sees that it is all a
20 contradiction in terms and gives up both. Seek no praise, no
21 reward, for anything you do. No sooner do we perform a good
22 action than we begin to desire credit for it. No sooner do we give
23 money to some charity than we want to see our names blazoned in
24 the papers. Misery must come as a result of such desires. The
25 greatest men in the world have passed away unknown. The
26 Buddhas and the Christs that we know are but second-rate heroes
27 in comparison with the greatest men of whom the world knows
28 nothing. Hundreds of these unknown heroes have lived in every
29 country working silently. Silently they live and silently they pass
30 away; and in time their thoughts find expression in Buddhas or
31 Christs, and it is these latter that become known to us. The highest
32 men do not seek to get any name or fame from their knowledge.
33 They leave their ideas to the world; they put forth no claims for
34 themselves and establish no schools or systems in their name. Their
35 whole nature shrinks from such a thing. They are the pure
36 Sattvikas, who can never make any stir, but only melt down in love.
37 I have seen one such Yogi who lives in a cave in India. He is one of
38 the most wonderful men I have ever seen. He has so completely lost
39 the sense of his own individuality that we may say that the man in
40 him is completely gone, leaving behind only the all-comprehending
41 sense of the divine. If an animal bites one of his arms, he is ready to
42 give it his other arm also, and say that it is the Lord's will.
43 Everything that comes to him is from the Lord. He does not show
44 himself to men, and yet he is a magazine of love and of true and
45 sweet ideas.

46 Next in order come the men with more Rajas, or activity,
47 combative natures, who take up the ideas of the perfect ones and
48 preach them to the world. The highest kind of men silently collect
49 true and noble ideas, and others--the Buddhas and Christs--go from
50 place to place preaching them and working for them. In the life of
51 Gautama Buddha we notice him constantly saying that he is the
52 twenty-fifth Buddha. The twenty-four before him are unknown to
53 history, although the Buddha known to history must have built upon

1 foundations laid by them. The highest men are calm, silent, and
2 unknown. They are the men who really know the power of thought;
3 they are sure that, even if they go into a cave and close the door
4 and simply think five true thoughts and then pass away, these five
5 thoughts of theirs will live through eternity. Indeed such thoughts
6 will penetrate through the mountains, cross the oceans, and travel
7 through the world. They will enter deep into human hearts and
8 brains and raise up men and women who will give them practical
9 expression in the workings of human life. These Sattvika men are
10 too near the Lord to be active and to fight, to be working,
11 struggling, preaching, and doing good, as they say, here on earth to
12 humanity. The active workers, however good, have still a little
13 remnant of ignorance left in them. When our nature has yet some
14 impurities left in it, then alone can we work. It is in the nature of
15 work to be impelled ordinarily by motive and by attachment. In the
16 presence of an ever active Providence who notes even the
17 sparrow's fall, how can man attach any importance to his own
18 work? Will it not be a blasphemy to do so when we know that He is
19 taking care of the minutest things in the world? We have only to
20 stand in awe and reverence before Him saying, "Thy will be done".
21 The highest men cannot work, for in them there is no attachment.
22 Those whose whole soul is gone into the Self, those whose desires
23 are confined in the Self, who have become ever associated with the
24 Self, for them there is no work. Such are indeed the highest of
25 mankind; but apart from them every one else has to work. In so
26 working we should never think that we can help on even the least
27 thing in this universe. We cannot. We only help ourselves in this
28 gymnasium of the world. This is the proper attitude of work. If we
29 work in this way, if we always remember that our present
30 opportunity to work thus is a privilege which has been given to us,
31 we shall never be attached to anything.

32 Millions like you and me think that we are great people in the
33 world; but we all die, and in five minutes the world forgets us. But
34 the life of God is infinite. "Who can live a moment, breathe a
35 moment, if this all-powerful One does not will it?" He is the ever
36 active Providence. All power is His and within His command.
37 Through His command the winds blow, the sun shines, the earth
38 lives, and death stalks upon the earth. He is the all in all; He is all
39 and in all. We can only worship Him. Give up all fruits of work; do
40 good for its own sake; then alone will come perfect non-attachment.
41 The bonds of the heart will thus break, and we shall reap perfect
42 freedom. This freedom is indeed the goal of Karma-Yoga.

THE IDEAL OF KARMA-YOGA

The grandest idea in the religion of the Vedanta is that we may reach the same goal by different paths; and these paths I have generalised into four, viz. those of work, love, psychology, and knowledge. But you must, at the same time, remember that these divisions are not very marked and quite exclusive of each other. Each blends into the other. But according to the type which prevails, we name the divisions. It is not that you can find men who have no other faculty than that of work, nor that you can find men who are no more than devoted worshippers only, nor that there are men who have no more than mere knowledge. These divisions are made in accordance with the type or the tendency that may be seen to prevail in a man. We have found that, in the end, all these four paths converge and become one. All religions and all methods of work and worship lead us to one and the same goal.

I have already tried to point out that goal. It is freedom as I understand it. Everything that we perceive around us is struggling towards freedom, from the atom to the man, from the insentient, lifeless particle of matter to the highest existence on earth, the human soul. The whole universe is in fact the result of this struggle for freedom. In all combinations every particle is trying to go on its own way, to fly from the other particles; but the others are holding it in check. Our earth is trying to fly away from the sun, and the moon from the earth. Everything has a tendency to infinite dispersion. All that we see in the universe has for its basis this one struggle towards freedom; it is under the impulse of this tendency that the saint prays and the robber robs. When the line of action taken is not a proper one, we call it evil; and when the manifestation of it is proper and high, we call it good. But the impulse is the same, the struggle towards freedom. The saint is oppressed with the knowledge of his condition of bondage, and he wants to get rid of it; so he worships God. The thief is oppressed with the idea that he does not possess certain things, and he tries to get rid of that want, to obtain freedom from it; so he steals. Freedom is the one goal of all nature, sentient or insentient; and consciously or unconsciously, everything is struggling towards that goal. The freedom which the saint seeks is very different from that which the robber seeks; the freedom loved by the saint leads him to the enjoyment of infinite, unspeakable bliss, while that on which the robber has set his heart only forges other bonds for his soul.

There is to be found in every religion the manifestation of this struggle towards freedom. It is the groundwork of all morality, of unselfishness, which means getting rid of the idea that men are the same as their little body. When we see a man doing good work, helping others, it means that he cannot be confined within the limited circle of "me and mine". There is no limit to this getting out of selfishness. All the great systems of ethics preach absolute unselfishness as the goal. Supposing this absolute unselfishness can be reached by a man, what becomes of him? He is no more the little Mr. So-and-so; he has acquired infinite expansion. The little

1 personality which he had before is now lost to him for ever; he has
2 become infinite, and the attainment of this infinite expansion is
3 indeed the goal of all religions and of all moral and philosophical
4 teachings. The personalist, when he hears this idea philosophically
5 put, gets frightened. At the same time, if he preaches morality, he
6 after all teaches the very same idea himself. He puts no limit to the
7 unselfishness of man. Suppose a man becomes perfectly unselfish
8 under the personalistic system, how are we to distinguish him from
9 the perfected ones in other systems? He has become one with the
10 universe and to become that is the goal of all; only the poor
11 personalist has not the courage to follow out his own reasoning to
12 its right conclusion. Karma-Yoga is the attaining through unselfish
13 work of that freedom which is the goal of all human nature. Every
14 selfish action, therefore, retards our reaching the goal, and every
15 unselfish action takes us towards the goal; that is why the only
16 definition that can be given of morality is this: *That which is selfish*
17 *is immoral, and that which is unselfish is moral.*

18 But, if you come to details, the matter will not be seen to be
19 quite so simple. For instance, environment often makes the details
20 different as I have already mentioned. The same action under one
21 set of circumstances may be unselfish, and under another set quite
22 selfish. So we can give only a general definition, and leave the
23 details to be worked out by taking into consideration the
24 differences in time, place, and circumstances. In one country one
25 kind of conduct is considered moral, and in another the very same
26 is immoral, because the circumstances differ. The goal of all nature
27 is freedom, and freedom is to be attained only by perfect
28 unselfishness; every thought, word, or deed that is unselfish takes
29 us towards the goal, and, as such, is called moral. That definition,
30 you will find, holds good in every religion and every system of
31 ethics. In some systems of thought morality is derived from a
32 Superior Being--God. If you ask why a man ought to do this and not
33 that, their answer is : "Because such is the command of God." But
34 whatever be the source from which it is derived, their code of
35 ethics also has the same central idea--not to think of self but to give
36 up self. And yet some persons, in spite of this high ethical idea, are
37 frightened at the thought of having to give up their little
38 personalities. We may ask the man who clings to the idea of little
39 personalities to consider the case of a person who has become
40 perfectly unselfish, who has no thought for himself, who does no
41 deed for himself, who speaks no word for himself, and then say
42 where his "himself" is. That "himself" is known to him only so long
43 as he thinks, acts, or speaks for himself. If he is only conscious of
44 others, of the universe, and of the all, where is his "himself"? It is
45 gone forever.

46 Karma-Yoga, therefore, is a system of ethics and religion
47 intended to attain freedom through unselfishness, and by good
48 works. The Karma-Yogi need not believe in any doctrine whatever.
49 He may not believe even in God, may not ask what his soul is, nor
50 think of any metaphysical speculation. He has got his own special
51 aim of realising selflessness; and he has to work it out himself.
52 Every moment of his life must be realisation, because he has to

1 solve by mere work, without the help of doctrine or theory, the very
2 same problem to which the Jnani applies his reason and inspiration
3 and the Bhakta his love.

4 Now comes the next question: What is this work? What is this
5 doing good to the world? Can we do good to the world? In an
6 absolute sense, no; in a relative sense, yes. No permanent or
7 everlasting good can be done to the world; if it could be done, the
8 world would not be this world. We may satisfy the hunger of a man
9 for five minutes, but he will be hungry again. Every pleasure with
10 which we supply a man may be seen to be momentary. No one can
11 permanently cure this ever-recurring fever of pleasure and pain.
12 Can any permanent happiness be given to the world? In the ocean
13 we cannot raise a wave without causing a hollow somewhere else.
14 The sum total of the good things in the world has been the same
15 throughout in its relation to man's need and greed. It cannot be
16 increased or decreased. Take the history of the human race as we
17 know it today. Do we not find the same miseries and the same
18 happiness, the same pleasures and pains, the same differences in
19 position? Are not some rich, some poor, some high, some low, some
20 healthy, some unhealthy? All this was just the same with the
21 Egyptians, the Greeks, and the Romans in ancient times as it is with
22 the Americans today. So far as history is known, it has always been
23 the same; yet at the same time we find that, running along with all
24 these incurable differences of pleasure and pain, there has ever
25 been the struggle to alleviate them. Every period of history has
26 given birth to thousands of men and women who have worked hard
27 to smooth the passage of life for others. And how far have they
28 succeeded? We can only play at driving the ball from one place to
29 another. We take away pain from the physical plane, and it goes to
30 the mental one. It is like that picture in Dante's hell where the
31 misers were given a mass of gold to roll up a hill. Every time they
32 rolled it up a little, it again rolled down. All our talks about the
33 millennium are very nice as school-boys' stories, but they are no
34 better than that. All nations that dream of the millennium also think
35 that, of all peoples in the world, they will have the best of it then for
36 themselves. This is the wonderfully unselfish idea of the
37 millennium!

38 We cannot add happiness to this world; similarly, we cannot
39 add pain to it either. The sum total of the energies of pleasure and
40 pain displayed here on earth will be the same throughout. We just
41 push it from this side to the other side, and from that side to this,
42 but it will remain the same, because to remain so is its very nature.
43 This ebb and flow, this rising and falling, is in the world's very
44 nature; it would be as logical to hold otherwise as to say that we
45 may have life without death. This is complete nonsense, because
46 the very idea of life implies death and the very idea of pleasure
47 implies pain. The lamp is constantly burning out, and that is its life.
48 If you want to have life, you have to die every moment for it. Life
49 and death are only different expressions of the same thing looked at
50 from different standpoints; they are the falling and the rising of the
51 same wave, and the two form one whole. One looks at the "fall" side
52 and becomes a pessimist, another looks at the "rise" side and

1 becomes an optimist. When a boy is going to school and his father
2 and mother are taking care of him, everything seems blessed to
3 him; his wants are simple, he is a great optimist. But the old man,
4 with his varied experience, becomes calmer, and is sure to have his
5 warmth considerably cooled down. So, old nations, with signs of
6 decay all around them, are apt to be less hopeful than new nations.
7 There is a proverb in India: "A thousand years a city, and a
8 thousand years a forest." This change of city into forest and vice
9 versa is going on everywhere, and it makes people optimists or
10 pessimists according to the side they see of it.

11 The next idea we take up is the idea of equality. These
12 millennium ideas have been great motive powers to work. Many
13 religions preach this an element in them--that God is coming to rule
14 the universe, and that then there will be no difference at all in
15 conditions. The people who preach this doctrine are mere fanatics,
16 and fanatics are indeed the sincerest of mankind. Christianity was
17 preached just on the basis of the fascination of this fanaticism, and
18 that is what made it so attractive to the Greek and the Roman
19 slaves. They believed that under the millennial religion there would
20 be no more slavery, that there would be plenty to eat and drink;
21 and, therefore, they flocked round the Christian standard. Those
22 who preached the idea first were of course ignorant fanatics, but
23 very sincere. In modern times this millennial aspiration takes the
24 form of equality--of liberty, equality, and fraternity. This is also
25 fanaticism. True equality has never been and never can be on earth.
26 How can we all be equal here? This impossible kind of equality
27 implies total death. What makes this world what it is? Lost balance.
28 In the primal state, which is called chaos, there is perfect balance.
29 How do all the formative forces of the universe come then? By
30 struggling, competition, conflict. Suppose that all the particles of
31 matter were held in equilibrium, would there be then any process of
32 creation? We know from science that it is impossible. Disturb a
33 sheet of water, and there you find every particle of the water trying
34 to become calm again, one rushing against the other; and in the
35 same way all the phenomena which we call the universe--all things
36 therein--are struggling to get back to the state of perfect balance.
37 Again a disturbance comes, and again we have combination and
38 creation. Inequality is the very basis of creation. At the same time
39 the forces struggling to obtain equality are as much a necessity of
40 creation as those which destroy it.

41 Absolute equality, that which means a perfect balance of all
42 the struggling forces in all the planes, can never be in this world.
43 Before you attain that state, the world will have become quite unfit
44 for any kind of life, and no one will be there. We find, therefore, that
45 all these ideas of the millennium and of absolute equality are not
46 only impossible but also that, if we try to carry them out, they will
47 lead us surely enough to the day of destruction. What makes the
48 difference between man and man? It is largely the difference in the
49 brain. Nowadays no one but a lunatic will say that we are all born
50 with the same brain power. We come into the world with unequal
51 endowments; we come as greater men or as lesser men, and there
52 is no getting away from that pre-natally determined condition. The

1 American Indians were in this country for thousands of years, and a
2 few handfuls of your ancestors came to their land. What difference
3 they have caused in the appearance of the country! Why did not the
4 Indians make improvements and build cities, if all were equal? With
5 your ancestors a different sort of brain power came into the land,
6 different bundles of past impressions came, and they worked out
7 and manifested themselves. Absolute non-differentiation is death.
8 So long as this world lasts, differentiation there will and must be,
9 and the millennium of perfect equality will come only when a cycle
10 of creation comes to its end. Before that, equality cannot be. Yet
11 this idea of realising the millennium is a great motive power. Just as
12 inequality is necessary for creation itself, so the struggle to limit it
13 is also necessary. If there were no struggle to become free and get
14 back to God, there would be no creation either. It is the difference
15 between these two forces that determines the nature of the motives
16 of men. There will always be these motives to work, some tending
17 towards bondage and others towards freedom.

18 This world's wheel within wheel is a terrible mechanism; if
19 we put our hands in it, as soon as we are caught we are gone. We
20 all think that when we have done a certain duty, we shall be at rest;
21 but before we have done a part of that duty, another is already in
22 waiting. We are all being dragged along by this mighty, complex
23 world-machine. There are only two ways out of it; one is to give up
24 all concerns with the machine, to let it go and stand aside, to give
25 up our desires. That is very easy to say, but is almost impossible to
26 do. I do not know whether in twenty millions of men one can do
27 that. The other way is to plunge into the world and learn the secret
28 of work, and that is the way of Karma-Yoga. Do not fly away from
29 the wheels of the world-machine, but stand inside it and learn the
30 secret of work. Through proper work done inside, it is also possible
31 to come out. Through this machinery itself is the way out.

32 We have now seen what work is. It is a part of nature's
33 foundation, and goes on always. Those that believe in God
34 understand this better, because they know that God is not such an
35 incapable being as will need our help. Although this universe will go
36 on always, our goal is freedom, our goal is unselfishness; and
37 according to Karma-Yoga, that goal is to be reached through work.
38 All ideas of making the world perfectly happy may be good as
39 motive powers for fanatics; but we must know that fanaticism
40 brings forth as much evil as good. The Karma Yogi asks why you
41 require any motive to work other than the inborn love of freedom.
42 Be beyond the common worldly motives. "To work you have the
43 right, but not to the fruits thereof." Man can train himself to know
44 and to practise that, says the Karma Yogi. When the idea of doing
45 good becomes a part of his very being, then he will not seek for any
46 motive outside. Let us do good because it is good to do good; he
47 who does good work even in order to get to heaven binds himself
48 down, says the Karma Yogi. Any work that is done with any the least
49 selfish motive, instead of making us free, forges one more chain for
50 our feet.

51 So the only way is to give up all the fruits of work, to be
52 unattached to them. Know that this world is not we, nor are we this

1 world; that we are really not the body; that we really do not work.
2 We are the Self, eternally at rest and at peace. Why should we be
3 bound by anything? It is very good to say that we should be
4 perfectly non-attached, but what is the way to do it? Every good
5 work we do without any ulterior motive, instead of forging a new
6 chain, will break one of the links in the existing chains. Every good
7 thought that we send to the world without thinking of any return,
8 will be stored up there and break one link in the chain, and make us
9 purer and purer, until we become the purest of mortals. Yet all this
10 may seem to be rather quixotic and too philosophical, more
11 theoretical than practical. I have read many arguments against the
12 Bhagavad-Gita, and many have said that without motives you
13 cannot work. They have never seen unselfish work except under the
14 influence of fanaticism, and, therefore, they speak in that way.

15 Let me tell you in conclusion a few words about one man who
16 actually carried this teaching of Karma-Yoga into practice. That man
17 is Buddha. He is the one man who ever carried this into perfect
18 practice. All the prophets of the world, except Buddha, had external
19 motives to move them to unselfish action. The prophets of the
20 world, with this single exception, may be divided into two sets, one
21 set holding that they are incarnations of God come down on earth,
22 and the other holding that they are only messengers from God; and
23 both draw their impetus for work from outside, expect reward from
24 outside, however highly spiritual may be the language they use. But
25 Buddha is the only prophet who said, "I do not care to know your
26 various theories about God. What is the use of discussing all the
27 subtle doctrines about the soul? Do good and be good. And this will
28 take you to freedom and to whatever truth there is." He was, in the
29 conduct of his life, absolutely without personal motives; and what
30 man worked more than he? Show me in history one character who
31 has soared so high above all. The whole human race has produced
32 but one such character, such high philosophy, such wide sympathy.
33 This great philosopher, preaching the highest philosophy, yet had
34 the deepest sympathy for the lowest of animals, and never put forth
35 any claims for himself. He is the ideal Karma-Yogi, acting entirely
36 without motive, and the history of humanity shows him to have been
37 the greatest man ever born; beyond compare the greatest
38 combination of heart and brain that ever existed, the greatest soul-
39 power that has ever been manifested. He is the first great reformer
40 the world has seen. He was the first who dared to say, "Believe not
41 because some old manuscripts are produced, believe not because it
42 is your national belief, because you have been made to believe it
43 from your childhood; but reason it all out, and after you have
44 analysed it, then, if you find that it will do good to one and all,
45 believe it, live up to it, and help others to live up to it." He works
46 best who works without any motive, neither for money, nor for
47 fame, nor for anything else; and when a man can do that, he will be
48 a Buddha, and out of him will come the power to work in such a
49 manner as will transform the world. This man represents the very
50 highest ideal of Karma-Yoga.

RAJA-YOGA

PREFACE

Since the dawn of history, various extraordinary phenomena have been recorded as happening amongst human beings. Witnesses are not wanting in modern times to attest to the fact of such events, even in societies living under the full blaze of modern science. The vast mass of such evidence is unreliable, as coming from ignorant, superstitious, or fraudulent persons. In many instances the so-called miracles are imitations. But what do they imitate? It is not the sign of a candid and scientific mind to throw overboard anything without proper investigation. Surface scientists, unable to explain the various extraordinary mental phenomena, strive to ignore their very existence. They are, therefore, more culpable than those who think that their prayers are answered by a being, or beings, above the clouds, or than those who believe that their petitions will make such beings change the course of the universe. The latter have the excuse of ignorance, or at least of a defective system of education, which has taught them dependence upon such beings, a dependence which has become a part of their degenerate nature. The former have no such excuse.

For thousands of years such phenomena have been studied, investigated, and generalised, the whole ground of the religious faculties of man has been analysed, and the practical result is the science of Raja-Yoga. Raja-Yoga does not, after the unpardonable manner of some modern scientists, deny the existence of facts which are difficult to explain; on the other hand, it gently yet in no uncertain terms tells the superstitious that miracles, and answers to prayers, and powers of faith, though true as facts, are not rendered comprehensible through the superstitious explanation of attributing them to the agency of a being, or beings, above the clouds. It declares that each man is only a conduit for the infinite ocean of knowledge and power that lies behind mankind. It teaches that desires and wants are in man, that the power of supply is also in man; and that wherever and whenever a desire, a want, a prayer has been fulfilled, it was out of this infinite magazine that the supply came, and not from any supernatural being. The idea of supernatural beings may rouse to a certain extent the power of action in man, but it also brings spiritual decay. It brings dependence; it brings fear; it brings superstition. It degenerates into a horrible belief in the natural weakness of man. There is no supernatural, says the Yogi, but there are in nature gross manifestations and subtle manifestations. The subtle are the causes, the gross the effects. The gross can be easily perceived by the senses; not so the subtle. The practice of Raja-Yoga will lead to the acquisition of the more subtle perceptions.

All the orthodox systems of India philosophy have one goal in view, the liberation of the soul through perfection. The method is by Yoga. The word Yoga covers an immense ground, but both the Sankhya and the Vedanta Schools point to Yoga in some form or other.

The subject of the present book is that form of Yoga known as

1 Raja- Yoga. The aphorisms of Patanjali are the highest authority on
2 Raja-Yoga, and form its textbook. The other philosophers, though
3 occasionally differing from Patanjali in some philosophical points,
4 have, as a rule, acceded to his method of practice a decided
5 consent. The first part of this book comprises several lectures to
6 classes delivered by the present writer in New York. The second
7 part is a rather free translation of the aphorisms (Sutras) of
8 Patanjali, with a running commentary. Effort has been made to
9 avoid technicalities as far as possible, and to keep to the free and
10 easy style of conversation. In the first part some simple and specific
11 directions are given for the student who want to practise, *but all*
12 *such are especially and earnestly reminded that, with few*
13 *exceptions, Yoga can only be safely learnt by direct contact with a*
14 *teacher.* If these conversations succeed in awakening a desire for
15 further information on the subject, the teacher will not be wanting.

16 The system of Patanjali is based upon the system of the
17 Sankhyas, the points of difference being very few. The two most
18 important differences are, first, that Patanjali admits a Personal God
19 in the form of a first teacher, while the only God the Sankhyas admit
20 is a nearly perfected being, temporarily in charge of a cycle of
21 creation. Second, the Yogis hold the mind to be equally all-
22 pervading with the soul, or Purusha, and the Sankhyas do not.

23 The Author

Each soul is potentially divine.

The goal is to manifest this Divinity within by controlling nature, external and internal.

Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy--by one, or more, or all of these--and be free.

This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms, are but secondary details.

INTRODUCTORY

All our knowledge is based upon experience. What we call inferential knowledge, in which we go from the less to the more general, or from the general to the particular, has experience as its basis. In what are called the exact sciences, people easily find the truth, because it appeals to the particular experiences of every human being. The scientist does not tell you to believe in anything, but he has certain results which come from his own experiences, and reasoning on them when he asks us to believe in his conclusions, he appeals to some universal experience of humanity. In every exact science there is a basis which is common to all humanity, so that we can at once see the truth or the fallacy of the conclusions drawn therefrom. Now, the question is: Has religion any such basis or not? I shall have to answer the question both in the affirmative and in the negative.

Religion, as it is generally taught all over the world, is said to be based upon faith and belief, and, in most cases, consists only of different sets of theories, and that is the reason why we find all religions quarrelling with one another. These theories, again, are based upon belief. One man says there is a great Being sitting above the clouds and governing the whole universe, and he asks me to believe that solely on the authority of his assertion. In the same way, I may have my own ideas, which I am asking others to believe, and if they ask a reason, I cannot give them any. This is why religion and metaphysical philosophy have a bad name nowadays. Every educated man seems to say, "Oh, these religions are only bundles of theories without any standard to judge them by, each man preaching his own pet ideas." Nevertheless, there is a basis of universal belief in religion, governing all the different theories and all the varying ideas of different sects in different countries. Going

1 to their basis we find that they also are based upon universal
2 experiences.

3 In the first place, if you analyse all the various religions of the
4 world, you will find that these are divided into two classes, those
5 with a book and those without a book. Those with a book are the
6 strongest, and have the largest number of followers. Those without
7 books have mostly died out, and the few new ones have very small
8 followings. Yet, in all of them we find one consensus of opinion, that
9 the truths they teach are the results of the experiences of particular
10 persons. The Christian asks you to believe in his religion, to believe
11 in Christ and to believe in him as the incarnation of God, to believe
12 in a God, in a soul, and in a better state of that soul. If I ask him for
13 reason, he says he believes in them. But if you go to the fountain-
14 head of Christianity, you will find that it is based upon experience.
15 Christ said he saw God; the disciples said they felt God; and so
16 forth. Similarly, in Buddhism, it is Buddha's experience. He
17 experienced certain truths, saw them, came in contact with them,
18 and preached them to the world. So with the Hindus. In their books
19 the writers, who are called Rishis, or sages, declare they
20 experienced certain truths, and these they preach. Thus it is clear
21 that all the religions of the world have been built upon that one
22 universal and adamant foundation of all our knowledge--direct
23 experience. The teachers all saw God; they all saw their own souls,
24 they saw their future, they saw their eternity, and what they saw
25 they preached. Only there is this difference that by most of these
26 religions especially in modern times, a peculiar claim is made,
27 namely, that these experiences are impossible at the present day;
28 they were only possible with a few men, who were the first
29 founders of the religions that subsequently bore their names. At the
30 present time these experiences have become obsolete, and,
31 therefore, we have now to take religion on belief. This I entirely
32 deny. If there has been one experience in this world in any
33 particular branch of knowledge, it absolutely follows that that
34 experience has been possible millions of times before, and will be
35 repeated eternally. Uniformity is the rigorous law of nature; what
36 once happened can happen always.

37 The teachers of the science of Yoga, therefore, declare that
38 religion is not only based upon the experience of ancient times, but
39 that no man can be religious until he has the same perceptions
40 himself. Yoga is the science which teaches us how to get these
41 perceptions. It is not much use to talk about religion until one has
42 felt it. Why is there so much disturbance, so much fighting and
43 quarrelling in the name of God? There has been more bloodshed in
44 the name of God than for any other cause, because people never
45 went to the fountain-head; they were content only to give a mental
46 assent to the customs of their forefathers, and wanted others to do
47 the same. What right has a man to say he has a soul if he does not
48 feel it, or that there is a God if he does not see Him? If there is a
49 God we must see Him, if there is a soul we must perceive it;
50 otherwise it is better not to believe. It is better to be an outspoken
51 atheist than a hypocrite. The modern idea, on the one hand, with
52 the "learned" is that religion and metaphysics and all search after a

1 Supreme Being are futile; on the other hand, with the semi-
2 educated, the idea seems to be that these things really have no
3 basis; their only value consists in the fact that they furnish strong
4 motive powers for doing good to the world. If men believe in a God,
5 they may become good, and moral, and so make good citizens. We
6 cannot blame them for holding such ideas, seeing that all the
7 teaching these men get is simply to believe in an eternal rigmarole
8 of words, without any substance behind them. They are asked to
9 live upon words; can they do it? If they could, I should not have the
10 least regard for human nature. Man wants truth, wants to
11 experience truth for himself; when he has grasped it, realised it,
12 felt it within his heart of hearts, then alone, declare the Vedas,
13 would all doubts vanish, all darkness be scattered, and all
14 crookedness be made straight. "Ye children of immortality, even
15 those who live in the highest sphere, the way is found; there is a
16 way out of all this darkness, and that is by perceiving Him who is
17 beyond all darkness; there is no other way."

18 The science of Raja-Yoga proposes to put before humanity a
19 practical and scientifically worked out method of reaching this
20 truth. In the first place, every science must have its own method of
21 investigation. If you want to become an astronomer and sit down
22 and cry "Astronomy! Astronomy!" it will never come to you. The
23 same with chemistry. A certain method must be followed. You must
24 go to a laboratory, take different substances, mix them up,
25 compound them, experiment with them, and out of that will come a
26 knowledge of chemistry. If you want to be an astronomer, you must
27 go to an observatory, take a telescope, study the stars and planets,
28 and then you will become an astronomer. Each science must have
29 its own methods. I could preach you thousands of sermons, but they
30 would not make you religious, until you practised the method.
31 These are the truths of the sages of all countries, of all ages, of men
32 pure and unselfish, who had no motive but to do good to the world.
33 They all declare that they have found some truth higher than what
34 the senses can bring to us, and they invite verification. They ask us
35 to take up the method and practise honestly, and then, if we do not
36 find this higher truth, we will have the right to say there is no truth
37 in the claim, but before we have done that, we are not rational in
38 denying the truth of their assertions. So we must work faithfully,
39 using the prescribed methods, and light will come.

40 In acquiring knowledge we make use of generalisations, and
41 generalisation is based upon observation. We first observe facts,
42 then generalise, and then draw conclusions or principles. The
43 knowledge of the mind, of the internal nature of man, of thought,
44 can never be had until we have first the power of observing the
45 facts that are going on within. It is comparatively easy to observe
46 facts in the external world, for many instruments have been
47 invented for the purpose, but in the internal world we have no
48 instrument to help us. Yet we know we must observe in order to
49 have a real science. Without a proper analysis, any science will be
50 hopeless--mere theorising. And that is why all the psychologists
51 have been quarrelling among themselves since the beginning of
52 time, except those few who found out the means of observation.

1 The science of Raja-Yoga, in the first place, proposes to give
2 us such a means of observing the internal states. The instrument is
3 the mind itself. The power of attention, when properly guided, and
4 directed towards the internal world, will analyse the mind, and
5 illumine facts for us. The powers of the mind are like rays of light
6 dissipated; when they are concentrated, they illumine. This is our
7 only means of knowledge. Everyone is using it, both in the external
8 and the internal world; but, for the psychologist, the same minute
9 observation has to be directed to the internal world, which the
10 scientific man directs to the external; and this requires a great deal
11 of practice. From our childhood upwards we have been taught only
12 to pay attention to things external, but never to things internal;
13 hence most of us have nearly lost the faculty of observing the
14 internal mechanism. To turn the mind, as it were, inside, stop it
15 from going outside, and then to concentrate all its powers, and
16 throw them upon the mind itself, in order that it may know its own
17 nature, analyse itself, is very hard work. Yet that is the only way to
18 anything which will be a scientific approach to the subject.

19 What is the use of such knowledge? In the first place,
20 knowledge itself is the highest reward of knowledge, and secondly,
21 there is also utility in it. It will take away all our misery. When by
22 analysing his own mind, man comes face to face, as it were, with
23 something which is never destroyed, something which is, by its own
24 nature, eternally pure and perfect, he will no more be miserable, no
25 more unhappy. All misery comes from fear, from unsatisfied desire.
26 Man will find that he never dies, and then he will have no more fear
27 of death. When he knows that he is perfect, he will have no more
28 vain desires, and both these causes being absent, there will be no
29 more misery--there will be perfect bliss, even while in this body.

30 There is only one method by which to attain this knowledge,
31 that which is called concentration. The chemist in his laboratory
32 concentrates all the energies of his mind into one focus, and throws
33 them upon the materials he is analysing, and so finds out their
34 secrets. The astronomer concentrates all the energies of his mind
35 and projects them through his telescope upon the skies; and the
36 stars, the sun, and the moon, give up their secrets to him. The more
37 I can concentrate my thoughts on the matter on which I am talking
38 to you, the more light I can throw upon you. You are listening to me,
39 and the more you concentrate your thoughts, the more clearly you
40 will grasp what I have to say.

41 How has all the knowledge in the world been gained but by
42 the concentration of the powers of the mind? The world is ready to
43 give up its secrets if we only know how to knock, how to give it the
44 necessary blow. The strength and force of the blow come through
45 concentration. There is no limit to the power of the human mind.
46 The more concentrated it is, the more power is brought to bear on
47 one point; that is the secret.

48 It is easy to concentrate the mind on external things, the
49 mind naturally goes outwards; but not so in the case of religion, or
50 psychology, or metaphysics, where the subject and the object, are
51 one. The object is internal, the mind itself is the object, and it is
52 necessary to study the mind itself--mind studying mind. We know

1 that there is the power of the mind called reflection. I am talking to
2 you. At the same time I am standing aside, as it were, a second
3 person, and knowing and hearing what I am talking. You work and
4 think at the same time, while a portion of your mind stands by and
5 sees what you are thinking. The powers of the mind should be
6 concentrated and turned back upon itself, and as the darkest places
7 reveal their secrets before the penetrating rays of the sun, so will
8 this concentrated mind penetrate its own innermost secrets. Thus
9 will we come to the basis of belief, the real genuine religion. We will
10 perceive for ourselves whether we have souls, whether life is of five
11 minutes or of eternity, whether there is a God in the universe or
12 none. It will all be revealed to us. This is what Raja-Yoga proposes
13 to teach. The goal of all its teaching is how to concentrate the
14 minds, then, how to discover the innermost recesses of our own
15 minds, then, how to generalise their contents and form our own
16 conclusions from them. It, therefore, never asks the question what
17 our religion is, whether we are Deists or Atheists, whether
18 Christians, Jews, or Buddhists. We are human beings; that is
19 sufficient. Every human being has the right and the power to seek
20 for religion. Every human being has the right to ask the reason,
21 why, and to have his question answered by himself, if he only takes
22 the trouble.

23 So far, then, we see that in the study of this Raja-Yoga no faith
24 or belief is necessary. Believe nothing until you find it out for
25 yourself; that is what it teaches us. Truth requires no prop to make
26 it stand. Do you mean to say that the facts of our awakened state
27 require any dreams or imaginings to prove them? Certainly not.
28 This study of Raja-Yoga takes a long time and constant practice. A
29 part of this practice is physical, but in the main it is mental. As we
30 proceed we shall find how intimately the mind is connected with the
31 body. If we believe that the mind is simply a finer part of the body,
32 and that mind acts upon the body, then it stands to reason that the
33 body must react upon the mind. If the body is sick, the mind
34 becomes sick also. If the body is healthy, the mind remains healthy
35 and strong. When one is angry, the mind becomes disturbed.
36 Similarly when the mind is disturbed, the body also becomes
37 disturbed. With the majority of mankind the mind is greatly under
38 the control of the body, their mind being very little developed. The
39 vast mass of humanity is very little removed from the animals. Not
40 only so, but in many instances, the power of control in them is little
41 higher than that of the lower animals. We have very little command
42 of our minds. Therefore to bring that command about, to get that
43 control over body and mind, we must take certain physical helps.
44 When the body is sufficiently controlled, we can attempt the
45 manipulation of the mind. By manipulating the mind, we shall be
46 able to bring it under our control, make it work as we like, and
47 compel it to concentrate its powers as we desire.

48 According to the Raja-Yogi, the external world is but the gross
49 form of the internal, or subtle. The finer is always the cause, the
50 grosser the effect. So the external world is the effect, the internal
51 the cause. In the same way external forces are simply the grosser
52 parts, of which the internal forces are the finer. The man who has

1 discovered and learned how to manipulate the internal forces will
2 get the whole of nature under his control. The Yogi proposes to
3 himself no less a task than to master the whole universe, to control
4 the whole of nature. He wants to arrive at the point where what we
5 call "nature's laws" will have no influence over him, where he will
6 be able to get beyond them all. He will be master of the whole of
7 nature, internal and external. The progress and civilisation of the
8 human race simply mean controlling this nature.

9 Different races take to different processes of controlling
10 nature. Just as in the same society some individuals want to control
11 the external nature, and others the internal, so, among races, some
12 want to control the external nature, and others the internal. Some
13 say that by controlling internal nature we control everything.
14 Others that by controlling external nature we control everything.
15 Carried to the extreme both are right, because in nature there is no
16 such division as internal or external. These are fictitious limitations
17 that never existed. The externalists and the internalists are
18 destined to meet at the same point, when both reach the extreme of
19 their knowledge. Just as a physicist, when he pushes his knowledge
20 to its limits, finds it melting away into metaphysics, so a
21 metaphysician will find that what he calls mind and matter are but
22 apparent distinctions, the reality being One.

23 The end and aim of all science is to find the unity, the One out
24 of which the manifold is being manufactured, that One existing as
25 many. Raja-Yoga proposes to start from the internal world, to study
26 internal nature, and through that, control the whole--both internal
27 and external. It is a very old attempt. India has been its special
28 stronghold, but it was also attempted by other nations. In Western
29 countries it was regarded as mysticism and people who wanted to
30 practise it were either burned or killed as witches and sorcerers. In
31 India, for various reasons, it fell into the hands of persons who
32 destroyed ninety per cent of the knowledge, and tried to make a
33 great secret of the remainder. In modern times many so-called
34 teachers have arisen in the West worse than those of India, because
35 the latter knew something, while these modern exponents know
36 nothing.

37 Anything that is secret and mysterious in these systems of
38 Yoga should be at once rejected. The best guide in life is strength.
39 In religion, as in all other matters, discard everything that weakens
40 you, have nothing to do with it. Mystery-mongering weakens the
41 human brain. It has well-nigh destroyed Yoga--one of the grandest
42 of sciences. From the time it was discovered, more than four
43 thousand years ago, Yoga was perfectly delineated, formulated, and
44 preached in India. It is a striking fact that the more modern the
45 commentator the greater the mistakes he makes, while the more
46 ancient the writer the more rational he is. Most of the modern
47 writers talk of all sorts of mystery. Thus Yoga fell into the hands of a
48 few persons who made it a secret, instead of letting the full blaze of
49 daylight and reason fall upon it. They did so that they might have
50 the powers to themselves.

51 In the first place, there is no mystery in what I teach. What
52 little I know I will tell you. So far as I can reason it out I will do so,

1 but as to what I do not know I will simply tell you what the books
2 say. It is wrong to believe blindly. You must exercise your own
3 reason and judgment; you must practise, and see whether these
4 things happen or not. Just as you would take up any other science,
5 exactly in the same manner you should take up this science for
6 study. There is neither mystery nor danger in it. So far as it is true,
7 it ought to be preached in the public streets, in broad daylight. Any
8 attempt to mystify these things is productive of great danger.

9 Before proceeding further, I will tell you a little of the
10 Sankhya philosophy, upon which the whole of Raja-Yoga is based.
11 According to the Sankhya philosophy, the genesis of perception is
12 as follows: the affections of external objects are carried by the
13 outer instruments to their respective brain centres or organs, the
14 organs carry the affections to the mind, the mind to the
15 determinative faculty, from this the Purusha (the soul) receives
16 them, when perception results. Next he gives the order back, as it
17 were, to the motor centres to do the needful. With the exception of
18 the Purusha all of these are material, but the mind is much finer
19 matter than the external instruments. That material of which the
20 mind is composed goes also to form the subtle matter called the
21 Tanmatras. These become gross and make the external matter. That
22 is the psychology of the Sankhya. So that between the intellect and
23 the grosser matter outside there is only a difference in degree. The
24 Purusha is the only thing which is immaterial. The mind is an
25 instrument, as it were, in the hands of the soul, through which the
26 soul catches external objects. The mind is constantly changing and
27 vacillating, and can, when perfected, either attach itself to several
28 organs, to one, or to none. For instance, if I hear the clock with
29 great attention, I will not, perhaps, see anything although my eyes
30 may be open, showing that the mind was not attached to the seeing
31 organ, while it was to the hearing organ. But the perfected mind
32 can be attached to all the organs simultaneously. It has the reflexive
33 power of looking back into its own depths. This reflexive power is
34 what the Yogi wants to attain; by concentrating the powers of the
35 mind, and turning them inward, he seeks to know what is
36 happening inside. There is in this no question of mere belief; it is
37 the analysis arrived at by certain philosophers. Modern
38 physiologists tell us that the eyes are not the organ of vision, but
39 that the organ is in one of the nerve centres of the brain, and so
40 with all the senses; they also tell us that these centres are formed
41 of the same material as the brain itself. The Sankhyas also tell us
42 the same thing. The former is a statement on the physical side, and
43 the latter on the psychological side; yet both are the same. Our field
44 of research lies beyond this. The Yogi proposed to attain that fine
45 state of perception in which he can perceive all the different mental
46 states. There must be mental perception of all of them. One can
47 perceive how the sensation is travelling, how the mind is receiving
48 it, how it is going to the determinative faculty, and how this gives it
49 to the Purusha. As each science requires certain preparations and
50 has its own method, which must be followed before it could be
51 understood, even so in Raja-Yoga.

52 Certain regulations as to food are necessary; we must use

1 that food which brings us the purest mind. If you go into a
2 menagerie, you will find this demonstrated at once. You see the
3 elephants, huge animals, but calm and gentle; and if you go towards
4 the cages of the lions and tigers, you find them restless, showing
5 how much difference has been made by food. All the forces that are
6 working in this body have been produced out of food; we see that
7 every day. If you begin to fast, first your body will get weak, the
8 physical forces will suffer; then, after a few days, the mental forces
9 will suffer also. First, memory will fail. Then comes a point, when
10 you are not able to think, much less to pursue any course of
11 reasoning. We have, therefore, to take care what sort of food we eat
12 at the beginning, and when we have got strength enough, when our
13 practice is well advanced, we need not be so careful in this respect.
14 While the plant is growing it must be hedged round, lest it be
15 injured; but when it becomes a tree, the hedges are taken away. It
16 is strong enough to withstand all assaults.

17 A Yogi must avoid the two extremes of luxury and austerity.
18 He must not fast, nor torture his flesh. He who does so, says the
19 Gita, cannot be a Yogi: He who fasts, he who keeps awake, he who
20 sleeps much, he who works too much, he who does no work, none
21 of these can be a Yogi (Gita, VI, 16).

THE FIRST STEPS

Raja-Yoga is divided into eight steps. The first is Yama--non-killing, truthfulness, non-stealing, continence, and non-receiving of any gifts. Next is Niyama--cleanliness, contentment, austerity, study, and self-surrender to God. Then comes Asana, or posture; Pranayama, or control of Prana; Pratyahara, or restraint of the senses from their objects; Dharana, or fixing the mind on a spot; Dhyana, or meditation; and Samadhi, or superconsciousness. The Yama and Niyama, as we see, are moral trainings; without these as the basis no practice of Yoga will succeed. As these two become established, the Yogi will begin to realise the fruits of his practice; without these it will never bear fruit. A Yogi must not think of injuring anyone, by thought, word, or deed. Mercy shall not be for men alone, but shall go beyond, and embrace the whole world.

The next step is Asana, posture. A series of exercises, physical and mental, is to be gone through every day, until certain higher states are reached. Therefore it is quite necessary that we should find a posture in which we can remain long. That posture which is the easiest for one should be the one chosen. For thinking, a certain posture may be very easy for one man, while to another it may be very difficult. We will find later on that during the study of these psychological matters a good deal of activity goes on in the body. Nerve currents will have to be displaced and given a new channel. New sorts of vibrations will begin, the whole constitution will be remodelled, as it were. But the main part of the activity will lie along the spinal column, so that the one thing necessary for the posture is to hold the spinal column free, sitting erect, holding the three parts--the chest, neck, and head--in a straight line. Let the whole weight of the body be supported by the ribs, and then you have an easy natural posture, with the spine straight. You will easily see that you cannot think very high thoughts with the chest in. This portion of the Yoga is a little similar to the Hatha-Yoga which deals entirely with the physical body, its aim being to make the physical body very strong. We have nothing to do with it here, because its practices are very difficult, and cannot be learned in a day, and, after all, do not lead to much spiritual growth. Many of these practices you will find in Delsarte and other teachers, such as placing the body in different postures, but the object in these is physical, not psychological. There is not one muscle in the body over which a man cannot establish a perfect control. The heart can be made to stop or go on at his bidding, and each part of the organism can be similarly controlled.

The result of this branch of Yoga is to make men live long; health is the chief idea, the one goal of the Hatha-Yogi. He is determined not to fall sick, and he never does. He lives long; a hundred years is nothing to him; he is quite young and fresh when he is 150, without one hair turned grey. But that is all. A banyan tree lives sometimes 5000 years, but it is a banyan tree and nothing more. So, if a man lives long, he is only a healthy animal. One or two ordinary lessons of the Hatha-Yogis are very useful. For

1 instance, some of you will find it a good thing for headaches to
2 drink cold water through the nose as soon as you get up in the
3 morning; the whole day your brain will be nice and cool, and you
4 will never catch cold. It is very easy to do; put your nose into the
5 water, draw it up through the nostrils and make a pump action in
6 the throat.

7 After one has learned to have a firm erect seat, one has to
8 perform, according to certain schools, a practice called the
9 purifying of the nerves. This part has been rejected by some as not
10 belonging to Raja- Yoga, but as so great an authority as the
11 commentator Shankaracharya advises it, I think fit that it should be
12 mentioned, and I will quote his own directions from his commentary
13 on the Shvethashvatara Upanishad: "The mind whose dross has
14 been cleared away by Pranayama, becomes fixed in Brahman;
15 therefore Pranayama is declared. First the nerves are to be
16 purified, then comes the power to practise Pranayama. Stopping
17 the right nostril with the thumb, through the left nostril fill in air,
18 according to capacity; then, without any interval, throw the air out
19 through the right nostril, closing the left one. Again inhaling
20 through the right nostril eject through the left, according to
21 capacity; practising this three or five times at four hours of the day,
22 before dawn, during midday, in the evening, and at midnight, in
23 fifteen days or a month purity of the nerves is attained; then begins
24 Pranayama."

25 Practice is absolutely necessary. You may sit down and listen
26 to me by the hour every day, but if you do not practise, you will not
27 get one step further. It all depends on practice. We never
28 understand these things until we experience them. We will have to
29 see and feel them for ourselves. Simply listening to explanations
30 and theories will not do. There are several obstructions to practice.
31 The first obstruction is an unhealthy body: if the body is not in a fit
32 state, the practice will be obstructed. Therefore we have to keep
33 the body in good health; we have to take care of what we eat and
34 drink, and what we do. Always use a mental effort, what is usually
35 called "Christian Science," to keep the body strong. That is all-
36 nothing further of the body. We must not forget that health is only a
37 means to an end. If health were the end, we would be like animals;
38 animals rarely become unhealthy.

39 The second obstruction is doubt; we always feel doubtful
40 about things we do not see. Man cannot live upon words, however
41 he may try. So, doubt comes to us as to whether there is any truth
42 in these things or not; even the best of us will doubt sometimes.
43 With practice, within a few days, a little glimpse will come, enough
44 to give one encouragement and hope. As a certain commentator on
45 Yoga philosophy says, "When one proof is obtained, however little
46 that may be, it will give us faith in the whole teaching of Yoga." For
47 instance, after the first few months of practice, you will begin to
48 find you can read another's thoughts; they will come to you in
49 picture form. Perhaps you will hear something happening at a long
50 distance, when you concentrate your mind with a wish to hear.
51 These glimpses will come, by little bits at first, but enough to give
52 you faith, and strength, and hope. For instance, if you concentrate

1 your thoughts on the tip of your nose, in a few days you will begin
2 to smell most beautiful fragrance, which will be enough to show you
3 that there are certain mental perceptions that can be made obvious
4 without the contact of physical objects. But we must always
5 remember that these are only the means; the aim, the end, the goal,
6 of all this training is liberation of the soul. Absolute control of
7 nature, and nothing short of it, must be the goal. We must be the
8 masters, and not the slaves of nature; neither body nor mind must
9 be our master, nor must we forget that the body is mine, and not I
10 the body's.

11 A god and a demon went to learn about the Self from a great
12 sage. They studied with him for a long time. At last the sage told
13 them, "You yourselves are the Being you are seeking." Both of them
14 thought that their bodies were the Self. They went back to their
15 people quite satisfied and said, "We have learned everything that
16 was to be learned; eat, drink, and be merry; we are the Self; there
17 is nothing beyond us." The nature of the demon was ignorant,
18 clouded; so he never inquired any further, but was perfectly
19 contented with the idea that he was God, that by the Self was
20 meant the body. The god had a purer nature. He at first committed
21 the mistake of thinking: I, this body, am Brahman: so keep it strong
22 and in health, and well dressed, and give it all sorts of enjoyments.
23 But, in a few days, he found out that that could not be the meaning
24 of the sage, their master; there must be something higher. So he
25 came back and said, "Sir, did you teach me that this body was the
26 Self? If so, I see all bodies die; the Self cannot die." The sage said,
27 "Find it out; thou art That." Then the god thought that the vital
28 forces which work the body were what the sage meant. But, after a
29 time, he found that if he ate, these vital forces remained strong,
30 but, if he starved, they became weak. The god then went back to
31 the sage and said, "Sir, do you mean that the vital forces are the
32 Self?" The sage said, "Find out for yourself; thou art That." The god
33 returned home once more, thinking that it was the mind, perhaps,
34 that was the Self. But in a short while he saw that thoughts were so
35 various, now good, again bad; the mind was too changeable to be
36 the Self. He went back to the sage and said, "Sir, I do not think that
37 the mind is the Self; did you mean that?" "No," replied the sage,
38 "thou art That; find out for yourself." The god went home, and at
39 last found that he was the Self, beyond all thought, one without
40 birth or death, whom the sword cannot pierce or the fire burn,
41 whom the air cannot dry or the water melt, the beginningless and
42 endless, the immovable, the intangible, the omniscient, the
43 omnipotent Being; that It was neither the body nor the mind, but
44 beyond them all. So he was satisfied; but the poor demon did not
45 get the truth, owing to his fondness for the body.

46 This world has a good many of these demonic natures, but
47 there are some gods too. If one proposes to teach any science to
48 increase the power of sense-enjoyment, one finds multitudes ready
49 for it. If one undertakes to show the supreme goal, one finds few to
50 listen to him. Very few have the power to grasp the higher, fewer
51 still the patience to attain to it. But there are a few also who know
52 that even if the body can be made to live for a thousand years, the

1 result in the end will be the same. When the forces that hold it
2 together go away, the body must fall. No man was ever born who
3 could stop his body one moment from changing. Body is the name
4 of a series of changes. "As in a river the masses of water are
5 changing before you every moment, and new masses are coming,
6 yet taking similar form, so is it with this body." Yet the body must be
7 kept strong and healthy. It is the best instrument we have.

8 This human body is the greatest body in the universe, and a
9 human being the greatest being. Man is higher than all animals,
10 than all angels; none is greater than man. Even the Devas (gods)
11 will have to come down again and attain to salvation through a
12 human body. Man alone attains to perfection, not even the Devas.
13 According to the Jews and Mohammedans, God created man after
14 creating the angels and everything else, and after creating man He
15 asked the angels to come and salute him, and all did so except Iblis;
16 so God cursed him and he became Satan. Behind this allegory is the
17 great truth that this human birth is the greatest birth we can have.
18 The lower creation, the animal, is dull, and manufactured mostly
19 out of Tamas. Animals cannot have any high thoughts; nor can the
20 angels, or Devas, attain to direct freedom without human birth. In
21 human society, in the same way, too much wealth or too much
22 poverty is a great impediment to the higher development of the
23 soul. It is from the middle classes that the great ones of the world
24 come. Here the forces are very equally adjusted and balanced.

25 Returning to our subject, we come next to Pranayama,
26 controlling the breathing. What has that to do with concentrating
27 the powers of the mind? Breath is like the fly-wheel of this machine,
28 the body. In a big engine you find the fly-wheel first moving, and
29 that motion is conveyed to finer and finer machinery until the most
30 delicate and finest mechanism in the machine is in motion. The
31 breath is that fly-wheel, supplying and regulating the motive power
32 to everything in this body.

33 There was once a minister to a great king. He fell into
34 disgrace. The king, as a punishment, ordered him to be shut up in
35 the top of a very high tower. This was done, and the minister was
36 left there to perish. He had a faithful wife, however, who came to
37 the tower at night and called to her husband at the top to know
38 what she could do to help him. He told her to return to the tower
39 the following night and bring with her a long rope, some stout
40 twine, pack thread, silken thread, a beetle, and a little honey.
41 Wondering much, the good wife obeyed her husband, and brought
42 him the desired articles. The husband directed her to attach the
43 silken thread firmly to the beetle, then to smear its horns with a
44 drop of honey, and to set it free on the wall of the tower, with its
45 head pointing upwards. She obeyed all these instructions, and the
46 beetle started on its long journey. Smelling the honey ahead it
47 slowly crept onwards, in the hope of reaching the honey, until at
48 last it reached to top of the tower, when the minister grasped the
49 beetle, and got possession of the silken thread. He told his wife to
50 tie the other end to the pack thread, and after he had drawn up the
51 pack thread, he repeated the process with the stout twine, and
52 lastly with the rope. Then the rest was easy. The minister

1 descended from the tower by means of the rope, and made his
2 escape. In this body of ours the breath motion is the "silken thread";
3 by laying hold of and learning to control it we grasp the pack thread
4 of the nerve currents, and from these the stout twine of our
5 thoughts, and lastly the rope of Prana, controlling which we reach
6 freedom.

7 We do not know anything about our own bodies; we cannot
8 know. At best we can take a dead body, and cut it in pieces, and
9 there are some who can take a live animal and cut it in pieces in
10 order to see what is inside the body. Still, that has nothing to do
11 with our own bodies. We know very little about them. Why do we
12 not? Because our attention is not discriminating enough to catch
13 the very fine movements that are going on within. We can know of
14 them only when the mind becomes more subtle and enters, as it
15 were, deeper into the body. To get the subtle perception we have to
16 begin with the grosser perceptions. We have to get hold of that
17 which is setting the whole engine in motion. That is the Prana, the
18 most obvious manifestation of which is the breath. Then, along with
19 the breath, we shall slowly enter the body, which will enable us to
20 find out about the subtle forces, the nerve currents that are moving
21 all over the body. As soon as we perceive and learn to feel them, we
22 shall begin to get control over them, and over the body. The mind is
23 also set in motion by these different nerve currents, so at last we
24 shall reach the state of perfect control over the body and the mind,
25 making both our servants. Knowledge is power. We have to get this
26 power. So we must begin at the beginning, with Pranayama,
27 restraining the Prana. This Pranayama is a long subject, and will
28 take several lessons to illustrate it thoroughly. We shall take it part
29 by part.

30 We shall gradually see the reasons for each exercise and what
31 forces in the body are set in motion. All these things will come to
32 us, but it requires constant practice, and the proof will come by
33 practice. No amount of reasoning which I can give you will be proof
34 to you, until you have demonstrated it for yourselves. As soon as
35 you begin to feel these currents in motion all over you, doubts will
36 vanish, but it requires hard practice every day. You must practise at
37 least twice every day, and the best times are towards the morning
38 and the evening. When night passes into day, and day into night, a
39 state of relative calmness ensues. The early morning and the early
40 evening are the two periods of calmness. Your body will have a like
41 tendency to become calm at those times. We should take advantage
42 of that natural condition and begin then to practise. Make it a rule
43 not to eat until you have practised; if you do this, the sheer force of
44 hunger will break your laziness. In India they teach children never
45 to eat until they have practised or worshipped, and it becomes
46 natural to them after a time; a boy will not feel hungry until he has
47 bathed and practised.

48 Those of you who can afford it will do better to have a room
49 for this practice alone. Do not sleep in that room, it must be kept
50 holy. You must not enter the room until you have bathed, and are
51 perfectly clean in body and mind. Place flowers in that room always;
52 they are the best surroundings for a Yogi; also pictures that are

1 pleasing. Burn incense morning and evening. Have no quarrelling,
2 nor anger, nor unholy thought in that room. Only allow those
3 persons to enter it who are of the same thought as you. Then
4 gradually there will be an atmosphere of holiness in the room, so
5 that when you are miserable, sorrowful, doubtful, or your mind is
6 disturbed, the very fact of entering that room will make you calm.
7 This was the idea of the temple and the church, and in some
8 temples and churches you will find it even now, but in the majority
9 of them the very idea has been lost. The idea is that by keeping holy
10 vibrations there the place becomes and remains illumined. Those
11 who cannot afford to have a room set apart can practise anywhere
12 they like. Sit in a straight posture, and the first thing to do is to
13 send a current of holy thought to all creation. Mentally repeat, "Let
14 all beings be happy; let all beings be peaceful; let all beings be
15 blissful." So do to the east, south, north and west. The more you do
16 that the better you will feel yourself. You will find at last that the
17 easiest way to make ourselves healthy is to see that others are
18 healthy, and the easiest way to make ourselves happy is to see that
19 others are happy. After doing that, those who believe in God should
20 pray--not for money, not for health, nor for heaven; pray for
21 knowledge and light; every other prayer is selfish. Then the next
22 thing to do is to think of your own body, and see that it is strong and
23 healthy; it is the best instrument you have. Think of it as being as
24 strong as adamant, and that with the help of this body you will
25 cross the ocean of life. Freedom is never to be reached by the
26 weak. Throw away all weakness. Tell your body that it is strong, tell
27 your mind that it is strong, and have unbounded faith and hope in
28 yourself.

PRANA

Pranayama is not, as many think, something about breath; breath indeed has very little to do with it, if anything. Breathing is only one of the many exercises through which we get to the real Pranayama. Pranayama means the control of Prana. According to the philosophers of India, the whole universe is composed of two materials, one of which they call Akasha. It is the omnipresent, all-penetrating existence. Everything that has form, everything that is the result of combination, is evolved out of this Akasha. It is the Akasha that becomes the air, that becomes the liquids, that becomes the solids; it is the Akasha that becomes the sun, the earth, the moon, the stars, the comets; it is the Akasha that becomes the human body, the animal body, the plants, every form that we see, everything that can be sensed, everything that exists. It cannot be perceived; it is so subtle that it is beyond all ordinary perception; it can only be seen when it has become gross, has taken form. At the beginning of creation there is only this Akasha. At the end of the cycle the solids, the liquids, and the gases all melt into the Akasha again, and the next creation similarly proceeds out of this Akasha.

By what power is this Akasha manufactured into this universe? By the power of Prana. Just as Akasha is the infinite, omnipresent material of this universe, so is this Prana the infinite, omnipresent manifesting power of this universe. At the beginning and at the end of a cycle everything becomes Akasha, and all the forces that are in the universe resolve back into the Prana; in the next cycle, out of this Prana is evolved everything that we call energy, everything that we call force. It is the Prana that is manifesting as motion; it is the Prana that is manifesting as gravitation, as magnetism. It is the Prana that is manifesting as the actions of the body, as the nerve currents, as thought force. From thought down to the lowest force, everything is but the manifestation of Prana. The sum total of all forces in the universe, mental or physical, when resolved back to their original state, is called Prana. "When there was neither aught nor naught, when darkness was covering darkness, what existed then? That Akasha existed without motion." The physical motion of the Prana was stopped, but it existed all the same.

At the end of a cycle the energies now displayed in the universe quiet down and become potential. At the beginning of the next cycle they start up, strike upon the Akasha, and out of the Akasha evolve these various forms, and as the Akasha changes, this Prana changes also into all these manifestations of energy. The knowledge and control of this Prana is really what is meant by Pranayama.

This opens to us the door to almost unlimited power. Suppose, for instance, a man understood the Prana perfectly, and could control it, what power on earth would not be his? He would be able to move the sun and stars out of their places, to control everything in the universe, from the atoms to the biggest suns, because he would control the Prana. This is the end and aim of Pranayama.

1 When the Yogi becomes perfect, there will be nothing in nature not
2 under his control. If he orders the gods or the souls of the departed
3 to come, they will come at his bidding. All the forces of nature will
4 obey him as slaves. When the ignorant see these powers of the Yogi,
5 they call them the miracles. One peculiarity of the Hindu mind is
6 that it always inquires for the last possible generalisation, leaving
7 the details to be worked out afterwards. The question is raised in
8 the Vedas, "What is that, knowing which, we shall know
9 everything?" Thus, all books, and all philosophies that have been
10 written, have been only to prove that by knowing which everything
11 is known. If a man wants to know this universe bit by bit he must
12 know every individual grain of sand, which means infinite time; he
13 cannot know all of them. Then how can knowledge be? How is it
14 possible for a man to be all-knowing through particulars? The Yogis
15 say that behind this particular manifestation there is a
16 generalisation. Behind all particular ideas stands a generalised, an
17 abstract principle; grasp it, and you have grasped everything. Just
18 as this whole universe has been generalised in the Vedas into that
19 One Absolute Existence, and he who has grasped that Existence has
20 grasped the whole universe, so all forces have been generalised
21 into this Prana, and he who has grasped the Prana has grasped all
22 the forces of the universe, mental or physical. He who has
23 controlled the Prana has controlled his own mind, and all the minds
24 that exist. He who has controlled the Prana has controlled his body,
25 and all the bodies that exist, because the Prana is the generalised
26 manifestation of force.

27 How to control the Prana is the one idea of Pranayama. All
28 the trainings and exercises in this regard are for that one end. Each
29 man must begin where he stands, must learn how to control the
30 things that are nearest to him. This body is very near to us, nearer
31 than anything in the external universe, and this mind is the nearest
32 of all. The Prana which is working this mind and body is the nearest
33 to us of all the Prana in this universe. This little wave of the Prana
34 which represents our own energies, mental and physical, is the
35 nearest to us of all the waves of the infinite ocean of Prana. If we
36 can succeed in controlling that little wave, then alone we can hope
37 to control the whole of Prana. The Yogi who has done this gains
38 perfection; no longer is he under any power. He becomes almost
39 almighty, almost all-knowing. We see sects in every country who
40 have attempted this control of Prana. In this country there are
41 Mind-healers, Faith-healers, Spiritualists, Christian Scientists,
42 Hypnotists, etc., and if we examine these different bodies, we shall
43 find at the back of each this control of the Prana, whether they
44 know it or not. If you boil all their theories down, the residuum will
45 be that. It is the one and the same force they are manipulating, only
46 unknowingly. They have stumbled on the discovery of a force and
47 are using it unconsciously without knowing its nature, but it is the
48 same as the Yogi uses, and which comes from Prana.

49 The Prana is the vital force in every being. Thought is the
50 finest and highest action of Prana. Thought, again, as we see, is not
51 all. There is also what we call instinct or unconscious thought, the
52 lowest plane of action. If a mosquito stings us, our hand will strike

1 it automatically, instinctively. This is one expression of thought. All
2 reflex actions of the body belong to this plane of thought. There is
3 again the other plane of thought, the conscious. I reason, I judge, I
4 think, I see the pros and cons of certain things, yet that is not all.
5 We know that reason is limited. Reason can go only to a certain
6 extent, beyond that it cannot reach. The circle within which it runs
7 is very very limited indeed. Yet at the same time, we find facts rush
8 into this circle. Like the coming of comets certain things come into
9 this circle; it is certain they come from outside the limit, although
10 our reason cannot go beyond. The causes of the phenomena
11 intruding themselves in this small limit are outside of this limit. The
12 mind can exist on a still higher plane, the superconscious. When the
13 mind has attained to that state, which is called Samadhi--perfect
14 concentration, superconsciousness--it goes beyond the limits of
15 reason, and comes face to face with facts which no instinct or
16 reason can ever know. All manipulations of the subtle forces of the
17 body, the different manifestations of Prana, if trained, give a push to
18 the mind, help it to go up higher, and become superconscious, from
19 where it acts.

20 In this universe there is one continuous substance on every
21 plane of existence. Physically this universe is one: there is no
22 difference between the sun and you. The scientist will tell you it is
23 only a fiction to say the contrary. There is no real difference
24 between the table and me; the table is one point in the mass of
25 matter, and I another point. Each form represents, as it were, one
26 whirlpool in the infinite ocean of matter, of which not one is
27 constant. Just as in a rushing stream there may be millions of
28 whirlpools, the water in each of which is different every moment,
29 turning round and round for a few seconds, and then passing out,
30 replaced by a fresh quantity, so the whole universe is one constantly
31 changing mass of matter, in which all forms of existence are so
32 many whirlpools. A mass of matter enters into one whirlpool, say a
33 human body, stays there for a period, becomes changed, and goes
34 out into another, say an animal body this time, from which again
35 after a few years, it enters into another whirlpool, called a lump of
36 mineral. It is a constant change. Not one body is constant. There is
37 no such thing as my body, or your body, except in words. Of the one
38 huge mass of matter, one point is called a moon, another a sun,
39 another a man, another the earth, another a plant, another a
40 mineral. Not one is constant, but everything is changing, matter
41 eternally concreting and disintegrating. So it is with the mind.
42 Matter is represented by the ether; when the action of Prana is
43 most subtle, this very ether, in the finer state of vibration, will
44 represent the mind, and there it will be still one unbroken mass. If
45 you can simply get to that subtle vibration, you will see and feel
46 that the whole universe is composed of subtle vibrations.
47 Sometimes certain drugs have the power to take us, while as yet in
48 the senses, to that condition. Many of you may remember the
49 celebrated experiment of Sir Humphrey Davy, when the laughing
50 gas overpowered him--how, during the lecture, he remained
51 motionless, stupefied and, after that, he said that the whole
52 universe was made up of ideas. For the time being, as it were, the
53 gross vibrations had ceased, and only the subtle vibrations which

1 he called ideas, were present to him. He could only see the subtle
2 vibrations round him; everything had become thought; the whole
3 universe was an ocean of thought, he and everyone else had
4 become little thought whirlpools.

5 Thus, even in the universe of thought we find unity, and at
6 last, when we get to the Self, we know that that Self can only be
7 One. Beyond the vibrations of matter in its gross and subtle
8 aspects, beyond motion there is but One. Even in manifested motion
9 there is only unity. These facts can no more be denied. Modern
10 physics also has demonstrated that the sum total of the energies in
11 the universe is the same throughout. It has also been proved that
12 this sum total of energy exists in two forms. It becomes potential,
13 toned down, and calmed, and next it comes out manifested as all
14 these various forces; again it goes back to the quiet state, and again
15 it manifests. Thus it goes on evolving and involving through
16 eternity. The control of this Prana, as before stated, is what is called
17 Pranayama.

18 The most obvious manifestation of this Prana in the human
19 body is the motion of the lungs. If that stops, as a rule all the other
20 manifestations of force in the body will immediately stop. But there
21 are persons who can train themselves in such a manner that the
22 body will live on, even when this motion has stopped. There are
23 some persons who can bury themselves for days, and yet live
24 without breathing. To reach the subtle we must take the help of the
25 grosser, and so, slowly travel towards the most subtle until we gain
26 our point. Pranayama really means controlling this motion of the
27 lungs, and this motion is associated with the breath. Not that
28 breath is producing it; on the contrary *it* is producing breath. This
29 motion draws in the air by pump action. The Prana is moving the
30 lungs, the movement of the lungs draws in the air. So Pranayama is
31 not breathing, but controlling that muscular power which moves the
32 lungs. That muscular power which goes out through the nerves to
33 the muscles and from them to the lungs, making them move in a
34 certain manner, is the Prana, which we have to control in the
35 practice of Pranayama. When the Prana has become controlled,
36 then we shall immediately find that all the other actions of the
37 Prana in the body will slowly come under control. I myself have
38 seen men who have controlled almost every muscle of the body; and
39 why not? If I have control over certain muscles, why not over every
40 muscle and nerve of the body? What impossibility is there? At
41 present the control is lost, and the motion has become automatic.
42 We cannot move our ears at will, but we know that animals can. We
43 have not that power because we do not exercise it. This is what is
44 called atavism.

45 Again, we know that motion which has become latent can be
46 brought back to manifestation. By hard work and practice certain
47 motions of the body which are most dormant can be brought back
48 under perfect control. Reasoning thus we find there is no
49 impossibility, but, on the other hand, every probability that each
50 part of the body can be brought under perfect control. This the Yogi
51 does through Pranayama. Perhaps some of you have read that in
52 Pranayama, when drawing in the breath, you must fill your whole

1 body with Prana. In the English translations Prana is given as
2 breath, and you are inclined to ask how that is to be done. The fault
3 is with the translator. Every part of the body can be filled with
4 Prana, this vital force, and when you are able to do that, you can
5 control the whole body. All the sickness and misery felt in the body
6 will be perfectly controlled; not only so, you will be able to control
7 another's body. Everything is infectious in this world, good or bad.
8 If your body be in a certain state of tension, it will have a tendency
9 to produce the same tension in others. If you are strong and
10 healthy, those that live near you will also have the tendency to
11 become strong and healthy, but if you are sick and weak, those
12 around you will have the tendency to become the same. In the case
13 of one man trying to heal another, the first idea is simply
14 transferring his own health to the other. This is the primitive sort of
15 healing. Consciously or unconsciously, health can be transmitted. A
16 very strong man, living with a weak man, will make him a little
17 stronger, whether he knows it or not. When consciously done, it
18 becomes quicker and better in its action. Next come those cases in
19 which a man may not be very healthy himself, yet we know that he
20 can bring health to another. The first man, in such a case, has a
21 little more control over the Prana, and can rouse, for the time
22 being, his Prana, as it were, to a certain state of vibration, and
23 transmit it to another person.

24 There have been cases where this process has been carried
25 on at a distance, but in reality there is no distance in the sense of a
26 break. Where is the distance that has a break? Is there any break
27 between you and the sun? It is a continuous mass of matter, the sun
28 being one part, and you another. Is there a break between one part
29 of a river and another? Then why cannot any force travel? There is
30 no reason against it. Cases of healing from a distance are perfectly
31 true. The Prana can be transmitted to a very great distance; but to
32 one genuine case, there are hundreds of frauds. This process of
33 healing is not so easy as it is thought to be. In the most ordinary
34 cases of such healing you will find that the healers simply take
35 advantage of the naturally healthy state of the human body. An
36 allopath comes and treats cholera patients, and gives them his
37 medicines. The homoeopath comes and gives his medicines, and
38 cures perhaps more than the allopath does, because the
39 homoeopath does not disturb his patients, but allows nature to deal
40 with them. The Faith-healer cures more still, because he brings the
41 strength of his mind to bear, and rouses, through faith, the dormant
42 Prana of the patient.

43 There is a mistake constantly made by Faith-healers: they
44 think that faith directly heals a man. But faith alone does not cover
45 all the ground. There are diseases where the worst symptoms are
46 that the patient never thinks that he has that disease. That
47 tremendous faith of the patient is itself one symptom of the disease,
48 and usually indicates that he will die quickly. In such cases the
49 principle that faith cures does not apply. If it were faith alone that
50 cured, these patients also would be cured. It is by the Prana that
51 real curing comes. The pure man, who has controlled the Prana,
52 has the power of bringing it into a certain state of vibration, which

1 can be conveyed to others, arousing in them a similar vibration. You
2 see that in everyday actions. I am talking to you. What am I trying
3 to do? I am, so to say, bringing my mind to a certain state of
4 vibration, and the more I succeed in bringing it to that state, the
5 more you will be affected by what I say. All of you know that the day
6 I am more enthusiastic, the more you enjoy the lecture; and when I
7 am less enthusiastic, you feel lack of interest.

8 The gigantic will-powers of the world, the world-movers, can
9 bring their Prana into a high state of vibration, and it is so great
10 and powerful that it catches others in a moment, and thousands are
11 drawn towards them, and half the world think as they do. Great
12 prophets of the world had the most wonderful control of the Prana,
13 which gave them tremendous will-power; they had brought their
14 Prana to the highest state of motion, and this is what gave them
15 power to sway the world. All manifestations of power arise from
16 this control. Men may not know the secret, but this is the one
17 explanation. Sometimes in your own body the supply of Prana
18 gravitates more or less to one part; the balance is disturbed, and
19 when the balance of Prana is disturbed, what we call disease is
20 produced.

21 To take away the superfluous Prana, or to supply the Prana
22 that is wanting, will be curing the disease. That again is
23 Pranayama--to learn when there is more or less Prana in one part of
24 the body than there should be. The feelings will become so subtle
25 that the mind will feel that there is less Prana in the toe or the
26 finger than there should be, and will possess the power to supply it.
27 These are among the various functions of Pranayama. They have to
28 be learned slowly and gradually, and as you see, the whole scope of
29 Raja-Yoga is really to teach the control and direction in different
30 planes of the Prana. When a man has concentrated his energies, he
31 masters the Prana that is in his body. When a man is meditating, he
32 is also concentrating the Prana.

33 In an ocean there are huge waves, like mountains, then
34 smaller waves, and still smaller, down to little bubbles, but back of
35 all these is the infinite ocean. The bubble is connected with the
36 infinite ocean at one end, and the huge wave at the other end. So,
37 one may be a gigantic man, and another a little bubble, but each is
38 connected with that infinite ocean of energy, which is the common
39 birthright of every animal that exists. Wherever there is life, the
40 storehouse of infinite energy is behind it. Starting as some fungus,
41 some very minute, microscopic bubble, and all the time drawing
42 from that infinite storehouse of energy, a form is changed slowly
43 and steadily until in course of time it becomes a plant, then an
44 animal, then man, ultimately God. This is attained through millions
45 of aeons, but what is time? An increase of speed, an increase of
46 struggle, is able to bridge the gulf of time. That which naturally
47 takes a long time to accomplish can be shortened by the intensity of
48 the action, says the Yogi. A man may go on slowly drawing in this
49 energy from the infinite mass that exists in the universe, and,
50 perhaps, he will require a hundred thousand years to become a
51 Deva, and then, perhaps, five hundred thousand years to become
52 still higher, and, perhaps, five millions of years to become perfect.

1 Given rapid growth, the time will be lessened. Why is it not
2 possible, with sufficient effort, to reach this very perfection in six
3 months or six years? There is no limit. Reason shows that. If an
4 engine, with a certain amount of coal, runs two miles an hour, it will
5 run the distance in less time with a greater supply of coal. Similarly,
6 why shall not the soul, by intensifying its action, attain perfection in
7 this very life? All beings will at last attain to that goal, we know. But
8 who cares to wait all these millions of aeons? Why not reach it
9 immediately, in this body even, in this human form? Why shall I not
10 get that infinite knowledge, infinite power, now?

11 The ideal of the Yogi, the whole science of Yoga, is directed to
12 the end of teaching men how, by intensifying the power of
13 assimilation, to shorten the time for reaching perfection, instead of
14 slowly advancing from point to point and waiting until the whole
15 human race has become perfect. All the great prophets, saints, and
16 seers of the world--what did they do? In one span of life they lived
17 the whole life of humanity, traversed the whole length of time that it
18 takes ordinary humanity to come to perfection. In one life they
19 perfect themselves; they have no thought for anything else, never
20 live a moment for any other idea, and thus the way is shortened for
21 them. This is what is meant by concentration, intensifying the
22 power of assimilation, thus shortening the time. Raja-Yoga is the
23 science which teaches us how to gain the power of concentration.

24 What has Pranayama to do with spiritualism? Spiritualism is
25 also a manifestation of Pranayama. If it be true that the departed
26 spirits exist, only we cannot see them, it is quite probable that there
27 may be hundreds and millions of them about us we can neither see,
28 feel, nor touch. We may be continually passing and repassing
29 through their bodies, and they do not see or feel us. It is a circle
30 within a circle, universe within universe. We have five senses, and
31 we represent Prana in a certain state of vibration. All beings in the
32 same state of vibration will see one another, but if there are beings
33 who represent Prana in a higher state of vibration, they will not be
34 seen. We may increase the intensity of a light until we cannot see it
35 at all, but there may be beings with eyes so powerful that they can
36 see such light. Again, if its vibrations are very low, we do not see a
37 light, but there are animals that may see it, as cats and owls. Our
38 range of vision is only one plane of the vibrations of this Prana.
39 Take this atmosphere, for instance; it is piled up layer on layer, but
40 the layers nearer to the earth are denser than those above, and as
41 you go higher the atmosphere become finer and finer. Or take the
42 case of the ocean; as you go deeper and deeper the pressure of the
43 water increases, and animals which live at the bottom of the sea
44 can never come up, or they will be broken into pieces.

45 Think of the universe as an ocean of ether, consisting of layer
46 after layer of varying degrees of vibration under the action of
47 Prana; away from the centre the vibrations are less, nearer to it
48 they become quicker and quicker; one order of vibration makes one
49 plane. Then suppose these ranges of vibrations are cut into planes,
50 so many millions of miles one set of vibration, and then so many
51 millions of miles another still higher set of vibration, and so on. It is,
52 therefore, probable, that those who live on the plane of a certain

1 state of vibration will have the power of recognising one another,
2 but will not recognise those above them. Yet, just as by the
3 telescope and the microscope we can increase the scope of our
4 vision, similarly we can by Yoga bring ourselves to the state of
5 vibration of another plane, and thus enable ourselves to see what is
6 going on there. Suppose this room is full of beings whom we do not
7 see. They represent Prana in a certain state of vibration while we
8 represent another. Suppose they represent a quick one, and we the
9 opposite.

10 Prana is the material of which they are composed, as well as
11 we. All are parts of the same ocean of Prana, they differ only in
12 their rate of vibration. If I can bring myself to the quick vibration,
13 this plane will immediately change for me: I shall not see you any
14 more; you vanish and they appear. Some of you, perhaps, know this
15 to be true. All this bringing of the mind into a higher state of
16 vibration is included in one word in Yoga--Samadhi. All these states
17 of higher vibration, superconscious vibrations of the mind, are
18 grouped in that one word, Samadhi, and the lower states of
19 Samadhi give us visions of these beings. The highest grade of
20 Samadhi is when we see the real thing, when we see the material
21 out of which the whole of these grades of beings are composed, and
22 that one lump of clay being known, we know all the clay in the
23 universe.

24 Thus we see that Pranayama includes all that is true of
25 spiritualism even. Similarly, you will find that wherever any sect or
26 body of people is trying to search out anything occult and mystical,
27 or hidden, what they are doing is really this Yoga, this attempt to
28 control the Prana. You will find that wherever there is any
29 extraordinary display of power, it is the manifestation of this Prana.
30 Even the physical sciences can be included in Pranayama. What
31 moves the steam engine? Prana, acting through the steam. What
32 are all these phenomena of electricity and so forth but Prana? What
33 is physical science? The science of Pranayama, by external means.
34 Prana, manifesting itself as mental power, can only be controlled by
35 mental means. That part of Pranayama which attempts to control
36 the physical manifestations of the Prana by physical means is called
37 physical science, and that part which tries to control the
38 manifestation of the Prana as mental force by mental means is
39 called Raja-Yoga.

THE PSYCHIC PRANA

According to the Yogis, there are two nerve currents in the spinal column, called Pingala and Ida, and a hollow canal called Sushumna running through the spinal cord. At the lower end of the hollow canal is what the Yogis call the "Lotus of the Kundalini". They describe it as triangular in form in which, in the symbolical language of the Yogis, there is a power called the Kundalini, coiled up. When that Kundalini awakes, it tries to force a passage through this hollow canal, and as it rises step by step, as it were, layer after layer of the mind becomes open and all the different visions and wonderful powers come to the Yogi. When it reaches the brain, the Yogi is perfectly detached from the body and mind; the soul finds itself free. We know that the spinal cord is composed in a peculiar manner. If we take the figure eight horizontally, there are two parts which are connected in the middle. Suppose you add eight after eight, piled one on top of the other, that will represent the spinal cord. The left is the Ida, the right Pingala, and that hollow canal which runs through the centre of the spinal cord is the Sushumna. Where the spinal cord ends in some of the lumbar vertebrae, a fine fibre issues downwards, and the canal runs up even within that fibre, only much finer. The canal is closed at the lower end, which is situated near what is called the sacral plexus, which, according to modern physiology, is triangular in form. The different plexuses that have their centres in the spinal canal can very well stand for the different "lotuses" of the Yogi.

The Yogi conceives of several centres, beginning with the Muladhara, the basic, and ending with the Sahasrara, the thousand-petalled lotus in the brain. So, if we take these different plexuses as representing these lotuses, the idea of the Yogi can be understood very easily in the language of modern physiology. We know there are two sorts of actions in these nerve currents, one afferent, the other efferent; one sensory and the other motor; one centripetal, and the other centrifugal. One carries the sensations to the brain, and the other from the brain to the outer body. These vibrations are all connected with the brain in the long run. Several other facts we have to remember, in order to clear the way for the explanation which is to come. This spinal cord, at the brain, ends in a sort of bulb, in the medulla, which is not attached to the brain, but floats in a fluid in the brain, so that if there be a blow on the head the force of that blow will be dissipated in the fluid, and will not hurt the bulb. This is an important fact to remember. Secondly, we have also to know that, of all the centres, we have particularly to remember three, the Muladhara (the basic), the Sahasrara (the thousand-petalled lotus of the brain) and the Manipura (the lotus of the navel).

Next we shall take one fact from physics. We all hear of electricity and various other forces connected with it. What electricity is no one knows, but so far as it is known, it is a sort of motion. There are various other motions in the universe; what is the difference between them and electricity? Suppose this table moves--that the molecules which compose this table are moving in different directions; if they are all made to move in the same

1 direction, it will be through electricity. Electric motion makes the
2 molecules of a body move in the same direction. If all the air
3 molecules in a room are made to move in the same direction, it will
4 make a gigantic battery of electricity of the room. Another point
5 from physiology we must remember, that the centre which
6 regulates the respiratory system, the breathing system, has a sort
7 of controlling action over the system of nerve currents.

8 Now we shall see why breathing is practised. In the first
9 place, from rhythmical breathing comes a tendency of all the
10 molecules in the body to move in the same direction. When mind
11 changes into will, the nerve currents change into a motion similar
12 to electricity, because the nerves have been proved to show polarity
13 under the action of electric currents. This shows that when the will
14 is transformed into the nerve currents, it is changed into something
15 like electricity. When all the motions of the body have become
16 perfectly rhythmical, the body has, as it were, become a gigantic
17 battery of will. This tremendous will is exactly what the Yogi wants.
18 This is, therefore, a physiological explanation of the breathing
19 exercise. It tends to bring a rhythmic action in the body, and helps
20 us, through the respiratory centre, to control the other centres. The
21 aim of Pranayama here is to rouse the coiled-up power in the
22 Muladhara, called the Kundalini.

23 Everything that we see, or imagine, or dream, we have to
24 perceive in space. This is the ordinary space, called the Mahakasha,
25 or elemental space. When a Yogi reads the thoughts of other men,
26 or perceives supersensuous objects, he sees them in another sort of
27 space called the Chittakasha, the mental space. When perception
28 has become objectless, and the soul shines in its own nature, it is
29 called the Chidakasha, or knowledge space. When the Kundalini is
30 aroused, and enters the canal of the Sushumna, all the perceptions
31 are in the mental space. When it has reached that end of the canal
32 which opens out into the brain, the objectless perception is in the
33 knowledge space. Taking the analogy of electricity, we find that man
34 can send a current only along a wire, but nature requires no wires
35 to send her tremendous currents.

36 This proves that the wire is not really necessary, but that only
37 our inability to dispense with it compels us to use it.

38 Similarly, all the sensations and motions of the body are being
39 sent into the brain, and sent out of it, through these wires of nerve
40 fibres. The columns of sensory and motor fibres in the spinal cord
41 are the Ida and Pingala of the Yogis. They are the main channels
42 through which the afferent and efferent currents travel. But why
43 should not the mind send news without any wire, or react without
44 any wire? We see this is done in nature. The Yogi says, if you can do
45 that, you have got rid of the bondage of matter. How to do it? If you
46 can make the current pass through the Sushumna, the canal in the
47 middle of the spinal column, you have solved the problem. The mind
48 has made this network of the nervous system, and has to break it,
49 so that no wires will be required to work through. Then alone will
50 all knowledge come to us--no more bondage of body; that is why it
51 is so important that we should get control of that Sushumna. If we
52 can send the mental current through the hollow canal without any

1 nerve fibres to act as wires, the Yogi says, the problem is solved,
2 and he also says it can be done.

3 This Sushumna is in ordinary persons closed up at the lower
4 extremity; no action comes through it. The Yogi proposes a practice
5 by which it can be opened, and the nerve currents made to travel
6 through. When a sensation is carried to a centre, the centre reacts.
7 This reaction, in the case of automatic centres, is followed by
8 motion; in the case of conscious centres it is followed first by
9 perception, and secondly by motion. All perception is the reaction
10 to action from outside. How, then, do perceptions in dreams arise?
11 There is then no action from outside. The sensory motions,
12 therefore, are coiled up somewhere. For instance, I see a city; the
13 perception of that city is from the reaction to the sensations
14 brought from outside objects comprising that city. That is to say, a
15 certain motion in the brain molecules has been set up by the motion
16 in the incarrying nerves, which again are set in motion by external
17 objects in the city. Now, even after a long time I can remember the
18 city. This memory is exactly the same phenomenon, only it is in a
19 milder form. But whence is the action that sets up even the milder
20 form of similar vibrations in the brain? Not certainly from the
21 primary sensations. Therefore it must be that the sensations are
22 coiled up somewhere, and they, by their acting, bring out the mild
23 reaction which we call dream perception.

24 Now the centre where all these residual sensations are, as it
25 were, stored up, is called the Muladhara, the root receptacle, and
26 the coiled-up energy of action is Kundalini, "the coiled up". It is very
27 probable that the residual motor energy is also stored up in the
28 same centre, as, after deep study or meditation on external objects,
29 the part of the body where the Muladhara centre is situated
30 (probably the sacral plexus) gets heated. Now, if this coiled-up
31 energy be roused and made active, and then consciously made to
32 travel up the Sushumna canal, as it acts upon centre after centre, a
33 tremendous reaction will set in. When a minute portion of energy
34 travels along a nerve fibre and causes reaction from centres, the
35 perception is either dream or imagination. But when by the power
36 of long internal meditation the vast mass of energy stored up
37 travels along the Sushumna, and strikes the centres, the reaction is
38 tremendous, immensely superior to the reaction of dream or
39 imagination, immensely more intense than the reaction of sense-
40 perception. It is supersensuous perception. And when it reaches the
41 metropolis of all sensations, the brain, the whole brain, as it were,
42 reacts, and the result is the full blaze of illumination, the perception
43 of the Self. As this Kundalini force travels from centre to centre,
44 layer after layer of the mind, as it were, opens up, and this universe
45 is perceived by the Yogi in its fine, or causal form. Then alone the
46 causes of this universe, both as sensation and reaction, are known
47 as they are, and hence comes all knowledge. The causes being
48 known, the knowledge of the effects is sure to follow.

49 Thus the rousing of the Kundalini is the one and only way to
50 attaining Divine Wisdom, superconscious perception, realisation of
51 the spirit. The rousing may come in various ways, through love for
52 God, through the mercy of perfected sages, or through the power of

1 the analytic will of the philosopher. Wherever there was any
2 manifestation of what is ordinarily called supernatural power or
3 wisdom, there a little current of Kundalini must have found its way
4 into the Sushumna. Only, in the vast majority of such cases, people
5 had ignorantly stumbled on some practice which set free a minute
6 portion of the coiled-up Kundalini. All worship, consciously or
7 unconsciously, leads to this end. The man who thinks that he is
8 receiving response to his prayers does not know that the fulfillment
9 comes from his own nature, that he has succeeded by the mental
10 attitude of prayer in waking up a bit of this infinite power which is
11 coiled up within himself. What, thus, men ignorantly worship under
12 various names, through fear and tribulation, the Yogi declares to
13 the world to be the real power coiled up in every being, the mother
14 of eternal happiness, if we but know how to approach her. And Raja-
15 Yoga is the science of religion, the rationale of all worship, all
16 prayers, forms, ceremonies, and miracles.

THE CONTROL OF THE PSYCHIC PRANA

We have now to deal with the exercises in Pranayama. We have seen that the first step, according to the Yogis, is to control the motion of the lungs. What we want to do is to feel the finer motions that are going on in the body. Our minds have become externalised, and have lost sight of the fine motions inside. If we can begin to feel them, we can begin to control them. These nerve currents go on all over the body, bringing life and vitality to every muscle, but we do not feel them. The Yogi says we can learn to do so. How? By taking up and controlling the motion of the lungs; when we have done that for a sufficient length of time, we shall be able to control the finer emotions.

We now come to the exercises in Pranayama. Sit upright; the body must be kept straight. The spinal cord, although not attached to the vertebral column, is yet inside of it. If you sit crookedly you disturb this spinal cord, so let it be free. Any time that you sit crookedly and try to meditate you do yourself an injury. The three parts of the body, the chest, the neck, and the head, must be always held straight in one line. You will find that by a little practice this will come to you as easy as breathing. The second thing is to get control of the nerves. We have said that the nerve centre that controls the respiratory organs has a sort of controlling effect on the other nerves, and rhythmical breathing is, therefore, necessary. The breathing that we generally use should not be called breathing at all. It is very irregular. Then there are some natural differences of breathing between men and women.

The first lesson is just to breathe in a measured way, in and out. That will harmonise the system. When you have practised this for some time, you will do well to join to it the repetition of some word as "Om," or any other sacred word. In India we use certain symbolical words instead of counting one, two, three, four. That is why I advise you to join the mental repetition of the "Om," or some other sacred word to the Pranayama. Let the word flow in and out with the breath, rhythmically, harmoniously, and you will find the whole body is becoming rhythmical. Then you will learn what rest is. Compared with it, sleep is not rest. Once this rest comes the most tired nerves will be calmed down, and you will find that you have never before really rested.

The first effect of this practice is perceived in the change of expression of one's face; harsh lines disappear; with calm thought calmness comes over the face. Next comes beautiful voice. I never saw a Yogi with a croaking voice. These signs come after a few months' practice. After practising the above mentioned breathing for a few days, you should take up a higher one. Slowly fill the lungs with breath through the Ida, the left nostril, and at the same time concentrate the mind on the nerve current. You are, as it were, sending the nerve current down the spinal column, and striking violently on the last plexus, the basic lotus which is triangular in form, the seat of the Kundalini. Then hold the current there for some time. Imagine that you are slowly drawing that nerve current with the breath through the other side, the Pingala, then slowly

1 throw it out through the right nostril. This you will find a little
2 difficult to practise. The easiest way is to stop the right nostril with
3 the thumb, and then slowly draw in the breath through the left;
4 then close both nostrils with thumb and forefinger, and imagine that
5 you are sending that current down, and striking the base of the
6 Sushumna; then take the thumb off, and let the breath out through
7 the right nostril. Next inhale slowly through that nostril, keeping
8 the other closed by the forefinger, then close both, as before. The
9 way the Hindus practise this would be very difficult for this country,
10 because they do it from their childhood, and their lungs are
11 prepared for it. Here it is well to begin with four seconds, and
12 slowly increase. Draw in four seconds, hold in sixteen seconds, then
13 throw out in eight seconds. This makes one Pranayama. At the same
14 time think of the basic lotus, triangular in form; concentrate the
15 mind on that centre. The imagination can help you a great deal. The
16 next breathing is slowly drawing the breath in, and then
17 immediately throwing it out slowly, and then stopping the breath
18 out, using the same numbers. The only difference is that in the first
19 case the breath was held in, and in the second, held out. This last is
20 the easier one. The breathing in which you hold the breath in the
21 lungs must not be practised too much. Do it only four times in the
22 morning, and four times in the evening. Then you can slowly
23 increase the time and number. You will find that you have the power
24 to do so, and that you take pleasure in it. So very carefully and
25 cautiously increase as you feel that you have the power, to six
26 instead of four. It may injure you if you practise it irregularly.

27 Of the three processes for the purification of the nerves,
28 described above, the first and the last are neither difficult nor
29 dangerous. The more you practise the first one the calmer you will
30 be. Just think of "Om," and you can practise even while you are
31 sitting at your work. You will be all the better for it. Some day, if you
32 practise hard, the Kundalini will be aroused. For those who practise
33 once or twice a day, just a little calmness of the body and mind will
34 come, and beautiful voice; only for those who can go on further with
35 it will Kundalini be aroused, and the whole of nature will begin to
36 change, and the book of knowledge will open. No more will you
37 need to go to books for knowledge; your own mind will have
38 become your book, containing infinite knowledge. I have already
39 spoken of the Ida and Pingala currents, flowing through either side
40 of the spinal column, and also of the Sushumna, the passage
41 through the centre of the spinal cord. These three are present in
42 every animal; whatever being has a spinal column has these three
43 lines of action. But the Yogis claim that in an ordinary man the
44 Sushumna is closed; its action is not evident while that of the other
45 two is carrying power to different parts of the body.

46 The Yogi alone has the Sushumna open. When this Sushumna
47 current opens, and begins to rise, we get beyond the senses, our
48 minds become supersensuous, superconscious--we get beyond even
49 the intellect, where reasoning cannot reach. To open that
50 Sushumna is the prime object of the Yogi. According to him, along
51 this Sushumna are ranged these centres, or, in more figurative
52 language, these lotuses, as they are called. The lowest one is at the

1 lower end of the spinal cord, and is called Muladhara, the next
2 higher is called Svadhishtana, the third Manipura, the fourth
3 Anahata, the fifth Vishuddha, the sixth Ajna and the last, which is in
4 the brain, is the Sahasrara, or "the thousand-petalled". Of these we
5 have to take cognition just now of two centres only, the lowest, the
6 Muladhara, and the highest, the Sahasrara. All energy has to be
7 taken up from its seat in the Muladhara and brought to the
8 Sahasrara. The Yogis claim that of all the energies that are in the
9 human body the highest is what they call "Ojas". Now this Ojas is
10 stored up in the brain, and the more Ojas is in a man's head, the
11 more powerful he is, the more intellectual, the more spiritually
12 strong. One man may speak beautiful language and beautiful
13 thoughts, but they do not impress people; another man speaks
14 neither beautiful language nor beautiful thoughts, yet his words
15 charm. Every movement of his is powerful. That is the power of
16 Ojas.

17 Now in every man there is more or less of this Ojas stored up.
18 All the forces that are working in the body in their highest become
19 Ojas. You must remember that it is only a question of
20 transformation. The same force which is working outside as
21 electricity or magnetism will become changed into inner force; the
22 same forces that are working as muscular energy will be changed
23 into Ojas. The Yogis say that that part of the human energy which is
24 expressed as sex energy, in sexual thought, when checked and
25 controlled, easily becomes changed into Ojas, and as the Muladhara
26 guides these, the Yogi pays particular attention to that centre. He
27 tries to take up all his sexual energy and convert it into Ojas. It is
28 only the chaste man or woman who can make the Ojas rise and
29 store it in the brain; that is why chastity has always been
30 considered the highest virtue. A man feels that if he is unchaste,
31 spirituality goes away, he loses mental vigour and moral stamina.
32 That is why in all the religious orders in the world which have
33 produced spiritual giants you will always find absolute chastity
34 insisted upon. That is why the monks came into existence, giving up
35 marriage. There must be perfect chastity in thought, word, and
36 deed; without it the practice of Raja-Yoga is dangerous, and may
37 lead to insanity. If people practise Raja-Yoga and at the same time
38 lead an impure life, how can they expect to become Yogis?

PRATYAHARA AND DHARANA

The next step is called Pratyahara. What is this? You know how perceptions come. First of all there are the external instruments, then the internal organs acting in the body through the brain centres, and there is the mind. When these come together and attach themselves to some external object, then we perceive it. At the same time it is a very difficult thing to concentrate the mind and attach it to one organ only; the mind is a slave.

We hear "Be good," and "Be good," and "Be good," taught all over the world. There is hardly a child, born in any country in the world, who has not been told, "Do not steal," "Do not tell a lie," but nobody tells the child how he can help doing them. Talking will not help him. Why should he not become a thief? We do not teach him how not to steal; we simply tell him, "Do not steal." Only when we teach him to control his mind do we really help him. All actions, internal and external, occur when the mind joins itself to certain centres, called the organs. Willingly or unwillingly it is drawn to join itself to the centres, and that is why people do foolish deeds and feel miserable, which, if the mind were under control, they would not do. What would be the result of controlling the mind? It then would not join itself to the centres of perception, and, naturally, feeling and willing would be under control. It is clear so far. Is it possible? It is perfectly possible. You see it in modern times; the faith-healers teach people to deny misery and pain and evil. Their philosophy is rather roundabout, but it is a part of Yoga upon which they have somehow stumbled. Where they succeed in making a person throw off suffering by denying it, they really use a part of Pratyahara, as they make the mind of the person strong enough to ignore the senses. The hypnotists in a similar manner, by their suggestion, excite in the patient a sort of morbid Pratyahara for the time being. The so-called hypnotic suggestion can only act upon a weak mind. And until the operator, by means of fixed gaze or otherwise, has succeeded in putting the mind of the subject in a sort of passive, morbid condition, his suggestions never work.

Now the control of the centres which is established in a hypnotic patient or the patient of faith-healing, by the operator, for a time, is reprehensible, because it leads to ultimate ruin. It is not really controlling the brain centres by the power of one's own will, but is, as it were, stunning the patient's mind for a time by sudden blows which another's will delivers to it. It is not checking by means of reins and muscular strength the mad career of a fiery team, but rather by asking another to deliver heavy blows on the heads of the horses, to stun them for a time into gentleness. At each one of these processes the man operated upon loses a part of his mental energies, till at last, the mind, instead of gaining the power of perfect control, becomes a shapeless, powerless mass, and the only goal of the patient is the lunatic asylum.

Every attempt at control which is not voluntary, not with the controller's own mind, is not only disastrous, but it defeats the end. The goal of each soul is freedom, mastery--freedom from the slavery of matter and thought, mastery of external and internal nature.

1 Instead of leading towards that, every will-current from another, in
2 whatever form it comes, either as direct control of organs, or as
3 forcing to control them while under a morbid condition, only rivets
4 one link more to the already existing heavy chain of bondage of past
5 thoughts, past superstitions. Therefore, beware how you allow
6 yourselves to be acted upon by others. Beware how you
7 unknowingly bring another to ruin. True, some succeed in doing
8 good to many for a time, by giving a new trend to their propensities,
9 but at the same time, they bring ruin to millions by the unconscious
10 suggestions they throw around, rousing in men and women that
11 morbid, passive, hypnotic condition which makes them almost
12 soulless at last. Whosoever, therefore, asks any one to believe
13 blindly, or drags people behind him by the controlling power of his
14 superior will, does an injury to humanity, though he may not intend
15 it.

16 Therefore use your own minds, control body and mind
17 yourselves, remember that until you are a diseased person, no
18 extraneous will can work upon you; avoid everyone, however great
19 and good he may be, who asks you to believe blindly. All over the
20 world there have been dancing and jumping and howling sects, who
21 spread like infection when they begin to sing and dance and
22 preach; they also are a sort of hypnotists. They exercise a singular
23 control for the time being over sensitive persons, alas! often, in the
24 long run, to degenerate whole races. Ay, it is healthier for the
25 individual or the race to remain wicked than be made apparently
26 good by such morbid extraneous control. One's heart sinks to think
27 of the amount of injury done to humanity by such irresponsible yet
28 well-meaning religious fanatics. They little know that the minds
29 which attain to sudden spiritual upheaval under their suggestions,
30 with music and prayers, are simply making themselves passive,
31 morbid, and powerless, and opening themselves to any other
32 suggestion, be it ever so evil. Little do these ignorant, deluded
33 persons dream that whilst they are congratulating themselves upon
34 their miraculous power to transform human hearts, which power
35 they think was poured upon them by some Being above the clouds,
36 they are sowing the seeds of future decay, of crime, of lunacy, and
37 of death. Therefore, beware of everything that take away your
38 freedom. Know that it is dangerous, and avoid it by all the means in
39 your power.

40 He who has succeeded in attaching or detaching his mind to
41 or from the centres at will has succeeded in Pratyahara, which
42 means, "gathering towards," checking the outgoing powers of the
43 mind, freeing it from the thralldom of the senses. When we can do
44 this, we shall really possess character; then alone we shall have
45 taken a long step towards freedom; before that we are mere
46 machines.

47 How hard it is to control the mind! Well has it been compared
48 to the maddened monkey. There was a monkey, restless by his own
49 nature, as all monkeys are. As if that were not enough some one
50 made him drink freely of wine, so that he became still more
51 restless. Then a scorpion stung him. When a man is stung by a
52 scorpion, he jumps about for a whole day; so the poor monkey

1 found his condition worse than ever. To complete his misery a
2 demon entered into him. What language can describe the
3 uncontrollable restlessness of that monkey? The human mind is like
4 that monkey, incessantly active by its own nature; then it becomes
5 drunk with the wine of desire, thus increasing its turbulence. After
6 desire takes possession comes the sting of the scorpion of jealousy
7 at the success of others, and last of all the demon of pride enters
8 the mind, making it think itself of all importance. How hard to
9 control such a mind!

10 The first lesson, then, is to sit for some time and let the mind
11 run on. The mind is bubbling up all the time. It is like that monkey
12 jumping about. Let the monkey jump as much as he can; you simply
13 wait and watch. Knowledge is power, says the proverb, and that is
14 true. Until you know what the mind is doing you cannot control it.
15 Give it the rein; many hideous thoughts may come into it; you will
16 be astonished that it was possible for you to think such thoughts.
17 But you will find that each day the mind's vagaries are becoming
18 less and less violent, that each day it is becoming calmer. In the
19 first few months you will find that the mind will have a great many
20 thoughts, later you will find that they have somewhat decreased,
21 and in a few more months they will be fewer and fewer, until at last
22 the mind will be under perfect control; but we must patiently
23 practise every day. As soon as the steam is turned on, the engine
24 must run; as soon as things are before us we must perceive; so a
25 man, to prove that he is not a machine, must demonstrate that he is
26 under the control of nothing. This controlling of the mind, and not
27 allowing it to join itself to the centres, is Pratyahara. How is this
28 practised? It is a tremendous work, not to be done in a day. Only
29 after a patient, continuous struggle for years can we succeed.

30 After you have practised Pratyahara for a time, take the next
31 step, the Dharana, holding the mind to certain points. What is
32 meant by holding the mind to certain points? Forcing the mind to
33 feel certain parts of the body to the exclusion of others. For
34 instance, try to feel only the hand, to the exclusion of other parts of
35 the body. When the Chitta, or mind-stuff, is confined and limited to a
36 certain place it is Dharana. This Dharana is of various sorts, and
37 along with it, it is better to have a little play of the imagination. For
38 instance, the mind should be made to think of one point in the
39 heart. That is very difficult; an easier way is to imagine a lotus
40 there. That lotus is full of light, effulgent light. Put the mind there.
41 Or think of the lotus in the brain as full of light, or of the different
42 centres in the Sushumna mentioned before.

43 The Yogi must always practise. He should try to live alone;
44 the companionship of different sorts of people distracts the mind;
45 he should not speak much, because to speak distracts the mind; not
46 work much, because too much work distracts the mind; the mind
47 cannot be controlled after a whole day's hard work. One observing
48 the above rules becomes a Yogi. Such is the power of Yoga that
49 even the least of it will bring a great amount of benefit. It will not
50 hurt anyone, but will benefit everyone.

51 First of all, it will tone down nervous excitement, bring
52 calmness, enable us to see things more clearly. The temperament

1 will be better, and the health will be better. Sound health will be
2 one of the first signs, and a beautiful voice. Defects in the voice will
3 be changed. This will be among the first of the many effects that
4 will come. Those who practise hard will get many other signs.
5 Sometimes there will be sounds, as a peal of bells heard at a
6 distance, commingling, and falling on the ear as one continuous
7 sound. Sometimes things will be seen, little specks of light floating
8 and becoming bigger and bigger; and when these things come,
9 know that you are progressing fast.

10 Those who want to be Yogis, and practise hard, must take
11 care of their diet at first. But for those who want only a little
12 practice for everyday business sort of life, let them not eat too
13 much; otherwise they may eat whatever they please. For those who
14 want to make rapid progress, and to practise hard, a strict diet is
15 absolutely necessary. They will find it advantageous to live only on
16 milk and cereals for some months. As the organisation becomes
17 finer and finer, it will be found in the beginning that the least
18 irregularity throws one out of balance. One bit of food more or less
19 will disturb the whole system, until one gets perfect control, and
20 then one will be able to eat whatever one likes.

21 When one begins to concentrate, the dropping of a pin will
22 seem like a thunderbolt going through the brain. As the organs get
23 finer, the perceptions get finer. These are the stages through which
24 we have to pass, and all those who persevere will succeed. Give up
25 all argumentation and other distractions. Is there anything in dry
26 intellectual jargon? It only throws the mind off its balance and
27 disturbs it. Things of subtler planes have to be realised. Will talking
28 do that? So give up all vain talk. Read only those books which have
29 been written by persons who have had realisation.

30 Be like the pearl oyster. There is a pretty Indian fable to the
31 effect that if it rains when the star Svati is in the ascendant, and a
32 drop of rain falls into an oyster, that drop becomes a pearl. The
33 oysters know this, so they come to the surface when that star
34 shines, and wait to catch the precious raindrop. When a drop falls
35 into them, quickly the oysters close their shells and dive down to
36 the bottom of the sea, there to patiently develop the drop into the
37 pearl. We should be like that. First hear, then understand, and then,
38 leaving all distractions, shut your minds to outside influences, and
39 devote yourselves to developing the truth within you. There is the
40 danger of frittering away your energies by taking up an idea only
41 for its novelty, and then giving it up for another that is newer. Take
42 one thing up and do it, and see the end of it, and before you have
43 seen the end, do not give it up. He who can become mad with an
44 idea, he alone sees light. Those that only take a nibble here and a
45 nibble there will never attain anything. They may titillate their
46 nerves for a moment, but there it will end. They will be slaves in the
47 hands of nature, and will never get beyond the senses.

48 Those who really want to be Yogis must give up, once for all,
49 this nibbling at things. Take up one idea. Make that one idea your
50 life--think of it, dream of it, live on that idea. Let the brain, muscles,
51 nerves, every part of your body, be full of that idea, and just leave
52 every other idea alone. This is the way to success, and this is the

1 way great spiritual giants are produced. Others are mere talking
2 machines. If we really want to be blessed, and make others blessed,
3 we must go deeper. The first step is not to disturb the mind, not to
4 associate with persons whose ideas are disturbing. All of you know
5 that certain persons, certain places, certain foods, repel you. Avoid
6 them; and those who want to go to the highest, must avoid all
7 company, good or bad. Practise hard; whether you live or die does
8 not matter. You have to plunge in and work, without thinking of the
9 result. If you are brave enough, in six months you will be a perfect
10 Yogi. But those who take up just a bit of it and a little of everything
11 else make no progress. It is of no use simply to take a course of
12 lessons. To those who are full of Tamas, ignorant and dull--those
13 whose minds never get fixed on any idea, who only crave for
14 something to amuse them--religion and philosophy are simply
15 objects of entertainment. These are the unpersevering. They hear a
16 talk, think it very nice, and then go home and forget all about it. To
17 succeed, you must have tremendous perseverance, tremendous
18 will. "I will drink the ocean," says the persevering soul, "at my will
19 mountains will crumble up." Have that sort of energy, that sort of
20 will, work hard, and you will reach the goal.

DHYANA AND SAMADHI

We have taken a cursory view of the different steps in Raja-Yoga, except the finer ones, the training in concentration, which is the goal, to which Raja-Yoga will lead us. We see, as human beings, that all our knowledge which is called rational is referred to consciousness. My consciousness of this table, and of your presence, makes me know that the table and you are here. At the same time, there is a very great part of my existence of which I am not conscious. All the different organs inside the body, the different parts of the brain--nobody is conscious of these.

When I eat food, I do it consciously; when I assimilate it, I do it unconsciously. When the food is manufactured into blood, it is done unconsciously. When out of the blood all the different parts of my body are strengthened, it is done unconsciously. And yet it is I who am doing all this; there cannot be twenty people in this one body. How do I know that I do it, and nobody else? It may be urged that my business is only in eating and assimilating the food, and that strengthening the body by the food is done for me by somebody else. That cannot be, because it can be demonstrated that almost every action of which we are now unconscious can be brought up to the plane of consciousness. The heart is beating apparently without our control. None of us here can control the heart; it goes on its own way. But by practice men can bring even the heart under control, until it will just beat at will, slowly, or quickly, or almost stop. Nearly every part of the body can be brought under control. What does this show? That the functions which are beneath consciousness are also performed by us, only we are doing it unconsciously. We have, then, two planes in which the human mind works. First is the conscious plane, in which all work is always accompanied with the feeling of egoism. Next comes the unconscious plane, where all work is unaccompanied by the feeling of egoism. That part of mind-work which is unaccompanied with the feeling of egoism is unconscious work, and that part which is accompanied with the feeling of egoism is conscious work. In the lower animals this unconscious work is called instinct. In higher animals, and in the highest of all animals, man, what is called conscious work prevails.

But it does not end here. There is a still higher plane upon which the mind can work. It can go beyond consciousness. Just as unconscious work is beneath consciousness, so there is another work which is above consciousness, and which also is not accompanied with the feeling of egoism. The feeling of egoism is only on the middle plane. When the mind is above or below that line, there is no feeling of "I", and yet the mind works. When the mind goes beyond this line of self-consciousness, it is called Samadhi or superconsciousness. How, for instance, do we know that a man in Samadhi has not gone below consciousness, has not degenerated instead of going higher? In both cases the works are unaccompanied with egoism. The answer is, by the effects, by the results of the work, we know that which is below, and that which is above. When a man goes into deep sleep, he enters a plane beneath consciousness. He works the body all the time, he breathes, he

1 moves the body, perhaps, in his sleep, without any accompanying
2 feeling of ego; he is unconscious, and when he returns from his
3 sleep, he is the same man who went into it. The sum total of the
4 knowledge which he had before he went into the sleep remains the
5 same; it does not increase at all. No enlightenment comes. But
6 when a man goes into Samadhi, if he goes into it a fool, he comes
7 out a sage.

8 What makes the difference? From one state a man comes out
9 the very same man that he went in, and from another state the man
10 comes out enlightened, a sage, a prophet, a saint, his whole
11 character changed, his life changed, illumined. These are the two
12 effects. Now the effects being different, the causes must be
13 different. As this illumination with which a man comes back from
14 Samadhi is much higher than can be got from unconsciousness, or
15 much higher than can be got by reasoning in a conscious state, it
16 must, therefore, be superconsciousness, and Samadhi is called the
17 superconscious state.

18 This, in short, is the idea of Samadhi. What is its application?
19 The application is here. The field of reason, or of the conscious
20 workings of the mind, is narrow and limited. There is a little circle
21 within which human reason must move. It cannot go beyond. Every
22 attempt to go beyond is impossible, yet it is beyond this circle of
23 reason that there lies all that humanity holds most dear. All these
24 questions, whether there is an immortal soul, whether there is a
25 God, whether there is any supreme intelligence guiding this
26 universe or not, are beyond the field of reason. Reason can never
27 answer these questions. What does reason say? It says, "I am
28 agnostic; I do not know either yea or nay." Yet these questions are
29 so important to us. Without a proper answer to them, human life
30 will be purposeless. All our ethical theories, all our moral attitudes,
31 all that is good and great in human nature, have been moulded
32 upon answers that have come from beyond the circle. It is very
33 important, therefore, that we should have answers to these
34 questions. If life is only a short play, if the universe is only a
35 "fortuitous combination of atoms," then why should I do good to
36 another? Why should there be mercy, justice, or fellow-feeling? The
37 best thing for this world would be to make hay while the sun shines,
38 each man for himself. If there is no hope, why should I love my
39 brother, and not cut his throat? If there is nothing beyond, if there
40 is no freedom, but only rigorous dead laws, I should only try to
41 make myself happy here. You will find people saying nowadays that
42 they have utilitarian grounds as the basis of morality. What is this
43 basis? Procuring the greatest amount of happiness to the greatest
44 number. Why should I do this? Why should I not produce the
45 greatest unhappiness to the greatest number, if that serves my
46 purpose? How will utilitarians answer this question? How do you
47 know what is right, or what is wrong? I am impelled by my desire
48 for happiness, and I fulfil it, and it is in my nature; I know nothing
49 beyond. I have these desires, and must fulfil them; why should you
50 complain? Whence come all these truths about human life, about
51 morality, about the immortal soul, about God, about love and
52 sympathy, about being good, and, above all, about being unselfish?

1 All ethics, all human action and all human thought, hang upon
2 this one idea of unselfishness. The whole idea of human life can be
3 put into that one word, unselfishness. Why should we be unselfish?
4 Where is the necessity, the force, the power, of my being unselfish?
5 You call yourself a rational man, a utilitarian; but if you do not show
6 me a reason for utility, I say you are irrational. Show me the reason
7 why I should not be selfish. To ask one to be unselfish may be good
8 as poetry, but poetry is not reason. Show me a reason. Why shall I
9 be unselfish, and why be good? Because Mr. and Mrs. So-and-so say
10 so does not weigh with me. Where is the utility of my being
11 unselfish? My utility is to be selfish if utility means the greatest
12 amount of happiness. What is the answer? The utilitarian can never
13 give it. The answer is that this world is only one drop in an infinite
14 ocean, one link in an infinite chain. Where did those that preached
15 unselfishness, and taught it to the human race, get this idea? We
16 know it is not instinctive; the animals, which have instinct, do not
17 know it. Neither is it reason; reason does not know anything about
18 these ideas. Whence then did they come?

19 We find, in studying history, one fact held in common by all
20 the great teachers of religion the world ever had. They all claim to
21 have got their truths from beyond, only many of them did not know
22 where they got them from. For instance, one would say that an
23 angel came down in the form of a human being, with wings, and
24 said to him, "Hear, O man, this is the message." Another says that a
25 Deva, a bright being, appeared to him. A third says he dreamed that
26 his ancestor came and told him certain things. He did not know
27 anything beyond that. But this is common that all claim that this
28 knowledge has come to them from beyond, not through their
29 reasoning power. What does the science of Yoga teach? It teaches
30 that they were right in claiming that all this knowledge came to
31 them from beyond reasoning, but that it came from within
32 themselves.

33 The Yogi teaches that the mind itself has a higher state of
34 existence, beyond reason, a superconscious state, and when the
35 mind gets to that higher state, then this knowledge, beyond
36 reasoning, comes to man. Metaphysical and transcendental
37 knowledge comes to that man. This state of going beyond reason,
38 transcending ordinary human nature, may sometimes come by
39 chance to a man who does not understand its science; he, as it
40 were, stumbles upon it. When he stumbles upon it, he generally
41 interprets it as coming from outside. So this explains why an
42 inspiration, or transcendental knowledge, may be the same in
43 different countries, but in one country it will seem to come through
44 an angel, and in another through a Deva, and in a third through
45 God. What does it mean? It means that the mind brought the
46 knowledge by its own nature, and that the finding of the knowledge
47 was interpreted according to the belief and education of the person
48 through whom it came. The real fact is that these various men, as it
49 were, stumbled upon this superconscious state.

50 The Yogi says there is a great danger in stumbling upon this
51 state. In a good many cases there is the danger of the brain being
52 deranged, and, as a rule, you will find that all those men, however

1 great they were, who had stumbled upon this superconscious state
2 without understanding it, groped in the dark, and generally had,
3 along with their knowledge, some quaint superstition. They opened
4 themselves to hallucinations. Mohammed claimed that the Angel
5 Gabriel came to him in a cave one day and took him on the heavenly
6 horse, Harak, and he visited the heavens. But with all that,
7 Mohammed spoke some wonderful truths. If you read the Koran,
8 you find the most wonderful truths mixed with superstitions. How
9 will you explain it? That man was inspired, no doubt, but that
10 inspiration was, as it were, stumbled upon. He was not a trained
11 Yogi, and did not know the reason of what he was doing. Think of
12 the good Mohammed did to the world, and think of the great evil
13 that has been done through his fanaticism! Think of the millions
14 massacred through his teachings, mothers bereft of their children,
15 children made orphans, whole countries destroyed, millions upon
16 millions of people killed!

17 So we see this danger by studying the lives of great teachers
18 like Mohammed and others. Yet we find, at the same time, that they
19 were all inspired. Whenever a prophet got into the superconscious
20 state by heightening his emotional nature, he brought away from it
21 not only some truths, but some fanaticism also, some superstition
22 which injured the world as much as the greatness of the teaching
23 helped. To get any reason out of the mass incongruity we call
24 human life, we have to transcend our reason, but we must do it
25 scientifically, slowly, by regular practice, and we must cast off all
26 superstition. We must take up the study of the superconscious state
27 just as any other science. On reason we must have to lay our
28 foundation, we must follow reason as far as it leads, and when
29 reason fails, reason itself will show us the way to the highest plane.
30 When you hear a man say, "I am inspired," and then talk irrationally,
31 reject it. Why? Because these three states--instinct, reason, and
32 superconsciousness, or the unconscious, conscious, and
33 superconscious states--belong to one and the same mind. There are
34 not three minds in one man, but one state of it develops into the
35 others. Instinct develops into reason, and reason into the
36 transcendental consciousness; therefore, not one of the states
37 contradicts the others. Real inspiration never contradicts reason,
38 but fulfills it. Just as you find the great prophets saying, "I come not
39 to destroy but to fulfil," so inspiration always comes to fulfil reason,
40 and is in harmony with it.

41 All the different steps in Yoga are intended to bring us
42 scientifically to the superconscious state, or Samadhi. Furthermore,
43 this is a most vital point to understand, that inspiration is as much
44 in every man's nature as it was in that of the ancient prophets.
45 These prophets were not unique; they were men as you or I. They
46 were great Yogis. They had gained this superconsciousness, and
47 you and I can get the same. They were not peculiar people. The
48 very fact that one man ever reached that state, proves that it is
49 possible for every man to do so. Not only is it possible, but every
50 man must, eventually, get to that state, and that is religion.
51 Experience is the only teacher we have. We may talk and reason all
52 our lives, but we shall not understand a word of truth, until we

1 experience it ourselves. You cannot hope to make a man a surgeon
2 by simply giving him a few books. You cannot satisfy my curiosity to
3 see a country by showing me a map; I must have actual experience.
4 Maps can only create curiosity in us to get more perfect knowledge.
5 Beyond that, they have no value whatever. Clinging to books only
6 degenerates the human mind. Was there ever a more horrible
7 blasphemy than the statement that all the knowledge of God is
8 confined to this or that book? How dare men call God infinite, and
9 yet try to compress Him within the covers of a little book! Millions
10 of people have been killed because they did not believe what the
11 books said, because they would not see all the knowledge of God
12 within the covers of a book. Of course this killing and murdering
13 has gone by, but the world is still tremendously bound up in a belief
14 in books.

15 In order to reach the superconscious state in a scientific
16 manner it is necessary to pass through the various steps of Raja-
17 Yoga I have been teaching. After Pratyahara and Dharana, we come
18 to Dhyana, meditation. When the mind has been trained to remain
19 fixed on a certain internal or external location, there comes to it the
20 power of flowing in an unbroken current, as it were, towards that
21 point. This state is called Dhyana. When one has so intensified the
22 power of Dhyana as to be able to reject the external part of
23 perception and remain meditating only on the internal part, the
24 meaning, that state is called Samadhi. The three--Dharana, Dhyana,
25 and Samadhi--together, are called Samyama. That is, if the mind
26 can first concentrate upon an object, and then is able to continue in
27 that concentration for a length of time, and then, by continued
28 concentration, to dwell only on the internal part of the perception of
29 which the object was the effect, everything comes under the control
30 of such a mind.

31 This meditative state is the highest state of existence. So long
32 as there is desire, no real happiness can come. It is only the
33 contemplative, witness-like study of objects that brings to us real
34 enjoyment and happiness. The animal has its happiness in the
35 senses, the man in his intellect, and the god in spiritual
36 contemplation. It is only to the soul that has attained to this
37 contemplative state that the world really becomes beautiful. To him
38 who desires nothing, and does not mix himself up with them, the
39 manifold changes of nature are one panorama of beauty and
40 sublimity.

41 These ideas have to be understood in Dhyana, or meditation.
42 We hear a sound. First, there is the external vibration; second, the
43 nerve motion that carries it to the mind; third, the reaction from the
44 mind, along with which flashes the knowledge of the object which
45 was the external cause of these different changes from the ethereal
46 vibrations to the mental reactions. These three are called in Yoga,
47 Shabda (sound), Artha (meaning), and Jnana (knowledge). In the
48 language of physics and physiology they are called the ethereal
49 vibration, the motion in the nerve and brain, and the mental
50 reaction. Now these, though distinct processes, have become mixed
51 up in such a fashion as to become quite indistinct. In fact, we
52 cannot now perceive any of these, we only perceive their combined

1 effect, what we call the external object. Every act of perception
2 includes these three, and there is no reason why we should not be
3 able to distinguish them.

4 When, by the previous preparations, it becomes strong and
5 controlled, and has the power of finer perception, the mind should
6 be employed in meditation. This meditation must begin with gross
7 objects and slowly rise to finer and finer, until it becomes objectless.
8 The mind should first be employed in perceiving the external causes
9 of sensations, then the internal motions, and then its own reaction.
10 When it has succeeded in perceiving the external causes of
11 sensations by themselves, the mind will acquire the power of
12 perceiving all fine material existences, all fine bodies and forms.
13 When it can succeed in perceiving the motions inside by
14 themselves, it will gain the control of all mental waves, in itself or in
15 others, even before they have translated themselves into physical
16 energy; and when he will be able to perceive the mental reaction by
17 itself, the Yogi will acquire the knowledge of everything, as every
18 sensible object, and every thought is the result of this reaction.
19 Then will he have seen the very foundations of his mind, and it will
20 be under his perfect control. Different powers will come to the Yogi,
21 and if he yields to the temptations of any one of these, the road to
22 his further progress will be barred. Such is the evil of running after
23 enjoyments. But if he is strong enough to reject even these
24 miraculous powers, he will attain to the goal of Yoga, the complete
25 suppression of the waves in the ocean of the mind. Then the glory
26 of the soul, undisturbed by the distractions of the mind, or motions
27 of the body, will shine in its full effulgence; and the Yogi will find
28 himself as he is and as he always was, the essence of knowledge,
29 the immortal, the all-pervading.

30 Samadhi is the property of every human being--nay, every
31 animal. From the lowest animal to the highest angel, some time or
32 other, each one will have to come to that state, and then, and then
33 alone, will real religion begin for him. Until then we only struggle
34 towards that stage. There is no difference now between us and
35 those who have no religion, because we have no experience. What
36 is concentration good for, save to bring us to this experience? Each
37 one of the steps to attain Samadhi has been reasoned out, properly
38 adjusted, scientifically organised, and, when faithfully practised,
39 will surely lead us to the desired end. Then will all sorrows cease,
40 all miseries vanish; the seeds for actions will be burnt, and the soul
41 will be free for ever.

RAJA-YOGA IN BRIEF

The following is a summary of Raja-Yoga freely translated from the Kurma-Purana.

The fire of Yoga burns the cage of sin that is around a man. Knowledge becomes purified and Nirvana is directly obtained. From Yoga comes knowledge; knowledge again helps the Yogi. He who combines in himself both Yoga and knowledge, with him the Lord is pleased. Those that practise Mahayoga, either once a day, or twice a day, or thrice, or always, know them to be gods. Yoga is divided into two parts. One is called Abhava, and the other, Mahayoga. Where one's self is meditated upon as zero, and bereft of quality, that is called Abhava. That in which one sees the self as full of bliss and bereft of all impurities, and one with God, is called Mahayoga. The Yogi, by each one, realises his Self. The other Yogas that we read and hear of, do not deserve to be ranked with the excellent Mahayoga in which the Yogi finds himself and the whole universe as God. This is the highest of all Yogas.

Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana, and Samadhi are the steps in Raja-Yoga, of which non-injury, truthfulness, non-covetousness, chastity, not receiving anything from another are called Yama. This purifies the mind, the Chitta. Never producing pain by thought, word, and deed, in any living being, is what is called Ahimsa, non-injury. There is no virtue higher than non-injury. There is no happiness higher than what a man obtains by this attitude of non-offensiveness, to all creation. By truth we attain fruits of work. Through truth everything is attained. In truth everything is established. Relating facts as they are--this is truth. Not taking others' goods by stealth or by force, is called Asteya, non-covetousness. Chastity in thought, word, and deed, always, and in all conditions, is what is called Brahmacharya. Not receiving any present from anybody, even when one is suffering terribly, is what is called Aparigraha. The idea is, when a man receives a gift from another, his heart becomes impure, he becomes low, he loses his independence, he becomes bound and attached.

The following are helps to success in Yoga and are called Niyama or regular habits and observances; Tapas, austerity; Svadhyaya, study; Santosha, contentment; Shaucha, purity; Ishvara-pranidhana, worshipping God. Fasting, or in other ways controlling the body, is called physical Tapas. Repeating the Vedas and other Mantras, by which the Sattva material in the body is purified, is called study, Svadhyaya. There are three sorts of repetitions of these Mantras. One is called the verbal, another semi-verbal, and the third mental. The verbal or audible is the lowest, and the inaudible is the highest of all. The repetition which is loud is the verbal; the next one is where only the lips move, but no sound is heard. The inaudible repetition of the Mantra, accompanied with the thinking of its meaning, is called the "mental repetition," and is the highest. The sages have said that there are two sorts of purification, external and internal. The purification of the body by water, earth, or other materials is the external purification, as bathing etc. Purification of the mind by truth, and by all the other

1 virtues, is what is called internal purification. Both are necessary. It
2 is not sufficient that a man should be internally pure and externally
3 dirty. When both are not attainable the internal purity is the better,
4 but no one will be a Yogi until he has both. Worship of God is by
5 praise, by thought, by devotion.

6 We have spoken about Yama and Niyama. The next is Asana
7 (posture). The only thing to understand about it is leaving the body
8 free, holding the chest, shoulders, and head straight. Then comes
9 Pranayama. Prana means the vital forces in one's own body, Ayama
10 means controlling them. There are three sorts of Pranayama, the
11 very simple, the middle, and the very high. Pranayama is divided
12 into three parts: filling, restraining, and emptying. When you begin
13 with twelve seconds it is the lowest Pranayama; when you begin
14 with twenty-four seconds it is the middle Pranayama; that
15 Pranayama is the best which begins with thirty-six seconds. In the
16 lowest kind of Pranayama there is perspiration, in the medium kind,
17 quivering of the body, and in the highest Pranayama levitation of
18 the body and influx of great bliss. There is a Mantra called the
19 Gayatri. It is a very holy verse of the Vedas. "We meditate on the
20 glory of that Being who has produced this universe; may He
21 enlighten our minds." Om is joined to it at the beginning and the
22 end. In one Pranayama repeat three Gayatris. In all books they
23 speak of Pranayama being divided into Rechaka (rejecting or
24 exhaling), Puraka (inhaling), and Kumbhaka (restraining,
25 stationary). The Indriyas, the organs of the senses, are acting
26 outwards and coming in contact with external objects. Bringing
27 them under the control of the will is what is called Pratyahara or
28 gathering towards oneself. Fixing the mind on the lotus of the
29 heart, or on the centre of the head, is what is called Dharana.
30 Limited to one spot, making that spot the base, a particular kind of
31 mental waves rises; these are not swallowed up by other kinds of
32 waves, but by degrees become prominent, while all the others
33 recede and finally disappear. Next the multiplicity of these waves
34 gives place to unity and one wave only is left in the mind. This is
35 Dhyana, meditation. When no basis is necessary, when the whole of
36 the mind has become one wave, one-formedness, it is called
37 Samadhi. Bereft of all help from places and centres, only the
38 meaning of the thought is present. If the mind can be fixed on the
39 centre for twelve seconds it will be a Dharana, twelve such
40 Dharanas will be a Dhyana, and twelve such Dhyanas will be a
41 Samadhi.

42 Where there is fire, or in water or on ground which is strewn
43 with dry leaves, where there are many ant-hills, where there are
44 wild animals, or danger, where four streets meet, where there is too
45 much noise, where there are many wicked persons, Yoga must not
46 be practised. This applies more particularly to India. Do not
47 practise when the body feels very lazy or ill, or when the mind is
48 very miserable and sorrowful. Go to a place which is well hidden,
49 and where people do not come to disturb you. Do not choose dirty
50 places. Rather choose beautiful scenery, or a room in your own
51 house which is beautiful. When you practise, first salute all the
52 ancient Yogis, and your own Guru, and God, and then begin.

1 Dhyana is spoken of, and a few examples are given of what to
2 meditate upon. Sit straight, and look at the tip of your nose. Later
3 on we shall come to know how that concentrates the mind, how by
4 controlling the two optic nerves one advances a long way towards
5 the control of the arc of reaction, and so to the control of the will.
6 Here are a few specimens of meditation. Imagine a lotus upon the
7 top of the head, several inches up, with virtue as its centre, and
8 knowledge as its stalk. The eight petals of the lotus are the eight
9 powers of the Yogi. Inside, the stamens and pistils are renunciation.
10 If the Yogi refuses the external powers he will come to salvation. So
11 the eight petals of the lotus are the eight powers, but the internal
12 stamens and pistils are extreme renunciation, the renunciation of
13 all these powers. Inside of that lotus think of the Golden One, the
14 Almighty, the Intangible, He whose name is Om, the Inexpressible,
15 surrounded with effulgent light. Meditate on that. Another
16 meditation is given. Think of a space in your heart, and in the midst
17 of that space think that a flame is burning. Think of that flame as
18 your own soul and inside the flame is another effulgent light, and
19 that is the Soul of your soul, God. Meditate upon that in the heart.
20 Chastity, non-injury, forgiving even the greatest enemy, truth, faith
21 in the Lord, these are all different Vrittis. Be not afraid if you are
22 not perfect in all of these; work, they will come. He who has given
23 up all attachment, all fear, and all anger, he whose whole soul has
24 gone unto the Lord, he who has taken refuge in the Lord, whose
25 heart has become purified, with whatsoever desire he comes to the
26 Lord, He will grant that to him. Therefore worship Him through
27 knowledge, love, or renunciation.

28 "He who hates none, who is the friend of all, who is merciful
29 to all, who has nothing of his own, who is free from egoism, who is
30 even-minded in pain and pleasure, who is forbearing, who is always
31 satisfied, who works always in Yoga, whose self has become
32 controlled, whose will is firm, whose mind and intellect are given up
33 unto Me, such a one is My beloved Bhakta. From whom comes no
34 disturbance, who cannot be disturbed by others, who is free from
35 joy, anger, fear, and anxiety, such a one is My beloved. He who does
36 not depend on anything, who is pure and active, who does not care
37 whether good comes or evil, and never becomes miserable, who has
38 given up all efforts for himself; who is the same in praise or in
39 blame, with a silent, thoughtful mind, blessed with what little
40 comes in his way, homeless, for the whole world is his home, and
41 who is steady in his ideas, such a one is My beloved Bhakta." Such
42 alone become Yogis.

43 There was a great god-sage called Narada. Just as there are
44 sages among mankind, great Yogis, so there are great Yogis among
45 the gods. Narada was a good Yogi, and very great. He travelled
46 everywhere. One day he was passing through a forest, and saw a
47 man who had been meditating until the white ants had built a huge
48 mound round his body--so long had he been sitting in that position.
49 He said to Narada, "Where are you going?" Narada replied, "I am
50 going to heaven." "Then ask God when He will be merciful to me;
51 when I shall attain freedom." Further on Narada saw another man.
52 He was jumping about, singing, dancing, and said, "Oh, Narada,

1 where are you going?" His voice and his gestures were wild.
2 Narada said, "I am going to heaven." "Then, ask when I shall be
3 free." Narada went on. In the course of time he came again by the
4 same road, and there was the man who had been meditating with
5 the ant-hill round him. He said, "Oh, Narada, did you ask the Lord
6 about me?" "Oh, yes." "What did He say?" "The Lord told me that
7 you would attain freedom in four more births." Then the man began
8 to weep and wail, and said, "I have meditated until an ant-hill has
9 grown around me, and I have four more births yet!" Narada went to
10 the other man. "Did you ask my question?" "Oh, yes. Do you see this
11 tamarind tree? I have to tell you that as many leaves as there are on
12 that tree, so many times, you shall be born, and then you shall
13 attain freedom." The man began to dance for joy, and said, "I shall
14 have freedom after such a short time!" A voice came, "My child, you
15 will have freedom this minute." That was the reward for his
16 perseverance. He was ready to work through all those births,
17 nothing discouraged him. But the first man felt that even four more
18 births were too long. Only perseverance, like that of the man who
19 was willing to wait aeons brings about the highest result.

PATANJALI'S YOGA APHORISMS

INTRODUCTION

Before going into the Yoga aphorisms I shall try to discuss one great question, upon which rests the whole theory of religion for the Yogis. It seems the consensus of opinion of the great minds of the world, and it has been nearly demonstrated by researches into physical nature, that we are the outcome and manifestation of an absolute condition, back of our present relative condition, and are going forward, to return to that absolute. This being granted, the question is: Which is better, the absolute or this state? There are not wanting people who think that this manifested state is the highest state of man. Thinkers of great calibre are of the opinion that we are manifestations of undifferentiated being and the differentiated state is higher than the absolute. They imagine that in the absolute there cannot be any quality; that it must be insensate, dull, and lifeless; that only this life can be enjoyed, and, therefore, we must cling to it. First of all we want to inquire into other solutions of life. There was an old solution that man after death remained the same; that all his good sides, minus his evil sides, remained for ever. Logically stated, this means that man's goal is the world; this world carried a stage higher, and eliminated of its evils, is the state they call heaven. This theory, on the face of it, is absurd and puerile, because it cannot be. There cannot be good without evil, nor evil without good. To live in a world where it is all good and no evil is what Sanskrit logicians call a "dream in the air". Another theory in modern times has been presented by several schools, that man's destiny is to go on always improving, always struggling towards, but never reaching the goal. This statement, though apparently very nice, is also absurd, because there is no such thing as motion in a straight line. Every motion is in a circle. If you can take up a stone, and project it into space, and then live long enough, that stone, if it meets with no obstruction, will come back exactly to your hand. A straight line, infinitely projected, must end in a circle. Therefore, this idea that the destiny of man is progressing ever forward and forward, and never stopping, is absurd. Although extraneous to the subject, I may remark that this idea explains the ethical theory that you must not hate, and must love. Because, just as in the case of electricity the modern theory is that the power leaves the dynamo and completes the circle back to the dynamo, so with hate and love; they must come back to the source. Therefore do not hate anybody, because that hatred which comes out from you, must, in the long run, come back to you. If you love, that love will come back to you, completing the circle. It is as certain as can be, that every bit of hatred that goes out of the heart of a man comes back to him in full force, nothing can stop it; similarly every impulse of love comes back to him.

On other and practical grounds we see that the theory of eternal progression is untenable, for destruction is the goal of everything earthly. All our struggles and hopes and fears and joys, what will they lead to? We shall all end in death. Nothing is so

1 certain as this. Where, then, is this motion in a straight line--this
2 infinite progression? It is only going out to a distance, and coming
3 back to the centre from which it started. See how, from nebulae, the
4 sun, moon, and stars are produced; then they dissolve and go back
5 to nebulae. The same is being done everywhere. The plant takes
6 material from the earth, dissolves, and gives it back. Every form in
7 this world is taken out of surrounding atoms and goes back to these
8 atoms. It cannot be that the same law acts differently in different
9 places. Law is uniform. Nothing is more certain than that. If this is
10 the law of nature, it also applies to thought. Thought will dissolve
11 and go back to its origin. Whether we will it or not, we shall have to
12 return to our origin which is called God or Absolute. We all came
13 from God, and we are all bound to go back to God. Call that by any
14 name you like, God, Absolute, or Nature, the fact remains the same.
15 "From whom all this universe comes out, in whom all that is born
16 lives, and to whom all returns." This is one fact that is certain.
17 Nature works on the same plan; what is being worked out in one
18 sphere is repeated in millions of spheres. What you see with the
19 planets, the same will it be with this earth, with men, and with all.
20 The huge wave is a mighty compound of small waves, it may be of
21 millions; the life of the whole world is a compound of millions of
22 little lives, and the death of the whole world is the compound of the
23 deaths of these millions of little beings.

24 Now the question arises: Is going back to God the higher
25 state, or not? The philosophers of the Yoga school emphatically
26 answer that it is. They say that man's present state is a
27 degeneration. There is not one religion on the face of the earth
28 which says that man is an improvement. The idea is that his
29 beginning is perfect and pure, that he degenerates until he cannot
30 degenerate further, and that there must come a time when he
31 shoots upward again to complete the circle. The circle must be
32 described. However low he may go, he must ultimately take the
33 upward bend and go back to the original source, which is God. Man
34 comes from God in the beginning, in the middle he becomes man,
35 and in the end he goes back to God. This is the method of putting it
36 in the dualistic form. The monistic form is that man is God, and
37 goes back to Him again. If our present state is the higher one, then
38 why is there so much horror and misery, and why is there an end to
39 it? If this is the higher state, why does it end?

40 That which corrupts and degenerates cannot be the highest
41 state. Why should it be so diabolical, so unsatisfying? It is only
42 excusable, inasmuch as through it we are taking a higher groove;
43 we have to pass through it in order to become regenerate again.
44 Put a seed into the ground and it disintegrates, dissolves after a
45 time, and out of that dissolution comes the splendid tree. Every soul
46 must disintegrate to become God. So it follows that the sooner we
47 get out of this state we call "man" the better for us. Is it by
48 committing suicide that we get out of this state? Not at all. That will
49 be making it worse. Torturing ourselves, or condemning the world,
50 is not the way to get out. We have to pass through the Slough of
51 Despond, and the sooner we are through, the better. It must always
52 be remembered that man-state is not the highest state.

1 The really difficult part to understand is that this state, the
2 Absolute, which has been called the highest, is not, as some fear,
3 that of the zoophyte or of the stone. According to them, there are
4 only two states of existence, one of the stone, and the other of
5 thought. What right have they to limit existence to these two? Is
6 there not something infinitely superior to thought? The vibrations of
7 light, when they are very low, we do not see; when they become a
8 little more intense, they become light to us; when they become still
9 more intense, we do not see them--it is dark to us. Is the darkness
10 in the end the same darkness as in the beginning? Certainly not;
11 they are different as the two poles. Is the thoughtlessness of the
12 stone the same as the thoughtlessness of God? Certainly not. God
13 does not think; He does not reason. Why should He? Is anything
14 unknown to Him, that He should reason? The stone cannot reason;
15 God does not. Such is the difference. These philosophers think it is
16 awful if we go beyond thought; they find nothing beyond thought.

17 There are much higher states of existence beyond reasoning.
18 It is really beyond the intellect that the first state of religious life is
19 to be found. When you step beyond thought and intellect and all
20 reasoning, then you have made the first step towards God; and that
21 is the beginning of life. What is commonly called life is but an
22 embryo state.

23 The next question will be: What proof is there that the state
24 beyond thought and reasoning is the highest state? In the first
25 place, all the great men of the world, much greater than those that
26 only talk, men who moved the world, men who never thought of any
27 selfish ends whatever, have declared that this life is but a little
28 stage on the way towards Infinity which is beyond. In the second
29 place, they not only say so, but show the way to every one, explain
30 their methods, that all can follow in their steps. In the third place,
31 there is no other way left. There is no other explanation. Taking for
32 granted that there is no higher state, why are we going through this
33 circle all the time; what reason can explain the world? The sensible
34 world will be the limit to our knowledge if we cannot go farther, if
35 we must not ask for anything more. This is what is called
36 agnosticism. But what reason is there to believe in the testimony of
37 the senses? I would call that man a true agnostic who would stand
38 still in the street and die. If reason is all in all, it leaves us no place
39 to stand on this side of nihilism. If a man is agnostic of everything
40 but money, fame, and name, he is only a fraud. Kant has proved
41 beyond all doubt that we cannot penetrate beyond the tremendous
42 dead wall called reason. But that is the very first idea upon which
43 all Indian thought takes its stand, and dares to seek, and succeeds
44 in finding something higher than reason, where alone the
45 explanation of the present state is to be found. This is the value of
46 the study of something that will take us beyond the world. "Thou art
47 our father, and wilt take us to the other shore of this ocean of
48 ignorance." That is the science of religion, nothing else.

CONCENTRATION: ITS SPIRITUAL USES

{Sanskrit}

1. Now concentration is explained.

{Sanskrit}

2. Yoga is restraining the mind-stuff (Chitta) from taking various forms (Vrittis).

A good deal of explanation is necessary here. We have to understand what Chitta is, and what the Vrittis are. I have eyes. Eyes do not see. Take away the brain centre which is in the head, the eyes will still be there, the retinae complete, as also the pictures of objects on them and yet the eyes will not see. So the eyes are only a secondary instrument, not the organ of vision. The organ of vision is in a nerve centre of the brain. The two eyes will not be sufficient. Sometimes a man is asleep with his eyes open. The light is there and the picture is there, but a third thing is necessary--the mind must be joined to the organ. The eye is the external instrument; we need also the brain centre and the agency of the mind. Carriages roll down a street, and you do not hear them. Why? Because your mind has not attached itself to the organ of hearing. First, there is the instrument, then there is the organ, and third, the mind attached to these two. The mind takes the impression farther in, and presents it to the determinative faculty--Buddhi--which reacts. Along with this reaction flashes the idea of egoism. Then this mixture of action and reaction is presented to the Purusha, the real Soul, who perceives an object in this mixture. The organs (Indriyas), together with the mind (Manas), the determinative faculty (Buddhi), and egoism (Ahankara), form the group called the Antahkarana (the internal instrument). They are but various processes in the mind-stuff, called Chitta. The waves of thought in the Chitta are called Vrittis (literally "whirlpool"). What is thought? Thought is a force, as is gravitation or repulsion. From the infinite storehouse of force in nature, the instrument called Chitta takes hold of some, absorbs it and sends it out as thought. Force is supplied to us through food, and out of that food the body obtains the power of motion etc. Others, the finer forces, it throws out in what we call thought. So we see that the mind is not intelligent; yet it appears to be intelligent. Why? Because the intelligent soul is behind it. You are the only sentient being; mind is only the instrument through which you catch the external world. Take this book; as a book it does not exist outside, what exists outside is unknown and unknowable. The unknowable furnishes the suggestion that gives a blow to the mind, and the mind gives out the reaction in the form of a book, in the same manner as when a stone is thrown into the water, the water is thrown against it in the form of waves. The real universe is the occasion of the reaction of the mind. A book form, or an elephant form, or a man form, is not outside; all that we know is our mental reaction from the outer suggestion. "Matter is the permanent possibility of sensations," said John Stuart Mill. It is only the suggestion that is outside. Take an oyster for example. You know how pearls are made. A parasite gets inside the shell and causes irritation, and the oyster throws a sort of

1 enamelling round it, and this makes the pearl. The universe of
2 experience is our own enamel, so to say, and the real universe is the
3 parasite serving as nucleus. The ordinary man will never
4 understand it, because when he tries to do so, he throws out an
5 enamel, and sees only his own enamel. Now we understand what is
6 meant by these Vrittis. The real man is behind the mind; the mind is
7 the instrument in his hands; it is his intelligence that is percolating
8 through the mind. It is only when you stand behind the mind that it
9 becomes intelligent. When man gives it up, it falls to pieces and is
10 nothing. Thus you understand what is meant by Chitta. It is the
11 mind-stuff, and Vrittis are the waves and ripples rising in it when
12 external causes impinge on it. These Vrittis are our universe.

13 The bottom of a lake we cannot see, because its surface is
14 covered with ripples. It is only possible for us to catch a glimpse of
15 the bottom, when the ripples have subsided, and the water is calm.
16 If the water is muddy or is agitated all the time, the bottom will not
17 be seen. If it is clear, and there are no waves, we shall see the
18 bottom. The bottom of the lake is our own true Self; the lake is the
19 Chitta and the waves the Vrittis. Again, the mind is in three states,
20 one of which is darkness, called Tamas, found in brutes and idiots;
21 it only acts to injure. No other idea comes into that state of mind.
22 Then there is the active state of mind, Rajas, whose chief motives
23 are power and enjoyment. "I will be powerful and rule others." Then
24 there is the state called Sattva, serenity, calmness, in which the
25 waves cease, and the water of the mind-lake becomes clear. It is not
26 inactive, but rather intensely active. It is the greatest manifestation
27 of power to be calm. It is easy to be active. Let the reins go, and the
28 horses will run away with you. Anyone can do that, but he who can
29 stop the plunging horses is the strong man. Which requires the
30 greater strength, letting go or restraining? The calm man is not the
31 man who is dull. You must not mistake Sattva for dullness or
32 laziness. The calm man is the one who has control over the mind
33 waves. Activity is the manifestation of inferior strength, calmness,
34 of the superior.

35 The Chitta is always trying to get back to its natural pure
36 state, but the organs draw it out. To restrain it, to check this
37 outward tendency, and to start it on the return journey to the
38 essence of intelligence is the first step in Yoga, because only in this
39 way can the Chitta get into its proper course.

40 Although the Chitta is in every animal, from the lowest to the
41 highest, it is only in the human form that we find it as the intellect.
42 Until the mind-stuff can take the form of intellect it is not possible
43 for it to return through all these steps, and liberate the soul.
44 Immediate salvation is impossible for the cow or the dog, although
45 they have mind, because their Chitta cannot as yet take that form
46 which we call intellect.

47 The Chitta manifests itself in the following forms--scattering,
48 darkening, gathering, one-pointed, and concentrated. The
49 scattering form is activity. Its tendency is to manifest in the form of
50 pleasure or of pain. The darkening form is dullness which tends to
51 injury. The commentator says, the third form is natural to the
52 Devas, the angels, and the first and second to the demons. The

1 gathering form is when it struggles to centre itself. The one-pointed
2 form is when it tries to concentrate, and the concentrated form is
3 what brings us to Samadhi.

4 {Sanskrit}

5 3. At that time (the time of concentration) the seer (Purusha)
6 rests in his own (unmodified) state.

7 As soon as the waves have stopped, and the lake has become
8 quiet, we see its bottom. So with the mind; when it is calm, we see
9 what our own nature is; we do not mix ourselves but remain our
10 own selves.

11 {Sanskrit}

12 4. At other times (other than that of concentration) the seer is
13 identified with the modifications.

14 For instance, someone blames me; this produces a
15 modification, Vritti, in my mind, and I identify myself with it, and
16 the result is misery.

17 {Sanskrit}

18 5. There are five classes of modifications, (some) painful and
19 (others) not painful.

20 {Sanskrit}

21 6. (These are) right knowledge, indiscrimination, verbal
22 delusion, sleep, and memory.

23 {Sanskrit}

24 7. Direct perception, inference, and competent evidence are
25 proofs.

26 When two of our perceptions do not contradict each other, we
27 call it proof. I hear something, and if it contradicts something
28 already perceived, I begin to fight it out, and do not believe it.
29 There are also three kinds of proof. Pratyaksha, direct perception;
30 whatever we see and feel, is proof, if there has been nothing to
31 delude the senses. I see the world; that is sufficient proof that it
32 exists. Secondly, Anumana, inference; you see a sign, and from the
33 sign you come to the thing signified. Thirdly, Aptavakya, the direct
34 evidence of the Yogis, of those who have seen the truth. We are all
35 of us struggling towards knowledge. But you and I have to struggle
36 hard, and come to knowledge through a long tedious process of
37 reasoning, but the Yogi, the pure one, has gone beyond all this.
38 Before his mind, the past, the present, and the future are alike, one
39 book for him to read; he does not require to go through the tedious
40 processes for knowledge we have to; his words are proof, because
41 he sees knowledge in himself. These, for instance, are the authors
42 of the sacred scriptures; therefore the scriptures are proof. If any
43 such persons are living now their words will be proof.

44 Other philosophers go into long discussions about Aptavakya
45 and they say, "What is the proof of their words?" The proof is their
46 direct perception. Because whatever I see is proof, and whatever
47 you see is proof, if it does not contradict any past knowledge. There

1 is knowledge beyond the senses, and whenever it does not
2 contradict reason and past human experience, that knowledge is
3 proof. Any madman may come into this room and say he sees angels
4 around him; that would not be proof. In the first place, it must be
5 true knowledge, and secondly, it must not contradict past
6 knowledge, and thirdly, it must depend upon the character of the
7 man who gives it out. I hear it said that the character of the man is
8 not of so much importance as what he may say; we must first hear
9 what he says. This may be true in other things. A man may be
10 wicked, and yet make an astronomical discovery, but in religion it is
11 different, because no impure man will ever have the power to reach
12 the truths of religion. Therefore we have first of all to see that the
13 man who declares himself to be an Apta is a perfectly unselfish and
14 holy person; secondly, that he has reached beyond the senses; and
15 thirdly, that what he says does not contradict the past knowledge of
16 humanity. Any new discovery of truth does not contradict the past
17 truth, but fits into it. And fourthly, that truth must have a possibility
18 of verification. If a man says, "I have seen a vision," and tells me
19 that I have no right to see it, I believe him not. Everyone must have
20 the power to see it for himself. No one who sells his knowledge is
21 an Apta. All these conditions must be fulfilled; you must first see
22 that the man is pure, and that he has no selfish motive; that he has
23 no thirst for gain or fame. Secondly, he must show that he is
24 superconscious. He must give us something that we cannot get
25 from our senses, and which is for the benefit of the world. Thirdly,
26 we must see that it does not contradict other truths; if it contradicts
27 other scientific truths reject it at once. Fourthly, the man should
28 never be singular; he should only represent what all men can attain.
29 The three sorts of proof are, then, direct sense-perception,
30 inference, and the words of an Apta. I cannot translate this word
31 into English. It is not the word "inspired", because inspiration is
32 believed to come from outside, while this knowledge comes from
33 the man himself. The literal meaning is "attained."

34 {Sanskrit}

35 8. Indiscrimination is false knowledge not established in real
36 nature.

37 The next class of Vrittis that arises is mistaking one thing for
38 another, as a piece of mother-of-pearl is taken for a piece of silver.

39 {Sanskrit}

40 9. Verbal delusion follows from words having no
41 (corresponding) reality.

42 There is another class of Vrittis called Vikalpa. A word is
43 uttered, and we do not wait to consider its meaning; we jump to a
44 conclusion immediately. It is the sign of weakness of the Chitta.
45 Now you can understand the theory of restraint. The weaker the
46 man, the less he has of restraint. Examine yourselves always by that
47 test. When you are going to be angry or miserable, reason it out
48 how it is that some news that has come to you is throwing your
49 mind into Vrittis.

50 {Sanskrit}

1 10. Sleep is a Vritti which embraces the feeling of voidness.

2 The next class of Vrittis is called sleep and dream. When we
3 awake, we know that we have been sleeping; we can only have
4 memory of perception. That which we do not perceive we never can
5 have any memory of.

6 Every reaction is a wave in the lake. Now, if, during sleep, the
7 mind had no waves, it would have no perceptions, positive or
8 negative, and, therefore, we would not remember them. The very
9 reason of our remembering sleep is that during sleep there was a
10 certain class of waves in the mind. Memory is another class of
11 Vrittis which is called Smriti.

12 {Sanskrit}

13 11. Memory is when the (Vrittis of) perceived subjects do not
14 slip away (and through impressions come back to consciousness.

15 Memory can come from direct perception, false knowledge,
16 verbal delusion, and sleep. For instance, you hear a word. That
17 word is like a stone thrown into the lake of the Chitta; it causes a
18 ripple, and that ripple rouses a series of ripples; this is memory. So
19 in sleep. When the peculiar kind of ripple called sleep throws the
20 Chitta into a ripple of memory, it is called a dream. Dream is
21 another form of the ripple which in the waking state is called
22 memory.

23 {Sanskrit}

24 12. Their control is by practice and non-attachment.

25 The mind, to have non-attachment, must be clear, good, and
26 rational. Why should we practise? Because each action is like the
27 pulsations quivering over the surface of the lake. The vibration dies
28 out, and what is left? The Samskaras, the impressions. When a
29 large number of these impressions are left on the mind, they
30 coalesce and become a habit. It is said, "Habit is second nature", it
31 is first nature also, and the whole nature of man; everything that we
32 are is the result of habit. That gives us consolation, because, if it is
33 only habit, we can make and unmake it at any time. The Samskaras
34 are left by these vibrations passing out of our mind, each one of
35 them leaving its result. Our character is the sum-total of these
36 marks, and according as some particular wave prevails one takes
37 that tone. If good prevails, one becomes good; if wickedness, one
38 becomes wicked; if joyfulness, one becomes happy. The only remedy
39 for bad habits is counter habits; all the bad habits that have left
40 their impressions are to be controlled by good habits. Go on doing
41 good, thinking holy thoughts continuously; that is the only way to
42 suppress base impressions. Never say any man is hopeless, because
43 he only represents a character, a bundle of habits, which can be
44 checked by new and better ones. Character is repeated habits, and
45 repeated habits alone can reform character.

46 {Sanskrit}

47 13. Continuous struggle to keep them (the Vrittis) perfectly
48 restrained is practice.

49 What is practice? The attempt to restrain the mind in Chitta

1 form, to prevent its going out into waves.

2 {Sanskrit}

3 14. It becomes firmly grounded by long constant efforts with
4 great love (for the end to be attained).

5 Restraint does not come in one day, but by long continued
6 practice.

7 {Sanskrit}

8 15. That effect which comes to those who have given up their
9 thirst after objects, either seen or heard, and which wills to control
10 the objects, is non-attachment.

11 The two motive powers of our actions are (1) what we see
12 ourselves, (2) the experience of others. These two forces throw the
13 mind, the lake, into various waves. Renunciation is the power of
14 battling against these forces and holding the mind in check. Their
15 renunciation is what we want. I am passing through a street, and a
16 man comes and takes away my watch. That is my own experience. I
17 see it myself, and it immediately throws my Chitta into a wave,
18 taking the form of anger. Allow not that to come. If you cannot
19 prevent that, you are nothing; if you can, you have Vairagya. Again,
20 the experience of the worldly-minded teaches us that sense-
21 enjoyments are the highest ideal. These are tremendous
22 temptations. To deny them, and not allow the mind to come to a
23 wave form with regard to them, is renunciation; to control the
24 twofold motive powers arising from my own experience and from
25 the experience of others, and thus prevent the Chitta from being
26 governed by them, is Vairagya. These should be controlled by me,
27 and not I by them. This sort of mental strength is called
28 renunciation. Vairagya is the only way to freedom.

29 {Sanskrit}

30 16. That is extreme non-attachment which gives up even the
31 qualities, and comes from the knowledge of (the real nature of) the
32 Purusha.

33 It is the highest manifestation of the power of Vairagya when
34 it takes away even our attraction towards the qualities. We have
35 first to understand what the Purusha, the Self, is and what the
36 qualities are. According to Yoga philosophy, the whole of nature
37 consists of three qualities or forces; one is called Tamas, another
38 Rajas, and the third Sattva. These three qualities manifest
39 themselves in the physical world as darkness or inactivity,
40 attraction or repulsion, and equilibrium of the two. Everything that
41 is in nature, all manifestations, are combinations and
42 recombinations of these three forces. Nature has been divided into
43 various categories by the Sankhyas; the Self of man is beyond all
44 these, beyond nature. It is effulgent, pure, and perfect. Whatever of
45 intelligence we see in nature is but the reflection of this Self upon
46 nature. Nature itself is insentient. You must remember that the
47 word nature also includes the mind; mind is in nature; thought is in
48 nature; from thought, down to the grossest form of matter,
49 everything is in nature, the manifestation of nature. This nature has

covered the Self of man, and when nature takes away the covering, the self appears in Its own glory. The non-attachment, as described in aphorism 15 (as being control of objects or nature) is the greatest help towards manifesting the Self. The next aphorism defines Samadhi, perfect concentration, which is the goal of the Yogi.

{Sanskrit}

17. The concentration called right knowledge is that which is followed by reasoning, discrimination, bliss, unqualified egoism.

Samadhi is divided into two varieties. One is called the Samprajnata, and the other the Asamprajnata. In the Samprajnata Samadhi come all the powers of controlling nature. It is of four varieties. The first variety is called the Savitarka, when the mind meditates upon an object again and again, by isolating it from other objects. There are two sorts of objects for meditation in the twenty-five categories of the Sankhyas, (1) the twenty-four insentient categories of Nature, and (2) the one sentient Purusha. This part of Yoga is based entirely on Sankhya philosophy, about which I have already told you. As you will remember, egoism and will and mind have a common basis, the Chitta or the mind-stuff, out of which they are all manufactured. The mind-stuff takes in the forces of nature, and projects them as thought. There must be something, again, where both force and matter are one.

This is called Avyakta, the unmanifest state of nature before creation, and to which, after the end of a cycle, the whole of nature returns, to come out again after another period. Beyond that is the Purusha, the essence of intelligence. Knowledge is power, and as soon as we begin to know a thing, we get power over it; so also when the mind begins to meditate on the different elements, it gains power over them. That sort of meditation where the external gross elements are the objects is called Savitarka. Vitarka means question; Savitarka, with question, questioning the elements, as it were, that they may give their truths and their powers to the man who meditates upon them. There is no liberation in getting powers. It is a worldly search after enjoyments, and there is no enjoyment in this life; all search for enjoyment is vain; this is the old, old lesson which man finds so hard to learn. When he does learn it, he gets out of the universe and becomes free. The possession of what are called occult powers is only intensifying the world, and in the end, intensifying suffering. Though as a scientist Patanjali is bound to point out the possibilities of this science, he never misses an opportunity to warn us against these powers.

Again, in the very same meditation, when one struggles to take the elements out of time and space, and think of them as they are, it is called Nirvitarka, without question. When the meditation goes a step higher, and takes the Tanmatras as its object, and thinks of them as in time and space, it is called Savichara, with discrimination; and when in the same meditation one eliminates time and space, and thinks of the fine elements as they are, it is called Nirvichara, without discrimination. The next step is when the elements are given up, both gross and fine, and the object of

meditation is the interior organ, the thinking organ. When the thinking organ is thought of as bereft of the qualities of activity and dullness, it is then called Sananda, the blissful Samadhi. When the mind itself is the object of meditation, when meditation becomes very ripe and concentrated, when all ideas of the gross and fine materials are given up, when the Sattva state only of the Ego remains, but differentiated from all other objects, it is called Sasmita Samadhi. The man who has attained to this has attained to what is called in the Vedas "bereft of body". He can think of himself as without his gross body; but he will have to think of himself as with a fine body. Those that in this state get merged in nature without attaining the goal are called Prakritilayas, but those who do not stop even there reach the goal, which is freedom.

{Sanskrit}

18. There is another Samadhi which is attained by the constant practice of cessation of all mental activity, in which the Chitta retains only the unmanifested impressions.

This is the perfect superconscious Asamprajnata Samadhi, the state which gives us freedom. The first state does not give us freedom, does not liberate the soul. A man may attain to all powers, and yet fall again. There is no safeguard until the soul goes beyond nature. It is very difficult to do so, although the method seems easy. The method is to meditate on the mind itself, and whenever thought comes, to strike it down, allowing no thought to come into the mind, thus making it an entire vacuum. When we can really do this, that very moment we shall attain liberation. When persons without training and preparation try to make their minds vacant, they are likely to succeed only in covering themselves with Tamas, the material of ignorance, which make the mind dull and stupid, and leads them to think that they are making a vacuum of the mind. To be able to really do that is to manifest the greatest strength, the highest control. When this state, Asamprajnata, superconsciousness, is reached, the Samadhi becomes seedless. What is meant by that? In a concentration where there is consciousness, where the mind succeeds only in quelling the waves in the Chitta and holding them down, the waves remain in the form of tendencies. These tendencies (or seeds) become waves again, when the time comes. But when you have destroyed all these tendencies, almost destroyed the mind, then the Samadhi becomes seedless; there are no more seeds in the mind out of which to manufacture again and again this plant of life, this ceaseless round of birth and death.

You may ask, what state would that be in which there is no mind, there is no knowledge? What we call knowledge is a lower state than the one beyond knowledge. You must always bear in mind that the extremes look very much alike. If a very low vibration of ether is taken as darkness, an intermediate state as light, very high vibration will be darkness again. Similarly, ignorance is the lowest state, knowledge is the middle state, and beyond knowledge is the highest state, the two extremes of which seem the same. Knowledge itself is a manufactured something, a combination; it is not reality.

1 What is the result of constant practice of this higher
2 concentration? All old tendencies of restlessness and dullness will
3 be destroyed, as well as the tendencies of goodness too. The case is
4 similar to that of the chemicals used to take the dirt and alloy off
5 gold. When the ore is smelted down, the dross is burnt along with
6 the chemicals. So this constant controlling power will stop the
7 previous bad tendencies, and eventually, the good ones also. Those
8 good and evil tendencies will suppress each other, leaving alone the
9 Soul, in its own splendour untrammelled by either good or bad, the
10 omnipresent, omnipotent, and omniscient. Then the man will know
11 that he had neither birth nor death, nor need for heaven or earth.
12 He will know that he neither came nor went, it was nature which
13 was moving, and that movement was reflected upon the soul. The
14 form of the light reflected by the glass upon the wall moves, and the
15 wall foolishly thinks it is moving. So with all of us; it is the Chitta
16 constantly moving making itself into various forms, and we think
17 that we are these various forms. All these delusions will vanish.
18 When that free Soul will command--not pray or beg, but command--
19 then whatever It desires will be immediately fulfilled; whatever It
20 wants It will be able to do. According to the Sankhya philosophy,
21 there is no God. It says that there can be no God of this universe,
22 because if there were one, He must be a soul, and a soul must be
23 either bound or free. How can the soul that is bound by nature, or
24 controlled by nature, create? It is itself a slave. On the other hand,
25 why should the Soul that is free create and manipulate all these
26 things? It has no desires, so it cannot have any need to create.
27 Secondly, it says the theory of God is an unnecessary one; nature
28 explains all. What is the use of any God? But Kapila teaches that
29 there are many souls, who, though nearly attaining perfection, fall
30 short because they cannot perfectly renounce all powers. Their
31 minds for a time merge in nature, to re-emerge as its masters. Such
32 gods there are. We shall all become such gods, and, according to
33 the Sankhyas, the God spoken of in the Vedas really means one of
34 these free souls. Beyond them there is not an eternally free and
35 blessed Creator of the universe. On the other hand, the Yogis say,
36 "Not so, there is a God; there is one Soul separate from all other
37 souls, and He is the eternal Master of all creation, the ever free, the
38 Teacher of all teachers." The Yogis admit that those whom the
39 Sankhyas call "the merged in nature" also exist. They are Yogis who
40 have fallen short of perfection, and though, for a time, debarred
41 from attaining the goal, remain as rulers of parts of the universe.

42 {Sanskrit}

43 19. (This Samadhi when not followed by extreme non-
44 attachment) becomes the cause of the re-manifestation of the gods
45 and of those that become merged in nature.

46 The gods in the Indian systems of philosophy represent
47 certain high offices which are filled successively by various souls.
48 But none of them is perfect.

49 {Sanskrit}

50 20. To others (this Samadhi) comes through faith, energy,
51 memory, concentration, and discrimination of the real.

1 These are they who do not want the position of gods or even
2 that of rulers of cycles. They attain to liberation.

3 {Sanskrit}

4 21. Success is speedy for the extremely energetic.

5 {Sanskrit}

6 22. The success of Yogis differs according as the means they
7 adopt are mild, medium, or intense.

8 {Sanskrit}

9 23. Or by devotion to Ishvara.

10 {Sanskrit}

11 24. Ishvara (the Supreme Ruler) is a special Purusha,
12 untouched by misery, actions, their results, and desires.

13 We must again remember that the Patanjala Yoga philosophy
14 is based upon the Sankhya philosophy; only in the latter there is no
15 place for God, while with the Yogis God has a place. The Yogis,
16 however, do not mention many ideas about God, such as creating.
17 God as the Creator of the universe is not meant by the Ishvara of
18 the Yogis. According to the Vedas, Ishvara is the Creator of the
19 universe; because it is harmonious, it must be the manifestation of
20 one will. The Yogis want to establish a God, but they arrive at Him
21 in a peculiar fashion of their own. They say:

22 {Sanskrit}

23 25. In Him becomes infinite that all-knowingness which in
24 others is (only) a germ.

25 The mind must always travel between two extremes. You can
26 think of limited space, but that very idea gives you also unlimited
27 space. Close your eyes and think of a little space; at the same time
28 that you perceive the little circle, you have a circle round it of
29 unlimited dimensions. It is the same with time. Try to think of a
30 second; you will have, with the same act of perception, to think of
31 time which is unlimited. So with knowledge. Knowledge is only a
32 germ in man, but you will have to think of infinite knowledge
33 around it, so that the very constitution of our mind shows us that
34 there is unlimited knowledge, and the Yogis call that unlimited
35 knowledge God.

36 {Sanskrit}

37 26. He is the Teacher of even the ancient teachers, being to
38 limited by time.

39 It is true that all knowledge is within ourselves, but this has
40 to be called forth by another knowledge. Although the capacity to
41 know is inside us, it must be called out, and that calling out of
42 knowledge can only be done, a Yogi maintains, through another
43 knowledge. Dead, insentient matter never calls out knowledge, it is
44 the action of knowledge that brings out knowledge. Knowing beings
45 must be with us to call forth what is in us, so these teachers were
46 always necessary. The world was never without them, and no
47 knowledge can come without them. God is the Teacher of all

1 teachers, because these teachers, however great they may have
2 been--gods or angels--were all bound and limited by time, while God
3 is not. There are two peculiar deductions of the Yogis. The first is
4 that in thinking of the limited, the mind must think of the unlimited;
5 and that if one part of that perception is true, so also must the other
6 be, for the reason that their value as perceptions of the mind is
7 equal. The very fact that man has a little knowledge shows that God
8 has unlimited knowledge. If I am to take one, why not the other?
9 Reason forces me to take both or reject both. If I believe that there
10 is a man with a little knowledge, I must also admit that there is
11 someone behind him with unlimited knowledge. The second
12 deduction is that no knowledge can come without a teacher. It is
13 true, as the modern philosophers say, that there is something in
14 man which evolves out of him; all knowledge is in man, but certain
15 environments are necessary to call it out. We cannot find any
16 knowledge without teachers. If there are men teachers, god
17 teachers, or angel teachers, they are all limited; who was the
18 teacher before them. We are forced to admit, as a last conclusion,
19 one teacher who is not limited by time; and that One Teacher of
20 infinite knowledge, without beginning or end, is called God.

21 {Sanskrit}

22 27. His manifesting word is Om.

23 Every idea that you have in the mind has a counterpart in a
24 word; the word and the thought are inseparable. The external part
25 of one and the same thing is what we call word, and the internal
26 part is what we call thought. No man can, by analysis, separate
27 thought from word. The idea that language was created by men--
28 certain men sitting together and deciding upon words, has been
29 proved to be wrong. So long as man has existed there have been
30 words and language. What is the connection between an idea and a
31 word? Although we see that there must always be a word with a
32 thought, it is not necessary that the same thought requires the
33 same word. The thought may be the same in twenty different
34 countries, yet the language is different. We must have a word to
35 express each thought, but these words need not necessarily have
36 the same sound. Sounds will vary in different nations. Our
37 commentator says, "Although the relation between thought and
38 word is perfectly natural, yet it does not mean a rigid connection
39 between one sound and one idea." These sounds vary, yet the
40 relation between the sounds and the thoughts is a natural one. The
41 connection between thoughts and sounds is good only if there be a
42 real connection between the thing signified and the symbol; until
43 then that symbol will never come into general use. A symbol is the
44 manifest of the thing signified, and if the thing signified has
45 already an existence, and if, by experience, we know that the
46 symbol has expressed that thing many times, then we are sure that
47 there is a real relation between them. Even if the things are not
48 present, there will be thousands who will know them by their
49 symbols. There must be a natural connection between the symbol
50 and the thing signified; then, when that symbol is pronounced, it
51 recalls the thing signified. The commentator says the manifesting
52 word of God is Om. Why does he emphasise this word? There are

1 hundreds of words for God. One thought is connected with a
2 thousand words; the idea "God" is connected with hundreds of
3 words, and each one stands as a symbol for God. Very good. But
4 there must be a generalisation among all these words, some
5 substratum, some common ground of all these symbols, and that
6 which is the common symbol will be the best, and will really
7 represent them all. In making a sound we use the larynx and the
8 palate as a sounding board. Is there any material sound of which all
9 other sounds must be manifestations, one which is the most natural
10 sound? Om (Aum) is such a sound, the basis of all sounds. The first
11 letter, A, is the root sound, the key, pronounced without touching
12 any part of the tongue or palate; M represents the last sound in the
13 series, being produced by the closed lips, and the U rolls from the
14 very root to the end of the sounding board of the mouth. Thus, Om
15 represents the whole phenomena of sound-producing. As such, it
16 must be the natural symbol, the matrix of all the various sounds. It
17 denotes the whole range and possibility of all the words that can be
18 made. Apart from these speculations, we see that around this word
19 Om are centred all the different religious ideas in India; all the
20 various religious ideas of the Vedas have gathered themselves
21 round this word Om. What has that to do with America and
22 England, or any other country? Simply this, that the word has been
23 retained at every stage of religious growth in India, and it has been
24 manipulated to mean all the various ideas about God. Monists,
25 dualists, mono-dualists, separatists, and even atheists took up this
26 Om. Om has become the one symbol for the religious aspiration of
27 the vast majority of human beings. Take, for instance, the English
28 word God. It covers only a limited function, and if you go beyond it,
29 you have to add adjectives, to make it Personal, or Impersonal, or
30 Absolute God. So with the words for God in every other language;
31 their signification is very small. This word Om, however, has around
32 it all the various significances. As such it should be accepted by
33 everyone.

34 {Sanskrit}

35 28. The repetition of this (Om) and meditating on its meaning
36 (is the way).

37 Why should there be repetition? We have not forgotten the
38 theory of Samskaras, that the sum-total of impressions lives in the
39 mind. They become more and more latent but remain there, and as
40 soon as they get the right stimulus, they come out. Molecular
41 vibration never ceases. When this universe is destroyed, all the
42 massive vibrations disappear; the sun, moon, stars, and earth, melt
43 down; but the vibrations remain in the atoms. Each atom performs
44 the same function as the big worlds do. So even when the vibrations
45 of the Chitta subside, its molecular vibrations go on, and when they
46 get the impulse, come out again. We can now understand what is
47 meant by repetition. It is the greatest stimulus that can be given to
48 the spiritual Samskaras. "One moment of company with the holy
49 makes a ship to cross this ocean of life." Such is the power of
50 association. So this repetition of Om, and thinking of its meaning, is
51 keeping good company in your own mind. Study, and then meditate
52 on what you have studied. Thus light will come to you, the Self will

1 become manifest.

2 But one must think of Om, and of its meaning too. Avoid evil
3 company, because the scars of old wounds are in you, and evil
4 company is just the thing that is necessary to call them out. In the
5 same way we are told that good company will call out the good
6 impressions that are in us, but which have become latent. There is
7 nothing holier in the world than to keep good company, because the
8 good impressions will then tend to come to the surface.

9 {Sanskrit}

10 29. From that is gained (the knowledge of) introspection, and
11 the destruction of obstacles.

12 The first manifestation of the repetition and thinking of Om is
13 that the introspective power will manifest more and more, all the
14 mental and physical obstacles will begin to vanish. What are the
15 obstacles to the Yogi?

16 {Sanskrit}

17 30. Disease, mental laziness, doubt, lack of enthusiasm,
18 lethargy, clinging to sense-enjoyments, false perception, non-
19 attaining concentration, and falling away from the state when
20 obtained, are the obstructing distractions.

21 *Disease.* This body is the boat which will carry us to the other
22 shore of the ocean of life. It must be taken care of. Unhealthy
23 persons cannot be Yogis. *Mental laziness* makes us lose all lively
24 interest in the subject, without which there will neither be the will
25 nor the energy to practise. *Doubts* will arise in the mind about the
26 truth of the science, however strong one's intellectual conviction
27 may be, until certain peculiar psychic experiences come, as hearing
28 or seeing at a distance, etc. These glimpses strengthen the mind
29 and make the student persevere. *Falling away...when obtained.*
30 Some days or weeks when you are practising, the mind will be calm
31 and easily concentrated, and you will find yourself progressing fast.
32 All of a sudden the progress will stop one day, and you will find
33 yourself, as it were, stranded. Persevere. All progress proceeds by
34 such rise and fall.

35 {Sanskrit}

36 31. Grief, mental distress, tremor of the body, irregular
37 breathing, accompany non-retention of concentration.

38 Concentration will bring perfect repose to mind and body
39 every time it is practised. When the practice has been misdirected,
40 or not enough controlled, these disturbances come. Repetition of
41 Om and self-surrender to the Lord will strengthen the mind, and
42 bring fresh energy. The nervous shakings will come to almost
43 everyone. Do not mind them at all, but keep on practising. Practice
44 will cure them, and make the seat firm.

45 {Sanskrit}

46 32. To remedy this, the practice of one subject (should be
47 made).

48 Making the mind take the form of one object for some time

1 will destroy these obstacles. This is general advice. In the following
2 aphorisms it will be expanded and particularised. As one practice
3 cannot suit everyone, various methods will be advanced, and
4 everyone by actual experience will find out that which helps him
5 most.

6 {Sanskrit}

7 33. Friendship, mercy, gladness, and indifference, being
8 thought of in regard to subjects, happy, unhappy, good, and evil
9 respectively, pacify the Chitta.

10 We must have these four sorts of ideas. We must have
11 friendship for all; we must be merciful towards those that are in
12 misery; when people are happy, we ought to be happy; and to the
13 wicked we must be indifferent. So with all subjects that come
14 before us. If the subject is a good one, we shall feel friendly
15 towards it; if the subject of thought is one that is miserable, we
16 must be merciful towards it. If it is good, we must be glad; if it is
17 evil, we must be indifferent. These attitudes of the mind towards
18 the different subjects that come before it will make the mind
19 peaceful. Most of our difficulties in our daily lives come from being
20 unable to hold our minds in this way. For instance, if a man does
21 evil to us, instantly we want to react evil, and every reaction of evil
22 shows that we are not able to hold the Chitta down; it comes out in
23 waves towards the object, and we lose our power. Every reaction in
24 the form of hatred or evil is so much loss to the mind; and every evil
25 thought or deed of hatred, or any thought of reaction, if it is
26 controlled, will be laid in our favour. It is not that we lose by thus
27 restraining ourselves; we are gaining infinitely more than we
28 suspect. Each time we suppress hatred, or a feeling of anger, it is so
29 much good energy stored up in our favour; that piece of energy will
30 be converted into the higher powers.

31 {Sanskrit}

32 34. By throwing out and restraining the Breath.

33 The word used is Prana. Prana is not exactly breath. It is the
34 name for the energy that is in the universe. Whatever you see in the
35 universe, whatever moves or works, or has life, is a manifestation of
36 this Prana. The sum-total of the energy displayed in the universe is
37 called Prana. This Prana, before a cycle begins, remains in an
38 almost motionless state; and when the cycle begins, this Prana
39 begins to manifest itself. It is this Prana that is manifested as
40 motion--as the nervous motion in human beings or animals; and the
41 same Prana is manifesting as thought, and so on. The whole
42 universe is a combination of Prana and Akasha; so is the human
43 body. Out of Akasha you get the different materials that you feel
44 and see, and out of Prana all the various forces. Now this throwing
45 out and restraining the Prana is what is called Pranayama.
46 Patanjali, the father of the Yoga philosophy, does not give very
47 many particular directions about Pranayama, but later on other
48 Yogis found out various things about this Pranayama, and made of it
49 a great science. With Patanjali it is one of the many ways, but he
50 does not lay much stress on it. He means that you simply throw the
51 air out, and draw it in, and hold it for some time, that is all, and by

1 that, the mind will become a little calmer. But, later on, you will find
2 that out of this is evolved a particular science called Pranayama. We
3 shall hear a little of what these later Yogis have to say.

4 Some of this I have told you before, but a little repetition will
5 serve to fix it in your minds. First, you must remember that this
6 Prana is not the breath; but that which causes the motion of the
7 breath, that which is the vitality of the breath, is the Prana. Again,
8 the word Prana is used for all the senses; they are all called Pranas,
9 the mind is called Prana; and so we see that Prana is force. And yet
10 we cannot call it force, because force is only the manifestation of it.
11 It is that which manifests itself as force and everything else in the
12 way of motion. The Chitta, the mind-stuff, is the engine which draws
13 in the Prana from the surroundings, and manufactures out of Prana
14 the various vital forces--those that keep the body in preservation--
15 and thought, will, and all other powers. By the above-mentioned
16 process of breathing we can control all the various motions in the
17 body, and the various nerve currents that are running through the
18 body. First we begin to recognise them, and then we slowly get
19 control over them.

20 Now, these later Yogis consider that there are three main
21 currents of this Prana in the human body. One they call Ida, another
22 Pingala, and the third Sushumna. Pingala, according to them, is on
23 the right side of the spinal column, and the Ida on the left, and in
24 the middle of the spinal column is the Sushumna, an empty channel.
25 Ida and Pingala, according to them, are the currents working in
26 every man, and through these currents, we are performing all the
27 functions of life. Sushumna is present in all, as a possibility; but it
28 works only in the Yogi. You must remember that Yoga changes the
29 body. As you go on practising, your body changes; it is not the same
30 body that you had before the practice. That is very rational, and can
31 be explained, because every new thought that we have must make,
32 as it were, a new channel through the brain, and that explains the
33 tremendous conservatism of human nature. Human nature likes to
34 run through the ruts that are already there, because it is easy. If we
35 think, just for example's sake, that the mind is like a needle, and the
36 brain substance a soft lump before it, then each thought that we
37 have makes a street, as it were, in the brain, and this street would
38 close up, but for the grey matter which comes and makes a lining to
39 keep it separate. If there were no grey matter, there would be no
40 memory, because memory means going over these old streets,
41 retracing a thought as it were. Now perhaps you have marked that
42 when one talks on subjects in which one takes a few ideas that are
43 familiar to everyone, and combines and recombines them, it is easy
44 to follow because these channels are present in everyone's brain,
45 and it is only necessary to recur them. But whenever a new subject
46 comes, new channels have to be made, so it is not understood
47 readily. And that is why the brain (it is the brain, and not the people
48 themselves) refuses unconsciously to be acted upon by new ideas. It
49 resists. The Prana is trying to make new channels, and the brain
50 will not allow it. This is the secret of conservatism. The fewer
51 channels there have been in the brain, and the less the needle of
52 the Prana has made these passages, the more conservative will be

1 the brain, the more it will struggle against new thoughts. The more
2 thoughtful the man, the more complicated will be the streets in his
3 brain, and the more easily he will take to new ideas, and
4 understand them. So with every fresh idea, we make a new
5 impression in the brain, cut new channels through the brain-stuff,
6 and that is why we find that in the practice of Yoga (it being an
7 entirely new set of thoughts and motives) there is so much physical
8 resistance at first. That is why we find that the part of religion
9 which deals with the world-side of nature is so widely accepted,
10 while the other part, the philosophy, or the psychology, which deals
11 with the inner nature of man, is so frequently neglected.

12 We must remember the definition of this world of ours; it is
13 only the Infinite Existence projected into the plane of
14 consciousness. A little of the Infinite is projected into
15 consciousness, and that we call our world. So there is an Infinite
16 beyond; and religion has to deal with both--with the little lump we
17 call our world, and with the Infinite beyond. Any religion which
18 deals with one only of these two will be defective. It must deal with
19 both. The part of religion which deals with the part of the Infinite
20 which has come into the plane of consciousness, got itself caught,
21 as it were, in the plane of consciousness, in the cage of time, space,
22 and causation, is quite familiar to us, because we are in that
23 already, and ideas about this world have been with us almost from
24 time immemorial. The part of religion which deals with the Infinite
25 beyond comes entirely new to us, and getting ideas about it
26 produces new channels in the brain, disturbing the whole system,
27 and that is why you find in the practice of Yoga ordinary people are
28 at first turned out of their grooves. In order to lessen these
29 disturbances as much as possible, all these methods are devised by
30 Patanjali, that we may practise any one of them best suited to us.

31 {Sanskrit}

32 35. Those forms of concentration that bring extraordinary
33 sense-perceptions cause perseverance of the mind.

34 This naturally comes with Dharana, concentration; the Yogis
35 say, if the mind becomes concentrated on the tip of the nose, one
36 begins to smell, after a few days, wonderful perfumes. If it becomes
37 concentrated at the root of the tongue, one begins to hear sounds;
38 if on the tip of the tongue, one begins to taste wonderful flavours; if
39 on the middle of the tongue, one feels as if one were coming in
40 contact with something. If one concentrates one's mind on the
41 palate, one begins to see peculiar things. If a man whose mind is
42 disturbed wants to take up some of these practices of Yoga, yet
43 doubts the truth of them, he will have his doubts set at rest when,
44 after a little practice, these things come to him, and he will
45 persevere.

46 {Sanskrit}

47 36. Or (by the meditation on) the Effulgent Light, which is
48 beyond all sorrow.

49 This is another sort of concentration. Think of the lotus of the
50 heart, with petals downwards, and running through it, the

1 Sushumna; take in the breath, and while throwing the breath out
2 imagine that the lotus is turned with the petals upwards, and inside
3 that lotus is an effulgent light. Meditate on that.

4 {Sanskrit}

5 37. Or (by meditation on) the heart that has given up all
6 attachment to sense-objects.

7 Take some holy person, some great person whom you revere,
8 some saint whom you know to be perfectly non-attached, and think
9 of his heart. That heart has become non-attached, and meditate on
10 that heart; it will calm the mind. If you cannot do that, there is the
11 next way:

12 {Sanskrit}

13 38. Or by meditating on the knowledge that comes in sleep.

14 Sometimes a man dreams that he has seen angels coming to
15 him and talking to him, that he is in an ecstatic condition, that he
16 has heard music floating through the air. He is in a blissful
17 condition in that dream, and when he wakes, it makes a deep
18 impression on him. Think of that dream as real, and meditate upon
19 it. If you cannot do that, meditate on any holy thing that pleases
20 you.

21 {Sanskrit}

22 39. Or by the meditation on anything that appeals to one as
23 good.

24 This does not mean any wicked subject, but anything good
25 that you like, any place that you like best, any scenery that you like
26 best, any idea that you like best, anything that will concentrate the
27 mind.

28 {Sanskrit}

29 40. The Yogi's mind thus meditating, becomes unobstructed
30 from the atomic to the infinite.

31 The mind, by this practice, easily contemplates the most
32 minute, as well as the biggest thing. Thus the mind-waves become
33 fainter.

34 {Sanskrit}

35 41. The Yogi whose Vrittis have thus become powerless
36 (controlled) obtains in the receiver, (the instrument of) receiving,
37 and the received (the Self, the mind, and external objects),
38 concentratedness and sameness like the crystal (before different
39 coloured objects).

40 What results from this constant meditation? We must
41 remember how in a previous aphorism Patanjali went into the
42 various states of meditation, how the first would be the gross, the
43 second the fine, and from them the advance was to still finer
44 objects. The result of these meditations is that we can meditate as
45 easily on the fine as on the gross objects. Here the Yogi sees the
46 three things, the receiver, the received, and the receiving
47 instrument, corresponding to the Soul, external objects, and the

mind. There are three objects of meditation given us. First, the gross things, as bodies, or material objects; second, fine things, as the mind, the Chitta; and third, the Purusha qualified, not the Purusha itself, but the Egoism. By practice, the Yogi gets established in all these meditations. Whenever he meditates he can keep out all other thoughts; he becomes identified with that on which he meditates. When he meditates, he is like a piece of crystal. Before flowers the crystal becomes almost identified with the flowers. If the flower is red, the crystal looks red, or if the flower is blue, the crystal looks blue.

{Sanskrit}

42. Sound, meaning, and resulting knowledge, being mixed up, is (called) Samadhi with question.

Sound here means vibration, meaning the nerve currents which conduct it; and knowledge, reaction. All the various meditations we have had so far, Patanjali calls Savitarka (meditation with question). Later on he gives us higher and higher Dhyanas. In these that are called "with question," we keep the duality of subject and object, which results from the mixture of word, meaning, and knowledge. There is first the external vibration, the word. This, carried inward by the sense currents, is the meaning. After that there comes a reactionary wave in the Chitta, which is knowledge, but the mixture of these three makes up what we call knowledge. In all the meditations up to this we get this mixture as objects of meditation. The next Samadhi is higher.

{Sanskrit}

43. The Samadhi called "without question" (comes) when the memory is purified, or devoid of qualities, expressing only the meaning (of the meditated object).

It is by the practice of meditation of these three that we come to the state where these three do not mix. We can get rid of them. We will first try to understand what these three are. Here is the Chitta; you will always remember the simile of the mind-stuff to a lake, and the vibration, the word, the sound, like a pulsation coming over it. You have that calm lake in you, and I pronounce a word, "Cow". As soon as it enters through your ears there is a wave produced in your Chitta along with it. So that wave represents the idea of the cow, the form or the meaning as we call it. The apparent cow that you know is really the wave in the mind-stuff that comes as a reaction to the internal and external sound vibrations. With the sound, the wave dies away; it can never exist without a word. You may ask how it is, when we only think of the cow, and do not hear a sound. You make that sound yourself. You are saying "cow" faintly in your mind, and with that comes a wave. There cannot be any wave without this impulse of sound; and when it is not from outside, it is from inside, and when the sound dies, the wave dies. What remains? The result of the reaction, and that is knowledge. These three are so closely combined in our mind that we cannot separate them. When the sound comes, the senses vibrate, and the wave rises in reaction; they follow so closely upon one another that there is no discerning one from the other. When this meditation has been

1 practised for a long time, memory, the receptacle of all impressions,
2 becomes purified, and we are able clearly to distinguish them from
3 one another. This is called Nirvitarka, concentration without
4 question.

5 {Sanskrit}

6 44. By this process, (the concentrations) with discrimination
7 and without discrimination, whose objects are finer, are (also)
8 explained.

9 A process similar to the preceding is applied again; only, the
10 objects to be taken up in the former meditations are gross; in this
11 they are fine.

12 {Sanskrit}

13 45. The finer objects end with the Pradhana.

14 The gross objects are only the elements and everything
15 manufactured out of them. The fine objects begin with the
16 Tanmatras or fine particles. The organs, the mind, egoism, the
17 mind-stuff (the cause of all manifestation), the equilibrium state of
18 Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas materials--called Pradhana (chief),
19 Prakriti (nature), or Avyakta (unmanifest)--are all included within
20 the category of fine objects, the Purusha (the Soul) along being
21 excepted.

22 {Sanskrit}

23 46. These concentrations are with seed.

24 These do not destroy the seeds of past actions, and thus
25 cannot give liberation, but what they bring to the Yogi is stated in
26 the following aphorism.

27 {Sanskrit}

28 47. The concentration "without discrimination" being purified,
29 the Chitta becomes firmly fixed.

30 {Sanskrit}

31 48. The knowledge in that is called "filled with Truth".

32 The next aphorism will explain this.

33 {Sanskrit}

34 49. The knowledge that is gained from testimony and
35 inference is about common objects. That from the Samadhi just
36 mentioned is of a much higher order, being able to penetrate where
37 inference and testimony cannot go.

38 The idea is that we have to get our knowledge of ordinary
39 objects by direct perception, and by inference therefrom, and from
40 testimony of people who are competent. By "people who are
41 competent," the Yogis always mean the Rishis, or the Seers of the
42 thoughts recorded in the scriptures--the Vedas. According to them,
43 the only proof of the scriptures is that they were the testimony of
44 competent persons, yet they say the scriptures cannot take us to
45 realisation. We can read all the Vedas, and yet will not realise
46 anything, but when we practise their teachings, then we attain to

1 that state which realises what the scriptures say, which penetrates
2 where neither reason nor perception nor inference can go, and
3 where the testimony of others cannot avail. This is what is meant by
4 the aphorism.

5 Realisation is real religion, all the rest is only preparation--
6 hearing lectures, or reading books, or reasoning is merely
7 preparing the ground; it is not religion. Intellectual assent and
8 intellectual dissent are not religion. The central idea of the Yogis is
9 that just as we come in direct contact with objects of the senses, so
10 religion even can be directly perceived in a far more intense sense.
11 The truths of religion, as God and Soul, cannot be perceived by the
12 external senses. I cannot see God with my eyes, nor can I touch
13 Him with my hands, and we also know that neither can we reason
14 beyond the senses. Reason leaves us at a point quite indecisive; we
15 may reason all our lives, as the world has been doing for thousands
16 of years, and the result is that we find we are incompetent to prove
17 or disprove the facts of religion. What we perceive directly we take
18 as the basis, and upon that basis we reason. So it is obvious that
19 reasoning has to run within these bounds of perception. It can
20 never go beyond. The whole scope of realisation, therefore, is
21 beyond sense-perception. The Yogis say that man can go beyond his
22 direct sense-perception, and beyond his reason also. Man has in
23 him the faculty, the power, of transcending his intellect even, a
24 power which is in every being, every creature. by the practice of
25 Yoga that power is aroused, and then man transcends the ordinary
26 limits of reason, and directly perceives things which are beyond all
27 reason.

28 {Sanskrit}

29 50. The resulting impression from this Samadhi obstructs all
30 other impressions.

31 We have seen in the foregoing aphorism that the only way of
32 attaining to that superconsciousness is by concentration, and we
33 have also seen that what hinders the mind from concentration are
34 the past Samskaras, impressions. All of you have observed that,
35 when you are trying to concentrate your mind, your thoughts
36 wander. When you are trying to think of God, that is the very time
37 these Samskaras appear. At other times they are not so active; but
38 when you want them not, they are sure to be there, trying their best
39 to crowd in your mind. Why should that be so? Why should they be
40 much more potent at the time of concentration? It is because you
41 are repressing them, and they react with all their force. At other
42 times they do not react. How countless these old past impressions
43 must be, all lodged somewhere in the Chitta, ready, waiting like
44 tigers, to jump up! These have to be suppressed that the one idea
45 which we want may arise, to the exclusion of the others. Instead
46 they are all struggling to come up at the same time. These are the
47 various powers of the Samskaras in hindering concentration of the
48 mind. So this Samadhi which has just been given is the best to be
49 practised, on account of its power of suppressing the Samskaras.
50 The Samskara which will be raised by this sort of concentration will
51 be so powerful that it will hinder the action of the others, and hold
52 them in check.

1 {Sanskrit}

2 51. By the restraint of even this (impression, which obstructs
3 all other impressions), all being restrained, comes the "seedless"
4 Samadhi.

5 You remember that our goal is to perceive the Soul itself. We
6 cannot perceive the Soul, because it has got mingled up with
7 nature, with the mind, with the body. The ignorant man thinks his
8 body is the Soul. The learned man thinks his mind is the Soul. But
9 both of them are mistaken. What makes the Soul get mingled up
10 with all this? Different waves in the Chitta rise and cover the Soul;
11 we only see a little reflection of the Soul through these waves; so, if
12 the wave is one of anger, we see the Soul as angry; "I am angry,"
13 one says. If it is one of love, we see ourselves reflected in that
14 wave, and say we are loving. If that wave is one of weakness, and
15 the Soul is reflected in it, we think we are weak. These various
16 ideas come from these impressions, these Samskaras covering the
17 Soul. The real nature of the Soul is not perceived as long as there is
18 one single wave in the lake of the Chitta; this real nature will never
19 be perceived until all the waves have subsided. So, first, Patanjali
20 teaches us the meaning of these waves; secondly, the best way to
21 repress them; and thirdly, how to make one wave so strong as to
22 suppress all other waves, fire eating fire as it were. When only one
23 remains, it will be easy to suppress that also, and when that is
24 gone, this Samadhi or concentration is called seedless. It leaves
25 nothing, and the Soul is manifested just as It is, in Its own glory.
26 Then alone we know that the Soul is not a compound; It is the only
27 eternal simple in the universe, and as such, It cannot be born, It
28 cannot die; It is immortal, indestructible, the ever-living essence of
29 intelligence.

CONCENTRATION: ITS PRACTICE

{Sanskrit}

1. Mortification, study, and surrendering fruits of work to God are called Kriya-yoga.

Those Samadhis with which we ended our last chapter are very difficult to attain; so we must take them up slowly. The first step, the preliminary step, is called Kriya-yoga. Literally this means work, working towards Yoga. The organs are the horses, the mind is the rein, the intellect is the charioteer, the soul is the rider, and the body is the chariot. The master of the household, the King, the Self of man, is sitting in this chariot. If the horses are very strong and do not obey the rein, if the charioteer, the intellect, does not know how to control the horses, then the chariot will come to grief. But if the organs, the horses, are well controlled, and if the rein, the mind, is well held in the hands of the charioteer, the intellect, the chariot reaches the goal. What is meant, therefore, by this mortification? Holding the rein firmly while guiding the body and the organs; not letting them do anything they like, but keeping them both under proper control. *Study*. What is meant by study in this case? No study of novels or story books, but study of those works which teach the liberation of the Soul. Then again this study does not mean controversial studies at all. The Yogi is supposed to have finished his period of controversy. He has had enough of that, and has become satisfied. He only studies to intensify his convictions. Vada and Siddhanta--these are the two sorts of scriptural knowledge--Vada (the argumentative) and Siddhanta (the decisive). When a man is entirely ignorant he takes up the first of these, the argumentative fighting, and reasoning pro and con; and when he has finished that he takes up the Siddhanta, the decisive, arriving at a conclusion. Simply arriving at this conclusion will not do. It must be intensified. Books are infinite in number, and time is short; therefore the secret of knowledge is to take what is essential. Take that and try to live up to it. There is an old Indian legend that if you place a cup of milk and water before a Raja Hamsa (swan), he will take all the milk and leave the water. In that way we should take what is of value in knowledge, and leave the dross. Intellectual gymnastics are necessary at first. We must not go blindly into anything. The Yogi has passed the argumentative state, and has come to a conclusion, which is, like the rocks, immovable. The only thing he now seeks to do is to intensify that conclusion. Do not argue, he says; if one forces arguments upon you, be silent. Do not answer any argument, but go away calmly, because arguments only disturb the mind. The only thing necessary is to train the intellect, what is the use of disturbing it for nothing? The intellect is but a weak instrument, and can give us only knowledge limited by the senses. The Yogi wants to go beyond the senses, therefore intellect is of no use to him. He is certain of this and, therefore, is silent, and does not argue. Every argument throws his mind out of balance, creates a disturbance in the Chitta, and a disturbance is a drawback. Argumentations and searchings of the reason are only by the way. There are much higher things beyond them. The whole of life is not for school boy fights and debating societies.

1 "Surrendering the fruits of work to God" is to take to ourselves
2 neither credit nor blame, but to give up both to the Lord and be at
3 peace.

4 {Sanskrit}

5 2. (It is for) the practice of Samadhi and minimising the pain-
6 bearing obstructions. Most of us make our minds like spoilt
7 children, allowing them to do whatever they want. Therefore it is
8 necessary that Kriya-yoga should be constantly practised, in order
9 to gain control of the mind, and bring it into subjection. The
10 obstructions to Yoga arise from lack of control, and cause us pain.
11 They can only be removed by denying the mind, and holding it in
12 check, through the means of Kriya-yoga.

13 {Sanskrit}

14 3. The pain-bearing obstructions are--ignorance, egoism,
15 attachment, aversion, and clinging to life.

16 These are the five pains, the fivefold tie that binds us down, of
17 which ignorance is the cause and the other four its effects. It is the
18 only cause of all our misery. What else can make us miserable? The
19 nature of the Soul is eternal bliss. What can make it sorrowful
20 except ignorance, hallucination, delusion? All pain of the Soul is
21 simply delusion.

22 {Sanskrit}

23 4. Ignorance is the productive field of all these that follow,
24 whether they are dormant, attenuated, overpowered, or expanded.

25 Ignorance is the cause of egoism, attachment, aversion, and
26 clinging to life. These impressions exist in different states. They are
27 sometimes dormant. You often hear the expression "innocent as a
28 baby," yet in the baby may be the state of a demon or of a god,
29 which will come out by degrees. In the Yogi, these impressions, the
30 Samskaras left by past actions, are attenuated, that is, exist in a
31 very fine state, and he can control them, and not allow them to
32 become manifest. "Overpowered" means that sometimes one set of
33 impressions is held down for a while by those that are stronger, but
34 they come out when that repressing cause is removed. The last
35 state is the "expanded," when the Samskaras, having helpful
36 surroundings, attain to a great activity, either as good or evil.

37 {Sanskrit}

38 5. Ignorance is taking the non-eternal, the impure, the
39 painful, and the non-Self for the eternal, the pure, the happy, and
40 the Atman or Self (respectively).

41 All the different sorts of impressions have one source,
42 ignorance. We have first to learn what ignorance is. All of us think,
43 "I am the body, and not the Self, the pure, the effulgent, the ever
44 blissful," and that is ignorance. We think of man, and see man as
45 body. This is the great delusion.

46 {Sanskrit}

47 6. Egoism is the identification of the seer with the instrument
48 of seeing.

1 The seer is really the Self, the pure one, the ever holy, the
2 infinite, the immortal. This is the Self of man. And what are the
3 instruments? The Chitta or mind-stuff, the Buddhi or determinative
4 faculty, the Manas or mind, and the Indriyas or sense-organs. These
5 are the instruments for him to see the external world, and the
6 identification of the Self with the instruments is what is called the
7 ignorance of egoism. We say, "I am the mind," "I am thought," "I am
8 angry," or "I am happy". How can we be angry and how can we
9 hate? We should identify ourselves with the Self that cannot
10 change. If It is unchangeable, how can It be one moment happy, and
11 one moment unhappy? It is formless, infinite, omnipresent. What
12 can change It? It is beyond all law. What can affect It? Nothing in
13 the universe can produce an effect on It. Yet through ignorance, we
14 identify ourselves with the mind-stuff, and think we feel pleasure or
15 pain.

16 {Sanskrit}

17 7. Attachment is that which dwells on pleasure.

18 We find pleasure in certain things, and the mind like a current
19 flows towards them; and this following the pleasure centre, as it
20 were, is what is called attachment. We are never attached where
21 we do not find pleasure. We find pleasure in very queer things
22 sometimes, but the principle remains: wherever we find pleasure,
23 there we are attached.

24 {Sanskrit}

25 8. Aversion is that which dwells on pain.

26 That which gives us pain we immediately seek to get away
27 from.

28 {Sanskrit}

29 9. Flowing through its own nature, and established even in
30 the learned, is the clinging to life.

31 This clinging to life you see manifested in every animal. Upon
32 it many attempts have been made to build the theory of a future
33 life, because men are so fond of life that they desire a future life
34 also. Of course it goes without saying that this argument is without
35 much value, but the most curious part of it is, that, in Western
36 countries, the idea that this clinging to life indicates a possibility of
37 future life applies only to men, but does not include animals. In
38 India this clinging to life has been one of the arguments to prove
39 past experience and existence. For instance, if it be true that all our
40 knowledge has come from experience, then it is sure that that
41 which we never experienced we cannot imagine or understand. As
42 soon as chickens are hatched they begin to pick up food. Many
43 times it has been seen, where ducks have been hatched by hens,
44 that, as soon as they came out of the eggs they flew to water, and
45 the mother thought they would be drowned. If experience be the
46 only source of knowledge, where did these chickens learn to pick
47 up food, or the ducklings that the water was their natural element?
48 If you say it is instinct, it means nothing--it is simply giving a word,
49 but is no explanation. What is this instinct? We have many instincts

1 in ourselves. For instance, most of you ladies play the piano, and
2 remember, when you first learned, how carefully you had to put
3 your fingers on the black and white keys, one after the other, but
4 now, after long years of practice, you can talk with your friends
5 while your fingers play mechanically. It has become instinct. So
6 with every work we do; by practice it becomes instinct, it becomes
7 automatic; but so far as we know, all the cases which we now
8 regard as automatic are degenerated reason. In the language of the
9 Yogi, instinct is involved reason. Discrimination becomes involved,
10 and gets to be automatic Samskaras. Therefore it is perfectly
11 logical to think that all we call instinct in this world is simply
12 involved reason. As reason cannot come without experience, all
13 instinct is, therefore, the result of past experience. Chickens fear
14 the hawk, and ducklings love the water; these are both the results
15 of past experience. Then the question is whether that experience
16 belongs to a particular soul, or to the body simply, whether this
17 experience which comes to the duck is the duck's forefathers'
18 experience, or the duck's own experience. Modern scientific men
19 hold that it belongs to the body, but the Yogis hold that it is the
20 experience of the mind, transmitted through the body. This is called
21 the theory of reincarnation.

22 We have seen that all our knowledge, whether we call it
23 perception, or reason, or instinct, must come through that one
24 channel called experience, and all that we now call instinct is the
25 result of past experience, degenerated into instinct and that instinct
26 regenerates into reason again. So on throughout the universe, and
27 upon this has been built one of the chief arguments for
28 reincarnation in India. The recurring experiences of various fears,
29 in course of time, produce this clinging to life. That is why the child
30 is instinctively afraid, because the past experience of pain is there
31 in it. Even in the most learned men, who know that this body will
32 go, and who say "never mind, we have had hundreds of bodies, the
33 soul cannot die"--even in them, with all their intellectual
34 convictions, we still find this clinging on to life. Why is this clinging
35 to life? We have seen that it has become instinctive. In the
36 psychological language of the Yogis it has become a Samskara. The
37 Samskaras, fine and hidden, are sleeping in the Chitta. All this past
38 experience of death, all that which we call instinct, is experience
39 become subconscious. It lives in the Chitta, and is not inactive, but
40 is working underneath.

41 The Chitta-Vrittis, the mind-waves, which are gross, we can
42 appreciate and feel; they can be more easily controlled, but what
43 about the finer instincts? How can they be controlled? When I am
44 angry, my whole mind becomes a huge wave of anger. I feel it, see
45 it, handle it, can easily manipulate it, can fight with it; but I shall
46 not succeed perfectly in the fight until I can get down below to its
47 causes. A man says something very harsh to me, and I begin to feel
48 that I am getting heated, and he goes on till I am perfectly angry
49 and forget myself, identify myself with anger. When he first began
50 to abuse me, I thought, "I am going to be angry". Anger was one
51 thing, and I was another; but when I became angry, I was anger.
52 These feelings have to be controlled in the germ, the root, in their

1 fine forms, before even we have become conscious that they are
2 acting on us. With the vast majority of mankind the fine states of
3 these passions are not even known--the states in which they emerge
4 from subconsciousness. When a bubble is rising from the bottom of
5 the lake, we do not see it, nor even when it is nearly come to the
6 surface; it is only when it bursts and makes a ripple that we know it
7 is there. We shall only be successful in grappling with the waves
8 when we can get hold of them in their fine causes, and until you can
9 get hold of them, and subdue them before they become gross, there
10 is no hope of conquering any passion perfectly. To control our
11 passions we have to control them at their very roots; then alone
12 shall we be able to burn out their very seeds. As fried seeds thrown
13 into the ground will never come up, so these passions will never
14 arise.

15 {Sanskrit}

16 10. The fine Samskaras are to be conquered by resolving
17 them into their causal state.

18 Samskaras are the subtle impressions that manifest
19 themselves into gross forms later on. How are these fine Samskaras
20 to be controlled? By resolving the effect into its cause. When the
21 Chitta, which is an effect, is resolved into its cause, Asmita or
22 Egoism, then only, the fine impressions die along with it. Meditation
23 cannot destroy these.

24 {Sanskrit}

25 11. By meditation, their (gross) modifications are to be
26 rejected.

27 Meditation is one of the great means of controlling the rising
28 of these waves. By meditation you can make the mind subdue these
29 waves, and if you go on practising meditation for days, and months,
30 and years, until it has become a habit, until it will come in spite of
31 yourself, anger and hatred will be controlled and checked.

32 {Sanskrit}

33 12. The "receptacle of works" has its root in these pain-
34 bearing obstructions, and their experience is in this visible life, or
35 in the unseen life.

36 By the "receptacle of works" is meant the sum-total of
37 Samskaras. Whatever work we do, the mind is thrown into a wave,
38 and after the work is finished, we think the wave is gone. No. It has
39 only become fine, but it is still there. When we try to remember the
40 work, it comes up again and becomes a wave. So it was there; if
41 not, there would not have been memory. Thus every action, every
42 thought, good or bad, just goes down and becomes fine, and is
43 there stored up. Both happy and unhappy thoughts are called pain-
44 bearing obstructions, because according to the Yogis, they, in the
45 long run, bring pain. All happiness which comes from the senses
46 will, eventually, bring pain. All enjoyment will make us thirst for
47 more, and that brings pain as its result. There is no limit to man's
48 desires; he goes on desiring, and when he comes to a point where
49 desire cannot be fulfilled, the result is pain. Therefore the Yogis

1 regard the sum-total of the impressions, good or evil, as pain-
2 bearing obstructions; they obstruct the way to freedom of the Soul.

3 It is the same with the Samskaras, the fine roots of all our
4 works; they are the causes which will again bring effects, either in
5 this life, or in the lives to come. In exceptional cases when these
6 Samskaras are very strong, they bear fruit quickly; exceptional acts
7 of wickedness, or of goodness, bring their fruits even in this life.
8 The Yogis hold that men who are able to acquire a tremendous
9 power of good Samskaras do not have to die, but, even in this life,
10 can change their bodies into god-bodies. There are several such
11 cases mentioned by the Yogis in their books. These men change the
12 very material of their bodies; they re-arrange the molecules in such
13 fashion that they have no more sickness, and what we call death
14 does not come to them. Why should not this be? The physiological
15 meaning of food is assimilation of energy from the sun. The energy
16 has reached the plant, the plant is eaten by an animal, and the
17 animal by man. The science of it is that we take so much energy
18 from the sun, and make it part of ourselves. That being the case,
19 why should there be only one way of assimilating energy? The
20 plant's way is not the same as ours; the earth's process of
21 assimilating energy differs from our own. But all assimilate energy
22 in some form or other. The Yogis say that they are able to assimilate
23 energy by the power of the mind alone, that they can draw in as
24 much of it as they desire without recourse to the ordinary methods.
25 As a spider makes its web out of its own substance, and becomes
26 bound in it, and cannot go anywhere except along the lines of that
27 web, so we have projected out of our own substance this network
28 called the nerves, and we cannot work except through the channels
29 of those nerves. The Yogi says we need not be bound by that.

30 Similarly, we can send electricity to any part of the world, but
31 we have to send it by means of wires. Nature can send a vast mass
32 of electricity without any wires at all. Why cannot we do the same?
33 We can send mental electricity. What we call mind is very much the
34 same as electricity. It is clear that this nerve fluid has some amount
35 of electricity, because it is polarised, and it answers all electrical
36 directions. We can only send our electricity through these nerve
37 channels. Why not send the mental electricity without this aid? The
38 Yogis say it is perfectly possible and practicable, and that when you
39 can do that, you will work all over the universe. You will be able to
40 work with any body anywhere, without the help of the nervous
41 system. When the soul is acting through these channels, we say a
42 man is living, and when these cease to work, a man is said to be
43 dead. But when a man is able to act either with or without these
44 channels, birth and death will have no meaning for him. All the
45 bodies in the universe are made up of Tanmatras, their difference
46 lies in the arrangement of the latter. If you are the arranger, you
47 can arrange a body in one way or another. Who makes up this body
48 but you? Who eats the food? If another ate the food for you, you
49 would not live long. Who makes the blood out of food? You,
50 certainly. Who purifies the blood, and sends it through the veins?
51 You. We are the masters of the body, and we live in it. Only we have
52 lost the knowledge of how to rejuvenate it. We have become

1 automatic, degenerate. We have forgotten the process of arranging
2 its molecules. So, what we do automatically has to be done
3 knowingly. We are the masters and we have to regulate that
4 arrangement; and as soon as we can do that, we shall be able to
5 rejuvenate just as we like, and then we shall have neither birth nor
6 disease nor death.

7 {Sanskrit}

8 13. The root being there, the fruition comes (in the form of)
9 species, life, and experience of pleasure and pain.

10 The roots, the causes, the Samskaras being there, they
11 manifest and form the effects. The cause dying down becomes the
12 effect; the effect getting subtler becomes the cause of the next
13 effect. A tree bears a seed, which becomes the cause of another
14 tree, and so on. All our works now are the effects of past
15 Samskaras; again, these works becoming Samskaras will be the
16 causes of future actions, and thus we go on. So this aphorism says
17 that the cause being there, the fruit must come, in the form of
18 species of beings: one will be a man, another an angel, another an
19 animal, another a demon. Then there are different effects of Karma
20 in life. One man lives fifty years, another a hundred, another dies in
21 two years, and never attains maturity; all these differences in life
22 are regulated by past Karma. One man is born, as it were, for
23 pleasure; if he buries himself in a forest, pleasure will follow him
24 there. Another man, wherever he goes, is followed by pain;
25 everything becomes painful for him. It is the result of their own
26 past. According to the philosophy of the Yogis, all virtuous actions
27 bring pleasure, and all vicious actions bring pain. Any man who
28 does wicked deeds is sure to reap their fruit in the form of pain.

29 {Sanskrit}

30 14. They bear fruit as pleasure or pain, caused by virtue or
31 vice.

32 {Sanskrit}

33 15. To the discriminating, all is, as it were, painful on account
34 of everything bringing pain either as consequence, or as
35 anticipation of loss of happiness, or as fresh craving arising from
36 impressions of happiness, and also as counteraction of qualities.

37 The Yogis say that the man who has discriminating powers,
38 the man of good sense, sees through all that are called pleasure
39 and pain, and knows that they come to all, and that one follows and
40 melts into the other; he sees that men follow an *ignis fatuus* all
41 their lives, and never succeed in fulfilling their desires. The great
42 king Yudhishtira once said that the most wonderful thing in life is
43 that every moment we see people dying around us, and yet we think
44 we shall never die. Surrounded by fools on every side, we think we
45 are the only exceptions, the only learned men. Surrounded by all
46 sorts of experiences of fickleness, we think our love is the only
47 lasting love. How can that be? Even love is selfish, and the Yogi says
48 that in the end we shall find that even the love of husbands and
49 wives, and children and friends, slowly decays. Decadence seizes
50 everything in this life. It is only when everything, even love, fails,

1 that, with a flash, man finds out how vain, how dream-like is this
2 world. Then he catches a glimpse of Vairagya (renunciation),
3 catches a glimpse of the Beyond. It is only by giving up this world
4 that the other comes; never through holding on to this one. Never
5 yet was there a great soul who had not to reject sense-pleasures
6 and enjoyments to acquire his greatness. The cause of misery is the
7 clash between the different forces of nature, one dragging one way,
8 and another dragging another, rendering permanent happiness
9 impossible.

10 {Sanskrit}

11 16. The misery which is not yet come is to be avoided.

12 Some Karma we have worked out already, some we are
13 working out now in the present, and some are waiting to bear fruit
14 in the future. The first kind is past and gone. The second we will
15 have to work out, and it is only that which is waiting to bear fruit in
16 the future that we can conquer and control, towards which end all
17 our forces should be directed. This is what Patanjali means when he
18 says that Samskaras are to be controlled by resolving them into
19 their causal state.

20 {Sanskrit}

21 17. The cause of that which is to be avoided is the junction of
22 the seer and the seen.

23 Who is the seer? The Self of man, the Purusha. What is the
24 seen? The whole of nature beginning with the mind, down to gross
25 matter. All pleasure and pain arise from the junction between this
26 Purusha and the mind. The Purusha, you must remember, according
27 to this philosophy, is pure; when joined to nature, it appears to feel
28 pleasure or pain by reflection.

29 {Sanskrit}

30 18. The experienced is composed of elements and organs, is
31 of the nature of illumination, action, and inertia, and is for the
32 purpose of experience and release (of the experiencer).

33 The experienced, that is nature, is composed of elements and
34 organs--the elements, gross and fine, which compose the whole of
35 nature, and the organs of the senses, mind, etc.--and is of the
36 nature of illumination (Sattva), action (Rajas), and inertia (Tamas).
37 What is the purpose of the whole of nature? That the Purusha may
38 gain experience. The Purusha has, as it were, forgotten its mighty,
39 godly nature. There is a story that the king of the gods, Indra, once
40 became a pig, wallowing in mire; he had a she-pig and a lot of baby
41 pigs, and was very happy. Then some gods saw his plight, and came
42 to him, and told him, "You are the king of the gods, you have all the
43 gods under your command. Why are you here?" But Indra said,
44 "Never mind; I am all right here; I do not care for heaven, while I
45 have this sow and these little pigs." The poor gods were at their
46 wits' end. After a time they decided to slay all the pigs one after
47 another. When all were dead, Indra began to weep and mourn. Then
48 the gods ripped his pig-body open and he came out of it, and began
49 to laugh, when he realised what a hideous dream he had had--he,

1 the king of the gods, to have become a pig, and to think that that
2 pig-life was the only life! Not only so, but to have wanted the whole
3 universe to come into the pig-life! The Purusha, when it identifies
4 itself with nature, forgets that it is pure and infinite. The Purusha
5 does not love, it is love itself. It does not exist, it is existence itself.
6 The Soul does not know, It is knowledge itself. It is a mistake to say
7 the Soul loves, exists, or knows. Love, existence, and knowledge are
8 not the qualities of the Purusha, but its essence. When they get
9 reflected upon something, you may call them the qualities of that
10 something. They are not the qualities but the essence of the
11 Purusha, the great Atman, the Infinite Being, without birth or
12 death, established in its own glory. It appears to have become so
13 degenerate that if you approach to tell it, "You are not a pig," it
14 begins to squeal and bite.

15 Thus is it with us all in this Maya, this dream world, where it
16 is all misery, weeping and crying, where a few golden balls are
17 rolled, and the world scrambles after them. You were never bound
18 by laws, nature never had a bond for you. That is what the Yogi tells
19 you. Have patience to learn it. And the Yogi shows how, by junction
20 with nature, and identifying itself with the mind and the world, the
21 Purusha thinks itself miserable. Then the Yogi goes on to show you
22 that the way out is through experience. You have to get all this
23 experience, but finish it quickly. We have placed ourselves in this
24 net, and will have to get out. We have got ourselves caught in the
25 trap, and we will have to work out our freedom. So get this
26 experience of husbands, and wives, and friends, and little loves; you
27 will get through them safely if you never forget what you really are.
28 Never forget this is only a momentary state, and that we have to
29 pass through it. Experience is the one great teacher--experience of
30 pleasure and pain--but know it is only experience. It leads, step by
31 step, to that state where all things become small, and the Purusha
32 so great that the whole universe seems as a drop in the ocean and
33 falls off by its own nothingness. We have to go through different
34 experiences, but let us never forget the ideal.

35 {Sanskrit}

36 19. The states of the qualities are the defined, the undefined,
37 the indicated only, and the signless.

38 The system of Yoga is built entirely on the philosophy of the
39 Sankhyas, as I told you before, and here again I shall remind you of
40 the cosmology of the Sankhya philosophy. According to the
41 Sankhyas, nature is both the material and the efficient cause of the
42 universe. In nature there are three sorts of materials, the Sattva,
43 the Rajas, and the Tamas. The Tamas material is all that is dark, all
44 that is ignorant and heavy. The Rajas is activity. The Sattva is
45 calmness, light. Nature, before creation, is called by them Avyakta,
46 undefined, or indiscrete; that is, in which there is no distinction of
47 form or name, a state in which these three materials are held in
48 perfect balance. Then the balance is disturbed, the three materials
49 begin to mingle in various fashions, and the result is the universe.
50 In every man, also, these three materials exist. When the Sattva
51 material prevails, knowledge comes; when Rajas, activity; and when
52 Tamas, darkness, lassitude, idleness, and ignorance. According to

1 the Sankhya theory, the highest manifestation of nature, consisting
2 of the three materials, is what they call Mahat or intelligence,
3 universal intelligence, of which each human intellect is a part. In
4 the Sankhya psychology there is a sharp distinction between
5 Manas, the mind function, and the function of the Buddhi, intellect.
6 The mind function is simply to collect and carry impressions and
7 present them to the Buddhi, the individual Mahat, which
8 determines upon it. Out of Mahat comes egoism, out of which again
9 come the fine materials. The fine materials combine and become
10 the gross materials outside--the external universe. The claim of the
11 Sankhya philosophy is that beginning with the intellect down to a
12 block of stone, all is the product of one substance, different only as
13 finer to grosser states of existence. The finer is the cause, and the
14 grosser is the effect. According to the Sankhya philosophy, beyond
15 the whole of nature is the Purusha, which is not material at all.
16 Purusha is not at all similar to anything else, either Buddhi, or
17 mind, or the Tanmatras, or the gross materials. It is not akin to any
18 one of these, it is entirely separate, entirely different in its nature,
19 and from this they argue that the Purusha must be immortal,
20 because it is not the result of combination. That which is not the
21 result of combination cannot die. The Purushas or souls are infinite
22 in number.

23 Now we shall understand the aphorism that the states of the
24 qualities are defined, undefined, indicated only, and signless. By the
25 "defined" are meant the gross elements, which we can sense. By
26 the "undefined" are meant the very fine materials, the Tanmatras,
27 which cannot be sensed by ordinary men. If you practise Yoga,
28 however, says Patanjali, after a while your perceptions will become
29 so fine that you will actually see the Tanmatras. For instance, you
30 have heard how every man has a certain light about him; every
31 living being emits a certain light, and this, he says, can be seen by
32 the Yogi. We do not all see it, but we all throw out these Tanmatras,
33 just as a flower continuously sends out fine particles which enable
34 us to smell it. Every day of our lives we throw out a mass of good or
35 evil, and everywhere we go the atmosphere is full of these
36 materials. That is how there came to the human mind,
37 unconsciously, the idea of building temples and churches. Why
38 should man build churches in which to worship God?

39 Why not worship Him anywhere? Even if he did not know the
40 reason, man found that the place where people worshipped God
41 became full of good Tanmatras. Every day people go there, and the
42 more they go the holier they get, and the holier that place becomes.
43 If any man who has not much Sattva in him goes there, the place
44 will influence him and arouse his Sattva quality. Here, therefore, is
45 the significance of all temples and holy places, but you must
46 remember that their holiness depends on holy people congregating
47 there. The difficulty with man is that he forgets the original
48 meaning, and puts the cart before the horse. It was men who made
49 these places holy, and then the effect became the cause and made
50 men holy. If the wicked only were to go there, it would become as
51 bad as any other place. It is not the building, but the people that
52 make a church, and that is what we always forget. That is why

1 sages and holy persons, who have much of this Sattva quality, can
2 send it out and exert a tremendous influence day and night on their
3 surroundings. A man may become so pure that his purity will
4 become tangible. Whosoever comes in contact with him becomes
5 pure.

6 Next "the indicated only" means the Buddhi, the intellect.
7 "The indicated only" is the first manifestation of nature; from it all
8 other manifestations proceed. The last is "the signless". There
9 seems to be a great difference between modern science and all
10 religions at this point. Every religion has the idea that the universe
11 comes out of intelligence. The theory of God, taking it in its
12 psychological significance, apart from all ideas of personality, is
13 that intelligence is first in the order of creation, and that out of
14 intelligence comes what we call gross matter. Modern philosophers
15 say that intelligence is the last to come. They say that unintelligent
16 things slowly evolve into animals, and from animals into men. They
17 claim that instead of everything coming out of intelligence,
18 intelligence itself is the last to come. Both the religious and the
19 scientific statements, though seeming directly opposed to each
20 other are true. Take an infinite series, A-B-A-B-A-B, etc. The
21 question is--which is first, A or B? If you take the series as A-B, you
22 will say that A is first, but if you take it as B-A, you will say that B is
23 first. It depends upon the way we look at it. Intelligence undergoes
24 modification and becomes the gross matter, this again merges into
25 intelligence, and thus the process goes on. The Sankhyas, and other
26 religionists, put intelligence first, and the series becomes
27 intelligence, then matter. The scientific man puts his finger on
28 matter, and says matter, then intelligence. They both indicate the
29 same chain. Indian philosophy, however, goes beyond both
30 intelligence and matter, and finds a Purusha, or Self, which is
31 beyond intelligence, of which intelligence is but the borrowed light.

32 {Sanskrit}

33 20. The seer is intelligence only, and though pure, sees
34 through the colouring of the intellect.

35 This is, again, Sankhya philosophy. We have seen from the
36 same philosophy that from the lowest form up to intelligence all is
37 nature; beyond nature are Purushas (souls), which have no
38 qualities. Then how does the soul appear to be happy or unhappy?
39 By reflection. If a red flower is put near a piece of pure crystal, the
40 crystal appears to be red, similarly the appearances of happiness or
41 unhappiness of the soul are but reflections., The soul itself has no
42 colouring. The soul is separate from nature. Nature is one thing,
43 soul another, eternally separate. The Sankhyas say that intelligence
44 is a compound, that it grows and wanes, that it changes, just as the
45 body changes, and that its nature is nearly the same as that of the
46 body. As a finger-nail is to the body, so is body to intelligence. The
47 nail is a part of the body, but it can be pared off hundreds of times,
48 and the body will still last. Similarly, the intelligence lasts aeons,
49 while this body can be "pared off," thrown off. Yet intelligence
50 cannot be immortal because it changes--growing and waning.
51 Anything that changes cannot be immortal. Certainly intelligence is
52 manufactured, and that very fact shows us that there must be

1 something beyond that. It cannot be free, everything connected
2 with matter is in nature, and, therefore, bound for ever. Who is
3 free? The free must certainly be beyond cause and effect. If you say
4 that the idea of freedom is a delusion, I shall say that the idea of
5 bondage is also a delusion. Two facts come into our consciousness,
6 and stand or fall with each other. These are our notions of bondage
7 and freedom. If we want to go through a wall, and our head bumps
8 against that wall, we see we are limited by that wall. At the same
9 time we find a will power, and think we can direct our will
10 everywhere. At every step these contradictory ideas come to us. We
11 have to believe that we are free, yet at every moment we find we
12 are not free. If one idea is a delusion, the other is also a delusion,
13 and if one is true, the other also is true, because both stand upon
14 the same basis--consciousness. The Yogi says, both are true; that we
15 are bound so far as intelligence goes, that we are free so far as the
16 soul is concerned. It is the real nature of man, the soul, the
17 Purusha, which is beyond all law of causation. Its freedom is
18 percolating through layers of matter in various forms, intelligence,
19 mind, etc. It is its light which is shining through all. Intelligence has
20 no light of its own. Each organ has a particular centre in the brain;
21 it is not that all the organs have one centre; each organ is separate.
22 Why do all perceptions harmonise? Where do they get their unity?
23 If it were in the brain, it would be necessary for all the organs, the
24 eyes, the nose, the ears, etc., to have one centre only, while we
25 know for certain that there are different centres for each. Both a
26 man can see and hear at the same time, so a unity must be there at
27 the back of intelligence. Intelligence is connected with the brain,
28 but behind intelligence even stands the Purusha, the unit, where all
29 different sensations and perceptions join and become one. The soul
30 itself is the centre where all the different perceptions converge and
31 become unified. That soul is free, and it is its freedom that tells you
32 every moment that you are free. But you mistake, and mingle that
33 freedom every moment with intelligence and mind. You try to
34 attribute that freedom to the intelligence, and immediately find that
35 intelligence is not free; you attribute that freedom to the body, and
36 immediately nature tells you that you are again mistaken. That is
37 why there is this mingled sense of freedom and bondage at the
38 same time. The Yogi analyses both what is free and what is bound,
39 and his ignorance vanishes. He finds that the Purusha is free, is the
40 essence of that knowledge which, coming through the Buddhi,
41 becomes intelligence, and, as such, is bound.

42 {Sanskrit}

43 21. The nature of the experienced is for him.

44 Nature has no light of its own. As long as the Purusha is
45 present in it, it appears as light. But the light is borrowed; just as
46 the moon's light is reflected. According to the Yogis, all the
47 manifestations of nature are caused by nature itself, but nature has
48 no purpose in view, except to free the Purusha.

49 {Sanskrit}

50 22. Though destroyed for him whose goal has been gained,
51 yet it is not destroyed, being common to others.

1 The whole activity of nature is to make the soul know that it is
2 entirely separate from nature. When the soul knows this, nature has
3 no more attractions for it. But the whole of nature vanishes only for
4 that man who has become free. There will always remain an infinite
5 number of others, for whom nature will go on working.

6 {Sanskrit}

7 23. Junction is the cause of the realisation of the nature of
8 both the powers, the experienced and its Lord.

9 According to this aphorism, both the powers of soul and
10 nature become manifest when they are in conjunction. Then all
11 manifestations are thrown out. Ignorance is the cause of this
12 conjunction. We see every day that the cause of our pain or
13 pleasure is always our joining ourselves with the body. If I were
14 perfectly certain that I am not this body, I should take no notice of
15 heat and cold, or anything of the kind. This body is a combination. It
16 is only a fiction to say that I have one body, you another, and the sun
17 another. The whole universe is one ocean of matter, and you are the
18 name of a little particle, and I of another, and the sun of another. We
19 know that this matter is continuously changing. What is forming the
20 sun one day, the next day may form the matter of our bodies.

21 {Sanskrit}

22 24. Ignorance is its cause.

23 Through ignorance we have joined ourselves with a particular
24 body, and thus opened ourselves to misery. This idea of body is a
25 simple superstition. It is superstition that makes us happy or
26 unhappy. It is superstition caused by ignorance that makes us feel
27 heat and cold, pain and pleasure. It is our business to rise above
28 this superstition, and the Yogi shows us how we can do this. It has
29 been demonstrated that, under certain mental conditions, a man
30 may be burned, yet he will feel no pain. The difficulty is that this
31 sudden upheaval of the mind comes like a whirlwind one minute,
32 and goes away the next. If, however, we gain it through Yoga, we
33 shall permanently attain to the separation of Self from the body.

34 {Sanskrit}

35 25. There being absence of that (ignorance) there is absence
36 of junction, which is the thing-to-be-avoided; that is the
37 independence of the seer.

38 According to yoga philosophy, it is through ignorance that the
39 soul has been joined with nature. The aim is to get rid of nature's
40 control over us. That is the goal of all religions. Each soul is
41 potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this Divinity within, by
42 controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work, or
43 worship, or psychic control, or philosophy--by one or more or all of
44 these--and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or
45 dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms, are but
46 secondary details. The Yogi tries to reach this goal through psychic
47 control. Until we can free ourselves from nature, we are slaves; as
48 she dictates so we must go. The Yogi claims that he who controls
49 mind controls matter also. The internal nature is much higher than

1 the external and much more difficult to grapple with, much more
2 difficult to control. Therefore he who has conquered the internal
3 nature controls the whole universe; it becomes his servant. Raja-
4 Yoga propounds the methods of gaining this control. Forces higher
5 than we know in physical nature will have to be subdued. This body
6 is just the external crust of the mind. They are not two different
7 things; they are just as the oyster and its shell. They are but two
8 aspects of one thing; the internal substance of the oyster takes up
9 matter from outside, and manufactures the shell. In the same way
10 the internal fine forces which are called mind take up gross matter
11 from outside, and from that manufacture this external shell, the
12 body.

13 If, then, we have control of the internal, it is very easy to have
14 control of the external. Then again, these forces are not different. It
15 is not that some forces are physical, and some mental; the physical
16 forces are but the gross manifestations of the fine forces, just as the
17 physical world is but the gross manifestation of the fine world.

18 {Sanskrit}

19 26. The means of destruction of ignorance is unbroken
20 practice of discrimination.

21 This is the real goal of practice--discrimination between the
22 real and the unreal, knowing that the Purusha is not nature, that it
23 is neither matter nor mind, and that because it is not nature, it
24 cannot possibly change. It is only nature which changes, combining
25 and re-combining, dissolving continually. When through constant
26 practice we begin to discriminate, ignorance will vanish, and the
27 Purusha will begin to shine in its real nature--omniscient,
28 omnipotent, omnipresent.

29 {Sanskrit}

30 27. His knowledge is of the sevenfold highest ground.

31 When this knowledge comes, it will come, as it were, in seven
32 grades, one after the other; and when one of these begins, we know
33 that we are getting knowledge. The first to appear will be that we
34 have known what is to be known. The mind will cease to be
35 dissatisfied. While we are aware of thirsting after knowledge, we
36 begin to seek here and there, wherever we think we can get some
37 truth, and failing to find it we become dissatisfied and seek in a
38 fresh direction. All search is vain, until we begin to perceive that
39 knowledge is within ourselves, that no one can help us, that we
40 must help ourselves. When we begin to practise the power of
41 discrimination, the first sign that we are getting near truth will be
42 that that dissatisfied state will vanish. We shall feel quite sure that
43 we have found the truth, and that it cannot be anything else but the
44 truth. Then we may know that the sun is rising, that the morning is
45 breaking for us, and taking courage, we must persevere until the
46 goal is reached. The second grade will be the absence of all pains.
47 It will be impossible for anything in the universe, external or
48 internal, to give us pain. The third will be the attainment of full
49 knowledge. Omniscience will be ours. The fourth will be the
50 attainment of the end of all duty through discrimination. Next will

1 come what is called freedom of the Chitta. We shall realise that all
2 difficulties and struggles, all vacillations of the mind, have fallen
3 down, just as a stone rolls from the mountain top into the valley and
4 never comes up again. The next will be that the Chitta itself will
5 realise that it melts away into its causes whenever we so desire.
6 Lastly we shall find that we are established in our Self, that we
7 have been alone throughout the universe, neither body nor mind
8 was ever related, much less joined, to us. They were working their
9 own way, and we, through ignorance, joined ourselves to them. But
10 we have been alone, omnipotent, omnipresent, ever blessed; our
11 own Self was so pure and perfect that we required none else. We
12 required none else to make us happy, for we are happiness itself.
13 We shall find that this knowledge does not depend on anything else;
14 throughout the universe there can be nothing that will not become
15 effulgent before our knowledge. This will be the last state, and the
16 Yogi will become peaceful and calm, never to feel any more pain,
17 never to be again deluded, never to be touched by misery. He will
18 know he is ever blessed, ever perfect, almighty.

19 {Sanskrit}

20 28. By the practice of the different parts of Yogas the
21 impurities being destroyed, knowledge becomes effulgent up to
22 discrimination.

23 Now comes the practical knowledge. What we have just been
24 speaking about is much higher. It is away above our heads, but it is
25 the ideal. It is first necessary to obtain physical and mental control.
26 Then the realisation will become steady in that ideal. The ideal
27 being known, what remains is to practise the method of reaching it.

28 {Sanskrit}

29 29. Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahara, Dharana,
30 Dhyana, and Samadhi are the eight limbs of Yoga.

31 {Sanskrit}

32 30. Non-killing, truthfulness, non-stealing, continence, and
33 non-receiving are called Yamas.

34 A man who wants to be a perfect Yogi must give up the sex
35 idea. The soul has no sex; why should it degrade itself with sex
36 ideas? Later on we shall understand better why these ideas must be
37 given up. The mind of the man who receives gifts is acted on by the
38 mind of the giver, so the receiver is likely to become degenerated.
39 Receiving gifts is prone to destroy the independence of the mind,
40 and make us slavish. Therefore, receive no gifts.

41 {Sanskrit}

42 31. These, unbroken by time, place, purpose, and caste-rules,
43 are (universal) great vows.

44 These practices--non-killing, truthfulness, non-stealing,
45 chastity, and non-receiving--are to be practised by every man,
46 woman, and child; by every soul, irrespective of nation, country, or
47 position.

48 {Sanskrit}

1 32. Internal and external purification, contentment,
2 mortification, study, and worship of God are the Niyamas.

3 External purification is keeping the body pure; a dirty man
4 will never be a Yogi. There must be internal purification also. That
5 is obtained by the virtues named in I.33. Of course, internal purity
6 is of greater value than external, but both are necessary, and
7 external purity, without internal, is of no good.

8 {Sanskrit}

9 33. To obstruct thoughts which are inimical to Yoga, contrary
10 thoughts should be brought.

11 That is the way to practise the virtues that have been stated.
12 For instance, when a big wave of anger has come into the mind,
13 how are we to control that? Just by raising an opposing wave. Think
14 of love. Sometimes a mother is very angry with her husband, and
15 while in that state, the baby comes in, and she kisses the baby; the
16 old wave dies out and a new wave arises, love for the child. That
17 suppresses the other one. Love is opposite to anger. Similarly, when
18 the idea of stealing comes, non-stealing should be thought of; when
19 the idea of receiving gifts comes, replace it by a contrary thought.

20 {Sanskrit}

21 34. The obstructions to Yoga are killing, falsehood, etc.,
22 whether committed, caused, or approved; either through avarice, or
23 anger, or ignorance; whether slight, middling, or great; and they
24 result in infinite ignorance and misery. This is (the method of)
25 thinking the contrary.

26 If I tell a lie, or cause another to tell one, or approve of
27 another doing so, it is equally sinful. If it is a very mild lie, still it is
28 a lie. Every vicious thought will rebound, every thought of hatred
29 which you may have thought, in a cave even, is stored up, and will
30 one day come back to you with tremendous power in the form of
31 some misery here. If you project hatred and jealousy, they will
32 rebound on you with compound interest. No power can avert them;
33 when once you have put them in motion, you will have to bear them.
34 Remembering this will prevent you from doing wicked things.

35 {Sanskrit}

36 35. Non-killing being established, in his presence all enmities
37 cease (in others).

38 If a man gets the ideal of non-injuring others, before him even
39 animals which are by their nature ferocious will become peaceful.
40 The tiger and the lamb will play together before that Yogi. When
41 you have come to that state, then alone you will understand that
42 you have become firmly established in non-injuring.

43 {Sanskrit}

44 36. By the establishment of truthfulness the Yogi gets the
45 power of attaining for himself and others the fruits of work without
46 the works.

47 When this power of truth will be established with you, then
48 even in dream you will never tell an untruth. You will be true in

1 thought, word, and deed. Whatever you say will be truth. You may
2 say to a man, "Be blessed," and that man will be blessed. If a man is
3 diseased, and you say to him, "Be thou cured," he will be cured
4 immediately.

5 {Sanskrit}

6 37. By the establishment of non-stealing all wealth comes to
7 the Yogi.

8 The more you fly from nature, the more she follows you; and
9 if you do not care for her at all, she becomes your slave.

10 {Sanskrit}

11 38. By the establishment of continence energy is gained.

12 The chaste brain has tremendous energy and gigantic will-
13 power. Without chastity there can be no spiritual strength.
14 Continence gives wonderful control over mankind. The spiritual
15 leaders of men have been very continent, and this is what gave
16 them power. Therefore the Yogi must be continent.

17 {Sanskrit}

18 39. When he is fixed in non-receiving, he gets the memory of
19 past life.

20 When a man does not receive presents, he does not become
21 beholden to others, but remains independent and free. His mind
22 becomes pure. With every gift, he is likely to receive the evils of the
23 giver. If he does not receive, the mind is purified, and the first
24 power it gets is memory of past life. Then alone the Yogi becomes
25 perfectly fixed in his ideal. He sees that he has been coming and
26 going many times, so he becomes determined that this time he will
27 be free, that he will no more come and go, and be the slave of
28 Nature.

29 {Sanskrit}

30 40. Internal and external cleanliness being established, there
31 arises disgust for one's own body, and non-intercourse with others.

32 When there is real purification of the body, external and
33 internal, there arises neglect of the body, and the idea of keeping it
34 nice vanishes. A face which others call most beautiful will appear to
35 the Yogi as merely animal, if there is not intelligence behind it.
36 What the world calls a very common face he regards as heavenly, if
37 the spirit shines behind it. This thirst after body is the great bane of
38 human life. So the first sign of the establishment of purity is that
39 you do not care to think you are a body. It is only when purity comes
40 that we get rid of the body idea.

41 {Sanskrit}

42 41. There also arises purification of the Sattva, cheerfulness
43 of the mind, concentration, conquest of the organs, and fitness for
44 the realisation of the Self.

45 By the practice of cleanliness, the Sattva material prevails,
46 and the mind becomes concentrated and cheerful. The first sign
47 that you are becoming religious is that you are becoming cheerful.

1 When a man is gloomy, that may be dyspepsia, but it is not religion.
2 A pleasurable feeling is the nature of the Sattva. Everything is
3 pleasurable to the Sattvika man, and when this comes, know that
4 you are progressing in Yoga. All pain is caused by Tamas, so you
5 must get rid of that; moroseness is one of the results of Tamas. The
6 strong, the well-knit, the young, the healthy, the daring alone are fit
7 to be Yogis. To the Yogi everything is bliss, every human face that
8 he sees brings cheerfulness to him. That is the sign of a virtuous
9 man. Misery is caused by sin, and by no other cause. What business
10 have you with clouded faces? It is terrible. If you have a clouded
11 face, do not go out that day, shut yourself up in your room. What
12 right have you to carry this disease out into the world? When your
13 mind has become controlled, you have control over the whole body;
14 instead of being a slave to this machine, the machine is your slave.
15 Instead of this machine being able to drag the soul down, it
16 becomes its greatest helpmate.

17 {Sanskrit}

18 42. From contentment comes superlative happiness.

19 {Sanskrit}

20 43. The result of mortification is bringing powers to the
21 organs and body, by destroying the impurity.

22 The results of mortification are seen immediately, sometimes
23 by heightened powers of vision, hearing things at a distance, and so
24 on.

25 {Sanskrit}

26 44. By repetition of the Mantra comes the realisation of the
27 intended deity.

28 The higher the beings that you want to get the harder is the
29 practice.

30 {Sanskrit}

31 45. By sacrificing all the Ishvara comes Samadhi.

32 By resignation to the Lord, Samadhi becomes perfect.

33 {Sanskrit}

34 46. Posture is that which is firm and pleasant.

35 Now comes Asana, posture. Until you can get a firm seat you
36 cannot practise the breathing and other exercises. Firmness of seat
37 means that you do not feel the body at all. In the ordinary way, you
38 will find that as soon as you sit for a few minutes all sorts of
39 disturbances come into the body; but when you have got beyond the
40 idea of a concrete body, you will lose all sense of the body. You will
41 feel neither pleasure nor pain. And when you take your body up
42 again, it will feel so rested. It is the only perfect rest that you can
43 give to the body. When you have succeeded in conquering the body
44 and keeping it firm, your practice will remain firm, but while you
45 are disturbed by the body, your nerves become disturbed, and you
46 cannot concentrate the mind.

47 {Sanskrit}

1 47. By lessening the natural tendency (for restlessness) and
2 meditating on the unlimited, posture becomes firm and pleasant.

3 We can make the seat firm by thinking of the infinite. We
4 cannot think of the Absolute Infinite, but we can think of the infinite
5 sky.

6 {Sanskrit}

7 48. Seat being conquered, the dualities do not obstruct.

8 The dualities, good and bad, heat and cold, and all the pairs
9 of opposites, will not then disturb you.

10 {Sanskrit}

11 49. Controlling the motion of the exhalation and the
12 inhalation follows after this.

13 When posture has been conquered, then the motion of the
14 Prana is to be broken and controlled. Thus we come to Pranayama,
15 the controlling of the vital forces of the body. Prana is not breath,
16 though it is usually so translated. It is the sum total of the cosmic
17 energy. It is the energy that is in each body, and its most apparent
18 manifestation is the motion of the lungs. This motion is caused by
19 Prana drawing in the breath, and it is what we seek to control in
20 Pranayama. We begin by controlling the breath, as the easiest way
21 of getting control of the Prana.

22 {Sanskrit}

23 50. Its modifications are either external or internal, or
24 motionless, regulated by place, time, and number, either long or
25 short.

26 The three sorts of motion of Pranayama are, one by which we
27 draw the breath in, another by which we throw it out, and the third
28 action is when the breath is held in the lungs, or stopped from
29 entering the lungs. These, again, are varied by place and time. By
30 place is meant that the Prana is held to some particular part of the
31 body. By time is meant how long the Prana should be confined to a
32 certain place, and so we are told how many seconds to keep one
33 motion, and how many seconds to keep another. The result of this
34 Pranayama is Udghata, awakening the Kundalini.

35 {Sanskrit}

36 51. The fourth is restraining the Prana by reflecting on
37 external or internal object.

38 This is the fourth sort of Pranayama, in which the Kumbhaka
39 is brought about by long practice attended with reflection, which is
40 absent in the other three.

41 {Sanskrit}

42 52. From that, the covering to the light of the Chitta is
43 attenuated.

44 The Chitta has, by its own nature, all knowledge. It is made of
45 Sattva particles, but is covered by Rajas and Tamas particles, and
46 by Pranayama this covering is removed.

1 {Sanskrit}

2 53. The mind becomes fit for Dharana.

3 After this covering has been removed, we are able to
4 concentrate the mind.

5 {Sanskrit}

6 54. The drawing in of the organs is by their giving up their
7 own objects and taking the form of the mind-stuff, as it were.

8 The organs are separate states of the mind-stuff. I see a book;
9 the form is not in the book, it is in the mind. Something is outside
10 which calls that form up. The real form is in the Chitta. The organs
11 identify themselves with, and take the form of, whatever comes to
12 them. If you can restrain the mind-stuff from taking these forms,
13 the mind will remain calm. This is called Pratyahara.

14 {Sanskrit}

15 55. Thence arises supreme control of the organs.

16 When the Yogi has succeeded in preventing the organs from
17 taking the forms of external objects, and in making them remain
18 one with the mind-stuff, then comes perfect control of the organs.
19 When the organs are perfectly under control, every muscle and
20 nerve will be under control, because the organs are the centres of
21 all the sensations, and of all actions. These organs are divided into
22 organs of work and organs of sensation. When the organs are
23 controlled, the Yogi can control all feeling and doing; the whole of
24 the body comes under his control. Then alone one begins to feel joy
25 in being born; then one can truthfully say, "Blessed am I that I was
26 born." When that control of the organs is obtained, we feel how
27 wonderful this body really is.

POWERS

We have now come to the chapter in which the Yoga powers are described.

{Sanskrit}

1. Dharana is holding the mind on to some particular object.

Dharana (concentration) is when the mind holds on to some object, either in the body, or outside the body, and keeps itself in that state.

{Sanskrit}

2. An unbroken flow of knowledge in that object is Dhyana.

The mind tries to think of one object, to hold itself to one particular spot, as the top of the head, the heart, etc., and if the mind succeeds in receiving the sensations only through that part of the body, and through no other part, that would be Dharana, and when the mind succeeds in keeping itself in that state for some time, it is called Dhyana (meditation).

{Sanskrit}

3. When that, giving up all forms, reflects only the meaning, it is Samadhi.

That comes when in meditation the form or the external part is given up. Suppose I were meditating on a book, and that I have gradually succeeded in concentrating the mind on it, and perceiving only the internal sensations, the meaning, unexpressed in any form--that state of Dhyana is called Samadhi.

{Sanskrit}

4. (These) three (when practised) in regard to one object is Samyama.

When a man can direct his mind to any particular object and fix it there, and then keep it there for a long time, separating the object from the internal part, this is Samyama; or Dharana, Dhyana, and Samadhi, one following the other, and making one. The form of the thing has vanished, and only its meaning remains in the mind.

{Sanskrit}

5. By the conquest of that comes light of knowledge.

When one has succeeded in making this Samyama, all powers come under his control. This is the great instrument of the Yogi. The objects of knowledge are infinite, and they are divided into the gross, grosser, grossest and the fine, finer, finest and so on. This Samyama should be first applied to gross things, and when you begin to get knowledge of this gross, slowly, by stages, it should be brought to finer things.

{Sanskrit}

6. That should be employed in stages.

This is a note of warning not to attempt to go too fast.

{Sanskrit}

1 7. These three are more internal than those that precede.

2 Before these we had the Pratyahara, the Pranayama, the
3 Asana, the Yama and Niyama; they are external parts of the three--
4 Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi. When a man has attained to them,
5 he may attain to omniscience and omnipotence, but that would not
6 be salvation. These three would not make the mind Nirvikalpa,
7 changeless, but would leave the seeds for getting bodies again.
8 Only when the seeds are, as the Yogi says, "fried," do they lose the
9 possibility of producing further plants. These powers cannot fry the
10 seed.

11 {Sanskrit}

12 8. But even they are external to the seedless (Samadhi).

13 Compared with that seedless Samadhi, therefore, even these
14 are external. We have not yet reached the real Samadhi, the
15 highest, but a lower stage, in which this universe still exists as we
16 see it, and in which are all these powers.

17 {Sanskrit}

18 9. By the suppression of the disturbed impressions of the
19 mind, and by the rise of impressions of control, the mind, which
20 persists in that moment of control, is said to attain the controlling
21 modifications.

22 That is to say, in this first state of Samadhi the modifications
23 of the mind have been controlled, but not perfectly, because if they
24 were, there would be no modifications. If there is a modification
25 which impels the mind to rush out through the senses, and the Yogi
26 tries to control it, that very control itself will be a modification. One
27 wave will be checked by another wave, so it will not be real
28 Samadhi in which all the waves subside, as control itself will be a
29 wave. Yet this lower Samadhi is very much nearer to the higher
30 Samadhi than when the mind comes bubbling out.

31 {Sanskrit}

32 10. Its flow becomes steady by habit.

33 The flow of this continuous control of the mind becomes
34 steady when practised day after day, and the mind obtains the
35 faculty of constant concentration.

36 {Sanskrit}

37 11. Taking in all sorts of objects, and

38 concentrating upon one object, these two powers being
39 destroyed and manifested respectively, the Chitta gets the
40 modification called Samadhi.

41 The mind takes up various objects, runs into all sorts of
42 things. That is the lower state. There is a higher state of the mind,
43 when it takes up one object and excludes all others, of which
44 Samadhi is the result.

45 {Sanskrit}

46 12. The one-pointedness of the Chitta is when the impression

1 that is past and that which is present are similar.

2 How are we to know that the mind has become concentrated?
3 Because the idea of time will vanish. The more time passes
4 unnoticed the more concentrated we are. In common life we see
5 that when we are interested in a book we do not note the time at
6 all; and when we leave the book, we are often surprised to find how
7 many hours have passed. All time will have the tendency to come
8 and stand in the one present. So the definition is given: When the
9 past and present come and stand in one, the mind is said to be
10 concentrated.

11 {Sanskrit}

12 13. By this is explained the threefold transformation of form,
13 time and state, in fine or gross matter and in the organs.

14 By the threefold changes in the mind-stuff as to form, time
15 and state are explained the corresponding changes in gross and
16 subtle matter and in the organs. Suppose there is a lump of gold. It
17 is transformed into a bracelet and again into an earring. These are
18 changes as to form. The same phenomena looked at from the
19 standpoint of time give us change as to time. Again, the bracelet or
20 the earring may be bright or dull, thick or thin, and so on. This is
21 change as to state. Now referring to the aphorisms 9, 11 and 12,
22 the mind-stuff is changing into Vrittis--this is change as to form.
23 That it passes through past, present and future moments of time is
24 change as to time. That the impressions vary as to intensity within
25 one particular period, say, present, is change as to state. The
26 concentrations taught in the preceding aphorisms were to give the
27 Yogi a voluntary control over the transformations of his mind-stuff,
28 which alone will enable him to make the Samyama named in III.4.

29 {Sanskrit}

30 14. That which is acted upon by transformation, either past,
31 present, or yet to be manifested is the qualified.

32 That is to say, the qualified is the substance which is being
33 acted upon by time and by the Samskaras, and getting changed and
34 being manifested always.

35 {Sanskrit}

36 15. The succession of changes is the cause of manifold
37 evolution.

38 {Sanskrit}

39 16. By making Samyama on the three sorts of changes comes
40 the knowledge of past and future.

41 We must not lose sight of the first definition of Samyama.
42 When the mind has attained to that state when it identifies itself
43 with the internal impression of the object, leaving the external, and
44 when, by long practice, that is retained by the mind and the mind
45 can get into that state in a moment, that is Samyama. If a man in
46 that state wants to know the past and future, he has to make a
47 Samyama on the changes in the Samskaras (III.13). Some are
48 working now at present, some have worked out, and some are

1 waiting to work. So by making a Samyama on these he knows the
2 past and future.

3 {Sanskrit}

4 17. By making Samyama on word, meaning and knowledge,
5 which are ordinarily confused, comes the knowledge of all animal
6 sounds.

7 The word represents the external cause, the meaning
8 represents the internal vibration that travels to the brain through
9 the channels of the Indriyas, conveying the external impression to
10 the mind, and knowledge represents the reaction of the mind, with
11 which comes perception. These three, confused, make our sense-
12 objects. Suppose I hear a word; there is first the external vibration,
13 next the internal sensation carried to the mind by the organ of
14 hearing, then the mind reacts, and I know the word. The word I
15 know is a mixture of the three-vibration, sensation, and reaction.
16 Ordinarily these three are inseparable; but by practice the Yogi can
17 separate them. When a man has attained to this, if he makes a
18 Samyama on any sound, he understands the meaning which that
19 sound was intended to express, whether it was made by man or by
20 any other animal.

21 {Sanskrit}

22 18. By perceiving the impressions, (comes) the knowledge of
23 past life.

24 Each experience that we have, comes in the form of a wave in
25 the Chitta, and this subsides and becomes finer and finer, but is
26 never lost. It remains there in minute form, and if we can bring this
27 wave up again, it becomes memory. So, if the Yogi can make a
28 Samyama on these past impressions in the mind, he will begin to
29 remember all his past lives.

30 {Sanskrit}

31 19. By making Samyama on the signs in another's body,
32 knowledge of his mind comes.

33 Each man has particular signs on his body, which differentiate
34 him from others; when the Yogi makes a Samyama on these signs
35 he knows the nature of the mind of that person.

36 {Sanskrit}

37 20. But not its contents, that not being the object of the
38 Samyama.

39 He would not know the contents of the mind by making a
40 Samyama on the body. There would be required a twofold
41 Samyama, first on the signs in the body, and then on the mind itself.
42 The Yogi would then know everything that is in that mind.

43 {Sanskrit}

44 21. By making Samyama on the form of the body, the
45 perceptibility of the form being obstructed and the power of
46 manifestation in the eye being separated, the Yogi's body becomes
47 unseen.

1 A Yogi standing in the midst of this room can apparently
2 vanish. He does not really vanish, but he will not be seen by
3 anyone. The form and the body are, as it were, separated. You must
4 remember that this can only be done when the Yogi has attained to
5 that power of concentration when form and the thing formed have
6 been separated. Then he makes a Samyama on that, and the power
7 to perceive forms is obstructed, because the power of perceiving
8 forms comes from the junction of form and the thing formed.

9 {Sanskrit}

10 22. By this the disappearance or concealment of words which
11 are being spoken and such other things are also explained.

12 {Sanskrit}

13 23. Karma is of two kinds--soon to be fructified and late to be
14 fructified. By making Samyama on these, or by the signs called
15 Arishta, portents, the Yogis know the exact time of separation from
16 their bodies.

17 When a Yogi makes a Samyama on his own Karma, upon
18 those impressions in his mind which are now working, and those
19 which are just waiting to work, he knows exactly by those that are
20 waiting when his body will fall. He knows when he will die, at what
21 hour, even at what minute. The Hindus think very much of that
22 knowledge or consciousness of the nearness of death, because it is
23 taught in the Gita that the thoughts at the moment of departure are
24 great powers in determining the next life.

25 {Sanskrit}

26 24. By making Samyama on friendship, mercy, etc. (I.33), the
27 Yogi excels in the respective qualities.

28 {Sanskrit}

29 25. By making Samyama on the strength of the elephant and
30 others, their respective strength comes to the Yogi.

31 When a Yogi has attained to this Samyama and wants
32 strength, he makes a Samyama on the strength of the elephant and
33 gets it. Infinite energy is at the disposal of everyone if he only
34 knows how to get it. The Yogi has discovered the science of getting
35 it.

36 {Sanskrit}

37 26. By making Samyama on the Effulgent Light (I.36), comes
38 the knowledge of the fine, the obstructed, and the remote.

39 When the Yogi makes Samyama on that Effulgent Light in the
40 heart, he sees things which are very remote, things, for instance,
41 that are happening in a distant place, and which are obstructed by
42 mountain barriers, and also things which are very fine.

43 {Sanskrit}

44 27. By making Samyama on the sun, (comes) the knowledge
45 of the world.

46 {Sanskrit}

- 1 28. On the moon, (comes) the knowledge of the cluster of
2 stars.
3 {Sanskrit}
- 4 29. On the pole-star, (comes) the knowledge of the motions of
5 the stars.
6 {Sanskrit}
- 7 30. On the navel circle, (comes) the knowledge of the
8 constitution of the body.
9 {Sanskrit}
- 10 31. On the hollow of the throat, (comes) cessation of hunger.
11 When a man is very hungry, if he can make Samyama on the
12 hollow of the throat, hunger ceases.
13 {Sanskrit}
- 14 32. On the nerve called Kurma, (comes) fixity of the body.
15 When he is practising, the body is not disturbed.
16 {Sanskrit}
- 17 33. On the light emanating from the top of the head, sight of
18 the Siddhas.
19 The Siddhas are beings who are a little above ghosts. When
20 the Yogi concentrates his mind on the top of his head, he will see
21 these Siddhas. The word Siddha does not refer to those men who
22 have become free--a sense in which it is often used.
23 {Sanskrit}
- 24 34. Or by the power of Pratibha, all knowledge.
25 All these can come without any Samyama to the man who has
26 the power of Pratibha (spontaneous enlightenment from purity).
27 When a man has risen to a high state of Pratibha, he has that great
28 light. All things are apparent to him. Everything comes to him
29 naturally without making Samyama.
30 {Sanskrit}
- 31 35. In the heart, knowledge of minds.
32 {Sanskrit}
- 33 36. Enjoyment comes from the non-discrimination of the soul
34 and Sattva which are totally different because the latter's actions
35 are for another. Samyama on the self-centred one gives knowledge
36 of the Purusha.
37 All action of Sattva, a modification of Prakriti characterised
38 by light and happiness, is for the soul. When Sattva is free from
39 egoism and illuminated with the pure intelligence of Purusha, it is
40 called the self-centred one, because in that state it becomes
41 independent of all relations.
42 {Sanskrit}
- 43 37. From that arises the knowledge belonging to Pratibha and

1 (supernatural) hearing, touching, seeing, tasting and smelling.

2 {Sanskrit}

3 38. These are obstacles to Samadhi; but they are powers in
4 the worldly state.

5 To the Yogi knowledge of the enjoyments of the world comes
6 by the junction of the Purusha and the mind. If he wants to make
7 Samyama on the knowledge that they are two different things,
8 nature and soul, he gets knowledge of the Purusha. From that
9 arises discrimination. When he has got that discrimination, he gets
10 the Pratibha, the light of supreme genius. These powers, however,
11 are obstructions to the attainment of the highest goal, the
12 knowledge of the pure Self, and freedom. These are, as it were, to
13 be met in the way; and if the Yogi rejects them, he attains the
14 highest. If he is tempted to acquire these, his further progress is
15 barred.

16 {Sanskrit}

17 39. When the cause of bondage of the Chitta has become
18 loosened, the Yogi, by his knowledge of its channels of activity (the
19 nerves), enters another's body.

20 The Yogi can enter a dead body and make it get up and move,
21 even while he himself is working in another body. Or he can enter a
22 living body and hold that man's mind and organs in check, and for
23 the time being act through the body of that man. That is done by
24 the Yogi coming to this discrimination of Purusha and nature. If he
25 wants to enter another's body, he makes a Samyama on that body
26 and enters it, because, not only is his soul omnipresent, but his
27 mind also, as the Yogi teaches. It is one bit of the universal mind.
28 Now, however, it can only work through the nerve currents in this
29 body, but when the Yogi has loosened himself from these nerve
30 currents, he can work through other things.

31 {Sanskrit}

32 40. By conquering the current called Udana the Yogi does not
33 sink in water or in swamps, he can walk on thorns etc., and can die
34 at will.

35 Udana is the name of the nerve current that governs the
36 lungs and all the upper parts of the body, and when he is master of
37 it, he becomes light in weight. He does not sink in water; he can
38 walk on thorns and sword blades, and stand in fire, and can depart
39 this life when ever he likes.

40 {Sanskrit}

41 41. By the conquest of the current Samana he is surrounded
42 by a blaze of light.

43 Whenever he likes, light flashes from his body.

44 {Sanskrit}

45 42. By making Samyama on the relation between the ear and
46 the Akasha comes divine hearing.

47 There is the Akasha, the ether, and the instrument, the ear.

1 By making Samyama on them the Yogi gets supernormal hearing;
2 he hears everything. Anything spoken or sounded miles away he
3 can hear.

4 {Sanskrit}

5 43. By making Samyama on the relation between the Akasha
6 and the body and becoming light as cotton-wool etc., through
7 meditation on them, the Yogi goes through the skies.

8 This Akasha is the material of this body; it is only Akasha in a
9 certain form that has become the body. If the Yogi makes a
10 Samyama on this Akasha material of his body, it acquires the
11 lightness of Akasha, and he can go anywhere through the air. So in
12 the other case also.

13 {Sanskrit}

14 44. By making Samyama on the "real modifications" of the
15 mind, outside of the body, called great disembodiedness, comes
16 disappearance of the covering to light.

17 The mind in its foolishness thinks that it is working in this
18 body. Why should I be bound by one system of nerves, and put the
19 Ego only in one body, if the mind is omnipresent? There is no reason
20 why I should. The Yogi wants to feel the Ego wherever he likes. The
21 mental waves which arise in the absence of egoism in the body are
22 called "real modifications" or "great disembodiedness". When he
23 has succeeded in making Samyama on these modifications, all
24 covering to light goes away, and all darkness and ignorance vanish.
25 Everything appears to him to be full of knowledge.

26 {Sanskrit}

27 45. By making Samyama on the gross and fine forms of the
28 elements, their essential traits, the inherence of the Gunas in them
29 and on their contributing to the experience of the soul, comes
30 mastery of the elements.

31 The Yogi makes Samyama on the elements, first on the gross,
32 and then on the finer states. This Samyama is taken up more by a
33 sect of the Buddhists. They take a lump of clay and make Samyama
34 on that, and gradually they begin to see the fine materials of which
35 it is composed, and when they have known all the fine materials in
36 it, they get power over that element. So with all the elements. The
37 Yogi can conquer them all.

38 {Sanskrit}

39 46. From that comes minuteness and the rest of the powers,
40 "glorification of the body," and indestructibleness of the bodily
41 qualities.

42 This means that the Yogi has attained the eight powers. He
43 can make himself as minute as a particle, or as huge as a mountain,
44 as heavy as the earth, or as light as the air; he can reach anything
45 he likes, he can rule everything he wants, he can conquer
46 everything he wants, and so on. A lion will sit at his feet like a lamb,
47 and all his desires will be fulfilled at will.

48 {Sanskrit}

1 47. The "glorification of the body" is beauty, complexion,
2 strength, adamant hardness.

3 The body becomes indestructible. Nothing can injure it.
4 Nothing can destroy it until the Yogi wishes. "Breaking the rod of
5 time he lives in this universe with his body." In the Vedas it is
6 written that for that man there is no more disease, death or pain.

7 {Sanskrit}

8 48. By making Samyama on the objectivity and power of
9 illumination of the organs, on egoism, the inherence of the Gunas in
10 them and on their contributing to the experience of the soul, comes
11 the conquest of the organs.

12 In the perception of external objects the organs leave their
13 place in the mind and go towards the object; this is followed by
14 knowledge. Egoism also is present in the act. When the Yogi makes
15 Samyama on these and the other two by gradation, he conquers the
16 organs. Take up anything that you see or feel, a book for instance;
17 first concentrate the mind on it, then on the knowledge that is in
18 the form of a book, and then on the Ego that sees the book, and so
19 on. By that practice all the organs will be conquered.

20 {Sanskrit}

21 49. From that comes to the body the power of rapid
22 movement like the mind, power of the organs independently of the
23 body, and conquest of nature.

24 Just as by the conquest of the elements comes glorified body,
25 so from the conquest of the organs will come the above-mentioned
26 powers.

27 {Sanskrit}

28 50. By making Samyama on the discrimination between the
29 Sattva and the Purusha come omnipotence and omniscience.

30 When nature has been conquered, and the difference
31 between the Purusha and nature realised--that the Purusha is
32 indestructible, pure and perfect--then come omnipotence and
33 omniscience.

34 {Sanskrit}

35 51. By giving up even these powers comes the destruction of
36 the very seed of evil, which leads to Kaivalya.

37 He attains aloneness, independence, and becomes free. When
38 one gives up even the ideas of omnipotence and omniscience, there
39 comes entire rejection of enjoyment, of the temptations from
40 celestial beings. When the Yogi has seen all these wonderful
41 powers, and rejected them, he reaches the goal. What are all these
42 powers? Simply manifestations. They are no better than dreams.
43 Even omnipotence is a dream. It depends on the mind. So long as
44 there is a mind it can be understood, but the goal is beyond even
45 the mind.

46 {Sanskrit}

47 52. The Yogi should not feel allured or flattered by the

1 overtures of celestial beings for fear of evil again.

2 There are other dangers too; gods and other beings come to
3 tempt the Yogi. They do not want anyone to be perfectly free. They
4 are jealous, just as we are, and worse than us sometimes. They are
5 very much afraid of losing their places. Those Yogis who do not
6 reach perfection die and become gods; leaving the direct road they
7 go into one of the side streets, and get these powers. Then, again,
8 they have to be born. But he who is strong enough to withstand
9 these temptations and go straight to the goal, becomes free.

10 {Sanskrit}

11 53. By making Samyama on a particle of time and its
12 precession and succession comes discrimination.

13 How are we to avoid all these things, these Devas, and
14 heavens, and powers? By discrimination, by knowing good from
15 evil. Therefore a Samyama is given by which the power of
16 discrimination can be strengthened. This is by making a Samyama
17 on a particle of time, and the time preceding and following it.

18 {Sanskrit}

19 54. Those things which cannot be differentiated by species,
20 sign, and place, even they will be discriminated by the above
21 Samyama.

22 The misery that we suffer comes from ignorance, from non-
23 discrimination between the real and the unreal. We all take the bad
24 for the good, the dream for the reality. Soul is the only reality, and
25 we have forgotten it. Body is an unreal dream, and we think we are
26 all bodies. This non-discrimination is the cause of misery. It is
27 caused by ignorance. When discrimination comes, it brings
28 strength, and then alone can we avoid all these various ideas of
29 body, heavens, and gods. This ignorance arises through
30 differentiating by species, sign, and place. For instance, take a cow.
31 The cow is differentiated from the dog by species. Even with the
32 cows alone how do we make the distinction between one cow and
33 another? By signs. If two objects are exactly similar, they can be
34 distinguished if they are in different places. When objects are so
35 mixed up that even these differentiae will not help us, the power of
36 discrimination acquired by the above-mentioned practice will give
37 us the ability to distinguish them. The highest philosophy of the
38 Yogi is based upon this fact, that the Purusha is pure and perfect,
39 and is the only "simple" that exists in this universe. The body and
40 mind are compounds, and yet we are ever identifying ourselves
41 with them. This is the great mistake that the distinction has been
42 lost. When this power of discrimination has been attained, man sees
43 that everything in this world, mental and physical, is a compound,
44 and, as such, cannot be the Purusha.

45 {Sanskrit}

46 55. The saving knowledge is that knowledge of discrimination
47 which simultaneously covers all objects, in all their variations.

48 Saving, because the knowledge takes the Yogi across the
49 ocean of birth and death. The whole of Prakriti in all its states,

1 subtle and gross, is within the grasp of this knowledge. There is no
2 succession in perception by this knowledge; it takes in all things
3 simultaneously, at a glance.

4 {Sanskrit}

5 56. By the similarity of purity between the Sattva and the
6 Purusha comes Kaivalya.

7 When the soul realises that it depends on nothing in the
8 universe, from gods to the lowest atom, that is called Kaivalya
9 (isolation) and perfection. It is attained when this mixture of purity
10 and impurity called Sattva (intellect) has been made as pure as the
11 Purusha itself; then the Sattva reflects only the unqualified essence
12 of purity, which is the Purusha.

INDEPENDENCE

{Sanskrit}

1. The Siddhis (powers) are attained by birth, chemical means, power of words, mortification, or concentration.

Sometimes a man is born with the Siddhis, powers, of course, those he had earned in his previous incarnation. This time he is born, as it were, to enjoy the fruits of them. It is said of Kapila, the great father of the Sankhya philosophy, that he was a born Siddha, which means literally a man who has attained to success.

The Yogis claim that these powers can be gained by chemical means. All of you know that chemistry originally began as alchemy; men went in search of the philosopher's stone and elixirs of life, and so forth. In India there was a sect called the Rasayanas. Their idea was that ideality, knowledge, spirituality, and religion were all very right, but that the body was the only instrument by which to attain to all these. If the body came to an end every now and again, it would take so much more time to attain to the goal. For instance, a man wants to practise Yoga, or wants to become spiritual. Before he has advanced very far he dies. Then he takes another body and begins again, then dies, and so on. In this way much time will be lost in dying and being born again. If the body could be made strong and perfect, so that it would get rid of birth and death, we should have so much more time to become spiritual. So these Rasayanas say, first make the body very strong. They claim that this body can be made immortal. Their idea is that if the mind manufactures the body, and if it be true that each mind is only one outlet to the infinite energy, there should be no limit to each outlet getting any amount of power from outside. Why is it impossible to keep our bodies all the time? We have to manufacture all the bodies that we ever have. As soon as this body dies, we shall have to manufacture another. If we can do that, why cannot we do it just here and now, without getting out of the present body? The theory is perfectly correct. If it is possible that we live after death, and make other bodies, why is it impossible that we should have the power of making bodies here, without entirely dissolving this body, simply changing it continually? They also thought that in mercury and in sulphur was hidden the most wonderful power, and that by certain preparations of these a man could keep the body as long as he liked. Others believed that certain drugs could bring powers, such as flying through the air. Many of the most wonderful medicines of the present day we owe to the Rasayanas, notably the use of metals in medicine. Certain sects of Yogis claim that many of their principal teachers are still living in their old bodies. Patanjali, the great authority on Yoga, does not deny this.

The power of words. There are certain sacred words called Mantras, which have power, when repeated under proper conditions, to produce these extraordinary powers. We are living in the midst of such a mass of miracles, day and night, that we do not think anything of them. There is no limit to man's power, the power of words and the power of mind.

Mortification. You find that in every religion mortifications

1 and asceticisms have been practised. In these religious conceptions
2 the Hindus always go to the extremes. You will find men with their
3 hands up all their lives, until their hands wither and die. Men keep
4 standing, day and night, until their feet swell, and if they live, the
5 legs become so stiff in this position that they can no more bend
6 them, but have to stand all their lives. I once saw a man who had
7 kept his hands raised in this way, and I asked him how it felt when
8 he did it first. He said it was awful torture. It was such torture that
9 he had to go to a river and put himself in water, and that allayed the
10 pain for a little while. After a month he did not suffer much.
11 Through such practices powers (Siddhis) can be attained.

12 *Concentration.* Concentration is Samadhi, and that is Yoga
13 proper; that is the principal theme of this science, and it is the
14 highest means. The preceding ones are only secondary, and we
15 cannot attain to the highest through them. Samadhi is the means
16 through which we can gain anything and everything, mental, moral,
17 or spiritual.

18 {Sanskrit}

19 2. The change into another species is by the filling in of
20 nature.

21 Patanjali has advanced the proposition that these powers
22 come by birth, sometimes by chemical means, or through
23 mortification. He also admits that this body can be kept for any
24 length of time. Now he goes on to state what is the cause of the
25 change of the body into another species. He says this is done by the
26 filling in of nature, which he explains in the next aphorism.

27 {Sanskrit}

28 3. Good and bad deeds are not the direct causes in the
29 transformations of nature, but they act as breakers of obstacles to
30 the evolutions of nature: as a farmer breaks the obstacles to the
31 course of water, which then runs down by its own nature.

32 The water for irrigation of fields is already in the canal, only
33 shut in by gates. The farmer opens these gates, and the water flows
34 in by itself, by the law of gravitation. So all progress and power are
35 already in every man; perfection is man's nature, only it is barred in
36 and prevented from taking its proper course. If anyone can take the
37 bar off, in rushes nature. Then the man attains the powers which
38 are his already. Those we call wicked become saints, as soon as the
39 bar is broken and nature rushes in. It is nature that is driving us
40 towards perfection, and eventually she will bring everyone there.
41 All these practices and struggles to become religious are only
42 negative work, to take off the bars, and open the doors to that
43 perfection which is our birthright, our nature.

44 Today the evolution theory of the ancient Yogis will be better
45 understood in the light of modern research. And yet the theory of
46 the Yogis is a better explanation. The two causes of evolution
47 advanced by the moderns, viz. sexual selection and survival of the
48 fittest, are inadequate. Suppose human knowledge to have
49 advanced so much as to eliminate competition, both from the
50 function of acquiring physical sustenance and of acquiring a mate.

1 Then, according to the moderns, human progress will stop and the
2 race will die. The result of this theory is to furnish every oppressor
3 with an argument to calm the qualms of conscience. Men are not
4 lacking, who, posing as philosophers, want to kill out all wicked and
5 incompetent persons (they are, of course, the only judges of
6 competency) and thus preserve the human race! But the great
7 ancient evolutionist, Patanjali, declares that the true secret of
8 evolution is the manifestation of the perfection which is already in
9 every being; that this perfection has been barred and the infinite
10 tide behind is struggling to express itself. These struggles and
11 competitions are but the results of our ignorance, because we do
12 not know the proper way to unlock the gate and let the water in.
13 This infinite tide behind must express itself; it is the cause of all
14 manifestation.

15 Competitions for life or sex-gratification are only momentary,
16 unnecessary, extraneous effects, caused by ignorance. Even when
17 all competition has ceased, this perfect nature behind will make us
18 go forward until everyone has become perfect. Therefore there is
19 no reason to believe that competition is necessary to progress. In
20 the animal the man was suppressed, but as soon as the door was
21 opened, out rushed man. So in man there is the potential god, kept
22 in by the locks and bars of ignorance. When knowledge breaks
23 these bars, the god becomes manifest.

24 {Sanskrit}

25 4. From egoism alone proceed the created minds.

26 The theory of Karma is that we suffer for our good or bad
27 deeds, and the whole scope of philosophy is to reach the glory of
28 man. All the scriptures sing the glory of man, of the soul, and then,
29 in the same breath, they preach Karma. A good deed brings such a
30 result, and a bad deed such another, but if the soul can be acted
31 upon by a good or a bad deed, the soul amounts to nothing. Bad
32 deeds put a bar to the manifestation of the nature of the Purusha;
33 good deeds take the obstacles off, and the glory of the Purusha
34 becomes manifest. The Purusha itself is never changed. Whatever
35 you do never destroys your own glory, your own nature, because the
36 soul cannot be acted upon by anything, only a veil is spread before
37 it, hiding its perfection.

38 With a view to exhausting their Karma quickly, Yogis create
39 Kaya-vyuha, or groups of bodies, in which to work it out. For all
40 these bodies they create minds from egoism. These are called
41 "created minds", in contradistinction to their original minds.

42 {Sanskrit}

43 5. Though the activities of the different created minds are
44 various, the one original mind is the controller of them all.

45 These different minds, which act in these different bodies are
46 called made-minds, and the bodies, made-bodies; that is,
47 manufactured bodies and minds. Matter and mind are like two
48 inexhaustible storehouses. When you become a Yogi, you learn the
49 secret of their control. It was yours all the time, but you had
50 forgotten it. When you become a Yogi, you recollect it. Then you can

1 do anything with it, manipulate it in every way you like. The
2 material out of which a manufactured mind is created is the very
3 same material which is used for the macrocosm. It is not that mind
4 is one thing and matter another, they are different aspects of the
5 same thing. Asmita, egoism, is the material, the fine state of
6 existence out of which these made-minds and made-bodies of the
7 Yogi are manufactured. Therefore, when the Yogi has found the
8 secret of these energies of nature, he can manufacture any number
9 of bodies or minds out of the substance known as egoism.

10 {Sanskrit}

11 6. Among the various Chittas, that which is attained by
12 Samadhi is desireless.

13 Among all the various minds that we see in various men, only
14 that mind which has attained to Samadhi, perfect concentration, is
15 the highest. A man who has attained certain powers through
16 medicines, or through words, or through mortifications, still has
17 desires, but that man who has attained to Samadhi through
18 concentration is alone free from all desires.

19 {Sanskrit}

20 7. Works are neither black nor white for the Yogis; for others
21 they are threefold--black, white, and mixed.

22 When the Yogi has attained perfection, his actions, and the
23 Karma produced by those actions, do not bind him, because he did
24 not desire them. He just works on; he works to do good, and he
25 does good, but does not care for the result, and it will not come to
26 him. But, for ordinary men, who have not attained to the highest
27 state, works are of three kinds, black (evil actions), white (good
28 actions), and mixed.

29 {Sanskrit}

30 8. From these threefold works are manifested in each state
31 only those desires (which are) fitting to that state alone. (The others
32 are held in abeyance for the time being.)

33 Suppose I have made the three kinds of Karma, good, bad,
34 and mixed, and suppose I die and become a god in heaven. The
35 desires in a god body are not the same as the desires in a human
36 body; the god body neither eats nor drinks. What becomes of my
37 past unworked Karmas which produce as their effect the desire to
38 eat and drink? Where would these Karmas go when I become a
39 god? The answer is that desires can only manifest themselves in
40 proper environments. Only those desires will come out for which
41 the environment is fitted; the rest will remain stored up. In this life
42 we have many godly desires, many human desires, many animal
43 desires. If I take a god body, only the good desires will come up,
44 because for them the environments are suitable. And if I take an
45 animal body, only the animal desires will come up, and the good
46 desires will wait. What does this show? That by means of
47 environment we can check these desires. Only that Karma which is
48 suited to and fitted for the environments will come out. This shows
49 that the power of environment is the great check to control even

1 Karma itself.

2 {Sanskrit}

3 9. There is consecutiveness in desires, even though separated
4 by species, space, and time, there being identification of memory
5 and impressions.

6 Experiences becoming fine become impressions; impressions
7 revived become memory. The word memory here includes
8 unconscious co-ordination of past experiences, reduced to
9 impressions, with present conscious action. In each body, the group
10 of impressions acquired in a similar body only becomes the cause of
11 action in that body. The experiences of a dissimilar body are held in
12 abeyance. Each body acts as if it were a descendant of a series of
13 bodies of that species only; thus, consecutiveness of desires is not
14 to be broken.

15 {Sanskrit}

16 10. Thirst for happiness being eternal, desires are without
17 beginning.

18 All experience is preceded by desire for happiness. There was
19 no beginning of experience, as each fresh experience is built upon
20 the tendency generated by past experience; therefore desire is
21 without beginning.

22 {Sanskrit}

23 11. Being held together by cause, effect, support, and objects,
24 in the absence of these is its absence.

25 Desires are held together by cause and effect; if a desire has
26 been raised, it does not die without producing its effect. Then,
27 again, the mind-stuff is the great storehouse, the support of all past
28 desires reduced to Samskara form; until they have worked
29 themselves out, they will not die. Moreover, so long as the senses
30 receive the external objects, fresh desires will arise. If it be possible
31 to get rid of the cause, effect, support, and objects of desire, then
32 alone it will vanish.

33 {Sanskrit}

34 12. The past and future exist in their own nature, qualities
35 having different ways.

36 The idea is that existence never comes out of non-existence.
37 The past and future, though not existing in a manifested form, yet
38 exist in a fine form.

39 {Sanskrit}

40 13. They are manifested or fine, being of the nature of the
41 Gunas.

42 The Gunas are the three substances, Sattva, Rajas, and
43 Tamas, whose gross state is the sensible universe. Past and future
44 arise from the different modes of manifestation of these Gunas.

45 {Sanskrit}

46 14. The unity in things is from the unity in changes.

1 Though there are three substances, their changes being co-
2 ordinated, all objects have their unity.

3 {Sanskrit}

4 15. Since perception and desire vary with regard to the same
5 object, mind and object are of different nature.

6 That is, there is an objective world independent of our minds.
7 This is a refutation of Buddhistic Idealism. Since different people
8 look at the same thing differently, it cannot be a mere imagination
9 of any particular individual.

10 {Sanskrit}

11 16. Things are known or unknown to the mind, being
12 dependent on the colouring which they give to the mind.

13 {Sanskrit}

14 17. The states of the mind are always known, because the
15 lord of the mind, the Purusha, is unchangeable.

16 The whole gist of this theory is that the universe is both
17 mental and material. Both of these are in a continuous state of flux.
18 What is this book? It is a combination of molecules in constant
19 change. One lot is going out, and another coming in; it is a
20 whirlpool, but what makes the unity? What makes it the same book?
21 The changes are rhythmical; in harmonious order they are sending
22 impressions to my mind, and these pieced together make a
23 continuous picture, although the parts are continuously changing.
24 Mind itself is continuously changing.

25 The mind and body are like two layers in the same substance,
26 moving at different rates of speed. Relatively, one being slower and
27 the other quicker, we can distinguish between the two motions. For
28 instance, a train is in motion, and a carriage is moving alongside it.
29 It is possible to find the motion of both these to a certain extent. But
30 still something else is necessary. Motion can only be perceived
31 when there is something else which is not moving. But when two or
32 three things are relatively moving, we first perceive the motion of
33 the faster one, and then that of the slower ones. How is the mind to
34 perceive? It is also in a flux. Therefore another thing is necessary
35 which moves more slowly, then you must get to something in which
36 the motion is still slower, and so on, and you will find no end.
37 Therefore logic compels you to stop somewhere. You must complete
38 the series by knowing something which never changes. Behind this
39 never-ending chain of motion is the Purusha, the changeless, the
40 colourless, the pure. All these impressions are merely reflected
41 upon it, as a magic lantern throws images upon a screen, without in
42 any way tarnishing it.

43 {Sanskrit}

44 18. The mind is not self-luminous, being an object.

45 Tremendous power is manifested everywhere in nature, but it
46 is not self-luminous, not essentially intelligent. The Purusha alone is
47 self-luminous, and gives its light to everything. It is the power of the
48 Purusha that is percolating through all matter and force.

1 {Sanskrit}

2 19. From its being unable to cognise both at the same time.

3 If the mind were self-luminous it would be able to cognise
4 itself and its objects at the same time, which it cannot. When it
5 cognises the object, it cannot reflect on itself. Therefore the
6 Purusha is self-luminous, and the mind is not.

7 {Sanskrit}

8 20. Another cognising mind being assumed, there will be no
9 end to such assumptions, and confusion of memory will be the
10 result.

11 Let us suppose there is another mind which cognises the
12 ordinary mind, then there will have to be still another to cognise the
13 former, and so there will be no end to it. It will result in confusion of
14 memory, there will be no storehouse of memory.

15 {Sanskrit}

16 21. The essence of knowledge (the Purusha) being
17 unchangeable, when the mind takes its form, it becomes conscious.

18 Patanjali says this to make it more clear that knowledge is not
19 a quality of the Purusha. When the mind comes near the Purusha it
20 is reflected, as it were, upon the mind, and the mind, for the time
21 being, becomes knowing and seems as if it were itself the Purusha.

22 {Sanskrit}

23 22. Coloured by the seer and the seen the mind is able to
24 understand everything.

25 On one side of the mind the external world, the seen, is being
26 reflected, and on the other, the seer is being reflected. Thus comes
27 the power of all knowledge to the mind.

28 {Sanskrit}

29 23. The mind, though variegated by innumerable desires, acts
30 for another (the Purusha), because it acts in combination.

31 The mind is a compound of various things and therefore it
32 cannot work for itself. Everything that is a combination in this world
33 has some object for that combination, some third thing for which
34 this combination is going on. So this combination of the mind is for
35 the Purusha.

36 {Sanskrit}

37 24. For the discriminating, the perception of the mind as
38 Atman ceases.

39 Through discrimination the Yogi knows that the Purusha is
40 not mind.

41 {Sanskrit}

42 25. Then, bent on discriminating, the mind attains the
43 previous state of Kaivalya (isolation).

44 Thus the practice of Yoga leads to discriminating power, to
45 clearness of vision. The veil drops from the eyes, and we see things

1 as they are. We find that nature is a compound, and is showing the
2 panorama for the Purusha, who is the witness; that nature is not
3 the Lord, that all the combinations of nature are simply for the sake
4 of showing these phenomena to the Purusha, the enthroned king
5 within. When discrimination comes by long practice, fear ceases,
6 and the mind attains isolation.

7 {Sanskrit}

8 26. The thoughts that arise as obstructions to that are from
9 impressions.

10 All the various ideas that arise, making us believe that we
11 require something external to make us happy, are obstructions to
12 that perfection. The Purusha is happiness and blessedness by its
13 own nature. But that knowledge is covered over by past
14 impressions. These impressions have to work themselves out.

15 {Sanskrit}

16 27. Their destruction is in the same manner as of ignorance,
17 egoism, etc., as said before (II.10).

18 {Sanskrit}

19 28. Even when arriving at the right discriminating knowledge
20 of the essences, he who gives up the fruits, unto him comes, as the
21 result of perfect discrimination, the Samadhi called the cloud of
22 virtue.

23 When the Yogi has attained to this discrimination, all the
24 powers mentioned in the last chapter come to him, but the true Yogi
25 rejects them all. Unto him comes a peculiar knowledge, a particular
26 light, called the Dharma-megha, the cloud of virtue. All the great
27 prophets of the world whom history has recorded had this. They
28 had found the whole foundation of knowledge within themselves.
29 Truth to them had become real. Peace and calmness, and perfect
30 purity became their own nature, after they had given up the
31 vanities of powers.

32 {Sanskrit}

33 29. From that comes cessation of pain and works.

34 When that cloud of virtue has come, then no more is there
35 fear of falling, nothing can drag the Yogi down. No more will there
36 be evils for him. No more pains.

37 {Sanskrit}

38 30. The knowledge, bereft of covering and impurities,
39 becoming infinite, the knowable becomes small.

40 Knowledge itself is there; its covering is gone. One of the
41 Buddhistic scriptures defines what is meant by the Buddha (which
42 is the name of a state) as infinite knowledge, infinite as the sky.
43 Jesus attained to that and became the Christ. All of you will attain
44 to that state. Knowledge becoming infinite, the knowable becomes
45 small. The whole universe, with all its objects of knowledge,
46 becomes as nothing before the Purusha. The ordinary man thinks
47 himself very small, because to him the knowable seems to be

1 infinite.

2 {Sanskrit}

3 31. Then are finished the successive transformations of the
4 qualities, they having attained the end.

5 Then all these various transformations of the qualities, which
6 change from species to species, cease for ever.

7 {Sanskrit}

8 32. The changes that exist in relation to moments and which
9 are perceived at the other end (at the end of a series) are
10 succession.

11 Patanjali here defines the word succession, the changes that
12 exist in relation to moments. While I think, many moments pass,
13 and with each moment there is a change of idea, but I only perceive
14 these changes at the end of a series. This is called succession, but
15 for the mind that has realised omnipresence there is no succession.
16 Everything has become present for it; to it the present alone exists,
17 the past and future are lost. Time stands controlled, all knowledge
18 is there in one second. Everything is known like a flash.

19 {Sanskrit}

20 33. The resolution in the inverse order of the qualities, bereft
21 of any motive of action for the Purusha, is Kaivalya, or it is the
22 establishment of the power of knowledge in its own nature.

23 Nature's task is done, this unselfish task which our sweet
24 nurse, nature, had imposed upon herself. She gently took the self-
25 forgetting soul by the hand, as it were, and showed him all the
26 experiences in the universe, all manifestations, bringing him higher
27 and higher through various bodies, till his lost glory came back, and
28 he remembered his own nature. Then the kind mother went back
29 the same way she came, for others who also have lost their way in
30 the trackless desert of life. And thus is she working, without
31 beginning and without end. And thus through pleasure and pain,
32 through good and evil, the infinite river of souls is flowing into the
33 ocean of perfection, of self-realisation.

34 Glory unto those who have realised their own nature. May
35 their blessing be on us all!

APPENDIX

REFERENCES TO YOGA

Shvetashvatara Upanishad

Chapter II

{Sanskrit}

6. Where the fire is rubbed, where the air is controlled, where the Soma flows over, there a (perfect) mind is created.

{Sanskrit}

8. Placing the body in a straight posture, with the chest, the throat, and the head held erect, making the organs enter the mind, the sage crosses all the fearful currents by means of the raft of Brahman.

{Sanskrit}

9. The man of well-regulated endeavours controls the Prana; and when it has become quieted, breathes out through the nostrils. The persevering sage holds his mind as a charioteer holds the restive horses.

{Sanskrit}

10. In (lonely) places as mountain caves where the floor is even, free of pebbles, fire, or sand, where there are no disturbing noises from men or waterfalls, in auspicious places helpful to the mind and pleasing to the eyes. Yoga is to be practised (mind is to be joined).

{Sanskrit}

11. Like snowfall, smoke, sun, wind, fire, firefly, lightning, crystal, moon, these forms, coming before, gradually manifest the Brahman in Yoga.

{Sanskrit}

12. When the perceptions of Yoga, arising from earth, water, light, fire, ether, have taken place, then Yoga has begun. Unto him does not come disease, nor old age, nor death, who has got a body made up of the fire of Yoga.

{Sanskrit}

13. The first signs of entering Yoga are lightness, health, non-covetousness, clearness of complexion, a beautiful voice, an agreeable odour in the body, and scantiness of excretions.

{Sanskrit}

14. As gold or silver, first covered with earth, and then cleaned, shines full of light, so the embodied man seeing the truth of the Atman as one, attains the goal and becomes sorrowless.

Yajnavalkya quoted by Shankara

{Sanskrit}

1 "After practising the postures as desired, according to rules,
2 then, O Gargi, the man who has conquered the posture will practise
3 Pranayama.

4 "Seated in an easy posture, on a (deer or tiger) skin, placed
5 on Kusha grass, worshipping Ganapati with fruits and sweetmeats,
6 placing the right palm on the left, holding the throat and head in
7 the same line, the lips closed and firm, facing the east or the north,
8 the eyes fixed on the tip of the nose, avoiding too much food or
9 fasting, the Nadis should be purified, without which the practice
10 will be fruitless. Thinking of the (seed-word) 'Hum,' at the junction
11 of Pingala and Ida (the right and the left nostrils), the Ida should be
12 filled with external air in twelve Matras (seconds); then the Yogi
13 meditates on fire in the same place with the word 'Rung,' and while
14 meditating thus, slowly ejects the air through the Pingala (right
15 nostril). Again filling in through the Pingala the air should be slowly
16 ejected through the Ida, in the same way. This should be practised
17 for three or four years, or three or four months, according to the
18 directions of a Guru, in secret (alone in a room), in the early
19 morning, at midday, in the evening, and at midnight (until) the
20 nerves become purified. Lightness of body, clear complexion, good
21 appetite, hearing of the Nada, are the signs of the purification of
22 nerves. Then should be practised Pranayama composed of Rechaka
23 (exhalation), Kumbhaka (retention), and Puraka (inhalation). Joining
24 the Prana with the Apana is Pranayama.

25 "In sixteen Matras filling the body from the head to the feet,
26 in thirty-two Matras the Prana is to be thrown out, and with sixty-
27 four the Kumbhaka should be made.

28 "There is another Pranayama in which the Kumbhaka should
29 first be made with sixty-four Matras, then the Prana should be
30 thrown out with sixteen, and the body next filled with sixteen
31 Matras.

32 "By Pranayama impurities of the body are thrown out; by
33 Dharana the impurities of the mind; by Pratyahara impurities of
34 attachment; and by Samadhi is taken off everything that hides the
35 lordship of the Soul."

36
37 *Sankhya*

38 Book III

39 {Sanskrit}

40 29. By the achievement of meditation, there come to the pure
41 one (the Purusha) all powers of nature.

42 {Sanskrit}

43 30. Meditation is the removal of attachment.

44 {Sanskrit}

45 31. It is perfected by the suppression of the modifications.

46 {Sanskrit}

47 32. By Dharana, posture, and performance of one's duties, it

1 is perfected.
2 {Sanskrit}
3 33. Restraint of the Prana is by means of expulsion and
4 retention.
5 {Sanskrit}
6 34. Posture is that which is steady and easy.
7 {Sanskrit}
8 36. Also by non-attachment and practice, meditation is
9 perfected.
10 {Sanskrit}
11 74. By reflection on the principles of nature, and by giving
12 them up as "not It, not It," discrimination is perfected.
13 {Sanskrit}
14
15 BOOK IV
16 3. Instruction is to be repeated.
17 {Sanskrit}
18 5. As the hawk becomes unhappy if the food is taken away
19 from him and happy if he gives it up himself (so he who gives up
20 everything voluntarily is happy).
21 {Sanskrit}
22 6. As the snake is happy in giving up his old skin.
23 {Sanskrit}
24 8. That which is not a means of liberation is not to be thought
25 of; it becomes a cause of bondage, as in the case of Bharata.
26 {Sanskrit}
27 9. From the association of many things there is obstruction to
28 meditation, through passion, aversion, etc., like the shell bracelets
29 on the virgin's hand.
30 {Sanskrit}
31 10. It is the same even in the case of two.
32 {Sanskrit}
33 11. The renouncers of hope are happy, like the girl Pingala.
34 {Sanskrit}
35 13. Although devotion is to be given to many institutes and
36 teachers, the essence is to be taken from them all as the bee takes
37 the essence from many flowers.
38 {Sanskrit}
39 14. One whose mind has become concentrated like the
40 arrowmaker's does not get his meditation disturbed.
41 {Sanskrit}

15. Through transgression of the original rules there is non-attainment of the goal, as in other worldly things.

{Sanskrit}

19. By continence, reverence, and devotion to Guru, success comes after a long time (as in the case of Indra).

{Sanskrit}

20. There is no law as to time, as in the case of Vamadeva.

{Sanskrit}

24. Or through association with one who has attained perfection.

{Sanskrit}

27. Not by enjoyments is desire appeased even with sages (who have practised Yoga for long).

{Sanskrit}

BOOK V

128. The Siddhis attained by Yoga are not to be denied like recovery through medicines etc.

BOOK VI

{Sanskrit}

24. Any posture which is easy and steady is an Asana; there is no other rule.

Vyasa-Sutras

Chapter IV, Section I

{Sanskrit}

7. Worship is possible in a sitting posture.

{Sanskrit}

8. Because of meditation.

{Sanskrit}

9. Because the meditating (person) is compared to the immovable earth.

{Sanskrit}

10. Also because the Smritis say so.

{Sanskrit}

11. There is no law of place; wherever the mind is concentrated, there worship should be performed.

These several extracts give an idea of what other systems of Indian Philosophy have to say upon Yoga.

SOUL, GOD AND RELIGION

Through the vistas of the past the voice of the centuries is coming down to us; the voice of the sages of the Himalayas and the recluses of the forest; the voice that came to the Semitic races; the voice that spoke through Buddha and other spiritual giants; the voice that comes from those who live in the light that accompanied man in the beginning of the earth--the light that shines wherever man goes and lives with him for ever--is coming to us even now. This voice is like the little rivulets that come from the mountains. Now they disappear, and now they appear again in stronger flow till finally they unite in one mighty majestic flood. The messages that are coming down to us from the prophets and holy men and women of all sects and nations are joining their forces and speaking to us with the trumpet voice of the past. And the first message it brings us is: Peace be unto you and to all religions. It is not a message of antagonism, but of one united religion.

Let us study this message first. At the beginning of this century it was almost feared that religion was at an end. Under the tremendous sledge-hammer blows of scientific research, old superstitions were crumbling away like masses of porcelain. Those to whom religion meant only a bundle of creeds and meaningless ceremonials were in despair; they were at their wit's end. Everything was slipping between their fingers. For a time it seemed inevitable that the surging tide of agnosticism and materialism would sweep all before it. There were those who did not dare utter what they thought. Many thought the case hopeless and the cause of religion lost once and for ever. But the tide has turned and to the rescue has come--what? The study of comparative religions. By the study of different religions we find that in essence they are one.

When I was a boy, this scepticism reached me, and it seemed for a time as if I must give up all hope of religion. But fortunately for me I studied the Christian religion, the Mohammedan, the Buddhistic, and others, and what was my surprise to find that the same foundation principles taught by my religion were also taught by all religions. It appealed to me this way. What is the truth? I asked. Is this world true? Yes. Why? Because I see it. Are the beautiful sounds we just heard (the vocal and instrumental music) true? Yes. Because we heard them. We know that man has a body, eyes, and ears, and he has a spiritual nature which we cannot see. And with his spiritual faculties he can study these different religions and find that whether a religion is taught in the forests and jungles of India or in a Christian land, in essentials all religions are one. This only shows us that religion is a constitutional necessity of the human mind. The proof of one religion depends on the proof of all the rest. For instance, if I have six fingers, and no one else has, you may well say that is abnormal. The same reasoning may be applied to the argument that only one religion is true and all others false. One religion only, like one set of six fingers in the world, would be unnatural. We see, therefore, that if one religion is true, all others must be true. There are differences in non-essentials, but in essentials they are all one. If my five fingers are true, they prove that your five fingers are true too. Wherever man is, he must

1 develop a belief, he must develop his religious nature.

2 And another fact I find in the study of the various religions of
3 the world is that there are three different stages of ideas with
4 regard to the soul and God. In the first place, all religions admit
5 that, apart from the body which perishes, there is a certain part or
6 something which does not change like the body, a part that is
7 immutable, eternal, that never dies; but some of the later religions
8 teach that although there is a part of us that never dies, it had a
9 beginning. But anything that has a beginning must necessarily have
10 an end. We--the essential part of us--never had a beginning, and will
11 never have an end. And above us all, above this eternal nature,
12 there is another eternal Being, without end--God. People talk about
13 the beginning of the world, the beginning of man. The word
14 *beginning* simply means the beginning of the cycle. It nowhere
15 means the beginning of the whole Cosmos. It is impossible that
16 creation could have a beginning. No one of you can imagine a time
17 of beginning. That which has a beginning must have an end. "Never
18 did I not exist, nor you, nor will any of us ever hereafter cease to
19 be," says the Bhagavad-Gita. Wherever the beginning of creation is
20 mentioned, it means the beginning of a cycle. Your body will meet
21 with death, but your soul, never.

22 Along with this idea of the soul we find another group of ideas
23 in regard to its perfection. The soul in itself is perfect. The Old
24 Testament of the Hebrews admits man perfect at the beginning.
25 Man made himself impure by his own actions. But he is to regain
26 his old nature, his pure nature. Some speak of these things in
27 allegories, fables, and symbols. But when we begin to analyse these
28 statements, we find that they all teach that the human soul is in its
29 very nature perfect, and that man is to regain that original purity.
30 How? By knowing God. Just as the Bible says, "No man can see God
31 but through the Son." What is meant by it? That seeing God is the
32 aim and goal of all human life. The sonship must come before we
33 become one with the Father. Remember that man lost his purity
34 through his own actions. When we suffer, it is because of our own
35 acts; God is not to be blamed for it.

36 Closely connected with these ideas is the doctrine--which was
37 universal before the Europeans mutilated it--the doctrine of
38 reincarnation. Some of you may have heard of and ignored it. This
39 idea of reincarnation runs parallel with the other doctrine of the
40 eternity of the human soul. Nothing which ends at one point can be
41 without a beginning and nothing that begins at one point can be
42 without an end. We cannot believe in such a monstrous impossibility
43 as the beginning of the human soul. The doctrine of reincarnation
44 asserts the freedom of the soul. Suppose there was an absolute
45 beginning. Then the whole burden of this impurity in man falls upon
46 God. The all-merciful Father responsible for the sins of the world! If
47 sin comes in this way, why should one suffer more than another?
48 Why such partiality, if it comes from an all-merciful God? Why are
49 millions trampled underfoot? Why do people starve who never did
50 anything to cause it? Who is responsible? If they had no hand in it,
51 surely, God would be responsible. Therefore the better explanation
52 is that one is responsible for the miseries one suffers. If I set the

1 wheel in motion, I am responsible for the result. And if I can bring
2 misery, I can also stop it. It necessarily follows that we are free.
3 There is no such thing as fate. There is nothing to compel us. What
4 we have done, that we can undo.

5 To one argument in connection with this doctrine I will ask
6 your patient attention, as it is a little intricate. We gain all our
7 knowledge through experience; that is the only way. What we call
8 experiences are on the plane of consciousness. For illustration: A
9 man plays a tune on a piano, he places each finger on each key
10 consciously. He repeats this process till the movement of the fingers
11 becomes a habit. He then plays a tune without having to pay special
12 attention to each particular key. Similarly, we find in regard to
13 ourselves that our tendencies are the result of past conscious
14 actions. A child is born with certain tendencies. Whence do they
15 come? No child is born with a *tabula rasa* --with a clean, blank
16 page--of a mind. The page has been written on previously. The old
17 Greek and Egyptian philosophers taught that no child came with a
18 vacant mind. Each child comes with a hundred tendencies
19 generated by past conscious actions. It did not acquire these in this
20 life, and we are bound to admit that it must have had them in past
21 lives. The rankest materialist has to admit that these tendencies are
22 the result of past actions, only they add that these tendencies come
23 through heredity. Our parents, grandparents, and great-
24 grandparents come down to us through this law of heredity. Now if
25 heredity alone explains this, there is no necessity of believing in the
26 soul at all, because body explains everything. We need not go into
27 the different arguments and discussions on materialism and
28 spiritualism. So far the way is clear for those who believe in an
29 individual soul. We see that to come to a reasonable conclusion we
30 must admit that we have had past lives. This is the belief of the
31 great philosophers and sages of the past and of modern times. Such
32 a doctrine was believed in among the Jews. Jesus Christ believed in
33 it. He says in the Bible, "Before Abraham was, I am." And in
34 another place it is said, "This is Elias who is said to have come."

35 All the different religions which grew among different nations
36 under varying circumstances and conditions had their origin in
37 Asia, and the Asiatics understand them well. When they came out
38 from the motherland, they got mixed up with errors. The most
39 profound and noble ideas of Christianity were never understood in
40 Europe, because the ideas and images used by the writers of the
41 Bible were foreign to it. Take for illustration the pictures of the
42 Madonna. Every artist paints his Madonna according to his own
43 pre-conceived ideas. I have been seeing hundreds of pictures of the
44 Last Supper of Jesus Christ, and he is made to sit at a table. Now,
45 Christ never sat at a table; he squatted with others, and they had a
46 bowl in which they dipped bread--not the kind of bread you eat
47 today. It is hard for any nation to understand the unfamiliar customs
48 of other people. How much more difficult was it for Europeans to
49 understand the Jewish customs after centuries of changes and
50 accretions from Greek, Roman, and other sources! Through all the
51 myths and mythologies by which it is surrounded it is no wonder
52 that the people get very little of the beautiful religion of Jesus, and

1 no wonder that they have made of it a modern shop-keeping
2 religion.

3 To come to our point. We find that all religions teach the
4 eternity of the soul, as well as that its lustre has been dimmed, and
5 that its primitive purity is to be regained by the knowledge of God.
6 What is the idea of God in these different religions? The primary
7 idea of God was very vague. The most ancient nations had different
8 Deities--sun, earth, fire, water. Among the ancient Jews we find
9 numbers of these gods ferociously fighting with each other. Then
10 we find Elohim whom the Jews and the Babylonians worshipped. We
11 next find one God standing supreme. But the idea differed
12 according to different tribes. They each asserted that their God was
13 the greatest. And they tried to prove it by fighting. The one that
14 could do the best fighting proved thereby that its God was the
15 greatest. Those races were more or less savage. But gradually
16 better and better ideas took the place of the old ones. All those old
17 ideas are gone or going into the lumber-room. All those religions
18 were the outgrowth of centuries; not one fell from the skies. Each
19 had to be worked out bit by bit. Next come the monotheistic ideas:
20 belief in one God, who is omnipotent and omniscient, the one God of
21 the universe. This one God is extra-cosmic; he lies in the heavens.
22 He is invested with the gross conceptions of His originators. He has
23 a right side and a left side, and a bird in His hand, and so on and so
24 forth. But one thing we find, that the tribal gods have disappeared
25 for ever, and the one God of the universe has taken their place: the
26 God of gods. Still He is only an extra-cosmic God. He is
27 unapproachable; nothing can come near Him. But slowly this idea
28 has changed also, and at the next stage we find a God immanent in
29 nature.

30 In the New Testament it is taught, "Our Father who art in
31 heaven"--God living in the heavens separated from men. We are
32 living on earth and He is living in heaven. Further on we find the
33 teaching that He is a God immanent in nature; He is not only God in
34 heaven, but on earth too. He is the God in us. In the Hindu
35 philosophy we find a stage of the same proximity of God to us. But
36 we do not stop there. There is the non-dualistic stage, in which man
37 realises that the God he has been worshipping is not only the
38 Father in heaven, and on earth, but that "I and my Father are one."
39 He realises in his soul that he is God Himself, only a lower
40 expression of Him. All that is real in me is He; all that is real in Him
41 is I. The gulf between God and man is thus bridged. Thus we find
42 how, by knowing God, we find the kingdom of heaven within us.

43 In the first or dualistic stage, man knows he is a little
44 personal soul, John, James, or Tom; and he says, "I will be John,
45 James, or Tom to all eternity, and never anything else." As well
46 might the murderer come along and say, "I will remain a murderer
47 for ever." But as time goes on, Tom vanishes and goes back to the
48 original pure Adam.

49 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Can
50 we see God? Of course not. Can we know God? Of course not. If
51 God can be known, He will be God no longer. Knowledge is
52 limitation. But I and my Father are one: I find the reality in my soul.

1 These ideas are expressed in some religions, and in others only
2 hinted. In some they were expatriated. Christ's teachings are now
3 very little understood in this country. If you will excuse me, I will
4 say that they have never been very well understood.

5 The different stages of growth are absolutely necessary to the
6 attainment of purity and perfection. The varying systems of religion
7 are at bottom founded on the same ideas. Jesus says the kingdom of
8 heaven is within you. Again he says, "Our father who art in
9 Heaven." How do you reconcile the two sayings? In this way: He
10 was talking to the uneducated masses when he said the latter, the
11 masses who were uneducated in religion. It was necessary to speak
12 to them in their own language. The masses want concrete ideas,
13 something the senses can grasp. A man may be the greatest
14 philosopher in the world, but a child in religion. When a man has
15 developed a high state of spirituality he can understand that the
16 kingdom of heaven is within him. That is the real kingdom of the
17 mind. Thus we see that the apparent contradictions and perplexities
18 in every religion mark but different stages of growth. And as such
19 we have no right to blame anyone for his religion. There are stages
20 of growth in which forms and symbols are necessary; they are the
21 language that the souls in that stage can understand.

22 The next idea that I want to bring to you is that religion does
23 not consist in doctrines or dogmas. It is not what you read, nor
24 what dogmas you believe that is of importance, but what you
25 realise. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God," yea,
26 in this life. And that is salvation. There are those who teach that
27 this can be gained by the mumbling of words. But no great Master
28 ever taught that external forms were necessary for salvation. The
29 power of attaining it is within ourselves. We live and move in God.
30 Creeds and sects have their parts to play, but they are for children,
31 they last but temporarily. Books never make religions, but religions
32 make books. We must not forget that. No book ever created God,
33 but God inspired all the great books. And no book ever created a
34 soul. We must never forget that. The end of all religions is the
35 realising of God in the soul. That is the one universal religion. If
36 there is one universal truth in all religions, I place it here--in
37 realising God. Ideals and methods may differ, but that is the central
38 point. There may be a thousand different radii, but they all
39 converge to the one centre, and that is the realisation of God:
40 something behind this world of sense, this world of eternal eating
41 and drinking and talking nonsense, this world of false shadows and
42 selfishness. There is that beyond all books, beyond all creeds,
43 beyond the vanities of this world, and it is the realisation of God
44 within yourself. A man may believe in all the churches in the world,
45 he may carry in his head all the sacred books ever written, he may
46 baptise himself in all the rivers of the earth, still, if he has no
47 perception of God, I would class him with the rankest atheist. And a
48 man may have never entered a church or a mosque, nor performed
49 any ceremony, but if he feels God within himself and is thereby
50 lifted above the vanities of the world, that man is a holy man, a
51 saint, call him what you will. As soon as a man stands up and says
52 he is right or his church is right, and all others are wrong, he is

1 himself all wrong. He does not know that upon the proof of all the
2 others depends the proof of his own. Love and charity for the whole
3 human race, that is the test of true religiousness. I do not mean the
4 sentimental statement that all men are brothers, but that one must
5 feel the oneness of human life. So far as they are not exclusive, I
6 see that the sects and creeds are all mine; they are all grand. They
7 are all helping men towards the real religion. I will add, it is good to
8 be born in a church, but it is bad to die there. It is good to be born a
9 child, but bad to remain a child. Churches, ceremonies, and
10 symbols are good for children, but when the child is grown, he must
11 burst the church or himself. We must not remain children for ever.
12 It is like trying to fit one coat to all sizes and growths. I do not
13 deprecate the existence of sects in the world. Would to God there
14 were twenty millions more, for the more there are, there will be a
15 greater field for selection. What I do object to is trying to fit one
16 religion to every case. Though all religions are essentially the same,
17 they must have the varieties of form produced by dissimilar
18 circumstances among different nations. We must each have our own
19 individual religion, individual so far as the externals of it go.

20 Many years ago, I visited a great sage of our own country, a
21 very holy man. We talked of our revealed book, the Vedas, of your
22 Bible, of the Koran, and of revealed books in general. At the close of
23 our talk, this good man asked me to go to the table and take up a
24 book; it was a book which, among other things, contained a forecast
25 of the rainfall during the year. The sage said, "Read that." And I
26 read out the quantity of rain that was to fall. He said, "Now take the
27 book and squeeze it." I did so and he said, "Why, my boy, not a drop
28 of water comes out. Until the water comes out, it is all book, book.
29 So until your religion makes you realise God, it is useless. He who
30 only studies books for religion reminds one of the fable of the ass
31 which carried a heavy load of sugar on its back, but did not know
32 the sweetness of it."

33 Shall we advise men to kneel down and cry, "O miserable
34 sinners that we are!" No, rather let us remind them of their divine
35 nature. I will tell you a story. A lioness in search of prey came upon
36 a flock of sheep, and as she jumped at one of them, she gave birth
37 to a cub and died on the spot. The young lion was brought up in the
38 flock, ate grass, and bleated like a sheep, and it never knew that it
39 was a lion. One day a lion came across the flock and was astonished
40 to see in it a huge lion eating grass and bleating like a sheep. At his
41 sight the flock fled and the lion-sheep with them. But the lion
42 watched his opportunity and one day found the lion-sheep asleep.
43 He woke him up and said, "You are a lion." The other said, "No,"
44 and began to bleat like a sheep. But the stranger lion took him to a
45 lake and asked him to look in the water at his own image and see if
46 it did not resemble him, the stranger lion. He looked and
47 acknowledged that it did. Then the stranger lion began to roar and
48 asked him to do the same. The lion-sheep tried his voice and was
49 soon roaring as grandly as the other. And he was a sheep no longer.

50 My friends, I would like to tell you all that you are mighty as
51 lions.

52 If the room is dark, do you go about beating your chest and

1 crying, "It is dark, dark, dark!" No, the only way to get the light is to
2 strike a light, and then the darkness goes. The only way to realise
3 the light above you is to strike the spiritual light within you, and the
4 darkness of sin and impurity will flee away. Think of your higher
5 self, not of your lower.

6 Some questions and answers here followed.

7 Q. A man in the audience said, "If ministers stop preaching
8 hell-fire, they will have no control over their people."

9 A. They had better lose it then. The man who is frightened
10 into religion has no religion at all. Better teach him of his divine
11 nature than of his animal.

12 Q. What did the Lord mean when he said, "The kingdom of
13 heaven is not of this world?"

14 A. That the kingdom of heaven is within us. The Jewish idea
15 was a kingdom of heaven upon this earth. That was not the idea of
16 Jesus.

17 Q. Do you believe we come up from the animals?

18 A. I believe that, by the law of evolution, the higher beings
19 have come up from the lower kingdoms.

20 Q. Do you know of anyone who remembers his previous life?

21 A. I have met some who told me they did remember their
22 previous life. They had reached a point where they could remember
23 their former incarnations.

24 Q. Do you believe in Christ's crucifixion?

25 A. Christ was God incarnate; they could not kill him. That
26 which was crucified was only a semblance, a mirage.

27 Q. If he could have produced such a semblance as that, would
28 not that have been the greatest miracle of all?

29 A. I look upon miracles as the greatest stumbling-blocks in
30 the way of truth. When the disciples of Buddha told him of a man
31 who had performed a so-called miracle--had taken a bowl from a
32 great height without touching it--and showed him the bowl, he took
33 it and crushed it under his feet and told them never to build their
34 faith on miracles, but to look for truth in everlasting principles. He
35 taught them the true inner light--the light of the spirit, which is the
36 only safe light to go by. Miracles are only stumbling-blocks. Let us
37 brush them aside.

38 Q. Do you believe Jesus preached the Sermon on the Mount?

39 A. I do believe he did. But in this matter I have to go by the
40 books as others do, and I am aware that mere book testimony is
41 rather shaky ground. But we are all safe in taking the teachings of
42 the Sermon on the Mount as a guide. We have to take what appeals
43 to our inner spirit. Buddha taught five hundred years before Christ,
44 and his words were full of blessings: never a curse came from his
45 lips, nor from his life; never one from Zoroaster, nor from
46 Confucius.

THE HINDU RELIGION

My religion is to learn. I read my Bible better in the light of your Bible and the dark prophecies of my religion become brighter when compared with those of your prophets. Truth has always been universal. If I alone were to have six fingers on my hand while all of you had only five, you would not think that my hand was the true intent of nature, but rather that it was abnormal and diseased. Just so with religion. If one creed alone were to be true and all the others untrue, you would have a right to say that that religion was diseased; if one religion is true, all the others must be true. Thus the Hindu religion is your property as well as mine. Of the two hundred and ninety millions of people inhabiting India, only two millions are Christians, sixty millions Mohammedans and all the rest are Hindus.

The Hindus found their creed upon the ancient Vedas, a word derived from Vid, "to know". These are a series of books which, to our minds, contain the essence of all religion; but we do not think they alone contain the truths. They teach us the immortality of the soul. In every country and every human breast there is a natural desire to find a stable equilibrium--something that does not change. We cannot find it in nature, for all the universe is nothing but an infinite mass of changes. But to infer from that that nothing unchanging exists is to fall into the error of the Southern school of Buddhists and the Charvakas, which latter believe that all is matter and nothing mind, that all religion is a cheat, and morality and goodness, useless superstitions. The Vedanta philosophy teaches that man is not bound by his five senses. They only know the present, and neither the future nor the past; but as the present signifies both past and future, and all three are only demarcations of time, the present also would be unknown if it were not for something above the senses, something independent of time, which unifies the past and the future in the present.

But what is independent? Not our body, for it depends upon outward conditions; nor our mind, because the thoughts of which it is composed are caused. It is our soul. The Vedas say the whole world is a mixture of independence and dependence, of freedom and slavery, but through it all shines the soul independent, immortal, pure, perfect, holy. For if it is independent, it cannot perish, as death is but a change, and depends upon conditions; if independent, it must be perfect, for imperfection is again but a condition, and therefore dependent. And this immortal and perfect soul must be the same in the highest God as well as in the humblest man, the difference between them being only in the degree in which this soul manifests itself.

But why should the soul take to itself a body? For the same reason that I take a looking-glass--to see myself. Thus, in the body, the soul is reflected. The soul is God, and every human being has a perfect divinity within himself, and each one must show his divinity sooner or later. If I am in a dark room, no amount of protestation will make it any brighter--I must light a match. Just so, no amount of grumbling and wailing will make our imperfect body more perfect.

1 But the Vedanta teaches--call forth your soul, show your divinity.
2 Teach your children that they are divine, that religion is a positive
3 something and not a negative nonsense; that it is not subjection to
4 groans when under oppression, but expansion and manifestation.

5 Every religion has it that man's present and future are
6 modified by the past, and that the present is but the effect of the
7 past. How is it, then, that every child is born with an experience
8 that cannot be accounted for by hereditary transmission? How is it
9 that one is born of good parents, receives a good education and
10 becomes a good man, while another comes from besotted parents
11 and ends on the gallows? How do you explain this inequality
12 without implicating God? Why should a merciful Father set His
13 child in such conditions which must bring forth misery? It is no
14 explanation to say God will make amends later on--God has no
15 blood-money. Then, too, what becomes of my liberty, if this be my
16 first birth? Coming into this world without the experience of a
17 former life, my independence would be gone, for my path would be
18 marked out by the experience of others. If I cannot be the maker of
19 my own fortune, then I am not free. I take upon myself the blame
20 for the misery of this existence, and say I will unmake the evil I
21 have done in another existence. This, then, is our philosophy of the
22 migration of the soul. We come into this life with the experience of
23 another, and the fortune or misfortune of this existence is the result
24 of our acts in a former existence, always becoming better, till at last
25 perfection is reached.

26 We believe in a God, the Father of the universe, infinite and
27 omnipotent. But if our soul at last becomes perfect, it also must
28 become infinite. But there is no room for two infinite unconditional
29 beings, and hence we believe in a Personal God, and we ourselves
30 are He. These are the three stages which every religion has taken.
31 First we see God in the far beyond, then we come nearer to Him
32 and give Him omnipresence so that we live in Him; and at last we
33 recognise that we are He. The idea of an objective God is not
34 untrue--in fact, every idea of God, and hence every religion, is true,
35 as each is but a different stage in the journey, the aim of which is
36 the perfect conception of the Vedas. Hence, too, we not only
37 tolerate, but we Hindus accept every religion, praying in the
38 mosque of the Mohammedans, worshipping before the fire of the
39 Zoroastrians, and kneeling before the cross of the Christians,
40 knowing that all the religions, from the lowest fetishism to the
41 highest absolutism, mean so many attempts of the human soul to
42 grasp and realise the infinite, each determined by the conditions of
43 its birth and association, and each of them marking a stage of
44 progress. We gather all these flowers and bind them with the twine
45 of love, making a wonderful bouquet of worship.

46 If I am God, then my soul is a temple of the Highest, and my
47 every motion should be a worship--love for love's sake, duty for
48 duty's sake, without hope of reward or fear of punishment. Thus my
49 religion means expansion, and expansion means realisation and
50 perception in the highest sense--no mumbling words or
51 genuflections. Man is to become divine, realising the divine more
52 and more from day to day in an endless progress.

WHAT IS RELIGION?

A huge locomotive has rushed on over the line and a small worm that was creeping upon one of the rails saved its life by crawling out of the path of the locomotive. Yet this little worm, so insignificant that it can be crushed in a moment, is a living something, while this locomotive, so huge, so immense, is only an engine, a machine. You say the one has life and the other is only dead matter and all its powers and strength and speed are only those of a dead machine, a mechanical contrivance. Yet the poor little worm which moved upon the rail and which the least touch of the engine would have deprived of its life is a majestic being compared to that huge locomotive. It is a small part of the Infinite and, therefore, it is greater than this powerful engine. Why should that be so? How do we know the living from the dead? The machine mechanically performs all the movements its maker made it to perform, its movements are not those of life. How can we make the distinction between the living and the dead, then? In the living there is freedom, there is intelligence; in the dead all is bound and no freedom is possible, because there is no intelligence. This freedom that distinguishes us from mere machines is what we are all striving for. To be more free is the goal of all our efforts, for only in perfect freedom can there be perfection. This effort to attain freedom underlies all forms of worship, whether we know it or not.

If we were to examine the various sorts of worship all over the world, we would see that the rudest of mankind are worshipping ghosts, demons, and the spirits of their forefathers--serpent worship, worship of tribal gods, and worship of the departed ones. Why do they do this? Because they feel that in some unknown way these beings are greater, more powerful than themselves, and limit their freedom. They, therefore, seek to propitiate these beings in order to prevent them from molesting them, in other words, to get more freedom. They also seek to win favour from these superior beings, to get by gift of the gods what ought to be earned by personal effort.

On the whole, this shows that the world is expecting a miracle. This expectation never leaves us, and however we may try, we are all running after the miraculous and extraordinary. What is mind but that ceaseless inquiry into the meaning and mystery of life? We may say that only uncultivated people are going after all these things, but the question still is there: Why should it be so? The Jews were asking for a miracle. The whole world has been asking for the same these thousands of years. There is, again, the universal dissatisfaction. We make an ideal but we have rushed only half the way after it, when we make a newer one. We struggle hard to attain to some goal and then discover we do not want it. This dissatisfaction we are having time after time, and what is there in the mind if there is to be only dissatisfaction? What is the meaning of this universal dissatisfaction? It is because freedom is every man's goal. He seeks it ever, his whole life is a struggle after it. The child rebels against law as soon as it is born. Its first utterance is a cry, a protest against the bondage in which it finds itself. This longing for freedom produces the idea of a Being who is absolutely

1 free. The concept of God is a fundamental element in the human
2 constitution. In the Vedanta, Sat-chit-ananda (Existence-Knowledge-
3 Bliss) is the highest concept of God possible to the mind. It is the
4 essence of knowledge and is by its nature the essence of bliss. We
5 have been stifling that inner voice long enough, seeking to follow
6 law and quiet the human nature, but there is that human instinct to
7 rebel against nature's laws. We may not understand what the
8 meaning is, but there is that unconscious struggle of the human
9 with the spiritual, of the lower with the higher mind, and the
10 struggle attempts to preserve one's separate life, what we call our
11 "individuality".

12 Even hells stand out with this miraculous fact that we are
13 born rebels; and the first fact of life--the intruding of life itself--
14 against this we rebel and cry out, "No law for us." As long as we
15 obey the laws we are like machines, and on goes the universe, and
16 we cannot break it. Laws as laws become man's nature. The first
17 inkling of life on its higher level is in seeing this struggle within us
18 to break the bond of nature and to be free. "Freedom, O Freedom!
19 Freedom, O Freedom!" is the song of the soul. Bondage, alas, to be
20 bound in nature, seems its fate.

21 Why should there be serpent, or ghost, or demon worship and
22 all these various creeds and forms for having miracles? Why do we
23 say that there is life, there is being in anything? There must be a
24 meaning in all this search, this endeavour to understand life, to
25 explain being. It is not meaningless and vain. It is man's ceaseless
26 endeavour to become free. The knowledge which we now call
27 science has been struggling for thousands of years in its attempt to
28 gain freedom, and people ask for freedom. Yet there is no freedom
29 in nature. It is all law. Still the struggle goes on. Nay, the whole of
30 nature from the very sun to the atoms is under law, and even for
31 man there is no freedom. But we cannot believe it. We have been
32 studying laws from the beginning and yet cannot--nay, will not--
33 believe that man is under law. The soul cries ever, "Freedom, O
34 Freedom!" With the conception of God as a perfectly free Being,
35 man cannot rest eternally in this bondage. Higher he must go, and
36 unless the struggle were for himself, he would think it too severe.
37 Man says to himself, "I am a born slave, I am bound; nevertheless,
38 there is a Being who is not bound by nature. He is free and Master
39 of nature."

40 The conception of God, therefore, is as essential and as
41 fundamental a part of mind as is the idea of bondage.

42 Both are the outcome of the idea of freedom. There cannot be
43 life, even in the plant, without the idea of freedom. In the plant or in
44 the worm, life has to rise to the individual concept. It is there,
45 unconsciously working, the plant living its life to preserve the
46 variety, principle, or form, not nature. The idea of nature controlling
47 every step onward overrules the idea of freedom. Onward goes the
48 idea of the material world, onward moves the idea of freedom. Still
49 the fight goes on. We are hearing about all the quarrels of creeds
50 and sects, yet creeds and sects are just and proper, they must be
51 there. The chain is lengthening and naturally the struggle
52 increases, but there need be no quarrels if we only knew that we

1 are all striving to reach the same goal.

2 The embodiment of freedom, the Master of nature, is what we
3 call God. You cannot deny Him. No, because you cannot move or
4 live without the idea of freedom. Would you come here if you did
5 not believe you were free? It is quite possible that the biologist can
6 and will give some explanation of this perpetual effort to be free.
7 Take all that for granted, still the idea of freedom is there. It is a
8 fact, as much so as the other fact that you cannot apparently get
9 over, the fact of being under nature.

10 Bondage and liberty, light and shadow, good and evil must be
11 there, but the very fact of the bondage shows also this freedom
12 hidden there. If one is a fact, the other is equally a fact. There must
13 be this idea of freedom. While now we cannot see that this idea of
14 bondage, in uncultivated man, is his struggle for freedom, yet the
15 idea of freedom is there. The bondage of sin and impurity in the
16 uncultivated savage is to his consciousness very small, for his
17 nature is only a little higher than the animal's. What he struggles
18 against is the bondage of physical nature, the lack of physical
19 gratification, but out of this lower consciousness grows and
20 broadens the higher conception of a mental or moral bondage and a
21 longing for spiritual freedom. Here we see the divine dimly shining
22 through the veil of ignorance. The veil is very dense at first and the
23 light may be almost obscured, but it is there, ever pure and
24 undimmed--the radiant fire of freedom and perfection. Man
25 personifies this as the Ruler of the Universe, the One Free Being.
26 He does not yet know that the universe is all one, that the
27 difference is only in degree, in the concept.

28 The whole of nature is worship of God. Wherever there is life,
29 there is this search for freedom and that freedom is the same as
30 God. Necessarily this freedom gives us mastery over all nature and
31 is impossible without knowledge. The more we are knowing, the
32 more we are becoming masters of nature. Mastery alone is making
33 us strong and if there be some being entirely free and master of
34 nature, that being must have a perfect knowledge of nature, must
35 be omnipresent and omniscient. Freedom must go hand in hand
36 with these, and that being alone who has acquired these will be
37 beyond nature.

38 Blessedness, eternal peace, arising from perfect freedom, is
39 the highest concept of religion underlying all the ideas of God in
40 Vedanta--absolutely free Existence, not bound by anything, no
41 change, no nature, nothing that can produce a change in Him. This
42 same freedom is in you and in me and is the only real freedom.

43 God is still, established upon His own majestic changeless
44 Self. You and I try to be one with Him, but plant ourselves upon
45 nature, upon the trifles of daily life, on money, on fame, on human
46 love, and all these changing forms in nature which make for
47 bondage. When nature shines, upon what depends the shining?
48 Upon God and not upon the sun, nor the moon, nor the stars.
49 Wherever anything shines, whether it is the light in the sun or in
50 our own consciousness, it is He. He shining, all shines after Him.

51 Now we have seen that this God is self-evident, impersonal,

1 omniscient, the Knower and Master of nature, the Lord of all. He is
2 behind all worship and it is being done according to Him, whether
3 we know it or not. I go one step further. That at which all marvel,
4 that which we call evil, is His worship too. This is a part of freedom.
5 Nay, I will be terrible even and tell you that, when you are doing
6 evil, the impulse behind is also that freedom. It may have been
7 misguided and misled, but it was there; and there cannot be any life
8 or any impulse unless that freedom be behind it. Freedom breathes
9 in the throb of the universe. Unless there is unity at the universal
10 heart, we cannot understand variety. Such is the conception of the
11 Lord in the Upanishads. Sometimes it rises even higher, presenting
12 to us an ideal before which at first we stand aghast--that we are in
13 essence one with God. He who is the colouring in the wings of the
14 butterfly, and the blossoming of the rose-bud, is the power that is in
15 the plant and in the butterfly. He who gives us life is the power
16 within us. Out of His fire comes life, and the direst death is also His
17 power. He whose shadow is death, His shadow is immortality also.
18 Take a still higher conception. See how we are flying like hunted
19 hares from all that is terrible, and like them, hiding our heads and
20 thinking we are safe. See how the whole world is flying from
21 everything terrible. Once when I was in Varanasi, I was passing
22 through a place where there was a large tank of water on one side
23 and a high wall on the other. It was in the grounds where there
24 were many monkeys. The monkeys of Varanasi are huge brutes and
25 are sometimes surly. They now took it into their heads not to allow
26 me to pass through their street, so they howled and shrieked and
27 clutched at my feet as I passed. As they pressed closer, I began to
28 run, but the faster I ran, the faster came the monkeys and they
29 began to bite at me. It seemed impossible to escape, but just then I
30 met a stranger who called out to me, "Face the brutes." I turned
31 and faced the monkeys, and they fell back and finally fled. That is a
32 lesson for all life--face the terrible, face it boldly. Like the monkeys,
33 the hardships of life fall back when we cease to flee before them. If
34 we are ever to gain freedom, it must be by conquering nature,
35 never by running away. Cowards never win victories. We have to
36 fight fear and troubles and ignorance if we expect them to flee
37 before us.

38 What is death? What are terrors? Do you not see the Lord's
39 face in them? Fly from evil and terror and misery, and they will
40 follow you. Face them, and they will flee. The whole world worships
41 ease and pleasure, and very few dare to worship that which is
42 painful. To rise above both is the idea of freedom. Unless man
43 passes through this gate he cannot be free. We all have to face
44 these. We strive to worship the Lord, but the body rises between,
45 nature rises between Him and us and blinds our vision. We must
46 learn how to worship and love Him in the thunderbolt, in shame, in
47 sorrow, in sin. All the world has ever been preaching the God of
48 virtue. I preach a God of virtue and a God of sin in one. Take Him if
49 you dare--that is the one way to salvation; then alone will come to
50 us the Truth Ultimate which comes from the idea of oneness. Then
51 will be lost the idea that one is greater than another. The nearer we
52 approach the law of freedom, the more we shall come under the
53 Lord, and troubles will vanish. Then we shall not differentiate the

1 door of hell from the gate of heaven, nor differentiate between men
2 and say, "I am greater than any being in the universe." Until we see
3 nothing in the world but the Lord Himself, all these evils will beset
4 us and we shall make all these distinctions; because it is only in the
5 Lord, in the Spirit, that we are all one; and until we see God
6 everywhere, this unity will not exist for us.

7 Two birds of beautiful plumage, inseparable companions, sat
8 upon the same tree, one on the top and one below. The beautiful
9 bird below was eating the fruits of the tree, sweet and bitter, one
10 moment a sweet one and another a bitter. The moment he ate a
11 bitter fruit, he was sorry, but after a while he ate another and when
12 it too was bitter, he looked up and saw the other bird who ate
13 neither the sweet nor the bitter, but was calm and majestic,
14 immersed in his own glory. And then the poor lower bird forgot and
15 went on eating the sweet and bitter fruits again, until at last he ate
16 one that was extremely bitter; and then he stopped again and once
17 more looked up at the glorious bird above. Then he came nearer
18 and nearer to the other bird; and when he had come near enough,
19 rays of light shone upon him and enveloped him, and he saw he was
20 transformed into the higher bird. He became calm, majestic, free,
21 and found that there had been but one bird all the time on the tree.
22 The lower bird was but the reflection of the one above. So we are in
23 reality one with the Lord, but the reflection makes us seem many,
24 as when the one sun reflects in a million dew-drops and seems a
25 million tiny suns. The reflection must vanish if we are to identify
26 ourselves with our real nature which is divine. The universe itself
27 can never be the limit of our satisfaction. That is why the miser
28 gathers more and more money, that is why the robber robs, the
29 sinner sins, that is why you are learning philosophy. All have one
30 purpose. There is no other purpose in life, save to reach this
31 freedom. Consciously or unconsciously, we are all striving for
32 perfection. Every being must attain to it.

33 The man who is groping through sin, through misery, the man
34 who is choosing the path through hells, will reach it, but it will take
35 time. We cannot save him. Some hard knocks on his head will help
36 him to turn to the Lord. The path of virtue, purity, unselfishness,
37 spirituality, becomes known at last and what all are doing
38 unconsciously, we are trying to do consciously. The idea is
39 expressed by St. Paul, "The God that ye ignorantly worship, Him
40 declare I unto you." This is the lesson for the whole world to learn.
41 What have these philosophies and theories of nature to do, if not to
42 help us to attain to this one goal in life? Let us come to that
43 consciousness of the identity of everything and let man see himself
44 in everything. Let us be no more the worshippers of creeds or sects
45 with small limited notions of God, but see Him in everything in the
46 universe. If you are knowers of God, you will everywhere find the
47 same worship as in your own heart.

48 Get rid, in the first place, of all these limited ideas and see
49 God in every person--working through all hands, walking through
50 all feet, and eating through every mouth. In every being He lives,
51 through all minds He thinks. He is self-evident, nearer unto us than
52 ourselves. To know this is religion, is faith, and may it please the

1 Lord to give us this faith! When we shall feel that oneness, we shall
2 be immortal. We are physically immortal even, one with the
3 universe. So long as there is one that breathes throughout the
4 universe, I live in that one. I am not this limited little being, I am
5 the universal. I am the life of all the sons of the past. I am the soul
6 of Buddha, of Jesus, of Mohammed. I am the soul of the teachers,
7 and I am all the robbers that robbed, and all the murderers that
8 were hanged, I am the universal. Stand up then; this is the highest
9 worship. You are one with the universe. That only is humility--not
10 crawling upon all fours and calling yourself a sinner. That is the
11 highest evolution when this veil of differentiation is torn off. The
12 highest creed is Oneness. I am so-and-so is a limited idea, not true
13 of the real "I". I am the universal; stand upon that and ever worship
14 the highest through the highest form, for God is Spirit and should
15 be worshipped in spirit and in truth. Through lower forms of
16 worship, man's material thoughts rise to spiritual worship and the
17 Universal Infinite One is at last worshipped in and through the
18 spirit. That which is limited is material. The Spirit alone is infinite.
19 God is Spirit, is infinite; man is Spirit and, therefore, infinite, and
20 the Infinite alone can worship the Infinite. We will worship the
21 Infinite; that is the highest spiritual worship.

22 The grandeur of realising these ideas, how difficult it is! I
23 theorise, talk, philosophise; and the next moment something comes
24 against me, and I unconsciously become angry, I forget there is
25 anything in the universe but this little limited self, I forget to say, "I
26 am the Spirit, what is this trifle to me? I am the Spirit." I forget it is
27 all myself playing, I forget God, I forget freedom.

28 Sharp as the blade of a razor, long and difficult and hard to
29 cross, is the way to freedom. The sages have declared this again
30 and again. Yet do not let these weaknesses and failures bind you.
31 The Upanishads have declared, "Arise! Awake! and stop not until
32 the goal is reached." We will then certainly cross the path, sharp as
33 it is like the razor, and long and distant and difficult though it be.
34 Man becomes the master of gods and demons. No one is to blame
35 for our miseries but ourselves. Do you think there is only a dark cup
36 of poison if man goes to look for nectar? The nectar is there and is
37 for every man who strives to reach it. The Lord Himself tells us,
38 "Give up all these paths and struggles. Do thou take refuge in Me. I
39 will take thee to the other shore, be not afraid." We hear that from
40 all the scriptures of the world that come to us. The same voice
41 teaches us to say, "Thy will be done upon earth, as it is in heaven,"
42 for "Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory." It is
43 difficult, all very difficult. I say to myself, "This moment I will take
44 refuge in Thee, O Lord. Unto Thy love I will sacrifice all, and on
45 Thine altar I will place all that is good and virtuous. My sins, my
46 sorrows, my actions, good and evil, I will offer unto Thee; do Thou
47 take them and I will never forget." One moment I say, "Thy will be
48 done," and the next moment something comes to try me and I
49 spring up in a rage. The goal of all religions is the same, but the
50 language of the teachers differs. The attempt is to kill the false "I",
51 so that the real "I", the Lord, will reign. "I the Lord thy God am a
52 jealous God. Thou shalt have no other gods before me," say the

1 Hebrew scriptures. God must be there all alone. We must say, "Not
2 I, but Thou," and then we should give up everything but the Lord.
3 He, and He alone, should reign. Perhaps we struggle hard, and yet
4 the next moment our feet slip, and then we try to stretch out our
5 hands to Mother. We find we cannot stand alone. Life is infinite, one
6 chapter of which is, "Thy will be done," and unless we realise all the
7 chapters we cannot realise the whole. "Thy will be done"--every
8 moment the traitor mind rebels against it, yet it must be said, again
9 and again, if we are to conquer the lower self. We cannot serve a
10 traitor and yet be saved. There is salvation for all except the traitor
11 and we stand condemned as traitors, traitors against our own
12 selves, against the majesty of Mother, when we refuse to obey the
13 voice of our higher Self. Come what will, we must give our bodies
14 and minds up to the Supreme Will. Well has it been said by the
15 Hindu philosopher, "If man says twice, 'Thy will be done,' he
16 commits sin." "Thy will be done," what more is needed, why say it
17 twice? What is good is good. No more shall we take it back. "Thy
18 will be done on earth as it is in heaven, for Thine is the kingdom
19 and the power and the glory for evermore."

VEDIC RELIGIOUS IDEALS

What concerns us most is the religious thought--on soul and God and all that appertains to religion. We will take the Samhitas. These are collections of hymns forming, as it were, the oldest Aryan literature, properly speaking, the oldest literature in the world. There may have been some scraps of literature of older date here and there, older than that even, but not books, or literature properly so called. As a collected book, this is the oldest the world has, and herein is portrayed the earliest feeling of the Aryans, their aspirations, the questions that arose about their manners and methods, and so on. At the very outset we find a very curious idea. These hymns are sung in praise of different gods, Devas as they are called, the bright ones. There is quite a number of them. One is called Indra, another Varuna, another Mitra, Parjanya, and so on. Various mythological and allegorical figures come before us one after the other--for instance, Indra the thunderer, striking the serpent who has withheld the rains from mankind. Then he lets fly his thunderbolt, the serpent is killed, and rain comes down in showers. The people are pleased, and they worship Indra with oblations. They make a sacrificial pyre, kill some animals, roast their flesh upon spits, and offer that meat to Indra. And they had a popular plant called Soma. What plant it was nobody knows now; it has entirely disappeared, but from the books we gather that, when crushed, it produced a sort of milky juice, and that was fermented; and it can also be gathered that this fermented Soma juice was intoxicating. This also they offered to Indra and the other gods, and they also drank it themselves. Sometimes they drank a little too much, and so did the gods. Indra on occasions got drunk. There are passages to show that Indra at one time drank so much of this Soma juice that he talked irrelevant words. So with Varuna. He is another god, very powerful, and is in the same way protecting his votaries, and they are praising him with libations of Soma. So is the god of war, and so on. But the popular idea that strikes one as making the mythologies of the Samhitas entirely different from the other mythologies is, that along with every one of these gods is the idea of an infinity. This infinite is abstracted, and sometimes described as Aditya. At other times it is affixed, as it were, to all the other gods. Take, for example, Indra. In some of the books you will find that Indra has a body, is very strong, sometimes is wearing golden armour, and comes down, lives and eats with his votaries, fights the demons, fights the snakes, and so on. Again, in one hymn we find that Indra has been given a very high position; he is omnipresent and omnipotent, and Indra sees the heart of every being. So with Varuna. This Varuna is god of the air and is in charge of the water, just as Indra was previously; and then, all of a sudden, we find him raised up and said to be omnipresent, omnipotent, and so on. I will read one passage about this Varuna in his highest form, and you will understand what I mean. It has been translated into English poetry, so it is better that I read it in that form.

The mighty Lord on high our deeds, as if at hand, espies;

The gods know all men do, though men would fain their acts disguise;

1 Whoever stands, whoever moves, or steals from place to
2 place,

3 Or hides him in his secret cell--the gods his movements trace.

4 Wherever two together plot, and deem they are alone,

5 King Varuna is there, a third, and all their schemes are
6 known.

7 This earth is his, to him belong those vast and boundless
8 skies;

9 Both seas within him rest, and yet in that small pool he lies,

10 Whoever far beyond the sky should think his way to wing.

11 He could not there elude the grasp of Varuna the King.

12 His spies, descending from the skies, glide all this world
13 around;

14 Their thousand eyes all-scanning sweep to earth's remotest
15 bound.

16 So we can multiply examples about the other gods; they all
17 come, one after the other, to share the same fate--they first begin as
18 gods, and then they are raised to this conception as the Being in
19 whom the whole universe exists, who sees every heart, who is the
20 ruler of the universe. And in the case of Varuna, there is another
21 idea, just the germ of one idea which came, but was immediately
22 suppressed by the Aryan mind, and that was the idea of fear. In
23 another place we read they are afraid they have sinned and ask
24 Varuna for pardon. These ideas were never allowed, for reasons you
25 will come to understand later on, to grow on Indian soil, but the
26 germs were there sprouting, the idea of fear, and the idea of sin.
27 This is the idea, as you all know, of what is called monotheism. This
28 monotheism, we see, came to India at a very early period.
29 Throughout the Samhitas, in the first and oldest part, this
30 monotheistic idea prevails, but we shall find that it did not prove
31 sufficient for the Aryans; they threw it aside, as it were, as a very
32 primitive sort of idea and went further on, as we Hindus think. Of
33 course in reading books and criticisms on the Vedas written by
34 Europeans, the Hindu cannot help smiling when he reads, that the
35 writings of our authors are saturated with this previous education
36 alone. Persons who have sucked in as their mother's milk the idea
37 that the highest ideal of God is the idea of a Personal God, naturally
38 dare not think on the lines of these ancient thinkers of India, when
39 they find that just after the Samhitas, the monotheistic idea with
40 which the Samhita portion is replete was thought by the Aryans to
41 be useless and not worthy of philosophers and thinkers, and that
42 they struggled hard for a more philosophical and transcendental
43 idea. The monotheistic idea was much too human for them,
44 although they gave it such descriptions as "The whole universe
45 rests in Him" and "Thou art the keeper of all hearts." The Hindus
46 were bold, to their great credit be it said, bold thinkers in all their
47 ideas, so bold that one spark of their thought frightens the so-called
48 bold thinkers of the West. Well has it been said by Prof. Max Muller
49 about these thinkers that they climbed up to the heights where

1 their lungs only could breathe, and where those of other beings
2 would have burst. These brave people followed reason wherever it
3 led them, no matter at what cost, never caring if all their best
4 superstitions were smashed to pieces, never caring what society
5 would think about them, or talk about them; but what they thought
6 was right and true, they preached and they talked.

7 Before going into all these speculations of the ancient Vedic
8 sages, we will first refer to one or two very curious instances in the
9 Vedas. The peculiar fact--that these gods are taken up, as it were,
10 one after the other, raised and sublimated, till each has assumed
11 the proportions of the infinite Personal God of the Universe--calls
12 for an explanation. Prof. Max Muller creates for it a new name, as
13 he thinks it peculiar to the Hindus: he calls it "Henotheism". We
14 need not go far for the explanation. It is within the book. A few
15 steps from the very place where we find those gods being raised
16 and sublimated, we find the explanation also. The question arises
17 how the Hindu mythologies should be so unique, so different from
18 all others. In Babylonian or Greek mythologies we find one god
19 struggling upwards, and he assumes a position and remains there,
20 while the other gods die out. Of all the Molochs, Jehovah becomes
21 supreme, and the other Molochs are forgotten, lost for ever; he is
22 the God of gods. So, too, of all the Greek gods, Zeus comes to the
23 front and assumes big proportions, becomes the God of the
24 Universe, and all the other gods become degraded into minor
25 angels. This fact was repeated in later times. The Buddhists and the
26 Jains raised one of their prophets to the Godhead, and all the other
27 gods they made subservient to Buddha, or to Jina. This is the world-
28 wide process, but there we find an exception, as it were. One god is
29 praised, and for the time being it is said that all the other gods obey
30 his commands, and the very one who is said to be raised up by
31 Varuna, is himself raised up, in the next book, to the highest
32 position. They occupy the position of the Personal God in turns. But
33 the explanation is there in the book, and it is a grand explanation,
34 one that has given the theme to all subsequent thought in India,
35 and one that will be the theme of the whole world of religions:
36 "Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanti--That which exists is One; sages
37 call It by various names." In all these cases where hymns were
38 written about all these gods, the Being perceived was one and the
39 same; it was the perceiver who made the difference. It was the
40 hymnist, the sage, the poet, who sang in different languages and
41 different words, the praise of one and the same Being. "That which
42 exists is One; sages call It by various names." Tremendous results
43 have followed from that one verse. Some of you, perhaps, are
44 surprised to think that India is the only country where there never
45 has been a religious persecution, where never was any man
46 disturbed for his religious faith. Theists or atheists, monists,
47 dualists, monotheists are there and always live unmolested.
48 Materialists were allowed to preach from the steps of Brahminical
49 temples, against the gods, and against God Himself; they went
50 preaching all over the land that the idea of God was a mere
51 superstition, and that gods, and Vedas, and religion were simply
52 superstitions invented by the priests for their own benefit, and they
53 were allowed to do this unmolested. And so, wherever he went,

1 Buddha tried to pull down every old thing sacred to the Hindus to
2 the dust, and Buddha died of ripe old age. So did the Jains, who
3 laughed at the idea of God. "How can it be that there is a God?"
4 they asked; "it must be a mere superstition." So on, endless
5 examples there are. Before the Mohammedan wave came into
6 India, it was never known what religious persecution was; the
7 Hindus had only experienced it as made by foreigners on
8 themselves. And even now it is a patent fact how much Hindus have
9 helped to build Christian churches, and how much readiness there
10 is to help them. There never has been bloodshed. Even heterodox
11 religions that have come out of India have been likewise affected;
12 for instance, Buddhism. Buddhism is a great religion in some
13 respects, but to confuse Buddhism with Vedanta is without
14 meaning; anyone may mark just the difference that exists between
15 Christianity and the Salvation Army. There are great and good
16 points in Buddhism, but these great points fell into hands which
17 were not able to keep them safe. The jewels which came from
18 philosophers fell into the hands of mobs, and the mobs took up their
19 ideas. They had a great deal of enthusiasm, some marvellous ideas,
20 great and humanitarian ideas, but, after all, there is something else
21 that is necessary--thought and intellect--to keep everything safe.
22 Wherever you see the most humanitarian ideas fall into the hands
23 of the multitude, the first result, you may notice, is degradation. It
24 is learning and intellect that keep things sure. Now this Buddhism
25 went as the first missionary religion to the world, penetrated the
26 whole of the civilised world as it existed at that time, and never was
27 a drop of blood shed for that religion. We read how in China the
28 Buddhist missionaries were persecuted, and thousands were
29 massacred by two or three successive emperors, but after that,
30 fortune favoured the Buddhists, and one of the emperors offered to
31 take vengeance of the persecutors, but the missionaries refused. All
32 that we owe to this one verse. That is why I want you to remember
33 it: "Whom they call Indra, Mitra, Varuna--That which exists is One;
34 sages call It by various names."

35 It was written, nobody knows at what date, it may be 8,000
36 years ago, in spite of all modern scholars may say, it may be 9,000
37 years ago. Not one of these religious speculations is of modern
38 date, but they are as fresh today as they were when they were
39 written, or rather, fresher, for at that distant date man was not so
40 civilised as we know him now. He had not learnt to cut his brother's
41 throat because he differed a little in thought from himself; he had
42 not deluged the world in blood, he did not become demon to his
43 own brother. In the name of humanity he did not massacre whole
44 lots of mankind then. Therefore these words come to us today very
45 fresh, as great stimulating, life-giving words, much fresher than
46 they were when they were written: "That which exists is One; sages
47 call It by various names." We have to learn yet that all religions,
48 under whatever name they may be called, either Hindu, Buddhist,
49 Mohammedan, or Christian, have the same God, and he who
50 derides any one of these derides his own God.

51 That was the solution they arrived at. But, as I have said, this
52 ancient monotheistic idea did not satisfy the Hindu mind. It did not

1 go far enough, it did not explain the visible world: a ruler of the
2 world does not explain the world--certainly not. A ruler of the
3 universe does not explain the universe, and much less an external
4 ruler, one outside of it. He may be a moral guide, the greatest
5 power in the universe, but that is no explanation of the universe;
6 and the first question that we find now arising, assuming
7 proportions, is the question about the universe: "Whence did it
8 come?" "How did it come?" "How does it exist?" Various hymns are
9 to be found on this question struggling forward to assume form,
10 and nowhere do we find it so poetically, so wonderfully expressed
11 as in the following hymn:

12 "Then there was neither aught nor naught, nor air, nor sky,
13 nor anything. What covered all? Where rested all? Then death was
14 not, nor deathlessness, nor change to night and day." The
15 translation loses a good deal of the poetical beauty. "Then death
16 was not, nor deathlessness, nor change to night and day"; the very
17 sound of the Sanskrit is musical. "*That* existed, that breath,
18 covering as it were, that God's existence; but it did not begin to
19 move." It is good to remember this one idea that it existed
20 motionless, because we shall find how this idea sprouts up
21 afterwards in the cosmology, how according to the Hindu
22 metaphysics and philosophy, this whole universe is a mass of
23 vibrations, as it were, motions; and there are periods when this
24 whole mass of motions subsides and becomes finer and finer,
25 remaining in that state for some time. That is the state described in
26 this hymn. It existed unmoved, without vibration, and when this
27 creation began, this began to vibrate and all this creation came out
28 of it, that one breath, calm, self-sustained, naught else beyond it.

29 "Gloom existed first." Those of you who have ever been in
30 India or any tropical country, and have seen the bursting of the
31 monsoon, will understand the majesty of these words. I remember
32 three poets' attempts to picture this. Milton says, "No light, but
33 rather darkness visible." Kalidasa says, "Darkness which can be
34 penetrated with a needle," but none comes near this Vedic
35 description, "Gloom hidden in gloom." Everything is parching and
36 sizzling, the whole creation seems to be burning away, and for days
37 it has been so, when one afternoon there is in one corner of the
38 horizon a speck of cloud, and in less than half an hour it has
39 extended unto the whole earth, until, as it were, it is covered with
40 cloud, cloud over cloud, and then it bursts into a tremendous deluge
41 of rain. The cause of creation was described as will. That which
42 existed at first became changed into will, and this will began to
43 manifest itself as desire. This also we ought to remember, because
44 we find that this idea of desire is said to be the cause of all we have.
45 This idea of will has been the corner-stone of both the Buddhist and
46 the Vedantic system, and later on, has penetrated into German
47 philosophy and forms the basis of Schopenhauer's system of
48 philosophy. It is here we first hear of it.

49 "Now first arose desire, the primal seed of mind.

50 Sages, searching in their hearts by wisdom, found the bond,

51 Between existence and non-existence."

1 It is a very peculiar expression; the poet ends by saying that
2 "perhaps He even does not know." We find in this hymn, apart from
3 its poetical merits, that this questioning about the universe has
4 assumed quite definite proportions, and that the minds of these
5 sages must have advanced to such a state, when all sorts of
6 common answers would not satisfy them. We find that they were
7 not even satisfied with this Governor above. There are various other
8 hymns where the same idea comes in, about how this all came, and
9 just as we have seen, when they were trying to find a Governor of
10 the universe, a Personal God, they were taking up one Deva after
11 another, raising him up to that position, so now we shall find that in
12 various hymns one or other idea is taken up, and expanded
13 infinitely and made responsible for everything in the universe. One
14 particular idea is taken as the support, in which everything rests
15 and exists, and that support has become all this. So on with various
16 ideas. They tried this method with Prana, the life principle. They
17 expanded the idea of the life principle until it became universal and
18 infinite. It is the life principle that is supporting everything; not only
19 the human body, but it is the light of the sun and the moon, it is the
20 power moving everything, the universal motive energy. Some of
21 these attempts are very beautiful, very poetical. Some of them as,
22 "He ushers the beautiful morning," are marvellously lyrical in the
23 way they picture things. Then this very desire, which, as we have
24 just read, arose as the first primal germ of creation, began to be
25 stretched out, until it became the universal God. But none of these
26 ideas satisfied.

27 Here the idea is sublimated and finally abstracted into a
28 personality. "He alone existed in the beginning; He is the one Lord
29 of all that exists; He supports this universe; He who is the author of
30 souls, He who is the author of strength, whom all the gods worship,
31 whose shadow is life, whose shadow is death; whom else shall we
32 worship? Whose glory the snow-tops of the Himalayas declare,
33 whose glory the oceans with all their waters proclaim." So on it
34 goes, but, as I told you just now, this idea did not satisfy them.

35 At last we find a very peculiar position. The Aryan mind had
36 so long been seeking an answer to the question from outside. They
37 questioned everything they could find, the sun, the moon, and stars,
38 and they found all they could in this way. The whole of nature at
39 best could teach them only of a personal Being who is the Ruler of
40 the universe; it could teach nothing further. In short, out of the
41 external world we can only get the idea of an architect, that which
42 is called the Design Theory. It is not a very logical argument, as we
43 all know; there is something childish about it, yet it is the only little
44 bit of anything we can know about God from the external world,
45 that this world required a builder. But this is no explanation of the
46 universe. The materials of this world were before Him, and this God
47 wanted all these materials, and the worst objection is that He must
48 be limited by the materials. The builder could not have made a
49 house without the materials of which it is composed. Therefore he
50 was limited by the materials; he could only do what the materials
51 enabled him to. Therefore the God that the Design Theory gives is
52 at best only an architect, and a limited architect of the universe; He

1 is bound and restricted by the materials; He is not independent at
2 all. That much they had found out already, and many other minds
3 would have rested at that. In other countries the same thing
4 happened; the human mind could not rest there; the thinking,
5 grasping minds wanted to go further, but those that were backward
6 got hold of them and did not allow them to grow. But fortunately
7 these Hindu sages were not the people to be knocked on the head;
8 they wanted to get a solution, and now we find that they were
9 leaving the external for the internal. The first thing that struck them
10 was, that it is not with the eyes and the senses that we perceive
11 that external world, and know anything about religion; the first
12 idea, therefore, was to find the deficiency, and that deficiency was
13 both physical and moral, as we shall see. You do not know, says one
14 of these sages, the cause of this universe; there has arisen a
15 tremendous difference between you and me--why? Because you
16 have been talking sense things and are satisfied with sense-objects
17 and with the mere ceremonials of religion, while I have known the
18 Purusha beyond.

19 Along with this progress of spiritual ideas that I am trying to
20 trace for you, I can only hint to you a little about the other factor in
21 the growth, for that has nothing to do with our subject, therefore I
22 need not enlarge upon it--the growth of rituals. As those spiritual
23 ideas progressed in arithmetical progression, so the ritualistic ideas
24 progressed in geometrical progression. The old superstitions had by
25 this time developed into a tremendous mass of rituals, which grew
26 and grew till it almost killed the Hindu life. And it is still there, it
27 has got hold of and permeated every portion of our life and made us
28 born slaves. Yet, at the same time, we find a fight against this
29 advance of ritual from the very earliest days. The one objection
30 raised there is this, that love for ceremonials, dressing at certain
31 times, eating in a certain way, and shows and mummeries of
32 religion like these are only external religion, because you are
33 satisfied with the senses and do not want to go beyond them. This is
34 a tremendous difficulty with us, with every human being. At best
35 when we want to hear of spiritual things our standard is the senses;
36 or a man hears things about philosophy, and God, and
37 transcendental things, and after hearing about them for days, he
38 asks: After all, how much money will they bring, how much sense-
39 enjoyment will they bring? For his enjoyment is only in the senses,
40 quite naturally. But that satisfaction in the senses, says our sage, is
41 one of the causes which have spread the veil between truth and
42 ourselves. Devotion to ceremonials, satisfaction in the senses, and
43 forming various theories, have drawn a veil between ourselves and
44 truth. This is another great landmark, and we shall have to trace
45 this ideal to the end, and see how it developed later on into that
46 wonderful theory of Maya of the Vedanta, how this veil will be the
47 real explanation of the Vedanta, how the truth was there all the
48 time, it was only this veil that had covered it.

49 Thus we find that the minds of these ancient Aryan thinkers
50 had begun a new theme. They found out that in the external world
51 no search would give an answer to their question. They might seek
52 in the external world for ages, but there would be no answer to

1 their questions. So they fell back upon this other method; and
2 according to this, they were taught that these desires of the senses,
3 desires for ceremonials and externalities have caused a veil to come
4 between themselves and the truth, and that this cannot be removed
5 by any ceremonial. They had to fall back on their own minds, and
6 analyse the mind to find the truth in themselves. The outside world
7 failed and they turned back upon the inside world, and then it
8 became the real philosophy of the Vedanta; from here the Vedanta
9 philosophy begins. It is the foundation-stone of Vedanta philosophy.
10 As we go on, we find that all its inquiries are inside. From the very
11 outset they seemed to declare--look not for the truth in any religion;
12 it is here in the human soul, the miracle of all miracles--in the
13 human soul, the emporium of all knowledge, the mine of all
14 existence--seek here. What is not here cannot be there. And they
15 found out step by step that that which is external is but a dull
16 reflection at best of that which is inside. We shall see how they
17 took, as it were, this old idea of God, the Governor of the universe,
18 who is external to the universe, and first put Him inside the
19 universe. He is not a God outside, but He is inside; and they took
20 Him from there into their own hearts. Here He is, in the heart of
21 man, the Soul of our souls, the Reality in us.

22 Several great ideas have to be understood, in order to grasp
23 properly the workings of the Vedanta philosophy. In the first place it
24 is not philosophy in the sense we speak of the philosophy of Kant
25 and Hegel. It is not one book, or the work of one man. Vedanta is
26 the name of a series of books written at different times. Sometimes
27 in one of these productions there will be fifty different things.
28 Neither are they properly arranged; the thoughts, as it were, have
29 been jotted down. Sometimes in the midst of other extraneous
30 things, we find some wonderful idea. But one fact is remarkable,
31 that these ideas in the Upanishads would be always progressing. In
32 that crude old language, the working of the mind of every one of
33 the sages has been, as it were, painted just as it went; how the
34 ideas are at first very crude, and they become finer and finer till
35 they reach the goal of the Vedanta, and this goal assumes a
36 philosophical name. Just at first it was a search after the Devas, the
37 bright ones, and then it was the origin of the universe, and the very
38 same search is getting another name, more philosophical, clearer--
39 the unity of all things--"Knowing which everything else becomes
40 known."

THE VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY

The Vedanta philosophy, as it is generally called at the present day, really comprises all the various sects that now exist in India. Thus there have been various interpretations, and to my mind they have been progressive, beginning with the dualistic or Dvaita and ending with the non-dualistic or Advaita. The word Vedanta literally means the end of the Vedas--the Vedas being the scriptures of the Hindus. Sometimes in the West by the Vedas are meant only the hymns and rituals of the Vedas. But at the present time these parts have almost gone out of use, and usually by the word Vedas in India, the Vedanta is meant. All our commentators, when they want to quote a passage from the scriptures, as a rule, quote from the Vedanta, which has another technical name with the commentators--the Shrutis. Now, all the books known by the name of the Vedanta were not entirely written after the ritualistic portions of the Vedas. For instance, one of them--the Isha Upanishad--forms the fortieth chapter of the Yajur-veda, that being one of the oldest parts of the Vedas. There are other Upanishads which form portions of the Brahmanas or ritualistic writings; and the rest of the Upanishads are independent, not comprised in any of the Brahmanas or other parts of the Vedas; but there is no reason to suppose that they were entirely independent of other parts, for, as we well know, many of these have been lost entirely and many of the Brahmanas have become extinct. So it is quite possible that the independent Upanishads belonged to some Brahmanas, which in course of time fell into disuse, while the Upanishads remained. These Upanishads are also called Forest Books or Aranyakas.

The Vedanta, then, practically forms the scriptures of the Hindus, and all systems of philosophy that are orthodox have to take it as their foundation. Even the Buddhists and Jains, when it suits their purpose, will quote a passage from the Vedanta as authority. All schools of philosophy in India, although they claim to have been based upon the Vedas, took different names for their systems. The last one, the system of Vyasa, took its stand upon the doctrines of the Vedas more than the previous systems did, and made an attempt to harmonise the preceding philosophies, such as the Sankhya and the Nyaya, with the doctrines of the Vedanta. So it is especially called the Vedanta philosophy; and the Sutras or aphorisms of Vyasa are, in modern India, the basis of the Vedanta philosophy. Again, these Sutras of Vyasa have been variously explained by different commentators. In general there are three sorts of commentators in India now; from their interpretations have arisen three systems of philosophy and sects. One is dualistic, or Dvaita; a second is the qualified non-dualistic, or Vishishtadvaita; and a third is the non-dualistic, or Advaita. Of these the dualistic and the qualified non-dualistic include the largest number of the Indian people. The non-dualists are comparatively few in number. Now I will try to lay before you the ideas that are contained in all these three sects; but before going on, I will make one remark--that these different Vedanta systems have one common psychology, and that is, the psychology of the Sankhya system. The Sankhya psychology is very much like the psychologies of the Nyaya and

1 Vaisheshika systems, differing only in minor particulars.

2 All the Vedantists agree on three points. They believe in God,
3 in the Vedas as revealed, and in cycles. We have already considered
4 the Vedas. The belief about cycles is as follows: All matter
5 throughout the universe is the outcome of one primal matter called
6 Akasha; and all force, whether gravitation, attraction or repulsion,
7 or life, is the outcome of one primal force called Prana. Prana
8 acting on Akasha is creating or projecting the universe. At the
9 beginning of a cycle, Akasha is motionless, unmanifested. Then
10 Prana begins to act, more and more, creating grosser and grosser
11 forms out of Akasha--plants, animals, men, stars, and so on. After an
12 incalculable time this evolution ceases and involution begins,
13 everything being resolved back through finer and finer forms into
14 the original Akasha and Prana, when a new cycle follows. Now
15 there is something beyond Akasha and Prana. Both can be resolved
16 into a third thing called Mahat--the Cosmic Mind. This Cosmic Mind
17 does not create Akasha and Prana, but changes itself into them.

18 We will now take up the beliefs about mind, soul, and God.
19 According to the universally accepted Sankhya psychology, in
20 perception--in the case of vision, for instance--there are, first of all,
21 the instruments of vision, the eyes. Behind the instruments--the
22 eyes--is the organ of vision or Indriya--the optic nerve and its
23 centres--which is not the external instrument, but without which the
24 eyes will not see. More still is needed for perception. The mind or
25 Manas must come and attach itself to the organ. And besides this,
26 the sensation must be carried to the intellect or Buddhi--the
27 determinative, reactive state of the mind. When the reaction comes
28 from Buddhi, along with it flashes the external world and egoism.
29 Here then is the will; but everything is not complete. Just as every
30 picture, being composed of successive impulses of light, must be
31 united on something stationary to form a whole, so all the ideas in
32 the mind must be gathered and projected on something that is
33 stationary--relatively to the body and mind--that is, on what is called
34 the Soul or Purusha or Atman.

35 According to the Sankhya philosophy, the reactive state of the
36 mind called Buddhi or intellect is the outcome, the change, or a
37 certain manifestation of the Mahat or Cosmic Mind. The Mahat
38 becomes changed into vibrating thought; and that becomes in one
39 part changed into the organs, and in the other part into the fine
40 particles of matter. Out of the combination of all these, the whole of
41 this universe is produced. Behind even Mahat, the Sankhya
42 conceives of a certain state which is called Avyakta or
43 unmanifested, where even the manifestation of mind is not present,
44 but only the causes exists. It is also called Prakriti. Beyond this
45 Prakriti, and eternally separate from it, is the Purusha, the soul of
46 the Sankhya which is without attributes and omnipresent. The
47 Purusha is not the doer but the witness. The illustration of the
48 crystal is used to explain the Purusha. The latter is said to be like a
49 crystal without any colour, before which different colours are
50 placed, and then it seems to be coloured by the colours before it,
51 but in reality it is not. The Vedantists reject the Sankhya ideas of
52 the soul and nature. They claim that between them there is a huge

1 gulf to be bridged over. On the one hand the Sankhya system comes
2 to nature, and then at once it has to jump over to the other side and
3 come to the soul, which is entirely separate from nature. How can
4 these different colours, as Sankhya called them, be able to act on
5 that soul which by its nature is colourless? So the Vedantists, from
6 the very first, affirm that this soul and this nature are one. Even the
7 dualistic Vedantists admit that the Atman or God is not only the
8 efficient cause of this universe, but also the material cause. But
9 they only say so in so many words. They do not really mean it, for
10 they try to escape from their conclusions, in this way: They say
11 there are three existences in this universe--God, soul, and nature.
12 Nature and soul are, as it were, the body of God, and in this sense it
13 may be said that God and the whole universe are one. But this
14 nature and all these various souls remain different from each other
15 through all eternity. Only at the beginning of a cycle do they
16 become manifest; and when the cycle ends, they become fine, and
17 remain in a fine state. The Advaita Vedantists--the non-dualists--
18 reject this theory of the soul, and, having nearly the whole range of
19 the Upanishads in their favour, build their philosophy entirely upon
20 them. All the books contained in the Upanishads have one subject,
21 one task before them--to prove the following theme: "Just as by the
22 knowledge of one lump of clay we have the knowledge of all the
23 clay in the universe, so what is that, knowing which we know
24 everything in the universe?" The idea of the Advaitists is to
25 generalise the whole universe into one--that something which is
26 really the whole of this universe. And they claim that this whole
27 universe is one, that it is one Being manifesting itself in all these
28 various forms. They admit that what the Sankhya calls nature
29 exists, but say that nature is God. It is this Being, the Sat, which has
30 become converted into all this--the universe, man, soul, and
31 everything that exists. Mind and Mahat are but the manifestations
32 of that one Sat. But then the difficulty arises that this would be
33 pantheism. How came that Sat which is unchangeable, as they
34 admit (for that which is absolute is unchangeable), to be changed
35 into that which is changeable, and perishable? The Advaitists here
36 have a theory which they call Vivarta Vada or apparent
37 manifestation. According to the dualists and the Sankhyas, the whole
38 of this universe is the evolution of primal nature. According to some
39 of the Advaitists and some of the dualists, the whole of this universe
40 is evolved from God. And according to the Advaitists proper, the
41 followers of Shankaracharya, the whole universe is the *apparent*
42 evolution of God. God is the material cause of this universe, but not
43 really, only apparently. The celebrated illustration used is that of the
44 rope and the snake, where the rope appeared to be the snake, but
45 was not really so. The rope did not really change into the snake.
46 Even so this whole universe as it exists is that Being. It is
47 unchanged, and all the changes we see in it are only apparent.
48 These changes are caused by Desha, Kala, and Nimitta (space,
49 time, and causation), or, according to a higher psychological
50 generalisation, by Nama and Rupa (name and form). It is by name
51 and form that one thing is differentiated from another. The name
52 and form alone cause the difference. In reality they are one and the
53 same. Again, it is not, the Vedantists say, that there is something as

1 phenomenon and something as noumenon. The rope is changed into
2 the snake apparently only; and when the delusion ceases, the snake
3 vanishes. When one is in ignorance, he sees the phenomenon and
4 does not see God. When he sees God, this universe vanishes
5 entirely for him. Ignorance or Maya, as it is called, is the cause of
6 all this phenomenon--the Absolute, the Unchangeable, being taken
7 as this manifested universe. This Maya is not absolute zero, nor
8 non-existence. It is defined as neither existence nor non-existence.
9 It is not existence, because that can be said only of the Absolute,
10 the Unchangeable, and in this sense, Maya is non-existence. Again,
11 it cannot be said it is non-existence; for if it were, it could never
12 produce the phenomenon. So it is something which is neither; and
13 in the Vedanta philosophy it is called Anirvachaniya or
14 inexpressible. Maya, then, is the real cause of this universe. Maya
15 gives the name and form to what Brahman or God gives the
16 material; and the latter seems to have been transformed into all
17 this. The Advaitists, then have no place for the individual soul. They
18 say individual souls are created by Maya. In reality they cannot
19 exist. If there were only one existence throughout, how could it be
20 that I am one, and you are one, and so forth? We are all one, and
21 the cause of evil is the perception of duality. As soon as I begin to
22 feel that I am separate from this universe, then first comes fear, and
23 then comes misery. "Where one hears another, one sees another,
24 that is small. Where one does not see another, where one does not
25 hear another, that is the greatest, that is God. In that greatest is
26 perfect happiness. In small things there is no happiness."

27 According to the Advaita philosophy, then, this differentiation
28 of matter, these phenomena, are, as it were, for a time, hiding the
29 real nature of man; but the latter really has not been changed at all.
30 In the lowest worm, as well as in the highest human being, the
31 same divine nature is present. The worm form is the lower form in
32 which the divinity has been more overshadowed by Maya; that is
33 the highest form in which it has been least overshadowed. Behind
34 everything the same divinity is existing, and out of this comes the
35 basis of morality. Do not injure another. Love everyone as your own
36 self, because the whole universe is one. In injuring another, I am
37 injuring myself; in loving another, I am loving myself. From this also
38 springs that principle of Advaita morality which has been summed
39 up in one word--self-abnegation. The Advaitist says, this little
40 personalised self is the cause of all my misery. This individualised
41 self, which makes me different from all other beings brings hatred
42 and jealousy and misery, struggle and all other evils. And when this
43 idea has been got rid of, all struggle will cease, all misery vanish.
44 So this is to be given up. We must always hold ourselves ready, even
45 to give up our lives for the lowest beings. When a man has become
46 ready even to give up his life for a little insect, he has reached the
47 perfection which the Advaitist wants to attain; and at that moment
48 when he has become thus ready, the veil of ignorance falls away
49 from him, and he will feel his own nature. Even in this life, he will
50 feel that he is one with the universe. For a time, as it were, the
51 whole of this phenomenal world will disappear for him, and he will
52 realise what he is. But so long as the Karma of this body remains,
53 he will have to live. This state, when the veil has vanished and yet

1 the body remains for some time, is what the Vedantists call the
2 Jivanmukti, the living freedom. If a man is deluded by a mirage for
3 some time, and one day the mirage disappears--if it comes back
4 again the next day, or at some future time, he will not be deluded.
5 Before the mirage first broke, the man could not distinguish
6 between the reality and the deception. But when it has once
7 broken, as long as he has organs and eyes to work with, he will see
8 the image, but will no more be deluded. That fine distinction
9 between the actual world and the mirage he has caught, and the
10 latter cannot delude him any more. So when the Vedantist has
11 realised his own nature, the whole world has vanished for him. It
12 will come back again, but no more the same world of misery. The
13 prison of misery has become changed into Sat, Chit, Ananda--
14 Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute--and the
15 attainment of this is the goal of the Advaita Philosophy.

REASON AND RELIGION

(Delivered in England)

A sage called Narada went to another sage named Sanatkumara to learn about truth, and Sanatkumara inquired what he had studied already. Narada answered that he had studied the Vedas, Astronomy, and various other things, yet he had got no satisfaction. Then there was a conversation between the two, in the course of which Sanatkumara remarked that all this knowledge of the Vedas, of Astronomy, and of Philosophy, was but secondary; sciences were but secondary. That which made us realise the Brahman was supreme, the highest knowledge. This idea we find in every religion, and that is why religion always claimed to be supreme knowledge. Knowledge of the sciences covers, as it were, only part of our lives, but the knowledge which religion brings to us is eternal, as infinite as the truth it preaches. Claiming this superiority, religions have many times looked down, unfortunately, on all secular knowledge, and not only so, but many times have refused to be justified by the aid of secular knowledge. In consequence, all the world over there have been fights between secular knowledge and religious knowledge, the one claiming infallible authority as its guide, refusing to listen to anything that secular knowledge has to say on the point, the other, with its shining instrument of reason, wanting to cut to pieces everything religion could bring forward. This fight has been and is still waged in every country. Religions have been again and again defeated, and almost exterminated. The worship of the goddess of Reason during the French Revolution was not the first manifestation of that phenomenon in the history of humanity, it was a re-enactment of what had happened in ancient times, but in modern times it has assumed greater proportions. The physical sciences are better equipped now than formerly, and religions have become less and less equipped. The foundations have been all undermined, and the modern man, whatever he may say in public, knows in the privacy of his heart that he can no more "believe". Believing certain things because an organised body of priests tells him to believe, believing because it is written in certain books, believing because his people like him to believe, the modern man knows to be impossible for him. There are, of course, a number of people who seem to acquiesce in the so-called popular faith, but we also know for certain that they do not think. Their idea of belief may be better translated as "not-thinking-carelessness". This fight cannot last much longer without breaking to pieces all the buildings of religion.

The question is: Is there a way out? To put it in a more concrete form: Is religion to justify itself by the discoveries of reason, through which every other science justifies itself? Are the same methods of investigation, which we apply to sciences and knowledge outside, to be applied to the science of Religion? In my opinion this must be so, and I am also of the opinion that the sooner it is done the better. If a religion is destroyed by such investigations, it was then all the time useless, unworthy superstition; and the sooner it goes the better. I am thoroughly convinced that its destruction would be the best thing that could

1 happen. All that is dross will be taken off, no doubt, but the
2 essential parts of religion will emerge triumphant out of this
3 investigation. Not only will it be made scientific--as scientific, at
4 least, as any of the conclusions of physics or chemistry--but will
5 have greater strength, because physics or chemistry has no internal
6 mandate to vouch for its truth, which religion has.

7 People who deny the efficacy of any rationalistic investigation
8 into religion seem to me somewhat to be contradicting themselves.
9 For instance, the Christian claims that his religion is the only true
10 one, because it was revealed to so-and-so. The Mohammedan
11 makes the same claim for his religion; his is the only true one,
12 because it was revealed to so-and-so. But the Christian says to the
13 Mohammedan, "Certain parts of your ethics do not seem to be
14 right. For instance, your books say, my Mohammedan friend, that an
15 infidel maybe converted to the religion of Mohammed by force, and
16 if he will not accept the Mohammedan religion he may be killed;
17 and any Mohammedan who kills such an infidel will get a sure entry
18 into heaven, whatever may have been his sins or misdeeds." The
19 Mohammedan will retort by saying, "It is right for me to do so,
20 because my book enjoins it. It will be wrong on my part not to say
21 so." The Christian says, "But my book does not say so." The
22 Mohammedan replies, "I do not know; I am not bound by the
23 authority of your book; my book says, 'Kill all infidels'. How do you
24 know which is right and which is wrong? Surely what is written in
25 my book is right and what your book says, 'Do not kill,' is wrong.
26 You also say the same thing, my Christian friend; you say that what
27 Jehovah declared to the Jews is right to do, and what he forbade
28 them to do is wrong. So say I, Allah declared in my book that
29 certain things should be done, and that certain things should not be
30 done, and that is all the test of right and wrong." In spite of that the
31 Christian is not satisfied; he insists on a comparison of the morality
32 of the Sermon on the Mount with the morality of the Koran. How is
33 this to be decided? Certainly not by the books, because the books,
34 fighting between themselves, cannot be the judges. Decidedly then
35 we have to admit that there is something more universal than these
36 books, something higher than all the ethical codes that are in the
37 world, something which can judge between the strength of
38 inspirations of different nations. Whether we declare it boldly,
39 clearly, or not--it is evident that here we appeal to reason.

40 Now, the question arises if this light of reason is able to judge
41 between inspiration and inspiration, and if this light can uphold its
42 standard when the quarrel is between prophet and prophet, if it has
43 the power of understanding anything whatsoever of religion. If it
44 has not, nothing can determine the hopeless fight of books and
45 prophets which has been going on through ages; for it means that
46 all religions are mere lies, hopelessly contradictory, without any
47 constant idea of ethics. The proof of religion depends on the truth
48 of the constitution of man, and not on any books. These books are
49 the outgoings, the effects of man's constitution; man made these
50 books. We are yet to see the books that made man. Reason is
51 equally an effect of that common cause, the constitution of man,
52 where our appeal must be. And yet, as reason alone is directly

1 connected with this constitution, it should be resorted to, as long as
2 it follows faithfully the same. What do I mean by reason? I mean
3 what every educated man or woman is wanting to do at the present
4 time, to apply the discoveries of secular knowledge to religion. The
5 first principle of reasoning is that the particular is explained by the
6 general, the general by the more general, until we come to the
7 universal. For instance, we have the idea of law. If something
8 happens and we believe that it is the effect of such and such a law,
9 we are satisfied; that is an explanation for us. What we mean by
10 that explanation is that it is proved that this one effect, which had
11 dissatisfied us, is only one particular of a general mass of
12 occurrences which we designate by the word "law". When one
13 apple fell, Newton was disturbed; but when he found that all apples
14 fell, it was gravitation, and he was satisfied. This is one principle of
15 human knowledge. I see a particular being, a human being, in the
16 street. I refer him to the bigger conception of man, and I am
17 satisfied; I know he is a man by referring him to the more general.
18 So the particulars are to be referred to the general, the general to
19 the more general, and everything at last to the universal, the last
20 concept that we have, the most universal--that of existence.
21 Existence is the most universal concept.

22 We are all human beings; that is to say, each one of us, as it
23 were, a particular part of the general concept, humanity. A man,
24 and a cat, and a dog, are all animals. These particular examples, as
25 man, or dog, or cat, are parts of a bigger and more general concept,
26 animal. The man, and the cat, and the dog, and the plant, and the
27 tree, all come under the still more general concept, life. Again, all
28 these, all beings and all materials, come under the one concept of
29 existence, for we all are in it. This explanation merely means
30 referring the particular to a higher concept, finding more of its
31 kind. The mind, as it was has stored up numerous classes of such
32 generalisations. It is, as it were, full of pigeon-holes where all these
33 ideas are grouped together, and whenever we find a new thing the
34 mind immediately tries to find out its type in one of these pigeon-
35 holes. If we find it, we put the new thing in there and are satisfied,
36 and we are said to have known the thing. This is what is meant by
37 knowledge, and no more. And if we do not find that there is
38 something like it, we are dissatisfied, and have to wait until we find
39 a further classification for it, already existing in the mind.
40 Therefore, as I have already pointed out, knowledge is more or less
41 classification. There is something more. A second explanation of
42 knowledge is that the explanation of a thing must come from inside
43 and not from outside. There had been the belief that, when a man
44 threw up a stone and it fell, some demon dragged it down. Many
45 occurrences which are really natural phenomena are attributed by
46 people to unnatural beings. That a ghost dragged down the stone
47 was an explanation that was not in the thing itself, it was an
48 explanation from outside; but the second explanation of gravitation
49 is something in the nature of the stone; the explanation is coming
50 from inside. This tendency you will find throughout modern
51 thought; in one word, what is meant by science is that the
52 explanations of things are in their own nature, and that no external
53 beings or existences are required to explain what is going on in the

1 universe. The chemist never requires demons, or ghosts, or
2 anything of that sort, to explain his phenomena. The physicist never
3 requires anyone of these to explain the things he knows, nor does
4 any other scientist. And this is one of the features of science which I
5 mean to apply to religion. In this religions are found wanting and
6 that is why they are crumbling into pieces. Every science wants its
7 explanations from inside, from the very nature of things; and the
8 religions are not able to supply this. There is an ancient theory of a
9 personal deity entirely separate from the universe, which has been
10 held from the very earliest time. The arguments in favour of this
11 have been repeated again and again, how it is necessary to have a
12 God entirely separate from the universe, an extra-cosmic deity, who
13 has created the universe out of his will, and is conceived by religion
14 to be its ruler. We find, apart from all these arguments, the
15 Almighty God painted as the All-merciful, and at the same time,
16 inequalities remain in the world. These things do not concern the
17 philosopher at all, but he says the heart of the thing was wrong; it
18 was an explanation from outside, and not inside. What is the cause
19 of the universe? Something outside of it, some being who is moving
20 this universe! And just as it was found insufficient to explain the
21 phenomenon of the falling stone, so this was found insufficient to
22 explain religion. And religions are falling to pieces, because they
23 cannot give a better explanation than that.

24 Another idea connected with this, the manifestation of the
25 same principle, that the explanation of everything comes from
26 inside it, is the modern law of evolution. The whole meaning of
27 evolution is simply that the nature of a thing is reproduced, that the
28 effect is nothing but the cause in another form, that all the
29 potentialities of the effect were present in the cause, that the whole
30 of creation is but an evolution and not a creation. That is to say,
31 every effect is a reproduction of a preceding cause, changed only by
32 the circumstances, and thus it is going on throughout the universe,
33 and we need not go outside the universe to seek the causes of these
34 changes; they are within. It is unnecessary to seek for any cause
35 outside. This also is breaking down religion. What I mean by
36 breaking down religion is that religions that have held on to the
37 idea of an extra-cosmic deity, that he is a very big man and nothing
38 else, can no more stand on their feet; they have been pulled down,
39 as it were.

40 Can there be a religion satisfying these two principles? I think
41 there can be. In the first place we have seen that we have to satisfy
42 the principle of generalisation. The generalisation principle ought
43 to be satisfied along with the principle of evolution. We have to
44 come to an ultimate generalisation, which not only will be the most
45 universal of all generalisations, but out of which everything else
46 must come. It will be of the same nature as the lowest effect; the
47 cause, the highest, the ultimate, the primal cause, must be the
48 same as the lowest and most distant of its effects, a series of
49 evolutions. The Brahman of the Vedanta fulfils that condition,
50 because Brahman is the last generalisation to which we can come.
51 It has no attributes but is Existence, Knowledge, and Bliss--
52 Absolute. Existence, we have seen, is the very ultimate

1 generalisation which the human mind can come to. Knowledge does
2 not mean the knowledge we have, but the essence of that, that
3 which is expressing itself in the course of evolution in human
4 beings or in other animals as knowledge. The essence of that
5 knowledge is meant, the ultimate fact beyond, if I may be allowed
6 to say so, even consciousness. That is what is meant by knowledge
7 and what we see in the universe as the essential unity of things. To
8 my mind, if modern science is proving anything again and again, it
9 is this, that we are one--mentally, spiritually, and physically. It is
10 wrong to say we are even physically different. Supposing we are
11 materialists, for argument's sake, we shall have to come to this,
12 that the whole universe is simply an ocean of matter, of which you
13 and I are like little whirlpools. Masses of matter are coming into
14 each whirlpool, taking the whirlpool form, and coming out as matter
15 again. The matter that is in my body may have been in yours a few
16 years ago, or in the sun, or may have been the matter in a plant,
17 and so on, in a continuous state of flux. What is meant by your body
18 and my body? It is the oneness of the body. So with thought. It is an
19 ocean of thought, one infinite mass, in which your mind and my
20 mind are like whirlpools. Are you not seeing the effect now, how my
21 thoughts are entering into yours, and yours into mine? The whole of
22 our lives is one; we are one, even in thought. Coming to a still
23 further generalisation, the essence of matter and thought is their
24 potentiality of spirit; this is the unity from which all have come, and
25 that must essentially be one. We are absolutely one; we are
26 physically one, we are mentally one, and as spirit, it goes without
27 saying, that we are one, if we believe in spirit at all. This oneness is
28 the one fact that is being proved every day by modern science. To
29 proud man it is told: You are the same as that little worm there;
30 think not that you are something enormously different from it; you
31 are the same. You have been that in a previous incarnation, and the
32 worm has crawled up to this man state, of which you are so proud.
33 This grand preaching, the oneness of things, making us one with
34 everything that exists, is the great lesson to learn, for most of us
35 are very glad to be made one with higher beings, but nobody wants
36 to be made one with lower beings. Such is human ignorance, that if
37 anyone's ancestors were men whom society honoured, even if they
38 were brutish, if they were robbers, even robber barons, everyone of
39 us would try to trace our ancestry to them; but if among our
40 ancestors we had poor, honest gentlemen, none of us wants to trace
41 our ancestry to them. But the scales are falling from our eyes, truth
42 is beginning to manifest itself more and more, and that is a great
43 gain to religion. That is exactly the teaching of the Advaita, about
44 which I am lecturing to you. The Self is the essence of this universe,
45 the essence of all souls; He is the essence of your own life, nay,
46 "Thou are That". You are one with this universe. He who says he is
47 different from others, even by a hair's breadth, immediately
48 becomes miserable. Happiness belongs to him who knows this
49 oneness, who knows he is one with this universe.

50 Thus we see that the religion of the Vedanta can satisfy the
51 demands of the scientific world, by referring it to the highest
52 generalisation and to the law of evolution. That the explanation of a
53 thing comes from within itself is still more completely satisfied by

1 Vedanta. The Brahman, the God of the Vedanta, has nothing outside
2 of Himself; nothing at all. All this indeed is He: He is in the
3 universe: He is the universe Himself. "Thou art the man, Thou art
4 the woman, Thou art the young man walking in the pride of youth,
5 Thou art the old man tottering in his step." He is here. Him we see
6 and feel: in Him we live, and move, and have our being. You have
7 that conception in the New Testament. It is that idea, God
8 immanent in the universe, the very essence, the heart, the soul of
9 things. He manifests Himself, as it were, in this universe. You and I
10 are little bits, little points, little channels, little expressions, all
11 living inside of that infinite ocean of Existence, Knowledge, and
12 Bliss. The difference between man and man, between angels and
13 man, between man and animals, between animals and plants,
14 between plants and stones is not in kind, because everyone from
15 the highest angel to the lowest particle of matter is but an
16 expression of that one infinite ocean, and the difference is only in
17 degree. I am a low manifestation, you may be a higher, but in both
18 the materials are the same. You and I are both outlets of the same
19 channel, and that is God; as such, your nature is God, and so is
20 mine. You are of the nature of God by your birthright; so am I. You
21 may be an angel of purity, and I may be the blackest of demons.
22 Nevertheless, my birthright is that infinite ocean of Existence,
23 Knowledge, and Bliss. So is yours. You have manifested yourself
24 more today. Wait; I will manifest myself more yet, for I have it all
25 within me. No extraneous explanation is sought; none is asked for.
26 The sum-total of this whole universe is God Himself. Is God then
27 matter? No, certainly not, for matter is that God perceived by the
28 five senses; that God as perceived through the intellect is mind; and
29 when the spirit sees, He is seen as spirit. He is not matter, but
30 whatever is real in matter is He. Whatever is real in this chair is
31 He, for the chair requires two things to make it. Something was
32 outside which my senses brought to me, and to which my mind
33 contributed something else, and the combination of these two is the
34 chair. That which existed eternally, independent of the senses and
35 of the intellect, was the Lord Himself. Upon Him the senses are
36 painting chairs, and tables, and rooms, and houses, and worlds, and
37 moons, and suns, and stars, and everything else. How is it, then,
38 that we all see this same chair, that we are all alike painting these
39 various things on the Lord, on this Existence, Knowledge, and Bliss?
40 It need not be that all paint the same way, but those who paint the
41 same way are on the same plane of existence and therefore they
42 see one another's paintings as well as one another. There may be
43 millions of beings between you and me who do not paint the Lord in
44 the same way, and them and their paintings we do not see.

45 On the other hand, as you all know, the modern physical
46 researches are tending more and more to demonstrate that what is
47 real is but the finer; the gross is simply appearance. However that
48 may be, we have seen that if any theory of religion can stand the
49 test of modern reasoning, it is the Advaita, because it fulfils its two
50 requirements. It is the highest generalisation, beyond even
51 personality, generalisation which is common to every being. A
52 generalisation ending in the Personal God can never be universal,
53 for, first of all, to conceive of a Personal God we must say, He is all-

1 merciful, all-good. But this world is a mixed thing, some good and
2 some bad. We cut off what we like, and generalise that into a
3 Personal God! Just as you say a Personal God is this and that, so you
4 have also to say that He is not this and not that. And you will always
5 find that the idea of a Personal God has to carry with it a personal
6 devil. That is how we clearly see that the idea of a Personal God is
7 not a true generalisation, we have to go beyond, to the Impersonal.
8 In that the universe exists, with all its joys and miseries, for
9 whatever exists in it has all come from the Impersonal. What sort of
10 a God can He be to whom we attribute evil and other things? The
11 idea is that both good and evil are different aspects, or
12 manifestations of the same thing. The idea that they were two was
13 a very wrong idea from the first, and it has been the cause of a
14 good deal of the misery in this world of ours--the idea that right and
15 wrong are two separate things, cut and dried, independent of each
16 other, that good and evil are two eternally separable and separate
17 things. I should be very glad to see a man who could show me
18 something which is good all the time, and something which is bad
19 all the time. As if one could stand and gravely define some
20 occurrences in this life of ours as good and good alone, and some
21 which are bad and bad alone. That which is good today may be evil
22 tomorrow. That which is bad today may be good tomorrow. What is
23 good for me may be bad for you. The conclusion is, that like every
24 other thing, there is an evolution in good and evil too. There is
25 something which in its evolution, we call, in one degree, good, and
26 in another, evil. The storm that kills my friend I call evil, but that
27 may have saved the lives of hundreds of thousands of people by
28 killing the bacilli in the air. They call it good, but I call it evil. So
29 both good and evil belong to the relative world, to phenomena. The
30 Impersonal God we propose is not a relative God; therefore it
31 cannot be said that It is either good or bad, but that It is something
32 beyond, because It is neither good nor evil. Good, however, is a
33 nearer manifestation of It than evil.

34 What is the effect of accepting such an Impersonal Being, an
35 Impersonal Deity? What shall we gain? Will religion stand as a
36 factor in human life, our consoler, our helper? What becomes of the
37 desire of the human heart to pray for help to some being? That will
38 all remain. The Personal God will remain, but on a better basis. He
39 has been strengthened by the Impersonal. We have seen that
40 without the Impersonal, the Personal cannot remain. If you mean to
41 say there is a Being entirely separate from this universe, who has
42 created this universe just by His will, out of nothing, that cannot be
43 proved. Such a state of things cannot be. But if we understand the
44 idea of the Impersonal, then the idea of the Personal can remain
45 there also. This universe, in its various forms, is but the various
46 readings of the same Impersonal. When we read it with the five
47 senses, we call it the material world. If there be a being with more
48 senses than five, he will read it as something else. If one of us gets
49 the electrical sense, he will see the universe as something else
50 again. There are various forms of that same Oneness, of which all
51 these various ideas of worlds are but various readings, and the
52 Personal God is the highest reading that can be attained to, of that
53 Impersonal, by the human intellect. So that the Personal God is true

1 as much as this chair is true, as much as this world is true, but no
2 more. It is not absolute truth. That is to say, the Personal God is that
3 very Impersonal God and, therefore, it is true, just as I, as a human
4 being, am true and not true at the same time. It is not true that I am
5 what you see I am; you can satisfy yourself on that point. I am not
6 the being that you take me to be. You can satisfy your reason as to
7 that, because light, and various vibrations, or conditions of the
8 atmosphere, and all sorts of motions inside me have contributed to
9 my being looked upon as what I am, by you. If any one of these
10 conditions change, I am different again. You may satisfy yourself by
11 taking a photograph of the same man under different conditions of
12 light. So I am what I appear in relation to your senses, and yet, in
13 spite of all these facts, there is an unchangeable something of
14 which all these are different states of existence, the impersonal me,
15 of which thousands of me's are different persons. I was a child, I
16 was young, I am getting older. Every day of my life, my body and
17 thoughts are changing, but in spite of all these changes, the sum-
18 total of them constitutes a mass which is a constant quantity. That is
19 the impersonal me, of which all these manifestations form, as it
20 were, parts.

21 Similarly, the sum-total of this universe is immovable, we
22 know, but everything pertaining to this universe consists of motion,
23 everything is in a constant state of flux, everything changing and
24 moving. At the same time, we see that the universe as a whole is
25 immovable, because motion is a relative term. I move with regard
26 to the chair, which does not move. There must be at least two to
27 make motion. If this whole universe is taken as a unit there is no
28 motion; with regard to what should it move? Thus the Absolute is
29 unchangeable and immovable, and all the movements and changes
30 are only in the phenomenal world, the limited. That whole is
31 Impersonal, and within this Impersonal are all these various
32 persons beginning with the lowest atom, up to God, the Personal
33 God, the Creator, the Ruler of the Universe, to whom we pray,
34 before whom we kneel, and so on. Such a Personal God can be
35 established with a great deal of reason. Such a Personal God is
36 explicable as the highest manifestation of the Impersonal. You and I
37 are very low manifestations, and the Personal God is the highest of
38 which we can conceive. Nor can you or I become that Personal God.
39 When the Vedanta says you and I are God, it does not mean the
40 Personal God. To take an example. Out of a mass of clay a huge
41 elephant of clay is manufactured, and out of the same clay, a little
42 clay mouse is made. Would the clay mouse ever be able to become
43 the clay elephant? But put them both in water and they are both
44 clay; as clay they are both one, but as mouse and elephant there
45 will be an eternal difference between them. The Infinite, the
46 Impersonal, is like the clay in the example. We and the Ruler of the
47 Universe are one, but as manifested beings, men, we are His
48 eternal slaves, His worshippers. Thus we see that the Personal God
49 remains. Everything else in this relative world remains, and religion
50 is made to stand on a better foundation. Therefore it is necessary
51 that we first know the Impersonal in order to know the Personal.

52 As we have seen, the law of reason says, the particular is only

1 known through the general. So all these particulars, from man to
2 God, are only known through the Impersonal, the highest
3 generalisation. Prayers will remain, only they will get a better
4 meaning. All those senseless ideas of prayer, the low stages of
5 prayer, which are simply giving words to all sorts of silly desires in
6 our minds, perhaps, will have to go. In all sensible religions, they
7 never allow prayers to God; they allow prayers to gods. That is
8 quite natural. The Roman Catholics pray to the saints; that is quite
9 good. But to pray to God is senseless. To ask God to give you a
10 breath of air, to send down a shower of rain, to make fruits grow in
11 your garden, and so on, is quite unnatural. The saints, however,
12 who were little beings like ourselves, may help us. But to pray to
13 the Ruler of the Universe, prating every little need of ours, and
14 from our childhood saying, "O Lord, I have a headache; let it go," is
15 ridiculous. There have been millions of souls that have died in this
16 world, and they are all here; they have become gods and angels; let
17 them come to your help. But God! It cannot be. Unto Him we must
18 go for higher things. A fool indeed is he who, resting on the banks
19 of the Ganga, digs a little well for water; a fool indeed is he who,
20 living near a mine of diamonds, digs for bits of crystal.

21 And indeed we shall be fools if we go to the Father of all
22 mercy, Father of all love, for trivial earthly things. Unto Him,
23 therefore, we shall go for light, for strength, for love. But so long as
24 there is weakness and a craving for servile dependence in us, there
25 will be these little prayers and ideas of the worship of the Personal
26 God. But those who are highly advanced do not care for such little
27 helps, they have well-nigh forgotten all about this seeking things for
28 themselves, wanting things for themselves. The predominant idea
29 in them is--not I, but thou, my brother. Those are the fit persons to
30 worship the Impersonal God. And what is the worship of the
31 Impersonal God? No slavery there--"O Lord, I am nothing, have
32 mercy on me." You know the old Persian poem, translated into
33 English: I came to see my beloved. The doors were closed. I
34 knocked and a voice came from inside. 'Who art thou?' 'I am so-and-
35 so.' The door was not opened. A second time I came and knocked; I
36 was asked the same question, and gave the same answer. The door
37 opened not. I came a third time, and the same question came. I
38 answered, 'I am thee, my love,' and the door opened." Worship of
39 the Impersonal God is through truth. And what is truth? That I am
40 He. When I say that I am not Thou, it is untrue. When I say I am
41 separate from you it is a lie, a terrible lie. I am one with this
42 universe, born one. It is self-evident to my senses that I am one with
43 the universe. I am one with the air that surrounds me, one with
44 heat, one with light, eternally one with the whole Universal Being,
45 who is called this universe, who is mistaken for the universe, for it
46 is He and nothing else, the eternal subject in the heart who says, "I
47 am," in every heart--the deathless one, the sleepless one, ever
48 awake, the immortal, whose glory never dies, whose powers never
49 fail. I am one with That.

50 This is all the worship of the Impersonal, and what is the
51 result? The whole life of man will be changed. Strength, strength it
52 is that we want so much in this life, for what we call sin and sorrow

1 have all one cause, and that is our weakness. With weakness comes
2 ignorance, and with ignorance comes misery. It will make us strong.
3 Then miseries will be laughed at, then the violence of the vile will
4 be smiled at, and the ferocious tiger will reveal, behind its tiger's
5 nature, my own Self. That will be the result. That soul is strong that
6 has become one with the Lord; none else is strong. In your own
7 Bible, what do you think was the cause of that strength of Jesus of
8 Nazareth, that immense, infinite strength which laughed at traitors,
9 and blessed those that were willing to murder him? It was that, "I
10 and my Father are one"; it was that prayer, "Father, just as I am one
11 with you, so make them all one with me. "That is the worship of the
12 Impersonal God. Be one with the universe, be one with Him. And
13 this Impersonal God requires no demonstrations, no proofs. He is
14 nearer to us than even our senses, nearer to us than our own
15 thoughts; it is in and through Him that we see and think. To see
16 anything, I must first see Him. To see this wall I first see Him, and
17 then the wall, for He is the eternal subject. Who is seeing whom?
18 He is here in the heart of our hearts. Bodies and minds change;
19 misery, happiness, good and evil come and go; days and years roll
20 on; life comes and goes; but He dies not. The same voice, "I am, I
21 am," is eternal, unchangeable. In Him and through Him we know
22 everything. In Him and through Him we see everything. In Him and
23 through Him we sense, we think, we live, and we are. And that "I,"
24 which we mistake to be a little "I," limited, is not only my "I," but
25 yours, the "I" of everyone, of the animals, of the angels, of the
26 lowest of the low. That "I am" is the same in the murderer as in the
27 saint, the same in the rich as in the poor, the same in man as in
28 woman, the same in man as in animals. From the lowest amoeba to
29 the highest angel, He resides in every soul, and eternally declares,
30 "I am He, I am He." When we have understood that voice eternally
31 present there, when we have learnt this lesson, the whole universe
32 will have expressed its secret. Nature will have given up her secret
33 to us. Nothing more remains to be known. Thus we find the truth
34 for which all religions search, that all this knowledge of material
35 sciences is but secondary. That is the only true knowledge which
36 makes us one with this Universal God of the Universe.

VEDANTA AS A FACTOR IN CIVILISATION

(Extract from an address delivered at Airlie Lodge, Ridgeway Gardens, England)

People who are capable of seeing only the gross external aspect of things can perceive in the Indian nation only a conquered and suffering people, a race of dreamers and philosophers. They seem to be incapable of perceiving that in the spiritual realm India conquers the world. No doubt it is true that just as the too active Western mind would profit by an admixture of Eastern introspection and the meditative habit, so the Eastern would benefit by a somewhat greater activity and energy. Still we must ask: What may be that force which causes this afflicted and suffering people, the Hindu, and the Jewish too (the two races from which have originated all the great religions of the world) to survive, when other nations perish? The cause can only be their spiritual force. The Hindus are still living though silent, the Jews are more numerous today than when they lived in Palestine. The philosophy of India percolates throughout the whole civilised world, modifying and permeating as it goes. So also in ancient times, her trade reached the shores of Africa before Europe was known, and opened communication with the rest of the world, thus disproving the belief that Indians never went outside of their own country.

It is remarkable also that the possession of India by a foreign power has always been a turning-point in the history of that power, bringing to it wealth, prosperity, dominion, and spiritual ideas. While the Western man tries to measure how much it is possible for him to possess and to enjoy, the Eastern seems to take the opposite course, and to measure how little of material possession he can do with. In the Vedas we trace the endeavour of that ancient people to find God. In their search for Him they came upon different strata; beginning with ancestor worship, they passed on to the worship of Agni, the fire-god, of Indra, the god of thunder, and of Varuna, the God of gods. We find the growth of this idea of God, from many gods to one God, in all religions; its real meaning is that He is the chief of the tribal gods, who creates the world, rules it, and sees into every heart; the stages of growth lead up from a multiplicity of gods to monotheism. This anthropomorphic conception, however, did not satisfy the Hindus, it was too human for them who were seeking the Divine. Therefore they finally gave up searching for God in the outer world of sense and matter, and turned their attention to the inner world. Is there an inner world? And what is it? It is Atman. It is the Self, it is the only thing an individual can be sure of. If he knows himself, he can know the universe, and not otherwise. The same question was asked in the beginning of time, even in the Rig-Veda, in another form: "Who or what existed from the beginning?" That question was gradually solved by the Vedanta philosophy. The Atman existed. That is to say, what we call the Absolute, the Universal Soul, the Self, is the force by which from the beginning all things have been and are and will be manifested.

While the Vedanta philosophers solved that question, they at the same time discovered the basis of ethics. Though all religions have taught ethical precepts, such as, "Do not kill, do not injure;

1 love your neighbour as yourself," etc., yet none of these has given
2 the reason. Why should I not injure my neighbour? To this question
3 there was no satisfactory or conclusive answer forthcoming, until it
4 was evolved by the metaphysical speculations of the Hindus who
5 could not rest satisfied with mere dogmas. So the Hindus say that
6 this Atman is absolute and all-pervading, therefore infinite. There
7 cannot be two infinities, for they would limit each other and would
8 become finite. Also each individual soul is a part and parcel of that
9 Universal Soul, which is infinite. Therefore in injuring his
10 neighbour, the individual actually injures himself. This is the basic
11 metaphysical truth underlying all ethical codes. It is too often
12 believed that a person in his progress towards perfection passes
13 from error to truth; that when he passes on from one thought to
14 another, he must necessarily reject the first. But no error can lead
15 to truth. The soul passing through its different stages goes from
16 truth to truth, and each stage is true; it goes from lower truth to
17 higher truth. This point may be illustrated in the following way. A
18 man is journeying towards the sun and takes a photograph at each
19 step. How different would be the first photograph from the second
20 and still more from the third or the last, when he reaches the real
21 sun! But all these, though differing so widely from each other, are
22 true, only they are made to appear different by the changing
23 conditions of time and space. It is the recognition of this truth,
24 which has enabled the Hindus to perceive the universal truth of all
25 religions, from the lowest to the highest; it has made of them the
26 only people who never had religious persecutions. The shrine of a
27 Mohammedan saint which is at the present day neglected and
28 forgotten by Mohammedans, is worshipped by Hindus! Many
29 instances may be quoted, illustrating the same spirit of tolerance.

30 The Eastern mind could not rest satisfied till it had found that
31 goal, which is the end sought by all humanity, namely, Unity. The
32 Western scientist seeks for unity in the atom or the molecule. When
33 he finds it, there is nothing further for him to discover, and so when
34 we find that Unity of Soul or Self, which is called Atman, we can go
35 no further. It becomes clear that everything in the sense-world is a
36 manifestation of that One Substance.

37 Further, the scientist is brought to the necessity of
38 recognising metaphysics, when he supposes that atoms having
39 neither breadth nor length yet become, when combined, the cause
40 of extension, length, and breadth. When one atom acts upon
41 another, some medium is necessary. What is that medium? It will be
42 a third atom. If so, then the question still remains unanswered, for
43 how do these two act on the third? A manifest *reductio ad*
44 *absurdum*. This contradiction in terms is also found in the
45 hypothesis necessary to all physical science that a point is that
46 which has neither parts nor magnitude, and a line has length
47 without breadth. These cannot be either seen or conceived. Why?
48 Because they do not come within the range of the senses. They are
49 metaphysical conceptions. So we see, it is finally the mind which
50 gives the form to all perception. When I see a chair, it is not the real
51 chair external to my eye which I perceive, but an external
52 something plus the mental image formed. Thus even the materialist

1 is driven to metaphysics in the last extremity.

THE SPIRIT AND INFLUENCE OF VEDANTA

(Delivered at the Twentieth Century Club, Boston)

Before going into the subject of this afternoon, will you allow me to say a few words of thanks, now that I have the opportunity? I have lived three years amongst you. I have travelled over nearly the whole of America, and as I am going back from here to my own country, it is meet that I should take this opportunity of expressing my gratitude in this Athens of America. When I first came to this country, after a few days I thought I would be able to write a book on the nation. But after three years' stay here, I find I am not able to write even a page. On the other hand, I find in travelling in various countries that beneath the surface differences that we find in dress and food and little details of manners, man is man all the world over; the same wonderful human nature is everywhere represented. Yet there are certain characteristics, and in a few words I would like to sum up all my experiences here. In this land of America, no question is asked about a man's peculiarities. If a man is a man, that is enough, and they take him into their hearts, and that is one thing I have never seen in any other country in the world.

I came here to represent a philosophy in India, which is called the Vedanta philosophy. This philosophy is very, very ancient; it is the outcome of that mass of ancient Aryan literature known by the name of the Vedas. It is, as it were, the very flower of all the speculations and experiences and analyses, embodied in that mass of literature--collected and culled through centuries. This Vedanta philosophy has certain peculiarities. In the first place, it is perfectly impersonal; it does not owe its origin to any person or prophet: it does not build itself around one man as a centre. Yet it has nothing to say against philosophies which do build themselves around certain persons. In later days in India, other philosophies and systems arose, built around certain persons--such as Buddhism, or many of our present sects. They each have a certain leader to whom they owe allegiance, just as the Christians and Mohammedans have. But the Vedanta philosophy stands at the background of all these various sects, and there is no fight and no antagonism between the Vedanta and any other system in the world.

One principle it lays down--and that, the Vedanta claims, is to be found in every religion in the world--that man is divine, that all this which we see around us is the outcome of that consciousness of the divine. Everything that is strong, and good, and powerful in human nature is the outcome of that divinity, and though potential in many, there is no difference between man and man essentially, all being alike divine. There is, as it were, an infinite ocean behind, and you and I are so many waves, coming out of that infinite ocean; and each one of us is trying his best to manifest that infinite outside. So, potentially, each one of us has that infinite ocean of Existence, Knowledge, and Bliss as our birthright, our real nature; and the difference between us is caused by the greater or lesser power to manifest that divine. Therefore the Vedanta lays down that each man should be treated not as what he manifests, but as what he

1 stands for. Each human being stands for the divine, and, therefore,
2 every teacher should be helpful, not by condemning man, but by
3 helping him to call forth the divinity that is within him.

4 It also teaches that all the vast mass of energy that we see
5 displayed in society and in every plane of action is really from
6 inside out; and, therefore, what is called inspiration by other sects,
7 the Vedantist begs the liberty to call the *expiration* of man. At the
8 same time it does not quarrel with other sects; the Vedanta has no
9 quarrel with those who do not understand this divinity of man.
10 Consciously or unconsciously, every man is trying to unfold that
11 divinity.

12 Man is like an infinite spring, coiled up in a small box, and
13 that spring is trying to unfold itself; and all the social phenomena
14 that we see are the result of this trying to unfold. All the
15 competitions and struggles and evils that we see around us are
16 neither the causes of these unfoldments, nor the effects. As one of
17 our great philosophers says--in the case of the irrigation of a field,
18 the tank is somewhere upon a higher level, and the water is trying
19 to rush into the field, and is barred by a gate. But as soon as the
20 gate is opened, the water rushes in by its own nature; and if there
21 is dust and dirt in the way, the water rolls over them. But dust and
22 dirt are neither the result nor the cause of this unfolding of the
23 divine nature of man. They are co-existent circumstances, and,
24 therefore, can be remedied.

25 Now, this idea, claims the Vedanta, is to be found in all
26 religions, whether in India or outside of it; only, in some of them,
27 the idea is expressed through mythology, and in others, through
28 symbology. The Vedanta claims that there has not been one
29 religious inspiration, one manifestation of the divine man, however
30 great, but it has been the expression of that infinite oneness in
31 human nature; and all that we call ethics and morality and doing
32 good to others is also but the manifestation of this oneness. There
33 are moments when every man feels that he is one with the universe,
34 and he rushes forth to express it, whether he knows it or not. This
35 expression of oneness is what we call love and sympathy, and it is
36 the basis of all our ethics and morality. This is summed up in the
37 Vedanta philosophy by the celebrated aphorism, Tat Tvam Asi,
38 "Thou art That".

39 To every man, this is taught: Thou art one with this Universal
40 Being, and, as such, every soul that exists is your soul; and every
41 body that exists is your body; and in hurting anyone, you hurt
42 yourself, in loving anyone, you love yourself. As soon as a current of
43 hatred is thrown outside, whomsoever else it hurts, it also hurts
44 yourself; and if love comes out from you, it is bound to come back to
45 you. For I am the universe; this universe is my body. I am the
46 Infinite, only I am not conscious of it now; but I am struggling to get
47 this consciousness of the Infinite, and perfection will be reached
48 when full consciousness of this Infinite comes.

49 Another peculiar idea of the Vedanta is that we must allow
50 this infinite variation in religious thought, and not try to bring
51 everybody to the same opinion, because the goal is the same. As the

1 Vedantist says in his poetical language, "As so many rivers, having
2 their source in different mountains, roll down, crooked or straight,
3 and at last come into the ocean--so, all these various creeds and
4 religions, taking their start from different standpoints and running
5 through crooked or straight courses, at last come unto THEE."

6 As a manifestation of that, we find that this most ancient
7 philosophy has, through its influence, directly inspired Buddhism,
8 the first missionary religion of the world, and indirectly, it has also
9 influenced Christianity, through the Alexandrians, the Gnostics, and
10 the European philosophers of the middle ages. And later,
11 influencing German thought, it has produced almost a revolution in
12 the regions of philosophy and psychology. Yet all this mass of
13 influence has been given to the world almost unperceived. As the
14 gentle falling of the dew at night brings support to all vegetable
15 life, so, slowly and imperceptibly, this divine philosophy has been
16 spread through the world for the good of mankind. No march of
17 armies has been used to preach this religion. In Buddhism, one of
18 the most missionary religions of the world, we find inscriptions
19 remaining of the great Emperor Asoka--recording how missionaries
20 were sent to Alexandria, to Antioch, to Persia, to China, and to
21 various other countries of the then civilised world. Three hundred
22 years before Christ, instructions were given them not to revile
23 other religions: "The basis of all religions is the same, wherever
24 they are; try to help them all you can, teach them all you can, but do
25 not try to injure them."

26 Thus in India there never was any religious persecution by
27 the Hindus, but only that wonderful reverence, which they have for
28 all the religions of the world. They sheltered a portion of the
29 Hebrews, when they were driven out of their own country; and the
30 Malabar Jews remain as a result. They received at another time the
31 remnant of the Persians, when they were almost annihilated; and
32 they remain to this day, as a part of us and loved by us, as the
33 modern Parsees of Bombay. There were Christians who claimed to
34 have come with St. Thomas, the disciple of Jesus Christ; and they
35 were allowed to settle in India and hold their own opinions; and a
36 colony of them is even now in existence in India. And this spirit of
37 toleration has not died out. It will not and cannot die there.

38 This is one of the great lessons that the Vedanta has to teach.
39 Knowing that, consciously or unconsciously, we are struggling to
40 reach the same goal, why should we be impatient? If one man is
41 slower than another, we need not be impatient, we need not curse
42 him, or revile him. When our eyes are opened and the heart is
43 purified, the work of the same divine influence, the unfolding of the
44 same divinity in every human heart, will become manifest; and then
45 alone we shall be in a position to claim the brotherhood of man.

46 When a man has reached the highest, when he sees neither
47 man nor woman, neither sect nor creed, nor colour, nor birth, nor
48 any of these differentiations, but goes beyond and finds that divinity
49 which is the real man behind every human being--then alone he has
50 reached the universal brotherhood, and that man alone is a
51 Vedantist.

1 Such are some of the practical historical results of the
2 Vedanta.

STEPS OF HINDU PHILOSOPHIC THOUGHT

The first group of religious ideas that we see coming up--I mean recognised religious ideas, and not the very low ideas, which do not deserve the name of religion--all include the idea of inspiration and revealed books and so forth. The first group of religious ideas starts with the idea of God. Here is the universe, and this universe is created by a certain Being. Everything that is in this universe has been created by Him. Along with that, at a later stage, comes the idea of soul--that there is this body, and something inside this body which is not the body. This is the most primitive idea of religion that we know. We can find a few followers of that in India, but it was given up very early. The Indian religions take a peculiar start. It is only by strict analysis, and much calculation and conjecture, that we can ever think that that stage existed in Indian religions. The tangible state in which we find them is the next step, not the first one. At the earliest step the idea of creation is very peculiar, and it is that the whole universe is created out of zero, at the will of God; that all this universe did not exist, and out of this nothingness all this has come. In the next stage we find this conclusion is questioned. How can existence be produced out of non-existence? At the first step in the Vedanta this question is asked. If this universe is existent it must have come out of something, because it was very easy to see that nothing comes out of nothing, anywhere. All work that is done by human hands requires materials. If a house is built, the material was existing before; if a boat is made, the material existed before; if any implements are made, the materials were existing before. So the effect is produced. Naturally, therefore, the first idea that this world was created out of nothing was rejected, and some material out of which this world was created was wanted. The whole history of religion, in fact, is this search after that material.

Out of what has all this been produced? Apart from the question of the efficient cause, or God, apart from the question that God created the universe, the great question of all questions is: Out of what did He create it? All the philosophies are turning, as it were, on this question. One solution is that nature, God, and soul are eternal existences, as if three lines are running parallel eternally, of which nature and soul comprise what they call the dependent, and God the independent Reality. Every soul, like every particle of matter, is perfectly dependent on the will of God. Before going to the other steps we will take up the idea of soul, and then find that with all the Vedantic philosophers, there is one tremendous departure from all Western philosophy. All of them have a common psychology. Whatever their philosophy may have been, their psychology is the same in India, the old Sankhya psychology. According to this, perception occurs by the transmission of the vibrations which first come to the external sense-organs, from the external to the internal organs, from the internal organs to the mind, from the mind to the Buddhi, from the Buddhi or intellect, to something which is a unit, which they call the Atman. Coming to modern physiology, we know that it has found

centres for all the different sensations. First it finds the lower centres, and then a higher grade of centres, and these two centres exactly correspond with the internal organs and the mind, but not one centre has been found which controls all the other centres. So physiology cannot tell what unifies all these centres. Where do the centres get united? The centres in the brain are all different, and there is not one centre which controls all the other centres; therefore, so far as it goes, the Indian psychology stands unchallenged upon this point. We must have this unification, something upon which the sensations will be reflected, to form a complete whole. Until there is that something, I cannot have any idea of you, or a picture, or anything else. If we had not that unifying something, we would only see, then after a while breathe, then hear, and so on, and while I heard a man talking I would not see him at all, because all the centres are different.

This body is made of particles which we call matter, and it is dull and insentient. So is what the Vedantists call the fine body. The fine body, according to them, is a material but transparent body, made of very fine particles, so fine that no microscope can see them. What is the use of that? It is the receptacle of the fine forces. Just as this gross body is the receptacle of the gross forces, so the fine body is the receptacle of the fine forces, which we call thought, in its various modifications. First is the body, which is gross matter, with gross force. Force cannot exist without matter. It must require some matter to exist, so the grosser forces work in the body; and those very forces become finer; the very force which is working in a gross form, works in a fine form, and becomes thought. There is no distinction between them, simply one is the gross and the other the fine manifestation of the same thing. Neither is there any distinction between this fine body and the gross body. The fine body is also material, only very fine matter; and just as this gross body is the instrument that works the gross forces, so the fine body is the instrument that works the fine forces. From where do all these forces come? According to Vedanta philosophy, there are two things in nature, one of which they call Akasha, which is the substance, infinitely fine, and the other they call Prana, which is the force. Whatever you see, or feel, or hear, as air, earth, or anything, is material--the product of Akasha. It goes on and becomes finer and finer, or grosser and grosser, changing under the action of Prana. Like Akasha, Prana is omnipresent, and interpenetrating everything.

Akasha is like the water, and everything else in the universe is like blocks of ice, made out of that water, and floating in the water, and Prana is the power that changes this Akasha into all these various forms. The gross body is the instrument made out of Akasha, for the manifestation of Prana in gross forms, as muscular motion, or walking, sitting, talking, and so forth. That fine body is also made of Akasha, a very fine form of Akasha, for the manifestation of the same Prana in the finer form of thought. So, first there is this gross body. Beyond that is this fine body, and beyond that is the Jiva, the real man. Just as the nails can be pared off many times and yet are still part of our bodies, not different, so

1 is our gross body related to the fine. It is not that a man has a fine
2 and also a gross body; it is the one body only, the part which
3 endures longer is the fine body, and that which dissolves sooner is
4 the gross. Just as I can cut this nail any number of times, so,
5 millions of times I can shed this gross body, but the fine body will
6 remain. According to the dualists, this Jiva or the real man is very
7 fine, minute.

8 So far we see that man is a being, who has first a gross body
9 which dissolves very quickly, then a fine body which remains
10 through aeons, and then a Jiva. This Jiva, according to the Vedanta
11 philosophy, is eternal, just as God is eternal. Nature is also eternal,
12 but changefully eternal. The material of nature--Prana and Akasha--
13 is eternal, but it is changing into different forms eternally. But the
14 Jiva is not manufactured either of Akasha or Prana; it is immaterial
15 and, therefore, will remain for ever. It is not the result of any
16 combination of Prana and Akasha, and whatever is not the result of
17 combination, will never be destroyed, because destruction is going
18 back to causes. The gross body is a compound of Akasha and Prana
19 and, therefore, will be decomposed. The fine body will also be
20 decomposed, after a long time, but the Jiva is simple, and will never
21 be destroyed.

22 It was never born for the same reason. Nothing simple can be
23 born. The same argument applies. That which is a compound only
24 can be born. The whole of nature comprising millions and millions
25 of souls is under the will of God. God is all-prevading, omniscient,
26 formless, and He is working through nature day and night. The
27 whole of it is under His control. He is the eternal Ruler. So say the
28 dualists. Then the question comes: If God is the ruler of this
29 universe, why did He create such a wicked universe, why must we
30 suffer so much? They say, it is not God's fault. It is our fault that we
31 suffer. Whatever we sow we reap. He did not do anything to punish
32 us. Man is born poor, or blind, or some other way. What is the
33 reason? He had done something before, he was born that way. The
34 Jiva has been existing for all time, was never created. It has been
35 doing all sorts of things all the time. Whatever we do reacts upon
36 us. If we do good, we shall have happiness, and if evil, unhappiness.
37 So the Jiva goes on enjoying and suffering, and doing all sorts of
38 things.

39 What comes after death? All these Vedanta philosophers
40 admit that this Jiva is by its own nature pure. But ignorance covers
41 its real nature, they say. As by evil deeds it has covered itself with
42 ignorance, so by good deeds it becomes conscious of its own nature
43 again. Just as it is eternal, so its nature is pure. The nature of every
44 being is pure.

45 When through good deeds all its sins and misdeeds have been
46 washed away, then the Jiva becomes pure again, and when it
47 becomes pure, it goes to what is called Devayana. Its organ of
48 speech enters the mind. You cannot think without words. Wherever
49 there is thought, there must be words. As words enter the mind, so
50 the mind is resolved into the Prana, and the Prana into the Jiva.
51 Then the Jiva gets quickly out of the body, and goes to the solar
52 regions. This universe has sphere after sphere. This earth is the

1 world sphere, in which are moons, suns, and stars. Beyond that
2 there is the solar sphere, and beyond that another which they call
3 the lunar sphere. Beyond that there is the sphere which they call
4 the sphere of lightning, the electric sphere, and when the Jiva goes
5 there, there comes another Jiva, already perfect, to receive it, and
6 takes it to another world, the highest heaven, called the
7 Brahmaloka, where the Jiva lives eternally, no more to be born or to
8 die. It enjoys through eternity, and gets all sorts of powers, except
9 the power of creation. There is only one ruler of the universe, and
10 that is God. No one can become God; the dualists maintain that if
11 you say you are God, it is a blasphemy. All powers except the
12 creative come to the Jiva, and if it likes to have bodies, and work in
13 different parts of the world, it can do so. If it orders all the gods to
14 come before it, if it wants its forefathers to come, they all appear at
15 its command. Such are its powers that it never feels any more pain,
16 and if it wants, it can live in the Brahmaloka through all eternity.
17 This is the highest man, who has attained the love of God, who has
18 become perfectly unselfish, perfectly purified, who has given up all
19 desires, and who does not want to do anything except worship and
20 love God.

21 There are others that are not so high, who do good works, but
22 want some reward. They say they will give so much to the poor, but
23 want to go to heaven in return. When they die, what becomes of
24 them? The speech enters the mind, the mind enters the Prana, the
25 Prana enters the Jiva, and the Jiva gets out, and goes to the lunar
26 sphere, where it has a very good time for a long period. There it
27 enjoys happiness, so long as the effect of its good deeds endures.
28 When the same is exhausted, it descends, and once again enters life
29 on earth according to its desires. In the lunar sphere the Jiva
30 becomes what we call a god, or what the Christians or
31 Mohammedans call an angel. These gods are the names of certain
32 positions; for instance, Indra, the king of the gods, is the name of a
33 position; thousands of men get to that position. When a virtuous
34 man who has performed the highest of Vedic rites dies, he becomes
35 a king of the gods; by that time the old king has gone down again,
36 and become man. Just as kings change here, so the gods, the Devas,
37 also have to die. In heaven they will all die. The only deathless place
38 is Brahmaloka, where alone there is no birth and death.

39 So the Jivas go to heaven, and have a very good time, except
40 now and then when the demons give them chase. In our mythology
41 it is said there are demons, who sometimes trouble the gods. In all
42 mythologies, you read how these demons and the gods fought, and
43 the demons sometimes conquered the gods, although many times, it
44 seems, the demons did not do so many wicked things as the gods.
45 In all mythologies, for instance, you find the Devas fond of women.
46 So after their reward is finished, they fall down again, come
47 through the clouds, through the rains, and thus get into some grain
48 or plant and find their way into the human body, when the grain or
49 plant is eaten by men. The father gives them the material out of
50 which to get a fitting body. When the material suits them no longer,
51 they have to manufacture other bodies. Now there are the very
52 wicked fellows, who do all sorts of diabolical things; they are born

1 again as animals, and if they are very bad, they are born as very
2 low animals, or become plants, or stones.

3 In the Deva form they make no Karma at all; only man makes
4 Karma. Karma means work which will produce effect. When a man
5 dies and becomes a Deva, he has only a period of pleasure, and
6 during that time, makes no fresh Karma; it is simply a reward for
7 his past good Karma. When the good Karma is worked out, then the
8 remaining Karma begins to take effect, and he comes down to
9 earth. He becomes man again, and if he does very good works, and
10 purifies himself, he goes to Brahmaloaka and comes back no more.

11 The animal is a state of sojourn for the Jiva evolving from
12 lower forms. In course of time the animal becomes man. It is a
13 significant fact that as the human population is increasing, the
14 animal population is decreasing. The animal souls are all becoming
15 men. So many species of animals have become men already. Where
16 else have they gone?

17 In the Vedas, there is no mention of hell. But our Puranas, the
18 later books of our scriptures, thought that no religion could be
19 complete, unless hells were attached to it, and so they invented all
20 sorts of hells. In some of these, men were sawed in half, and
21 continually tortured, but do not die. They are continually feeling
22 intense pain, but the books are merciful enough to say it is only for
23 a period. Bad Karma is worked out in that state and then they come
24 back on earth, and get another chance. So this human form is the
25 great chance. It is called the Karma-body, in which we decide our
26 fate. We are running in a huge circle, and this is the point in the
27 circle which determines the future. So this is considered the most
28 important form that there is. Man is greater than the gods.

29 So far with dualism, pure and simple. Next comes the higher
30 Vedantic philosophy which says, that this cannot be. God is both the
31 material and the efficient cause of this universe. If you say there is
32 a God who is an infinite Being, and a soul which is also infinite, and
33 a nature which is also infinite, you can go on multiplying infinities
34 without limit which is simply absurd; you smash all logic. So God is
35 both the material and the efficient cause of the universe; He
36 projects this universe out of Himself. Then how is it that God has
37 become these walls and this table, that God has become the pig,
38 and the murderer, and all the evil things in the world? We say that
39 God is pure. How can He become all these degenerate things? Our
40 answer is: just as I am a soul and have a body, and in a sense, this
41 body is not different from me, yet I, the real I, in fact, am not the
42 body. For instance, I say, I am a child, a young man, or an old man,
43 but my soul has not changed. It remains the same soul. Similarly,
44 the whole universe, comprising all nature and an infinite number of
45 souls, is, as it were, the infinite body of God. He is interpenetrating
46 the whole of it. He alone is unchangeable, but nature changes, and
47 soul changes. He is unaffected by changes in nature and soul. In
48 what way does nature change? In its forms; it takes fresh forms.
49 But the soul cannot change that way. The soul contracts and
50 expands in knowledge. It contracts by evil deeds. Those deeds
51 which contract the real natural knowledge and purity of the soul
52 are called evil deeds. Those deeds, again, which bring out the

1 natural glory of the soul, are called good deeds. All these souls
2 were pure, but they have become contracted; through the mercy of
3 God, and by doing good deeds, they will expand and recover their
4 natural purity. Everyone has the same chance, and in the long run,
5 must get out. But this universe will not cease, because it is eternal.
6 This is the second theory. The first is called dualism. The second
7 holds that there are God, soul, and nature, and soul and nature
8 form the body of God, and, therefore, these three form one unit. It
9 represents a higher stage of religious development and goes by the
10 name of qualified monism. In dualism, the universe is conceived as
11 a large machine set going by God, while in qualified monism, it is
12 conceived as an organism, interpenetrated by the Divine Self.

13 The last are the non-dualists. They raise the question also,
14 that God must be both the material and the efficient cause of this
15 universe. As such, God has become the whole of this universe and
16 there is no going against it. And when these other people say that
17 God is the soul, and the universe is the body, and the body is
18 changing, but God is changeless, the non-dualists say, all this is
19 nonsense. In that case what is the use of calling God the material
20 cause of this universe? The material cause is the cause become
21 effect; the effect is nothing but the cause in another form. Wherever
22 you see an effect, it is the cause reproduced. If the universe is the
23 effect, and God the cause, it must be the reproduction of God. If you
24 say that the universe is the body of God, and that the body becomes
25 contracted and fine and becomes the cause, and out of that the
26 universe is evolved, the non-dualists say that it is God Himself who
27 has become this universe. Now comes a very fine question. If this
28 God has become this universe, you and all these things are God.
29 Certainly. This book is God, everything is God. My body is God, and
30 my mind is God, and my soul is God. Then why are there so many
31 Jivas? Has God become divided into millions of Jivas? Does that one
32 God turn into millions of Jivas? Then how did it become so? How
33 can that infinite power and substance, the one Being of the
34 universe, become divided? It is impossible to divide infinity. How
35 can that pure Being become this universe? If He has become the
36 universe, He is changeful, and if He is changeful, He is part of
37 nature, and whatever is nature and changeful is born and dies. If
38 our God is changeful, He must die some day. Take note of that.
39 Again, how much of God has become this universe? If you say X (the
40 unknown algebraical quantity), then God is God minus X now, and,
41 therefore, not the same God as before this creation, because so
42 much has become this universe.

43 So the non-dualists say, "This universe does not exist at all; it
44 is all illusion. The whole of this universe, these Devas, gods, angels,
45 and all the other beings born and dying, all this infinite number of
46 souls coming up and going down, are all dreams." There is no Jiva
47 at all. How can there be many? It is the one Infinity. As the one sun,
48 reflected on various pieces of water, appears to be many, and
49 millions of globules of water reflect so many millions of suns, and in
50 each globule will be a perfect image of the sun, yet there is only
51 one sun, so are all these Jivas but reflections in different minds.
52 These different minds are like so many different globules, reflecting

1 this one Being. God is being reflected in all these different Jivas.
2 But a dream cannot be without a reality, and that reality is that one
3 Infinite Existence. You, as body, mind, or soul, are a dream, but
4 what you really are, is Existence, Knowledge, Bliss. You are the God
5 of this universe. You are creating the whole universe and drawing it
6 in. Thus says the Advaitist. So all these births and rebirths, coming
7 and going, are the figments of Maya. You are infinite. Where can
8 you go? The sun, the moon, and the whole universe are but drops in
9 your transcendent nature. How can you be born or die? I never was
10 born, never will be born. I never had father or mother, friends or
11 foes, for I am Existence, Knowledge, Bliss Absolute. I am He, I am
12 He. So, what is the goal, according to this philosophy? That those
13 who receive this knowledge are one with the universe. For them, all
14 heavens and even Brahmaloaka are destroyed, the whole dream
15 vanishes, and they find themselves the eternal God of the universe.
16 They attain their real individuality, with its infinite knowledge and
17 bliss, and become free. Pleasures in little things cease. We are
18 finding pleasure in this little body, in this little individuality. How
19 much greater the pleasure when this whole universe is my body! If
20 there is pleasure in one body, how much more when all bodies are
21 mine! Then is freedom attained. And this is called Advaita, the non-
22 dualistic Vedanta philosophy.

23 These are the three steps which Vedanta philosophy has
24 taken, and we cannot go any further, because we cannot go beyond
25 unity. When a science reaches a unity, it cannot by any manner of
26 means go any further. You cannot go beyond this idea of the
27 Absolute.

28 All people cannot take up this Advaita philosophy; it is hard.
29 First of all, it is very hard to understand it intellectually. It requires
30 the sharpest of intellects, a bold understanding. Secondly, it does
31 not suit the vast majority of people. So there are these three steps.
32 Begin with the first one. Then by thinking of that and understanding
33 it, the second will open itself. Just as a race advances, so individuals
34 have to advance. The steps which the human race has taken to
35 reach to the highest pinnacles of religious thought, every individual
36 will have to take. Only, while the human race took millions of years
37 to reach from one step to another, individuals may live the whole
38 life of the human race in a much shorter duration. But each one of
39 us will have to go through these steps. Those of you who are non-
40 dualists look back to the period of your lives when you were strong
41 dualists. As soon as you think you are a body and a mind, you will
42 have to take the whole of this dream. If you take one portion, you
43 must take the whole. The man who says, here is this world, and
44 there is no (Personal) God, is a fool; because if there is a world,
45 there will have to be a cause, and that is what is called God. You
46 cannot have an effect without knowing that there is a cause. God
47 will only vanish when this world vanishes; then you will become
48 God (Absolute), and this world will be no longer for you. So long as
49 the dream that you are a body exists, you are bound to see yourself
50 as being born and dying; but as soon as that dream vanishes, so will
51 the dream vanish that you are being born and dying, and so will the
52 other dream that there is a universe vanish. That very thing which

1 we now see as the universe will appear to us as God (Absolute), and
2 that very God who has so long been external will appear to be
3 internal, as our own Self.

STEPS TO REALISATION

(A class-lecture delivered in America)

First among the qualification required of the aspirant for Jnana, or wisdom, come Shama and Dama, which may be taken together. They mean the keeping of the organs in their own centres without allowing them to stray out. I shall explain to you first what the word "organ" means. Here are the eyes; the eyes are not the organs of vision but only the instruments. Unless the organs also are present, I cannot see, even if I have eyes. But, given both the organs and the instruments, unless the mind attaches itself to these two, no vision takes place. So, in each act of perception, three things are necessary--first, the external instruments, then, the internal organs, and lastly, the mind. If any one of them be absent, then there will be no perception. Thus the mind acts through two agencies--one external, and the other internal. When I see things, my mind goes out, becomes externalised; but suppose I close my eyes and begin to think, the mind does not go out, it is internally active. But, in either case, there is activity of the organs. When I look at you and speak to you, both the organs and the instruments are active. When I close my eyes and begin to think, the organs are active, but not the instruments. Without the activity of these organs, there will be no thought. You will find that none of you can think without some symbol. In the case of the blind man, he has also to think through some figure. The organs of sight and hearing are generally very active. You must bear in mind that by the word "organ" is meant the nerve centre in the brain. The eyes and ears are only the instruments of seeing and hearing, and the organs are inside. If the organs are destroyed by any means, even if the eyes or the ears be there, we shall not see or hear. So in order to control the mind, we must first be able to control these organs. To restrain the mind from wandering outward or inward, and keep the organs in their respective centres, is what is meant by the words Shama and Dama. Shama consists in not allowing the mind to externalise, and Dama, in checking the external instruments.

Now comes Uparati which consists in not thinking of things of the senses. Most of our time is spent in thinking about sense-objects, things which we have seen, or we have heard, which we shall see or shall hear, things which we have eaten, or are eating, or shall eat, places where we have lived, and so on. We think of them or talk of them most of our time. One who wishes to be a Vedantin must give up this habit.

Then comes the next preparation (it is a hard task to be a philosopher!), Titiksha, the most difficult of all. It is nothing less than the ideal forbearance--"Resist not evil." This requires a little explanation. We may not resist an evil, but at the same time we may feel very miserable. A man may say very harsh things to me, and I may not outwardly hate him for it, may not answer him back, and may restrain myself from apparently getting angry, but anger and hatred may be in my mind, and I may feel very badly towards that man. That is not non-resistance; I should be without any feeling of hatred or anger, without any thought of resistance; my mind must

1 then be as calm as if nothing had happened. And only when I have
2 got to that state, have I attained to non-resistance, and not before.
3 Forbearance of all misery, without even a thought of resisting or
4 driving it out, without even any painful feeling in the mind, or any
5 remorse--this is Titiksha. Suppose I do not resist, and some great
6 evil comes thereby; if I have Titiksha, I should not feel any remorse
7 for not having resisted. When the mind has attained to that state, it
8 has become established in Titiksha. People in India do
9 extraordinary things in order to practise this Titiksha. They bear
10 tremendous heat and cold without caring, they do not even care for
11 snow, because they take no thought for the body; it is left to itself,
12 as if it were a foreign thing.

13 The next qualification required is Shraddha, faith. One must
14 have tremendous faith in religion and God. Until one has it, one
15 cannot aspire to be a Jnani. A great sage once told me that not one
16 in twenty millions in this world believed in God. I asked him why,
17 and he told me, "Suppose there is a thief in this room, and he gets
18 to know that there is a mass of gold in the next room, and only a
19 very thin partition between the two rooms; what will be the
20 condition of that thief?" I answered, "He will not be able to sleep at
21 all; his brain will be actively thinking of some means of getting at
22 the gold, and he will think of nothing else." Then he replied, "Do
23 you believe that a man could believe in God and not go mad to get
24 Him? If a man sincerely believes that there is that immense, infinite
25 mine of Bliss, and that It can be reached, would not that man go
26 mad in his struggle to reach It?" Strong faith in God and the
27 consequent eagerness to reach Him constitute Shraddha.

28 Then comes Samadhana, or constant practice, to hold the
29 mind in God. Nothing is done in a day. Religion cannot be
30 swallowed in the form of a pill. It requires hard and constant
31 practice. The mind can be conquered only by slow and steady
32 practice.

33 Next is Mumukshutva, the intense desire to be free. Those of
34 you who have read Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia* remember his
35 translation of the first sermon of Buddha, where Buddha says,

36 "Ye suffer from yourselves. None else compels.

37 None other holds you that ye live and die,

38 And whirl upon the wheel, and hug and kiss

39 Its spokes of agony,

40 Its tire of tears, its nave of nothingness."

41 All the misery we have is of our own choosing; such is our
42 nature. The old Chinaman, who having been kept in prison for sixty
43 years was released on the coronation of a new emperor, exclaimed,
44 when he came out, that he could not live; he must go back to his
45 horrible dungeon among the rats and mice; he could not bear the
46 light. So he asked them to kill him or send him back to the prison,
47 and he was sent back. Exactly similar is the condition of all men. We
48 run headlong after all sorts of misery, and are unwilling to be freed
49 from them. Every day we run after pleasure, and before we reach it,

1 we find it is gone, it has slipped through our fingers. Still we do not
2 cease from our mad pursuit, but on and on we go, blinded fools that
3 we are.

4 In some oil mills in India, bullocks are used that go round and
5 round to grind the oil-seed. There is a yoke on the bullock's neck.
6 They have a piece of wood protruding from the yoke, and on that is
7 fastened a wisp of straw. The bullock is blindfolded in such a way
8 that it can only look forward, and so it stretches its neck to get at
9 the straw; and in doing so, it pushes the piece of wood out a little
10 further; and it makes another attempt with the same result, and yet
11 another, and so on. It never catches the straw, but goes round and
12 round in the hope of getting it, and in so doing, grinds out the oil. In
13 the same way you and I who are born slaves to nature, money and
14 wealth, wives and children, are always chasing a wisp of straw, a
15 mere chimera, and are going through an innumerable round of lives
16 without obtaining what we seek. The great dream is love; we are all
17 going to love and be loved, we are all going to be happy and never
18 meet with misery, but the more we go towards happiness, the more
19 it goes away from us. Thus the world is going on, society goes on,
20 and we, blinded slaves, have to pay for it without knowing. Study
21 your own lives, and find how little of happiness there is in them, and
22 how little in truth you have gained in the course of this wild-goose
23 chase of the world.

24 Do you remember the story of Solon and Croesus? The king
25 said to the great sage that Asia Minor was a very happy place. And
26 the sage asked him, "Who is the happiest man? I have not seen
27 anyone very happy." "Nonsense," said Croesus, "I am the happiest
28 man in the world." "Wait, sir, till the end of your life; don't be in a
29 hurry," replied the sage and went away. In course of time that king
30 was conquered by the Persians, and they ordered him to be burnt
31 alive. The funeral pyre was prepared and when poor Croesus saw it,
32 he cried aloud "Solon! Solon!" On being asked to whom he referred,
33 he told his story, and the Persian emperor was touched, and saved
34 his life.

35 Such is the life-story of each one of us; such is the
36 tremendous power of nature over us. It repeatedly kicks us away,
37 but still we pursue it with feverish excitement. We are always
38 hoping against hope this hope, this chimera maddens us; we are
39 always hoping for happiness.

40 There was a great king in ancient India who was once asked
41 four questions, of which one was: "What is the most wonderful
42 thing in the world?" "Hope," was the answer. This is the most
43 wonderful thing. Day and night we see people dying around us, and
44 yet we think we shall not die; we never think that we shall die, or
45 that we shall suffer. Each man thinks that success will be his,
46 hoping against hope, against all odds, against all mathematical
47 reasoning. Nobody is ever really happy here. If a man be wealthy
48 and have plenty to eat, his digestion is out of order, and he cannot
49 eat. If a man's digestion be good, and he have the digestive power
50 of a cormorant, he has nothing to put into his mouth. If he be rich,
51 he has no children. If he be hungry and poor, he has a whole
52 regiment of children, and does not know what to do with them. Why

1 is it so? Because happiness and misery are the obverse and reverse
2 of the same coin; he who takes happiness, must take misery also.
3 We all have this foolish idea that we can have happiness without
4 misery, and it has taken such possession of us that we have no
5 control over the senses.

6 When I was in Boston, a young man came up to me, and gave
7 me a scrap of paper of which he had written a name and address,
8 followed by these words: "All the wealth and all the happiness of
9 the world are yours, if you only know how to get them. If you come
10 to me, I will teach you how to get them. Charge, \$5." He gave me
11 this and said, "What do you think of this?" I said, "Young man, why
12 don't you get the money to print this? You have not even enough
13 money to get this printed!" He did not understand this. He was
14 infatuated with the idea that he could get immense wealth and
15 happiness without any trouble. There are two extremes into which
16 men are running; one is extreme optimism, when everything is rosy
17 and nice and good; the other, extreme pessimism, when everything
18 seems to be against them. The majority of men have more or less
19 undeveloped brains. One in a million we see with a well-developed
20 brain; the rest either have peculiar idiosyncrasies, or are
21 monomaniacs.

22 Naturally we run into extremes. When we are healthy and
23 young, we think that all the wealth of the world will be ours, and
24 when later we get kicked about by society like footballs and get
25 older, we sit in a corner and croak and throw cold water on the
26 enthusiasm of others. Few men know that with pleasure there is
27 pain, and with pain, pleasure; and as pain is disgusting, so is
28 pleasure, as it is the twin brother of pain. It is derogatory to the
29 glory of man that he should be going after pain, and equally
30 derogatory, that he should be going after pleasure. Both should be
31 turned aside by men whose reason is balanced. Why will not men
32 seek freedom from being played upon?

33 This moment we are whipped, and when we begin to weep,
34 nature gives us a dollar; again we are whipped, and when we weep,
35 nature gives us a piece of gingerbread, and we begin to laugh
36 again.

37 The sage wants liberty; he finds that sense-objects are all vain
38 and that there is no end to pleasures and pains. How many rich
39 people in the world want to find fresh pleasures! All pleasures are
40 old, and they want new ones. Do you not see how many foolish
41 things they are inventing every day, just to titillate the nerves for a
42 moment, and that done, how there comes a reaction? The majority
43 of people are just like a flock of sheep. If the leading sheep falls into
44 a ditch, all the rest follow and break their necks. In the same way,
45 what one leading member of a society does, all the others do,
46 without thinking what they are doing. When a man begins to see
47 the vanity of worldly things, he will feel he ought not to be thus
48 played upon or borne along by nature. That is slavery. If a man has
49 a few kind words said to him, he begins to smile, and when he
50 hears a few harsh words, he begins to weep. He is a slave to a bit of
51 bread, to a breath of air; a slave to dress, a slave to patriotism, to
52 country, to name, and to fame. He is thus in the midst of slavery and

1 the real man has become buried within, through his bondage. What
2 you call man is a slave. When one realises all this slavery, then
3 comes the desire to be free; an intense desire comes. If a piece of
4 burning charcoal be placed on a man's head, see how he struggles
5 to throw it off. Similar will be the struggles for freedom of a man
6 who really understands that he is a slave of nature.

7 We have now seen what Mumukshutva, or the desire to be
8 free, is. The next training is also a very difficult one. Nityanitya-
9 Viveka--discriminating between that which is true and that which is
10 untrue, between the eternal and the transitory. God alone is
11 eternal, everything else is transitory. Everything dies; the angels
12 die, men die, animals die, earths die, sun, moon, and stars, all die;
13 everything undergoes constant change. The mountains of today
14 were the oceans of yesterday and will be oceans tomorrow.
15 Everything is in a state of flux. The whole universe is a mass of
16 change. But there is One who never changes, and that is God; and
17 the nearer we get to Him, the less will be the change for us, the
18 less will nature be able to work on us; and when we reach Him, and
19 stand with Him, we shall conquer nature, we shall be masters of
20 these phenomena of nature, and they will have no effect on us.

21 You see, if we really have undergone the above discipline, we
22 really do not require anything else in this world. All knowledge is
23 within us. All perfection is there already in the soul. But this
24 perfection has been covered up by nature; layer after layer of
25 nature is covering this purity of the soul. What have we to do?
26 Really we do not develop our souls at all. What can develop the
27 perfect? We simply take the veil off; and the soul manifests itself in
28 its pristine purity, its natural, innate freedom.

29 Now begins the inquiry: Why is this discipline so necessary?
30 Because religion is not attained through the ears, nor through the
31 eyes, nor yet through the brain. No scriptures can make us
32 religious. We may study all the books that are in the world, yet we
33 may not understand a word of religion or of God. We may talk all
34 our lives and yet may not be the better for it; we may be the most
35 intellectual people the world ever saw, and yet we may not come to
36 God at all. On the other hand, have you not seen what irreligious
37 men have been produced from the most intellectual training? It is
38 one of the evils of your Western civilisation that you are after
39 intellectual education alone, and take no care of the heart. It only
40 makes men ten times more selfish, and that will be your
41 destruction. When there is conflict between the heart and the brain,
42 let the heart be followed, because intellect has only one state,
43 reason, and within that, intellect works, and cannot get beyond. It is
44 the heart which takes one to the highest plane, which intellect can
45 never reach; it goes beyond intellect, and reaches to what is called
46 inspiration. Intellect can never become inspired; only the heart
47 when it is enlightened, becomes inspired. An intellectual, heartless
48 man never becomes an inspired man. It is always the heart that
49 speaks in the man of love; it discovers a greater instrument than
50 intellect can give you, the instrument of inspiration. Just as the
51 intellect is the instrument of knowledge, so is the heart the
52 instrument of inspiration. In a lower state it is a much weaker

1 instrument than intellect. An ignorant man knows nothing, but he is
2 a little emotional by nature. Compare him with a great professor--
3 what wonderful power the latter possesses! But the professor is
4 bound by his intellect, and he can be a devil and an intellectual man
5 at the same time; but the man of heart can never be a devil; no man
6 with emotion was ever a devil. Properly cultivated, the heart can be
7 changed, and will go beyond intellect; it will be changed into
8 inspiration. Man will have to go beyond intellect in the end. The
9 knowledge of man, his powers of perception, of reasoning and
10 intellect and heart, all are busy churning this milk of the world. Out
11 of long churning comes butter, and this butter is God. Men of heart
12 get the "butter", and the "buttermilk" is left for the intellectual.

13 These are all preparations for the heart, for that love, for that
14 intense sympathy appertaining to the heart. It is not at all
15 necessary to be educated or learned to get to God. A sage once told
16 me, "To kill others one must be equipped with swords and shields,
17 but to commit suicide a needle is sufficient; so to teach others,
18 much intellect and learning are necessary, but not so for your own
19 self-illumination." Are you pure? If you are pure, you will reach God.
20 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." If you are
21 not pure, and you know all the sciences in the world, that will not
22 help you at all; you may be buried in all the books you read, but that
23 will not be of much use. It is the heart that reaches the goal. Follow
24 the heart. A pure heart sees beyond the intellect; it gets inspired; it
25 knows things that reason can never know, and whenever there is
26 conflict between the pure heart and the intellect, always side with
27 the pure heart, even if you think what your heart is doing is
28 unreasonable. When it is desirous of doing good to others, your
29 brain may tell you that it is not politic to do so, but follow your
30 heart, and you will find that you make less mistakes than by
31 following your intellect. The pure heart is the best mirror for the
32 reflection of truth, so all these disciplines are for the purification of
33 the heart. And as soon as it is pure, all truths flash upon it in a
34 minute; all truth in the universe will manifest in your heart, if you
35 are sufficiently pure.

36 The great truths about atoms, and the finer elements, and the
37 fine perceptions of men, were discovered ages ago by men who
38 never saw a telescope, or a microscope, or a laboratory. How did
39 they know all these things? It was through the heart; they purified
40 the heart. It is open to us to do the same today; it is the culture of
41 the heart, really, and not that of the intellect that will lessen the
42 misery of the world.

43 Intellect has been cultured with the result that hundreds of
44 sciences have been discovered, and their effect has been that the
45 few have made slaves of the many--that is all the good that has
46 been done. Artificial wants have been created; and every poor man,
47 whether he has money or not, desires to have those wants satisfied,
48 and when he cannot, he struggles, and dies in the struggle. This is
49 the result. Through the intellect is not the way to solve the problem
50 of misery, but through the heart. If all this vast amount of effort had
51 been spent in making men purer, gentler, more forbearing, this
52 world would have a thousandfold more happiness than it has today.

1 Always cultivate the heart; through the heart the Lord speaks, and
2 through the intellect you yourself speak.

3 You remember in the Old Testament where Moses was told,
4 "Take off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou
5 standest is holy ground." We must always approach the study of
6 religion with that reverent attitude. He who comes with a pure
7 heart and a reverent attitude, his heart will be opened; the doors
8 will open for him, and he will see the truth.

9 If you come with intellect only, you can have a little
10 intellectual gymnastics, intellectual theories, but not truth. Truth
11 has such a face that any one who sees that face becomes convinced.
12 The sun does not require any torch to show it; the sun is self-
13 effulgent. If truth requires evidence, what will evidence that
14 evidence? If something is necessary as witness for truth, where is
15 the witness for that witness? We must approach religion with
16 reverence and with love, and our heart will stand up and say, this is
17 truth, and this is untruth.

18 The field of religion is beyond our senses, beyond even our
19 consciousness. We cannot *sense* God. Nobody has seen God with
20 his eyes or ever will see; nobody has God in his consciousness. I am
21 not conscious of God, or you, or anybody. Where is God? Where is
22 the field of religion? It is beyond the senses, beyond consciousness.
23 Consciousness is only one of the many planes in which we work;
24 you will have to transcend the field of consciousness, to go beyond
25 the senses, approach nearer and nearer to your own centre, and as
26 you do that, you will approach nearer and nearer to God. What is
27 the proof of God? Direct perception, Pratyaksha. The proof of this
28 wall is that I perceive it. God has been perceived that way by
29 thousands before, and will be perceived by all who want to perceive
30 Him. But this perception is no sense-perception at all; it is
31 supersensuous, superconscious, and all this training is needed to
32 take us beyond the senses. By means of all sorts of past work and
33 bondages we are being dragged downwards; these preparations
34 will make us pure and light. Bondages will fall off by themselves,
35 and we shall be buoyed up beyond this plane of sense-perception to
36 which we are tied down, and then we shall see, and hear, and feel
37 things which men in the three ordinary states (viz. waking, dream,
38 and sleep) neither feel, nor see, nor hear. Then we shall speak a
39 strange language, as it were, and the world will not understand us,
40 because it does not know anything but the senses. True religion is
41 entirely transcendental. Every being that is in the universe has the
42 potentiality of transcending the senses; even the little worm will
43 one day transcend the senses and reach God. No life will be a
44 failure; there is no such thing as failure in the universe. A hundred
45 times man will hurt himself, a thousand times he will tumble, but in
46 the end he will realise that he is God. We know there is no progress
47 in a straight line. Every soul moves, as it were, in a circle, and will
48 have to complete it, and no soul can go so low but there will come a
49 time when it will have to go upwards. No one will be lost. We are all
50 projected from one common centre, which is God. The highest as
51 well as the lowest life God ever projected, will come back to the
52 Father of all lives. "From whom all beings are projected, in whom

1 all live, and unto whom they all return; that is God."

VEDANTA AND PRIVILEGE

(Delivered in London)

We have nearly finished the metaphysical portion of the Advaita. One point, and perhaps the most difficult to understand, remains. We have seen so far that, according to the Advaita theory, all we see around us, and the whole universe in fact, is the evolution of that one Absolute. This is called, in Sanskrit, Brahman. The Absolute has become changed into the whole of nature. But here comes a difficulty. How is it possible for the Absolute to change? What made the Absolute to change? By its very definition, the Absolute is unchangeable. Change of the unchangeable would be a contradiction. The same difficulty applies to those who believe in a Personal God. For instance, how did this creation arise? It could not have arisen out of nothing; that would be a contradiction--something coming out of nothing can never be. The effect is the cause in another form. Out of the seed, the big tree grows; the tree is the seed, plus air and water taken in. And if there were any method of testing the amount of the air, and water taken to make the body of the tree, we should find that it is exactly the same as the effect, the tree. Modern science has proved beyond doubt that it is so, that the cause is the effect in another form. The adjustment of the parts of the cause changes and becomes the effect. So, we have to avoid this difficulty of having a universe without a cause, and we are bound to admit that God has become the universe.

But we have avoided one difficulty, and landed in another. In every theory, the idea of God comes through the idea of unchangeability. We have traced historically how the one idea which we have always in mind in the search for God, even in its crudest form, is the idea of freedom; and the idea of freedom and of unchangeability is one and the same. It is the free alone which never changes, and the unchangeable alone which is free; for change is produced by something exterior to a thing, or within itself, which is more powerful than the surroundings. Everything which can be changed is necessarily bound by certain cause or causes, which cannot be unchangeable. Supposing God has become this universe, then God is here and has changed. And suppose the Infinite has become this finite universe, so much of the Infinite has gone, and, therefore, God is Infinite minus the universe. A changeable God would be no God. To avoid this doctrine of pantheism, there is a very bold theory of the Vedanta. It is that this universe, as we know and think it, does not exist, that the unchangeable has not changed, that the whole of this universe is mere appearance and not reality, that this idea of parts, and little beings, and differentiations is only apparent, not the nature of the thing itself. God has not changed at all, and has not become the universe at all. We see God as the universe, because we have to look through time, space, and causation. It is time, space, and causation that make this differentiation apparently, but not really. This is a very bold theory indeed. Now this theory ought to be explained a little more clearly. It does not mean idealism in the sense in which it is generally understood. It does not say that this universe does not exist; it exists, but at the same time it is not what

1 we take it for. To illustrate this, the example given by the Advaita
2 philosophy is well known. In the darkness of night, a stump of a
3 tree is looked upon as a ghost by some superstitious person, as a
4 policeman by a robber, as a friend by some one waiting for his
5 companion. In all these cases, the stump of the tree did not change,
6 but there are apparent changes, and these changes were in the
7 minds of those who saw it. From the subjective side we can
8 understand it better through psychology. There is something
9 outside of ourselves, the true nature of which is unknown and
10 unknowable to us; let us call it x . And there is something inside,
11 which is also unknown and unknowable to us; let us call it y . The
12 knowable is a combination of x plus y , and everything that we
13 know, therefore, must have two parts, the x outside, and the y
14 inside; and the x plus y is the thing we know. So, every form in the
15 universe is partly our creation and partly something outside. Now
16 what the Vedanta holds is that this x and this y are one and the
17 same.

18 A very similar conclusion has been arrived at by some
19 western philosophers, especially by Herbert Spencer, and some
20 other modern philosophers. When it is said that the same power
21 which is manifesting itself in the flower is welling up in my own
22 consciousness, it is the very same idea which the Vedantist wants to
23 preach, that the reality of the external world and the reality of the
24 internal world are one and the same. Even the ideas of the internal
25 and external exist by differentiation and do not exist in the things
26 themselves. For instance, if we develop another sense, the whole
27 world will change for us, showing that it is the subject which will
28 change the object. If I change, the external world changes. The
29 theory of the Vedanta, therefore, comes to this, that you and I and
30 everything in the universe are that Absolute, not parts, but the
31 whole. You are the whole of that Absolute, and so are all others,
32 because the idea of part cannot come into it. These divisions, these
33 limitations, are only apparent, not in the thing itself. I am complete
34 and perfect, and I was never bound, boldly preaches the Vedanta. If
35 you think you are bound, bound you will remain; if you know that
36 you are free, free you are. Thus the end and aim of this philosophy
37 is to let us know that we have been free always, and shall remain
38 free for ever. We never change, we never die, and we are never
39 born. What are all these changes then? What becomes of this
40 phenomenal world? This world is admitted as an apparent world,
41 bound by time, space, and causation, and it comes to what is called
42 the Vivarta-vada in Sanskrit, evolution of nature, and manifestation
43 of the Absolute. The Absolute does not change, or re-evolve. In the
44 little amoeba is that infinite perfection latent. It is called amoeba
45 from its amoeba covering, and from the amoeba to the perfect man
46 the change is not in what is inside- that remains the same,
47 unchangeable--but the change occurs in the covering.

48 There is a screen here, and some beautiful scenery outside.
49 There is a small hole in the screen through which we can only catch
50 a glimpse of it. Suppose this hole begins to increase; as it grows
51 larger and larger, more and more of the scenery comes into view,
52 and when the screen has vanished, we come face to face with the

1 whole of the scenery. This scene outside is the soul, and the screen
2 between us and the scenery is Maya--time, space, and causation.
3 There is a little hole somewhere, through which I can catch only a
4 glimpse of the soul. When the hole is bigger, I see more and more,
5 and when the screen has vanished, I know that I am the soul. So
6 changes in the universe are not in the Absolute; they are in nature.
7 Nature evolves more and more, until the Absolute manifests Itself.
8 In everyone It exists; in some It is manifested more than in others.
9 The whole universe is really one. In speaking of the soul, to say that
10 one is superior to another has no meaning. In speaking of the soul,
11 to say that man is superior to the animal or the plant, has no
12 meaning; the whole universe is one. In plants the obstacle to soul-
13 manifestation is very great; in animals a little less; and in man still
14 less; in cultured, spiritual men still less; and in perfect men, it has
15 vanished altogether. All our struggles, exercises, pains, pleasures,
16 tears, and smiles, all that we do and think tend towards that goal,
17 the tearing up of the screen, making the hole bigger, thinning the
18 layers that remain between the manifestation and the reality
19 behind. Our work, therefore, is not to make the soul free, but to get
20 rid of the bondages. The sun is covered by layers of clouds, but
21 remains unaffected by them. The work of the wind is to drive the
22 clouds away, and the more the clouds disappear, the more the light
23 of the sun appears. There is no change whatsoever in the soul--
24 Infinite, Absolute, Eternal, Knowledge, Bliss, and Existence. Neither
25 can there be birth or death for the soul. Dying, and being born,
26 reincarnation, and going to heaven, cannot be for the soul. These
27 are different appearances, different mirages, different dreams. If a
28 man who is dreaming of this world now dreams of wicked thoughts
29 and wicked deeds, after a certain time the thought of that very
30 dream will produce the next dream. He will dream that he is in a
31 horrible place, being tortured. The man who is dreaming good
32 thoughts and good deeds, after that period of dream is over, will
33 dream he is in a better place; and so on from dream to dream. But
34 the time will come when the whole of this dream will vanish. To
35 everyone of us there must come a time when the whole universe
36 will be found to have been a mere dream, when we shall find that
37 the soul is infinitely better than its surroundings. In this struggle
38 through what we call our environments, there will come a time
39 when we shall find that these environments were almost zero in
40 comparison with the power of the soul. It is only a question of time,
41 and time is nothing in the Infinite. It is a drop in the ocean. We can
42 afford to wait and be calm.

43 Consciously or unconsciously, therefore, the whole universe is
44 going towards that goal. The moon is struggling to get out of the
45 sphere of attraction of other bodies, and will come out of it, in the
46 long run. But those who consciously strive to get free hasten the
47 time. One benefit from this theory we practically see is that the idea
48 of a real universal love is only possible from this point of view. All
49 are our fellow passengers, our fellow travellers--all life, plants,
50 animals; not only my brother man, but my brother brute, my
51 brother plant; not only my brother the good, but my brother the
52 evil, my brother the spiritual and my brother the wicked. They are
53 all going to the same goal. All are in the same stream, each is

1 hurrying towards that infinite freedom. We cannot stay the course,
2 none can stay it, none can go back, however he may try; he will be
3 driven forward, and in the end he will attain to freedom. Creation
4 means the struggle to get back to freedom, the centre of our being,
5 whence we have been thrown off, as it were. The very fact that we
6 are here, shows that we are going towards the centre, and the
7 manifestation of this attraction towards the centre is what we call
8 love.

9 The question is asked: From what does this universe come, is
10 what does it remain, to what does it go back? And the answer is:
11 From Love it comes, in love it remains, back it goes unto love. Thus
12 we are in a position to understand that, whether one likes it or not,
13 there is no going back for anyone. Everyone has to get to the
14 centre, however he may struggle to go back. Yet if we struggle
15 consciously, knowingly, it will smooth the passage, it will lessen the
16 jar, and quicken the time. Another conclusion we naturally arrive at
17 from this is that all knowledge and all power are within and not
18 without. What we call nature is a reflecting glass--that is all the use
19 of nature--and all knowledge is this reflection of the within on this
20 glass of nature. What we call powers, secrets of nature, and force,
21 are all within. In the external world are only a series of changes.
22 There is no knowledge in nature; all knowledge comes from the
23 human soul. Man manifests knowledge, discovers it within himself,
24 which is pre-existing through eternity. Everyone is the embodiment
25 of Knowledge, everyone is the embodiment of eternal Bliss, and
26 eternal Existence. The ethical effect is just the same, as we have
27 seen elsewhere, with regard to equality.

28 But the idea of privilege is the bane of human life. Two forces,
29 as it were, are constantly at work, one making caste, and the other
30 breaking caste; in other words, the one making for privilege, the
31 other breaking down privilege. And whenever privilege is broken
32 down, more and more light and progress come to a race. This
33 struggle we see all around us. Of course there is first the brutal
34 idea of privilege, that of the strong over the weak. There is the
35 privilege of wealth. If a man has more money than another, he
36 wants a little privilege over those who have less. There is the still
37 subtler and more powerful privilege of intellect; because one man
38 knows more than others, he claims more privilege. And the last of
39 all, and the worst, because the most tyrannical, is the privilege of
40 spirituality. If some persons think they know more of spirituality, of
41 God, they claim a superior privilege over everyone else. They say,
42 "Come down and worship us, ye common herds; we are the
43 messengers of God, and you have to worship us." None can be
44 Vedantists, and at the same time admit of privilege to anyone,
45 either mental, physical, or spiritual; absolutely no privilege for
46 anyone. The same power is in every man, the one manifesting more,
47 the other less; the same potentiality is in everyone. Where is the
48 claim to privilege? All knowledge is in every soul, even in the most
49 ignorant; he has not manifested it, but, perhaps, he has not had the
50 opportunity, the environments were not, perhaps, suitable to him.
51 When he gets the opportunity, he will manifest it. The idea that one
52 man is born superior to another has no meaning in the Vedanta;

1 that between two nations one is superior and the other inferior has
2 no meaning whatsoever. Put them in the same circumstances, and
3 see whether the same intelligence comes out or not. Before that
4 you have no right to say that one nation is superior to another. And
5 as to spirituality, no privilege should be claimed there. It is a
6 privilege to serve mankind, for this is the worship of God. God is
7 here, in all these human souls. He is the soul of man. What privilege
8 can men ask? There are no special messengers of God, never were,
9 and never can be. All beings, great or small, are equally
10 manifestations of God; the difference is only in the manifestation.
11 The same eternal message, which has been eternally given, comes
12 to them little by little. The eternal message has been written in the
13 heart of every being; it is there already, and all are struggling to
14 express it. Some, in suitable circumstances, express it a little better
15 than others, but as bearers of the message they are all one. What
16 claim to superiority is there? The most ignorant man, the most
17 ignorant child, is as great a messenger of God as any that ever
18 existed, and as great as any that are yet to come. For the infinite
19 message is there imprinted once for all in the heart of every being.
20 Wherever there is a being, that being contains the infinite message
21 of the Most High. It is there. The work of the Advaita, therefore, is
22 to break down all these privileges. It is the hardest work of all, and
23 curious to say, it has been less active than anywhere else in the land
24 of its birth. If there is any land of privilege, it is the land which gave
25 birth to this philosophy--privilege for the spiritual man as well as for
26 the man of birth. There they have not so much privilege for money
27 (that is one of the benefits, I think), but privilege for birth and
28 spirituality is everywhere.

29 Once a gigantic attempt was made to preach Vedantic ethics,
30 which succeeded to a certain extent for several hundred years, and
31 we know historically that those years were the best times of that
32 nation. I mean the Buddhistic attempt to break down privilege.
33 Some of the most beautiful epithets addressed to Buddha that I
34 remember are, "Thou the breaker of castes, destroyer of privileges,
35 preacher of equality to all beings." So, he preached this one idea of
36 equality. Its power has been misunderstood to a certain extent in
37 the brotherhood of Shramanas, where we find that hundreds of
38 attempts have been made to make them into a church, with
39 superiors and inferiors. You cannot make much of a church when
40 you tell people they are all gods. One of the good effects of Vedanta
41 has been freedom of religious thought, which India enjoyed
42 throughout all times of its history. It is something to glory in, that it
43 is the land where there was never a religious persecution, where
44 people are allowed perfect freedom in religion.

45 This practical side of Vedanta morality is necessary as much
46 today as it ever was, more necessary, perhaps, than it ever was, for
47 all this privilege-claiming has become tremendously intensified with
48 the extension of knowledge. The idea of God and the devil, or Ahura
49 Mazda and Ahriman, has a good deal of poetry in it. The difference
50 between God and the devil is in nothing except in unselfishness and
51 selfishness. The devil knows as much as God, is as powerful as God;
52 only he has no holiness--that makes him a devil. Apply the same

1 idea to the modern world: excess of knowledge and power, without
2 holiness, makes human beings devils. Tremendous power is being
3 acquired by the manufacture of machines and other appliances, and
4 privilege is claimed today as it never has been claimed in the
5 history of the world. That is why the Vedanta wants to preach
6 against it, to break down this tyrannising over the souls of men.

7 Those of you who have studied the Gita will remember the
8 memorable passages: "He who looks upon the learned Brahmin,
9 upon the cow, the elephant, the dog, or the outcast with the same
10 eye, he indeed is the sage, and the wise man"; "Even in this life he
11 has conquered relative existence whose mind is firmly fixed on this
12 sameness, for the Lord is one and the same to all, and the Lord is
13 pure; therefore those who have this sameness for all, and are pure,
14 are said to be living in God." This is the gist of Vedantic morality--
15 this sameness for all. We have seen that it is the subjective world
16 that rules the objective. Change the subject, and the object is bound
17 to change; purify yourself, and the world is bound to be purified.
18 This one thing requires to be taught now more than ever before. We
19 are becoming more and more busy about our neighbours, and less
20 and less about ourselves. The world will change if we change; if we
21 are pure, the world will become pure. The question is why I should
22 see evil in others. I cannot see evil unless I be evil. I cannot be
23 miserable unless I am weak. Things that used to make me
24 miserable when I was a child, do not do so now. The subject
25 changed, so the object was bound to change; so says the Vedanta.
26 All these things which we call causes of misery and evil, we shall
27 laugh at when we arrive at that wonderful state of equality, that
28 sameness. This is what is called in Vedanta attaining to freedom.
29 The sign of approaching that freedom is more and more of this
30 sameness and equality. In misery and happiness the same, in
31 success and defeat the same--such a mind is nearing that state of
32 freedom.

33 The mind cannot be easily conquered. Minds that rise into
34 waves at the approach of every little thing at the slightest
35 provocation or danger, in what a state they must be! What to talk of
36 greatness or spirituality, when these changes come over the mind?
37 This unstable condition of the mind must be changed. We must ask
38 ourselves how far we can be acted upon by the external world, and
39 how far we can stand on our own feet, in spite of all the forces
40 outside us. When we have succeeded in preventing all the forces in
41 the world from throwing us off our balance, then alone we have
42 attained to freedom, and not before. That is salvation. It is here and
43 nowhere else; it is this moment. Out of this idea, out of this
44 fountain-head, all beautiful streams of thought have flowed upon
45 the world, generally misunderstood in their expression, apparently
46 contradicting each other. We find hosts of brave and wonderfully
47 spiritual souls, in every nation, taking to caves or forests for
48 meditation, severing their connection with the external world. This
49 is the one idea. And, on the other hand, we find bright, illustrious
50 beings coming into society, trying to raise their fellow men, the
51 poor, the miserable. Apparently these two methods are
52 contradictory. The man who lives in a cave, apart from his fellow-

1 beings, smiles contemptuously upon those who are working for the
2 regeneration of their fellow men. "How foolish!" he says; "what
3 work is there? The world of Maya will always remain the world of
4 Maya; it cannot be changed." If I ask one of our priests in India, "Do
5 you believe in Vedanta?"--he says, "That is my religion; I certainly
6 do; that is my life." "Very well, do you admit the equality of all life,
7 the sameness of everything?" "Certainly, I do." The next moment,
8 when a low-caste man approaches this priest, he jumps to one side
9 of the street to avoid that man. "Why do you jump?" "Because his
10 very touch would have polluted me." "But you were just saying we
11 are all the same, and you admit there is no difference in souls." He
12 says, "Oh, that is in theory only for householders; when I go into a
13 forest, then I will look upon everyone as the same." You ask one of
14 your great men in England, of great birth and wealth, if he believes
15 as a Christian in the brotherhood of mankind, since all came from
16 God. He answers in the affirmative, but in five minutes he shouts
17 something uncomplimentary about the common herd. Thus, it has
18 been a theory only for several thousand years and never came into
19 practice. All understand it, declare it as the truth, but when you ask
20 them to practise it, they say, it will take millions of years.

21 There was a certain king who had a huge number of
22 courtiers, and each one of these courtiers declared he was ready to
23 sacrifice his life for his master, and that he was the most sincere
24 being ever born. In course of time, a Sannyasin came to the king.
25 The king said to him that there never was a king who had so many
26 sincere courtiers as he had. The Sannyasin smiled and said he did
27 not believe that. The king said the Sannyasin could test it if he
28 liked. So the Sannyasin declared that he would make a great
29 sacrifice by which the king's reign would be extended very long,
30 with the condition that there should be made a small tank into
31 which each one of his courtiers should pour a pitcher of milk, in the
32 dark of night. The king smiled and said, "Is this the test?" And he
33 asked his courtiers to come to him, and told them what was to be
34 done. They all expressed their joyful assent to the proposal and
35 returned. In the dead of night, they came and emptied their
36 pitchers into the tank. But in the morning, it was found full of water
37 only. The courtiers were assembled and questioned about the
38 matter. Each one of them had thought there would be so many
39 pitchers of milk that his water would not be detected. Unfortunately
40 most of us have the same idea and we do our share of work as did
41 the courtiers in the story.

42 There is so much idea of equality, says the priest, that my
43 little privilege will not be detected. So say our rich men, so say the
44 tyrants of every country. There is more hope for the tyrannised over,
45 than for the tyrants. It will take a very long time for tyrants to
46 arrive at freedom, but less time for the others. The cruelty of the
47 fox is much more terrible than the cruelty of the lion. The lion
48 strikes a blow and is quiet for some time afterwards, but the fox
49 trying persistently to follow his prey never misses an opportunity.
50 Priestcraft is in its nature cruel and heartless. That is why religion
51 goes down where priestcraft arises. Says the Vedanta, we must give
52 up the idea of privilege, then will religion come. Before that there is

1 no religion at all.

2 Do you believe what Christ says, "Sell all that thou hast, and
3 give to the poor?" Practical equality there; no trying to torture the
4 texts, but taking the truth as it is. Do not try to torture texts. I have
5 heard it said that that was preached only to the handful of Jews who
6 listened to Jesus. The same argument will apply to other things
7 also. Do not torture texts; dare to face truth as it is. Even if we
8 cannot reach to it, let us confess our weakness, but let us not
9 destroy the ideal. Let us hope that we shall attain to it sometime,
10 and strive for it. There it is--"Sell all that thou hast, and give to the
11 poor, and follow me." Thus, trampling on every privilege and
12 everything in us that works for privilege, let us work for that
13 knowledge which will bring the feeling of sameness towards all
14 mankind. You think that because you talk a little more polished
15 language you are superior to the man in the street. Remember that
16 when you are thinking this, you are not going towards freedom, but
17 are forging a fresh chain for your feet. And, above all, if the pride of
18 spirituality enters into you, woe unto you. It is the most awful
19 bondage that ever existed. Neither can wealth nor any other
20 bondage of the human heart bind the soul so much as this. "I am
21 purer than others", is the most awful idea that can enter into the
22 human heart. In what sense are you pure? The God in you is the
23 God in all. If you have not known this, you have known nothing.
24 How can there be difference? It is all one. Every being is the temple
25 of the Most High; if you can see that, good, if not, spirituality has
26 yet to come to you.

PRIVILEGE

(Delivered at the Sesame Club, London)

Two forces seem to be working throughout nature. One of these is constantly differentiating, and the other is as constantly unifying; the one making more and more for separate individuals, the other, as it were, bringing the individuals into a mass, bringing out sameness in the midst of all this differentiation. It seems that the action of these two forces enters into every department of nature and of human life. On the physical plane, we always find the two forces most distinctly at work, separating the individuals, making them more and more distinct from other individuals, and again making them into species and classes, and bringing out similarities of expressions, and form. The same holds good as regards the social life of man. Since the time when society began, these two forces have been at work, differentiating and unifying. Their action appears in various forms, and is called by various names, in different places, and at different times. But the essence is present in all, one making for differentiation, and the other for sameness; the one making for caste, and the other breaking it down; one making for classes and privileges, and the other destroying them. The whole universe seems to be the battle-ground of these two forces. On the one hand, it is urged, that though this unifying process exists, we ought to resist it with all our might, because it leads towards death, that perfect unity is perfect annihilation, and that when the differentiating process that is at work in this universe ceases, the universe comes to an end. It is differentiation that causes the phenomena that are before us; unification would reduce them all to a homogeneous and lifeless matter. Such a thing, of course, mankind wants to avoid. The same argument is applied to all the things and facts that we see around us. It is urged that even in the physical body and social classification, absolute sameness would produce natural death and social death. Absolute sameness of thought and feeling would produce mental decay and degeneration. Sameness, therefore, is to be avoided. This has been the argument on the one side, and it has been urged in every country and in various times, with only a change of language. Practically it is the same argument which is urged by the Brahmins of India, when they want to uphold the divisions and castes, when they want to uphold the privileges of a certain portion of the community, against everybody else. The destruction of caste, they declare, would lead to destruction of society, and boldly they produce the historical fact that theirs has been the longest-lived society. So they, with some show of force, appeal to this argument. With some show of authority they declare that that alone which makes the individual live the longest life must certainly be better than that which produces shorter lives.

On the other hand, the idea of oneness has had its advocates throughout all times. From the days of the Upanishads, the Buddhas, and Christs, and all other great preachers of religion, down to our present day, in the new political aspirations, and in the claims of the oppressed and the downtrodden, and of all those who find themselves bereft of privileges--comes out the one assertion of

1 this unity and sameness. But human nature asserts itself. Those
2 who have an advantage want to keep it, and if they find an
3 argument, however one-sided and crude, they must cling to it. This
4 applies to both sides.

5 Applied to metaphysics, this question also assumes another
6 form. The Buddhist declares that we need not look for anything
7 which brings unity in the midst of these phenomena, we ought to be
8 satisfied with this phenomenal world. This variety is the essence of
9 life, however miserable and weak it may seem to be; we can have
10 nothing more. The Vedantist declares that unity is the only thing
11 that exists; variety is but phenomenal, ephemeral and apparent.
12 "Look not to variety," says the Vedantist, "go back to unity." "Avoid
13 unity; it is a delusion," says the Buddhist, "go to variety." The same
14 differences of opinion in religion and metaphysics have come down
15 to our own day, for, in fact, the sum-total of the principles of
16 knowledge is very small. Metaphysics and metaphysical knowledge,
17 religion and religious knowledge, reached their culmination five
18 thousand years ago, and we are merely reiterating the same truths
19 in different languages, only enriching them sometimes by the
20 accession of fresh illustrations. So this is the fight, even today. One
21 side wants us to keep to the phenomenal, to all this variation, and
22 points out, with great show of argument, that variation has to
23 remain, for when that stops, everything is gone. What we mean by
24 life has been caused by variation. The other side, at the same time,
25 valiantly points to unity.

26 Coming to ethics, we find a tremendous departure. It is,
27 perhaps, the only science which makes a bold departure from this
28 fight. For ethics is unity; its basis is love. It will not look at this
29 variation. The one aim of ethics is this unity, this sameness. The
30 highest ethical codes that mankind has discovered up to the present
31 time know no variation; they have no time to stop to look into it;
32 their one end is to make for that sameness. The Indian mind, being
33 more analytical--I mean the Vedantic mind--found this unity as the
34 result of all its analyses, and wanted to base everything upon this
35 one idea of unity. But as we have seen, in the same country, there
36 were other minds (the Buddhistic) who could not find that unity
37 anywhere. To them all truth was a mass of variation, there was no
38 connection between one thing and another.

39 I remember a story told by Prof. Max Muller in one of his
40 books, an old Greek story, of how a Brahmin visited Socrates in
41 Athens. The Brahmin asked, "What is the highest knowledge?" And
42 Socrates answered, "To know man is the end and aim of all
43 knowledge." "But how can you know man without knowing God?"
44 replied the Brahmin. The one side, the Greek side, which is
45 represented by modern Europe, insisted upon the knowledge of
46 man; the Indian side, mostly represented by the old religions of the
47 world, insisted upon the knowledge of God. The one sees God in
48 nature, and the other sees nature in God. To us, at the present time,
49 perhaps, has been given the privilege of standing aside from both
50 these aspects, and taking an impartial view of the whole. This is a
51 fact that variation exists, and so it must, if life is to be. This is also a
52 fact that in and through these variations unity must be perceived.

1 This is a fact that God is perceived in nature. But it is also a fact
2 that nature is perceived in God. The knowledge of man is the
3 highest knowledge, and only by knowing man, can we know God.
4 This is also a fact that the knowledge of God is the highest
5 knowledge, and knowing God alone we can know man. Apparently
6 contradictory though these statements may appear, they are the
7 necessity of human nature. The whole universe is a play of unity in
8 variety, and of variety in unity. The whole universe is a play of
9 differentiation and oneness; the whole universe is a play of the
10 finite in the Infinite. We cannot take one without granting the
11 other. But we cannot take them both as facts of the same
12 perception, as facts of the same experience; yet in this way it will
13 always go on.

14 Therefore, coming to our more particular purpose, which is
15 religion rather than ethics, a state of things, where all variation has
16 died down, giving place to a uniform, dead homogeneity, is
17 impossible so long as life lasts. Nor is it desirable. At the same time,
18 there is the other side of the fact, viz that this unity already exists.
19 That is the peculiar claim--not that this unity has to be made, but
20 that it already exists, and that you could not perceive the variety at
21 all, without it. God is not to be made, but He already exists. This
22 has been the claim of all religions. Whenever one has perceived the
23 finite, he has also perceived the Infinite. Some laid stress on the
24 finite side, and declared that they perceived the finite without;
25 others laid stress on the Infinite side, and declared they perceived
26 the Infinite only. But we know that it is a logical necessity that we
27 cannot perceive the one without the other. So the claim is that this
28 sameness, this unity, this perfection--as we may call it--is not to be
29 made, it already exists, and is here. We have only to recognise it, to
30 understand it. Whether we know it or not, whether we can express
31 it in clear language or not, whether this perception assumes the
32 force and clearness of a sense-perception or not, it is there. For we
33 are bound by the logical necessity of our minds to confess that it is
34 there, else, the perception of the finite would not be. I am not
35 speaking of the old theory of substance and qualities, but of
36 oneness; that in the midst of all this mass of phenomena, the very
37 fact of the consciousness that you and I are different brings to us, at
38 the same moment, the consciousness that you and I are not
39 different. Knowledge would be impossible without that unity.
40 Without the idea of sameness there would be neither perception
41 nor knowledge. So both run side by side.

42 Therefore the absolute sameness of conditions, if that be the
43 aim of ethics, appears to be impossible. That all men should be the
44 same, could never be, however we might try. Men will be born
45 differentiated; some will have more power than others; some will
46 have natural capacities, others not; some will have perfect bodies,
47 others not. We can never stop that. At the same time ring in our
48 ears the wonderful words of morality proclaimed by various
49 teachers: "Thus, seeing the same God equally present in all, the
50 sage does not injure Self by the Self, and thus reaches the highest
51 goal. Even in this life they have conquered relative existence whose
52 minds are firmly fixed on this sameness; for God is pure, and God is

1 the same to all. Therefore such are said to be living in God." We
2 cannot deny that this is the real idea; yet at the same time comes
3 the difficulty that the sameness as regards external forms and
4 position can never be attained.

5 But what can be attained is elimination of privilege. That is
6 really the work before the whole world. In all social lives, there has
7 been that one fight in every race and in every country. The difficulty
8 is not that one body of men are naturally more intelligent than
9 another, but whether this body of men, because they have the
10 advantage of intelligence, should take away even physical
11 enjoyment from those who do not possess that advantage. The fight
12 is to destroy that privilege. That some will be stronger physically
13 than others, and will thus naturally be able to subdue or defeat the
14 weak, is a self-evident fact, but that because of this strength they
15 should gather unto themselves all the attainable happiness of this
16 life, is not according to law, and the fight has been against it. That
17 some people, through natural aptitude, should be able to
18 accumulate more wealth than others, is natural: but that on account
19 of this power to acquire wealth they should tyrannise and ride
20 roughshod over those who cannot acquire so much wealth, is not a
21 part of the law, and the fight has been against that. The enjoyment
22 of advantage over another is privilege, and throughout ages, the
23 aim of morality has been its destruction. This is the work which
24 tends towards sameness, towards unity, without destroying variety.

25 Let all these variations remain eternally; it is the very essence
26 of life. We shall all play in this way, eternally. You will be wealthy,
27 and I shall be poor; you will be strong, and I shall be weak; you will
28 be learned and I ignorant; you will be very spiritual, and I, less so.
29 But what of that? Let us remain so, but because you are physically
30 or intellectually stronger, you must not have more privilege than I,
31 and that you have more wealth is no reason why you should be
32 considered greater than I, for that sameness is here, in spite of the
33 different conditions.

34 The work of ethics has been, and will be in the future, not the
35 destruction of variation and the establishment of sameness in the
36 external world--which is impossible for it would bring death and
37 annihilation--but to recognise the unity in spite of all these
38 variations, to recognise the God within, in spite of everything that
39 frightens us, to recognise that infinite strength as the property of
40 everyone in spite of all apparent weakness, and to recognise the
41 eternal, infinite, essential purity of the soul in spite of everything to
42 the contrary that appears on the surface. This we have to
43 recognise. Taking one side alone, one half only of the position, is
44 dangerous and liable to lead to quarrels. We must take the whole
45 thing as it is, stand on it as our basis and work it out in every part
46 of our lives, as individuals and as unit members of society.

KRISHNA

(Delivered in California, on April 1, 1900)

Almost the same circumstances which gave birth to Buddhism in India surrounded the rise of Krishna. Not only this, the events of that day we find happening in our own times.

There is a certain ideal. At the same time there must always be a large majority of the human race who cannot come up to the ideal, not even intellectually.The strong ones carry it out and many times have no sympathy for the weak. The weak to the strong are only beggars. The strong ones march ahead. ...Of course, we see at once that the highest position to take is to be sympathetic and helpful to those who are weak. But then, in many cases the philosopher bars the way to our being sympathetic. If we go by the theory that the whole of this infinite life has to be determined by the few years' existence here and now, ...then it is very hopeless for us, ...and we have no time to look back upon those who are weak. But if these are not the conditions--if the world is only one of the many schools through which we have to pass, if the eternal life is to be moulded and fashioned and guided by the eternal law, and eternal law, eternal chances await everyone--then we need not be in a hurry. We have time to sympathise, to look around, stretch out a helping hand to the weak and bring them up.

With Buddhism we have two words in Sanskrit: one is translated religion, the other, a sect. It is the most curious fact that the disciples and descendants of Krishna have no name for their religion [although] foreigners call it Hinduism or Brahmanism. There is one religion, and there are many sects. The moment you give it a name, individualise it and separate it from the rest, it is a sect, no more a religion. A sect [proclaims] its own truth and declares that there is no truth anywhere else. Religion believes that there has been, and still is, one religion in the world. There never were two religions. It is the same religion [presenting] different aspects in different places. The task is to conceive the proper understanding of the goal and scope of humanity.

This was the great work of Krishna: to clear our eyes and make us look with broader vision upon humanity in its march upward and onward. His was the first heart that was large enough to see truth in all, his the first lips that uttered beautiful words for each and all.

This Krishna preceded Buddha by some thousand years. ...A great many people do not believe that he ever existed. Some believe that [the worship of Krishna grew out of] the old sun worship. There seem to be several Krishnas: one was mentioned in the Upanishads, another was king, another a general. All have been lumped into one Krishna. It does not matter much. The fact is, some individual comes who is unique in spirituality. Then all sorts of legends are invented around him. But, all the Bibles and stories which come to be cast upon this one person have to be recast in [the mould of] his character. All the stories of the New Testament have to be modelled upon the accepted life [and] character of Christ. In all of the Indian stories about Buddha the one central

1 note of that whole life is kept up--sacrifice for others. ...

2 In Krishna we find...two ideas [stand] supreme in his
3 message: The first is the harmony of different ideas; the second is
4 non-attachment. A man can attain to perfection, the highest goal,
5 sitting on a throne, commanding armies, working out big plans for
6 nations. In fact, Krishna's great sermon was preached on the
7 battlefield.

8 Krishna saw plainly through the vanity of all the mummeries,
9 mockeries, and ceremonials of the old priests; and yet he saw some
10 good in them.

11 If you are a strong man, very good! But do not curse others
12 who are not strong enough for you. ...Everyone says, "Woe unto you
13 people!!" Who says, "Woe unto me that I cannot help you?" The
14 people are doing all right to the best of their ability and means and
15 knowledge. Woe unto me that I cannot lift them to where I am!

16 So the ceremonials, worship of gods, and myths, are all right,
17 Krishna says. ...Why? Because they all lead to the same goal.
18 Ceremonies, books, and forms--all these are links in the chain. Get
19 hold! That is the one thing. If you are sincere and have really got
20 hold of one link, do not let go; the rest is bound to come. [But
21 people] do not get hold. They spend the time quarrelling and
22 determining what they should get hold of, and do not get hold of
23 anything. ...We are always after truth, but never want to get it. We
24 simply want the pleasure to go about and ask. We have a lot of
25 energy and spend it that way. That is why Krishna says: Get hold of
26 any one of these chains that are stretched out from the common
27 centre. No one step is greater than another. ...Blame no view of
28 religion so far as it is sincere. Hold on to one of these links, and it
29 will pull you to the centre. Your heart itself will teach all the rest.
30 The teacher within will teach all the creeds, all the philosophies. ..

31 Krishna talks of himself as God, as Christ does. He sees the
32 Deity in himself. And he says, "None can go a day out of my path.
33 All have to come to me. Whosoever wants to worship in whatsoever
34 form, I give him faith in that form, and through that I meet him. ..."
35 His heart is all for the masses.

36 Independent, Krishna stands out. The very boldness of it
37 frightens us. We depend upon everything--...upon a few good words,
38 upon circumstances. When the soul wants to depend upon nothing,
39 not even upon life, that is the height of philosophy, the height of
40 manhood. Worship leads to the same goal. Krishna lays great stress
41 upon worship. Worship God!

42 Various sorts of worship we see in this world. The sick man is
43 very worshipful to God. ...There is the man who loses his fortune;
44 he also prays very much, to get money. The highest worship is that
45 of the man who loves God for God's sake. [The question may be
46 asked:] "Why should there be so much sorrow if there is a God?"
47 The worshipper replies: "...There is misery in the world; [but]
48 because of that I do not cease to love God. I do not worship Him to
49 take away my [misery]. I love Him because He is love itself." The
50 other [types of worship] are lower-grade; but Krishna has no

1 condemnation for anything. It is better to do something than to
2 stand still. The man who begins to worship God will grow by
3 degrees and begin to love God for love's sake. ...

4 How to attain purity living this life? Shall we all go to the
5 forest caves? What good would it do? If the mind is not under
6 control, it is no use living in a cave because the same mind will
7 bring all disturbances there. We will find twenty devils in the cave
8 because all the devils are in the mind. If the mind is under control,
9 we can have the cave anywhere, wherever we are.

10 It is our own mental attitude which makes the world what it is
11 for us. Our thoughts make things beautiful, our thoughts make
12 things ugly. The whole world is in our own minds. Learn to see
13 things in the proper light. First, believe in this world--that there is
14 meaning behind everything. Everything in the world is good, is holy
15 and beautiful. If you see something evil, think that you are not
16 understanding it in the right light. Throw the burden on yourselves!
17 ...Whenever we are tempted to say that the world is going to the
18 dogs, we ought to analyse ourselves, and we shall find that we have
19 lost the faculty of seeing things as they are.

20 Work day and night! "Behold, I am the Lord of the Universe. I
21 have no duty. Every duty is bondage. But I work for work's sake. If I
22 ceased to work for a minute, [there would be chaos]." So do thou
23 work, without any idea of duty. ...

24 This world is a play. You are His playmates. Go on and work,
25 without any sorrow, without any misery. See His play in the slums, in
26 the saloons! Work to lift people! Not that they are vile or degraded;
27 Krishna does not say that.

28 Do you know why so little good work is done? My lady goes to
29 the slum. ...She gives a few ducats and says, "My poor men, take
30 that and be happy!" ...Or my fine woman, walking through the
31 street, sees a poor fellow and throws him five cents. Think of the
32 blasphemy of it! Blessed are we that the Lord has given us his
33 teaching in your own Testament. Jesus says, "Inasmuch as ye have
34 done it unto the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto
35 me." It is blasphemy to think that you can help anyone. First root
36 out this idea of helping, and then go to worship. God's children are
37 your Master's children. [And children are but different forms of the
38 father.] You are His servant. ...Serve the living God! God comes to
39 you in the blind, in the halt, in the poor, in the weak, in the
40 diabolical. What a glorious chance for you to worship! The moment
41 you think you are "helping", you undo the whole thing and degrade
42 yourself. Knowing this, work. "What follows?" you say. You do not
43 get that heartbreak, that awful misery. ...Then work is no more
44 slavery. It becomes a play, and joy itself. ...Work! Be unattached!
45 That is the whole secret. If you get attached, you become
46 miserable. ...

47 With everything we do in life we identify ourselves. Here is a
48 man who says harsh words to me. I feel anger coming on me. In a
49 few seconds anger and I are one, and then comes misery. Attach
50 yourselves to the Lord and to nothing else, because everything else
51 is unreal. Attachment to the unreal will bring misery. There is only

1 one Existence that is real, only one Life in which there is neither
2 object nor [subject]. ...

3 But unattached love will not hurt you. Do anything--marry,
4 have children. ...Do anything you like--nothing will hurt you. Do
5 nothing with the idea of "mine". Duty for duty's sake; work for
6 work's sake. What is that to you? You stand aside.

7 When we come to that non-attachment, then we can
8 understand the marvellous mystery of the universe; how it is
9 intense activity and vibration, and at the same time intensest peace
10 and calm; how it is work every moment and rest every moment.
11 That is the mystery of the universe--the impersonal and personal in
12 one, the infinite and finite in one. Then we shall find the secret. "He
13 who finds in the midst of intense activity the greatest rest, and in
14 the midst of the greatest rest intense activity, he has become a
15 Yogi." He alone is a real worker, none else. We do a little work and
16 break ourselves. Why? We become attached to that work. If we do
17 not become attached, side by side with it we have infinite rest. ...

18 How hard it is to arrive at this sort of non-attachment!
19 Therefore Krishna shows us the lower ways and methods. The
20 easiest way for everyone is to do [his or her] work and not take the
21 results. It is our desire that binds us. If we take the results of
22 actions, whether good or evil, we will have to bear them. But if we
23 work not for ourselves, but all for the glory of the Lord, the results
24 will take care of themselves. "To work you have the right, but not to
25 the fruits thereof." The soldier works for no results. He does his
26 duty. If defeat comes, it belongs to the general, not to the soldier.
27 We do our duty for love's sake--love for the general, love for the
28 Lord. ...

29 If you are strong, take up the Vedanta philosophy and be
30 independent. If you cannot do that, worship God; if not, worship
31 some image. If you lack strength even to do that, do some good
32 works without the idea of gain. Offer everything you have unto the
33 service of the Lord. Fight on! "Leaves and water and one flower--
34 whosoever lays anything on my altar, I receive it with equal
35 delights." If you cannot do anything, not a single good work, then
36 take refuge [in the Lord]. "The Lord resides within the heart of the
37 being, making them turn upon His wheel. Do thou with all thy soul
38 and heart take refuge in Him. ..."

39 These are some of the general ideas that Krishna preached on
40 this idea of love [in the Gita]. There are [in] other great books,
41 sermons on love--as with Buddha, as with Jesus. ...

42 A few words about the life of Krishna. There is a great deal of
43 similarity between the lives of Jesus and Krishna. A discussion is
44 going on as to which borrowed of the other. There was the
45 tyrannical king in both places. Both were born in a manger. The
46 parents were bound in both cases. Both were saved by angels. In
47 both cases all the boys born that year were killed. The childhood is
48 the same. ...Again, in the end, both were killed. Krishna was killed
49 by accident; he took the man who killed him to heaven. Christ was
50 killed, and blessed the robber and took him to heaven.

1 There are a great many similarities in the teaching of the
2 New Testament and the Gita. The human thought goes the same
3 way. ...I will find you the answer in the words of Krishna himself:
4 "Whenever virtue subsides and irreligion prevails, I come down.
5 Again and again I come. Therefore, whenever thou seest a great
6 soul struggling to uplift mankind, know that I am come, and
7 worship. ..."

8 At the same time, if he comes as Jesus or as Buddha, why is
9 there so much schism? The preachings must be followed! A Hindu
10 devotee would say: It is God himself who became Christ and
11 Krishna and Buddha and all these [great teachers]. A Hindu
12 philosopher would say: These are the great souls; they are already
13 free. And though free, they refuse to accept their liberation while
14 the whole world is suffering. They come again and again, take a
15 human embodiment and help mankind. They know from their
16 childhood what they are and what they come for. ...They do not
17 come through bondage like we do. ...They come out of their own
18 free will, and cannot help having tremendous spiritual power. We
19 cannot resist it. The vast mass of mankind is dragged into the
20 whirlpool of spirituality, and the vibration goes on and on because
21 one of these [great souls] gives a push. So it continues until all
22 mankind is liberated and the play of this planet is finished.

23 Glory unto the great souls whose lives we have been
24 studying! They are the living gods of the world. They are the
25 persons whom we ought to worship. If He comes to me, I can only
26 recognise Him if He takes a human form. He is everywhere, but do
27 we see Him? We can only see Him if He takes the limitation of man.
28 ...If men and ... animals are manifestations of God, these teachers
29 of mankind are leaders, are Gurus. Therefore, salutations unto you,
30 whose footstool is worshipped by angels! Salutations unto you
31 leaders of the human race! Salutations unto you great teachers! You
32 leaders have our salutations for ever and ever!

THE GITA I

(Delivered in San Francisco, on May 26, 1900)

To understand the Gita requires its historical background. The Gita is a commentary on the Upanishads. The Upanishads are the Bible of India. They occupy the same place as the New Testament does. There are [more than] a hundred books comprising the Upanishads, some very small and some big, each a separate treatise. The Upanishads do not reveal the life of any teacher, but simply teach principles. They are [as it were] shorthand notes taken down of discussion in [learned assemblies], generally in the courts of kings. The word Upanishad may mean "sittings" [or "sitting near a teacher"]. Those of you who may have studied some of the Upanishads can understand how they are condensed shorthand sketches. After long discussions had been held, they were taken down, possibly from memory. The difficulty is that you get very little of the background. Only the luminous points are mentioned there. The origin of ancient Sanskrit is 5000 B.C.; the Upanishads [are at least] two thousand years before that. Nobody knows [exactly] how old they are. The Gita takes the ideas of the Upanishads and in [some] cases the very words. They are strung together with the idea of bringing out, in a compact, condensed, and systematic form, the whole subject the Upanishads deal with.

The [original] scriptures of the Hindus are called the Vedas. They were so vast--the mass of writings--that if the texts alone were brought here, this room would not contain them. Many of them are lost. They were divided into branches, each branch put into the head of certain priests and kept alive by memory.

Such men still exist. They will repeat book after book of the Vedas without missing a single intonation. The larger portion of the Vedas has disappeared. The small portion left makes a whole library by itself. The oldest of these contains the hymns of the Rig-Veda. It is the aim of the modern scholar to restore [the sequence of the Vedic compositions]. The old, orthodox idea is quite different, as your orthodox idea of the Bible is quite different from the modern scholar's. The Vedas are divided into two portions: one the Upanishads, the philosophical portion, the other the work portion.

We will try to give a little idea of the work portion. It consists of rituals and hymns, various hymns addressed to various gods. The ritual portion is composed of ceremonies, some of them very elaborate. A great many priests are required. The priestly function became a science by itself, owing to the elaboration of the ceremonials. Gradually the popular idea of veneration grew round these hymns and rituals. The gods disappeared and in their place were left the rituals. That was the curious development in India. The orthodox Hindu [the Mimamsaka] does not believe in gods, the unorthodox believe in them. If you ask the orthodox Hindu what the meaning is of these gods in the Vedas, he will not be able to give any satisfactory answer]. The priests sing these hymns and pour libations and offerings into the fire. When you ask the orthodox Hindu the meaning of this, he says that words have the power to produce certain effects. That is all. There is all the natural and

1 supernatural power that ever existed. The Vedas are simply words
2 that have the mystical power to produce effects if the sound
3 intonation is right. If one sound is wrong it will not do. Each one
4 must be perfect. [Thus] what in other religions is called prayer
5 disappeared and the Vedas became the gods. So you see the
6 tremendous importance that was attached to the words of the
7 Vedas. These are the eternal words out of which the whole universe
8 has been produced. There cannot be any thought without the word.
9 Thus whatever there is in this world is the manifestation of thought,
10 and thought can only manifest itself through words. This mass of
11 words by which the unmanifested thought becomes manifest, that is
12 what is meant by the Vedas. It follows that the external existence of
13 everything [depends on the Vedas, for thought] does not exist
14 without the word. If the word "horse" did not exist, none could think
15 of a horse. [So] there must be [an intimate relation between]
16 thought, word, and the external object. What are these words [in
17 reality]? The Vedas. They do not call it Sanskrit language at all. It is
18 Vedic language, a divine language. Sanskrit is a degenerate form.
19 So are all other languages. There is no language older than Vedic.
20 You may ask, "Who wrote the Vedas?" They were not written. The
21 words are the Vedas. A word is Veda, if I can pronounce it rightly.
22 Then it will immediately produce the [desired] effect.

23 This mass of Vedas eternally exists and all the world is the
24 manifestation of this mass of words. Then when the cycle ends, all
25 this manifestation of energy becomes finer and finer, becomes only
26 words, then thought. In the next cycle, first the thought changes
27 into words and then out of those words [the whole universe] is
28 produced. If there is something here that is not in the Vedas, that is
29 your delusion. It does not exist.

30 [Numerous] books upon that subject alone defend the Vedas.
31 If you tell [their authors] that the Vedas must have been
32 pronounced by men first, [they will simply laugh]. You never heard
33 of any [man uttering them for the first time]. Take Buddha's words.
34 There is a tradition that he lived and spoke these words [many
35 times before]. If the Christian stands up and says, "My religion is a
36 historical religion and therefore yours is wrong and ours is true,"
37 [the Mimamsaka replies], "Yours being historical, you confess that a
38 man invented it nineteen hundred years ago. That which is true
39 must be infinite and eternal. That is the one test of truth. It never
40 decays, it is always the same. You confess your religion was created
41 by such-and-such a man. The Vedas were not. By no prophets or
42 anything. ...Only infinite words, infinite by their very nature, from
43 which the whole universe comes and goes." In the abstract it is
44 perfectly correct. ...The sound must be the beginning of creation.
45 There must be germ sounds like germ plasm. There cannot be any
46 ideas without the words. ...Wherever there are sensations, ideas,
47 emotion, there must be words. The difficulty is when they say that
48 these four books are the Vedas and nothing else. [Then] the
49 Buddhist will stand up and say, "Ours are Vedas. They were
50 revealed to us later on." That cannot be. Nature does not go on in
51 that way. Nature does not manifest her laws bit by bit, an inch of
52 gravitation today and [another inch] tomorrow. No, every law is

1 complete. There is no evolution in law at all. It is [given] once and
2 for ever. It is all nonsense, this "new religion and better
3 inspiration," and all that. It means nothing. There may be a hundred
4 thousand laws and man may know only a few today. We discover
5 them--that is all. Those old priests with their tremendous [claims
6 about eternal words], having dethroned the gods, took the place of
7 the gods. [They said], "You do not understand the power of words.
8 We know how to use them. We are the living gods of the world. Pay
9 us; we will manipulate the words, and you will get what you want.
10 Can you pronounce the words yourself? You cannot, for, mind you,
11 one mistake will produce the opposite effect. You want to be rich,
12 handsome, have a long life, a fine husband?" Only pay the priest
13 and keep quiet!

14 Yet there is another side. The ideal of the first part of the
15 Vedas is entirely different from the ideal of the other part, the
16 Upanishads. The ideal of the first part coincides with [that of] all
17 other religions of the world except the Vedanta. The ideal is
18 enjoyment here and hereafter--man and wife, husband and children.
19 Pay your dollar, and the priest will give you a certificate, and you
20 will have a happy time afterwards in heaven. You will find all your
21 people there and have this merry-go-round without end. No tears,
22 no weeping--only laughing. No stomach-ache, but yet eating. No
23 headache, but yet [parties]. That, considered the priests, was the
24 highest goal of man.

25 There is another idea in this philosophy which is according to
26 your modern ideas. Man is a slave of nature, and slave eternally he
27 has got to remain. We call it Karma. Karma means law, and it
28 applies everywhere. Everything is bound by Karma. "Is there no
29 way out?" "No! Remain slaves all through the years--fine slaves. We
30 will manipulate the words so that you will only have the good and
31 not the bad side of all--if you will pay [us] enough." That was the
32 ideal of [the Mimamsakas]. These are the ideals which are popular
33 throughout the ages. The vast mass of mankind are never thinkers.
34 Even if they try to think, the [effect of the] vast mass of
35 superstitions on them is terrible. The moment they weaken, one
36 blow comes, and the backbone breaks into twenty pieces. They can
37 only be moved by lures and threats. They can never move of their
38 own accord. They must be frightened, horrified, or terrorised, and
39 they are your slaves for ever. They have nothing else to do but to
40 pay and obey. Everything else is done by the priest. ...How much
41 easier religion becomes! You see, you have nothing to do. Go home
42 and sit quietly. Somebody is doing the whole thing for you. Poor,
43 poor animals!

44 Side by side, there was the other system. The Upanishads are
45 diametrically opposite in all their conclusions. First of all, the
46 Upanishads believe in God, the creator of the universe, its ruler.
47 You find later on [the idea of a benign Providence]. It is an entirely
48 opposite [conception]. Now, although we hear the priest, the ideal
49 is much more subtle. Instead of many gods they made one God.

50 The second idea, that you are all bound by the law of Karma,
51 the Upanishads admit, but they declare the way out. The goal of
52 man is to go beyond law. And enjoyment can never be the goal,

1 because enjoyment can only be in nature.

2 In the third place, the Upanishads condemn all the sacrifices
3 and say that is mummery. That may give you all you want, but it is
4 not desirable, for the more you get, the more you [want], and you
5 run round and round in a circle eternally, never getting to the end--
6 enjoying and weeping. Such a thing as eternal happiness is
7 impossible anywhere. It is only a child's dream. The same energy
8 becomes joy and sorrow.

9 I have changed my psychology a bit today. I have found the
10 most curious fact. You have a certain idea and you do not want to
11 have it, and you think of something else, and the idea you want to
12 suppress is entirely suppressed. What is that idea? I saw it come
13 out in fifteen minutes. It came out and staggered me. It was strong,
14 and it came in such a violent and terrible fashion [that] I thought
15 here was a madman. And when it was over, all that had happened
16 [was a suppression of the previous emotion]. What came out? It was
17 my own bad impression which had to be worked out. "Nature will
18 have her way. What can suppression do?" That is a terrible
19 [statement] in the Gita. It seems it may be a vain struggle after all.
20 You may have a hundred thousand [urges competing] at the same
21 time. You may repress [them], but the moment the spring rebounds,
22 the whole thing is there again.

23 [But there is hope]. If you are powerful enough, you can
24 divide your consciousness into twenty parts all at the same time. I
25 am changing my psychology. Mind grows. That is what the Yogis
26 say. There is one passion and it rouses another, and the first one
27 dies. If you are angry, and then happy, the next moment the anger
28 passes away. Out of that anger you manufactured the next state.
29 These states are always interchangeable. Eternal happiness and
30 misery are a child's dream. The Upanishads point out that the goal
31 of man is neither misery nor happiness, but we have to be master of
32 that out of which these are manufactured. We must be masters of
33 the situation at its very root, as it were.

34 The other point of divergence is: the Upanishads condemn all
35 rituals, especially those that involve the killing of animals. They
36 declare those all nonsense. One school of old philosophers says that
37 you must kill such an animal at a certain time if the effect is to be
38 produced. [You may reply], "But [there is] also the sin of taking the
39 life of the animal; you will have to suffer for that." They say that is
40 all nonsense. How do you know what is right and what is wrong?
41 Your mind says so? Who cares what your mind says? What nonsense
42 are you talking? You are setting your mind against the scriptures. If
43 your mind says something and the Vedas say something else, stop
44 your mind and believe in the Vedas. If they say, killing a man is
45 right, that is right. If you say, "No, my conscience says [otherwise,"
46 it won't do]. The moment you believe in any book as the eternal
47 word, as sacred, no more can you question. I do not see how you
48 people here believe in the Bible whenever you say about [it], "How
49 wonderful those words are, how right and how good!" Because, if
50 you believe in the Bible as the word of God, you have no right to
51 judge at all. The moment you judge, you think you are higher than
52 the Bible. [Then] what is the use of the Bible to you? The priests

1 say, "We refuse to make the comparison with your Bible or
2 anybody's. It is no use comparing, because--what is the authority?
3 There it ends. If you think something is not right, go and get it right
4 according to the Vedas."

5 The Upanishads believe in that, [but they have a higher
6 standard too]. On the one hand, they do not want to overthrow the
7 Vedas, and on the other they see these animal sacrifices and the
8 priests stealing everybody's money. But in the psychology they are
9 all alike. All the differences have been in the philosophy, [regarding]
10 the nature of the soul. Has it a body and a mind? And is the mind
11 only a bundle of nerves, the motor nerves and the sensory nerves?
12 Psychology, they all take for granted, is a perfect science. There
13 cannot be any difference there. All the fight has been regarding
14 philosophy--the nature of the soul, and God, and all that.

15 Then another great difference between the priests and the
16 Upanishads. The Upanishads say, renounce. That is the test of
17 everything. Renounce everything. It is the creative faculty that
18 brings us into all this entanglement. The mind is in its own nature
19 when it is calm. The moment you can calm it, that [very] moment
20 you will know the truth. What is it that is whirling the mind?
21 Imagination, creative activity. Stop creation and you know the truth.
22 All power of creation must stop, and then you know the truth at
23 once.

24 On the other hand, the priests are all for [creation]. Imagine a
25 species of life [in which there is no creative activity. It is
26 unthinkable]. The people had to have a plan [of evolving a stable
27 society. A system of rigid selection was adopted. For instance,] no
28 people who are blind and halt can be married. [As a result] you will
29 find so much less deformity [in India] than in any other country in
30 the world. Epileptics and insane [people] are very rare [there]. That
31 is owing to direct selection. The priests say, "Let them become
32 Sannyasins." On the other hand, the Upanishad say, "Oh no, [the]
33 earth's best and finest [and] freshest flowers should be laid upon
34 the altar. The strong, the young, with sound intellect and sound
35 body--they must struggle for the truth."

36 So with all these divergences of opinion, I have told you that
37 the priests already differentiated themselves into a separate caste.
38 The second is the caste of the kings. ...All the Upanishadic
39 philosophy is from the brains of kings, not priests. There [runs] an
40 economic struggle through every religious struggle. This animal
41 called man has some religious influence, but he is guided by
42 economy. Individuals are guided by something else, but the mass of
43 mankind never made a move unless economy was [involved]. You
44 may [preach a religion that may not be perfect in every detail], but
45 if there is an economic background [to it], and you have the most
46 [ardent champions] to preach it, you can convince a whole
47 country. ...

48 Whenever any religion succeeds, it must have economic
49 value. Thousands of similar sects will be struggling for power, but
50 only those who meet the real economic problem will have it. Man is
51 guided by the stomach. He walks and the stomach goes first and

1 the head afterwards. Have you not seen that? It will take ages for
2 the head to go first. By the time a man is sixty years of age, he is
3 called out of [the world]. The whole of life is one delusion, and just
4 when you begin to see things the way they are, you are snatched
5 off. So long as the stomach went first you were all right. When
6 children's dreams begin to vanish and you begin to look at things
7 the way they are, the head goes. Just when the head goes first, [you
8 go out].

9 [For] the religion of the Upanishads to be popularised was a
10 hard task. Very little economy is there, but tremendous altruism. ...

11 The Upanishads had very little kingdom, although they were
12 discovered by kings that held all the royal power in their hands. So
13 the struggle ...began to be fiercer. Its culminating point came two
14 thousand years after, in Buddhism. The seed of Buddhism is here,
15 [in] the ordinary struggle between the king and the priest; and [in
16 the struggle] all religion declined. One wanted to sacrifice religion,
17 the other wanted to cling to the sacrifices, to Vedic gods, etc.
18 Buddhism...broke the chains of the masses. All castes and creeds
19 alike became equal in a minute. So the great religious ideas in India
20 exist, but have yet to be preached: otherwise they do no good. ...

21 In every country it is the priest who is conservative, for two
22 reasons--because it is his bread and because he can only move with
23 the people. All priests are not strong. If the people say, "Preach two
24 thousand gods," the priests will do it. They are the servants of the
25 congregation who pay them. God does not pay them. So blame
26 yourselves before blaming the priests. You can only get the
27 government and the religion and the priesthood you deserve, and
28 no better.

29 So the great struggle began in India and it comes to one of its
30 culminating points in the Gita. When it was causing fear that all
31 India was going to be broken up between [the] two...[groups], there
32 rose this man Krishna, and in the Gita he tries to reconcile the
33 ceremony and the philosophy of the priests and the people. Krishna
34 is loved and worshipped in the same way as you do Christ. The
35 difference is only in the age. The Hindus keep the birthday of
36 Krishna as you do Christ's. Krishna lived five thousand years ago
37 and his life is full of miracles, some of them very similar to those in
38 the life of Christ. The child was born in prison. The father took him
39 away and put him with the shepherds. All children born in that year
40 were ordered to be killed. He was killed; that was his fate.

41 Krishna was a married man. There are thousands of books
42 about him. They do not interest me much. The Hindus are great in
43 telling stories, you see. [If] the Christian missionaries tell one story
44 from their Bible, the Hindus will produce twenty stories. You say
45 the whale swallowed Jonah; the Hindus say someone swallowed an
46 elephant. ...Since I was a child I have heard about Krishna's life. I
47 take it for granted there must have been a man called Krishna, and
48 his Gita shows he has [left] a wonderful book. I told you, you can
49 understand the character of a man by analysing the fables about
50 him. The fables have the nature [of decorations]. You must find they
51 are all polished and manipulated to fit into the character. For

1 instance, take Buddha. The central idea [is] sacrifice. There are
2 thousands of folklore, but in every case the sacrifice must have
3 been kept up. There are thousands of stories about Lincoln, about
4 some characteristic of that great man. You take all the fables and
5 find the general idea and [know] that that was the central character
6 of the man. You find in Krishna that non-attachment is the central
7 idea. He does not need anything. He does not want anything. He
8 works for work's sake. "Work for work's sake. Worship for worship's
9 sake. Do good because it is good to do good. Ask no more." That
10 must have been the character of the man. Otherwise these fables
11 could not be brought down to the one idea of non-attachment. The
12 Gita is not his only sermon. ...

13 He is the most rounded man I know of, wonderfully developed
14 equally in brain and heart and hand. Every moment [of his] is alive
15 with activity, either as a gentleman, warrior, minister, or something
16 else. Great as a gentleman, as a scholar, as a poet. This all-rounded
17 and wonderful activity and combination of brain and heart you see
18 in the Gita and other books. Most wonderful heart, exquisite
19 language, and nothing can approach it anywhere. This tremendous
20 activity of the man--the impression is still there. Five thousand
21 years have passed and he has influenced millions and millions. Just
22 think what an influence this man has over the whole world, whether
23 you know it or not. My regard for him is for his perfect sanity. No
24 cobwebs in that brain, no superstition. He knows the use of
25 everything, and when it is necessary to [assign a place to each], he
26 is there. Those that talk, go everywhere, question about the
27 mystery of the Vedas, etc., they do not know the truth. They are no
28 better than frauds. There is a place in the Vedas [even] for
29 superstition, for ignorance. The whole secret is to find out the
30 proper place for everything.

31 Then that heart! He is the first man, way before Buddha, to
32 open the door of religion to every caste. That wonderful mind! That
33 tremendously active life! Buddha's activity was on one plane, the
34 plane of teaching. He could not keep his wife and child and become
35 a teacher at the same time. Krishna preached in the midst of the
36 battlefield. "He who in the midst of intense activity finds himself in
37 the greatest calmness, and in the greatest peace finds intense
38 activity, that is the greatest [Yogi as well as the wisest man]." It
39 means nothing to this man--the flying of missiles about him. Calm
40 and sedate he goes on discussing the problems of life and death.
41 Each one of the prophets is the best commentary on his own
42 teaching. If you want to know what is meant by the doctrine of the
43 New Testament, you go to Mr. So-and-so. [But] read again and
44 again [the four Gospels and try to understand their import in the
45 light of the wonderful life of the Master as depicted there]. The
46 great men think, and you and I [also] think. But there is a
47 difference. We think and our bodies do not follow. Our actions do
48 not harmonise with our thoughts. Our words have not the power of
49 the words that become Vedas. ...Whatever they think must be
50 accomplished. If they say, "I do this," the body does it. Perfect
51 obedience. This is the end. You can think yourself God in one
52 minute, but you cannot be [God]. That is the difficulty. They become

1 what they think. We will become [only] by [degrees].

2 You see, that was about Krishna and his time. In the next
3 lecture we will know more of his book.

THE GITA II

(Delivered In San Francisco, on May 28, 1900)

The Gita requires a little preliminary introduction. The scene is laid on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. There were two branches of the same race fighting for the empire of India about five thousand years ago. The Pandavas had the right, but the Kauravas had the might. The Pandavas were five brothers, and they were living in a forest. Krishna was the friend of the Pandavas. The Kauravas would not grant them as much land as would cover the point of a needle.

The opening scene is the battlefield, and both sides see their relatives and friends--one brother on one side and another on the other side; a grandfather on one side, grandson on the other side. ...When Arjuna sees his own friends and relatives on the other side and knows that he may have to kill them, his heart gives way and he says that he will not fight. Thus begins the Gita.

For all of us in this world life is a continuous fight. ...Many a time comes when we want to interpret our weakness and cowardice as forgiveness and renunciation. There is no merit in the renunciation of a beggar. If a person who can [give a blow] forbears, there is merit in that. If a person who has, gives up, there is merit in that. We know how often in our lives through laziness and cowardice we give up the battle and try to hypnotise our minds into the belief that we are brave.

The Gita opens with this very significant verse: "Arise, O Prince! Give up this faint-heartedness, this weakness! Stand up and fight!" Then Arjuna, trying to argue the matter [with Krishna], brings higher moral ideas, how non-resistance is better than resistance, and so on. He is trying to justify himself, but he cannot fool Krishna. Krishna is the higher Self, or God. He sees through the argument at once. In this case [the motive] is weakness. Arjuna sees his own relatives and he cannot strike them. ...

There is a conflict in Arjuna's heart between his emotionalism and his duty. The nearer we are to [beasts and] birds, the more we are in the hells of emotion. We call it love. It is self-hypnotisation. We are under the control of our [emotions] like animals. A cow can sacrifice its life for its young. Every animal can. What of that? It is not the blind, birdlike emotion that leads to perfection. ...[To reach] the eternal consciousness, that is the goal of man! There emotion has no place, nor sentimentalism, nor anything that belongs to the senses--only the light of pure reason. [There] man stands as spirit.

Now, Arjuna is under the control of this emotionalism. He is not what he should be--a great self-controlled, enlightened sage working through the eternal light of reason. He has become like an animal, like a baby, just letting his heart carry away his brain, making a fool of himself and trying to cover his weakness with the flowery names of "love" and so on. Krishna sees through that. Arjuna talks like a man of little learning and brings out many reasons, but at the same time he talks the language of a fool.

"The sage is not sorry for those that are living nor for those

1 that die." [Krishna says:] "You cannot die nor can I. There was
2 never a time when we did not exist. There will never be a time
3 when we shall not exist. As in this life a man begins with childhood,
4 and [passes through youth and old age, so at death he merely
5 passes into another kind of body]. Why should a wise man be
6 sorry?" And where is the beginning of this emotionalism that has
7 got hold of you? It is in the senses. "It is the touch of the senses that
8 brings all this quality of existence: heat and cold, pleasure and pain.
9 They come and go." Man is miserable this moment, happy the next.
10 As such he cannot experience the nature of the soul. ...

11 "Existence can never be non-existence, neither can non-
12 existence ever become existence. ...Know, therefore, that that
13 which pervades all this universe is without beginning or end. It is
14 unchangeable. There is nothing in the universe that can change
15 [the Changeless]. Though this body has its beginning and end, the
16 dweller in the body is infinite and without end."

17 Knowing this, stand up and fight! Not one step back, that is
18 the idea. ...Fight it out, whatever comes. Let the stars move from
19 the sphere! Let the whole world stand against us! Death means only
20 a change of garment. What of it? Thus fight! You gain nothing by
21 becoming cowards. ...Taking a step backward, you do not avoid any
22 misfortune. You have cried to all the gods in the world. Has misery
23 ceased? The masses in India cry to sixty million gods, and still die
24 like dogs. Where are these gods? ...The gods come to help you when
25 you have succeeded. So what is the use? Die game. ...This bending
26 the knee to superstitions, this selling yourself to your own mind
27 does not befit you, my soul. You are infinite, deathless, birthless.
28 Because you are infinite spirit, it does not befit you to be a
29 slave. ...Arise! Awake! Stand up and fight! Die if you must. There is
30 none to help you. You are all the world. Who can help you?

31 "Beings are unknown to our human senses before birth and
32 after death. It is only in the interim that they are manifest. What is
33 there to grieve about?

34 "Some look at It [the Self] with wonder. Some talk of It as
35 wonderful. Others hear of It as wonderful. Others, hearing of It, do
36 not understand."

37 But if you say that killing all these people is sinful, then
38 consider this from the standpoint of your own caste-duty. ..."Making
39 pleasure and misery the same, making success and defeat the
40 same, do thou stand up and fight."

41 This is the beginning of another peculiar doctrine of the Gita--
42 the doctrine of non-attachment. That is to say, we have to bear the
43 result of our own actions because we attach ourselves to
44 them. ..."Only what is done as duty for duty's sake...can scatter the
45 bondage of Karma." There is no danger that you can overdo it. ..."If
46 you do even a little of it, [this Yoga will save you from the terrible
47 round of birth and death].

48 "Know, Arjuna, the mind that succeeds is the mind that is
49 concentrated. The minds that are taken up with two thousand
50 subjects (have) their energies dispersed. Some can talk flowery

1 language and think there is nothing beyond the Vedas. They want to
2 go to heaven. They want good things through the power of the
3 Vedas, and so they make sacrifices." Such will never attain any
4 success [in spiritual life] unless they give up all these materialistic
5 ideas.

6 That is another great lesson. Spirituality can never be
7 attained unless all material ideas are given up. ...What is in the
8 senses? The senses are all delusion. People wish to retain them [in
9 heaven] even after they are dead--a pair of eyes, a nose. Some
10 imagine they will have more organs than they have now. They want
11 to see God sitting on a throne through all eternity--the material
12 body of God. ...Such men's desires are for the body, for food and
13 drink and enjoyment. It is the materialistic life prolonged. Man
14 cannot think of anything beyond this life. This life is all for the body.
15 "Such a man never comes to that concentration which leads to
16 freedom."

17 "The Vedas only teach things belonging to the three Gunas, to
18 Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas." The Vedas only teach about things in
19 nature. People cannot think anything they do not see on earth. If
20 they talk about heaven, they think of a king sitting on a throne, of
21 people burning incense. It is all nature, nothing beyond nature. The
22 Vedas, therefore, teach nothing but nature. "Go beyond nature,
23 beyond the dualities of existence, beyond your own consciousness,
24 caring for nothing, neither for good nor for evil."

25 We have identified ourselves with our bodies. We are only
26 body, or rather, possessed of a body. If I am pinched, I cry. All this is
27 nonsense, since I am the soul. All this chain of misery, imagination,
28 animals, gods, and demons, everything, the whole world--all this
29 comes from the identification of ourselves with the body. I am spirit.
30 Why do I jump if you pinch me? ...Look at the slavery of it. Are you
31 not ashamed? We are religious! We are philosophers! We are sages!
32 Lord bless us! What are we? Living hells, that is what we are.
33 Lunatics, that is what we are!

34 We cannot give up the idea [of body]. We are earth-
35 bound. ...Our ideas are burial grounds. When we leave the body we
36 are bound by thousands of elements to those [ideas].

37 Who can work without any attachment? That is the real
38 question. Such a man is the same whether his work succeeds or
39 fails. His heart does not give one false beat even if his whole life-
40 work is burnt to ashes in a moment. "This is the sage who always
41 works for work's sake without caring for the results. Thus he goes
42 beyond the pain of birth and death. Thus he becomes free." Then he
43 sees that this attachment is all delusion. The Self can never be
44 attached. ...Then he goes beyond all the scriptures and
45 philosophies. If the mind is deluded and pulled into a whirlpool by
46 books and scriptures, what is the good of all these scriptures? One
47 says this, another says that. What book shall you take? Stand alone!
48 See the glory of your won soul, and see that you will have to work.
49 Then you will become a man of firm will.

50 Arjuna asks: "Who is a person of established will?"

1 [Krishna answers:] "The man who has given up all desires,
2 who desires nothing, not even this life, nor freedom, nor gods, nor
3 work, nor anything. When he has become perfectly satisfied, he has
4 no more cravings." He has seen the glory of the Self and has found
5 that the world, and the gods, and heaven are...within his own Self.
6 Then the gods become no gods; death becomes no death; life
7 becomes no life. Everything has changed. "A man is said to be
8 [illumined] if his will has become firm, if his mind is not disturbed
9 by misery, if he does not desire any happiness, if he is free of all
10 [attachment], of all fear, of all anger. ...

11 "As the tortoise can draw in his legs, and if you strike him, not
12 one foot comes out, even so the sage can draw all his sense-organs
13 inside," and nothing can force them out. Nothing can shake him, no
14 temptation or anything. Let the universe tumble about him, it does
15 not make one single ripple in his mind.

16 Then comes a very important question. Sometimes people fast
17 for days. ...When the worst man has fasted for twenty days, he
18 becomes quite gentle. Fasting and torturing themselves have been
19 practised by people all over the world. Krishna's idea is that this is
20 all nonsense. He says that the senses will for the moment recede
21 from the man who tortures himself, but will emerge again with
22 twenty times more [power]. ...What should you do? The idea is to be
23 natural--no asceticism. Go on, work, only mind that you are not
24 attached. The will can never be fixed strongly in the man who has
25 not learnt and practised the secret of non-attachment.

26 I go out and open my eyes. If something is there, I must see
27 it. I cannot help it. The mind runs after the senses. Now the senses
28 must give up any reaction to nature.

29 "Where it is dark night for the [sense-bound] world, the self
30 controlled [man] is awake. It is daylight for him. ...And where the
31 world is awake, the sage sleeps." Where is the world awake? In the
32 senses. People want to eat and drink and have children, and then
33 they die a dog's death. ...They are always awake for the senses.
34 Even their religion is just for that. They invent a God to help them,
35 to give them more women, more money, more children--never a God
36 to help them become more godlike! "Where the whole world is
37 awake, the sage sleeps. But where the ignorant are asleep, there
38 the sage keeps awake"--in the world of light where man looks upon
39 himself not as a bird, not as an animal, not as a body, but as infinite
40 spirit, deathless, immortal.

41 There, where the ignorant are asleep, and do not have time,
42 nor intellect, nor power to understand, there the sage is awake.
43 That is daylight for him.

44 "As all the rivers of the world constantly pour their waters
45 into the ocean, but the ocean's grand, majestic nature remains
46 undisturbed and unchanged, so even though all the senses bring in
47 sensations from nature, the ocean-like heart of the sage knows no
48 disturbance, knows no fear." Let miseries come in millions of rivers
49 and happiness in hundreds! I am no slave to misery! I am no slave
50 to happiness!

THE GITA III

(Delivered in San Francisco, on May 29, 1900)

Arjuna asks: "You just advised action, and yet you uphold knowledge of Brahman as the highest form of life. Krishna, if you think that knowledge is better than action, why do you tell me to act?"

[Shri Krishna]: "From ancient times these two systems have come down to us. The Sankhya philosophers advance the theory of knowledge. The Yogis advance the theory of work. But none can attain to peace by renouncing actions. None in this life can stop activity even for a moment. Nature's qualities [Gunas] will make him act. He who stops his activities and at the same time is still thinking about them attains to nothing; he only becomes a hypocrite. But he who by the power of his mind gradually brings his sense-organs under control, employing them in work, that man is better. Therefore do thou work."...

"Even if you have known the secret that you have no duty, that you are free, still you have to work for the good of others. Because whatever a great man does, ordinary people will do also. If a great man who has attained peace of mind and freedom ceases to work, then all the rest without that knowledge and peace will try to imitate him, and thus confusion would arise.

"Behold, Arjuna, there is nothing that I do not possess and nothing that I want to acquire. And yet I continue to work. If I stopped work for a moment, the whole universe would [be destroyed]. That which the ignorant do with desire for results and gain, let the wise do without any attachment and without any desire for results and gain."

Even is you have knowledge, do not disturb the childlike faith of the ignorant. On the other hand, go down to their level and gradually bring them up. That is a very powerful idea, and it has become the ideal in India. That is why you can see a great philosopher going into a temple and worshipping images. It is not hypocrisy.

Later on we read what Krishna says, "Even those who worship other deities are really worshipping me." It is God incarnate whom man is worshipping. Would God be angry if you called Him by the wrong name? He would be no God at all! Can't you understand that whatever a man has in his own heart is God--even if he worships a stone? What of that!

We will understand more clearly if we once get rid of the idea that religion consists in doctrines. One idea of religion has been that the whole world was born because Adam ate the apple, and there is no way of escape. Believe in Jesus Christ--in a certain man's death! But in India there is quite a different idea. [There] religion means realisation, nothing else. It does not matter whether one approaches the destination in a carriage with four horses, in an electric car, or rolling on the ground. The goal is the same. For the [Christians] the problem is how to escape the wrath of the terrible God. For the Indians it is how to become what they really are, to

1 regain their lost Selfhood. ...

2 Have you realised that you are spirit? When you say, "I do,"
3 what is meant by that--this lump of flesh called the body or the
4 spirit, the infinite, ever blessed, effulgent, immortal? You may be
5 the greatest philosopher, but as long as you have the idea that you
6 are the body, you are no better than the little worm crawling under
7 your foot! No excuse for you! So much the worse for you that you
8 know all the philosophies and at the same time think you are the
9 body! Body-gods, that is what you are! Is that religion?

10 Religion is the realisation of spirit as spirit. What are we
11 doing now? Just the opposite, realising spirit as matter. Out of the
12 immortal God we manufacture death and matter, and out of dead
13 dull matter we manufacture spirit. ...

14 If you [can realise Brahman] by standing on your head, or on
15 one foot, or by worshipping five thousand gods with three heads
16 each--welcome to it! ...Do it any way you can! Nobody has any right
17 to say anything. Therefore, Krishna says, if your method is better
18 and higher, you have no business to say that another man's method
19 is bad, however wicked you may think it.

20 Again, we must consider, religion is a [matter of] growth, not
21 a mass of foolish words. Two thousand years ago a man saw God.
22 Moses saw God in a burning bush. Does what Moses did when he
23 saw God save you? No man's seeing God can help you the least bit
24 except that it may excite you and urge you to do the same thing.
25 That is the whole value of the ancients' examples. Nothing more.
26 [Just] signposts on the way. No man's eating can satisfy another
27 man. No man's seeing God can save another man. You have to see
28 God yourself. All these people fighting about what God's nature is--
29 whether He has three heads in one body or five heads in six bodies.
30 Have you seen God? No. ...And they do not believe they can ever
31 see Him. What fools we mortals be! Sure, lunatics!

32 [In India] it has come down as a tradition that if there is a
33 God, He must be your God and my God.

34 To whom does the sun belong! You say Uncle Sam is
35 everybody's uncle. If there is an God, you ought to be able to see
36 Him. If not, let Him go.

37 Each one thinks his method is best. Very good! But remember,
38 it may be good for *you* . One food which is very indigestible to one
39 is very digestible to another. Because it is good for you, do not jump
40 to the conclusion that your method is everybody's method, that
41 Jack's coat fits John and Mary. All the uneducated, uncultured,
42 unthinking men and women have been put into that sort of strait
43 jacket! Think for yourselves. Become atheists! Become materialists!
44 That would be better. Exercise the mind! ...What right have you to
45 say that this man's method is wrong? It may be wrong for you. That
46 is to say, if you undertake the method, you will be degraded; but
47 that does not mean that he will be degraded. Therefore, says
48 Krishna, if you have knowledge and see a man weak, do not
49 condemn him. Go to his level and help him if you can. He must
50 grow. I can put five bucketfuls of knowledge into his head in five

1 hours. But what good will it do? He will be a little worse than
2 before.

3 Whence comes all this bondage of action? Because we chain
4 the soul with action. According to our Indian system, there are two
5 existences: nature on the one side and the Self, the Atman, on the
6 other. By the word nature is meant not only all this external world,
7 but also our bodies, the mind, the will, even down to what says "I".
8 Beyond all that is the infinite life and light of the soul--the Self, the
9 Atman. ...According to this philosophy the Self is entirely separate
10 from nature, always was and always will be. ...There never was a
11 time when the spirit could be identified even with the mind. ...

12 It is self-evident that the food you eat is manufacturing the
13 mind all the time. It is matter. The Self is above any connection with
14 food. Whether you eat or not does not matter. Whether you think or
15 not...does not matter. It is infinite light. Its light is the same always.
16 If you put a blue or a green glass [before a light], what has that to
17 do with the light? Its colour is unchangeable. It is the mind which
18 changes and gives the different colours. The moment the spirit
19 leaves the body, the whole thing goes to pieces.

20 The reality in nature is spirit. Reality itself--the light of the
21 spirit--moves and speaks and does everything [through our bodies,
22 minds, etc.]. It is the energy and soul and life of the spirit that is
23 being worked upon in different ways by matter... The spirit is the
24 cause of all our thoughts and body-action and everything, but it is
25 untouched by good or evil, pleasure or pain, heat or cold, and all
26 the dualism of nature, although it lends its light to everything.

27 "Therefore, Arjuna, all these actions are in nature. Nature ...is
28 working out her own laws in our bodies and minds. We identify
29 ourselves with nature and say, 'I am doing this.' This way delusion
30 seizes us."

31 We always act under some compulsion. When hunger compels
32 me, I eat. And suffering is still worse--slavery. That real "I" is
33 eternally free. What can compel it to do anything? The sufferer is in
34 nature. It is only when we identify ourselves with the body that we
35 say, "I am suffering; I am Mr. So-and-so"--all such nonsense. But he
36 who has known the truth, holds himself aloof. Whatever his body
37 does, whatever his mind does, he does not care. But mind you, the
38 vast majority of mankind are under this delusion; and whenever
39 they do any good, they feel that they are [the doers]. They are not
40 yet able to understand higher philosophy. Do not disturb their faith!
41 They are shunning evil and doing good. Great idea! Let them have
42 it!...They are workers for good. By degrees they will think that
43 there is greater glory than that of doing good. They will only
44 witness, and things are done. ...Gradually they will understand.
45 When they have shunned all evil and done all good, then they will
46 begin to realise that they are beyond all nature. They are not the
47 doers. They stand [apart]. They are the ...witness. They simply
48 stand and look. Nature is begetting all the universe. ...They turn
49 their backs. "In the beginning, O beloved, there only existed that
50 Existence. Nothing else existed. And That [brooding], everything
51 else was created."

1 "Even those who know the path act impelled by their own
2 nature. Everyone acts according to his nature. He cannot transcend
3 it." The atom cannot disobey the law. Whether it is the mental or the
4 physical atom, it must obey the law. "What is the use of [external
5 restraint]?"

6 What makes the value of anything in life? Not enjoyment, not
7 possessions. Analyse everything. You will find there is no value
8 except in experience, to teach us something. And in many cases it is
9 our hardships that give us better experience than enjoyment. Many
10 times blows give us better experience than the caresses of
11 nature. ...Even famine has its place and value. ...

12 According to Krishna, we are not new beings just come into
13 existence. Our minds are not new minds. ...In modern times we all
14 know that every child brings [with him] all the past, not only of
15 humanity, but of the plant life. There are all the past chapters, and
16 this present chapter, and there are a whole lot of future chapters
17 before him. Everyone has his path mapped and sketched and
18 planned out for him. And in spite of all this darkness, there cannot
19 be anything uncaused--no event, no circumstance. ...It is simply our
20 ignorance. The whole infinite chain of causation...is bound one link
21 to another back to nature. The whole universe is bound by that sort
22 of chain. It is the universal [chain of] cause and effect, you
23 receiving one link, one part, I another...And that [part] is our own
24 nature.

25 Now Shri Krishna says: "Better die in your own path than
26 attempt the path of another." This is my path, and I am down here.
27 And you are way up there, and I am always tempted to give up my
28 path thinking I will go there and be with you. And if I go up, I am
29 neither there nor here. We must not lose sight of this doctrine. It is
30 all [a matter of] growth. Wait and grow, and you attain everything;
31 otherwise there will be [great spiritual danger]. Here is the
32 fundamental secret of teaching religion.

33 What do you mean by "saving people" and all believing in the
34 same doctrine? It cannot be. There are the general ideas that can
35 be taught to mankind. The true teacher will be able to find out for
36 you what your own nature is. Maybe you do not know it. It is
37 possible that what you think is your own nature is all wrong. It has
38 not developed to consciousness. The teacher is the person who
39 ought to know...He ought to know by a glance at your face and put
40 you on [your path]. We grope about and struggle here and there
41 and do all sorts of things and make no progress until the time
42 comes when we fall into that life-current and are carried on. The
43 sign is that the moment we are in that stream we will float. Then
44 there is no more struggle. This is to be found out. Then die in that
45 [path] rather than giving it up and taking hold of another.

46 Instead, we start a religion and make a set of dogmas and
47 betray the goal of mankind and treat everyone [as having] the same
48 nature. No two persons have the same mind or the same body. ...No
49 two persons have the same religion....

50 If you want to be religious, enter not the gate of any
51 organised religions. They do a hundred times more evil than good,

1 because they stop the growth of each one's individual development.
2 Study everything, but keep your own seat firm. If you take my
3 advice, do not put your neck into the trap. The moment they try to
4 put their noose on you, get your neck out and go somewhere else.
5 [As] the bee culling honey from many flowers remains free, not
6 bound by any flower, be not bound. ...Enter not the door of any
7 organised religion. [Religion] is only between you and your God,
8 and no third person must come between you. Think what these
9 organised religions have done! What Napoleon was more terrible
10 than these religious persecutions? ...If you and I organise, we begin
11 to hate every person. It is better not to love, if loving only means
12 hating others. That is no love. That is hell! If loving your own people
13 means hating everybody else, it is the quintessence of selfishness
14 and brutality, and the effect is that it will make you brutes.
15 Therefore, better die working out your own natural religion than
16 following another's natural religion, however great it may appear to
17 you.

18 "Beware, Arjuna, lust and anger are the great enemies. These
19 are to be controlled. These cover the knowledge even of those [who
20 are wise]. This fire of lust is unquenchable. Its location is in the
21 sense-organs and in the mind. The Self desires nothing.

22 "This Yoga I taught in ancient times [to Vivaswan; Vivaswan
23 taught it to Manu]. ...Thus it was that the knowledge descended
24 from one thing to another. But in time this great Yoga was
25 destroyed. That is why I am telling it to you again today."

26 Then Arjuna asks, "Why do you speak thus? You are a man
27 born only the other day, and [Vivaswan was born long before you].
28 What do you mean that you taught him?"

29 Then Krishna says, "O Arjuna, you and I have run the cycle of
30 births and deaths many times, but you are not conscious of them all.
31 I am without beginning, birthless, the absolute Lord of all creation.
32 I through my own nature take form. Whenever virtue subsides and
33 wickedness prevails, I come to help mankind. For the salvation of
34 the good, for the destruction of wickedness, for the establishment
35 of spirituality I come from time to time. Whosoever wants to reach
36 me through whatsoever ways, I reach him through that. But know,
37 Arjuna, none can ever swerve from my path." None ever did. How
38 can we? None swerves from His path.

39 ...All societies are based upon bad generalisation. The law
40 can only be formed upon perfect generalisation. What is the old
41 saying: Every law has its exception? ...If it is a law, it cannot be
42 broken. None can break it. Does the apple break the law of
43 gravitation? The moment a law is broken, no more universe exists.
44 There will come a time when you will break the law, and that
45 moment your consciousness, mind, and body will melt away.

46 There is a man stealing there. Why does he steal? You punish
47 him. Why can you not make room for him and put his energy to
48 work? ...You say, "You are a sinner," and many will say he has
49 broken the law. All this herd of mankind is forced [into uniformity]
50 and hence all trouble, sin, and weakness. ...The world is not as bad
51 as you think. It is we fools who have made it evil. We manufacture

1 our own ghosts and demons, and then...we cannot get rid of them.
2 We put our hands before our eyes and cry: "Somebody give us
3 light." Fools! Take your hands from your eyes! That is all there is to
4 it. ...We call upon the gods to save us and nobody blames himself.
5 That is the pity of it. Why is there so much evil in society? What is it
6 they say? Flesh and the devil and the woman. Why make these
7 things [up]? Nobody asks you to make them [up]. "None, O Arjuna,
8 can swerve from my path." We are fools, and our paths are foolish.
9 We have to go through all this Maya. God made the heaven, and
10 man made the hell for himself.

11 "No action can touch me. I have no desire for the results of
12 action. Whosoever knows me thus knows the secret and is not
13 bound by action. The ancient sages, knowing this secret [could
14 safely engage in action]. Do thou work in the same fashion.

15 "He who sees in the midst of intense activity, intense calm,
16 and in the midst of intensest peace is intensely active [is wise
17 indeed]. ...This is the question: With every sense and every organ
18 active, have you that tremendous peace [so that] nothing can
19 disturb you? Standing on Market Street, waiting for the car with all
20 the rush...going on around you, are you in meditation--calm and
21 peaceful? In the cave, are you intensely active there with all quiet
22 about you? If you are, you are a Yogi, otherwise not.

23 "[The seers call him wise] whose every attempt is free,
24 without any desire for gain, without any selfishness." Truth can
25 never come to us as long as we are selfish. We colour everything
26 with our own selves.

27 Things come to us as they are. Not that they are hidden, not
28 at all! We hide them. We have the brush. A thing comes, and we do
29 not like it, and we brush a little and then look at it. ..We do not want
30 to know. We paint everything with ourselves. In all action the motive
31 power is selfishness. Everything is hidden by ourselves. We are like
32 the caterpillar which takes the thread out of his own body and of
33 that makes the cocoon, and behold, he is caught. By his own work
34 he imprisons himself. That is what we are doing. The moment I say
35 "me" the thread makes a turn. "I and mine," another turn. So it
36 goes. ...

37 We cannot remain without action for a moment. Act! But just
38 as when your neighbour asks you, "Come and help me!" have you
39 exactly the same idea when you are helping yourself. No more. Your
40 body is of no more value than that of John. Don't do anything more
41 for your body than you do for John. That is religion.

42 "He whose efforts are bereft of all desire and selfishness has
43 burnt all this bondage of action with the fire of knowledge. He is
44 wise." Reading books cannot do that. The ass can be burdened with
45 the whole library; that does not make him learned at all. What is the
46 use of reading many books? "Giving up all attachment to work,
47 always satisfied, not hoping for gain, the wise man acts and is
48 beyond action." ...

49 Naked I came out of my mother's womb and naked I return.
50 Helpless I came and helpless I go. Helpless I am now. And we do

1 not know [the goal]. It is terrible for us to think about it. We get
2 such odd ideas! We go to a medium and see if the ghost can help us.
3 Think of the weakness! Ghosts, devils, gods, anybody--come on! And
4 all the priests, all the charlatans! That is just the time they get hold
5 of us, the moment we are weak. Then they bring in all the gods.

6 I see in my country a man becomes strong, educated,
7 becomes a philosopher, and says, "All this praying and bathing is
8 nonsense." ...The man's father dies, and his mother dies. That is the
9 most terrible shock a Hindu can have. You will find him bathing in
10 every dirty pool, going into the temple, licking the dust. ...Help
11 anyone! But we are helpless. There is no help from anyone. That is
12 the truth. There have been more gods than human beings; and yet
13 no help. We die like dogs--no help. Everywhere beastliness, famine,
14 disease, misery, evil! And all are crying for help. But no help. And
15 yet, hoping against hope, we are still screaming for help. Oh, the
16 miserable condition! Oh, the terror of it! Look into your own heart!
17 One half of [the trouble] is not our fault, but the fault of our
18 parents. Born with this weakness, more and more of it was put into
19 our heads. Step by step we go beyond it.

20 It is a tremendous error to feel helpless. Do not seek help
21 from anyone. We are our own help. If we cannot help ourselves,
22 there is none to help us. ..."Thou thyself art thy only friend, thou
23 thyself thy only enemy. There is no other enemy but this self of
24 mine, no other friend by myself." This is the last and greatest
25 lesson, and Oh, what a time it takes to learn it! We seem to get hold
26 of it, and the next moment the old wave comes. The backbone
27 breaks. We weaken and again grasp for that superstition and help.
28 Just think of that huge mass of misery, and all caused by this false
29 idea of going to seek for help!

30 Possibly the priest says his routine words and expects
31 something. Sixty thousand people look to the skies and pray and
32 pay the priest. Month after month they still look, still pay and
33 pray. ...Think of that! Is it not lunacy? What else is it? Who is
34 responsible? You may preach religion, but to excite the minds of
35 undeveloped children...! You will have to suffer for that. In your
36 heart of hearts, what are you? For every weakening thought you
37 have put into anybody's head you will have to pay with compound
38 interest. The law of Karma must have its pound of flesh. ...

39 There is only one sin. That is weakness. When I was a boy I
40 read Milton's *Paradise Lost*. The only good man I had any respect
41 for was Satan. The only saint is that soul that never weakens, faces
42 everything, and determines to die game.

43 Stand up and die game! ... Do not add one lunacy to another.
44 Do not add your weakness to the evil that is going to come. That is
45 all I have to say to the world. Be strong! ...You talk of ghosts and
46 devils. We are the living devils. The sign of life is strength and
47 growth. The sign of death is weakness. Whatever is weak, avoid! It
48 is death. If it is strength, go down into hell and get hold of it! There
49 is salvation only for the brave. "None but the brave deserves the
50 fair." None but the bravest deserves salvation. Whose hell? Whose
51 torture? Whose sin? Whose weakness? Whose death? Whose

1 disease?

2 You believe in God. If you do, believe in the real God. "Thou
3 are the man, thou the woman, thou the young man walking in the
4 strength of youth, ...thou the old man tottering with his stick." Thou
5 art weakness. Thou art fear. Thou art heaven, and Thou art hell.
6 Thou art the serpent that would sting. Come thou as fear! Come
7 thou as death! Come thou as misery! ...

8 All weakness, all bondage is imagination. Speak one word to
9 it, it must vanish. Do not weaken! There is no other way
10 out. ...Stand up and be strong! No fear.

11 No superstition. Face the truth as it is! If death comes--that is
12 the worst of our miseries--let it come! We are determined to die
13 game. That is all the religion I know. I have not attained to it, but I
14 am struggling to do it. I may not, but you may. Go on!

15 Where one sees another, one hears another, so long as there
16 are two, there must be fear, and fear is the mother of all [misery].
17 Where none sees another, where it is all One, there is none to be
18 miserable, none to be unhappy. [There is only] the One without a
19 second. Therefore be not afraid. Awake, arise, and stop not till the
20 goal is reached!

MOHAMMED

(Delivered on March 25, 1900, in the San Francisco Bay Area)

The ancient message of Krishna is one harmonising three--
Buddha's, Christ's, and Mohammed's. Each of the three started an
idea and carried it to its extreme. Krishna antedates all the other
prophets. [Yet, we might say,] Krishna takes the old ideas and
synthesises them, [although] his is the most ancient message. His
message was for the time being submerged by the advance wave of
Buddhism. Today it is the message peculiar to India. If you will have
it so, this afternoon I will take Mohammed and bring out the
particular work of the great Arabian prophet. ...

Mohammed [as] a young man...did not [seem to] care much
for religion. He was inclined to make money. He was considered a
nice young man and very handsome. There was a rich widow. She
fell in love with this young man, and they married. When
Mohammed had become emperor over the larger part of the world,
the Roman and Persian empires were all under his feet, and he had
a number of wives. When one day he was asked which wife he liked
best, he pointed to his first wife: "Because she believed [in] me
first." Women have faith. ...Gain independence, gain everything, but
do not lose that characteristic of women! ...

Mohammed's heart was sick at the sin, idolatry and mock
worship, superstitions and human sacrifices, and so on. The Jews
were degraded by the Christians. On the other hand, the Christians
were worse degraded than his own countrymen.

We are always in the hurry. [But] if any great work is to be
done, there must be great preparation. ...After much praying, day
and night, Mohammed began to have dreams and visions. Gabriel
appeared to him in a dream and told him that he was the
messenger of truth. He told him that the message of Jesus, of
Moses, and all the prophets would be lost and asked him to go and
preach. Seeing the Christians preaching politics in the name of
Jesus, seeing the Persians preaching dualism, Mohammed said:
"Our God is one God. He is the Lord of all that exists. There is no
comparison between Him and any other."

God is God. There is no philosophy, no complicated code of
ethics. "Our God is one without a second, and Mohammed is the
Prophet." ...Mohammed began to preach it in the streets of
Mecca. ...They began to persecute him, and he fled into the city of
[Medina]. He began to fight, and the whole race became united.
[Mohammedanism] deluged the world in the name of the Lord. The
tremendous conquering power! ...

You...people {Americans} have very hard ideas and are so
superstitious and prejudiced! These messengers must have come
from God, else how could they have been so great? You look at
every defect. Each one of us has his defects. Who hasn't? I can
point out many defects in the Jews. The wicked are always looking
for defects. ...Flies come and seek for the [ulcer], and bees come
only for the honey in the flower. Do not follow the way of the fly but
that of the bee. ...

1 Mohammed married quite a number of wives afterwards.
2 Great men may marry two hundred wives each. "Giants" like you, I
3 would not allow to marry one wife. The characters of the great
4 souls are mysterious, their methods past our finding out. We must
5 not judge them. Christ may judge Mohammed. Who are you and I?
6 Little babies. What do we understand of these great souls? ...

7 [Mohammedanism] came as a message for the masses. ...The
8 first message was equality. ...There is one religion--love. No more
9 question of race, colour, [or] anything else. Join it! That practical
10 quality carried the day. ...The great message was perfectly simple.
11 Believe in one God, the creator of heaven and earth. All was
12 created out of nothing by Him. Ask no questions. ...

13 Their temples are like Protestant churches, ...no music, no
14 paintings, no pictures. A pulpit in the corner; on that lies the Koran.
15 The people all stand in line. No priest, no person{parson?}, no
16 bishop. ...The man who prays must stand at the side of the
17 audience. Some parts are beautiful. ...

18 These old people were all messengers of God. I fall down and
19 worship them; I take the dust of their feet. But they are dead! ...And
20 we are alive. We must go ahead! ...Religion is not an imitation of
21 Jesus or Mohammed. Even if an imitation is good, it is never
22 genuine. Be not an imitation of Jesus, but be Jesus. You are quite as
23 great as Jesus, Buddha, or anybody else. If we are not...we must
24 struggle and be. I would not be exactly like Jesus. It is unnecessary
25 that I should be born a Jew. ...

26 The greatest religion is to be true to your own nature. Have
27 faith in yourselves! If you do not exist, how can God exist, or
28 anybody else? Wherever you are, it is this mind that perceives even
29 the Infinite. I see God, therefore He exists. If I cannot think of God,
30 He does not exist [for me]. This is the grand march of our human
31 progress.

32 These [great souls] are signposts on the way. That is all they
33 are. They say, "Onward, brothers!" We cling to them; we never want
34 to move. We do not want to think; we want others to think for us.
35 The messengers fulfil their mission. They ask to be up and doing. A
36 hundred years later we cling to the message and go to sleep.

37 Talking about faith and belief and doctrine is easy, but it is so
38 difficult to build character and to stem the tide of the senses. We
39 succumb. We become hypocrites. ...

40 [Religion] is not a doctrine, [not] a rule. It is a process. That is
41 all. [Doctrines and rules] are all for exercise. By that exercise we
42 get strong and at last break the bonds and become free. Doctrine is
43 of no use except for gymnastics. ...Through exercise the soul
44 becomes perfect. That exercise is stopped when you say, "I believe."
45 ...

46 "Whenever virtue subsides and immorality abounds, I take
47 human form. In every age I come for the salvation of the good, for
48 the destruction of the wicked, for the establishment of spirituality.
49 '...

1 [Such] are the great messengers of light. They are our great
2 teachers, our elder brothers. But we must go our own way!

VILVAMANGALA

This is a story from one of the books of India, called "Lives of Saints". There was a young man, a Brahmin by birth, in a certain village. The man fell in love with a bad woman in another village. There was a big river between the two villages, and this man, every day, used to go to that girl, crossing this river in a ferry boat. Now, one day he had to perform the obsequies of his father, and so, although he was longing, almost dying to go to the girl, he could not. The ceremonies had to be performed, and all those things had to be undergone; it is absolutely necessary in Hindu society. He was fretting and fuming and all that, but could not help it. At last the ceremony ended, and night came, and with the night, a tremendous howling storm arose. The rain was pouring down, and the river was lashed into gigantic waves. It was very dangerous to cross. Yet he went to the bank of the river. There was no ferry boat. The ferrymen were afraid to cross, but he would go; his heart was becoming mad with love for the girl, so he would go. There was a log floating down, and he got that, and with the help of it, crossed the river, and getting to the other side dragged the log up, threw it on the bank, and went to the house. The doors were closed. He knocked at the door, but the wind was howling, and nobody heard him. So he went round the walls and at last found what he thought to be a rope, hanging from the wall. He clutched at it, saying to himself, "Oh, my love has left a rope for me to climb." By the help of that rope he climbed over the wall, got to the other side, missed his footing, and fell, and the noise aroused the inmates of the house, and the girl came out and found the man there in a faint. She revived him, and noticing that he was smelling very unpleasantly, she said, "What is the matter with you? Why this stench on your body? How did you come into the house?" He said, "Why, did not my love put that rope there?" She smiled, and said, "What love? We are for money, and do you think that I let down a rope for you, fool that you are? How did you cross the river?" "Why, I got hold of a log of wood." "Let us go and see," said the girl. The rope was a cobra, a tremendously poisonous serpent, whose least touch is death. It had its head in a hole, and was getting in when the man caught hold of its tail, and he thought it was a rope. The madness of love made him do it. When the serpent has its head in its hole, and its body out, and you catch hold of it, it will not let its head come out; so the man climbed up by it, but the force of the pull killed the serpent. "Where did you get the log?" "It was floating down the river." It was a festering dead body; the stream had washed it down and that he took for a log, which explained why he had such an unpleasant odour. The woman looked at him and said, "I never believed in love; we never do; but, if this is not love, the Lord have mercy on me. We do not know what love is. But, my friend, why do you give that heart to a woman like me? Why do you not give it to God? You will be perfect." It was a thunderbolt to the man's brain. He got a glimpse of the beyond for a moment. "Is there a God?" "Yes, yes, my friend, there is," said the woman. And the man walked on, went into a forest, began to weep and pray. "I want Thee, Oh Lord! This tide of my love cannot find a receptacle in little human beings. I want to love where this mighty river of my love can go, the ocean of love;

1 this rushing tremendous river of my love cannot enter into little
2 pools, it wants the infinite ocean. Thou art there; come Thou to me."
3 So he remained there for years. After years he thought he had
4 succeeded, he became a Sannyasin and he came into the cities. One
5 day he was sitting on the bank of a river, at one of the bathing
6 places, and a beautiful young girl, the wife of a merchant of the city,
7 with her servant, came and passed the place. The old man was
8 again up in him, the beautiful face again attracted him. The Yogi
9 looked and looked, stood up and followed the girl to her home.
10 Presently the husband came by, and seeing the Sannyasin in the
11 yellow garb he said to him, "Come in, sir, what can I do for you?"
12 The Yogi said, "I will ask you a terrible thing." "Ask anything, sir, I
13 am a Grihastha (householder), and anything that one asks I am
14 ready to give." "I want to see your wife." The man said, "Lord, what
15 is this! Well, I am pure, and my wife is pure, and the Lord is a
16 protection to all. Welcome; come in sir." He came in, and the
17 husband introduced him to his wife. "What can I do for you?" asked
18 the lady. He looked and looked, and then said, "Mother, will you
19 give me two pins from your hair?" "Here they are." He thrust them
20 into his two eyes saying, "Get away, you rascals! Henceforth no
21 fleshy things for you. If you are to see, see the Shepherd of the
22 groves of Vrindaban with the eyes of the soul. Those are all the eyes
23 you have." So he went back into the forest. There again he wept
24 and wept and wept. It was all that great flow of love in the man that
25 was struggling to get at the truth, and at last he succeeded; he gave
26 his soul, the river of his love, the right direction, and it came to the
27 Shepherd. The story goes that he saw God in the form of Krishna.
28 Then, for once, he was sorry that he had lost his eyes, and that he
29 could only have the internal vision. He wrote some beautiful poems
30 of love. In all Sanskrit books, the writers first of all salute their
31 Gurus. So he saluted that girl as his first Guru.

THE SOUL AND GOD

(Delivered in San Francisco, March 23, 1900)

Whether it was fear or mere inquisitiveness which first led man to think of powers superior to himself, we need not discuss. ...These raised in the mind peculiar worship tendencies, and so on. There never have been [times in the history of mankind] without [some ideal] of worship. Why? What makes us all struggle for something beyond what we see--whether it be a beautiful morning or a fear of dead spirits? ...We need not go back into prehistoric times, for it is a fact present today as it was two thousand years ago. We do not find satisfaction here. Whatever our station in life--[even if we are] powerful and wealthy--we cannot find satisfaction.

Desire is infinite. Its fulfilment is very limited. There is no end to our desires; but when we go to fulfil them, the difficulty comes. It has been so with the most primitive minds, when their desires were [few]. Even [these] could not be accomplished. Now, with our arts and sciences improved and multiplied, our desires cannot be fulfilled [either]. On the other hand, we are struggling to perfect means for the fulfilment of desires, and the desires are increasing. ...

The most primitive man naturally wanted help from outside for things which he could not accomplish. ...He desired something, and it could not be obtained. He wanted help from other powers. The most ignorant and primitive man and the most cultivated man today, each appealing to God and asking for the fulfilment of some desire, are exactly the same. What difference? [Some people] find a great deal of difference. We are always finding much difference in things when there is no difference at all. Both [the primitive man and the cultivated man] plead to the same [power]. You may call it God or Allah or Jehovah. Human beings want something and cannot get it by their own powers, and are after someone who will help them. This is primitive, and it is still present with us. ...We are all born savages and gradually civilise ourselves. ...All of us here, if we search, will find the same fact. Even now this fear does not leave us. We may talk big, become philosophers and all that; but when the blow comes, we find that we must beg for help. We believe in all the superstitions that ever existed. [But] there is no superstition in the world [that does not have some basis of truth]. If I cover my face and only the tip of my [nose] is showing, still it is a bit of my face. So [with] the superstitions--the little bits are true.

You see, the lowest sort of manifestation of religion came with the burial of the departed. ...First they wrapped them up and put them in mounds, and the spirits of the departed came and lived in the [mounds, at night]. ...Then they began to bury them. ...At the gate stands a terrible goddess with a thousand teeth. ...Then [came] the burning of the body and the flames bore the spirit up. ...The Egyptians brought food and water for the departed.

The next great idea was that of the tribal gods. This tribe had one god and that tribe another. The Jews had their God Jehovah, who was their own tribal god and fought against all the other gods

1 and tribes. That god would do anything to please his own people. If
2 he killed a whole tribe not protected by him, that was all right,
3 quite good. A little love was given, but that love was confined to a
4 small section.

5 Gradually, higher ideals came. The chief of the conquering
6 tribe was the Chief of chiefs, God of gods. ...So with the Persians
7 when they conquered Egypt. The Persian emperor was the Lord of
8 [lords], and before the emperor nobody could stand. Death was the
9 penalty for anyone who looked at the Persian emperor.

10 Then came the ideal of God Almighty and All-powerful, the
11 omnipotent, omniscient Ruler of the universe: He lives in heaven,
12 and man pays special tribute to his Most Beloved, who creates
13 everything for man. The whole world is for man. The sun and moon
14 and stars are [for him]. All who have those ideas are primitive men,
15 not civilised and not cultivated at all. All the superior religions had
16 their growth between the Ganga and the Euphrates. ...Outside of
17 India we will find no further development [of religion beyond this
18 idea of God in heaven]. That was the highest knowledge ever
19 obtained outside of India. There is the local heaven where he is and
20 [where] the faithful shall go when they die. ...As far as I have seen,
21 we should call it a very primitive idea. ...Mumbo jumbo in Africa
22 [and] God in heaven--the same. He moves the world, and of course
23 his will is being done everywhere. ...

24 The old Hebrew people did not care for any heaven. That is
25 one of the reasons they [opposed] Jesus of Nazareth--because he
26 taught life after death. Paradise in Sanskrit means land beyond this
27 life. So the paradise was to make up for all this evil. The primitive
28 man does not care [about] evil. ...He never questions why there
29 should be any. ...

30 ...The word devil is a Persian word. ...The Persians and
31 Hindus [share the Aryan ancestry] upon religious grounds,
32 and...they spoke the same language, only the words one sect uses
33 for good the other uses for bad. The word Deva is an old Sanskrit
34 word for God, the same word in the Aryan languages. Here the
35 word means the devil. ...

36 Later on, when man developed [his inner life], he began to
37 question, and to say that God is good. The Persians said that there
38 were two gods--one was bad and one was good. [Their idea was
39 that] everything in this life was good: beautiful country, where there
40 was spring almost the whole year round and nobody died; there
41 was no disease, everything was fine. Then came this Wicked One,
42 and he touched the land, and then came death and disease and
43 mosquitoes and tigers and lions. Then the Aryans left their
44 fatherland and migrated southward. The old Aryans must have lived
45 way to the north. The Jews learnt it [the idea of the devil] from the
46 Persians. The Persians also taught that there will come a day when
47 this wicked god will be killed, and it is our duty to stay with the
48 good god and add our force to him in this eternal struggle between
49 him and the wicked one. ...The whole world will be burnt out and
50 everyone will get a new body.

51 The Persian idea was that even the wicked will be purified

1 and not be bad any more. The nature of the Aryan was love and
2 poetry. They cannot think of their being burnt [for eternity]. They
3 will all receive new bodies. Then no more death. So that is the best
4 about [religious] ideas outside of India. ...

5 Along with that is the ethical strain. All that man has to do is
6 to take care of three things: good thought, good word, good deed.
7 That is all. It is a practical, wise religion. Already there has come a
8 little poetry in it. But there is higher poetry and higher thought.

9 In India we see this Satan in the most ancient part of the
10 Vedas. He just (appears) and immediately disappears. ...In the
11 Vedas the bad god got a blow and disappeared. He is gone, and the
12 Persians took him. We are trying to make him leave the world
13 [all]together. Taking the Persian idea, we are going to make a
14 decent gentleman of him; give him a new body. There was the end
15 of the Satan idea in India.

16 But the idea of God went on; but mind you, here comes
17 another fact. The idea of God grew side by side with the idea of
18 [materialism] until you have traced it up to the emperor of Persia.
19 But on the other hand comes in metaphysics, philosophy. There is
20 another line of thought, the idea of [the non-dual Atman, man's]
21 own soul. That also grows. So, outside of India ideas about God had
22 to remain in that concrete form until India came to help them out a
23 bit.The other nations stopped with that old concrete idea. In this
24 country, there are millions who believe that God is [has?] a
25 body. ...Whole sects say it. [They believe that] He rules the world,
26 but there is a place where He has a body. He sits upon a throne.
27 They light candles and sing songs just as they do in our temples.

28 But in India they are sensible enough never to make [their
29 God a physical being]. You never see in India a temple of Brahma.
30 Why? Because the idea of the soul always existed. The Hebrew race
31 never questioned about the soul. There is no soul idea in the Old
32 Testament at all. The first is in the New Testament. The Persians,
33 they became so practical--wonderfully practical people--a fighting,
34 conquering race. They were the English people of the old time,
35 always fighting and destroying their neighbours--too much engaged
36 in that sort of thing to think about the soul. ...

37 The oldest idea of [the] soul [was that of] a fine body inside
38 this gross one. The gross one disappears and the fine one appears.
39 In Egypt that fine one also dies, and as soon as the gross body
40 disintegrates, the fine one also disintegrates. That is why they built
41 those pyramids [and embalmed the dead bodies of their ancestors,
42 thus hoping to secure immortality for the departed. ...

43 The Indian people have no regard for the dead body at all.
44 [Their attitude is:] "Let us take it and burn it." The son has to set
45 fire to his father's body. ...

46 There are two sorts of races, the divine and the demonic. The
47 divine think that they are soul and spirit. The demonic think that
48 they are bodies. The old Indian philosophers tried to insist that the
49 body is nothing. "As a man emits his old garment and takes a new
50 one, even so the old body is [shed] and he takes a new one" (Gita,

1 II.22). In my case, all my surroundings and education were trying to
2 [make me] the other way. I was always associated with
3 Mohammedans and Christians, who take more care of the body. ...

4 It is only one step from [the body] to the spirit. ...[In India]
5 they became insistent on this ideal of the soul. It became
6 [synonymous with] the idea of God. ...If the idea of the soul begins
7 to expand, [man must arrive at the conclusion that it is beyond
8 name and form]. ...The Indian idea is that the soul is formless.
9 Whatever is form must break sometime or other. There cannot be
10 any form unless it is the result of force and matter; and all
11 combinations must dissolve. If such is the case, [if] your soul is
12 [made of name and form, it disintegrates], and you die, and you are
13 no more immortal. If it is double, it has form and it belongs to
14 nature and it obeys nature's laws of birth and death. ...They find
15 that this [soul] is not the mind...neither a double. ...

16 Thoughts can be guided and controlled. ...[The Yogis of India]
17 practised to see how far the thoughts can be guided and controlled.
18 By dint of hard work, thoughts may be silenced altogether. If
19 thoughts were [the real man], as soon as thought ceases, he ought
20 to die. Thought ceases in meditation; even the mind's elements are
21 quite quiet. Blood circulation stops. His breath stops, but he is not
22 dead. If thought were he, the whole thing ought to go, but they find
23 it does not go. That is practical [proof]. They came to the conclusion
24 that even mind and thought were not the real man. Then
25 speculation showed that it could not be.

26 I come, I think and talk. In the midst of all [this activity is]
27 this unity [of the Self]. My thought and action are varied, many
28 [fold]...but in and through them runs...that one unchangeable One.
29 It cannot be the body. That is changing every minute. It cannot be
30 the mind; new and fresh thoughts [come] all the time. It is neither
31 the body nor the mind. Both body and mind belong to nature and
32 must obey nature's laws. A free mind never will. ...

33 Now, therefore, this real man does not belong to nature. It is
34 the person whose mind and body belong to nature. So much of
35 nature we are using. Just as you come to use the pen and ink and
36 chair, so he uses so much of nature in fine and in gross form; gross
37 form, the body, and fine form, the mind. If it is simple, it must be
38 formless. In nature alone are forms. That which is not of nature
39 cannot have any forms, fine or gross. It must be formless. It must
40 be omnipresent. Understand this. [Take] this glass on the table. The
41 glass is form and the table is form. So much of the glass-ness goes
42 off, so much of table-ness [when they break]. ...

43 The soul...is nameless because it is formless. It will neither go
44 to heaven nor [to hell] any more than it will enter this glass. It takes
45 the form of the vessel it fills. If it is not in space, either of two
46 things is possible. Either the [soul permeates] space or space is in
47 [it]. You are in space and must have a form. Space limits us, binds
48 us, and makes a form of us. If you are not in space, space is in you.
49 All the heavens and the world are in the person. ...

50 So it must be with God. God is omnipresent. "Without hands
51 [he grasps] everything; without feet he can move. .." He [is] the

1 formless, the deathless, the eternal. The idea of God came. ...He is
2 the Lord of souls, just as my soul is the [lord] of my body. If my soul
3 left the body, the body would not be for a moment. If He left my
4 soul, the soul would not exist. He is the creator of the universe; of
5 everything that dies He is the destroyer. His shadow is death; His
6 shadow is life.

7 [The ancient Indian philosophers] thought: ...This filthy world
8 is not fit for man's attention. There is nothing in the universe that is
9 [permanent--neither good nor evil]. ...

10 I told you...Satan...did not have much chance [in India]. Why?
11 Because they were very bold in religion. They were not babies.
12 Have you seen that characteristic of children? They are always
13 trying to throw the blame on someone else. Baby minds [are] trying,
14 when they make a mistake, to throw the blame upon someone
15 [else]. On the one hand, we say, "Give me this; give me that." On the
16 other hand, we say, "I did not do this; the devil tempted me. The
17 devil did it." That is the history of mankind, weak mankind. ...

18 Why is evil? Why is [the world] the filthy, dirty hole? We have
19 made it. Nobody is to blame. We put our hand in the fire. The Lord
20 bless us, [man gets] just what he deserves. Only He is merciful. If
21 we pray to Him, He helps us. He gives Himself to us.

22 That is their idea. They are [of a] poetic nature. They go crazy
23 over poetry. Their philosophy is poetry. This philosophy is a
24 poem. ...All [high thought] in the Sanskrit is written in poetry.
25 Metaphysics, astronomy--all in poetry.

26 We are responsible, and how do we come to mischief? [You
27 may say], "I was born poor and miserable. I remember the hard
28 struggle all my life." Philosophers say that you are to blame. You do
29 not mean to say that all this sprang up without any cause whatever?
30 You are a rational being. Your life is not without cause, and you are
31 the cause. You manufacture your own life all the time. ...You make
32 and mould your own life. You are responsible for yourself. Do not
33 lay the blame upon anybody, any Satan. You will only get punished a
34 little more. ...

35 [A man] is brought up before God, and He says, "Thirty-one
36 stripes for you,"...when comes another man. He says, "Thirty
37 stripes: fifteen for that fellow, and fifteen for the teacher--that awful
38 man who taught him." That is the awful thing in teaching. I do not
39 know what I am going to get. I go all over the world. If I have to get
40 fifteen for each one I have taught!...

41 We have to come to this idea: "This My Maya is divine." It is
42 My activity [My] divinity. "[My Maya] is hard to cross, but those that
43 take refuge in me [go beyond Maya]." But you find out that it is very
44 difficult to cross this ocean [of Maya by] yourself. You cannot. It is
45 the old question--hen and egg. If you do any work, that work
46 becomes the cause and produces the effect. That effect [again]
47 becomes the cause and produces the effect. And so on. If you push
48 this down, it never stops. Once you set a thing in motion, there is no
49 more stopping. I do some work, good or bad, [and it sets up a chain
50 reaction]... I cannot stop now.

1 It is impossible for us to get out from this bondage [by
2 ourselves]. It is only possible if there is someone more powerful
3 than this law of causation, and if he takes mercy on us and drags us
4 out.

5 And we declare that there is such a one--God. There is such a
6 being, all merciful. ...If there is a God, then it is possible for me to
7 be saved. How can you be saved by your own will? Do you see the
8 philosophy of the doctrine of salvation by grace? You Western
9 people are wonderfully clever, but when you undertake to explain
10 philosophy, you are so wonderfully complicated. How can you save
11 yourself by work, if by salvation you mean that you will be taken out
12 of all this nature? Salvation means just standing upon God, but if
13 you understand what is meant by salvation, then you are the
14 Self. ...You are not nature. You are the only thing outside of souls
15 and gods and nature. These are the external existences, and God
16 [is] interpenetrating both nature and soul.

17 Therefore, just as my soul is [to] my body, we, as it were, are
18 the bodies of God. God-souls-nature--it is one. The One, because, as
19 I say, I mean the body, soul, and mind. But, we have seen, the law of
20 causation pervades every bit of nature, and once you have got
21 caught you cannot get out. When once you get into the meshes of
22 law, a possible way of escape is not [through work done] by you.
23 You can build hospitals for every fly and flea that ever lived. ...All
24 this you may do, but it would never lead to salvation. ...[Hospitals]
25 go up and they come down again. [Salvation] is only possible if
26 there is some being whom nature never caught, who is the Ruler of
27 nature. He rules nature instead of being ruled by nature. He wills
28 law instead of being downed by law. ...He exists and he is all
29 merciful. The moment you seek Him [He will save you].

30 Why has He not taken us out? You do not want Him. You want
31 everything but Him. The moment you want Him, that moment you
32 get Him. We never want Him. We say, "Lord, give me a fine house."
33 We want the house, not Him. "Give me health! Save me from this
34 difficulty!" When a man wants nothing but Him, [he gets Him]. "The
35 same love which wealthy men have for gold and silver and
36 possessions, Lord, may I have the same love for Thee. I want
37 neither earth nor heaven, nor beauty nor learning. I do not want
38 salvation. Let me go to hell again and again. But one thing I want:
39 to love Thee, and for love's sake--not even for heaven."

40 Whatever man desires, he gets. If you always dream of having
41 a body, [you will get another body]. When this body goes away he
42 wants another, and goes on begetting body after body. Love matter
43 and you become matter. You first become animals. When I see a dog
44 gnawing a bone, I say, "Lord help us!" Love body until you become
45 dogs and cats! Still degenerate, until you become minerals--all body
46 and nothing else. ...

47 There are other people, who would have no compromise. The
48 road to salvation is through truth. That was another watchword. ...

49 [Man began to progress spiritually] when he kicked the devil
50 out. He stood up and took the responsibility of the misery of the
51 world upon his own shoulders. But whenever he looked [at the] past

1 and future and [at the] law of causation, he knelt down and said,
2 "Lord, save me, [thou] who [art] our creator, our father, and dearest
3 friend." That is poetry, but not very good poetry, I think. Why not? It
4 is the painting of the Infinite [no doubt]. You have it in every
5 language how they paint the Infinite. [But] it is the infinite of the
6 senses, of the muscles. ...

7 "[Him] the sun [does not illumine], nor the moon, nor the
8 stars, [nor] the flash of lightning." That is another painting of the
9 Infinite, by negative language. ...And the last Infinite is painted in
10 [the] spirituality of the Upanishads. Not only is Vedanta the highest
11 philosophy in the world, but it is the greatest poem. ...

12 Mark today, this is the ...difference between the first part of
13 the Vedas and the second. In the first, it is all in [the domain of]
14 sense. But all religions are only [concerned with the] infinite of the
15 external world--nature and nature's God. ...[Not so Vedanta]. This is
16 the first light that the human mind throws back [of] all that. No
17 satisfaction [comes] of the infinite [in] space.

18 "[The] Self-existent [One] has [created] the [senses as
19 turned]... to the outer world. Those therefore who [seek] outside
20 will never find that [which is within]. There are the few who,
21 wanting to know the truth, turn their eyes inward and in their own
22 souls behold the glory [of the Self]."

23 It is not the infinite of space, but the real Infinite, beyond
24 space, beyond time. ...Such is the world missed by the
25 Occident. ...Their minds have been turned to external nature and
26 nature's God. Look within yourself and find the truth that you had
27 [forgotten]. Is it possible for mind to come out of this dream without
28 the help of the gods? Once you start the action, there is no help
29 unless the merciful Father takes us out.

30 That would not be freedom, [even] at the hands of the
31 merciful God. Slavery is slavery. The chain of gold is quite as bad as
32 the chain of iron. Is there a way out?

33 You are not bound. No one was ever bound. [The Self] is
34 beyond. It is the all. You are the One; there are no two. God was
35 your own reflection cast upon the screen of Maya. The real God [is
36 the Self]. He [whom man] ignorantly worships is that reflection.
37 [They say that] the Father in heaven is God. Why God? [It is
38 because He is] your own reflection that [He] is God. Do you see how
39 you are seeing God all the time? As you unfold yourself, the
40 reflection grows [clearer].

41 "Two beautiful birds are there sitting upon the same tree. The
42 one [is] calm, silent, majestic; the one below [the individual self], is
43 eating the fruits, sweet and bitter, and becoming happy and sad.
44 [But when the individual self beholds the worshipful Lord as his
45 own true Self, he grieves no more.]"

46 ...Do not say "God". Do not say "Thou". Say "I". The language
47 of [dualism] says, "God, Thou, my Father." The language of [non-
48 dualism] says, "Dearer unto me than I am myself. I would have no
49 name for Thee. The nearest I can use is I...

1 "God is true. The universe is a dream. Blessed am I that I
2 know this moment that I [have been and] shall be free all
3 eternity; ...that I know that I am worshipping only myself; that no
4 nature, no delusion, had any hold on me. Vanish nature from me,
5 vanish [these] gods; vanish worship; ...vanish superstitions, for I
6 know myself. I am the Infinite. All these--Mrs. So-and-so, Mr. So-
7 and-so, responsibility, happiness, misery--have vanished. I am the
8 Infinite. How can there be death for me, or birth? Whom shall I
9 fear? I am the One. Shall I be afraid of myself? Who is to be afraid
10 of [whom]? I am the one Existence. Nothing else exists. I am
11 everything."

12 It is only the question of memory [of your true nature], not
13 salvation by work. Do you *get* salvation? You are [already] free.

14 Go on saying, "I am free". Never mind if the next moment
15 delusion comes and says, "I am bound." Dehypnotise the whole
16 thing.

17 [This truth] is first to be heard. Hear it first. Think on it day
18 and night. Fill the mind [with it] day and night: "I am It. I am the
19 Lord of the universe. Never was there any delusion..." Meditate
20 upon it with all the strength of the mind till you actually see these
21 walls, houses, everything, melt away--[until] body, everything,
22 vanishes. "I will stand alone. I am the One." Struggle on! "Who
23 cares! We want to be free; [we] do not want any powers. Worlds we
24 renounce; heavens we renounce; hells we renounce. What do I care
25 about all these powers, and this and that! What do I care if the
26 mind is controlled or uncontrolled! Let it run on. What of that! I am
27 not the mind. Let it go on!"

28 The sun [shines on the just and on the unjust]. Is he touched
29 by the defective [character] of anyone? "I am He. Whatever [my]
30 mind does, I am not touched. The sun is not touched by shining on
31 filthy places, I am Existence."

32 This is the religion of [non-dual] philosophy. [It is] difficult.
33 Struggle on! Down with all superstitions! Neither teachers nor
34 scriptures nor gods [exist]. Down with temples, with priests, with
35 gods, with incarnations, with God himself? I am all the God that
36 ever existed! There, stand up philosophers! No fear! Speak no more
37 of God and [the] superstition of the world. Truth alone triumphs,
38 and this is true. I am the Infinite.

39 All religious superstitions are vain imaginations. ...This
40 society, that I see you before me, and [that] I am talking to you--this
41 is all superstition; all must be given up. Just see what it takes to
42 become a philosopher! This is the [path] of [Jnana-] Yoga, the way
43 through knowledge. The other [paths] are easy, slow, ...but this is
44 pure strength of mind. No weakling [can follow this path of
45 knowledge. You must be able to say:] "I am the Soul, the ever free;
46 [I] never was bound. Time is in me, not I in time. God was born in
47 my mind. God the Father, Father of the universe--he is created by
48 me in my own mind..."

49 Do you call yourselves philosophers? Show it! Think of this,
50 talk [of] this, and [help] each other in this path, and give up all

1 superstition!

BREATHING

(Delivered in San Francisco, March 28, 1900)

Breathing exercises have been very popular in India from the most ancient times, so much so [that] they form a part of their religion, just as going to church and repeating certain prayers. ...I will try to bring those ideas before you.

I have told you how the Indian philosopher reduces the whole universe into two parts--Prana and Akasha.

Prana means force--all that is manifesting itself as movement or possible movement, force, or attraction. ...Electricity, magnetism, all the movements in the body, all [the movements] in the mind--all these are various manifestations of one thing called Prana. The best form of Prana, however, is in [the brain], manifesting itself as light [of understanding]. This light is under the guidance of thought.

The mind ought to control every bit of Prana that has been worked up in the body. ...[The] mind should have entire control of the body. That is not [the case] with all. With most of us it is the other way. The mind should be able to control every part of [the body] just at will. That is reason, philosophy; but [when] we come to matters of fact, it is not so. For you, on the other hand, the cart is before the horse. It is the body mastering the mind. If my finger gets pinched, I become sorry. The body works upon the mind. If anything happens which I do not like to happen, I am worried; my mind [is] thrown off its balance. The body is master of the mind. We have become bodies. We are nothing else but bodies just now.

Here [comes] the philosopher to show us the way out, to teach us what we really are. You may reason it out and understand it intellectually, but there is a long way between intellectual understanding and the practical realisation of it. Between the plan of the building and the building itself there is quite a long distance. Therefore there must be various methods [to reach the goal of religion]. In the last course, we have been studying the method of philosophy, trying to bring everything under control, once more asserting the freedom of the soul. ..."It is very difficult. This way is not for [every]body. The embodied mind tries it with great trouble" (Gita, XII. 5).

A little physical help will make the mind comfortable. What would be more rational than to have the mind itself accomplish the thing? But it cannot. The physical help is necessary for most of us. The system of Raja- Yoga is to utilise these physical helps, to make use of the powers and forces in the body to produce certain mental states, to make the mind stronger and stronger until it regains its lost empire. By sheer force of will if anyone can attain to that, so much the better. But most of us cannot, so we will use physical means, and help the will on its way.

...The whole universe is a tremendous case of unity in variety. There is only one mass of mind. Different [states] of that mind have different names. [They are] different little whirlpools in this ocean of mind. We are universal and individual at the same time. Thus is

1 the play going on. ...In reality this unity is never broken. [Matter,
2 mind, spirit are all one.]

3 All these are but various names. There is but one fact in the
4 universe, and we look at it from various standpoints. The same
5 [fact] looked at from one standpoint becomes matter. The same one
6 from another standpoint becomes mind. There are not two things.
7 Mistaking the rope for the snake, fear came [to a man] and made
8 him call somebody else to kill the snake. [His] nervous system
9 began to shake; his heart began to beat. ...All these manifestations
10 [came] from fear, and he discovered it was a rope, and they all
11 vanished. This is what we see in reality. What even the senses see--
12 what we call matter--that [too] is the real; only not as we have seen
13 it. The mind [which] saw the rope [and] took it for a snake was not
14 under a delusion. If it had been, it would not have seen anything.
15 One thing is taken for another, not as something that does not exist.
16 What we see here is body, and we take the Infinite as matter. ...We
17 are but seeking that Reality. We are never deluded. We always
18 know truth, only our reading of truth is mistaken at times. You can
19 perceive only one thing at a time. When I see the snake, the rope
20 has vanished entirely. And when I see the rope, the snake has
21 vanished. It must be one thing. ...

22 When we see the world, how can we see God? Think in your
23 own mind. What is meant by the world is God as seen as all things
24 [by] our senses. Here you see the snake; the rope is not. When you
25 know the Spirit, everything else will vanish. When you see the Spirit
26 itself, you see no matter, because that which you called matter is
27 the very thing that is Spirit. All these variations are [superimposed]
28 by our senses. The same sun, reflected by a thousand little
29 wavelets, will represent to us thousands of little suns. If I am
30 looking at the universe with my senses, I interpret it as matter and
31 force. It is one and many at the same time. The manifold does not
32 destroy the unity. The millions of waves do not destroy the unity of
33 the ocean. It remains the same ocean. When you look at the
34 universe, remember that we can reduce it to matter or to force. If
35 we increase the velocity, the mass decreases. ...On the other hand,
36 we can increase the mass and decrease the velocity. ...We may
37 almost come to a point where all the mass will entirely disappear. ...

38 Matter cannot be said to cause force nor [can] force [be] the
39 cause of matter. Both are so [related] that one may disappear in the
40 other. There must be a third [factor], and that third something is
41 the mind. You cannot produce the universe from matter, neither
42 from force. Mind is something [which is] neither force nor matter,
43 yet begetting force and matter all the time. In the long run, mind is
44 begetting all force, and that is what is meant by the universal mind,
45 the sum total of all minds. Everyone is creating, and [in] the sum
46 total of all these creations you have the universe -unity in diversity.
47 It is one and it is many at the same time.

48 The Personal God is only the sum total of all, and yet it is an
49 individual by itself, just as you are the individual body of which each
50 cell is an individual part itself.

51 Everything that has motion is included in Prana or force. [It

1 is] this Prana which is moving the stars, sun, moon; Prana is
2 gravitation. ...

3 All forces of nature, therefore, must be created by the
4 universal mind. And we, as little bits of mind, [are] taking out that
5 Prana from nature, working it out again in our own nature, moving
6 our bodies and manufacturing our thought. If [you think] thought
7 cannot be manufactured, stop eating for twenty days and see how
8 you feel. Begin today and count. ...Even thought is manufactured by
9 food. There is no doubt about it.

10 Control of this Prana that is working everything, control of
11 this Prana in the body, is called Pranayama. We see with our
12 common sense that it is the breath [that] is setting everything in
13 motion. If I stop breathing, I stop. If the breath begins, [the body]
14 begins to move. What we want to get at is not the breath itself; it is
15 something finer behind the breath.

16 [There was once a minister to a great king. The] king,
17 displeased with the minister, ordered him to be confined in the top
18 of [a very high tower. This was done, and the minister was left there
19 to perish. His wife came to the tower at night and called to her
20 husband.] The minister said to her, "No use weeping." He told her
21 to take a little honey, [a beetle], a pack of fine thread, a ball of
22 twine, and a rope. She tied the fine thread to one of the legs of the
23 beetle and put honey on the top of its head and let it go [with its
24 head up]. [The beetle slowly crept onwards, in the hope of reaching
25 the honey, until at last it reached the top of the tower, when the
26 minister grasped the beetle, and got possession of the silken thread,
27 then the pack thread, then the stout twine, and lastly of the rope.
28 The minister descended from the tower by means of the rope, and
29 made his escape. In this body of ours the breath motion is the
30 "silken thread"; by laying hold of it we grasp the pack thread of
31 nerve currents, and from these the stout twine of our thoughts, and
32 lastly the rope of Prana, controlling which we reach freedom. (*Vide*
33 *ante* pp. 143-44).]

34 By the help of things on the material plane, we have to come
35 to finer and finer [perceptions]. The universe is one, whatever point
36 you touch. All the points are but variations of that one point.
37 Throughout the universe is a unity (at bottom). ...Even through such
38 a gross thing as breath I can get hold of the Spirit itself.

39 By the exercise of breathing we begin to feel all the
40 movements of the body that we [now] do not feel. As soon as we
41 begin to feel them, we begin to master them. Thoughts in the germ
42 will open to us, and we will be able to get hold of them. Of course,
43 not all of us have the opportunity nor the will nor the patience nor
44 the faith to pursue such a thing; but there is the common sense idea
45 that is of some benefit to everyone.

46 The first benefit is health. Ninety-nine per cent of us do not at
47 all breathe properly. We do not inflate the lungs
48 enough. ...Regularity [of breath] will purify the body. It quiets the
49 mind. ...When you are peaceful, your breath is going on peacefully,
50 [it is] rhythmic. If the breath is rhythmic, you must be peaceful.
51 When the mind is disturbed, the breath is broken. If you can bring

1 the breath into rhythm forcibly by practice, why can you not
2 become peaceful? When you are disturbed, go in to the room and
3 close the door. Do not try to control the mind, but go on with
4 rhythmic breathing for ten minutes. The heart will become
5 peaceful. These are common sense benefits that come to everyone.
6 The others belong to the Yogi. ...

7 Deep-breathing exercises [are only the first step]. There are
8 about eighty-four [postures for] various exercises. Some [people]
9 have taken up this breathing as the whole [pursuit] of life. They do
10 not do anything without consulting the breath. They are all the time
11 [observing] in which nostril there is more breath. When it is the
12 right, [they] will do certain things, and when [it is] the left, they do
13 other things. When [the breath is] flowing equally through both
14 nostrils, they will worship.

15 When the breath is coming rhythmically through both
16 nostrils, that is the time to control your mind. By means of the
17 breath you can make the currents of the body move through any
18 part of the body, just [at] will. Whenever [any] part of the body is ill,
19 send the Prana to that part, all by the breath.

20 Various other things are done. There are sects who are trying
21 not to breathe at all. They would not do anything that would make
22 them breathe hard. They go into a sort of trance. ...Scarcely any
23 part of the body [functions]. The heart almost ceases [to
24 beat]. ...Most of these exercises are very dangerous; the higher
25 methods [are] for acquiring higher powers. There are whole sects
26 trying to [lighten] the whole body by withdrawal of breath and then
27 they will rise up in the air. I have never seen anyone rise. ...I have
28 never seen anyone fly through the air, but the books say so. I do not
29 pretend to know everything. All the time I am seeing most
30 wonderful things. ...[Once I observed a] man bringing out fruits and
31 flowers, etc. [out of nowhere].

32The Yogi, when he becomes perfect, can make his body so
33 small it will pass through this wall--this very body. He can become
34 so heavy, two hundred persons cannot lift him. He will be able to fly
35 through the air if he likes. [But] nobody can be as powerful as God
36 Himself. If they could, and one created, another would destroy. ...

37 This is in the books. I can [hardly] believe them, nor do I
38 disbelieve them. What I have seen I take. ...

39 If the study [improvement?] of things in this world is possible,
40 it is not by competition, it is by regulating the mind. Western people
41 say, "That is our nature; we cannot help it." Studying your social
42 problems, [I conclude] you cannot solve them either. In some things
43 you are worse off than we are, ...and all these things do not bring
44 the world anywhere at all. ...

45 The strong take everything; the weak go to the wall. The poor
46 are waiting. ...The man who can take, will take everything. The poor
47 hate that man. Why? Because they are waiting their turn. All the
48 systems they invent, they all teach the same thing. The problem can
49 only be solved in the mind of man. ...No law will ever make him do
50 what he does not want to do. ...It is only if [man] wills to be good

1 that he will be good. All the law and juries...cannot make him good.
2 The almighty man says, "I do not care." ...The only solution is if we
3 all want to be good. How can that be done?

4 All knowledge is within [the] mind. Who saw knowledge in the
5 stone, or astronomy in the star? It is all in the human being.

6 Let us realise [that] we are the infinite power. Who put a limit
7 to the power of mind? Let us realise we are all mind. Every drop
8 has the whole of the ocean in it. That is the mind of man. The Indian
9 mind reflects upon these [powers and potentialities] and wants to
10 bring [them] all out. For himself he doesn't care what happens. It
11 will take a great length of time [to reach perfection]. If it takes fifty
12 thousand years, what of that! ...

13 The very foundation of society, the formation of it, makes the
14 defect. [Perfection] is only possible if the mind of man is changed, if
15 he, of his own sweet will, changes his mind; and the great difficulty
16 is, neither can he force his own mind.

17 You may not believe in all the claims of this Raja-Yoga. It is
18 absolutely necessary that every individual can become divine. That
19 is only [possible] when every individual has absolute mastery over
20 his own thought. ...[The thoughts, the senses] should be all my
21 servants, not my masters. Then only is it possible that evils will
22 vanish. ...

23 Education is not filling the mind with a lot of facts. Perfecting
24 the instrument and getting complete mastery of my own mind [is
25 the ideal of education]. If I want to concentrate my mind upon a
26 point, it goes there, and the moment I call, it is free [again]. ...

27 That is the great difficulty. By great struggle we get a certain
28 power of concentration, the power of attachment of the mind to
29 certain things. But then there is not the power of detachment. I
30 would give half my life to take my mind off that object! I cannot. It
31 is the power of concentration and attachment as well as the power
32 of detachment [that we must develop]. [If] the man [is] equally
33 powerful in both--that man has attained manhood. You cannot make
34 him miserable even if the whole universe tumbles about his ears.
35 What books can teach you that? You may read any amount of books.
36 ...Crowd into the child fifty thousand words a moment, teach him all
37 the theories and philosophies. ...There is only one science that will
38 teach him facts, and that is psychology. ...And the work begins with
39 control of the breath.

40 Slowly and gradually you get into the chambers of the mind
41 and gradually get control of the mind. It is a long, [hard struggle]. It
42 must not be taken up as something curious. When one wants to do
43 something, he has a plan. [Raja-Yoga] proposes no faith, no belief,
44 no God. If you believe in two thousand gods, you can try that. Why
45 not? ...[But in Raja-Yoga] it is impersonal principles.

46 The greatest difficulty is what? We talk and theorise. The vast
47 majority of mankind must deal with things that are concrete. For
48 the dull people cannot see all the highest philosophy. Thus it ends.
49 You may be graduates [in] all sciences in the world, ...but if you
50 have not realised, you must become a baby and learn.

1 ...If you give them things in the abstract and infinite, they get
2 lost. Give them things [to do], a little at a time. [Tell them,] "You
3 take [in] so many breaths, you do this." They go on, [they]
4 understand it, and find pleasure in it. These are the kindergartens
5 of religion. That is why breathing exercises will be so beneficial. I
6 beg you all not to be merely curious. Practise a few days, and if you
7 do not find any benefit, then come and curse me. ...

8 The whole universe is a mass of energy, and it is present at
9 every point. One grain is enough for all of us, if we know how to get
10 what there is. ...

11 This having to *do* is the poison that is killing us. ...[Duty is]
12 what pleases slaves. ...[But] I am free! What I do is my play. [I am
13 not a slave. I am] having a little fun--that is all. ...

14 The departed spirits--they are weak, are trying to get vitality
15 from us. ...

16 Spiritual vitality can be given from one mind to another. The
17 man who gives is the Guru. The man who receives is the disciple.
18 That is the only way spiritual truth is brought into the world.

19 [At death] all the senses go into the [mind] and the mind goes
20 into Prana, vitality. The soul goes out and carries part of the mind
21 out with him. He carries a certain part of the vitality, and he carries
22 a certain amount of very fine material also, as the germ of the
23 spiritual body. The Prana cannot exist without some sort of
24 [vehicle]. ...It gets lodgement in the thoughts, and it will come out
25 again. So you manufacture this new body and new brain. Through
26 that it will manifest. ...

27 [Departed spirits] cannot manufacture a body; and those that
28 are very weak do not remember that they are dead. ...They try to
29 get more enjoyment from this [spirit] life by getting into the bodies
30 of others, and any person who opens his body to them runs a
31 terrible risk. They seek his vitality. ...

32 In this world nothing is permanent except God. ...Salvation
33 means knowing the truth. We do not become anything; we are what
34 we are. Salvation [comes] by faith and not by work. It is a question
35 of *knowledge* ! You must *know* what you are, and it is done. The
36 dream vanishes. This you [and others] are dreaming here. When
37 they die, they go to [the] heaven [of their dream]. They live in that
38 dream, and [when it ends], they take a nice body [here], and they
39 are good people. ...

40 [The wise man says,] "All these [desires] have vanished from
41 me. This time I will not go through all this paraphernalia." He tries
42 to get knowledge and struggles hard, and he sees what a dream,
43 what a nightmare this is--[this dreaming], and working up heavens
44 and worlds and worse. He laughs at it. According to SWAMI
45 VIVEKANANDA HIS SECOND VISIT TO THE WEST (P. 461), this
46 address was delivered on 29 March 1900 under the title "The
47 Science of Breathing".--Ed.

PRACTICAL RELIGION: BREATHING AND MEDITATION

(Delivered in San Francisco, April 5, 1900)

Everyone's idea of practical religion is according to his theory of practicality and the standpoint he starts from. There is work. There is the system of worship. There is knowledge.

The philosopher thinks...the difference between bondage and freedom is only caused by knowledge and ignorance. To him, knowledge is the goal, and his practicality is gaining that knowledge. ...The worshipper's practical religion is the power of love and devotion. The worker's practical religion consists in doing good works. And so, as in every other thing, we are always trying to ignore the standard of another, trying to bind the whole world to our standard.

Doing good to his fellow-beings is the practical religion of the man full of love. If men do not help to build hospitals, he thinks that they have no religion at all. But there is no reason why everyone should do that. The philosopher, in the same way, may denounce every man who does not have knowledge. People may build twenty thousand hospitals, and the philosopher declares they are but...the beasts of burden of the gods. The worshipper has his own idea and standard: Men who cannot love God are no good, whatever work they do. The [Yogi believes in] psychic [control and] the conquest of [internal] nature. "How much have you gained towards that? How much control over your senses, over your body?"--that is all the Yogi asks. And, as we said, each one judges the others by his own standard. Men may have given millions of dollars and fed rats and cats, as some do in India. They say that men can take care of themselves, but the poor animals cannot. That is *their* idea. But to the Yogi the goal is conquest of [internal] nature, and he judges man by that standard. ...

We are always talking [about] practical religion. But it must be practical in *our* sense. Especially [so] in the Western countries. The Protestants' ideal is good works. They do not care much for devotion and philosophy. They think there is not much in it. "What is your knowledge!" [they say]. "Man has to do something!"...A little humanitarianism! The churches rail day and night against callous agnosticism. Yet they seem to be veering rapidly towards just that. Callous slaves! Religion of utility! That is the spirit just now. And that is why some Buddhists have become so popular in the West. People do not know whether there is a God or not, whether there is a soul or not. [They think:] This world is full of misery. Try to help this world.

The Yoga doctrine, which we are having our lecture on, is not from that standpoint. [It teaches that] there is the soul, and inside this soul is all power. It is already there, and if we can master this body, all the power will be unfolded. All knowledge is in the soul. Why are people struggling? To lessen the misery. ...All unhappiness is caused by our not having mastery over the body. ...We are all putting the cart before the horse. ...Take the system of work, for

1 instance. We are trying to do good by...comforting the poor. We do
2 not get to the cause which created the misery. It is like taking a
3 bucket to empty out the ocean, and more [water] comes all the
4 time. The Yogi sees that this is nonsense. [He says that] the way out
5 of misery is to know the cause of misery first. ...We try to do the
6 good we can. What for? If there is an incurable disease, why should
7 we struggle and take care of ourselves? If the utilitarians say: "Do
8 not bother about soul and God!" what is that to the Yogi and what is
9 it to the world? The world does not derive any good [from such an
10 attitude]. More and more misery is going on all the time. ...

11 The Yogi says you are to go to the root of all this. Why is there
12 misery in the world? He answers: "It is all our own foolishness, not
13 having proper mastery of our own bodies. That is all." He advises
14 the means by which this misery can be [overcome]. If you can thus
15 get mastery of your body, all the misery of the world will vanish.
16 Every hospital is praying that more and more sick people will come
17 there. Every time you think of doing some charity, you think there is
18 some beggar to take your charity. If you say, "O Lord, let the world
19 be full of charitable people!"--you mean, let the world be full of
20 beggars also. Let the world be full of good works--let the world be
21 full of misery. This is out-and-out slavishness!

22 ...The Yogi says, religion is practical if you know first why
23 misery exists. All the misery in the world is in the senses. Is there
24 any ailment in the sun, moon, and stars? The same fire that cooks
25 your meal burns the child. Is it the fault of the fire? Blessed be the
26 fire! Blessed be this electricity! It gives light. ...Where can you lay
27 the blame? Not on the elements. The world is neither good nor bad;
28 the world is the world. The fire is the fire. If you burn your finger in
29 it, you are a fool. If you [cook your meal and with it satisfy your
30 hunger,] you are a wise man. That is all the difference.
31 Circumstances can never be good or bad. Only the individual man
32 can be good or bad. What is meant by the world being good or bad?
33 Misery and happiness can only belong to the sensuous individual
34 man.

35 The Yogis say that nature is the enjoyed; the soul is the
36 enjoyer. All misery and happiness--where is it? In the senses. It is
37 the touch of the senses that causes pleasure and pain, heat and
38 cold. If we can control the senses and order what they shall feel--
39 not let them order us about as they are doing now--if they can obey
40 our commands, become our servants, the problem is solved at once.
41 We are bound by the senses; they play upon us, make fools of us all
42 the time.

43 Here is a bad odour. It will bring me unhappiness as soon as
44 it touches my nose. I am the slave of my nose. If I am not its slave, I
45 do not care. A man curses me. His curses enter my ears and are
46 retained in my mind and body. If I am the master, I shall say: "Let
47 these things go; they are nothing to me. I am not miserable. I do not
48 bother." This is the outright, pure, simple, clear-cut truth.

49 The other problem to be solved is--is it practical? Can man
50 attain to the power of mastery of the body? ...Yoga says it *is*
51 practical. ...Supposing it is not--suppose there are doubts in your

1 mind. You have got to try it. There is no other way out. ...

2 You may do good works all the time. All the same, you will be
3 the slave of your senses, you will be miserable and unhappy. You
4 may study the philosophy of every religion. Men in this country
5 carry loads and loads of books on their backs. They are mere
6 scholars, slaves of the senses, and therefore happy and unhappy.
7 They read two thousand books, and that is all right; but as soon as a
8 little misery comes, they are worried, anxious. ...You call yourselves
9 men! You stand up...and build hospitals. You are fools!

10 What is the difference between men and animals? ..."Food
11 and [sleep], procreation of the species, and fear exist in common
12 with the animals. There is one difference: Man can control all these
13 and become God, the master." Animals cannot do it. Animals can do
14 charitable work. Ants do it. Dogs do it. What is the difference then?
15 Men can be masters of themselves. They can resist the reaction to
16 anything. ...The animal cannot resist anything. He is held...by the
17 string of nature everywhere. That is all the distinction. One is the
18 master of nature, the other the slave of nature. What is nature? The
19 five senses...

20 [The conquest of internal nature] is the only way out,
21 according to Yoga. ...The thirst for God is religion. ...Good works
22 and all that [merely] make the mind a little quiet. To practise this--
23 to be perfect--all depends upon our past. I have been studying
24 [Yoga] all my life and have made very little progress yet. But I have
25 got enough [result] to believe that this is the only true way. The day
26 will come when I will be master of myself. If not in this life, [in
27 another life]. I will struggle and never let go. Nothing is lost. If I die
28 this moment, all my past struggles [will come to my help]. Have you
29 not seen what makes the difference between one man and another?
30 It is their past. The past habits make one man a genius and another
31 man a fool. You may have the power of the past and can succeed in
32 five minutes. None can predict the moment of time. We all have to
33 attain [perfection] some time or other.

34 The greater part of the practical lessons which the Yogi gives
35 us is in the mind, the power of concentration and meditation. ...We
36 have become so materialistic. When we think of ourselves, we find
37 only the body. The body has become the ideal, nothing else.
38 Therefore a little physical help is necessary. ...

39 First, to sit in the posture in which you can sit still for a long
40 time. All the nerve currents which are working pass along the
41 spine. The spine is not intended to support the weight of the body.
42 Therefore the posture must be such that the weight of the body is
43 not on the spine. Let it be free from all pressure.

44 There are some other preliminary things. There is the great
45 question of food and exercise. ...

46 The food must be simple and taken several times [a day]
47 instead of once or twice. Never get very hungry. "He who eats too
48 much cannot be a Yogi. He who fasts too much cannot be a Yogi. He
49 who sleeps too much cannot be a Yogi, nor he who keeps awake too
50 much." He who does not do any work and he who works too hard

1 cannot succeed. Proper food, proper exercise, proper sleep, proper
2 wakefulness--these are necessary for any success.

3 What the proper food is, what kind, we have to determine
4 ourselves. Nobody can determine that [for us]. As a general
5 practice, we have to shun exciting food. ...We do not know how to
6 vary our diet with our occupation. We always forget that it is the
7 food out of which we manufacture everything we have. So the
8 amount and kind of energy that we want, the food must
9 determine. ...

10 Violent exercises are not all necessary. ...If you want to be
11 muscular, Yoga is not for you. You have to manufacture a finer
12 organism than you have now. Violent exercises are positively
13 hurtful. ...Live amongst those who do not take too much exercise. If
14 you do not take violent exercise, you will live longer. You do not
15 want to burn out your lamp in muscles! People who work with their
16 brains are the longest-lived people. ...Do not burn the lamp quickly.
17 Let it burn slowly and gently. ...Every anxiety, every violent
18 exercise--physical and mental--[means] you are burning the lamp.

19 The proper diet means, generally, simply do not eat highly
20 spiced foods. There are three sorts of mind, says the Yogi,
21 according to the elements of nature. One is the dull mind, which
22 covers the luminosity of the soul. Then there is that which makes
23 people active, and lastly, that which makes them calm and peaceful.

24 Now there are persons born with the tendency to sleep all the
25 time. Their taste will be towards that type of food with is rotting--
26 crawling cheese. They will eat cheese that fairly jumps off the table.
27 It is a natural tendency with them.

28 Then active people. Their taste is for everything hot and
29 pungent, strong alcohol...

30 Sattvika people are very thoughtful, quiet, and patient. They
31 take food in small quantities, and never anything bad.

32 I am always asked the question: "Shall I give up meat?" My
33 Master said, "Why should you give up anything? It will give you up."
34 Do not give up anything in nature. Make it so hot for nature that
35 she will give you up. There will come a time when you cannot
36 possibly eat meat. The very sight of it will disgust you. There will
37 come a time when many things you are struggling to give up will be
38 distasteful, positively loathsome.

39 Then there are various sorts of breathing exercises. One
40 consists of three parts: the drawing in of the breath, the holding of
41 the breath--stopping still without breathing--and throwing the
42 breath out. [Some breathing exercises] are rather difficult, and
43 some of the complicated ones are attended with great danger if
44 done without proper diet. I would not advise you to go through any
45 one of these except the very simple ones.

46 Take a deep breath and fill the lungs. Slowly throw the breath
47 out. Take it through one nostril and fill the lungs, and throw it out
48 slowly through the other nostril. Some of us do not breathe deeply
49 enough. Others cannot fill the lungs enough. These breathings will

1 correct that very much. Half an hour in the morning and half an
2 hour in the evening will make you another person. This sort of
3 breathing is never dangerous. The other exercises should be
4 practised very slowly. And measure your strength. If ten minutes
5 are a drain, only take five.

6 The Yogi is expected to keep his own body well. These various
7 breathing exercises are a great help in regulating the different
8 parts of the body. All the different parts are inundated with breath.
9 It is through breath that we gain control of them all. Disharmony in
10 parts of the body is controlled by more flow of the nerve currents
11 towards them. The Yogi ought to be able to tell when in any part
12 pain is caused by less vitality or more. He has to equalise that. ...

13 Another condition [for success in Yoga] is chastity. It is the
14 corner-stone of all practice. Married or unmarried--perfect chastity.
15 It is a long subject, of course, but I want to tell you: Public
16 discussions of this subject are not to the taste of this country. These
17 Western countries are full of the most degraded beings in the shape
18 of teachers who teach men and women that if they are chaste they
19 will be hurt. How do they gather all this? ...People come to me--
20 thousands come every year--with this one question. Someone has
21 told them that if they are chaste and pure they will be hurt
22 physically. ...How do these teachers know it? Have they been
23 chaste? Those unchaste, impure fools, lustful creatures, want to
24 drag the whole world down to their [level]! ...

25 Nothing is gained except by sacrifice. ...The holiest function
26 of our human consciousness, the noblest, do not make it unclean!
27 Do not degrade it to the level of the brutes. ...Make yourselves
28 decent men! ...Be chaste and pure! ...There is no other way. Did
29 Christ find any other way? ...If you can conserve and use the energy
30 properly, it leads you to God. Inverted, it is hell itself. ...

31 It is much easier to do anything upon the external plane, but
32 the greatest conqueror in the world finds himself a mere child when
33 he tries to control his own mind. This is the world he has to
34 conquer--the greater and more difficult world to conquer. Do not
35 despair! Awake, arise, and stop not until the goal is reached! ...

WORK AND ITS SECRET

(Delivered at Los Angeles, California, January 4, 1900)

One of the greatest lessons I have learnt in my life is to pay as much attention to the means of work as to its end. He was a great man from whom I learnt it, and his own life was a practical demonstration of this great principle. I have been always learning great lessons from that one principle, and it appears to be that all the secret of success is there; to pay as much attention to the means as to the end.

Our great defect in life is that we are so much drawn to the ideal, the goal is so much more enchanting, so much more alluring, so much bigger in our mental horizon, that we lose sight of the details altogether.

But whenever failure comes, if we analyse it critically, in ninety-nine per cent of cases we shall find that it was because we did not pay attention to the means. Proper attention to the finishing, strengthening, of the means is what we need. With the means all right, the end must come. We forget that it is the cause that produces the effect; the effect cannot come of itself; and unless the causes are exact, proper, and powerful, the effect will not be produced. Once the ideal is chosen and the means determined, we may almost let go the ideal, because we are sure it will be there, when the means are perfected. When the cause is there, there is no more difficulty about the effect, the effect is bound to come. If we take care of the cause, the effect will take care of itself. The realization of the ideal is the effect. The means are the cause: attention to the means, therefore, is the great secret of life. We also read this in the Gita and learn that we have to work, constantly work with all our power; to put our whole mind in the work, whatever it be, that we are doing. At the same time, we must not be attached. That is to say, we must not be drawn away from work by anything else; still, we must be able to quit the work whenever we like.

If we examine our own lives, we find that the greatest cause of sorrow is this: we take up something, and put our whole energy on it--perhaps it is a failure and yet we cannot give it up. We know that it is hurting us, that any further clinging to it is simply bringing misery on us; still, we cannot tear ourselves away from it. The bee came to sip the honey, but its feet stuck to the honey-pot and it could not get away. Again and again, we are finding ourselves in that state. That is the whole secret of existence. Why are we here? We came here to sip the honey, and we find our hands and feet sticking to it. We are caught, though we came to catch. We came to enjoy; we are being enjoyed. We came to rule; we are being ruled. We came to work; we are being worked. All the time, we find that. And this comes into every detail of our life. We are being worked upon by other minds, and we are always struggling to work on other minds. We want to enjoy the pleasures of life; and they eat into our vitals. We want to get everything from nature, but we find in the long run that nature takes everything from us--depletes us, and casts us aside.

1 Had it not been for this, life would have been all sunshine.
2 Never mind! With all its failures and successes, with all its joys and
3 sorrows, it can be one succession of sunshine, if only we are not
4 caught.

5 That is the one cause of misery: we are attached, we are
6 being caught. Therefore says the Gita: Work constantly; work, but
7 be not attached; be not caught. Reserve unto yourself the power of
8 detaching yourself from everything, however beloved, however
9 much the soul might yearn for it, however great the pangs of misery
10 you feel if you were going to leave it; still, reserve the power of
11 leaving it whenever you want. The weak have no place here, in this
12 life or in any other life. Weakness leads to slavery. Weakness leads
13 to all kinds of misery, physical and mental. Weakness is death.
14 There are hundreds of thousands of microbes surrounding us, but
15 they cannot harm us unless we become weak, until the body is
16 ready and predisposed to receive them. There may be a million
17 microbes of misery, floating about us. Never mind! They dare not
18 approach us, they have no power to get a hold on us, until the mind
19 is weakened. This is the great fact: strength is life, weakness is
20 death. Strength is felicity, life eternal, immortal; weakness is
21 constant strain and misery: weakness is death.

22 Attachment is the source of all our pleasures now. We are
23 attached to our friends, to our relatives; we are attached to our
24 intellectual and spiritual works; we are attached to external objects,
25 so that we get pleasure from them. What, again, brings misery but
26 this very attachment? We have to detach ourselves to earn joy. If
27 only we had power to detach ourselves at will, there would not be
28 any misery. That man alone will be able to get the best of nature,
29 who, having the power of attaching himself to a thing with all his
30 energy, has also the power to detach himself when he should do so.
31 The difficulty is that there must be as much power of attachment as
32 that of detachment. There are men who are never attracted by
33 anything. They can never love, they are hard-hearted and apathetic;
34 they escape most of the miseries of life. But the wall never feels
35 misery, the wall never loves, is never hurt; but it is the wall, after
36 all. Surely it is better to be attached and caught, than to be a wall.
37 Therefore the man who never loves who is hard and stony, escaping
38 most of the miseries of life, escapes also its joys. We do not want
39 that. That is weakness, that is death. That soul has not been
40 awakened that never feels weakness, never feels misery. That is a
41 callous state. We do not want that.

42 At the same time, we not only want this mighty power of love,
43 this mighty power of attachment, the power of throwing our whole
44 soul upon a single object, losing ourselves and letting ourselves be
45 annihilated, as it were, for other souls--which is the power of the
46 gods--but we want to be higher even than the gods. The perfect
47 man can put his whole soul upon that one point of love, yet he is
48 unattached. How comes this? There is another secret to learn.

49 The beggar is never happy. The beggar only gets a dole with
50 pity and scorn behind it, at least with the thought behind that the
51 beggar is a low object. He never really enjoys what he gets.

1 We are all beggars. Whatever we do, we want a return. We
2 are all traders. We are traders in life, we are traders in virtue, we
3 are traders in religion. And alas! we are also traders in love.

4 If you come to trade, if it is a question of give-and-take, if it is
5 a question of buy-and-sell, abide by the laws of buying and selling.
6 There is a bad time and there is a good time; there is a rise and a
7 fall in prices: always you expect the blow to come. It is like looking
8 at the mirror. Your face is reflected: you make a grimace--there is
9 one in the mirror; if you laugh, the mirror laughs. This is buying and
10 selling, giving and taking.

11 We get caught. How? Not by what we give, but by what we
12 expect. We get misery in return for our love; not from the fact that
13 we love, but from the fact that we want love in return. There is no
14 misery where there is no want. Desire, want, is the father of all
15 misery. Desires are bound by the laws of success and failure.
16 Desires must bring misery.

17 The great secret of true success, of true happiness, then, is
18 this: the man who asks for no return, the perfectly unselfish man, is
19 the most successful. It seems to be a paradox. Do we not know that
20 every man who is unselfish in life gets cheated, gets hurt?
21 Apparently, yes. "Christ was unselfish, and yet he was crucified."
22 True, but we know that his unselfishness is the reason, the cause of
23 a great victory--the crowning of millions upon millions of lives with
24 the blessings of true success.

25 Ask nothing; want nothing in return. Give what you have to
26 give; it will come back to you--but do not think of that now, it will
27 come back multiplied a thousand fold--but the attention must not be
28 on that. Yet have the power to give: give, and there it ends. Learn
29 that the whole of life is giving, that nature will force you to give. So,
30 give willingly. Sooner or later you will have to give up. You come
31 into life to accumulate. With clenched hands, you want to take. But
32 nature puts a hand on your throat and makes your hands open.
33 Whether you will it or not, you have to give. The moment you say, "I
34 will not", the blow comes; you are hurt. None is there but will be
35 compelled, in the long run, to give up everything. And the more one
36 struggles against this law, the more miserable one feels. It is
37 because we dare not give, because we are not resigned enough to
38 accede to this grand demand of nature, that we are miserable. The
39 forest is gone, but we get heat in return. The sun is taking up water
40 from the ocean, to return it in showers. You are a machine for
41 taking and giving: you take, in order to give. Ask, therefore, nothing
42 in return; but the more you give, the more will come to you. The
43 quicker you can empty the air out of this room, the quicker it will be
44 filled up by the external air; and if you close all the doors and every
45 aperture, that which is within will remain, but that which is outside
46 will never come in, and that which is within will stagnate,
47 degenerate, and become poisoned. A river is continually emptying
48 itself into the ocean and is continually filling up again. Bar not the
49 exit into the ocean. The moment you do that, death seizes you.

50 Be, therefore, not a beggar; be unattached. This is the most
51 terrible task of life! You do not calculate the dangers on the path.

1 Even by intellectually recognising the difficulties, we really do not
2 know them until we feel them. From a distance we may get a
3 general view of a park: well, what of that? We feel and really know
4 it when we are in it. Even if our every attempt is a failure, and we
5 bleed and are torn asunder, yet, through all this, we have to
6 preserve our heart--we must assert our God-head in the midst of all
7 these difficulties. Nature wants us to react, to return blow for blow,
8 cheating for cheating, lie for lie, to hit back with all our might. Then
9 it requires a superdivine power not to hit back, to keep control, to
10 be unattached.

11 Every day we renew our determination to be unattached. We
12 cast our eyes back and look at the past objects of our love and
13 attachment, and feel how every one of them made us miserable. We
14 went down into the depths of dependency because of our "love"! We
15 found ourselves mere slaves in the hands of others, we were
16 dragged down and down! And we make a fresh determination:
17 "Henceforth, I will be master of myself; henceforth, I will have
18 control over myself." But the time comes, and the same story once
19 more! Again the soul is caught and cannot get out. The bird is in a
20 net, struggling and fluttering. This is our life.

21 I know the difficulties. Tremendous they are, and ninety per
22 cent of us become discouraged and lose heart, and in our turn,
23 often become pessimists and cease to believe in sincerity, love, and
24 all that is grand and noble. So, we find men who in the freshness of
25 their lives have been forgiving, kind, simple, and guileless, become
26 in old age lying masks of men. Their minds are a mass of intricacy.
27 There may be a good deal of external policy, possibly. They are not
28 hot-headed, they do not speak, but it would be better for them to do
29 so; their hearts are dead and, therefore, they do not speak. They do
30 not curse, not become angry; but it would be better for them to be
31 able to be angry; a thousand times better, to be able to curse. They
32 cannot. There is death in the heart, for cold hands have seized upon
33 it, and it can no more act, even to utter a curse, even to use a harsh
34 word.

35 All this we have to avoid: therefore I say, we require
36 superdivine power. Superhuman power is not strong enough.
37 Superdivine strength is the only way, the one way out. By it alone
38 we can pass through all these intricacies, through these showers of
39 miseries, unscathed. We may be cut to pieces, torn asunder, yet our
40 hearts must grow nobler and nobler all the time.

41 It is very difficult, but we can overcome the difficulty by
42 constant practice. We must learn that nothing can happen to us,
43 unless we make ourselves susceptible to it. I have just said, no
44 disease can come to me until the body is ready; it does not depend
45 alone on the germs, but upon a certain predisposition which is
46 already in the body. We get only that for which we are fitted. Let us
47 give up our pride and understand this, that never is misery
48 undeserved. There never has been a blow undeserved: there never
49 has been an evil for which I did not pave the way with my own
50 hands. We ought to know that. Analyse yourselves and you will find
51 that every blow you have received, came to you because you
52 prepared yourselves for it. You did half, and the external world did

1 the other half: that is how the blow came. That will sober us down.
2 At the same time, from this very analysis will come a note of hope,
3 and the note of hope is: "I have no control of the external world, but
4 that which is in me and nearer unto me, my own world, is in my
5 control. If the two together are required to make a failure, if the
6 two together are necessary to give me a blow, I will not contribute
7 the one which is in my keeping; and how then can the blows come?
8 If I get real control of myself, the blow will never come."

9 We are all the time, from our childhood, trying to lay the
10 blame upon something outside ourselves. We are always standing
11 up to set right other people, and not ourselves. If we are miserable,
12 we say, "Oh, the world is a devil's world." We curse others and say,
13 "What infatuated fools!" But why should we be in such a world, if
14 we really are so good? If this is a devil's world, we must be devils
15 also; why else should we be here? "Oh, the people of the world are
16 so selfish!" True enough; but why should we be found in that
17 company, if we be better? Just think of that.

18 We only get what we deserve. It is a lie when we say, the
19 world is bad and we are good. It can never be so. It is a terrible lie
20 we tell ourselves.

21 This is the first lesson to learn: be determined not to curse
22 anything outside, not to lay the blame upon any one outside, but be
23 a man, stand up, lay the blame on yourself. You will find, that is
24 always true. Get hold of yourself.

25 Is it not a shame that at one moment we talk so much of our
26 manhood, of our being gods--that we know everything, we can do
27 everything, we are blameless, spotless, the most unselfish people in
28 the world; and at the next moment, a little stone hurts us, a little
29 anger from a little Jack wounds us--any fool in the street makes
30 "these gods" miserable! Should this be so if we are such gods? Is it
31 true that the world is to blame? Could God, who is the purest and
32 noblest of souls, be made miserable by any of our tricks? If you are
33 so unselfish, you are like God. What world can hurt you? You would
34 go through the seventh hell unscathed, untouched. But the very fact
35 that you complain and want to lay blame upon the external world
36 shows that you feel the external world--the very fact that you feel
37 shows that you are not what you claim to be. You only make your
38 offence greater by heaping misery upon misery, by imagining that
39 the external world is hurting you, and crying out, "Oh, this devil's
40 world! This man hurts me; that man hurts me!" and so forth. It is
41 adding lies to misery.

42 We are to take care of ourselves--that much we can do--and
43 give up attending to others for a time. Let us perfect the means; the
44 end will take care of itself. For the world can be good and pure,
45 only if our lives are good and pure. It is an effect, and we are the
46 means. Therefore, let us purify ourselves. Let us make ourselves
47 perfect.

THE POWERS OF THE MIND

(Delivered at Los Angeles, California, January 8, 1900)

All over the world there has been the belief in the supernatural throughout the ages. All of us have heard of extraordinary happenings, and many of us have had some personal experience of them. I would rather introduce the subject by telling you certain facts which have come within my own experience. I once heard of a man who, if any one went to him with questions in his mind, would answer them immediately; and I was also informed that he foretold events. I was curious and went to see him with a few friends. We each had something in our minds to ask, and, to avoid mistakes, we wrote down our questions and put them in our pockets. As soon as the man saw one of us, he repeated our questions and gave the answers to them. Then he wrote something on paper, which he folded up, asked me to sign on the back, and said, "Don't look at it; put it in your pocket and keep it there till I ask for it again." And so on to each one of us. He next told us about some events that would happen to us in the future. Then he said, "Now, think of a word or a sentence, from any language you like." I thought of a long sentence from Sanskrit, a language of which he was entirely ignorant. "Now, take out the paper from your pocket," he said. The Sanskrit sentence was written there! He had written it an hour before with the remark, "In confirmation of what I have written, this man will think of this sentence." It was correct. Another of us who had been given a similar paper which he had signed and placed in his pocket, was also asked to think of a sentence. He thought of a sentence in Arabic, which it was still less possible for the man to know; it was some passage from the Koran. And my friend found this written down on the paper.

Another of us was a physician. He thought of a sentence from a German medical book. It was written on his paper.

Several days later I went to this man again, thinking possibly I had been deluded somehow before. I took other friends, and on this occasion also he came out wonderfully triumphant.

Another time I was in the city of Hyderabad in India, and I was told of a Brahmin there who could produce numbers of things from where, nobody knew. This man was in business there; he was a respectable gentleman. And I asked him to show me his tricks. It so happened that this man had a fever, and in India there is a general belief that if a holy man puts his hand on a sick man he would be well. This Brahmin came to me and said, "Sir, put your hand on my head, so that my fever may be cured." I said, "Very good; but you show me your tricks." He promised. I put my hand on his head as desired, and later he came to fulfil his promise. He had only a strip of cloth about his loins, we took off everything else from him. I had a blanket which I gave him to wrap round himself, because it was cold, and made him sit in a corner. Twenty-five pairs of eyes were looking at him. And he said, "Now, look, write down anything you want." We all wrote down names of fruits that never grew in that country, bunches of grapes, oranges, and so on. And

1 we gave him those bits of paper. And there came from under his
2 blanket, bushels of grapes, oranges, and so forth, so much that if all
3 that fruit was weighed, it would have been twice as heavy as the
4 man. He asked us to eat the fruit. Some of us objected, thinking it
5 was hypnotism; but the man began eating himself--so we all ate. It
6 was all right.

7 He ended by producing a mass of roses. Each flower was
8 perfect, with dew-drops on the petals, not one crushed, not one
9 injured. And masses of them! When I asked the man for an
10 explanation, he said, "It is all sleight of hand."

11 Whatever it was, it seemed to be impossible that it could be
12 sleight of hand merely. From whence could he have got such large
13 quantities of things?

14 Well, I saw many things like that. Going about India you find
15 hundreds of similar things in different places. These are in every
16 country. Even in this country you will find some such wonderful
17 things. Of course there is a great deal of fraud, no doubt; but then,
18 whenever you see fraud, you have also to say that fraud is an
19 imitation. There must be some truth somewhere, that is being
20 imitated; you cannot imitate nothing. Imitation must be of
21 something substantially true.

22 In very remote times in India, thousands of years ago, these
23 facts used to happen even more than they do today. It seems to me
24 that when a country becomes very thickly populated, psychical
25 power deteriorates. Given a vast country thinly inhabited, there
26 will, perhaps, be more of psychical power there. These facts, the
27 Hindus, being analytically minded, took up and investigated. And
28 they came to certain conclusions; that is, they made a science of it.
29 They found out that all these, though extraordinary, are also
30 natural; there is nothing supernatural. They are under laws just the
31 same as any other physical phenomenon. It is not a freak of nature
32 that a man is born with such powers. They can be systematically
33 studied, practised, and acquired. This science they call the science
34 of Raja-Yoga. There are thousands of people who cultivate the study
35 of this science, and for the whole nation it has become a part of
36 daily worship.

37 The conclusion they have reached is that all these
38 extraordinary powers are in the mind of man. This mind is a part of
39 the universal mind. Each mind is connected with every other mind.
40 And each mind, wherever it is located, is in actual communication
41 with the whole world.

42 Have you ever noticed the phenomenon that is called thought-
43 transference? A man here is thinking something, and that thought
44 is manifested in somebody else, in some other place. With
45 preparations--not by chance--a man wants to send a thought to
46 another mind at a distance, and this other mind knows that a
47 thought is coming, and he receives it exactly as it is sent out.
48 Distance makes no difference. The thought goes and reaches the
49 other man, and he understands it. If your mind were an isolated
50 something here, and my mind were an isolated something there,
51 and there were no connection between the two, how would it be

1 possible for my thought to reach you? In the ordinary cases, it is not
2 my thought that is reaching you direct; but my thought has got to
3 be dissolved into ethereal vibrations and those ethereal vibrations
4 go into your brain, and they have to be resolved again into your own
5 thoughts. Here is a dissolution of thought, and there is a resolution
6 of thought. It is a roundabout process. But in telepathy, there is no
7 such thing; it is direct.

8 This shows that there is a continuity of mind, as the Yogis call
9 it. The mind is universal. Your mind, my mind, all these little minds,
10 are fragments of that universal mind, little waves in the ocean; and
11 on account of this continuity, we can convey our thoughts directly to
12 one another.

13 You see what is happening all around us. The world is one of
14 influence. Part of our energy is used up in the preservation of our
15 own bodies. Beyond that, every particle of our energy is day and
16 night being used in influencing others. Our bodies, our virtues, our
17 intellect, and our spirituality, all these are continuously influencing
18 others; and so, conversely, we are being influenced by them. This is
19 going on all around us. Now, to take a concrete example. A man
20 comes; you know he is very learned, his language is beautiful, and
21 he speaks to you by the hour; but he does not make any impression.
22 Another man comes, and he speaks a few words, not well arranged,
23 ungrammatical perhaps; all the same, he makes an immense
24 impression. Many of you have seen that. So it is evident that words
25 alone cannot always produce an impression. Words, even thoughts
26 contribute only one-third of the influence in making an impression,
27 the man, two-thirds. What you call the personal magnetism of the
28 man--that is what goes out and impresses you.

29 In our families there are the heads; some of them are
30 successful, others are not. Why? We complain of others in our
31 failures. The moment I am unsuccessful, I say, so-and-so is the
32 cause of the failure. In failure, one does not like to confess one's
33 own faults and weaknesses. Each person tries to hold himself
34 faultless and lay the blame upon somebody or something else, or
35 even on bad luck. When heads of families fail, they should ask
36 themselves, why it is that some persons manage a family so well
37 and others do not. Then you will find that the difference is owing to
38 the man--his presence, his personality.

39 Coming to great leaders of mankind, we always find that it
40 was the personality of the man that counted. Now, take all the great
41 authors of the past, the great thinkers. Really speaking, how many
42 thoughts have they thought? Take all the writings that have been
43 left to us by the past leaders of mankind; take each one of their
44 books and appraise them. The real thoughts, new and genuine, that
45 have been thought in this world up to this time, amount to only a
46 handful. Read in their books the thoughts they have left to us. The
47 authors do not appear to be giants to us, and yet we know that they
48 were great giants in their days. What made them so? Not simply the
49 thoughts they thought, neither the books they wrote, nor the
50 speeches they made, it was something else that is now gone, that is
51 their personality. As I have already remarked, the personality of the
52 man is two-thirds, and his intellect, his words, are but one-third. It

1 is the real man, the personality of the man, that runs through us.
2 Our actions are but effects. Actions must come when the man is
3 there; the effect is bound to follow the cause.

4 The ideal of all education, all training, should be this man-
5 making. But, instead of that, we are always trying to polish up the
6 outside. What use in polishing up the outside when there is no
7 inside? The end and aim of all training is to make the man grow.
8 The man who influences, who throws his magic, as it were, upon his
9 fellow-beings, is a dynamo of power, and when that man is ready, he
10 can do anything and everything he likes; that personality put upon
11 anything will make it work.

12 Now, we see that though this is a fact, no physical laws that
13 we know of will explain this. How can we explain it by chemical and
14 physical knowledge? How much of oxygen, hydrogen, carbon, how
15 many molecules in different positions, and how many cells, etc., etc.
16 can explain this mysterious personality? And we still see, it is a fact,
17 and not only that, it is the real man; and it is that man that lives and
18 moves and works, it is that man that influences, moves his fellow-
19 beings, and passes out, and his intellect and books and works are
20 but traces left behind. Think of this. Compare the great teachers of
21 religion with the great philosophers. The philosophers scarcely
22 influenced anybody's inner man, and yet they wrote most
23 marvellous books. The religious teachers, on the other hand, moved
24 countries in their lifetime. The difference was made by personality.
25 In the philosopher it is a faint personality that influences; in the
26 great prophets it is tremendous. In the former we touch the
27 intellect, in the latter we touch life. In the one case, it is simply a
28 chemical process, putting certain chemical ingredients together
29 which may gradually combine and under proper circumstances
30 bring out a flash of light or may fail. In the other, it is like a torch
31 that goes round quickly, lighting others.

32 The science of Yoga claims that it has discovered the laws
33 which develop this personality, and by proper attention to those
34 laws and methods, each one can grow and strengthen his
35 personality. This is one of the great practical things, and this is the
36 secret of all education. This has a universal application. In the life
37 of a householder, in the life of the poor, the rich, the man of
38 business, the spiritual man, in every one's life, it is a great thing,
39 the strengthening of this personality. There are laws, very fine,
40 which are behind the physical laws, as we know. That is to say,
41 there are no such realities as a physical world, a mental world, a
42 spiritual world. Whatever is, is one. Let us say, it is a sort of
43 tapering existence; the thickest part is here, it tapers and becomes
44 finer and finer. The finest is what we call spirit; the grossest, the
45 body. And just as it is here in microcosm, it is exactly the same in
46 the macrocosm. The universe of ours is exactly like that; it is the
47 gross external thickness, and it tapers into something finer and
48 finer until it becomes God.

49 We also know that the greatest power is lodged in the fine,
50 not the coarse. We see a man take up a huge weight, we see his
51 muscles swell, and all over his body we see signs of exertion, and
52 we think the muscles are powerful things. But it is the thin thread-

1 like things, the nerves, which bring power to the muscles; the
2 moment one of these threads is cut off from reaching the muscles,
3 they are not able to work at all. These tiny nerves bring the power
4 from something still finer, and that again in its turn brings it from
5 something finer still--thought, and so on. So we can see the
6 movements in the gross; but when fine movements take place, we
7 cannot see them. When a gross thing moves, we catch it, and thus
8 we naturally identify movement with things which are gross. But all
9 the power is really in the fine. We do not see any movement in the
10 fine, perhaps, because the movement is so intense that we cannot
11 perceive it. But if by any science, any investigation, we are helped
12 to get hold of these finer forces which are the cause of the
13 expression, the expression itself will be under control. There is a
14 little bubble coming out of the bottom of a lake; we do not see it
15 coming all the time, we see it only when it bursts on the surface; so,
16 we can perceive thoughts only after they develop a great deal, or
17 after they become actions. We constantly complain that we have no
18 control over our actions, over our thoughts. But how can we have
19 it? If we can get control over the fine movements, if we can get hold
20 of thought at the root, before it has become thought, before it has
21 become action, then it would be possible for us to control the
22 whole. Now, if there is a method by which we can analyse,
23 investigate, understand, and finally grapple with those finer
24 powers, the finer causes, then alone is it possible to have control
25 over ourselves, and the man who has control over his own mind
26 assuredly will have control over every other mind. That is why
27 purity and morality have been always the object of religion; a pure,
28 moral man has control of himself. And all minds are the same,
29 different parts of one Mind. He who knows one lump of clay has
30 known all the clay in the universe. He who knows and controls his
31 own mind knows the secret of every mind and has power over every
32 mind.

33 Now, a good deal of our physical evil we can get rid of, if we
34 have control over the fine parts; a good many worries we can throw
35 off, if we have control over the fine movements; a good many
36 failures can be averted, if we have control over these fine powers.
37 So far, is utility. Yet beyond, there is something higher.

38 Now, I shall tell you a theory, which I will not argue now, but
39 simply place before you the conclusion. Each man in his childhood
40 runs through the stages through which his race has come up; only
41 the race took thousands of years to do it, while the child takes a few
42 years. The child is first the old savage man--and he crushes a
43 butterfly under his feet. The child is at first like the primitive
44 ancestors of his race. As he grows, he passes through different
45 stages until he reaches the development of his race. Only he does it
46 swiftly and quickly. Now, take the whole of humanity as a race, or
47 take the whole of the animal creation, man and the lower animals,
48 as one whole. There is an end towards which the whole is moving.
49 Let us call it perfection. Some men and women are born who
50 anticipate the whole progress of mankind. Instead of waiting and
51 being reborn over and over again for ages until the whole human
52 race has attained to that perfection, they, as it were, rush through

1 them in a few short years of their life. And we know that we can
2 hasten these processes, if we be true to ourselves. If a number of
3 men, without any culture, be left to live upon an island, and are
4 given barely enough food, clothing, and shelter, they will gradually
5 go on and on, evolving higher and higher stages of civilisation. We
6 know also, that this growth can be hastened by additional means.
7 We help the growth of trees, do we not? Left to nature they would
8 have grown, only they would have taken a longer time; we help
9 them to grow in a shorter time than they would otherwise have
10 taken. We are doing all the time the same thing, hastening the
11 growth of things by artificial means. Why cannot we hasten the
12 growth of man? We can do that as a race. Why are teachers sent to
13 other countries? Because by these means we can hasten the growth
14 of races. Now, can we not hasten the growth of individuals? We can.
15 Can we put a limit to the hastening? We cannot say how much a
16 man can grow in one life. You have no reason to say that this much
17 a man can do and no more. Circumstances can hasten him
18 wonderfully. Can there be any limit then, till you come to
19 perfection? So, what comes of it?--That a perfect man, that is to say,
20 the type that is to come of this race, perhaps millions of years
21 hence, that man can come today. And this is what the Yogis say, that
22 all the great incarnations and prophets are such men; that they
23 reached perfection in this one life. We have had such men at all
24 periods of the world's history and at all times. Quite recently, there
25 was such a man who lived the life of the whole human race and
26 reached the end--even in this life. Even this hastening of the growth
27 must be under laws. Suppose we can investigate these laws and
28 understand their secrets and apply them to our own needs; it
29 follows that we grow. We hasten our growth, we hasten our
30 development, and we become perfect, even in this life. This is the
31 higher part of our life, and the science of the study of mind and its
32 powers has this perfection as its real end. Helping others with
33 money and other material things and teaching them how to go on
34 smoothly in their daily life are mere details.

35 The utility of this science is to bring out the perfect man, and
36 not let him wait and wait for ages, just a plaything in the hands of
37 the physical world, like a log of drift-wood carried from wave to
38 wave and tossing about in the ocean. This science wants you to be
39 strong, to take the work in your own hand, instead of leaving it in
40 the hands of nature, and get beyond this little life. That is the great
41 idea.

42 Man is growing in knowledge, in power, in happiness.
43 Continuously, we are growing as a race. We see that is true,
44 perfectly true. Is it true of individuals? To a certain extent, yes. But
45 yet, again comes the question: Where do you fix the limit? I can see
46 only at a distance of so many feet. But I have seen a man close his
47 eyes and see what is happening in another room. If you say you do
48 not believe it, perhaps in three weeks that man can make you do
49 the same. It can be taught to anybody. Some persons, in five
50 minutes even, can be made to read what is happening in another
51 man's mind. These facts can be demonstrated.

52 Now, if these things are true, where can we put a limit? If a

1 man can read what is happening in another's mind in the corner of
2 this room, why not in the next room? Why not anywhere? We cannot
3 say, why not. We dare not say that it is not possible. We can only
4 say, we do not know how it happens. Material scientists have no
5 right to say that things like this are not possible; they can only say,
6 "We do not know." Science has to collect facts, generalise upon
7 them, deduce principles, and state the truth--that is all. But if we
8 begin by denying the facts, how can a science be?

9 There is no end to the power a man can obtain. This is the
10 peculiarity of the Indian mind, that when anything interests it, it
11 gets absorbed in it and other things are neglected. You know how
12 many sciences had their origin in India. Mathematics began there.
13 You are even today counting 1,2,3, etc. to zero, after Sanskrit
14 figures, and you all know that algebra also originated in India, and
15 that gravitation was known to the Indian thousands of years before
16 Newton was born.

17 You see the peculiarity. At a certain period of Indian history,
18 this one subject of man and his mind absorbed all their interest.
19 And it was so enticing, because it seemed the easiest way to
20 achieve their ends. Now, the Indian mind became so thoroughly
21 persuaded that the mind could do anything and everything
22 according to law, that its powers became the great object of study.
23 Charms, magic, and other powers, and all that were nothing
24 extraordinary, but a regularly taught science, just as the physical
25 sciences they had taught before that. Such a conviction in these
26 things came upon the race that physical sciences nearly died out. It
27 was the one thing that came before them. Different sects of Yogis
28 began to make all sorts of experiments. Some made experiments
29 with light, trying to find out how lights of different colours produced
30 changes in the body. They wore a certain coloured cloth, lived
31 under a certain colour, and ate certain coloured foods. All sorts of
32 experiments were made in this way. Others made experiments in
33 sound by stopping and unstopping their ears. And still others
34 experimented in the sense of smell, and so on.

35 The whole idea was to get at the basis, to reach the fine parts
36 of the thing. And some of them really showed most marvellous
37 powers. Many of them were trying to float in the air or pass through
38 it. I shall tell you a story which I heard from a great scholar in the
39 West. It was told him by a Governor of Ceylon who saw the
40 performance. A girl was brought forward and seated cross-legged
41 upon a stool made of sticks crossed. After she had been seated for a
42 time, the show-man began to take out, one after another, these
43 cross-bars; and when all were taken out, the girl was left floating in
44 the air. The Governor thought there was some trick, so he drew his
45 sword and violently passed it under the girl; nothing was there.
46 Now, what was this? It was not magic or something extraordinary.
47 That is the peculiarity. No one in India would tell you that things
48 like this do not exist. To the Hindu it is a matter of course. You know
49 what the Hindus would often say when they have to fight their
50 enemies--"Oh, one of our Yogis will come and drive the whole lot
51 out!" It is the extreme belief of the race. What power is there in the
52 hand or the sword? The power is all in the spirit.

1 If this is true, it is temptation enough for the mind to exert its
2 highest. But as with every other science it is very difficult to make
3 any great achievement, so also with this, nay much more. Yet most
4 people think that these powers can be easily gained. How many are
5 the years you take to make a fortune? Think of that! First, how
6 many years do you take to learn electrical science or engineering?
7 And then you have to work all the rest of your life.

8 Again, most of the other sciences deal with things that do not
9 move, that are fixed. You can analyse the chair, the chair does not
10 fly from you. But this science deals with the mind, which moves all
11 the time; the moment you want to study it, it slips. Now the mind is
12 in one mood, the next moment, perhaps, it is different, changing,
13 changing all the time. In the midst of all this change it has to be
14 studied, understood, grasped and controlled. How much more
15 difficult, then, is this science! It requires rigorous training. People
16 ask me why I do not give them practical lessons. Why, it is no joke. I
17 stand upon this platform talking to you and you go home and find no
18 benefit; nor do I. Then you say, "It is all bosh." It is because you
19 wanted to make a bosh of it. I know very little of this science, but
20 the little that I gained I worked for thirty years of my life, and for
21 six years I have been telling people the little that I know. It took me
22 thirty years to learn it; thirty years of hard struggle. Sometimes I
23 worked at it twenty hours during the twenty-four; sometimes I slept
24 only one hour in the night; sometimes I worked whole nights;
25 sometimes I lived in places where there was hardly a sound, hardly
26 a breath; sometimes I had to live in caves. Think of that. And yet I
27 know little or nothing; I have barely touched the hem of the
28 garment of this science. But I can understand that it is true and
29 vast and wonderful.

30 Now, if there is any one amongst you who really wants to
31 study this science, he will have to start with that sort of
32 determination, the same as, nay even more than, that which he puts
33 into any business of life.

34 And what an amount of attention does business require, and
35 what a rigorous taskmaster it is! Even if the father, the mother, the
36 wife, or the child dies, business cannot stop! Even if the heart is
37 breaking, we still have to go to our place of business, when every
38 hour of work is a pang. That is business, and we think that it is just,
39 that it is right.

40 This science calls for more application than any business can
41 ever require. Many men succeed in business; very few in this.
42 Because so much depends upon the particular constitution of the
43 person studying it. As in business all may not make a fortune, but
44 everyone can make something, so in the study of this science each
45 one can get a glimpse which will convince him of its truth and of the
46 fact that there have been men who realised it fully.

47 This is the outline of the science. It stands upon its own feet
48 and in its own light, and challenges comparison with any other
49 science. There have been charlatans, there have been magicians,
50 there have been cheats, and more here than in any other field.
51 Why? For the same reason, that the more profitable the business,

1 the greater the number of charlatans and cheats. But that is no
2 reason why the business should not be good. And one thing more; it
3 may be good intellectual gymnastics to listen to all the arguments
4 and an intellectual satisfaction to hear of wonderful things. But, if
5 any one of you really wants to learn something beyond that, merely
6 attending lectures will not do. That cannot be taught in lectures, for
7 it is life; and life can only convey life. If there are any amongst you
8 who are really determined to learn it, I shall be very glad to help
9 them.

HINTS ON PRACTICAL SPIRITUALITY

(Delivered at the Home of Truth, Los Angeles, California)

This morning I shall try to present to you some ideas about breathing and other exercises. We have been discussing theories so long that now it will be well to have a little of the practical. A great many books have been written in India upon this subject. Just as your people are practical in many things, so it seems our people are practical in this line. Five persons in this country will join their heads together and say, "We will have a joint-stock company", and in five hours it is done; in India they could not do it in fifty years; they are so unpractical in matters like this. But, mark you, if a man starts a system of philosophy, however wild its theory may be, it will have followers. For instance, a sect is started to teach that if a man stands on one leg for twelve years, day and night, he will get salvation--there will be hundreds ready to stand on one leg. All the suffering will be quietly borne. There are people who keep their arms upraised for years to gain religious merit. I have seen hundreds of them. And, mind you, they are not always ignorant fools, but are men who will astonish you with the depth and breadth of their intellect. So, you see, the word practical is also relative.

We are always making this mistake in judging others; we are always inclined to think that our little mental universe is all that is; our ethics, our morality, our sense of duty, our sense of utility, are the only things that are worth having. The other day when I was going to Europe, I was passing through Marseilles, where a bull-fight was being held. All the Englishmen in the steamer were mad with excitement, abusing and criticising the whole thing as cruel. When I reached England, I heard of a party of prize-fighters who had been to Paris, and were kicked out unceremoniously by the French, who thought prize-fighting very brutal. When I hear these things in various countries, I begin to understand the marvellous saying of Christ: "Judge not that ye be not judged." The more we learn, the more we find out how ignorant we are, how multiform and multi-sided is this mind of man. When I was a boy, I used to criticise the ascetic practices of my countrymen; great preachers in our own land have criticised them; the greatest man that was ever born, Buddha himself, criticised them. But all the same, as I am growing older, I feel that I have no right to judge. Sometimes I wish that, in spite of all their incongruities, I had one fragment of their power to do and to suffer. Often I think that my judgment and my criticism do not proceed from any dislike of torture, but from sheer cowardice--because I cannot do it--I dare not do it.

Then, you see that strength, power, and courage are things which are very peculiar. We generally say, "A courageous man, a brave man, a daring man", but we must bear in mind that courage or bravery or any other trait does not always characterise the man. The same man who would rush to the mouth of a cannon shrinks from the knife of the surgeon; and another man who never dares to face a gun will calmly bear a severe surgical operation, if need be. Now, in judging others you must always define your terms of

1 courage or greatness. The man whom I am criticising as not good
2 may be wonderfully so in some points in which I am not.

3 Take another example. You often note, when people are
4 discussing as to what man and woman can do, always the same
5 mistake is made. They think they show man at his best because he
6 can fight, for instance, and undergo tremendous physical exertion;
7 and this is pitted against the physical weakness and the non-
8 combating quality of woman. This is unjust. Woman is as
9 courageous as man. Each is equally good in his or her way. What
10 man can bring up a child with such patience, endurance, and love
11 as the woman can? The one has developed the power of doing; the
12 other, the power of suffering. If woman cannot act, neither can man
13 suffer. The whole universe is one of perfect balance. I do not know,
14 but some day we may wake up and find that the mere worm has
15 something which balances our manhood. The most wicked person
16 may have some good qualities that I entirely lack. I see that every
17 day of my life. Look at the savage! I wish I had such a splendid
18 physique! He eats, he drinks, to his heart's content, without
19 knowing perhaps what sickness is, while I am suffering every
20 minute. How many times would I have been glad to have changed
21 my brain for his body! The whole universe is only a wave and a
22 hollow; there can be no wave without a hollow. Balance
23 everywhere. You have one thing great, your neighbour has another
24 thing great. When you are judging man and woman, judge them by
25 the standard of their respective greatness. One cannot be in other's
26 shoes. The one has no right to say that the other is wicked. It is the
27 same old superstition that says, "If this is done, the world will go to
28 ruin." But in spite of this the world has not yet come to ruin. It was
29 said in this country that if the Negroes were freed, the country
30 would go to ruin--but did it? It was also said that if the masses were
31 educated, the world would come to ruin--but it was only made
32 better. Several years ago a book came out depicting the worst thing
33 that could happen to England. The writer showed that as
34 workmen's wages were rising, English commerce was declining. A
35 cry was raised that the workmen in England were exorbitant in
36 their demands, and that the Germans worked for less wages. A
37 commission was sent over to Germany to investigate this and it was
38 reported that the German labourers received higher wages. Why
39 was it so? Because of the education of the masses. Then how about
40 the world going to ruin if the masses are educated? In India,
41 especially, we meet with old fogies all over the land. They want to
42 keep everything secret from the masses. These people come to the
43 very satisfying conclusion that they are the *crème de la crème* of
44 this universe. They believed they cannot be hurt by these
45 dangerous experiments. It is only the masses that can be hurt by
46 them!

47 Now, coming back to the practical. The subject of the
48 practical application of psychology has been taken up in India from
49 very early times. About fourteen hundred years before Christ, there
50 flourished in India a great philosopher, Patanjali by name. He
51 collected all the facts, evidences, and researches in psychology and
52 took advantage of all the experiences accumulated in the past.

1 Remember, this world is very old; it was not created two or three
2 thousand years ago. It is taught here in the West that society began
3 eighteen hundred years ago, with the New Testament. Before that
4 there was no society. That may be true with regard to the West, but
5 it is not true as regards the whole world. Often, while I was
6 lecturing in London, a very intellectual and intelligent friend of
7 mine would argue with me, and one day after using all his weapons
8 against me, he suddenly exclaimed, "But why did not your Rishis
9 come to England to teach us?" I replied, "Because there was no
10 England to come to. Would they preach to the forests?"

11 "Fifty years ago," said Ingersoll to me, "you would have been
12 hanged in this country if you had come to preach. You would have
13 been burnt alive or you would have been stoned out of the villages."

14 So there is nothing unreasonable in the supposition that
15 civilisation existed fourteen hundred years before Christ. It is not
16 yet settled whether civilisation has always come from the lower to
17 the higher. The same arguments and proofs that have been brought
18 forward to prove this proposition can also be used to demonstrate
19 that the savage is only a degraded civilised man. The people of
20 China, for instance, can never believe that civilisation sprang from
21 a savage state, because the contrary is within their experience. But
22 when you talk of the civilisation of America, what you mean is the
23 perpetuity and the growth of your own race.

24 It is very easy to believe that the Hindus, who have been
25 declining for seven hundred years, were highly civilised in the past.
26 We cannot prove that it is not so.

27 There is not one single instance of any civilisation being
28 spontaneous. There was not a race in the world which became
29 civilised unless another civilised race came and mingled with that
30 race. The origin of civilisation must have belonged, so to say, to one
31 or two races who went abroad, spread their ideas, and intermingled
32 with other races and thus civilisation spread.

33 For practical purposes, let us talk in the language of modern
34 science. But I must ask you to bear in mind that, as there is
35 religious superstition, so also there is a superstition in the matter of
36 science. There are priests who take up religious work as their
37 specialty; so also there are priests of the physical laws, scientists.
38 As soon as a great scientist's name, like Darwin or Huxley, is cited,
39 we follow blindly. It is the fashion of the day. Ninety-nine per cent of
40 what we call scientific knowledge is mere theories. And many of
41 them are no better than the old superstitions of ghosts with many
42 heads and hands, but with this difference that the latter
43 differentiated man a little from stocks and stones. True science asks
44 us to be cautious. Just as we should be careful with the priests, so
45 we should be with the scientists. Begin with disbelief. Analyse, test,
46 prove everything, and then take it. Some of the most current beliefs
47 of modern science have not been proved. Even in such a science as
48 mathematics, the vast majority of its theories are only working
49 hypotheses. With the advent of greater knowledge they will be
50 thrown away.

51 In 1400 B.C. a great sage made an attempt to arrange,

1 analyse, and generalise upon certain psychological facts. He was
2 followed by many others who took up parts of what he had
3 discovered and made a special study of them. The Hindus alone of
4 all ancient races took up the study of this branch of knowledge in
5 right earnest. I am teaching you now about it, but how many of you
6 will practise it? How many days, how many months will it be before
7 you give it up? You are impractical on this subject. In India, they
8 will persevere for ages and ages. You will be astonished to hear that
9 they have no churches, no Common Prayers, or anything of the
10 kind; but they, every day, still practise the breathings and try to
11 concentrate the mind; and that is the chief part of their devotion.
12 These are the main points. Every Hindu must do these. It is the
13 religion of the country. Only, each one may have a special method--a
14 special form of breathing, a special form of concentration, and what
15 is one's special method, even one's wife need not know; the father
16 need not know the son's. But they all have to do these. And there is
17 nothing occult about these things. The word "occult" has no bearing
18 on them. Near the Ganga thousands and thousands of people may
19 be seen daily sitting on its banks breathing and concentrating with
20 closed eyes. There may be two reasons that make certain practices
21 impracticable for the generality of mankind. One is, the teachers
22 hold that the ordinary people are not fit for them. There may be
23 some truth in this, but it is due more to pride. The second is the
24 fear of persecution. A man, for instance, would not like to practise
25 breathing publicly in this country, because he would be thought so
26 queer; it is not the fashion here. On the other hand, in India, if a
27 man prayed, "Give us this day our daily bread", people would laugh
28 at him. Nothing could be more foolish to the Hindu mind than to
29 say, "Our Father which art in Heaven." The Hindu, when he
30 worships, thinks that God is within himself.

31 According to the Yogis, there are three principal nerve
32 currents; one they call the Idâ, the other the Pingalâ, and the
33 middle one the Sushumnâ, and all these are inside the spinal
34 column. The Ida and the Pingala, the left and the right, are clusters
35 of nerves, while the middle one, the Sushumna, is hollow and is not
36 a cluster of nerves. This Sushumna is closed, and for the ordinary
37 man is of no use, for he works through the Ida and the Pingala only.
38 Currents are continually going down and coming up through these
39 nerves, carrying orders all over the body through other nerves
40 running to the different organs of the body.

41 It is the regulation and the bringing into rhythm of the Ida
42 and Pingala that is the great object of breathing. But that itself is
43 nothing--it is only so much air taken into the lungs; except for
44 purifying the blood, it is of no more use. There is nothing occult in
45 the air that we take in with our breath and assimilate to purify the
46 blood; the action is merely a motion. This motion can be reduced to
47 the unit movement we call Prâna; and everywhere, all movements
48 are the various manifestations of this Prana. This Prana is
49 electricity, it is magnetism; it is thrown out by the brain as thought.
50 Everything is Prana; it is moving the sun, the moon, and the stars.

51 We say, whatever is in this universe has been projected by the
52 vibration of the Prana. The highest result of vibration is thought. If

1 there be any higher, we cannot conceive of it. The nerves, Ida and
2 Pingala, work through the Prana. It is the Prana that is moving
3 every part of the body, becoming the different forces. Give up that
4 old idea that God is something that produces the effect and sits on a
5 throne dispensing justice. In working we become exhausted
6 because we use up so much Prana.

7 The breathing exercises, called Prânâyâma, bring about
8 regulation of the breathing, rhythmic action of the Prana. When the
9 Prana is working rhythmically, everything works properly. When the
10 Yogis get control over their own bodies, if there is any disease in
11 any part, they know that the Prana is not rhythmic there and they
12 direct the Prana to the affected part until the rhythm is re-
13 established.

14 Just as you can control the Prana in your own body, so, if you
15 are powerful enough, you can control, even from here another
16 man's Prana in India. It is all one. There is no break; unity is the
17 law. Physically, psychically, mentally, morally, metaphysically, it is all
18 one. Life is only a vibration. That which vibrates this ocean of ether,
19 vibrates you. Just as in a lake, various strata of ice of various
20 degrees of solidity are formed, or as in an ocean of vapour there are
21 various degrees of density, so is this universe an ocean of matter.
22 This is an ocean of ether in which we find the sun, moon, stars, and
23 ourselves--in different states of solidity; but the continuity is not
24 broken; it is the same throughout.

25 Now, when we study metaphysics, we come to know the
26 world is one, not that the spiritual, the material, the mental, and the
27 world of energies are separate. It is all one, but seen from different
28 planes of vision. When you think of yourself as a body, you forget
29 that you are a mind, and when you think of yourself as a mind, you
30 will forget the body. There is only one thing, that you are; you can
31 see it either as matter or body--or you can see it as mind or spirit.
32 Birth, life, and death are but old superstitions. None was ever born,
33 none will ever die; one changes one's position--that is all. I am sorry
34 to see in the West how much they make of death; always trying to
35 catch a little life. "Give us life after death! Give us life!" They are so
36 happy if anybody tells them that they are going to live afterwards!
37 How can I ever doubt such a thing! How can I imagine that I am
38 dead! Try to think of yourself as dead, and you will see that you are
39 present to see your own dead body. Life is such a wonderful reality
40 that you cannot for a moment forget it. You may as well doubt that
41 you exist. This is the first fact of consciousness--I am. Who can
42 imagine a state of things which never existed? It is the most self-
43 evident of all truths. So, the idea of immortality is inherent in man.
44 How can one discuss a subject that is unimaginable? Why should
45 we want to discuss the *pros* and *cons* of a subject that is self-
46 evident?

47 The whole universe, therefore, is a unit, from whatever
48 standpoint you view it. Just now, to us, this universe is a unit of
49 Prana and Akasha, force and matter. And mind you, like all other
50 basic principles, this is also self-contradictory. For what is force?--
51 that which moves matter. And what is matter?--that which is moved
52 by force. It is a seesaw! Some of the fundamentals of our reasoning

1 are most curious, in spite of our boast of science and knowledge. 'It
2 is a headache without a head", as the Sanskrit proverb says. This
3 state of things has been called Maya. It has neither existence nor
4 non-existence. You cannot call it existence, because that only exists
5 which is beyond time and space, which is self-existence. Yet this
6 world satisfies to a certain degree our idea of existence. Therefore
7 it has an apparent existence.

8 But there is the real existence in and through everything; and
9 that reality, as it were, is caught in the meshes of time, space, and
10 causation. There is the real man, the infinite, the beginningless, the
11 endless, the ever-blessed, the ever-free. He has been caught in the
12 meshes of time, space, and causation. So has everything in this
13 world. The reality of everything is the same infinite. This is not
14 idealism; it is not that the world does not exist. It has a relative
15 existence, and fulfils all its requirements. But it has no independent
16 existence. It exists because of the Absolute Reality beyond time,
17 space, and causation.

18 I have made long digressions. Now, let us return to our main
19 subject.

20 All the automatic movements and all the conscious
21 movements are the working of Prana through the nerves. Now, you
22 see, it will be a very good thing to have control over the
23 unconscious actions.

24 On some other occasions, I told you the definition of God and
25 man. Man is an infinite circle whose circumference is nowhere, but
26 the centre is located in one spot; and God is an infinite circle whose
27 circumference is nowhere, but whose centre is everywhere. He
28 works through all hands, sees through all eyes, walks on all feet,
29 breathes through all bodies, lives in all life, speaks through every
30 mouth, and thinks through every brain. Man can become like God
31 and acquire control over the whole universe if he multiplies
32 infinitely his centre of self-consciousness. Consciousness, therefore,
33 is the chief thing to understand. Let us say that here is an infinite
34 line amid darkness. We do not see the line, but on it there is one
35 luminous point which moves on. As it moves along the line, it lights
36 up its different parts in succession, and all that is left behind
37 becomes dark again. Our consciousness may well be likened to this
38 luminous point. Its past experiences have been replaced by the
39 present, or have become subconscious. We are not aware of their
40 presence in us; but there they are, unconsciously influencing our
41 body and mind. Every movement that is now being made without
42 the help of consciousness was previously conscious. Sufficient
43 impetus has been given to it to work of itself.

44 The great error in all ethical systems, without exception, has
45 been the failure of teaching the means by which man could refrain
46 from doing evil. All the systems of ethics teach, "Do not steal!" Very
47 good; but why does a man steal? Because all stealing, robbing, and
48 other evil actions, as a rule, have become automatic. The systematic
49 robber, thief, liar, unjust man and woman, are all these in spite of
50 themselves! It is really a tremendous psychological problem. We
51 should look upon man in the most charitable light. It is not so easy

1 to be good. What are you but mere machines until you are free?
2 Should you be proud because you are good? Certainly not. You are
3 good because you cannot help it. Another is bad because he cannot
4 help it. If you were in his position, who knows what you would have
5 been. The woman in the street, or the thief in the jail, is the Christ
6 that is being sacrificed that you may be a good man. Such is the law
7 of balance. All the thieves and the murderers, all the unjust, the
8 weakest, the wickedest, the devils, they are all my Christ! I owe a
9 worship to the God Christ and to the demon Christ! That is my
10 doctrine, I cannot help it. My salutation goes to the feet of the good,
11 the saintly, and to the feet of the wicked and the devilish! They are
12 all my teachers, all are my spiritual fathers, all are my Saviours. I
13 may bless one and yet benefit by his failings; I may bless another
14 and benefit by his good deeds. This is as true as that I stand here. I
15 have to sneer at the woman walking in the street, because society
16 wants it! She, my Saviour, she, whose street-walking is the cause of
17 the chastity of other women! Think of that. Think, men and women,
18 of this question in your mind. It is a truth--a bare, bold truth! As I
19 see more of the world, see more of the men and women, this
20 conviction grows stronger. Whom shall I blame? Whom shall I
21 praise? Both sides of the shield must be seen.

22 The task before us is vast; and first and foremost, we must
23 seek to control the vast mass of sunken thoughts which have
24 become automatic with us. The evil deed is, no doubt, on the
25 conscious plane; but the cause which produced the evil deed was
26 far beyond in the realms of the unconscious, unseen, and therefore
27 more potent.

28 Practical psychology directs first of all its energies in
29 controlling the unconscious, and we know that we can do it. Why?
30 Because we know the cause of the unconscious is the conscious; the
31 unconscious thoughts are the submerged millions of our old
32 conscious thoughts, old conscious actions become petrified--we do
33 not look at them, do not know them, have forgotten them. But mind
34 you, if the power of evil is in the unconscious, so also is the power
35 of good. We have many things stored in us as in a pocket. We have
36 forgotten them, do not even think of them, and there are many of
37 them, rotting, becoming positively dangerous; they come forth, the
38 unconscious causes which kill humanity. True psychology would,
39 therefore, try to bring them under the control of the conscious. The
40 great task is to revive the whole man, as it were, in order to make
41 him the complete master of himself. Even what we call the
42 automatic action of the organs within our bodies, such as the liver
43 etc., can be made to obey our commands.

44 This is the first part of the study, the control of the
45 unconscious. The next is to go beyond the conscious. Just as
46 unconscious work is beneath consciousness, so there is another
47 work which is above consciousness. When this superconscious state
48 is reached, man becomes free and divine; death becomes
49 immortality, weakness becomes infinite power, and iron bondage
50 becomes liberty. That is the goal, the infinite realm of the
51 superconscious.

52 So, therefore, we see now that there must be a twofold work.

1 First, by the proper working of the Ida and the Pingala, which are
2 the two existing ordinary currents, to control the subconscious
3 action; and secondly, to go beyond even consciousness.

4 The books say that he alone is the Yogi who, after long
5 practice in self-concentration, has attained to this truth. The
6 Sushumna now opens and a current which never before entered
7 into this new passage will find its way into it, and gradually ascend
8 to (what we call in figurative language) the different lotus centres,
9 till at last it reaches the brain. Then the Yogi becomes conscious of
10 what he really is, God Himself.

11 Everyone without exception, everyone of us, can attain to this
12 culmination of Yoga. But it is a terrible task. If a person wants to
13 attain to this truth, he will have to do something more than to listen
14 to lectures and take a few breathing exercises. Everything lies in
15 the preparation. How long does it take to strike a light? Only a
16 second; but how long it takes to make the candle! How long does it
17 take to eat a dinner? Perhaps half an hour. But hours to prepare the
18 food! We want to strike the light in a second, but we forget that the
19 making of the candle is the chief thing.

20 But though it is so hard to reach the goal, yet even our
21 smallest attempts are not in vain. We know that nothing is lost. In
22 the Gita, Arjuna asks Krishna, "Those who fail in attaining
23 perfection in Yoga in this life, are they destroyed like the clouds of
24 summer?" Krishna replies, "Nothing, my friend, is lost in this world.
25 Whatever one does, that remains as one's own, and if the fruition of
26 Yoga does not come in this life, one takes it up again in the next
27 birth." Otherwise, how do you explain the marvellous childhood of
28 Jesus, Buddha, Shankara?

29 Breathing, posturing, etc. are no doubt helps in Yoga; but
30 they are merely physical. The great preparations are mental. The
31 first thing necessary is a quiet and peaceable life.

32 If you want to be a Yogi, you must be free, and place yourself
33 in circumstances where you are alone and free from all anxiety. He
34 who desires a comfortable and nice life and at the same time wants
35 to realise the Self is like the fool who, wanting to cross the river,
36 caught hold of a crocodile, mistaking it for a log of wood.¹ "Seek ye
37 first the kingdom of God, and everything shall be added unto you."
38 This is the one great duty, this is renunciation. Live for an ideal, and
39 leave no place in the mind for anything else. Let us put forth all our
40 energies to acquire that which never fails--our spiritual perfection.
41 If we have true yearning for realisation, we must struggle, and
42 through struggle growth will come. We shall make mistakes, but
43 they may be angels unawares.

44 The greatest help to spiritual life is meditation (Dhyana). In
45 meditation we divest ourselves of all material conditions and feel
46 our divine nature. We do not depend upon any external help in
47 meditation. The touch of the soul can paint the brightest colour
48 even in the dingiest places; it can cast a fragrance over the vilest

¹ ? *Vivekachudamani*, 84.

1 thing; it can make the wicked divine--and all enmity, all selfishness
2 is effaced. The less the thought of the body, the better. For it is the
3 body that drags us down. It is attachment, identification, which
4 makes us miserable. That is the secret: To think that I am the spirit
5 and not the body, and that the whole of this universe with all its
6 relations, with all its good and all its evil, is but as a series of
7 paintings--scenes on a canvas--of which I am the witness.

BHAKTI OR DEVOTION

The idea of a Personal God has obtained in almost every religion, except a very few. With the exception of the Buddhist and the Jain, perhaps all the religions of the world have the idea of a Personal God, and with it comes the idea of devotion and worship. The Buddhists and the Jains, although they have no Personal God, worship the founders of their religions in precisely the same way as others worship a Personal God. This idea of devotion and worship to some higher being who can reflect back the love to man is universal. In various religions this love and devotion is manifested in various degrees, at different states. The lowest stage is that of ritualism, when abstract ideas are almost impossible, and are dragged down to the lowest plane, and made concrete. Forms come into play, and, along with them, various symbols. Throughout the history of the world, we find that man is trying to grasp the abstract through thought-forms, or symbols. All the external manifestations of religion--bells, music, rituals, books, and images--come under that head. Anything that appeals to the senses, anything that helps man to form a concrete image of the abstract, is taken hold of, and worshipped.

From time to time, there have been reformers in every religion who have stood against all symbols and rituals. But vain has been their opposition, for so long as man will remain as he is, the vast majority will always want something concrete to hold on to, something around which, as it were, to place their ideas, something which will be the centre of all the thought-forms in their minds. The great attempts of the Mohammedans and of the Protestants have been directed to this one end, of doing away with all rituals, and yet we find that even with them, rituals have crept in. They cannot be kept out; after long struggle, the masses simply change one symbol for another. The Mohammedan, who thinks that every ritual, every form, image, or ceremony, used by a non-Mohammedan is sinful, does not think so when he comes to his own shrine, the Caaba. Every religious Mohammedan wherever he prays, must imagine that he is standing before the Caaba. When he makes a pilgrimage there, he must kiss the black stone in the wall of the shrine. All the kisses that have been imprinted on that stone, by millions and millions of pilgrims, will stand up as witnesses for the benefit of the faithful on the last day of judgment. Then, there is the well of Zimzim. Mohammedans believe that whoever draws a little water out of that well will have his sins pardoned, and he will, after the day of resurrection, have a fresh body, and live for ever. In others, we find that the symbology comes in the form of buildings. Protestants hold that churches are more sacred than other places. The church, as it is, stands for a symbol. Or there is the Book. The idea of the Book, to them, is much holier than any other symbol.

It is vain to preach against the use of symbols, and why should we preach against them? There is no reason why man should not use symbols. They have them in order to represent the ideas signified behind them. This universe is a symbol, in and

1 through which we are trying to grasp the thing signified, which is
2 beyond and behind. The spirit is the goal, and not matter. Forms,
3 images, bells, candles, books, churches, temples, and all holy
4 symbols are very good, very helpful to the growing plant of
5 spirituality, but thus far and no farther. In the vast majority of cases,
6 we find that the plant does not grow. It is very good to be born in a
7 church, but it is very bad to die in a church. It is very good to be
8 born within the limits of certain forms that help the little plant of
9 spirituality, but if a man dies within the bounds of these forms, it
10 shows that he has not grown, that there has been no development
11 of the soul.

12 If, therefore, any one says that symbols, rituals, and forms are
13 to be kept for ever, he is wrong; but if he says, that these symbols
14 and rituals are a help to the growth of the soul, in its low and
15 undeveloped state, he is right. But, you must not mistake this
16 development of the soul as meaning anything intellectual. A man
17 can be of gigantic intellect, yet spiritually he may be a baby. You
18 can verify it this minute. All of you have been taught to believe in an
19 Omnipresent God. Try to think of it. How few of you can have any
20 idea of what omnipresence means! If you struggle hard, you will get
21 something like the idea of the ocean, or of the sky, or of a vast
22 stretch of green earth, or of a desert. All these are material images,
23 and so long as you cannot conceive of the abstract *as* abstract, of
24 the ideal *as* the ideal, you will have to resort to these forms, these
25 material images. It does not make much difference whether these
26 images are inside or outside the mind. We are all born idolaters,
27 and idolatry is good, because it is in the nature of man. Who can get
28 beyond it? Only the perfect man, the God-man. The rest are all
29 idolaters. So long as we see this universe before us, with its forms
30 and shapes, we are all idolaters. This is a gigantic symbol we are
31 worshipping. He who says he is the body is a born idolater. We are
32 spirit, spirit that has no form or shape, spirit that is infinite, and not
33 matter. Therefore, anyone who cannot grasp the abstract, who
34 cannot think of himself as he is, except in and through matter, as
35 the body, is an idolater. And yet how people fight among
36 themselves, calling one another idolaters! In other words, each
37 says, his idol is right, and the others' are wrong.

38 Therefore, we should get rid of these childish notions. We
39 should get beyond the prattle of men who think that religion is
40 merely a mass of frothy words, that it is only a system of doctrines;
41 to whom religion is only a little intellectual assent or dissent; to
42 whom religion is believing in certain words which their own priests
43 tell them; to whom religion is something which their forefathers
44 believed; to whom religion is a certain form of ideas and
45 superstitions to which they cling because they are their national
46 superstitions. We should get beyond all these and look at humanity
47 as one vast organism, slowly coming towards light--a wonderful
48 plant, slowly unfolding itself to that wonderful truth which is called
49 God--and the first gyrations, the first motions, towards this are
50 always through matter and through ritual.

51 In the heart of all these ritualisms, there stands one idea
52 prominent above all the rest--the worship of a name. Those of you

1 who have studied the older forms of Christianity, those of you who
2 have studied the other religions of the world, perhaps have marked
3 that there is this idea with them all, the worship of a name. A name
4 is said to be very sacred. In the Bible we read that the holy name of
5 God was considered sacred beyond compare, holy beyond
6 everything. It was the holiest of all names, and it was thought that
7 this very Word was God. This is quite true. What is this universe but
8 name and form? Can you think without words? Word and thought
9 are inseparable. Try if any one of you can separate them. Whenever
10 you think, you are doing so through word forms. The one brings the
11 other; thought brings the word, and the word brings the thought.
12 Thus the whole universe is, as it were, the external symbol of God,
13 and behind that stands His grand name. Each particular body is a
14 form, and behind that particular body is its name. As soon as you
15 think of your friend So-and-so, there comes the idea of his body, and
16 as soon as you think of your friend's body, you get the idea of his
17 name. This is in the constitution of man. That is to say,
18 psychologically, in the mind-stuff of man, there cannot come the
19 idea of name without the idea of form, and there cannot come the
20 idea of form without the idea of name. They are inseparable; they
21 are the external and the internal sides of the same wave. As such,
22 names have been exalted and worshipped all over the world--
23 consciously or unconsciously, man found the glory of names.

24 Again, we find that in many different religions, holy
25 personages have been worshipped. They worship Krishna, they
26 worship Buddha, they worship Jesus, and so forth. Then, there is
27 the worship of saints; hundreds of them have been worshipped all
28 over the world, and why not? The vibration of light is everywhere.
29 The owl sees it in the dark. That shows it is there, though man
30 cannot see it. To man, that vibration is only visible in the lamp, in
31 the sun, in the moon, etc. God is omnipresent, He is manifesting
32 Himself in every being; but for men, He is only visible,
33 recognisable, in man. When His light, His presence, His spirit,
34 shines through the human face, then and then alone, can man
35 understand Him. Thus, man has been worshipping God through
36 men all the time, and must do so as long as he is a man. He may cry
37 against it, struggle against it, but as soon as he attempts to realise
38 God, he will find the constitutional necessity of thinking of God as a
39 man.

40 So we find that in almost every religion these are the three
41 primary things which we have in the worship of God--forms or
42 symbols, names, God-men. All religions have these, but you find
43 that they want to fight with each other. One says, "My name is the
44 only name; my form is the only form; and my God-men are the only
45 God-men in the world; yours are simply myths." In modern times,
46 Christian clergymen have become a little kinder, and they allow that
47 in the older religions, the different forms of worship were
48 foreshadowings of Christianity, which of course, they consider, is
49 the only true form. God tested Himself in older times, tested His
50 powers by getting these things into shape which culminated in
51 Christianity. This, at least, is a great advance. Fifty years ago they
52 would not have said even that; nothing was true except their own

1 religion. This idea is not limited to any religion, nation, or class of
2 persons; people are always thinking that the only right thing to be
3 done by others is what they themselves are doing. And it is here
4 that the study of different religions helps us. It shows us that the
5 same thoughts that we have been calling ours, and ours alone, were
6 present hundreds of years ago in others, and sometimes even in a
7 better form of expression than our own.

8 These are the external forms of devotion, through which man
9 has to pass; but if he is sincere, if he really wants to reach the
10 truth, he goes higher than these, to a plane where forms are as
11 nothing. Temples or churches, books or forms, are simply the
12 kindergarten of religion, to make the spiritual child strong enough
13 to take higher steps; and these first steps are necessary if he wants
14 religion. With the thirst, the longing for God, comes real devotion,
15 real Bhakti. Who has the longing? That is the question. Religion is
16 not in doctrines, in dogmas, nor in intellectual argumentation; it is
17 being and becoming, it is realisation. We hear so many talking
18 about God and the soul, and all the mysteries of the universe, but if
19 you take them one by one, and ask them, "Have you realised God?
20 Have you seen your Soul?"--how many can say they have? And yet
21 they are all fighting with one another! At one time, in India,
22 representatives of different sects met together and began to
23 dispute. One said that the only God was Shiva; another said, the
24 only God was Vishnu, and so on; and there was no end to their
25 discussion. A sage was passing that way, and was invited by the
26 disputants to decide the matter. He first asked the man who was
27 claiming Shiva as the greatest God. "Have you seen Shiva? Are you
28 acquainted with Him? If not, how do you know He is the greatest
29 God?" Then turning to the worshipper of Vishnu, he asked, "Have
30 you seen Vishnu?" And after asking this question to all of them, he
31 found out that not one of them knew anything of God. That was why
32 they were disputing so much, for had they really known, they would
33 not have argued. When a jar is being filled with water, it makes a
34 noise, but when it is full, there is no noise. So, the very fact of these
35 disputations and fighting among sects shows that they do not know
36 anything about religion. Religion to them is a mere mass of frothy
37 words, to be written in books. Each one hurries to write a big book,
38 to make it as massive as possible, stealing his materials from every
39 book he can lay his hands upon, and never acknowledging his
40 indebtedness. Then he launches his book upon the world, adding to
41 the disturbance that is already existing there.

42 The vast majority of men are atheists. I am glad that, in
43 modern times, another class of atheists has come into existence in
44 the Western world--I mean the materialists. They are sincere
45 atheists. They are better than the religious atheists, who are
46 insincere, who fight and talk about religion, and yet do not want it,
47 never try to realise it, never try to understand it. Remember the
48 words of Christ: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall
49 find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." These words are
50 literally true, not figures or fiction. They were the outflow of the
51 heart's blood of one the greatest sons of God who have ever come
52 to this world of ours; words which came as the fruit of realisation,

1 from a man who had felt and realised God himself; who had spoken
2 with God, lived with God, a hundred times more intensely than you
3 or I see this building. Who wants God? That is the question. Do you
4 think that all this mass of people in the world want God, and cannot
5 get Him? That cannot be. What want is there without its object
6 outside? Man wants to breathe, and there is air for him to breathe.
7 Man wants to eat, and there is food to eat. What creates these
8 desires? The existence of external things. It was the light that made
9 the eyes; it was the sound that made the ears. So every desire in
10 human beings has been created by something which already existed
11 outside. This desire for perfection, for reaching the goal and getting
12 beyond nature, how can it be there, until something has created it
13 and drilled it into the soul of man, and makes it live there? He,
14 therefore, in whom this desire is awakened, will reach the goal. We
15 want everything but God. This is not religion that you see all around
16 you. My lady has furniture in her parlour, from all over the world,
17 and now it is the fashion to have something Japanese; so she buys a
18 vase and puts it in her room. Such is religion with the vast majority;
19 they have all sorts of things for enjoyment, and unless they add a
20 little flavour of religion, life is not all right, because society would
21 criticise them. Society expects it; so they must have some religion.
22 This is the present state of religion in the world.

23 A disciple went to his master and said to him, "Sir, I want
24 religion." The master looked at the young man, and did not speak,
25 but only smiled. The young man came every day, and insisted that
26 he wanted religion. But the old man knew better than the young
27 man. One day, when it was very hot, he asked the young man to go
28 to the river with him and take a plunge. The young man plunged in,
29 and the old man followed him and held the young man down under
30 the water by force. After the young man had struggled for a while,
31 he let him go and asked him what he wanted most while he was
32 under the water. "A breath of air", the disciple answered. "Do you
33 want God in that way? if you do, you will get Him in a moment,"
34 said the master. Until you have that thirst, that desire, you cannot
35 get religion, however you may struggle with your intellect, or your
36 books, or your forms. Until that thirst is awakened in you, you are
37 no better than any atheist; only the atheist is sincere, and you are
38 not.

39 A great sage used to say, "Suppose there is a thief in a room,
40 and somehow he comes to know that there is a vast mass of gold in
41 the next room, and that there is only a thin partition between the
42 two rooms. What would be the condition of that thief? He would be
43 sleepless, he would not be able to eat or do anything. His whole
44 mind would be on getting that gold. Do you mean to say that, if all
45 these people really believe that the Mine of Happiness, of
46 Blessedness, or Glory were here, they would act as they do in the
47 world, without trying to get God?" As soon as a man begins to
48 believe there is a God, he becomes mad with longing to get to Him.
49 Others may go their way, but as soon as a man is sure that there is
50 a much higher life than that which he is leading here, as soon as he
51 feels sure that the senses are not all, that this limited, material
52 body is as nothing compared with the immortal, eternal, undying

1 bliss of the Self, he becomes mad until he finds out this bliss for
2 himself. And this madness, this thirst, this mania, is what is called
3 the "awakening" to religion, and when that has come, a man is
4 beginning to be religious. But it takes a long time. All these forms
5 and ceremonies, these prayers and pilgrimages, these books, bells,
6 candles, and priests, are the preparations; they take off the
7 impurities from the soul. And when the soul has become pure, it
8 naturally wants to get to the mine of all purity, God Himself. Just as
9 a piece of iron, which had been covered with the dust of centuries,
10 might be lying near a magnet all the time, and yet not be attracted
11 by it, but as soon as the dust is cleared away, the iron is drawn by
12 the magnet; so, when the human soul, covered with the dust of
13 ages, impurities, wickednesses, and sins, after many births,
14 becomes purified enough by these forms and ceremonies, by doing
15 good to others, loving other beings, its natural spiritual attraction
16 comes, it wakes up and struggles towards God.

17 Yet, all these forms and symbols are simply the beginning, not
18 true love of God. Love we hear spoken of everywhere. Everyone
19 says, "Love God." Men do not know what it is to love; if they did,
20 they would not talk so glibly about it. Every man says he can love,
21 and then, in no time, finds out that there is no love in his nature.
22 Every woman says she can love and soon finds out that she cannot.
23 The world is full of the talk of love, but it is hard to love. Where is
24 love? How do you know that there is love? The first test of love is
25 that it knows no bargaining. So long as you see a man love another
26 only to get something from him, you know that that is not love; it is
27 shopkeeping. Wherever there is any question of buying and selling,
28 it is not love. So, when a man prays to God, "Give me this, and give
29 me that", it is not love. How can it be? I offer you a prayer, and you
30 give me something in return; that is what it is, mere shopkeeping.

31 A certain great king went to hunt in a forest, and there he
32 happened to meet a sage. He had a little conversation with him and
33 became so pleased with him that he asked him to accept a present
34 from him. "No," said the sage, "I am perfectly satisfied with my
35 condition; these trees give me enough fruit to eat; these beautiful
36 pure streams supply me with all the water I want; I sleep in these
37 caves. What do I care for your presents, though you be an
38 emperor?" The emperor said, "Just to purify me, to gratify me, come
39 with me into the city and take some present." At last the sage
40 consented to go with the emperor, and he was taken into the
41 emperor's palace, where there were gold, jewellery, marble, and
42 the most wonderful things. Wealth and power were manifest
43 everywhere. The emperor asked the sage to wait a minute, while he
44 repeated his prayer, and he went into a corner and began to pray,
45 "Lord, give me more wealth, more children, more territory." In the
46 meanwhile, the sage got up and began to walk away. The emperor
47 saw him going and went after him. "Stay, Sir, you did not take my
48 present and are going away." The sage turned to him and said,
49 "Beggar, I do not beg of beggars. What can you give? You have been
50 begging yourself all the time." That is not the language of love.
51 What is the difference between love and shopkeeping, if you ask
52 God to give you this, and give you that? The first test of love is that

1 it knows no bargaining. Love is always the giver, and never the
2 taker. Says the child of God, "If God wants, I give Him my
3 everything, but I do not want anything of Him. I want nothing in
4 this universe. I love Him, because I want to love Him, and I ask no
5 favour in return. Who cares whether God is almighty or not? I do
6 not want any power from Him nor any manifestation of His power.
7 Sufficient for me that He is the God of love. I ask no more
8 question."

9 The second test is that love knows no fear. So long as man
10 thinks of God as a Being sitting above the clouds, with rewards in
11 one hand and punishments in the other, there can be no love. Can
12 you frighten one into love? Does the lamb love the lion? The mouse,
13 the cat? The slave, the master? Slaves sometimes simulate love, but
14 is it love? Where do you ever see love in fear? It is always a sham.
15 With love never comes the idea of fear. Think of a young mother in
16 the street: if a dog barks at her, she flees in to the nearest house.
17 The next day she is in the street with her child, and suppose a lion
18 rushes upon the child, where will be her position? Just at the mouth
19 of the lion, protecting her child. Love conquered all her fear. So also
20 in the love of God. Who cares whether God is a rewarder or a
21 punisher? That is not the thought of a lover. Think of a judge when
22 he comes home, what does his wife see in him? Not a judge, or a
23 rewarder or punisher, but her husband, her love. What do his
24 children see in him? Their loving father, not the punisher or
25 rewarder. So the children of God never see in Him a punisher or a
26 rewarder. It is only people who have never tasted of love that fear
27 and quake. Cast off all fear--though these horrible ideas of God as a
28 punisher or rewarder may have their use in savage minds. Some
29 men, even the most intellectual, are spiritual savages, and these
30 ideas may help them. But to men who are spiritual, men who are
31 approaching religion, in whom spiritual insight is awakened, such
32 ideas are simply childish, simply foolish. Such men reject all ideas
33 of fear.

34 The third is a still higher test. Love is always the highest
35 ideal. When one has passed through the first two stages, when one
36 has thrown off all shopkeeping, and casts off all fear, one then
37 begins to realise that love is always the highest ideal. How many
38 times in this world we see a beautiful woman loving an ugly man?
39 How many times we see a handsome man loving an ugly woman!
40 What is the attraction? Lookers-on only see the ugly man or the
41 ugly woman, but not so the lover; to the lover the beloved is the
42 most beautiful being that ever existed. How is it? The woman who
43 loves the ugly man takes, as it were, the ideal of beauty which is in
44 her own mind, and projects it on the ugly man; and what she
45 worships and loves is not the ugly man, but her own ideal. That man
46 is, as it were, only the suggestion, and upon that suggestion she
47 throws her own ideal, and covers it; and it becomes her object of
48 worship. Now, this applies in every case where we love. Many of us
49 have very ordinary looking brothers or sisters; yet the very idea of
50 their being brothers or sisters makes them beautiful to us.

51 The philosophy in the background is that each one projects
52 his own ideal and worships that. This external world is only the

1 world of suggestion. All that we see, we project out of our own
2 minds. A grain of sand gets washed into the shell of an oyster and
3 irritates it. The irritation produces a secretion in the oyster, which
4 covers the grain of sand and the beautiful pearl is the result.
5 Similarly, external things furnish us with suggestions, over which
6 we project our own ideals and make our objects. The wicked see
7 this world as a perfect hell, and the good as a perfect heaven.
8 Lovers see this world as full of love, and haters as full of hatred;
9 fighters see nothing but strife, and the peaceful nothing but peace.
10 The perfect man sees nothing but God. So we always worship our
11 highest ideal, and when we have reached the point, when we love
12 the ideal as the ideal, all arguments and doubts vanish for ever.
13 Who cares whether God can be demonstrated or not? The ideal can
14 never go, because it is a part of my own nature. I shall only
15 question the ideal when I question my own existence, and as I
16 cannot question the one, I cannot question the other. Who cares
17 whether God can be almighty and all-merciful at the same time or
18 not? Who cares whether He is the rewarder of mankind, whether
19 He looks at us with the eyes of a tyrant or with the eyes of a
20 beneficent monarch?

21 The lover has passed beyond all these things, beyond rewards
22 and punishments, beyond fears and doubts, beyond scientific or any
23 other demonstration. Sufficient unto him is the ideal of love, and is
24 it not self-evident that this universe is but a manifestation of this
25 love? What is it that makes the atoms unite with atoms, molecules
26 with molecules, and causes planets to fly towards each other? What
27 is it that attracts man to man, man to woman, woman to man, and
28 animals to animals, drawing the whole universe, as it were, towards
29 one centre? It is what is called love. Its manifestation is from the
30 lowest atom to the highest being: omnipotent, all-pervading, is this
31 love. What manifests itself as attraction in the sentient and the
32 insentient, in the particular and in the universal, is the love of God.
33 It is the one motive power that is in the universe. Under the
34 impetus of that love, Christ gives his life for humanity, Buddha even
35 for an animal, the mother for the child, the husband for the wife. It
36 is under the impetus of the same love that men are ready to give up
37 their lives for their country, and strange to say, under the impetus
38 of the same love, the thief steals, the murderer murders. Even in
39 these cases, the spirit is the same, but the manifestation is
40 different. This is the one motive power in the universe. The thief
41 has love for gold; the love is there, but it is misdirected. So, in all
42 crimes, as well as in all virtuous actions, behind stands that eternal
43 love. Suppose a man writes a cheque for a thousand dollars for the
44 poor of New York, and at the same time, in the same room, another
45 man forges the name of a friend. The light by which both of them
46 write is the same, but each one will be responsible for the use he
47 makes of it. It is not the light that is to be praised or blamed.
48 Unattached, yet shining in everything, is love, the motive power of
49 the universe, without which the universe would fall to pieces in a
50 moment, and this love is God.

51 "None, O beloved, loves the husband for the husband's sake,
52 but for the Self that is in the husband; none, O beloved, ever loves

1 the wife for the wife's sake, but for the Self that is in the wife. None
2 ever loves anything else, except for the Self." Even this selfishness,
3 which is so much condemned, is but a manifestation of the same
4 love. Stand aside from this play, do not mix in it, but see this
5 wonderful panorama, this grand drama, played scene after scene,
6 and hear this wonderful harmony; all are the manifestation of the
7 same love. Even in selfishness, that self will multiply, grow and
8 grow. That one self, the one man, will become two selves when he
9 gets married; several, when he gets children; and thus he grows
10 until he feels the whole world as his Self, the whole universe as his
11 Self. He expands into one mass of universal love, infinite love--the
12 love that is God.

13 Thus we come to what is called supreme Bhakti, supreme
14 devotion, in which forms and symbols fall off. One who has reached
15 that cannot belong to any sect, for all sects are in him. To what shall
16 he belong? For all churches and temples are in him. Where is the
17 church big enough for him? Such a man cannot bind himself down
18 to certain limited forms. Where is the limit for unlimited love, with
19 which he has become one? In all religions which take up this ideal
20 of love, we find the struggle to express it. Although we understand
21 what this love means and see that everything in this world of
22 affections and attractions is a manifestation of that Infinite Love,
23 the expression of which has been attempted by sages and saints of
24 different nations, yet we find them using all the powers of language,
25 transfiguring even the most carnal expression into the divine.

26 Thus sang the royal Hebrew sage, thus sang they of India. "O
27 beloved, one kiss of Thy lips! Kissed by Thee, one's thirst for Thee
28 increaseth for ever! All sorrows cease, one forgets the past,
29 present, and future, and only thinks of Thee alone." That is the
30 madness of the lover, when all desires have vanished. "Who cares
31 for salvation? Who cares to be saved? Who cares to be perfect
32 even? Who cares for freedom?"--says the lover. "I do not want
33 wealth, nor even health; I do not want beauty, I do not want
34 intellect: let me be born again and again, amid all the evils that are
35 in the world; I will not complain, but let me love Thee, and that for
36 love's sake."

37 That is the madness of love which finds expression in these
38 songs. The highest, most expressive, strongest, and most attractive
39 human love is that between man and woman, and, therefore, that
40 language was used in expressing the deepest devotion. The
41 madness of this human love was the faintest echo of the mad love of
42 the saints. The true lovers of God want to become mad, inebriated
43 with the love of God, to become "God-intoxicated men." They want
44 to drink of the cup of love which has been prepared by the saints
45 and sages of every religion, who have poured their heart's blood
46 into it, and in which have been concentrated all the hopes of those
47 who have loved God without seeking reward, who wanted love for
48 itself only. The reward of love is love, and what a reward it is! It is
49 the only thing that takes off all sorrows, the only cup, by the
50 drinking of which this disease of the world vanishes. Man becomes
51 divinely mad and forgets that he is man.

52 Lastly, we find that all these various systems, in the end,

1 converge to that one point, that perfect union. We always begin as
2 dualists. God is a separate Being, and I am a separate being. Love
3 comes between, and man begins to approach God, and God, as it
4 were, begins to approach man. Man takes up all the various
5 relationships of life, as father, mother, friend, or lover; and the last
6 point is reached when he becomes one with the object of worship.
7 "I am you, and you are I; and worshipping you, I worship myself;
8 and in worshipping myself, I worship you." There we find the
9 highest culmination of that with which man begins. At the
10 beginning it was love for the self, but the claims of the little self
11 made love selfish; at the end came the full blaze of light, when that
12 self had become the Infinite. That God who at first was a Being
13 somewhere, became resolved, as it were, into Infinite Love. Man
14 himself was also transformed. He was approaching God, he was
15 throwing off the vain desires, of which he was full before. With
16 desires vanished selfishness, and, at the apex, he found that Love,
17 Lover, and Beloved were One.

THE NECESSITY OF RELIGION

(Delivered in London)

Of all the forces that have worked and are still working to mould the destinies of the human race, none, certainly, is more potent than that, the manifestation of which we call religion. All social organisations have as a background, somewhere, the workings of that peculiar force, and the greatest cohesive impulse ever brought into play amongst human units has been derived from this power. It is obvious to all of us that in very many cases the bonds religion have proved stronger than the bonds of race, or climate, or even of descent. It is a well-known fact that persons worshipping the same God, believing in the same religion, have stood by each other, with much greater strength and constancy, than people of merely the same descent, or even brothers. Various attempts have been made to trace the beginnings of religion. In all the ancient religions which have come down to us at the present day, we find one claim made--that they are all supernatural, that their genesis is not, as it were, in the human brain, but that they have originated somewhere outside of it.

Two theories have gained some acceptance amongst modern scholars. One is the spirit theory of religion, the other the evolution of the idea of the Infinite. One party maintains that ancestor worship is the beginning of religious ideas; the other, that religion originates in the personification of the power of nature. Man wants to keep up the memory of his dead relatives and thinks they are living even when the body is dissolved, and he wants to place food for them and, in a certain sense, to worship them. Out of that came the growth we call religion.

Studying the ancient religions of the Egyptians, Babylonians, Chinese, and many other races in America and elsewhere, we find very clear traces of this ancestor worship being the beginning of religion. With the ancient Egyptians, the first idea of the soul was that of a double. Every human body contained in it another being very similar to it; and when a man died, this double went out of the body and yet lived on. But the life of the double lasted only so long as the dead body remained intact, and that is why we find among the Egyptians so much solicitude to keep the body uninjured. And that is why they built those huge pyramids in which they preserved the bodies. For, if any portion of the external body was hurt, the double would be correspondingly injured. This is clearly ancestor worship. With the ancient Babylonians we find the same idea of the double, but with a variation. The double lost all sense of love; it frightened the living to give it food and drink, and to help it in various ways. It even lost all affection for its own children and its own wife. Among the ancient Hindus also, we find traces of this ancestor worship. Among the Chinese, the basis of their religion may also be said to be ancestor worship, and it still permeates the length and breadth of that vast country. In fact, the only religion that can really be said to flourish in China is that of ancestor worship. Thus it seems, on the one hand, a very good position is

1 made out for those who hold the theory of ancestor worship as the
2 beginning of religion.

3 On the other hand, there are scholars who from the ancient
4 Aryan literature show that religion originated in nature worship.
5 Although in India we find proofs of ancestor worship everywhere,
6 yet in the oldest records there is no trace of it whatsoever. In the
7 Rig-Veda Samhita, the most ancient record of the Aryan race, we do
8 not find any trace of it. Modern scholars think, it is the worship of
9 nature that they find there. The human mind seems to struggle to
10 get a peep behind the scenes. The dawn, the evening, the
11 hurricane, the stupendous and gigantic forces of nature, its
12 beauties, these have exercised the human mind, and it aspires to go
13 beyond, to understand something about them. In the struggle they
14 endow these phenomena with personal attributes, giving them souls
15 and bodies, sometimes beautiful, sometimes transcendent. Every
16 attempt ends by these phenomena becoming abstractions whether
17 personalised or not. So also it is found with the ancient Greeks;
18 their whole mythology is simply this abstracted nature worship. So
19 also with the ancient Germans, the Scandinavians, and all the other
20 Aryan races. Thus, on this side, too, a very strong case has been
21 made out, that religion has its origin in the personification of the
22 forces of nature.

23 These two views, though they seem to be contradictory, can
24 be reconciled on a third basis, which, to my mind, is the real germ
25 of religion, and that I propose to call the struggle to transcend the
26 limitations of the senses. Either, man goes to seek for the spirits of
27 his ancestors, the spirits of the dead, that is, he wants to get a
28 glimpse of what there is after the body is dissolved, or, he desires to
29 understand the power working behind the stupendous phenomena
30 of nature. Whichever of these is the case, one thing is certain, that
31 he tries to transcend the limitations of the senses. He cannot
32 remain satisfied with his senses; he wants to go beyond them. The
33 explanation need not be mysterious. To me it seems very natural
34 that the glimpse of religion should come through dreams. The first
35 idea of immortality man may well get through dreams. Is that not a
36 most wonderful state? And we know that children and untutored
37 minds find very little difference between dreaming and their
38 awakened state. What can be more natural than that they find, as
39 natural logic, that even during the sleep state when the body is
40 apparently dead, the mind goes on with all its intricate workings?
41 What wonder that men will at once come to the conclusion that
42 when this body is dissolved for ever, the same working will go on?
43 This, to my mind, would be a more natural explanation of the
44 supernatural, and through this dream idea the human mind rises to
45 higher and higher conceptions. Of course, in time, the vast majority
46 of mankind found out that these dreams are not verified by their
47 waking states, and that during the dream state it is not that man
48 has a fresh existence, but simply that he recapitulates the
49 experiences of the awakened state.

50 But by this time the search had begun, and the search was
51 inward, and man continued inquiring more deeply into the different
52 stages of the mind and discovered higher states than either the

1 waking or the dreaming. This state of things we find in all the
2 organised religions of the world, called either ecstasy or
3 inspiration. In all organised religions, their founders, prophets, and
4 messengers are declared to have gone into states of mind that were
5 neither waking nor sleeping, in which they came face to face with a
6 new series of facts relating to what is called the spiritual kingdom.
7 They realised things there much more intensely than we realise
8 facts around us in our waking state. Take, for instance, the religions
9 of the Brahmins. The Vedas are said to be written by Rishis. These
10 Rishis were sages who realised certain facts. The exact definition of
11 the Sanskrit word Rishi is a Seer of Mantras--of the thoughts
12 conveyed in the Vedic hymns. These men declared that they had
13 realised--sensed, if that word can be used with regard to the
14 supersensuous--certain facts, and these facts they proceeded to put
15 on record. We find the same truth declared amongst both the Jews
16 and the Christians.

17 Some exceptions may be taken in the case of the Buddhists as
18 represented by the Southern sect. It may be asked--if the Buddhists
19 do not believe in any God or soul, how can their religion be derived
20 from the supersensuous state of existence? The answer to this is
21 that even the Buddhists find an eternal moral law, and that moral
22 law was not reasoned out in our sense of the word. But Buddha
23 found it, discovered it, in a supersensuous state. Those of you who
24 have studied the life of Buddha, even as briefly given in that
25 beautiful poem, *The Light of Asia*, may remember that Buddha is
26 represented as sitting under the Bo-tree until he reached that
27 supersensuous state of mind. All his teachings came through this,
28 and not through intellectual cogitations.

29 Thus, a tremendous statement is made by all religions; that
30 the human mind, at certain moments, transcends not only the
31 limitations of the senses, but also the power of reasoning. It then
32 comes face to face with facts which it could never have sensed,
33 could never have reasoned out. These facts are the basis of all the
34 religions of the world. Of course we have the right to challenge
35 these facts, to put them to the test of reason. Nevertheless, all the
36 existing religions of the world claim for the human mind this
37 peculiar power of transcending the limits of the senses and the
38 limits of reason; and this power they put forward as a statement of
39 fact.

40 Apart from the consideration of the question how far these
41 facts claimed by religions are true, we find one characteristic
42 common to them all. They are all abstractions as contrasted with
43 the concrete discoveries of physics, for instance; and in all the
44 highly organised religions they take the purest form of Unit
45 Abstraction, either in the form of an Abstracted Presence, as an
46 Omnipresent Being, as an Abstract Personality called God, as a
47 Moral Law, or in the form of an Abstract Essence underlying every
48 existence. In modern times, too, the attempts made to preach
49 religions without appealing to the supersensuous state of mind have
50 had to take up the old abstractions of the Ancients and give
51 different names to them as "Moral Law", the "Ideal Unity", and so
52 forth, thus showing that these abstractions are not in the senses.

1 None of us have yet seen an "Ideal Human Being", and yet we are
2 told to believe in it. None of us have yet seen an ideally perfect
3 man, and yet without that ideal we cannot progress. Thus, this one
4 fact stands out from all these different religions, that there is an
5 Ideal Unit Abstraction, which is put before us, either in the form of
6 a Person or an Impersonal Being, or a Law, or a Presence, or an
7 Essence. We are always struggling to raise ourselves up to that
8 ideal. Every human being, whosoever and wheresoever he may be,
9 has an ideal of infinite power. Every human being has an ideal of
10 infinite pleasure. Most of the works that we find around us, the
11 activities displayed everywhere, are due to the struggle for this
12 infinite power or this infinite pleasure. But a few quickly discover
13 that although they are struggling for infinite power, it is not through
14 the senses that it can be reached. They find out very soon that that
15 infinite pleasure is not to be got through the senses, or, in other
16 words, the senses are too limited, and the body is too limited, to
17 express the Infinite. To manifest the Infinite through the finite is
18 impossible, and sooner or later, man learns to give up the attempt
19 to express the Infinite through the finite. This giving up, this
20 renunciation of the attempt, is the background of ethics.
21 Renunciation is the very basis upon which ethics stands. There
22 never was an ethical code preached which had not renunciation for
23 its basis.

24 Ethics always says, "Not I, but thou." Its motto is, "Not self,
25 but non-self." The vain ideas of individualism, to which man clings
26 when he is trying to find that Infinite Power or that Infinite Pleasure
27 through the senses, have to be given up--say the laws of ethics. You
28 have to put *yourself* last, and others before you. The senses say,
29 "Myself first." Ethics says, "I must hold myself last." Thus, all codes
30 of ethics are based upon this renunciation; destruction, not
31 construction, of the individual on the material plane. That Infinite
32 will never find expression upon the material plane, nor is it possible
33 or thinkable.

34 So, man has to give up the plane of matter and rise to other
35 spheres to seek a deeper expression of that Infinite. In this way the
36 various ethical laws are being moulded, but all have that one
37 central idea, eternal self-abnegation. Perfect self-annihilation is the
38 ideal of ethics. People are startled if they are asked not to think of
39 their individualities. They seem so very much afraid of losing what
40 they call their individuality. At the same time, the same men would
41 declare the highest ideals of ethics to be right, never for a moment
42 thinking that the scope, the goal, the idea of all ethics is the
43 destruction, and not the building up, of the individual.

44 Utilitarian standards cannot explain the ethical relations of
45 men, for, in the first place, we cannot derive any ethical laws from
46 considerations of utility. Without the supernatural sanction as it is
47 called, or the perception of the superconscious as I prefer to term
48 it, there can be no ethics. Without the struggle towards the Infinite
49 there can be no ideal. Any system that wants to bind men down to
50 the limits of their own societies is not able to find an explanation for
51 the ethical laws of mankind. The Utilitarian wants us to give up the
52 struggle after the Infinite, the reaching-out for the Super-sensuous,

1 as impracticable and absurd, and, in the same breath, asks us to
2 take up ethics and do good to society. Why should we do good?
3 Doing good is a secondary consideration. We must have an idea.
4 Ethics itself is not the end, but the means to the end. If the end is
5 not there, why should we be ethical? Why should I do good to other
6 men, and not injure them? If happiness is the goal of mankind, why
7 should I not make myself happy and others unhappy? What
8 prevents me? In the second place, the basis of utility is too narrow.
9 All the current social forms and methods are derived from society
10 as it exists, but what right has the Utilitarian to assume that society
11 is eternal? Society did not exist ages ago, possibly will not exist
12 ages hence. Most probably it is one of the passing stages through
13 which we are going towards a higher evolution, and any law that is
14 derived from society alone cannot be eternal, cannot cover the
15 whole ground of man's nature. At best, therefore, Utilitarian
16 theories can only work under present social conditions. Beyond that
17 they have no value. But a morality, an ethical code, derived from
18 religion and spirituality, has the whole of infinite man for its scope.
19 It takes up the individual, but its relations are to the Infinite, and it
20 takes up society also--because society is nothing but numbers of
21 these individuals grouped together; and as it applies to the
22 individual and *his* eternal relations, it must necessarily apply to the
23 whole of society, in whatever condition it may be at any given time.
24 Thus we see that there is always the necessity of spiritual religion
25 for mankind. Man cannot always think of matter, however
26 pleasurable it may be.

27 It has been said that too much attention to things spiritual
28 disturbs our practical relations in this world. As far back as in the
29 days of the Chinese sage Confucius, it was said, "Let us take care of
30 this world: and then, when we have finished with this world, we will
31 take care of other world." It is very well that we should *take care* of
32 this world. But if too much attention to the spiritual may affect a
33 little our practical relations, too much attention to the so-called
34 practical hurts us here and hereafter. It makes us materialistic. For
35 man is not to regard *nature* as his goal, but something higher.

36 *Man is man so long as he is struggling to rise above nature,*
37 and this nature is both internal and external. Not only does it
38 comprise the laws that govern the particles of matter outside us
39 and in our bodies, but also the more subtle nature within, which is,
40 in fact, the motive power governing the external. It is good and very
41 grand to conquer external nature, but grander still to conquer our
42 internal nature. It is grand and good to know the laws that govern
43 the stars and planets; it is infinitely grander and better to know the
44 laws that govern the passions, the feelings, the will, of mankind.
45 This conquering of the inner man, understanding the secrets of the
46 subtle workings that are within the human mind, and knowing its
47 wonderful secrets, belong entirely to religion. Human nature--the
48 ordinary human nature, I mean--wants to see big material facts. The
49 ordinary man cannot understand anything that is subtle. Well has it
50 been said that the masses admire the lion that kills a thousand
51 lambs, never for a moment thinking that it is death to the lambs,
52 although a momentary triumph for the lion; because they find

1 pleasure only in manifestations of physical strength. Thus it is with
2 the ordinary run of mankind. They understand and find pleasure in
3 everything that is external. But in every society there is a section
4 whose pleasures are not in the senses, but beyond, and who now
5 and then catch glimpses of something higher than matter and
6 struggle to reach it. And if we read the history of nations between
7 the lines, we shall always find that the rise of a nation comes with
8 an increase in the number of such men; and the fall begins when
9 this pursuit after the Infinite, however vain Utilitarians may call it,
10 has ceased. That is to say, the mainspring of the strength of every
11 race lies in its spirituality, and the death of that race begins the day
12 that spirituality wanes and materialism gains ground.

13 Thus, apart from the solid facts and truths that we may learn
14 from religion, apart from the comforts that we may gain from it,
15 religion, as a science, as a study, is the greatest and healthiest
16 exercise that the human mind can have. This pursuit of the Infinite,
17 this struggle to grasp the Infinite, this effort to get beyond the
18 limitations of the senses--out of matter, as it were--and to evolve the
19 spiritual man--this striving day and night to make the Infinite one
20 with our being--this struggle itself is the grandest and most glorious
21 that man can make. Some persons find the greatest pleasure in
22 eating. We have no right to say that they should not. Others find the
23 greatest pleasure in possessing certain things. We have no right to
24 say that they should not. But they also have no right to say "no" to
25 the man who finds his highest pleasure in spiritual thought. The
26 lower the organisation, the greater the pleasure in the senses. Very
27 few men can eat a meal with the same gusto as a dog or a wolf. But
28 all the pleasures of the dog or the wolf have gone, as it were into
29 the senses. The lower types of humanity in all nations find pleasure
30 in the senses, while the cultured and the educated find it in
31 thought, in philosophy, in arts and sciences. Spirituality is a still
32 higher plane. The subject being infinite, that plane is the highest,
33 and the pleasure there is the highest for those who can appreciate
34 it. So, even on the utilitarian ground that man is to seek for
35 pleasure, he should cultivate religious thought, for it is the highest
36 pleasure that exists. Thus religion, as a study, seems to me to be
37 absolutely necessary.

38 We can see it in its effects. It is the greatest motive power
39 that moves the human mind. No other ideal can put into us the
40 same mass of energy as the spiritual. So far as human history goes,
41 it is obvious to all of us that this has been the case and that its
42 powers are not dead. I do not deny that men, on simply utilitarian
43 grounds, can be very good and moral. There have been many great
44 men in this world perfectly sound, moral, and good, simply on
45 utilitarian grounds. But the world-movers, men who bring, as it
46 were, a mass of magnetism into the world, whose spirit works in
47 hundreds and in thousands, whose life ignites others with a
48 spiritual fire--such men, we always find, have that spiritual
49 background. Their motive power came from religion. Religion is the
50 greatest motive power for realising that infinite energy which is the
51 birthright and nature of every man. In building up character, in
52 making for everything that is good and great, in bringing peace to

1 others and peace to one's own self, religion is the highest motive
2 power and, therefore, ought to be studied from that standpoint.
3 Religion must be studied on a broader basis than formerly. All
4 narrow, limited, fighting ideas of religion have to go. All sect ideas
5 and tribal or national ideas of religion must be given up. That each
6 tribe or nation should have its own particular God and think that
7 every other is wrong is a superstition that should belong to the
8 past. All such ideas must be abandoned.

9 As the human mind broadens, its spiritual steps broaden too.
10 The time has already come when a man cannot record a thought
11 without its reaching to all corners of the earth; by merely physical
12 means, we have come into touch with the whole world; so the
13 future religions of the world have to become as universal, as wide.

14 The religious ideals of the future must embrace all that exists
15 in the world and is good and great, and, at the same time, have
16 infinite scope for future development. All that was good in the past
17 must be preserved; and the doors must be kept open for future
18 additions to the already existing store. Religions must also be
19 inclusive, and not look down with contempt upon one another,
20 because their particular ideals of God are different. In my life I have
21 seen a great many spiritual men, a great many sensible persons,
22 who did not believe in God at all, that is to say, not in our sense of
23 the word. Perhaps they understood God better than we can ever do.
24 The Personal idea of God or the Impersonal, the Infinite, Moral
25 Law, or the Ideal Man-these all have to come under the definition
26 of religion. And when religions have become thus broadened, their
27 power for good will have increased a hundredfold. Religions, having
28 tremendous power in them, have often done more injury to the
29 world than good, simply on account of their narrowness and
30 limitations.

31 Even at the present time we find many sects and societies,
32 with almost the same ideas, fighting each other, because one does
33 not want to set forth those ideas in precisely the same way as
34 another. Therefore, religions will have to broaden. Religious ideas
35 will have to become universal, vast, and infinite; and then alone we
36 shall have the fullest play of religion, for the power of religion has
37 only just begun to manifest in the world. It is sometimes said that
38 religions are dying out, that spiritual ideas are dying out of the
39 world. To me it seems that they have just begun to grow. The power
40 of religion, broadened and purified, is going to penetrate every part
41 of human life. So long as religion was in the hands of a chosen few
42 or of a body of priests, it was in temples, churches, books, dogmas,
43 ceremonials, forms, and rituals. But when we come to the real,
44 spiritual, universal concept, then, and then alone, religion will
45 become real and living; it will come into our very nature, live in our
46 every movement, penetrate every pore of our society, and be
47 infinitely more a power for good than it has ever been before.

48 What is needed is a fellow-feeling between the different types
49 of religion, seeing that they all stand or fall together, a fellow-
50 feeling which springs from mutual esteem and mutual respect, and
51 not the condescending, patronising, niggardly expression of
52 goodwill, unfortunately in vogue at the present time with many. And

1 above all, this is needed between types of religious expression
2 coming from the study of mental phenomena--unfortunately, even
3 now laying exclusive claim to the name of religion--and those
4 expressions of religion whose heads, as it were, are penetrating
5 more into the secrets of heaven though their feet are clinging to the
6 earth, I mean, the so-called materialistic sciences.

7 To bring about this harmony, both will have to make
8 concessions, sometimes very large, nay more, sometimes painful,
9 but each will find itself the better for the sacrifice and more
10 advanced in truth. And in the end, the knowledge which is confined
11 within the domain of time and space will meet and become one with
12 that which is beyond them both, where the mind and senses cannot
13 reach--the Absolute, the Infinite, the One without a second.

THE REAL NATURE OF MAN

(Delivered in London)

Great is the tenacity with which man clings to the senses. Yet, however substantial he may think the external world in which he lives and moves, there comes a time in the lives of individuals and of races when, involuntarily, they ask, "Is this real?" To the person who never finds a moment to question the credentials of his senses, whose every moment is occupied with some sort of sense-enjoyment—even to him death comes, and he also is compelled to ask, "Is this real?" Religion begins with this question and ends with its answer. Even in the remote past, where recorded history cannot help us, in the mysterious light of mythology, back in the dim twilight of civilisation, we find the same question was asked, "What becomes of this? What is real?"

One of the most poetical of the Upanishads, the Katha Upanishad, begins with the inquiry: "When a man dies, there is a dispute. One party declares that he has gone for ever, the other insists that he is still living. Which is true?" Various answers have been given. The whole sphere of metaphysics, philosophy, and religion is really filled with various answers to this question. At the same time, attempts have been made to suppress it, to put a stop to the unrest of mind which asks, "What is beyond? What is real?" But so long as death remains, all these attempts at suppression will always prove to be unsuccessful. We may talk about seeing nothing beyond and keeping all our hopes and aspirations confined to the present moment, and struggle hard not to think of anything beyond the world of senses; and, perhaps, everything outside helps to keep us limited within its narrow bounds. The whole world may combine to prevent us from broadening out beyond the present. Yet, so long as there is death, the question must come again and again, "Is death the end of all these things to which we are clinging, as if they were the most real of all realities, the most substantial of all substances?" The world vanishes in a moment and is gone. Standing on the brink of a precipice beyond which is the infinite yawning chasm, every mind, however hardened, is bound to recoil and ask, "Is this real?" The hopes of a lifetime, built up little by little with all the energies of a great mind, vanish in a second. Are they real? This question must be answered. Time never lessens its power; on the other hand, it adds strength to it.

Then there is the desire to be happy. We run after everything to make ourselves happy; we pursue our mad career in the external world of senses. If you ask the young man with whom life is successful, he will declare that it is real; and he really thinks so. Perhaps, when the same man grows old and finds fortune ever eluding him, he will then declare that it is fate. He finds at last that his desires cannot be fulfilled. Wherever he goes, there is an adamant wall beyond which he cannot pass. Every sense-activity results in a reaction. Everything is evanescent. Enjoyment, misery, luxury, wealth, power, and poverty, even life itself, are all

1 evanescent.

2 Two positions remain to mankind. One is to believe with the
3 nihilists that all is nothing, that we know nothing, that we can never
4 know anything either about the future, the past, or even the
5 present. For we must remember that he who denies the past and
6 the future and wants to stick to the present is simply a madman.
7 One may as well deny the father and mother and assert the child. It
8 would be equally logical. To deny the past and future, the present
9 must inevitably be denied also. This is one position, that of the
10 nihilists. I have never seen a man who could really become a nihilist
11 for one minute. It is very easy to talk.

12 Then there is the other position--to seek for an explanation, to
13 seek for the real, to discover in the midst of this eternally changing
14 and evanescent world whatever is real. In this body which is an
15 aggregate of molecules of matter, is there anything which is real?
16 This has been the search throughout the history of the human mind.
17 In the very oldest times, we often find glimpses of light coming into
18 men's minds. We find man, even then, going a step beyond this
19 body, finding something which is not this external body, although
20 very much like it, much more complete, much more perfect, and
21 which remains even when this body is dissolved. We read in the
22 hymns of the Rig-Veda, addressed to the God of Fire who is burning
23 a dead body, "Carry him, O Fire, in your arms gently, give him a
24 perfect body, a bright body, carry him where the fathers live, where
25 there is no more sorrow, where there is no more death." The same
26 idea you will find present in every religion. And we get another idea
27 with it. It is a significant fact that all religions, without one
28 exception, hold that man is a degeneration of what he was, whether
29 they clothe this in mythological words, or in the clear language of
30 philosophy, or in the beautiful expressions of poetry. This is the one
31 fact that comes out of every scripture and of every mythology that
32 the man that is, is a degeneration of what he was. This is the kernel
33 of truth within the story of Adam's fall in the Jewish scripture. This
34 is again and again repeated in the scriptures of the Hindus; the
35 dream of a period which they call the Age of Truth, when no man
36 died unless he wished to die, when he could keep his body as long
37 as he liked, and his mind was pure and strong. There was no evil
38 and no misery; and the present age is a corruption of that state of
39 perfection. Side by side with this, we find the story of the deluge
40 everywhere. That story itself is a proof that this present age is held
41 to be a corruption of a former age by every religion. It went on
42 becoming more and more corrupt until the deluge swept away a
43 large portion of mankind, and again the ascending series began. It
44 is going up slowly again to reach once more the early state of
45 purity. You are all aware of the story of the deluge in the Old
46 Testament. The same story was current among the ancient
47 Babylonians, the Egyptians, the Chinese, and the Hindus. Manu, a
48 great ancient sage, was praying on the bank of the Ganga, when a
49 little minnow came to him for protection, and he put it into a pot of
50 water he had before him. "What do you want?" asked Manu. The
51 little minnow declared he was pursued by a bigger fish and wanted
52 protection. Manu carried the little fish to his home, and in the

1 morning he had become as big as the pot and said, "I cannot live in
2 this pot any longer". Manu put him in a tank, and the next day he
3 was as big as the tank and declared he could not live there any
4 more. So Manu had to take him to a river, and in the morning the
5 fish filled the river. Then Manu put him in the ocean, and he
6 declared, "Manu, I am the Creator of the universe. I have taken this
7 form to come and warn you that I will deluge the world. You build
8 an ark and in it put a pair of every kind of animal, and let your
9 family enter the ark, and there will project out of the water my
10 horn. Fasten the ark to it; and when the deluge subsides, come out
11 and people the earth." So the world was deluged, and Manu saved
12 his own family and two of every kind of animal and seeds of every
13 plant. When the deluge subsided, he came and peopled the world;
14 and we are called "man", because we are the progeny of Manu.

15 Now, human language is the attempt to express the truth that
16 is within. I am fully persuaded that a baby whose language consists
17 of unintelligible sounds is attempting to express the highest
18 philosophy, only the baby has not the organs to express it nor the
19 means. The difference between the language of the highest
20 philosophers and the utterances of babies is one of degree and not
21 of kind. What you call the most correct, systematic, mathematical
22 language of the present time, and the hazy, mystical, mythological
23 languages of the ancients, differ only in degree. All of them have a
24 grand idea behind, which is, as it were, struggling to express itself;
25 and often behind these ancient mythologies are nuggets of truth;
26 and often, I am sorry to say, behind the fine, polished phrases of the
27 moderns is arrant trash. So, we need not throw a thing overboard
28 because it is clothed in mythology, because it does not fit in with the
29 notions of Mr. So-and-so and Mrs. So-and-so of modern times. If
30 people should laugh at religion because most religions declare that
31 men must believe in mythologies taught by such and such a
32 prophet, they ought to laugh more at these moderns. In modern
33 times, if a man quotes a Moses or a Buddha or a Christ, he is
34 laughed at; but let him give the name of a Huxley, a Tyndall, or a
35 Darwin, and it is swallowed without salt. "Huxley has said it", that
36 is enough for many. We are free from superstitions indeed! That
37 was a religious superstition, and this is a scientific superstition;
38 only, in and through that superstition came life-giving ideas of
39 spirituality; in and through this modern superstition come lust and
40 greed. That superstition was worship of God, and this superstition
41 is worship of filthy lucre, of fame and power. That is the difference.

42 To return to mythology. Behind all these stories we find one
43 idea standing supreme--that man is a degeneration of what he was.
44 Coming to the present times, modern research seems to repudiate
45 this position absolutely. Evolutionists seem to contradict entirely
46 this assertion. According to them, man is the evolution of the
47 mollusc; and, therefore, what mythology states cannot be true.
48 There is in India, however, a mythology which is able to reconcile
49 both these positions. The Indian mythology has a theory of cycles,
50 that all progression is in the form of waves. Every wave is attended
51 by a fall, and that by a rise the next moment, that by a fall in the
52 next, and again another rise. The motion is in cycles. Certainly it is

1 true, even on the grounds of modern research, that man cannot be
2 simply an evolution. Every evolution presupposes an involution. The
3 modern scientific man will tell you that you can only get the amount
4 of energy out of a machine which you have previously put into it.
5 Something cannot be produced out of nothing. If a man is an
6 evolution of the mollusc, then the perfect man--the Buddha-man,
7 the Christ-man--was evolved in the mollusc. If it is not so, whence
8 come these gigantic personalities? Something cannot come out of
9 nothing. Thus we are in the position of reconciling the scriptures
10 with modern light. That energy which manifests itself slowly
11 through various stages until it becomes the perfect man, cannot
12 come out of nothing. It existed somewhere; and if the mollusc or the
13 protoplasm is the first point to which you can trace it, that
14 protoplasm, somehow or other, must have contained the energy.

15 There is a great discussion going on as to whether the
16 aggregate of materials we call the body is the cause of
17 manifestation of the force we call the soul, thought, etc., or whether
18 it is the thought that manifests this body. The religions of the world
19 of course hold that the force called thought manifests the body, and
20 not the reverse. There are schools of modern thought which hold
21 that what we call thought is simply the outcome of the adjustment
22 of the parts of the machine which we call body. Taking the second
23 position that the soul or the mass of thought, or however you may
24 call it, is the outcome of this machine, the outcome of the chemical
25 and physical combinations of matter making up the body and brain,
26 leaves the question unanswered. What makes the body? What force
27 combines the molecules into the body form? What force is there
28 which takes up material from the mass of matter around and forms
29 my body one way, another body another way, and so on? What
30 makes these infinite distinctions? To say that the force called soul is
31 the outcome of the combinations of the molecules of the body is
32 putting the cart before the horse. How did the combinations come;
33 where was the force to make them? If you say that some other force
34 was the cause of these combinations, and soul was the outcome of
35 that matter, and that soul--which combined a certain mass of
36 matter--was itself the result of the combinations, it is no answer.
37 That theory ought to be taken which explains most of the facts, if
38 not all, and that without contradicting other existing theories. It is
39 more logical to say that the force which takes up the matter and
40 forms the body is the same which manifests through that body. To
41 say, therefore, that the thought forces manifested by the body are
42 the outcome of the arrangement of molecules and have no
43 independent existence has no meaning; neither can force evolve out
44 of matter. Rather it is impossible to demonstrate that what we call
45 matter does not exist at all. It is only a certain state of force.
46 Solidity, hardness, or any other state of matter can be proved to be
47 the result of motion. Increase of vortex motion imparted to fluids
48 gives them the force of solids. A mass of air in vortex motion, as in a
49 tornado, becomes solid-like and by its impact breaks or cuts
50 through solids. A thread of a spider's web, if it could be moved at
51 almost infinite velocity, would be as strong as an iron chain and
52 would cut through an oak tree. Looking at it in this way, it would be
53 easier to prove that what we call matter does not exist. But the

1 other way cannot be proved.

2 What is the force which manifests itself through the body? It
3 is obvious to all of us, whatever that force be, that it is taking
4 particles up, as it were, and manipulating forms out of them--the
5 human body. None else comes here to manipulate bodies for you
6 and me. I never saw anybody eat food for me. I have to assimilate it,
7 manufacture blood and bones and everything out of that food. What
8 is this mysterious force? Ideas about the future and about the past
9 seem to be terrifying to many. To many they seem to be mere
10 speculation.

11 We will take the present theme. What is this force which is
12 now working through us? We know how in old times, in all the
13 ancient scriptures, this power, this manifestation of power, was
14 thought to be a bright substance having the form of this body, and
15 which remained even after this body fell. Later on, however, we find
16 a higher idea coming--that this bright body did not represent the
17 force. Whatsoever has form must be the result of combinations of
18 particles and requires something else behind it to move it. If this
19 body requires something which is not the body to manipulate it, the
20 bright body, by the same necessity, will also require something
21 other than itself to manipulate it. So, that something was called the
22 soul, the Atman in Sanskrit. It was the Atman which through the
23 bright body, as it were, worked on the gross body outside. The
24 bright body is considered as the receptacle of the mind, and the
25 Atman is beyond that. It is not the mind even; it works the mind,
26 and through the mind the body. You have an Atman, I have another,
27 each one of us has a separate Atman and a separate fine body, and
28 through that we work on the gross external body. Questions were
29 then asked about this Atman, about its nature. What is this Atman,
30 this soul of man, which is neither the body nor the mind? Great
31 discussions followed. Speculations were made, various shades of
32 philosophic inquiry came into existence; and I shall try to place
33 before you some of the conclusions that have been reached about
34 this Atman.

35 The different philosophies seem to agree that this Atman,
36 whatever it be, has neither form nor shape, and that which has
37 neither form nor shape must be omnipresent. Time begins with
38 mind, space also is in the mind. Causation cannot stand without
39 time. Without the idea of succession there cannot be any idea of
40 causation. Time, space and causation, therefore, are in the mind,
41 and as this Atman is beyond the mind and formless, it must be
42 beyond time, beyond space, and beyond causation. Now, if it is
43 beyond time, space, and causation, it must be infinite. Then comes
44 the highest speculation in our philosophy. The infinite cannot be
45 two. If the soul be infinite, there can be only one Soul, and all ideas
46 of various souls--you having one soul, and I having another and so
47 forth--are not real. The Real Man, therefore, is one and infinite, the
48 omnipresent Spirit. And the apparent man is only a limitation of
49 that Real Man. In that sense the mythologies are true that the
50 apparent man, however great he may be, is only a dim reflection of
51 the Real Man who is beyond. The Real Man, the Spirit, being
52 beyond cause and effect, not bound by time and space, must,

1 therefore, be free. He was never bound, and could not be bound.
2 The apparent man, the reflection, is limited by time, space, and
3 causation, and is, therefore, bound. Or in the language of some of
4 our philosophers, he appears to be bound, but really is not. This is
5 the reality in our souls, this omnipresence, this spiritual nature, this
6 infinity. Every soul is infinite, therefore there is no question of birth
7 and death. Some children were being examined. The examiner put
8 them rather hard questions, and among them was this one: "Why
9 does not the earth fall?" He wanted to evoke answers about
10 gravitation. Most of the children could not answer at all; a few
11 answered that it was gravitation or something. One bright little girl
12 answered it by putting another question: "Where should it fall?" The
13 question is nonsense. Where should the earth fall? There is no
14 falling or rising for the earth. In infinite space there is no up or
15 down; that is only in the relative. Where is the going or coming for
16 the infinite? Whence should it come and whither should it go?

17 Thus, when people cease to think of the past or future, when
18 they give up the idea of body, because the body comes and goes and
19 is limited, then they have risen to a higher ideal. The body is not the
20 Real Man, neither is the mind, for the mind waxes and wanes. It is
21 the Spirit beyond, which alone can live for ever. The body and mind
22 are continually changing, and are, in fact, only names of series of
23 changeful phenomena, like rivers whose waters are in a constant
24 state of flux, yet presenting the appearance of unbroken streams.
25 Every particle in this body is continually changing; no one has the
26 same body for many minutes together, and yet we think of it as the
27 same body. So with the mind; one moment it is happy, another
28 moment unhappy; one moment strong, another weak; an ever-
29 changing whirlpool. That cannot be the Spirit which is infinite.
30 Change can only be in the limited. To say that the infinite changes
31 in any way is absurd; it cannot be. You can move and I can move, as
32 limited bodies; every particle in this universe is in a constant state
33 of flux, but taking the universe as a unit, as one whole, it cannot
34 move, it cannot change. Motion is always a relative thing. I move in
35 relation to something else. Any particle in this universe can change
36 in relation to any other particle; but take the whole universe as one,
37 and in relation to what can it move? There is nothing besides it. So
38 this infinite Unit is unchangeable, immovable, absolute, and this is
39 the Real Man. Our reality, therefore, consists in the Universal and
40 not in the limited. These are old delusions, however comfortable
41 they are, to think that we are little limited beings, constantly
42 changing. People are frightened when they are told that they are
43 Universal Being, everywhere present. Through everything you
44 work, through every foot you move, through every lip you talk,
45 through every heart you feel.

46 People are frightened when they are told this. They will again
47 and again ask you if they are not going to keep their individuality.
48 What is individuality? I should like to see it. A baby has no
49 moustache; when he grows to be a man, perhaps he has a
50 moustache and beard. His individuality would be lost, if it were in
51 the body. If I lose one eye, or if I lose one of my hands, my
52 individuality would be lost if it were in the body. Then, a drunkard

1 should not give up drinking because he would lose his individuality.
2 A thief should not be a good man because he would thereby lose his
3 individuality. No man ought to change his habits for fear of this.
4 There is no individuality except in the Infinite. That is the only
5 condition which does not change. Everything else is in a constant
6 state of flux. Neither can individuality be in memory. Suppose, on
7 account of a blow on the head I forget all about my past; then, I
8 have lost all individuality; I am gone. I do not remember two or
9 three years of my childhood, and if memory and existence are one,
10 then whatever I forget is gone. That part of my life which I do not
11 remember, I did not live. That is a very narrow idea of individuality.

12 We are not individuals yet. We are struggling towards
13 individuality, and that is the Infinite, that is the real nature of man.
14 He alone lives whose life is in the whole universe, and the more we
15 concentrate our lives on limited things, the faster we go towards
16 death. Those moments alone we live when our lives are in the
17 universe, in others; and living this little life is death, simply death,
18 and that is why the fear of death comes. The fear of death can only
19 be conquered when man realises that so long as there is one life in
20 this universe, he is living. When he can say, "I am in everything, in
21 everybody, I am in all lives, I am the universe," then alone comes
22 the state of fearlessness. To talk of immortality in constantly
23 changing things is absurd. Says an old Sanskrit philosopher: It is
24 only the Spirit that is the individual, because it is infinite. No
25 infinity can be divided; infinity cannot be broken into pieces. It is
26 the same one, undivided unit for ever, and this is the individual
27 man, the Real Man. The apparent man is merely a struggle to
28 express, to manifest this individuality which is beyond; and
29 evolution is not in the Spirit. These changes which are going on--the
30 wicked becoming good, the animal becoming man, take them in
31 whatever way you like--are not in the Spirit. They are the evolution
32 of nature and manifestation of Spirit. Suppose there is a screen
33 hiding you from me, in which there is a small hole through which I
34 can see some of the faces before me, just a few faces. Now suppose
35 the hole begins to grow larger and larger, and as it does so, more
36 and more of the scene before me reveals itself and when at last the
37 whole screen has disappeared, I stand face to face with you all. You
38 did not change at all in this case; it was the hole that was evolving,
39 and you were gradually manifesting yourselves. So it is with the
40 Spirit. No perfection is going to be attained. You are already free
41 and perfect. What are these ideas of religion and God and
42 searching for the hereafter? Why does man look for a God? Why
43 does man, in every nation, in every state of society, want a perfect
44 ideal somewhere, either in man, in God, or elsewhere? Because that
45 idea is within you. It was your own heart beating and you did not
46 know; you were mistaking it for something external. It is the God
47 within your own self that is propelling you to seek for Him, to
48 realise Him. After long searches here and there, in temples and in
49 churches, in earths and in heavens, at last you come back,
50 completing the circle from where you started, to your own soul and
51 find that He for whom you have been seeking all over the world, for
52 whom you have been weeping and praying in churches and
53 temples, on whom you were looking as the mystery of all mysteries

1 shrouded in the clouds, is nearest of the near, is your own Self, the
2 reality of your life, body, and soul. That is your own nature. Assert
3 it, manifest it. Not to become pure, you are pure already. You are
4 not to be perfect, you are that already. Nature is like that screen
5 which is hiding the reality beyond. Every good thought that you
6 think or act upon is simply tearing the veil, as it were; and the
7 purity, the Infinity, the God behind, manifests Itself more and more.

8 This is the whole history of man. Finer and finer becomes the
9 veil, more and more of the light behind shines forth, for it is its
10 nature to shine. It cannot be known; in vain we try to know it. Were
11 it knowable, it would not be what it is, for it is the eternal subject.
12 Knowledge is a limitation, knowledge is objectifying. He is the
13 eternal subject of everything, the eternal witness in this universe,
14 your own Self. Knowledge is, as it were, a lower step, a
15 degeneration. We are that eternal subject already; how can we
16 know it? It is the real nature of every man, and he is struggling to
17 express it in various ways; otherwise, why are there so many ethical
18 codes? Where is the explanation of all ethics? One idea stands out
19 as the centre of all ethical systems, expressed in various forms,
20 namely, doing good to others. The guiding motive of mankind should
21 be charity towards men, charity towards all animals. But these are
22 all various expressions of that eternal truth that, "I am the universe;
23 this universe is one." Or else, where is the reason? Why should I do
24 good to my fellowmen? Why should I do good to others? What
25 compels me? It is sympathy, the feeling of sameness everywhere.
26 The hardest hearts feel sympathy for beings sometimes. Even the
27 man who gets frightened if he is told that this assumed individuality
28 is really a delusion, that it is ignoble to try to cling to this apparent
29 individuality, that very man will tell you that extreme self-
30 abnegation is the centre of all morality. And what is perfect self-
31 abnegation? It means the abnegation of this apparent self, the
32 abnegation of all selfishness. This idea of "me and mine"--Ahamkâra
33 and Mamatâ--is the result of past superstition, and the more this
34 present self passes away, the more the real Self becomes manifest.
35 This is true self-abnegation, the centre, the basis, the gist of all
36 moral teaching; and whether man knows it or not, the whole world
37 is slowly going towards it, practising it more or less. Only, the vast
38 majority of mankind are doing it unconsciously. Let them do it
39 consciously. Let them make the sacrifice, knowing that this "me and
40 mine" is not the real Self, but only a limitation. But one glimpse of
41 that infinite reality which is behind--but one spark of that infinite
42 fire that is the All--represents the present man; the Infinite is his
43 true nature.

44 What is the utility, the effect, the result, of this knowledge? In
45 these days, we have to measure everything by utility--by how many
46 pounds, shillings, and pence it represents. What right has a person
47 to ask that truth should be judged by the standard of utility or
48 money? Suppose there is no utility, will it be less true? Utility is not
49 the test of truth. Nevertheless, there is the highest utility in this.
50 Happiness, we see, is what everyone is seeking for, but the majority
51 seek it in things which are evanescent and not real. No happiness
52 was ever found in the senses. There never was a person who found

1 happiness in the senses or in the enjoyment of the senses.
2 Happiness is only found in the Spirit. Therefore the highest utility
3 for mankind is to find this happiness in the Spirit. The next point is
4 that ignorance is the great mother of all misery, and the
5 fundamental ignorance is to think that the Infinite weeps and cries,
6 that He is finite. This is the basis of all ignorance that we, the
7 immortal, the ever pure, the perfect Spirit, think that we are little
8 minds, that we are little bodies; it is the mother of all selfishness.
9 As soon as I think that I am a little body, I want to preserve it, to
10 protect it, to keep it nice, at the expense of other bodies; then you
11 and I become separate. As soon as this idea of separation comes, it
12 opens the door to all mischief and leads to all misery. This is the
13 utility that if a very small fractional part of human beings living
14 today can put aside the idea of selfishness, narrowness, and
15 littleness, this earth will become a paradise tomorrow; but with
16 machines and improvements of material knowledge only, it will
17 never be. These only increase misery, as oil poured on fire increase
18 the flame all the more. Without the knowledge of the Spirit, all
19 material knowledge is only adding fuel to fire, only giving into the
20 hands of selfish man one more instrument to take what belongs to
21 others, to live upon the life of others, instead of giving up his life for
22 them.

23 Is it practical?--is another question. Can it be practised in
24 modern society? *Truth does not pay homage to any society, ancient*
25 *or modern. Society has to pay homage to Truth or die.* Societies
26 should be moulded upon truth, and truth has not to adjust itself to
27 society. If such a noble truth as unselfishness cannot be practised in
28 society, it is better for man to give up society and go into the forest.
29 That is the daring man. There are two sorts of courage. One is the
30 courage of facing the cannon. And the other is the courage of
31 spiritual conviction. An Emperor who invaded India was told by his
32 teacher to go and see some of the sages there. After a long search
33 for one, he found a very old man sitting on a block of stone. The
34 Emperor talked with him a little and became very impressed by his
35 wisdom. He asked the sage to go to his country with him. "No," said
36 the sage, "I am quite satisfied with my forest here." Said the
37 Emperor, "I will give you money, position, wealth. I am the Emperor
38 of the world." "No," replied the man. "I don't care for those things."
39 The Emperor replied, "If you do not go, I will kill you." The man
40 smiled serenely and said, "That is the most foolish thing you have
41 ever said, Emperor. You cannot kill me. Me the sun cannot dry, fire
42 cannot burn, sword cannot kill, for I am the birthless, the deathless,
43 the ever-living omnipotent, omnipresent Spirit." This is spiritual
44 boldness, while the other is the courage of a lion or a tiger. In the
45 Mutiny of 1857 there was a Swami, a very great soul, whom a
46 Mohammedan mutineer stabbed severely. The Hindu mutineers
47 caught and brought the man to the Swami, offering to kill him. But
48 the Swami looked up calmly and said, "My brother, thou art He,
49 thou art He!" and expired. This is another instance. What good is it
50 to talk of the strength of your muscles, of the superiority of your
51 Western institutions, if you cannot make Truth square with your
52 society, if you cannot build up a society into which the highest Truth
53 will fit? What is the good of this boastful talk about your grandeur

1 and greatness, if you stand up and say, "This courage is not
2 practical." Is nothing practical but pounds, shillings, and pence? If
3 so, why boast of your society? *Truth does not pay homage to any*
4 *society, ancient or modern. Society has to pay homage to Truth or*
5 *die.* Societies should be moulded upon truth, and truth has not to
6 adjust itself to society. *That society is the greatest, where the*
7 *highest truths become practical.* That is my opinion; and if society is
8 not fit for the highest truths, make it so; and the sooner, the better.
9 Stand up, men and women, in this spirit, dare to believe in the
10 Truth, dare to practise the Truth! The world requires a few hundred
11 bold men and women. Practise that boldness which dares know the
12 Truth, which dares show the Truth in life, which does not quake
13 before death, nay, welcomes death, makes a man know that he is
14 the Spirit, that, in the whole universe, nothing can kill him. Then
15 you will be free. Then you will know your real Soul. "This Atman is
16 first to be heard, then thought about and then meditated upon."

17 There is a great tendency in modern times to talk too much of
18 work and decry thought. Doing is very good, but that comes from
19 thinking. Little manifestations of energy through the muscles are
20 called work. But where there is no thought, there will be no work.
21 Fill the brain, therefore, with high thoughts, highest ideals, place
22 them day and night before you, and out of that will come great
23 work. Talk not about impurity, but say that we are pure. We have
24 hypnotised ourselves into this thought that we are little, that we are
25 born, and that we are going to die, and into a constant state of fear.

26 There is a story about a lioness, who was big with young,
27 going about in search of prey; and seeing a flock of sheep, she
28 jumped upon them. She died in the effort; and a little baby lion was
29 born, motherless. It was taken care of by the sheep and the sheep
30 brought it up, and it grew up with them, ate grass, and bleated like
31 the sheep. And although in time it became a big, full-grown lion, it
32 thought it was a sheep. One day another lion came in search of prey
33 and was astonished to find that in the midst of this flock of sheep
34 was a lion, fleeing like the sheep at the approach of danger. He
35 tried to get near the sheep-lion, to tell it that it was not a sheep but
36 a lion; but the poor animal fled at his approach. However, he
37 watched his opportunity and one day found the sheep-lion sleeping.
38 He approached it and said, "You are a lion." "I am a sheep," cried
39 the other lion and could not believe the contrary but bleated. The
40 lion dragged him towards a lake and said, "Look here, here is my
41 reflection and yours." Then came the comparison. It looked at the
42 lion and then at its own reflection, and in a moment came the idea
43 that it was a lion. The lion roared, the bleating was gone. You are
44 lions, you are souls, pure, infinite, and perfect. The might of the
45 universe is within you. "Why weepest thou, my friend? There is
46 neither birth nor death for thee. Why weepest thou? There is no
47 disease nor misery for thee, but thou art like the infinite sky; clouds
48 of various colours come over it, play for a moment, then vanish. But
49 the sky is ever the same eternal blue." Why do we see wickedness?
50 There was a stump of a tree, and in the dark, a thief came that way
51 and said, "That is a policeman." A young man waiting for his
52 beloved saw it and thought that it was his sweetheart. A child who

1 had been told ghost stories took it for a ghost and began to shriek.
2 But all the time it was the stump of a tree. We see the world as we
3 are. Suppose there is a baby in a room with a bag of gold on the
4 table and a thief comes and steals the gold. Would the baby know it
5 was stolen? That which we have inside, we see outside. The baby
6 has no thief inside and sees no thief outside. So with all knowledge.
7 Do not talk of the wickedness of the world and all its sins. Weep
8 that you are bound to see wickedness yet. Weep that you are bound
9 to see sin everywhere, and if you want to help the world, do not
10 condemn it. Do not weaken it more. For what is sin and what is
11 misery, and what are all these, but the results of weakness? The
12 world is made weaker and weaker every day by such teachings.
13 Men are taught from childhood that they are weak and sinners.
14 Teach them that they are all glorious children of immortality, even
15 those who are the weakest in manifestation. Let positive, strong,
16 helpful thought enter into their brains from very childhood. Lay
17 yourselves open to these thoughts, and not to weakening and
18 paralysing ones. Say to your own minds, "I am He. I am He." Let it
19 ring day and night in your minds like a song, and at the point of
20 death declare, "I am He." That is the Truth; the infinite strength of
21 the world is yours. Drive out the superstition that has covered your
22 minds. Let us be brave. Know the Truth and practise the Truth. The
23 goal may be distant, but awake, arise, and stop not till the goal is
24 reached.

MAYA AND ILLUSION

(Delivered in London)

Almost all of you have heard of the word Maya. Generally it is used, though incorrectly, to denote illusion, or delusion, or some such thing. But the theory of Maya forms one of the pillars upon which the Vedanta rests; it is, therefore, necessary that it should be properly understood. I ask a little patience of you, for there is a great danger of its being misunderstood. The oldest idea of Maya that we find in the Vedic literature is the sense of delusion; but then the real theory had not been reached. We find such passages as, "Indra through his Maya assumed various forms." Here it is true the word Maya means something like magic, and we find various other passages, always taking the same meaning. The word Maya then dropped out of sight altogether. But in the meantime the idea was developing. Later, the question was raised: "Why can't we know this secret of the universe?" And the answer given was very significant: "Because we talk in vain, and because we are satisfied with the things of the senses, and because we are running after desires; therefore, we, as it were, cover the Reality with a mist." Here the word Maya is not used at all, but we get the idea that the cause of our ignorance is a kind of mist that has come between us and the Truth. Much later on, in one of the latest Upanishads, we find the word Maya reappearing, but this time, a transformation has taken place in it, and a mass of new meaning has attached itself to the word. Theories had been propounded and repeated, others had been taken up, until at last the idea of Maya became fixed. We read in the Shvetashvatara Upanishad, "Know nature to be Maya and the Ruler of this Maya is the Lord Himself." Coming to our philosophers, we find that this word Maya has been manipulated in various fashions, until we come to the great Shankaracharya. The theory of Maya was manipulated a little by the Buddhists too, but in the hands of the Buddhists it became very much like what is called Idealism, and that is the meaning that is now generally given to the word Maya. When the Hindu says the world is Maya, at once people get the idea that the world is an illusion. This interpretation has some basis, as coming through the Buddhistic philosophers, because there was one section of philosophers who did not believe in the external world at all. But the Maya of the Vedanta, in its last developed form, is neither Idealism nor Realism, nor is it a theory. It is a simple statement of facts--what we are and what we see around us.

As I have told you before, the minds of the people from whom the Vedas came were intent upon following principles, discovering principles. They had no time to work upon details or to wait for them; they wanted to go deep into the heart of things. Something beyond was calling them, as it were, and they could not wait. Scattered through the Upanishads, we find that the details of subjects which we now call modern sciences are often very erroneous, but, at the same time, their principles are correct. For instance, the idea of ether, which is one of the latest theories of

1 modern science, is to be found in our ancient literature in forms
2 much more developed than is the modern scientific theory of ether
3 today, but it was in principle. When they tried to demonstrate the
4 workings of that principle, they made many mistakes. The theory of
5 the all-pervading life principle, of which all life in this universe is
6 but a differing manifestation was understood in Vedic times; it is
7 found in the Brahmanas. There is a long hymn in the Samhitas in
8 praise of Prana of which all life is but a manifestation. By the by, it
9 may interest some of you to know that there are theories in the
10 Vedic philosophy about the origin of life on this earth very similar to
11 those which have been advanced by some modern European
12 scientists. You, of course, all know that there is a theory that life
13 came from other planets. It is a settled doctrine with some Vedic
14 philosophers that life comes in this way from the moon.

15 Coming to the principles, we find these Vedic thinkers very
16 courageous and wonderfully bold in propounding large and
17 generalised theories. Their solution of the mystery of the universe,
18 from the external world, was as satisfactory as it could be. The
19 detailed workings of modern science do not bring the question one
20 step nearer to solution, because the principles have failed. If the
21 theory of ether failed in ancient times to give a solution of the
22 mystery of the universe, working out the details of that ether theory
23 would not bring us much nearer to the truth. If the theory of all-
24 pervading life failed as a theory of this universe, it would not mean
25 anything more if worked out in detail, for the details do not change
26 the principle of the universe. What I mean is that in their inquiry
27 into the principle, the Hindu thinkers were as bold, and in some
28 cases, much bolder than the moderns. They made some of the
29 grandest generalisations that have yet been reached, and some still
30 remain as theories, which modern science has yet to get even as
31 theories. For instance, they not only arrived at the ether theory, but
32 went beyond and classified mind also as a still more rarefied ether.
33 Beyond that again, they found a still more rarefied ether. Yet that
34 was no solution, it did not solve the problem. No amount of
35 knowledge of the external world could solve the problem. "But",
36 says the scientists, "we are just beginning to know a little: wait a
37 few thousand years and we shall get the solution." "No," says the
38 Vedantist, for he has proved beyond all doubt that the mind is
39 limited, that it cannot go beyond certain limits--beyond time, space,
40 and causation. As no man can jump out of his own self, so no man
41 can go beyond the limits that have been put upon him by the laws of
42 time and space. Every attempt to solve the laws of causation, time,
43 and space would be futile, because the very attempt would have to
44 be made by taking for granted the existence of these three. What
45 does the statement of the existence of the world mean, then? "This
46 world has no existence." What is meant by that? It means that it has
47 no absolute existence. It exists only in relation to my mind, to your
48 mind, and to the mind of everyone else. We see this world with the
49 five senses but if we had another sense, we would see in it
50 something more. If we had yet another sense, it would appear as
51 something still different. It has, therefore, no real existence; it has
52 no unchangeable, immovable, infinite existence. Nor can it be
53 called non-existence, seeing that it exists, and we have to work in

1 and through it. It is a mixture of existence and non-existence.

2 Coming from abstractions to the common, everyday details of
3 our lives, we find that our life is a contradiction, a mixture of
4 existence and non-existence. There is this contradiction in
5 knowledge. It seems that man can know everything, if he only
6 wants to know; but before he has gone a few steps, he finds an
7 adamant wall which he cannot pass. All his work is in a circle,
8 and he cannot go beyond that circle. The problems which are
9 nearest and dearest to him are impelling him on and calling, day
10 and night, for a solution, but he cannot solve them, because he
11 cannot go beyond his intellect. And yet that desire is implanted
12 strongly in him. Still we know that the only good is to be obtained
13 by controlling and checking it. With every breath, every impulse of
14 our heart asks us to be selfish. At the same time, there is some
15 power beyond us which says that it is unselfishness alone which is
16 good. Every child is a born optimist; he dreams golden dreams. In
17 youth he becomes still more optimistic. It is hard for a young man
18 to believe that there is such a thing as death, such a thing as defeat
19 or degradation. Old age comes, and life is a mass of ruins. Dreams
20 have vanished into the air, and the man becomes a pessimist. Thus
21 we go from one extreme to another, buffeted by nature, without
22 knowing where we are going. It reminds me of a celebrated song in
23 the *Lalita Vistara*, the biography of Buddha. Buddha was born, says
24 the book, as the saviour of mankind, but he forgot himself in the
25 luxuries of his palace. Some angels came and sang a song to rouse
26 him. And the burden of the whole song is that we are floating down
27 the river of life which is continually changing with no stop and no
28 rest. So are our lives, going on and on without knowing any rest.
29 What are we to do? The man who has enough to eat and drink is an
30 optimist, and he avoids all mention of misery, for it frightens him.
31 Tell not to him of the sorrows and the sufferings of the world; go to
32 him and tell that it is all good. "Yes, I am safe," says he. "Look at
33 me! I have a nice house to live in. I do not fear cold and hunger;
34 therefore do not bring these horrible pictures before me." But, on
35 the other hand, there are others dying of cold and hunger. If you go
36 and teach *them* that it is all good, they will not hear you. How can
37 they wish others to be happy when they are miserable? Thus we are
38 oscillating between optimism and pessimism.

39 Then, there is the tremendous fact of death. The whole world
40 is going towards death; everything dies. All our progress, our
41 vanities, our reforms, our luxuries, our wealth, our knowledge, have
42 that one end--death. That is all that is certain. Cities come and go,
43 empires rise and fall, planets break into pieces and crumble into
44 dust, to be blown about by the atmospheres of other planets. Thus it
45 has been going on from time without beginning. Death is the end of
46 everything. Death is the end of life, of beauty, of wealth, of power,
47 of virtue too. Saints die and sinners die, kings die and beggars die.
48 They are all going to death, and yet this tremendous clinging on to
49 life exists. Somehow, we do not know why, we cling to life; we
50 cannot give it up. And this is Maya.

51 The mother is nursing a child with great care; all her soul,
52 her life, is in that child. The child grows, becomes a man, and

1 perchance becomes a blackguard and a brute, kicks her and beats
2 her every day; and yet the mother clings to the child; and when her
3 reason awakes, she covers it up with the idea of love. She little
4 thinks that it is not love, that it is something which has got hold of
5 her nerves, which she cannot shake off; however she may try, she
6 cannot shake off the bondage she is in. And this is Maya.

7 We are all after the Golden Fleece. Every one of us thinks
8 that this will be his. Every reasonable man sees that his chance is,
9 perhaps, one in twenty millions, yet everyone struggles for it. And
10 this is Maya.

11 Death is stalking day and night over this earth of ours, but at
12 the same time we think we shall live eternally. A question was once
13 asked of King Yudhishthira, "What is the most wonderful thing on
14 this earth?" And the king replied, "Every day people are dying
15 around us, and yet men think they will never die." And this is Maya.

16 These tremendous contradictions in our intellect, in our
17 knowledge, yea, in all the facts of our life face us on all sides. A
18 reformer arises and wants to remedy the evils that are existing in a
19 certain nation; and before they have been remedied, a thousand
20 other evils arise in another place. It is like an old house that is
21 falling; you patch it up in one place and the ruin extends to another.
22 In India, our reformers cry and preach against the evils of enforced
23 widowhood. In the West, non-marriage is the great evil. Help the
24 unmarried on one side; they are suffering. Help the widows on the
25 other; they are suffering. It is like chronic rheumatism: you drive it
26 from the head, and it goes to the body; you drive it from there, and
27 it goes to the feet. Reformers arise and preach that learning,
28 wealth, and culture should not be in the hands of a select few; and
29 they do their best to make them accessible to all. These may bring
30 more happiness to some, but, perhaps as culture comes, physical
31 happiness lessens. The knowledge of happiness brings the
32 knowledge of unhappiness. Which way then shall we go? The least
33 amount of material prosperity that we enjoy is causing the same
34 amount of misery elsewhere. This is the law. The young, perhaps,
35 do not see it clearly, but those who have lived long enough and
36 those who have struggled enough will understand it. And this is
37 Maya. These things are going on, day and night, and to find a
38 solution of this problem is impossible. Why should it be so? It is
39 impossible to answer this, because the question cannot be logically
40 formulated. There is neither *how* nor *why* in fact; we only know
41 that it *is* and that we cannot help it. Even to grasp it, to draw an
42 exact image of it in our own mind, is beyond our power. How can
43 we solve it then?

44 Maya is a statement of the fact of this universe, of how it is
45 going on. People generally get frightened when these things are
46 told to them. But bold we must be. Hiding facts is not the way to
47 find a remedy. As you all know, a hare hunted by dogs puts its head
48 down and thinks itself safe; so, when we run into optimism, we do
49 just like the hare, but that is no remedy. There are objections
50 against this, but you may remark that they are generally from
51 people who possess many of the good things of life. In this country
52 (England) it is very difficult to be a pessimist. Everyone tells me

1 how wonderfully the world is going on, how progressive; but what
2 he himself is, in his own world. Old questions arise: Christianity
3 must be the only true religion of the world, because Christian
4 nations are prosperous! But that assertion contradicts itself,
5 because the prosperity of the Christian nation depends on the
6 misfortune of non-Christian nations. There must be some to prey
7 on. Suppose the whole world were to become Christian, then the
8 Christian nations would become poor, because there would be no
9 non-Christian nations for them to prey upon. Thus the argument
10 kills itself. Animals are living upon plants, men upon animals and,
11 worst of all, upon one another, the strong upon the weak. This is
12 going on everywhere. And this is Maya. What solution do you find
13 for this? We hear every day many explanations, and are told that in
14 the long run all will be good. Taking it for granted that this is
15 possible, why should there be this diabolical way of doing good?
16 Why cannot good be done through good, instead of through these
17 diabolical methods? The descendants of the human beings of today
18 will be happy; but why must there be all this suffering now? There
19 is no solution. This is Maya.

20 Again, we often hear that it is one of the features of evolution
21 that it eliminates evil, and this evil being continually eliminated
22 from the world, at last only good will remain. That is very nice to
23 hear, and it panders to the vanity of those who have enough of this
24 world's goods, who have not a hard struggle to face every day and
25 are not being crushed under the wheel of this so-called evolution. It
26 is very good and comforting indeed to such fortunate ones. The
27 common herd may suffer, but they do not care; let them die, they
28 are of no consequence. Very good, yet this argument is fallacious
29 from beginning to end. It takes for granted, in the first place, that
30 manifested good and evil in this world are two absolute realities. In
31 the second place, it makes a still worse assumption that the amount
32 of good is an in-creasing quantity and the amount of evil is a
33 decreasing quantity. So, if evil is being eliminated in this way by
34 what they call evolution, there will come a time when all this evil
35 will be eliminated and what remains will be all good. Very easy to
36 say, but can it be proved that evil is a lessening quality? Take, for
37 instance, the man who lives in a forest, who does not know how to
38 cultivate the mind, cannot read a book, has not heard of such a
39 thing as writing. If he is severely wounded, he is soon all right
40 again; while we die if we get a scratch. Machines are making things
41 cheap, making for progress and evolution, but millions are crushed,
42 that one may become rich; while one becomes rich, thousands at
43 the same time become poorer and poorer, and whole masses of
44 human beings are made slaves. That way it is going on. The animal
45 man lives in the senses. If he does not get enough to eat, he is
46 miserable; or if something happens to his body, he is miserable. In
47 the senses both his misery and his happiness begin and end. As
48 soon as this man progresses, as soon as his horizon of happiness
49 increases, his horizon of unhappiness increases proportionately.
50 The man in the forest does not know what it is to be jealous, to be
51 in the law courts, to pay taxes, to be blamed by society, to be ruled
52 over day and night by the most tremendous tyranny that human
53 diabolism ever invented, which pries into the secrets of every

1 human heart. He does not know how man becomes a thousand
2 times more diabolical than any other animal, with all his vain
3 knowledge and with all his pride. Thus it is that, as we emerge out
4 of the senses, we develop higher powers of enjoyment, and at the
5 same time we have to develop higher powers of suffering too. The
6 nerves become finer and capable of more suffering. In every society,
7 we often find that the ignorant, common man, when abused does
8 not feel much, but he feels a good thrashing. But the gentleman
9 cannot bear a single word of abuse; he has become so finely nerved.
10 Misery has increased with his susceptibility to happiness. This does
11 not go much to prove the evolutionist's case. As we increase our
12 power to be happy, we also increase our power to suffer, and
13 sometimes I am inclined to think that if we increase our power to
14 become happy in arithmetical progression, we shall increase, on the
15 other hand, our power to become miserable in geometrical
16 progression. We who are progressing know that the more we
17 progress, the more avenues are opened to pain as well as to
18 pleasure. And this is Maya.

19 Thus we find that Maya is not a theory for the explanation of
20 the world; it is simply a statement of facts as they exist, that the
21 very basis of our being is contradiction, that wherever there is
22 good, there must also be evil, and wherever there is evil, there
23 must be some good, wherever there is life, death must follow as its
24 shadow, and everyone who smiles will have to weep, and vice versa.
25 Nor can this state of things be remedied. We may verily imagine
26 that there will be a place where there will be only good and no evil,
27 where we shall only smile and never weep. This is impossible in the
28 nature of things; for the conditions will remain the same. Wherever
29 there is the power of producing a smile in us, there lurks the power
30 of producing tears. Wherever there is the power of producing
31 happiness, there lurks somewhere the power of making us
32 miserable.

33 Thus the Vedanta philosophy is neither optimistic nor
34 pessimistic. It voices both these views and takes things as they are.
35 It admits that this world is a mixture of good and evil, happiness
36 and misery, and that to increase the one, one must of necessity
37 increase the other. There will never be a perfectly good or bad
38 world, because the very idea is a contradiction in terms. The great
39 secret revealed by this analysis is that good and bad are not two
40 cut-and-dried, separate existences. There is not one thing in this
41 world of ours which you can label as good and good alone, and
42 there is not one thing in the universe which you can label as bad
43 and bad alone. The very same phenomenon which is appearing to
44 be good now, may appear to be bad tomorrow. The same thing
45 which is producing misery in one, may produce happiness in
46 another. The fire that burns the child, may cook a good meal for a
47 starving man. The same nerves that carry the sensations of misery
48 carry also the sensations of happiness. The only way to stop evil,
49 therefore, is to stop good also; there is no other way. To stop death,
50 we shall have to stop life also. Life without death and happiness
51 without misery are contradictions, and neither can be found alone,
52 because each of them is but a different manifestation of the same

1 thing. What I thought to be good yesterday, I do not think to be
2 good now. When I look back upon my life and see what were my
3 ideals at different times, I find this to be so. At one time my ideal
4 was to drive a strong pair of horses; at another time I thought, if I
5 could make a certain kind of sweetmeat, I should be perfectly
6 happy; later I imagined that I should be entirely satisfied if I had a
7 wife and children and plenty of money. Today I laugh at all these
8 ideals as mere childish nonsense.

9 The Vedanta says, there must come a time when we shall look
10 back and laugh at the ideals which make us afraid of giving up our
11 individuality. Each one of us wants to keep this body for an
12 indefinite time, thinking we shall be very happy, but there will come
13 a time when we shall laugh at this idea. Now, if such be the truth,
14 we are in a state of hopeless contradiction--neither existence nor
15 non-existence, neither misery nor happiness, but a mixture of them.
16 What, then, is the use of Vedanta and all other philosophies and
17 religions? And, above all, what is the use of doing good work? This
18 is a question that comes to the mind. If it is true that you cannot do
19 good without doing evil, and whenever you try to create happiness
20 there will always be misery, people will ask you, "What is the use of
21 doing good?" The answer is in the first place, that we must work for
22 lessening misery, for that is the only way to make ourselves happy.
23 Every one of us finds it out sooner or later in our lives. The bright
24 ones find it out a little earlier, and the dull ones a little later. The
25 dull ones pay very dearly for the discovery and the bright ones less
26 dearly. In the second place, we must do our part, because that is
27 the only way of getting out of this life of contradiction. Both the
28 forces of good and evil will keep this universe alive for us, until we
29 awake from our dreams and give up this building of mud pies. That
30 lesson we shall have to learn, and it will take a long, long time to
31 learn it.

32 Attempts have been made in Germany to build a system of
33 philosophy on the basis that the Infinite has become the finite. Such
34 attempts are also made in England. And the analysis of the position
35 of these philosophers is this, that the Infinite is trying to express
36 itself in this universe, and that there will come a time when the
37 Infinite will succeed in doing so. It is all very well, and we have
38 used the words *Infinite* and *manifestation* and *expression*, and so
39 on, but philosophers naturally ask for a logical fundamental basis
40 for the statement that the finite can fully express the Infinite. The
41 Absolute and the Infinite can become this universe only by
42 limitation. Everything must be limited that comes through the
43 senses, or through the mind, or through the intellect; and for the
44 limited to be the unlimited is simply absurd, and can never be. The
45 Vedanta, on the other hand, says that it is true that the Absolute or
46 the Infinite is trying to express itself in the finite, but there will
47 come a time when it will find that it is impossible, and it will then
48 have to beat a retreat, and this beating a retreat means
49 renunciation which is the real beginning of religion. Nowadays it is
50 very hard even to talk of renunciation. It was said of me in America
51 that I was a man who came out of a land that had been dead and
52 buried for five thousand years, and talked of renunciation. So says,

perhaps, the English philosopher. Yet it is true that that is the only path to religion. Renounce and give up. What did Christ say? "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it." Again and again did he preach renunciation as the only way to perfection. There comes a time when the mind awakes from this long and dreary dream--the child gives up its play and wants to go back to its mother. It finds the truth of the statement, "Desire is never satisfied by the enjoyment of desires, it only increases the more, as fire, when butter is poured upon it."

This is true of all sense-enjoyments, of all intellectual enjoyments, and of all the enjoyments of which the human mind is capable. They are nothing, they are within Maya, within this network beyond which we cannot go. We may run therein through infinite time and find no end, and whenever we struggle to get a little enjoyment, a mass of misery falls upon us. How awful is this! And when I think of it, I cannot but consider that this theory of Maya, this statement that it is all Maya, is the best and only explanation. What an amount of misery there is in this world; and if you travel among various nations you will find that one nation attempts to cure its evils by one means, and another by another. The very same evil has been taken up by various races, and attempts have been made in various ways to check it, yet no nation has succeeded. If it has been minimised at one point, a mass of evil has been crowded at another point. Thus it goes. The Hindus, to keep up a high standard of chastity in the race, have sanctioned child-marriage, which in the long run has degraded the race. At the same time, I cannot deny that this child-marriage makes the race more chaste. What would you have? If you want the nation to be more chaste, you weaken men and women physically by child-marriage. On the other hand, are you in England any better off? No, because chastity is the life of a nation. Do you not find in history that the first death-sign of a nation has been unchastity? When that has entered, the end of the race is in sight. Where shall we get a solution of these miseries then? If parents select husbands and wives for their children, then this evil is minimised. The daughters of India are more practical than sentimental. But very little of poetry remains in their lives. Again, if people select their own husbands and wives, that does not seem to bring much happiness. The Indian woman is generally very happy; there are not many cases of quarrelling between husband and wife. On the other hand in the United States, where the greatest liberty obtains, the number of unhappy homes and marriages is large. Unhappiness is here, there, and everywhere. What does it show? That, after all, not much happiness has been gained by all these ideals. We all struggle for happiness and as soon as we get a little happiness on one side, on the other side there comes unhappiness.

Shall we not work to do good then? Yes, with more zest than ever, but what this knowledge will do for us is to break down fanaticism. The Englishman will no more be a fanatic and curse the Hindu. He will learn to respect the customs of different nations. There will be less of fanaticism and more of real work. Fanatics cannot work, they waste three-fourths of their energy. It is the level-

1 headed, calm, practical man who works. So, the power to work will
2 increase from this idea. Knowing that this is the state of things,
3 there will be more patience. The sight of misery or of evil will not
4 be able to throw us off our balance and make us run after shadows.
5 Therefore, patience will come to us, knowing that the world will
6 have to go on in its own way. If, for instance, all men have become
7 good, the animals will have in the meantime evolved into men, and
8 will have to pass through the same state, and so with the plants.
9 But only one thing is certain; the mighty river is rushing towards
10 the ocean, and all the drops that constitute the stream will in time
11 be drawn into that boundless ocean. So, in this life, with all its
12 miseries and sorrows, its joys and smiles and tears, one thing is
13 certain, that all things are rushing towards their goal, and it is only
14 a question of time when you and I, and plants and animals, and
15 every particle of life that exists must reach the Infinite Ocean of
16 Perfection, must attain to Freedom, to God.

17 Let me repeat, once more, that the Vedantic position is
18 neither pessimism nor optimism. It does not say that this world is
19 all evil or all good. It says that our evil is of no less value than our
20 good, and our good of no more value than our evil. They are bound
21 together. This is the world, and knowing this, you work with
22 patience. What for? Why should we work? If this is the state of
23 things, what shall we do? Why not become agnostics? The modern
24 agnostics also know there is no solution of this problem, no getting
25 out of this evil of Maya, as we say in our language; therefore they
26 tell us to be satisfied and enjoy life. Here, again, is a mistake, a
27 tremendous mistake, a most illogical mistake. And it is this. What
28 do you mean by life? Do you mean only the life of the senses? In
29 this, every one of us differs only slightly from the brutes. I am sure
30 that no one is present here whose life is only in the senses. Then,
31 this present life means something more than that. Our feelings,
32 thoughts, and aspirations are all part and parcel of our life; and is
33 not the struggle towards the great ideal, towards perfection, one of
34 the most important components of what we call life? According to
35 the agnostics, we must enjoy life as it is. But this life means, above
36 all, this search after the ideal; the essence of life is going towards
37 perfection. We must have that, and, therefore, we cannot be
38 agnostics or take the world as it appears. The agnostic position
39 takes this life, *minus* the ideal component, to be all that exists. And
40 this, the agnostic claims, cannot be reached, therefore he must give
41 up the search. This is what is called Maya--this nature, this
42 universe.

43 All religions are more or less attempts to get beyond nature--
44 the crudest or the most developed, expressed through mythology or
45 symbology, stories of gods, angels or demons, or through stories of
46 saints or seers, great men or prophets, or through the abstractions
47 of philosophy--all have that one subject, all are trying to get beyond
48 these limitations. In one word, they are all struggling towards
49 freedom. Man feels, consciously or unconsciously, that he is bound;
50 he is not what he wants to be. It was taught to him at the very
51 moment he began to look around. That very instant he learnt that
52 he was bound, and he also found that there was something in him

1 which wanted to fly beyond, where the body could not follow, but
2 which was as yet chained down by this limitation. Even in the
3 lowest of religious ideas, where departed ancestors and other
4 spirits--mostly violent and cruel, lurking about the houses of their
5 friends, fond of bloodshed and strong drink--are worshipped, even
6 there we find that one common factor, that of freedom. The man
7 who wants to worship the gods sees in them, above all things,
8 greater freedom than in himself. If a door is closed, he thinks the
9 gods can get through it, and that walls have no limitations for them.
10 This idea of freedom increases until it comes to the ideal of a
11 Personal God, of which the central concept is that He is a Being
12 beyond the limitation of nature, of Maya. I see before me, as it
13 were, that in some of those forest retreats this question is being
14 discussed by those ancient sages of India; and in one of them,
15 where even the oldest and the holiest fail to reach the solution, a
16 young man stands up in the midst of them, and declares, "Hear, ye
17 children of immortality, hear, ye who live in the highest places, I
18 have found the way. By knowing Him who is beyond darkness we
19 can go beyond death."

20 This Maya is everywhere. It is terrible. Yet we have to work
21 through it. The man who says that he will work when the world has
22 become all good and then he will enjoy bliss is as likely to succeed
23 as the man who sits beside the Ganga and says, "I will ford the river
24 when all the water has run into the ocean." The way is not with
25 Maya, but against it. This is another fact to learn. We are not born
26 as helpers of nature, but competitors with nature. We are its bond-
27 masters, but we bind ourselves down. Why is this house here?
28 Nature did not build it. Nature says, go and live in the forest. Man
29 says, I will build a house and fight with nature, and he does so. The
30 whole history of humanity is a continuous fight against the so-called
31 laws of nature, and man gains in the end. Coming to the internal
32 world, there too the same fight is going on, this fight between the
33 animal man and the spiritual man, between light and darkness; and
34 here too man becomes victorious. He, as it were, cuts his way out of
35 nature to freedom.

36 We see, then, that beyond this Maya the Vedantic
37 philosophers find something which is not bound by Maya; and if we
38 can get there, we shall not be bound by Maya. This idea is in some
39 form or other the common property of all religions. But, with the
40 Vedanta, it is only the beginning of religion and not the end. The
41 idea of a Personal God, the Ruler and Creator of this universe, as
42 He has been styled, the Ruler of Maya, or nature, is not the end of
43 these Vedantic ideas; it is only the beginning. The idea grows and
44 grows until the Vedantist finds that He who, he thought, was
45 standing outside, is he himself and is in reality within. He is the one
46 who is free, but who through limitation thought he was bound.

MAYA AND THE EVOLUTION OF THE CONCEPTION OF GOD

(Delivered in London, 20th October, 1896)

We have seen how the idea of Maya, which forms, as it were, one of the basic doctrines of the Advaita Vedanta, is, in its germs, found even in the Samhitas, and that in reality all the ideas which are developed in the Upanishads are to be found already in the Samhitas in some form or other. Most of you are by this time familiar with the idea of Maya, and know that it is sometimes erroneously explained as illusion, so that when the universe is said to be Maya, that also has to be explained as being illusion. The translation of the word is neither happy nor correct. Maya is not a theory; it is simply a statement of facts about the universe as it exists, and to understand Maya we must go back to the Samhitas and begin with the conception in the germ.

We have seen how the idea of the Devas came. At the same time we know that these Devas were at first only powerful beings, nothing more. Most of you are horrified when reading the old scriptures, whether of the Greeks, the Hebrews, the Persians, or others, to find that the ancient gods sometimes did things which, to us, are very repugnant. But when we read these books, we entirely forget that we are persons of the nineteenth century, and these gods were beings existing thousands of years ago. We also forget that the people who worshipped these gods found nothing incongruous in their characters, found nothing to frighten them, because they were very much like themselves. I may also remark that is the one great lesson we have to learn throughout our lives. In judging others we always judge them by our own ideals. That is not as it should be. Everyone must be judged according to his own ideal, and not by that of anyone else. In our dealings with our fellow-beings we constantly labour under this mistake, and I am of opinion that the vast majority of our quarrels with one another arise simply from this one cause that we are always trying to judge others' gods by our own, others' ideals by our ideals, and others' motives by our motives. Under certain circumstances I might do a certain thing, and when I see another person taking the same course I think he has also the same motive actuating him, little dreaming that although the effect may be the same, yet many other causes may produce the same thing. He may have performed the action with quite a different motive from that which impelled me to do it. So in judging of those ancient religions we must not take the standpoint to which we incline, but must put ourselves into the position of thought and life of those early times.

The idea of the cruel and ruthless Jehovah in the Old Testament has frightened many--but why? What right have they to assume that the Jehovah of the ancient Jews must represent the conventional idea of the God of the present day? At the same time, we must not forget that there will come men after us who will laugh at our ideas of religion and God in the same way that we laugh at those of the ancients. Yet, through all these various conceptions

1 runs the golden thread of unity, and it is the purpose of the Vedanta
2 to discover this thread. "I am the thread that runs through all these
3 various ideas, each one of which is like a pearl," says the Lord
4 Krishna; and it is the duty of Vedanta to establish this connecting
5 thread, however incongruous or disgusting may seem these ideas
6 which judged according to the conceptions of today. These ideas, in
7 the setting of past times, were harmonious and not more hideous
8 than our present ideas. It is only when we try to take them out of
9 their settings and apply to our present circumstances that the
10 hideousness becomes obvious. For the old surroundings are dead
11 and gone. Just as the ancient Jew has developed into the keen,
12 modern, sharp Jew, and the ancient Aryan into the intellectual
13 Hindu, similarly Jehovah has grown, and Devas have grown.

14 The great mistake is in recognising the evolution of the
15 worshippers, while we do not acknowledge the evolution of the
16 Worshipped. He is not credited with the advance that his devotees
17 have made. That is to say, you and I, as representing ideas, have
18 grown; these gods also, as representing ideas, have grown. This
19 may seem somewhat curious to you--that God can grow. He cannot.
20 He is unchangeable. In the same sense the real man never grows.
21 But the man's ideas of God are constantly changing and expanding.
22 We shall see later on how the real man behind each one of these
23 human manifestations is immovable, unchangeable, pure, and
24 always perfect; and in the same way the idea that we form of God is
25 a mere manifestation, our own creation. Behind that is the real God
26 who never changes, the ever pure, the immutable. But the
27 manifestation is always changing, revealing the reality behind more
28 and more. When it reveals more of the fact behind, it is called
29 progression, when it hides more of the fact behind, it is called
30 retrogression. Thus, as we grow, so the gods grow. From the
31 ordinary point of view, just as we reveal ourselves as we evolve, so
32 the gods reveal themselves.

33 We shall now be in a position to understand the theory of
34 Maya. In all the regions of the world the one question they propose
35 to discuss is this: Why is there disharmony in the universe? Why is
36 there this evil in the universe? We do not find this question in the
37 very inception of primitive religious ideas, because the world did
38 not appear incongruous to the primitive man. Circumstances were
39 not inharmonious for him; there was no clash of opinions; to him
40 there was no antagonism of good and evil. There was merely a
41 feeling in his own heart of something which said yea, and
42 something which said nay. The primitive man was a man of impulse.
43 He did what occurred to him, and tried to bring out through his
44 muscles whatever thought came into his mind, and he never
45 stopped to judge, and seldom tried to check his impulses. Indra
46 comes and shatters the forces of the demons. Jehovah is pleased
47 with one person and displeased with another, for what reason no
48 one knows or asks. The habit of inquiry had not then arisen, and
49 whatever he did was regarded as right. There was no idea of good
50 or evil. The Devas did many wicked things in our sense of the word;
51 again and again Indra and other gods committed very wicked
52 deeds, but to the worshippers of Indra the ideas of wickedness and

1 evil did not occur, so they did not question them.

2 With the advance of ethical ideas came the fight. There arose
3 a certain sense in man, called in different languages and nations by
4 different names. Call it the voice of God, or the result of past
5 education, or whatever else you like, but the effect was this that it
6 had a checking power upon the natural impulses of man. There is
7 one impulse in our minds which says, do. Behind it rises another
8 voice which says, do not. There is one set of ideas in our mind
9 which is always struggling to get outside through the channels of
10 the senses, and behind that, although it may be thin and weak,
11 there is an infinitely small voice which says, do not go outside. The
12 two beautiful Sanskrit words for these phenomena are Pravritti and
13 Nivritti, "circling forward" and "circling inward". It is the circling
14 forward which usually governs our actions. Religion begins with the
15 circling inward. Religion begins with this "do not". Spiritual begins
16 with this "do not". When the "do not" is not there, religion has not
17 begun. And this "do not" came, causing men's ideas to grow, despite
18 the fighting gods which they had worshipped.

19 A little love awoke in the hearts of mankind. It was very small
20 indeed, and even now it is not much greater. It was at first confined
21 to a tribe embracing perhaps members of the same tribe; these
22 gods loved their tribes and each god was a tribal god, and the
23 protector of that tribe. And sometimes the members of a tribe
24 would think of themselves as the descendants of their god, just as
25 the clans in different nations think that they are the common
26 descendants of the man who was the founder of the clan. There
27 were in ancient times, and are even now, some people who claim to
28 be descendants not only of these tribal gods, but also of the Sun
29 and the Moon. You read in the ancient Sanskrit books of the great
30 heroic emperors of the solar and the lunar dynasties. They were
31 first worshippers of the Sun and the Moon, and gradually came to
32 think of themselves as descendants of the god of the Sun, of the
33 Moon, and so forth. So when these tribal ideas began to grow there
34 came a little love, some slight idea of duty towards each other, a
35 little social organisation. Then, naturally, the idea came: How can
36 we live together without bearing and forbearing? How can one man
37 live with another without having some time or other to check his
38 impulses, to restrain himself, to forbear from doing things which his
39 mind would prompt him to do? It is impossible. Thus comes the idea
40 of restraint. The whole social fabric is based upon the idea of
41 restraint, and we all know that the man or woman who has not
42 learnt the great lesson of bearing and forbearing leads a most
43 miserable life.

44 Now, when the ideas of religion came, a glimpse or something
45 higher, more ethical, dawned upon the intellect of mankind. The old
46 gods were found to be incongruous--these boisterous, fighting,
47 drinking, beef-eating gods of the ancients--whose delight was in the
48 smell of burning flesh and libations of strong liquor. Sometimes
49 Indra drank so much that he fell upon the ground and talked
50 unintelligibly. These gods could no longer be tolerated. The notion
51 had arisen of inquiring into motives, and the gods had to come in
52 for their share of inquiry. Reason for such-and-such actions was

1 demanded and the reason was wanting. Therefore man gave up
2 these gods, or rather they developed higher ideas concerning them.
3 They took a survey, as it were, of all the actions and qualities of the
4 gods and discarded those which they could not harmonise, and kept
5 those which they could understand, and combined them, labelling
6 them with one name, Deva-deva, the God of gods. The god to be
7 worshipped was no more a simple symbol of power; something
8 more was required than that. He was an ethical god; he loved
9 mankind, and did good to mankind. But the idea of god still
10 remained. They increased his ethical significance, and increased
11 also his power. He became the most ethical being in the universe,
12 as well as the most almighty.

13 But all this patchwork would not do. As the explanation
14 assumed greater proportions, the difficulty which is sought to solve
15 did the same. If the qualities of the god increased in arithmetical
16 progression, the difficulty and doubt increased in geometrical
17 progression. The difficulty of Jehovah was very little beside the
18 difficulty of the God of the universe, and this question remains to
19 the present day. Why under the reign of the almighty and all-loving
20 God of the universe should diabolical things be allowed to remain?
21 Why so much more misery than happiness, and so much more
22 wickedness than good? We may shut our eyes to all these things,
23 but the fact still remains that this world is a hideous world. At best,
24 it is the hell of Tantalus. Here we are with strong impulses and
25 stronger cravings for sense-enjoyments, but cannot satisfy them.
26 There rises a wave which impels us forward in spite of our own will,
27 and as soon as we move one step, comes a blow. We are all doomed
28 to live here like Tantalus. Ideals come into our head far beyond the
29 limit of our sense-ideals, but when we seek to express them, we
30 cannot do so. On the other hand, we are crushed by the surging
31 mass around us. Yet if I give up all ideality and merely struggle
32 through this world, my existence is that of a brute, and I
33 degenerate and degrade myself. Neither way is happiness.
34 Unhappiness is the fate of those who are content to live in this
35 world, born as they are. A thousand times greater misery is the fate
36 of those who dare to stand forth for truth and for higher things and
37 who dare to ask for something higher than mere brute existence
38 here. These are facts; but there is no explanation--there cannot be
39 any explanation. But the Vedanta shows the way out. You must bear
40 in mind that I have to tell you facts that will frighten you
41 sometimes, but if you remember what I say, think of it, and digest it,
42 it will be yours, it will raise you higher, and make you capable of
43 understanding and living in truth.

44 Now, it is statement of fact that this world is a Tantalus's hell,
45 that we do not know anything about this universe, yet at the same
46 time we cannot say that we do not know. I cannot say that this chain
47 exists, when I think that I do not know it. It may be an entire
48 delusion of my brain. I may be dreaming all the time. I am dreaming
49 that I am talking to you, and that you are listening to me. No one
50 can prove that it is not a dream. My brain itself may be a dream,
51 and as to that no one has ever seen his own brain. We all take it for
52 granted. So it is with everything. My own body I take for granted.

1 At the same time I cannot say, I do not know. This standing between
2 knowledge and ignorance, this mystic twilight, the mingling of truth
3 and falsehood--and where they meet--no one knows. We are walking
4 in the midst of a dream, half sleeping, half waking, passing all our
5 lives in a haze; this is the fate of everyone of us. This is the fate of
6 all sense-knowledge. This is the fate of all philosophy, of all boasted
7 science, of all boasted human knowledge. This is the universe.

8 What you call matter, or spirit, or mind, or anything else you
9 may like to call them, the fact remains the same: we cannot say that
10 they are, we cannot say that they are not. We cannot say they are
11 one, we cannot say they are many. This eternal play of light and
12 darkness--indiscriminate, indistinguishable, inseparable--is always
13 there. A fact, yet at the same time not a fact; awake and at the
14 same time asleep. This is a statement of facts, and this is what is
15 called Maya. We are born in this Maya, we live in it, we think in it,
16 we dream in it. We are philosophers in it, we are spiritual men in it,
17 nay, we are devils in this Maya, and we are gods in this Maya.
18 Stretch your ideas as far as you can, make them higher and higher,
19 call them infinite or by any other name you please, even these ideas
20 are within this Maya. It cannot be otherwise, and the whole of
21 human knowledge is a generalisation of this Maya trying to know it
22 as it appears to be. This is the work of Nama-Rupa--name and form.
23 Everything that has form, everything that calls up an idea in your
24 mind, is within Maya; for everything that is bound by the laws of
25 time, space and causation is within Maya.

26 Let us go back a little to those early ideas of God and see
27 what became of them. We perceive at once that the idea of some
28 Being who is eternally loving us--eternally unselfish and almighty,
29 ruling this universe--could not satisfy. "Where is the just, merciful
30 God?" asked the philosopher. Does He not see millions and millions
31 of His children perish, in the form of men and animals; for who can
32 live one moment here without killing others? Can you draw a breath
33 without destroying thousands of lives? You live, because, millions
34 die. Every moment of your life, every breath that you breathe, is
35 death to thousands; every movement that you make is death to
36 millions. Every morsel that you eat is death to millions. Why should
37 they die? There is an old sophism that they are very low existences.
38 Supposing they are--which is questionable, for who knows whether
39 the ant is greater than the man, or the man than the ant--who can
40 prove one way or the other? Apart from that question, even taking it
41 for granted that they are very low beings, still why should they die?
42 If they are low, they have more reason to live. Why not? Because
43 they live more in the senses, they feel pleasure and pain a
44 thousandfold more than you or I can do. Which of us eats a dinner
45 with the same gusto as a dog or wolf? None, because our energies
46 are not in the senses; they are in the intellect, in the spirit. But in
47 animals, their whole soul is in the senses, and they become mad
48 and enjoy things which we human beings never dream of, and the
49 pain is commensurate with the pleasure. Pleasure and pain are
50 meted out in equal measure. If the pleasure felt by animals is so
51 much keener than that felt by man, it follows that the animals'
52 sense of pain is as keen, if not keener than man's. So the fact is, the

1 pain and misery men feel in dying is intensified a thousandfold in
2 animals, and yet we kill them without troubling ourselves about
3 their misery. This is Maya. And if we suppose there is a Personal
4 God like a human being, who made everything, these so-called
5 explanations and theories which try to prove that out of evil comes
6 good are not sufficient. Let twenty thousand good things come, but
7 why should they come from evil? On that principle, I might cut the
8 throats of others because I want the full pleasure of my senses.
9 That is no reason. Why should good come through evil? The
10 question remains to be answered, and it cannot be answered. The
11 philosophy of India was compelled to admit this.

12 The Vedanta was (and is) the boldest system of religion. It
13 stopped nowhere, and it had one advantage. There was no body of
14 priests who sought to suppress every man who tried to tell the
15 truth. There was always absolute religious freedom. In India the
16 bondage of superstition is a social one; here in the West society is
17 very free. Social matters in India are very strict, but religious
18 opinion is free. In England a man may dress any way he likes, or eat
19 what he likes--no one objects; but if he misses attending church,
20 then Mrs. Grundy is down on him. He has to conform first to what
21 society says on religion, and then he may think of the truth. In
22 India, on the other hand, if a man dines with one who does not
23 belong to his own caste, down comes society with all its terrible
24 powers and crushes him then and there. If he wants to dress a little
25 differently from the way in which his ancestor dressed ages ago, he
26 is done for. I have heard of a man who was cast out by society
27 because he went several miles to see the first railway train. Well,
28 we shall presume that was not true! But in religion, we find
29 atheists, materialists, and Buddhists, creeds, opinions, and
30 speculations of every phase and variety, some of a most startling
31 character, living side by side. Preachers of all sects go about
32 teaching and getting adherents, and at the very gates of the
33 temples of gods, the Brahmins--to their credit be it said--allow even
34 the materialists to give forth their opinions.

35 Buddha died at a ripe old age. I remember a friend of mine, a
36 great American scientist, who was fond of reading his life. He did
37 not like the death of Buddha, because he was not crucified. What a
38 false idea! For a man to be great he must be murdered! Such ideas
39 never prevailed in India. This great Buddha travelled all over India,
40 denouncing her gods and even the God of the universe, and yet he
41 lived to a good old age. For eighty years he lived, and had
42 converted half the country.

43 Then, there were the Charvakas, who preached horrible
44 things, the most rank, undisguised materialism, such as in the
45 nineteenth century they dare not openly preach. These Charvakas
46 were allowed to preach from temple to temple, and city to city, that
47 religion was all nonsense, that it was priestcraft, that the Vedas
48 were the words and writings of fools, rogues, and demons, and that
49 there was neither God nor an eternal soul. If there was a soul, why
50 did it not come back after death drawn by the love of wife and
51 child? Their idea was that if there was a soul it must still love after
52 death, and want good things to eat and nice dress. Yet no one hurt

1 these Charvakas.

2 Thus India has always had this magnificent idea of religious
3 freedom, and you must remember that freedom is the first condition
4 of growth. What you do not make free, will never grow. The idea
5 that you can make others grow and help their growth, that you can
6 direct and guide them, always retaining for yourself the freedom of
7 the teacher, is nonsense, a dangerous lie which has retarded the
8 growth of millions and millions of human beings in this world. Let
9 men have the light of liberty. That is the only condition of growth.

10 We, in India, allowed liberty in spiritual matters, and we have
11 a tremendous spiritual power in religious thought even today. You
12 grant the same liberty in social matters, and so have a splendid
13 social organisation. We have not given any freedom to the
14 expansion of social matters, and ours is a cramped society. You have
15 never given any freedom in religious matters but with fire and
16 sword have enforced your beliefs, and the result is that religion is a
17 stunted, degenerated growth in the European mind. In India, we
18 have to take the shackles from society; in Europe, the chains must
19 be taken from the feet of spiritual progress. Then will come a
20 wonderful growth and development of man. If we discover that
21 there is one unity running through all these developments, spiritual,
22 moral, and social, we shall find that religion, in the fullest sense of
23 the word, must come into society, and into our everyday life. In the
24 light of Vedanta you will understand that all sciences are but
25 manifestations of religion, and so is everything that exists in this
26 world.

27 We see, then, that through freedom the sciences were built;
28 and in them we have two sets of opinions, the one the materialistic
29 and denouncing, and the other the positive and constructive. It is a
30 most curious fact that in every society you find them. Supposing
31 there is an evil in society, you will find immediately one group rise
32 up and denounce it in vindictive fashion, which sometimes
33 degenerates into fanaticism. There are fanatics in every society, and
34 women frequently join in these outcries, because of their impulsive
35 nature. Every fanatic who gets up and denounces something can
36 secure a following. It is very easy to break down; a maniac can
37 break anything he likes, but it would be hard for him to build up
38 anything. These fanatics may do some good, according to their
39 light, but much more harm. Because social institutions are not
40 made in a day, and to change them means removing the cause.
41 Suppose there is an evil; denouncing it will not remove it, but you
42 must go to work at the root. First find out the cause, then remove it,
43 and the effect will be removed also. Mere outcry will not produce
44 any effect, unless indeed it produces misfortune.

45 There were others who had sympathy in their hearts and who
46 understood the idea that we must go deep into the cause; these
47 were the great saints. One fact you must remember, that all the
48 great teachers of the world have declared that they came not to
49 destroy but to fulfil. Many times this has not been understood, and
50 their forbearance has been thought to be an unworthy compromise
51 with existing popular opinions. Even now, you occasionally hear that
52 these prophets and great teachers were rather cowardly and dared

1 not say and do what they thought was right; but that was not so.
2 Fanatics little understand the infinite power of love in the hearts of
3 these great sages who looked upon the inhabitants of this world as
4 their children. They were the real fathers, the real gods, filled with
5 infinite sympathy and patience for everyone; they were ready to
6 bear and forbear. They knew how human society should grow, and
7 patiently, slowly, surely, went on applying their remedies, not by
8 denouncing and frightening people, but by gently and kindly
9 leading them upwards step by step. Such were the writers of the
10 Upanishads. They knew full well how the old ideas of God were not
11 reconcilable with the advanced ethical ideas of the time; they knew
12 full well that what the atheists were preaching contained a good
13 deal of truth, nay, great nuggets of truth; but at the same time, they
14 understood that those who wished to sever the thread that bound
15 the beads, who wanted to build a new society in the air, would
16 entirely fail.

17 We never build anew, we simply change places; we cannot
18 have anything new, we only change the position of things. The seed
19 grows into the tree, patiently and gently; we must direct our
20 energies towards the truth, and fulfil the truth that exists, not try to
21 make new truths. Thus, instead of denouncing these old ideas of
22 God as unfit for modern times, the ancient sages began to seek out
23 the reality that was in them. The result was the Vedanta philosophy,
24 and out of the old deities, out of the monotheistic God, the Ruler of
25 the universe, they found yet higher and higher ideas in what is
26 called the Impersonal Absolute; they found oneness throughout the
27 universe.

28 He who sees in this world of manifoldness that One running
29 through all, in this world of death he who finds that One Infinite
30 Life, and in this world of insentience and ignorance he who finds
31 that One Light and Knowledge, unto him belongs eternal peace.
32 Unto none else, unto none else.

MAYA AND FREEDOM

(Delivered in London, 22nd October 1896)

"Trailing clouds of glory we come," says the poet. Not all of us come as trailing clouds of glory however; some of us come as trailing black fogs; there can be no question about that. But every one of us comes into this world to fight, as on a battlefield. We come here weeping to fight our way, as well as we can, and to make a path for ourselves through this infinite ocean of life; forward we go, having long ages behind us and an immense expanse beyond. So on we go, till death comes and takes us off the field-victorious or defeated, we do not know. And this is Maya.

Hope is dominant in the heart of childhood. The whole world is a golden vision to the opening eyes of the child; he thinks his will is supreme. As he moves onward, at every step nature stands as an adamant wall, barring his future progress. He may hurl himself against it again and again, striving to break through. The further he goes, the further recedes the ideal, till death comes, and there is release, perhaps. And this is Maya.

A man of science rises, he is thirsting after knowledge. No sacrifice is too great, no struggle too hopeless for him. He moves onward discovering secret after secret of nature, searching out the secrets from her innermost heart, and what for? What is it all for? Why should we give him glory? Why should he acquire fame? Does not nature do infinitely more than any human being can do--and nature is dull, insentient. Why should it be glory to imitate the dull, the insentient? Nature can hurl a thunderbolt of any magnitude to any distance. If a man can do one small part as much, we praise him and laud him to the skies. Why? Why should we praise him for imitating nature, imitating death, imitating dullness, imitating insentience? The force of gravitation can pull to pieces the biggest mass that ever existed; yet it is insentient. What glory is there in imitating the insentient? Yet we are all struggling after that. And this is Maya.

The senses drag the human soul out. Man is seeking for pleasure and for happiness where it can never be found. For countless ages we are all taught that this is futile and vain, there is no happiness here. But we cannot learn; it is impossible for us to do so, except through our own experiences. We try them, and a blow comes. Do we learn then? Not even then. Like moths hurling themselves against the flame, we are hurling ourselves again and again into sense-pleasures, hoping to find satisfaction there. We return again and again with freshened energy; thus we go on, till crippled and cheated we die. And this is Maya.

So with our intellect. In our desire to solve the mysteries of the universe, we cannot stop our questioning, we feel we must know and cannot believe that no knowledge is to be gained. A few steps, and there arises the wall of beginningless and endless time which we cannot surmount. A few steps, and there appears of wall of boundless space which cannot be surmounted, and the whole is

1 irrevocably bound in by the walls of cause and effect. We cannot go
2 beyond them. Yet we struggle, and still have to struggle. And this is
3 Maya.

4 With every breath, with every pulsation of the heart, with
5 every one of our movements, we think we are free, and with very
6 same moment we are shown that we are not. Bound slaves, nature's
7 bond-slaves, in body, in mind, in all our thoughts, in all our feelings.
8 And this is Maya.

9 There was never a mother who did not think her child was a
10 born genius, the most extraordinary child that was ever born; she
11 dotes upon her child. The child grows up, perhaps becomes a
12 drunkard, a brute, ill-treats the mother, and the more he ill-treats
13 her, the more her love increases. The world lauds it as the unselfish
14 love of the mother, little dreaming that the mother is a born slave,
15 she cannot help it. She would a thousand times rather throw off the
16 burden, but she cannot. So she covers it with a mass of flowers,
17 which she calls wonderful love. And this is Maya.

18 We are all like this in the world. A legend tells how once
19 Narada said to Krishna, "Lord, show me Maya." A few days passed
20 away, and Krishna asked Narada to make a trip with him towards a
21 desert, and after walking for several miles, Krishna said, "Narada, I
22 am thirsty; can you fetch some water for me?" "I will go at once, sir,
23 and get you water." So Narada went. At a little distance there was a
24 village; he entered the village in search of water and knocked at a
25 door, which was opened by a most beautiful young girl. At the sight
26 of her he immediately forgot that his Master was waiting for water,
27 perhaps dying for the want of it. He forgot everything and began to
28 talk with the girl. All that day, he was again at the house, talking to
29 the girl. That talk ripened into love; he asked the father for the
30 daughter, and they were married and lived there and had children.
31 Thus twelve years passed. His father-in-law died, he inherited his
32 property. He lived, as he seemed to think, a very happy life with his
33 wife and children, his fields and his cattle, and so forth. Then came
34 a flood. One night the river rose until it overflowed its banks and
35 flooded the whole village. Houses fell, men and animals were swept
36 away and drowned, and everything was floating in the rush of the
37 stream. Narada had to escape. With one hand he held his wife, and
38 with other two of his children; another child was on his shoulders,
39 and he was trying to ford this tremendous flood. After a few steps
40 he found the current was too strong, and the child on his shoulders
41 fell and was borne away. A cry of despair came from Narada. In
42 trying to save that child, he lost his grasp upon one of the others,
43 and it also was lost. At last his wife, whom he clasped with all his
44 might, was torn away by the current, and he was thrown on the
45 bank, weeping and wailing in bitter lamentation. Behind him there
46 came a gentle voice, "My child, where is the water? You went to
47 fetch a pitcher of water, and I am waiting for you; you have been
48 gone for quite half an hour." "Half an hour!" Narada exclaimed.
49 Twelve whole years had passed through his mind, and all these
50 scenes had happened in half an hour! And this is Maya.

51 In one form or another, we are all in it. It is a most difficult
52 and intricate state of things to understand. It has been preached in

1 every country, taught everywhere, but only believed by a few,
2 because until we get the experiences ourselves we cannot believe
3 in it. What does it show? Something very terrible. For it is all futile.
4 Time, the avenger of everything, comes, and nothing is left. He
5 swallows up the saint and the sinner, the king and the peasant, the
6 beautiful and the ugly; he leaves nothing. Everything is rushing
7 towards that one goal, destruction. Our knowledge, our arts, our
8 sciences, everything is rushing towards it. None can stem the tide,
9 none can hold it back for a minute. We may try to forget it, in the
10 same way that persons in a plague-stricken city try to create
11 oblivion by drinking, dancing, and other vain attempts, and so
12 becoming paralysed. So we are trying to forget, trying to create
13 oblivion by all sort of sense-pleasures. And this is Maya.

14 Two ways have been proposed. One method, which everyone
15 knows, is very common, and that is: "It may be very true, but do not
16 think of it. 'Make hay while the sun shines,' as the proverb says. It
17 is all true, it is a fact, but do not mind it. Seize the few pleasures
18 you can, do not look at the dark side of the picture, but always
19 towards the hopeful, the positive side." There is some truth in this,
20 but there is also a danger. The truth is that it is a good motive
21 power. Hope and a positive ideal are very good motive powers for
22 our lives, but there is a certain danger in them. The danger lies in
23 our giving up the struggle in despair. Such is the case with those
24 who preach, "Take the world as it is; sit down as calmly and
25 comfortably as you can and be contented with all those miseries.
26 When you receive blows, say they are not blows but flowers; and
27 when you are driven about like slaves, say that you are free. Day
28 and night tell lies to others and to your own souls, because that is
29 the only way to live happily." This is what is called practical wisdom,
30 and never was it more prevalent in the world than in this
31 nineteenth century; because never were harder blows hit than at
32 the present time, never was competition keener, never were men so
33 cruel to their fellow-men as now; and, therefore, must this
34 consolation be offered. It is put forward in the strongest way at the
35 present time; but it fails, as it always must fail. We cannot hide a
36 carrion with roses; it is impossible. It would not avail long; for soon
37 the roses would fade, and the carrion would be worse than ever
38 before. So with our lives. We may try to cover our old and festering
39 sores with cloths of gold, but there comes a day when the cloth of
40 gold is removed, and the sore in all its ugliness is revealed.

41 Is there no hope then? True it is that we are all slaves of
42 Maya, born in Maya, and live in Maya. Is there then no way out, no
43 hope? That we are all miserable, that this world is really a prison,
44 that even our so-called trailing beauty is but a prison-house, and
45 that even our intellects and minds are prison-houses, have been
46 known for ages upon ages. There has never been a man, there has
47 never been a human soul, who has not felt this sometime or other,
48 however he may talk. And the old people feel it most, because in
49 them is the accumulated experience of a whole life, because they
50 cannot be easily cheated by the lies of nature. Is there no way out?
51 We find that with all this, with this terrible fact before us, in the
52 midst of sorrow and suffering, even in this world where life and

1 death are synonymous, even here, there is a still small voice that is
2 ringing through all ages, through every country, and in every heart:
3 "This My Maya is divine, made up of qualities, and very difficult to
4 cross. Yet those that come unto Me, cross the river of life." "Come
5 unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you
6 rest." This is the voice that is leading us forward. Man has heard it,
7 and is hearing it all through the ages. This voice comes to men
8 when everything seems to be lost and hope has fled, when man's
9 dependence on his own strength has been crushed down, and
10 everything seems to melt away between his fingers, and life is a
11 hopeless ruin. Then he hears it. This is called religion.

12 On the one side, therefore, is the bold assertion that this is all
13 nonsense, that this is Maya, but along with it, there is the most
14 hopeful assertion that beyond Maya, there is a way out. On the
15 other hand, practical men tell us, "Don't bother your heads about
16 such nonsense as religion and metaphysics. Live here; this is a very
17 bad world indeed, but make the best of it." Which put in plain
18 language means, live a hypocritical, lying life, a life of continuous
19 fraud, covering all the sores in the best way you can. Go on putting
20 patch after patch, until everything is lost, and you are a mass of
21 patchwork. This is what is called practical life. Those that are
22 satisfied with this patchwork will never come to religion. Religion
23 begins with a tremendous dissatisfaction with the present state of
24 things, with our lives, and a hatred, an intense hatred, for this
25 patching up of life, an unbounded disgust for fraud and lies. He
26 alone can be religious who dares say, as the mighty Buddha once
27 said under the Bo-tree, when this idea of practicality appeared
28 before him and he saw that it was nonsense, and yet could not find
29 a way out. When the temptation came to him to give up his search
30 after truth, to go back to the world and live the old life of fraud,
31 calling things by wrong names, telling lies to oneself and to
32 everybody, he, the giant, conquered it and said, "Death is better
33 than a vegetating ignorant life; it is better to die on the battle-field
34 than to live a life of defeat." This is the basis of religion. When a
35 man takes this stand, he is on the way to find the truth, he is on the
36 way to God. That determination must be the first impulse towards
37 becoming religious. I will hew out a way for myself. I will know the
38 truth or give up my life in the attempt. For on this side it is nothing,
39 it is gone, it is vanishing every day. The beautiful, hopeful, young
40 person of today is the veteran of tomorrow. Hopes and joys and
41 pleasures will die like blossoms with tomorrow's frost. That is one
42 side; on the other, there are the great charms of conquest, victories
43 over all the ills of life, victory over life itself, the conquest of the
44 universe. On that side men can stand. Those who dare, therefore, to
45 struggle for victory, for truth, for religion, are in the right way; and
46 that is what the Vedas preach: Be not in despair; the way is very
47 difficult, like walking on the edge of a razor; yet despair not, arise,
48 awake, and find the ideal, the goal.

49 Now all these various manifestations of religion, in whatever
50 shape and form they have come to mankind, have this one common
51 central basis. It is the preaching of freedom, the way out of the
52 world. They never came to reconcile the world and religion, but to

1 cut the Gordian knot, to establish religion in its own ideal, and not
2 to compromise with the world. That is what every religion preaches,
3 and the duty of the Vedanta is to harmonise all these aspirations, to
4 make manifest the common ground between all the religions of the
5 world, the highest as well as the lowest. What we call the most
6 arrant superstition and the highest philosophy really have a
7 common aim in that they both try to show the way out of the same
8 difficulty, and in most cases this way is through the help of someone
9 who is not himself bound by the laws of nature, in one word,
10 someone who is free. In spite of all the difficulties and differences
11 of opinion about the nature of the one free agent, whether he is a
12 Personal God, or a sentient being like man, whether masculine,
13 feminine, or neuter--and the discussions have been endless--the
14 fundamental idea is the same. In spite of the almost hopeless
15 contradictions of the different systems, we find the golden thread of
16 unity running through them all, and in this philosophy, this golden
17 thread has been traced, revealed little by little to our view, and the
18 first step to this revelation is the common ground that all are
19 advancing towards freedom.

20 One curious fact present in the midst of all our joys and
21 sorrows, difficulties and struggles, is that we are surely journeying
22 towards freedom. The question was practically this: "What is this
23 universe? From what does it arise? Into what does it go?" And the
24 answer was: "In freedom it rises, in freedom it rests, and into
25 freedom it melts away." This idea of freedom you cannot relinquish.
26 Your actions, your very lives will be lost without it. Every moment
27 nature is proving us to be slaves and not free. Yet, simultaneously
28 rises the other idea, that still we are free. At every step we are
29 knocked down, as it were, by Maya, and shown that we are bound;
30 and yet at the same moment, together with this blow, together with
31 this feeling that we are bound, comes the other feeling that we are
32 free. Some inner voice tells us that we are free. But if we attempt to
33 realise that freedom, to make it manifest, we find the difficulties
34 almost insuperable. Yet, in spite of that it insists on asserting itself
35 inwardly, "I am free, I am free." And if you study all the various
36 religions of the world you will find this idea expressed. Not only
37 religion--you must not take this word in its narrow sense--but the
38 whole life of society is the assertion of that one principle of
39 freedom. All movements are the assertion of that one freedom. That
40 voice has been heard by everyone, whether he knows it or not, that
41 voice which declares, "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are
42 heavy laden." It may not be in the same language or the same form
43 of speech, but in some form or other, that voice calling for freedom
44 has been with us. Yes, we are born here on account of that voice;
45 every one of our movements is for that. We are all rushing towards
46 freedom, we are all following that voice, whether we know it or not;
47 as the children of the village were attracted by the music of the
48 flute-player, so we are all following the music of the voice without
49 knowing it.

50 We are ethical when we follow that voice. Not only the human
51 soul, but all creatures from the lowest to the highest have heard the
52 voice and are rushing towards it; and in the struggle are either

1 combining with each other or pushing each other out of the way.
2 Thus come competition, joys, struggles, life, pleasure, and death,
3 and the whole universe is nothing but the result of this mad
4 struggle to reach the voice. This is the manifestation of nature.

5 What happens then? The scene begins to shift. As soon as you
6 know the voice and understand what it is, the whole scene changes.
7 The same world which was the ghastly battle-field of Maya is now
8 changed into something good and beautiful. We no longer curse
9 nature nor say that the world is horrible and that it is all vain; we
10 need no longer weep and wail. As soon as we understand the voice,
11 we see the reason why this struggle should be here, this fight, this
12 competition, this difficulty, this cruelty, these little pleasures and
13 joys; we see that they are in the nature of things, because without
14 them there would be no going towards the voice, to attain which we
15 are destined, whether we know it or not. All human life, all nature,
16 therefore, is struggling to attain to freedom. The sun is moving
17 towards the goal, so is the earth in circling round the sun, so is the
18 moon encircling round the earth. To that goal the planet is moving,
19 and the air is blowing. Everything is struggling towards that. The
20 saint is going towards that voice--he cannot help it, it is no glory to
21 him. So is the sinner. The charitable man is going straight towards
22 that voice, and cannot be hindered; the miser is also going towards
23 the same destination; the greatest worker of good hears the same
24 voice within, and he cannot resist it, he must go towards the voice;
25 so with the most arrant idler. One stumbles more than another, and
26 him who stumbles more we call bad, him who stumbles less we call
27 good. Good and bad are never two different things, they are one
28 and the same; the different is not one of kind, but of degree.

29 Now, if the manifestation of this power of freedom is really
30 governing the whole universe--applying that to religion, our special
31 study--we find this idea has been the one assertion throughout.
32 Take the lowest form of religion where there is worship of departed
33 ancestors or certain powerful and cruel gods; what is the prominent
34 idea about the gods or departed ancestors? That they are superior
35 to nature, not bound by its restrictions. The worshipper has, no
36 doubt, very limited ideas of nature. He himself cannot pass through
37 a wall, nor fly up into the skies, but the gods whom he worships can
38 do these things. What is meant by that, philosophically? That the
39 assertion of freedom is there, that the gods whom he worships are
40 superior to nature as he knows it. So with those who worship still
41 higher beings. As the idea of nature expands, the idea of the soul
42 which is superior to nature also expands, until we come to what we
43 call monotheism, which holds that there is Maya (nature), and that
44 there is some Being who is the Ruler of this Maya.

45 Here Vedanta begins, where these monotheistic ideas first
46 appear. But the Vedanta philosophy wants further explanation. This
47 explanation--that there is a Being beyond all these manifestations of
48 Maya, who is superior to and independent of Maya, and who is
49 attracting us towards Himself, and that we are all going towards
50 Him--is very good, says the Vedanta, but yet the perception is not
51 clear, the vision is dim and hazy, although it does not directly
52 contradict reason. Just as in your hymn it is said, "Nearer my God to

1 Thee," the same hymn would be very good to the Vedantin, only he
2 would change a word, and make it, "Nearer my God to me." The
3 idea that the goal is far off, far beyond nature, attracting us all
4 towards it, has to be brought nearer and nearer, without degrading
5 or degenerating it. The God of heaven becomes the God in nature,
6 and the God in nature becomes the God who is nature, and the God
7 who is nature becomes the God within this temple of the body, and
8 the God dwelling in the temple of the body at last becomes the
9 temple itself, becomes the soul and man--and there it reaches the
10 last words it can teach. He whom the sages have been seeking in all
11 these places is in our own hearts; the voice that you heard was
12 right, says the Vedanta, but the direction you gave to the voice was
13 wrong. That ideal of freedom that you perceived was correct, but
14 you projected it outside yourself, and that was your mistake. Bring
15 it nearer and nearer, until you find that it was all the time within
16 you, it was the Self of your own self. That freedom was your own
17 nature, and this Maya never bound you. Nature never has power
18 over you. Like a frightened child you were dreaming that it was
19 throttling you, and the release from this fear is the goal: not only to
20 see it intellectually, but to perceive it, actualise it, much more
21 definitely than we perceive this world. Then we shall know that we
22 are free. Then, and then alone, will all difficulties vanish, then will
23 all the perplexities of heart be smoothed away, all crookedness
24 made straight, then will vanish the delusion of manifoldness and
25 nature; and Maya, instead of being a horrible, hopeless dream, as it
26 is now, will become beautiful, and this earth, instead of being a
27 prison-house, will become our playground; and even dangers and
28 difficulties, even all sufferings, will become deified and show us
29 their real nature, will show us that behind everything, as the
30 substance of everything, He is standing, and that He is the one real
31 Self.

THE ABSOLUTE AND MANIFESTATION

(Delivered in London, 1896)

The one question that is most difficult to grasp in understanding the Advaita philosophy, and the one question that will be asked again and again and that will always remain is: How has the Infinite, the Absolute, become the finite? I will now take up this question, and, in order to illustrate it, I will use a figure. {chart} Here is the Absolute (a), and this is the universe (b). The Absolute has become the universe. By this is not only meant the material world, but the mental world, the spiritual world--heavens and earths, and in fact, everything that exists. Mind is the name of a change, and body the name of another change, and so on, and all these changes compose our universe. This Absolute (a) has become the universe (b) by coming through time, space, and causation (c). This is the central idea of Advaita. Time, space, and causation are like the glass through which the Absolute is seen, and when It is seen on the lower side, It appears as the universe. Now we at once gather from this that in the Absolute there is neither time, space, nor causation. The idea of time cannot be there, seeing that there is no mind, no thought. The idea of space cannot be there, seeing that there is no external change. What you call motion and causation cannot exist where there is only One. We have to understand this, and impress it on our minds, that what we call causation begins after, if we may be permitted to say so, the degeneration of the Absolute into the phenomenal, and not before; that our will, our desire, and all these things always come *after* that. I think Schopenhauer's philosophy makes a mistake in its interpretation of Vedanta, for it seeks to make the will everything. Schopenhauer makes the will stand in the place of the Absolute. But the absolute cannot be presented as will, for will is something changeable and phenomenal, and over the line, drawn above time, space, and causation, there is no change, no motion; it is only below the line that external motion and internal motion, called thought, begin. There can be no will on the other side, and will therefore, cannot be the cause of this universe. Coming nearer, we see in our own bodies that will is not the cause of every movement. I move this chair; my will is the cause of this movement, and this will becomes manifested as muscular motion at the other end. But the same power that moves the chair is moving the heart, the lungs, and so on, but not through will. Given that the power is the same, it only becomes will when it rises to the plane of consciousness, and to call it will before it has risen to this plane is a misnomer. This makes a good deal of confusion in Schopenhauer's philosophy.

A stone falls and we ask, why? This question is possible only on the supposition that nothing happens without a cause. I request you to make this very clear in your minds, for whenever we ask why anything happens, we are taking for granted that everything that happens must have a why, that is to say, it must have been preceded by something else which acted as the cause. This precedence and succession are what we call the law of causation. It means that

1 everything in the universe is by turn a cause and an effect. It is the
2 cause of certain things which come after it, and is itself the effect of
3 something else which has preceded it. This is called the law of
4 causation and is a necessary condition of all our thinking. We
5 believe that every particle in the universe, whatever it be, is in
6 relation to every other particle. There has been much discussion as
7 to how this idea arose. In Europe, there have been intuitive
8 philosophers who believed that it was constitutional in humanity,
9 others have believed it came from experience, but the question has
10 never been settled. We shall see later on what the Vedanta has to
11 say about it. But first we have to understand this that the very
12 asking of the question "why" presupposes that everything round us
13 has been preceded by certain things and will be succeeded by
14 certain other things. The other belief involved in this question is
15 that nothing in the universe is independent, that everything is acted
16 upon by something outside itself. Interdependence is the law of the
17 whole universe. In asking what caused the Absolute, what an error
18 we are making! To ask this question we have to suppose that the
19 Absolute also is bound by something, that It is dependent on
20 something; and in making this supposition, we drag the Absolute
21 down to the level of the universe. For in the Absolute there is
22 neither time, space, nor causation; It is all one. That which exists by
23 itself alone cannot have any cause. That which is free cannot have
24 any cause; else it would not be free, but bound. That which has
25 relativity cannot be free. Thus we see the very question, why the
26 Infinite became the finite, is an impossible one, for it is self-
27 contradictory. Coming from subtleties to the logic of our common
28 plane, to common sense, we can see this from another side, when
29 we seek to know how the Absolute has become the relative.
30 Supposing we knew the answer, would the Absolute remain the
31 Absolute? It would have become relative. What is meant by the
32 knowledge in our common-sense idea? It is only something that has
33 become limited by our mind, that we know, and when it is beyond
34 our mind, it is not knowledge. Now if the Absolute becomes limited
35 by the mind, It is no more Absolute; It has become finite. Everything
36 limited by the mind becomes finite. Therefore, to know the Absolute
37 is again a contradiction in terms. That is why this question has
38 never been answered, because if it were answered, there would no
39 more be an Absolute. A God known is no more God; He has become
40 finite like one of us. He cannot be known, He is always the
41 Unknowable One.

42 But what Advaita says is that God is more than knowable.
43 This is a great fact to learn. You must not go home with the idea
44 that God is unknowable in the sense in which agnostics put it. For
45 instance, here is a chair, it is known to us. But what is beyond ether
46 or whether people exist there or not is possibly unknowable. But
47 God is neither known nor unknowable in this sense. He is
48 something still higher than known; that is what is meant by God
49 being unknown and unknowable. The expression is not used in the
50 sense in which it may be said that some questions are unknown and
51 unknowable. God is more than known. This chair is known, but God
52 is intensely more than that, because in and through Him we have to
53 know this chair itself. He is the Witness, the eternal Witness of all

1 knowledge. Whatever we know we have to know in and through
2 Him. He is the Essence of our own Self. He is the Essence of this
3 ego, this I and we cannot know anything excepting in and through
4 that I. Therefore you have to know everything in and through the
5 Brahman. To know the chair you have to know it in and through
6 God. Thus God is infinitely nearer to us than the chair, but yet He is
7 infinitely higher. Neither known, nor unknown, but something
8 infinitely higher than either. He is your Self. "Who would live a
9 second, who would breathe a second in this universe, if that
10 Blessed One were not filling it?" Because in and through Him we
11 breathe, in and through Him we exist. Not that He is standing
12 somewhere and making my blood circulate. What is meant is that
13 He is the Essence of all this, the Soul of my soul. You cannot by any
14 possibility say you know Him; it would be degrading Him. You
15 cannot get out of yourself, so you cannot know Him. Knowledge is
16 objectification. For instance, in memory you are objectifying many
17 things, projecting them out of yourself. All memory, all the things
18 which I have seen and which I know are in my mind. The pictures,
19 the impressions of all these things, are in my mind, and when I
20 would try to think of them, to know them, the first act of knowledge
21 would be to project them outside. This cannot be done with God,
22 because He is the Essence of our souls; we cannot project Him
23 outside ourselves. Here is one of the profoundest passages in
24 Vedanta: "He that is the Essence of your soul, He is the Truth, He is
25 the Self, thou art That, O Shvetaketu." This is what is meant by
26 "Thou art God." You cannot describe Him by any other language. All
27 attempts of language, calling Him father, or brother, or our dearest
28 friend, are attempts to objectify God, which cannot be done. He is
29 the Eternal Subject of everything. I am the subject of this chair; I
30 see the chair; so God is the Eternal Subject of my soul. How can you
31 objectify Him, the Essence of your souls, the Reality of everything?
32 Thus, I would repeat to you once more, God is neither knowable nor
33 unknowable, but something infinitely higher than either. He is one
34 with us; and that which is one with us is neither knowable nor
35 unknowable, as our own self. You cannot know your own self; you
36 cannot move it out and make it an object to look at, because you *are*
37 that and cannot separate yourself from it. Neither is it unknowable,
38 for what is better known than yourself? It is really the centre of our
39 knowledge. In exactly the same sense, God is neither unknowable
40 nor known, but infinitely higher than both; for He is our real Self.

41 First, we see then that the question, "What caused the
42 Absolute?" is a contradiction in terms; and secondly, we find that
43 the idea of God in the Advaita is this Oneness; and, therefore, we
44 cannot objectify Him, for we are always living and moving in Him,
45 whether we know it or not. Whatever we do is always through Him.
46 Now the question is: What are time, space, and causation? Advaita
47 means non-duality; there are not two, but one. Yet we see that here
48 is a proposition that the Absolute is manifesting Itself as many,
49 through the veil of time, space, and causation. Therefore it seems
50 that here are two, the Absolute and Maya (the sum total of time,
51 space, and causation). It seems apparently very convincing that
52 there are two. To this the Advaitist replies that it cannot be called
53 two. To have two, we must have two absolute independent

1 existences which cannot be caused. In the first place, time, space,
2 and causation cannot be said to be independent existences. Time is
3 entirely a dependent existence; it changes with every change of our
4 mind. Sometimes in dream one imagines that one has lived several
5 years; at other times several months were passed as one second.
6 So, time is entirely dependent on our state of mind. Secondly, the
7 idea of time vanishes altogether, sometimes. So with space. We
8 cannot know what space is. Yet it is there, indefinable, and cannot
9 exist separate from anything else. So with causation.

10 The one peculiar attribute we find in time, space, and
11 causation is that they cannot exist separate from other things. Try
12 to think of space without colour, or limits, or any connection with
13 the things around-just abstract space. You cannot; you have to
14 think of it as the space between two limits or between three
15 objects. It has to be connected with some object to have any
16 existence. So with time; you cannot have any idea of abstract time,
17 but you have to take two events, one preceding and the other
18 succeeding, and join the two events by the idea of succession. Time
19 depends on two events, just as space has to be related to outside
20 objects. And the idea of causation is inseparable from time and
21 space. This is the peculiar thing about them having no independent
22 existence. They have not even the existence which the chair or the
23 wall has. They are as shadows around everything which you cannot
24 catch. They have no real existence; yet they are not non-existent,
25 seeing that through them all things are manifesting as this
26 universe. Thus we see, first, that the combination of time, space,
27 and causation has neither existence nor non-existence. Secondly, it
28 sometimes vanishes. To give an illustration, there is a wave on the
29 ocean. The wave is the same as the ocean certainly, and yet we
30 know it is a wave, and as such different from the ocean. What
31 makes this difference? The name and the form; that is, the idea in
32 the mind and the form. Now, can we think of a wave-form as
33 something separate from the ocean? Certainly not. It is always
34 associated with the ocean idea. If the wave subsides, the form
35 vanishes in a moment, and yet the form was not a delusion. So long
36 as the wave existed the form was there, and you were bound to see
37 the form. This is Maya.

38 The whole of the universe, therefore, is, as it were, a peculiar
39 form; the Absolute is that ocean while you and I, the suns and the
40 stars, and everything else are various waves of that ocean. And
41 what makes the waves different? Only the form, and that form is
42 time, space, and causation, all entirely dependent on the wave. As
43 soon as the individual gives up this Maya, it vanishes for him and he
44 becomes free. The whole struggle is to get rid of this clinging on to
45 time, space, and causation, which are always obstacles in our way.
46 What is the theory of evolution? What are the two factors? A
47 tremendous potential power which is trying to express itself, and
48 circumstances which are holding it down, the environments not
49 allowing it to express itself. So, in order to fight with these
50 environments, the power is taking new bodies again and again. An
51 amoeba, in the struggle, gets another body and conquers some
52 obstacles, then gets another body and so on, until it becomes man.

1 Now, if you carry this idea to its logical conclusion, there must come
2 a time when that power that was in the amoeba and which evolved
3 as man will have conquered all the obstructions that nature can
4 bring before it and will thus escape from all its environments. This
5 idea expressed in metaphysics will take this form; there are two
6 components in every action, the one the subject, the other the
7 object, and the one aim of life is to make the subject master of the
8 object. For instance, I feel unhappy because a man scolds me. My
9 struggle will be to make myself strong enough to conquer the
10 environment, so that he may scold and I shall not feel. That is how
11 we are all trying to conquer. What is meant by morality? Making the
12 subject strong by attuning it to the Absolute, so that finite nature
13 ceases to have control over us. It is a logical conclusion of our
14 philosophy that there must come a time when we shall have
15 conquered all the environments, because nature is finite.

16 Here is another thing to learn. How do you know that nature
17 is finite? You can only know this through metaphysics. Nature is
18 that Infinite under limitations. Therefore it is finite. So, there must
19 come a time when we shall have conquered all environments. And
20 how are we to conquer them? We cannot possible conquer *all* the
21 objective environments. We cannot. The little fish wants to fly from
22 its enemies in the water. How does it do so? By evolving wings and
23 becoming a bird. The fish did not change the water or the air; the
24 change was in itself. Change is always subjective. All through
25 evolution you find that the conquest of nature comes by change in
26 the subject. Apply this to religion and morality, and you will find
27 that the conquest of evil comes by the change in the subjective
28 alone. That is how the Advaita system gets its whole force, on the
29 subjective side of man. To talk of evil and misery is nonsense,
30 because they do not exist outside. If I am immune against all anger,
31 I never feel angry. If I am proof against all hatred, I never feel
32 hatred.

33 This is, therefore, the process by which to achieve that
34 conquest--through the subjective, by perfecting the subjective. I
35 may make bold to say that the only religion which agrees with, and
36 even goes a little further than modern researches, both on physical
37 and moral lines is the Advaita, and that is why it appeals to modern
38 scientists so much. They find that the old dualistic theories are not
39 enough for them, do not satisfy their necessities. A man must have
40 not only faith, but intellectual faith too. Now, in this later part of the
41 nineteenth century, such an idea as that religion coming from any
42 other source than one's own hereditary religion must be false
43 shows that there is still weakness left, and such ideas must be given
44 up. I do not mean that such is the case in this country alone, it is in
45 every country, and nowhere more than in my own. This Advaita was
46 never allowed to come to the people. At first some monks got hold
47 of it and took it to the forests, and so it came to be called the
48 "Forest Philosophy". By the mercy of the Lord, the Buddha came
49 and preached it to the masses, and the whole nation became
50 Buddhists. Long after that, when atheists and agnostics had
51 destroyed the nation again, it was found out that Advaita was the
52 only way to save India from materialism.

1 Thus has Advaita twice saved India from materialism. Before
2 the Buddha came, materialism had spread to a fearful extent, and it
3 was of a most hideous kind, not like that of the present day, but of a
4 far worse nature. I am a materialist in a certain sense, because I
5 believe that there is only One. That is what the materialist wants
6 you to believe; only he calls it matter and I call it God. The
7 materialists admit that out of this matter all hope, and religion, and
8 everything have come. I say, all these have come out of Brahman.
9 But the materialism that prevailed before Buddha was that crude
10 sort of materialism which taught, "Eat, drink, and be merry; there is
11 no God, soul, or heaven; religion is a concoction of wicked priests."
12 It taught the morality that so long as you live, you must try to live
13 happily; eat, though you have to borrow money for the food, and
14 never mind about repaying it. That was the old materialism, and
15 that kind of philosophy spread so much that even today it has got
16 the name of "popular philosophy". Buddha brought the Vedanta to
17 light, gave it to the people, and saved India. A thousand years after
18 his death a similar state of things again prevailed. The mobs, the
19 masses, and various races, had been converted to Buddhism;
20 naturally the teachings of the Buddha became in time degenerated,
21 because most of the people were very ignorant. Buddhist taught no
22 God, no Ruler of the universe, so gradually the masses brought
23 their gods, and devils, and hobgoblins out again, and a tremendous
24 hotchpotch was made of Buddhism in India. Again materialism
25 came to the fore, taking the form of licence with the higher classes
26 and superstition with the lower. Then Shankaracharya arose and
27 once more revived the Vedanta philosophy. He made it a
28 rationalistic philosophy. In the Upanishads the arguments are often
29 very obscure. By Buddha the moral side of the philosophy was laid
30 stress upon, and by Shankaracharya, the intellectual side. He
31 worked out, rationalised, and placed before men the wonderful
32 coherent system of Advaita.

33 Materialism prevails in Europe today. You may pray for the
34 salvation of the modern skeptics, but they do not yield, they want
35 reason. The salvation of Europe depends on a rationalistic religion,
36 and Advaita--the non-duality, the Oneness, the idea of the
37 Impersonal God--is the only religion that can have any hold on any
38 intellectual people. It comes whenever religion seems to disappear
39 and irreligion seems to prevail, and that is why it has taken ground
40 in Europe and America.

41 I would say one thing more in connection with this philosophy.
42 In the old Upanishads we find sublime poetry; their authors were
43 poets. Plato says, inspiration comes to people through poetry, and it
44 seems as if these ancient Rishis, seers of Truth, were raised above
45 humanity to show these truths through poetry. They never
46 preached, nor philosophised, nor wrote. Music came out of their
47 hearts. In Buddha we had the great, universal heart and universal
48 patience, making religion practical and bringing it to everyone's
49 door. In Shankaracharya we saw tremendous intellectual power,
50 throwing the scorching light of reason upon everything. We want
51 today that bright sun of intellectuality joined with the heart of
52 Buddha, the wonderful infinite heart of love and mercy. This union

1 will give us the highest philosophy. Science and religion will meet
2 and shake hands. Poetry and philosophy will become friends. This
3 will be the religion of the future, and if we can work it out, we may
4 be sure that it will be for all times and peoples. This is the one way
5 that will prove acceptable to modern science, for it has almost come
6 to it. When the scientific teacher asserts that all things are the
7 manifestation of one force, does it not remind you of the God of
8 whom you hear in the Upanishads: "As the one fire entering into the
9 universe expresses Itself in various forms, even so that One Soul is
10 expressing Itself in every soul and yet is infinitely more besides?"
11 Do you not see whither science is tending? The Hindu nation
12 proceeded through the study of the mind, through metaphysics and
13 logic. The European nations start from external nature, and now
14 they too are coming to the same results. We find that searching
15 through the mind we at last come to that Oneness, that Universal
16 One, the Internal Soul of everything, the Essence and Reality of
17 everything, the Ever-Free, the Ever-blissful, the Ever-Existing.
18 Through material science we come to the same Oneness. Science
19 today is telling us that all things are but the manifestation of one
20 energy which is the sum total of everything which exists, and the
21 trend of humanity is towards freedom and not towards bondage.
22 Why should men be moral? Because through morality is the path
23 towards freedom, and immorality leads to bondage.

24 Another peculiarity of the Advaita system is that from its very
25 start it is non-destructive. This is another glory, the boldness to
26 preach, "Do not disturb the faith of any, even of those who through
27 ignorance have attached themselves to lower forms of worship."
28 That is what it says, do not disturb, but help everyone to get higher
29 and higher; include all humanity. This philosophy preaches a God
30 who is a sum total. If you seek a universal religion which can apply
31 to everyone, that religion must not be composed of only the parts,
32 but it must always be their sum total and include all degrees of
33 religious development.

34 This idea is not clearly found in any other religious system.
35 They are all parts equally struggling to attain to the whole. The
36 existence of the part is only for this. So, from the very first, Advaita
37 had no antagonism with the various sects existing in India. There
38 are dualists existing today, and their number is by far the largest in
39 India, because dualism naturally appeals to less educated minds. It
40 is a very convenient, natural, common-sense explanation of the
41 universe. But with these dualists, Advaita has no quarrel. The one
42 thinks that God is outside the universe, somewhere in heaven, and
43 the other, that He is his own Soul, and that it will be a blasphemy to
44 call Him anything more distant. Any idea of separation would be
45 terrible. He is the nearest of the near. There is no word in any
46 language to express the nearness except the word Oneness. With
47 any other idea the Advaitist is not satisfied just as the dualist is
48 shocked with the concept of the Advaita, and thinks it blasphemous.
49 At the same time the Advaitist knows that these other ideas must
50 be, and so has no quarrel with the dualist who is on the right road.
51 From his standpoint, the dualist will have to see many.

52 It is a constitutional necessity of his standpoint. Let him have

1 it. The Advaitist knows that whatever may be his theories, he is
2 going to the same goal as he himself. There he differs entirely from
3 the dualist who is forced by his point of view to believe that all
4 differing views are wrong. The dualists all the world over naturally
5 believe in a Personal God who is purely anthropomorphic, who like
6 a great potentate in this world is pleased with some and displeased
7 with others. He is arbitrarily pleased with some peoples or races
8 and showers blessing upon them. Naturally the dualist comes to the
9 conclusion that God has favourites, and he hopes to be one of them.
10 You will find that in almost every religion is the idea: "We are the
11 favourites of our God, and only by believing as we do, can you be
12 taken into favour with Him." Some dualists are so narrow as to
13 insist that only the few that have been predestined to the favour of
14 God can be saved; the rest may try ever so hard, but they cannot be
15 accepted. I challenge you to show me one dualistic religion which
16 has not more or less of this exclusiveness. And, therefore, in the
17 nature of things, dualistic religions are bound to fight and quarrel
18 with each other, and this they have ever been doing. Again, these
19 dualists win the popular favour by appealing to the vanity of the
20 uneducated. They like to feel that they enjoy exclusive privileges.
21 The dualist thinks you cannot be moral until you have a God with a
22 rod in His hand, ready to punish you. The unthinking masses are
23 generally dualists, and they, poor fellows, have been persecuted for
24 thousands of years in every country; and their idea of salvation is,
25 therefore, freedom from the fear of punishment. I was asked by a
26 clergyman in America, "What! you have no Devil in your religion?
27 How can that be?" But we find that the best and the greatest men
28 that have been born in the world have worked with that high
29 impersonal idea. It is the Man who said, "I and my Father are One",
30 whose power has descended unto millions. For thousands of years it
31 has worked for good. And we know that the same Man, because he
32 was a non-dualist, was merciful to others. To the masses who could
33 not conceive of anything higher than a Personal God, he said, "Pray
34 to your Father in heaven." To others who could grasp a higher idea,
35 he said, "I am the vine, ye are the branches," but to his disciples to
36 whom he revealed himself more fully, he proclaimed the highest
37 truth, "I and my Father are One."

38 It was the great Buddha, who never cared for the dualist
39 gods, and who has been called an atheist and materialist, who yet
40 was ready to give up his body for a poor goat. That Man set in
41 motion the highest moral ideas any nation can have. Whenever
42 there is a moral code, it is a ray of light from that Man. We cannot
43 force the great hearts of the world into narrow limits, and keep
44 them there, especially at this time in the history of humanity when
45 there is a degree of intellectual development such as was never
46 dreamed of even a hundred years ago, when a wave of scientific
47 knowledge has arisen which nobody, even fifty years ago, would
48 have dreamed of. By trying to force people into narrow limits you
49 degrade them into animals and unthinking masses. You kill their
50 moral life. What is now wanted is a combination of the greatest
51 heart with the highest intellectuality, of infinite love with infinite
52 knowledge. The Vedantist gives no other attributes to God except
53 these three--that He is Infinite Existence, Infinite Knowledge, and

1 Infinite Bliss, and he regards these three as One. Existence without
2 knowledge and love cannot be; knowledge without love and love
3 without knowledge cannot be. What we want is the harmony of
4 Existence, Knowledge, and Bliss Infinite. For that is our goal. We
5 want harmony, not one-sided development. And it is possible to
6 have the intellect of a Shankara with the heart of a Buddha. I hope
7 we shall all struggle to attain to that blessed combination.

GOD IN EVERYTHING

(Delivered in London, 27th October 1896)

We have seen how the greater portion of our life must of necessity be filled with evils, however we may resist, and that this mass of evil is practically almost infinite for us. We have been struggling to remedy this since the beginning of time, yet everything remains very much the same. The more we discover remedies, the more we find ourselves beset by subtler evils. We have also seen that all religions propose a God, as the one way of escaping these difficulties. All religions tell us that if you take the world as it is, as the most practical people would advise us to do in this age, then nothing would be left to us but evil. They further assert that there is something beyond this world. This life in the five senses, life in the material world, is not all; it is only a small portion, and merely superficial. Behind and beyond is the Infinite in which there is no more evil. Some people call it God, some Allah, some Jehovah, Jove, and so on. The Vedantin calls It Brahman.

The first impression we get of the advice given by religions is that we had better terminate our existence. To the question how to cure the evils of life, the answer apparently is, to give up life. It reminds one of the old story: A mosquito settled on the head of a man, and a friend, wishing to kill the mosquito, gave it such a blow that he killed both man and mosquito. The remedy of evil seems to suggest a similar course of action. Life is full of ills, the world is full of evils; that is a fact no one who is old enough to know the world can deny.

But what is remedy proposed by all the religions? That this world is nothing. Beyond this world is something which is very real. Here comes the difficulty. The remedy seems to destroy everything. How can that be a remedy? Is there no way out then? The Vedanta says that what all the religions advance is perfectly true, but it should be properly understood. Often it is misunderstood, because the religions are not very clear in their meaning. What we really want is head and heart combined. The heart is great indeed; it is through the heart that come the great inspirations of life. I would a hundred times rather have a little heart and no brain, than be all brains and no heart. Life is possible, progress is possible for him who has heart, but he who has no heart and only brains dies of dryness.

At the same time we know that he who is carried along by his heart alone has to undergo many ills, for now and then he is liable to tumble into pitfalls. The combination of heart and head is what we want. I do not mean that a man should compromise his heart for his brain or vice versa, but let everyone have an infinite amount of heart and feeling, and at the same time an infinite amount of reason. Is there any limit to what we want in this world? Is not the world infinite? There is room for an infinite amount of feeling, and so also for an infinite amount of culture and reason. Let them come together without limit, let them be running together, as it were, in parallel lines each with the other.

1 Most of the religions understand the fact, but the error into
2 which they all seem to fall is the same; they are carried away by the
3 heart, the feelings. There is evil in the world, give up the world;
4 that is the great teaching, and the only teaching, no doubt. Give up
5 the world. There cannot be two opinions that to understand the
6 truth everyone of us has to give up error. There cannot be two
7 opinions that everyone of us in order to have good must give up
8 evil; there cannot be two opinions that everyone of us to have life
9 must give up what is death.

10 And yet, what remains to us, if this theory involves giving up
11 the life of the senses, the life as we know it? And what else do we
12 mean by life? If we give this up, what remains?

13 We shall understand this better, when, later on, we come to
14 the more philosophical portions of the Vedanta. But for the present
15 I beg to state that in Vedanta alone we find a rational solution of the
16 problem. Here I can only lay before you what the Vedanta seeks to
17 teach, and that is the deification of the world. The Vedanta does not
18 in reality denounce the world. The ideal of renunciation nowhere
19 attains such a height as in the teachings of the Vedanta. But, at the
20 same time, dry suicidal advice is not intended; it really means
21 deification of the world--giving up the world as we think of it, as we
22 know it, as it appears to us--and to know what it really is. Deify it; it
23 is God alone. We read at the commencement of one of the oldest of
24 the Upanishads, "Whatever exists in this universe is to be covered
25 with the Lord."

26 We have to cover everything with the Lord Himself, not by a
27 false sort of optimism, not by blinding our eyes to the evil, but by
28 really seeing God in everything. Thus we have to give up the world,
29 and when the world is given up, what remains? God. What is
30 meant? You can have your wife; it does not mean that you are to
31 abandon her, but that you are to see God in the wife. Give up your
32 children; what does that mean? To turn them out of doors, as some
33 human brutes do in every country? Certainly not. That is diabolism;
34 it is not religion. But see God in your children. So, in everything. In
35 life and in death, in happiness and in misery, the Lord is equally
36 present. The whole world is full of the Lord. Open your eyes and
37 see Him. This is what Vedanta teaches. Give up the world which you
38 have conjectured, because your conjecture was based upon a very
39 partial experience, upon very poor reasoning, and upon your own
40 weakness. Give it up; the world we have been thinking of so long,
41 the world to which we have been clinging so long, is a false world of
42 our own creation. Give that up; open your eyes and see that as such
43 it never existed; it was a dream, Maya. What existed was the Lord
44 Himself. It is He who is in the child, in the wife, and in the husband;
45 it is He who is in the good and in the bad; He is in the sin and in the
46 sinner; He is in life and in death.

47 A tremendous assertion indeed! Yet that is the theme which
48 the Vedanta wants to demonstrate, to teach, and to preach. This is
49 just the opening theme.

50 Thus we avoid the dangers of life and its evils. Do not desire
51 anything. What makes us miserable? The cause of all miseries from

1 which we suffer is desire. You desire something and the desire is
2 not fulfilled; the result is distress. If there is no desire, there is no
3 suffering. But here, too, there is the danger of my being
4 misunderstood. So it is necessary to explain what I mean by giving
5 up desire and becoming free from all misery. The walls have no
6 desire and they never suffer. True, but they never evolve. This chair
7 has no desires, it never suffers; but it is always a chair. There is a
8 glory in happiness, there is a glory in suffering. If I may dare to say
9 so, there is a utility in evil too. The great lesson in misery we all
10 know. There are hundreds of things we have done in our lives which
11 we wish we had never done, but which, at the same time, have been
12 great teachers. As for me, I am glad I have done something good
13 and many things bad; glad I have done something right, and glad I
14 have committed many errors, because every one of them has been a
15 great lesson. I, as I am now, am the resultant of all I have done, all I
16 have thought. Every action and thought have had their effect, and
17 these effects are the sum total of my progress.

18 We all understand that desires are wrong, but what is meant
19 by giving up desires? How could life go on? It would be suicidal
20 advice, killing the desire and the man too. The solution is this. Not
21 that you should not have property, not that you should not have
22 things which are necessary and things which are even luxuries.
23 Have all that you want, and more, only know the truth and realise
24 it. Wealth does not belong to anybody. Have no idea of
25 proprietorship, possession. You are nobody, nor am I, nor anyone
26 else. All belongs to the Lord, because the opening verse told us to
27 put the Lord in everything. God is in the wealth that you enjoy. He
28 is in the desire that rises in your mind. He is in the things you buy
29 to satisfy your desire; He is in your beautiful attire, in your
30 beautiful ornaments. This is the line of thought. All will be
31 metamorphosed as soon as you begin to see things in that light. If
32 you put God in your every movement, in your conversation, in your
33 form, in everything, the whole scene changes, and the world,
34 instead of appearing as one of woe and misery, will become a
35 heaven.

36 "The kingdom of heaven is within you," says Jesus; so says the
37 Vedanta, and every great teacher. "He that hath eyes to see, let him
38 see, and he that hath ears to hear, let him hear." The Vedanta
39 proves that the truth for which we have been searching all this time
40 is present, and was all the time with us. In our ignorance, we
41 thought we had lost it, and went about the world crying and
42 weeping, struggling to find the truth, while all along it was dwelling
43 in our own hearts. There alone can we find it.

44 If we understand the giving up of the world in its old, crude
45 sense, then it would come to this: that we must not work, that we
46 must be idle, sitting like lumps of earth, neither thinking nor doing
47 anything, but must become fatalists, driven about by every
48 circumstance, ordered about by the laws of nature, drifting from
49 place to place. That would be the result. But that is not what is
50 meant. We must work. Ordinary mankind, driven everywhere by
51 false desire, what do they know of work? The man propelled by his
52 own feelings and his own senses, what does he know about work?

1 He works, who is not propelled by his own desires, by any
2 selfishness whatsoever. He works, who has no ulterior motive in
3 view. He works, who has nothing to gain from work.

4 Who enjoys the picture, the seller or the seer? The seller is
5 busy with his accounts, computing what his gain will be, how much
6 profit he will realise on the picture. His brain is full of that. He is
7 looking at the hammer, and watching the bids. He is intent on
8 hearing how fast the bids are rising. That man is enjoying the
9 picture who has gone there without any intention of buying or
10 selling. He looks at the picture and enjoys it. So this whole universe
11 is a picture, and when these desires have vanished, men will enjoy
12 the world, and then this buying and selling and these foolish ideas
13 of possession will be ended. The money-lender gone, the buyer
14 gone, the seller gone, this world remains the picture, a beautiful
15 painting. I never read of any more beautiful conception of God than
16 the following: "He is the Great Poet, the Ancient Poet; the whole
17 universe is His poem, coming in verses and rhymes and rhythms,
18 written in infinite bliss." When we have given up desires, then alone
19 shall we be able to read and enjoy this universe of God. Then
20 everything will become deified. Nooks and corners, by-ways and
21 shady places, which we thought dark and unholy, will be all deified.
22 They will all reveal their true nature, and we shall smile at
23 ourselves and think that all this weeping and crying has been but
24 child's play, and we were only standing by, watching.

25 So do your work, says the Vedanta. It first advises us how to
26 work-by giving up the apparent, illusive world. What is meant by
27 that? Seeing God everywhere. Thus do you work. Desire to live a
28 hundred years, have all earthly desires, if you wish, only deify them,
29 convert them into heaven. Have the desire to live a long life of
30 helpfulness, of blissfulness and activity on this earth. Thus working,
31 you will find the way out. There is no other way. If a man plunges
32 headlong into foolish luxuries of the world without knowing the
33 truth, he has missed his footing, he cannot reach the goal. And if a
34 man curses the world, goes into a forest, mortifies his flesh, and
35 kills himself little by little by starvation, makes his heart a barren
36 waste, kills out all feelings, and becomes harsh, stern, and dried-up,
37 that man also has missed the way. These are the two extremes, the
38 two mistakes at either end. Both have lost the way, both have
39 missed the goal.

40 So work, says the Vedanta, putting God in everything, and
41 knowing Him to be in everything. Work incessantly, holding life as
42 something deified, as God Himself, and knowing that this is all we
43 have to do, this is all we should ask for. God is in everything, where
44 else shall we go to find Him? He is already in every work, in every
45 thought, in every feeling. Thus knowing, we must work-this is the
46 only way, there is no other. Thus the effects of work will not bind us.
47 We have seen how false desires are the cause of all the misery and
48 evil we suffer, but when they are thus deified, purified, through
49 God, they bring no evil, they bring no misery. Those who have not
50 learnt this secret will have to live in a demoniacal world until they
51 discover it. Many do not know what an infinite mine of bliss is in
52 them, around them, everywhere; they have not yet discovered it.

1 What is a demoniacal world? The Vedanta says, ignorance.

2 We are dying of thirst sitting on the banks of the mightiest
3 river. We are dying of hunger sitting near heaps of food. Here is the
4 blissful universe, yet we do not find it. We are in it all the time, and
5 we are always mistaking it. Religion proposes to find this out for us.

6 The longing for this blissful universe is in all hearts. It has
7 been the search of all nations, it is the one goal of religion, and this
8 ideal is expressed in various languages in different religions. It is
9 only the difference of language that makes all these apparent
10 divergences. One expresses a thought in one way, another a little
11 differently, yet perhaps each is meaning exactly what the other is
12 expressing in a different language.

13 More questions arise in connection with this. It is very easy to
14 talk. From my childhood I have heard of seeing God everywhere
15 and in everything, and then I can really enjoy the world, but as soon
16 as I mix with the world, and get a few blows from it, the idea
17 vanishes. I am walking in a street thinking that God is in every man,
18 and a strong man comes along and gives me a push and I fall flat on
19 the footpath. Then I rise up quickly with a clenched fist, and the
20 blood has rushed to my head, and the reflection goes. Immediately I
21 have become mad. Everything is forgotten; instead of encountering
22 God I see the devil. Ever since we were born we have been told to
23 see God in all. Every religion reaches that--see God in everything
24 and everywhere. Do you not remember in the New Testament how
25 Christ says so? We have all been taught that; but it is when we
26 come to the practical side, that the difficulty begins. You all
27 remember how in *Aesop's Fables* a fine stag is looking at his form
28 reflected in a lake and is saying to his young one, "How powerful I
29 am, look at my splendid head, look at my limbs, how strong and
30 muscular they are; and how swiftly I can run." In the meantime he
31 hears the barking of dogs in the distance, and immediately takes to
32 his heels, and after he has run several miles, he comes back
33 panting. The young one says, "You just told me how strong you
34 were, how was it that when the dog barked, you ran away?" "Yes,
35 my son; but when the dogs bark all my confidence vanishes." Such
36 is the case with us. We think highly of humanity, we feel ourselves
37 strong and valiant, we make grand resolves; but when the "dogs" of
38 trial and temptation bark, we are like the stag in the fable. Then, if
39 such is the case, what is the use of teaching all these things? There
40 is the greatest use. The use is this, that perseverance will finally
41 conquer. Nothing can be done in a day.

42 "This Self is first to be heard, then to be thought upon, and
43 then meditated upon." Everyone can see the sky, even the very
44 worm crawling upon the earth sees the blue sky, but how very far
45 away it is! So it is with our ideal. It is far away, no doubt, but at the
46 same time, we know that we must have it. We must even have the
47 highest ideal. Unfortunately in this life, the vast majority of persons
48 are groping through this dark life without any ideal at all. If a man
49 with an ideal makes a thousand mistakes, I am sure that the man
50 without an ideal makes fifty thousand. Therefore, it is better to have
51 an ideal. And this ideal we must hear about as much as we can, till
52 it enters into our hearts, into our brains, into our very veins, until it

1 tingles in every drop of our blood and permeates every pore in our
2 body. We must meditate upon it. "Out of the fullness of the heart the
3 mouth speaketh," and out of the fullness of the heart the hand
4 works too.

5 It is thought which is the propelling force in us. Fill the
6 mind with the highest thoughts, hear them day after day, think them
7 month after month. Never mind failures; they are quite natural,
8 they are the beauty of life, these failures. What would life be
9 without them? It would not be worth having if it were not for
10 struggles. Where would be the poetry of life? Never mind the
11 struggles, the mistakes. I never heard a cow tell a lie, but it is only
12 a cow--never a man. So never mind these failures, these little
13 backslidings; hold the ideal a thousand times, and if you fail a
14 thousand times, make the attempt once more. The ideal of man is to
15 see God in everything. But if you cannot see Him in everything, see
16 Him in one thing, in that thing which you like best, and then see
17 Him in another. So on you can go. There is infinite life before the
18 soul. Take your time and you will achieve your end.

19 "He, the One, who vibrates more quickly than mind, who
20 attains to more speed than mind can ever do, whom even the gods
21 reach not, nor thought grasps, He moving, everything moves. In
22 Him all exists. He is moving. He is also immovable. He is near and
23 He is far. He is inside everything. He is outside everything,
24 interpenetrating everything. Whoever sees in every being that same
25 Atman, and whoever sees everything in that Atman, he never goes
26 far from that Atman. When all life and the whole universe are seen
27 in this Atman, then alone man has attained the secret. There is no
28 more delusion for him. Where is any more misery for him who sees
29 this Oneness in the universe?"

30 This is another great theme of the Vedanta, this
31 Oneness of life, this Oneness of everything. We shall see how it
32 demonstrates that all our misery comes through ignorance, and this
33 ignorance is the idea of manifoldness, this separation between man
34 and man, between nation and nation, between earth and moon,
35 between moon and sun. Out of this idea of separation between atom
36 and atom comes all misery. But the Vedanta says this separation
37 does not exist, it is not real. It is merely apparent, on the surface. In
38 the heart of things there is Unity still. If you go below the surface,
39 you find that Unity between man and man, between races and
40 races, high and low, rich and poor, gods and men, and men and
41 animals. If you go deep enough, all will be seen as only variations of
42 the One, and he who has attained to this conception of Oneness has
43 no more delusion. What can delude him? He knows the reality of
44 everything, the secret of everything. Where is there any more
45 misery for him? What does he desire? He has traced the reality of
46 everything to the Lord, the Centre, the Unity of everything, and that
47 is Eternal Existence, Eternal Knowledge, Eternal Bliss. Neither
48 death nor disease, nor sorrow, nor misery, nor discontent is there.
49 All is Perfect Union and Perfect Bliss. For whom should he mourn
50 then? In the Reality, there is no death, there is no misery; in the
51 Reality, there is no one to mourn for, no one to be sorry for. He has
52 penetrated everything, the Pure One, the Formless, the Bodiless,

1 the Stainless. He is the Knower, He the Great Poet, the Self-
2 Existent, He who is giving to everyone what he deserves. They
3 grope in darkness who worship this ignorant world, the world that
4 is produced out of ignorance, thinking of it as Existence, and those
5 who live their whole lives in this world, and never find anything
6 better or higher, are groping in still greater darkness. But he who
7 knows the secret of nature, seeing That which is beyond nature
8 through the help of nature, he crosses death, and through the help
9 of That which is beyond nature, he enjoys Eternal Bliss. "Thou sun,
10 who hast covered the Truth with thy golden disc, do thou remove
11 the veil, so that I may see the Truth that is within thee. I have
12 known the Truth that is within thee, I have known what is the real
13 meaning of thy rays and thy glory and have seen That which shines
14 in thee; the Truth in thee I see, and That which is within thee is
15 within me, and I am That."

REALISATION

(Delivered in London, 29th October 1896)

I will read to you from one of the Upanishads. It is called the Katha Upanishad. Some of you, perhaps, have read the translation of Sir Edwin Arnold, called the Secret of Death. In our last [i.e. a previous] lecture we saw how the inquiry which started with the origin of the world, and the creation of the universe, failed to obtain a satisfactory answer from without, and how it then turned inwards. This book psychologically takes up that suggestion, questioning into the internal nature of man. It was first asked who created the external world, and how it came into being. Now the question is: What is that in man which makes him live and move, and what becomes of that when he dies? The first philosophers studied the material substance, and tried to reach the ultimate through that. At the best, they found a personal governor of the universe, a human being immensely magnified, but yet to all intents and purposes a human being. But that could not be the whole of truth; at best, it could be only partial truth. We see this universe as human beings, and our God is our human explanation of the universe.

Suppose a cow were philosophical and had religion, it would have a cow universe, and a cow solution of the problem, and it would not be possible that it should see our God. Suppose cats became philosophers, they would see a cat universe and have a cat solution of the problem of the universe, and a cat ruling it. So we see from this that our explanation of the universe is not the whole of the solution. Neither does our conception cover the whole of the universe. It would be a great mistake to accept that tremendously selfish position which man is apt to take. Such a solution of the universal problem as we can get from the outside labours under this difficulty that in the first place the universe we see is our own particular universe, our own view of the Reality. That Reality we cannot see through the senses; we cannot comprehend It. We only know the universe from the point of view of beings with five senses. Suppose we obtain another sense, the whole universe must change for us. Suppose we had a magnetic sense, it is quite possible that we might then find millions and millions of forces in existence which we do not now know, and for which we have no present sense or feeling. Our senses are limited, very limited indeed; and within these limitations exists what we call our universe; and our God is the solution of that universe, but that cannot be the solution of the whole problem. But man cannot stop there. He is a thinking being and wants to find a solution which will comprehensively explain all the universes. He wants to see a world which is at once the world of men, and of gods, and of all possible beings, and to find a solution which will explain all phenomena.

We see, we must first find the universe which includes all universes; we must find something which, by itself, must be the material running through all these various planes of existence, whether we apprehend it through the senses or not. If we could possibly find something which we could know as the common

1 property of the lower as well as of the higher worlds, then our
2 problem would be solved. Even if by the sheer force of logic alone
3 we could understand that there must be one basis of all existence,
4 then our problem might approach to some sort of solution; but this
5 solution certainly cannot be obtained only through the world we see
6 and know, because it is only a partial view of the whole.

7 Our only hope then lies in penetrating deeper. The early
8 thinkers discovered that the farther they were from the centre, the
9 more marked were the variations and differentiations; and that the
10 nearer they approached the centre, the nearer they were to unity.
11 The nearer we are to the centre of a circle, the nearer we are to the
12 common ground in which all the radii meet; and the farther we are
13 from the centre, the more divergent is our radial line from the
14 others. The external world is far away from the centre, and so there
15 is no common ground in it where all the phenomena of existence
16 can meet. At best, the external world is but one part of the whole of
17 phenomena. There are other parts, the mental, the moral, and the
18 intellectual--the various planes of existence--and to take up only
19 one, and find a solution of the whole out of that one, is simply
20 impossible. We first, therefore, want to find somewhere a centre
21 from which, as it were, all the other planes of existence start, and
22 standing there we should try to find a solution. That is the
23 proposition. And where is that centre? It is within us. The ancient
24 sages penetrated deeper and deeper until they found that in the
25 innermost core of the human soul is the centre of the whole
26 universe. All the planes gravitate towards that one point. That is the
27 common ground, and standing there alone can we find a common
28 solution. So the question who made this world is not very
29 philosophical, nor does its solution amount to anything.

30 This the Katha Upanishad speaks in very figurative language.
31 There was, in ancient times, a very rich man, who made a certain
32 sacrifice which required that he should give away everything that
33 he had. Now, this man was not sincere. He wanted to get the fame
34 and glory of having made the sacrifice, but he was only giving
35 things which were of no further use to him--old cows, barren, blind,
36 and lame. He had a boy called Nachiketas. This boy saw that his
37 father was not doing what was right, that he was breaking his vow;
38 but he did not know what to say to him. In India, father and mother
39 are living gods to their children. And so the boy approached the
40 father with the greatest respect and humbly inquired of him,
41 "Father, to whom are you going to give me? For your sacrifice
42 requires that everything shall be given away." The father was very
43 much vexed at this question and replied, "What do you mean, boy?
44 A father giving away his own son?" The boy asked the question a
45 second and a third time, and then the angry father answered, "Thee
46 I give unto Death (Yama)." And the story goes on to say that the boy
47 went to Yama, the god of death. Yama was the first man who died.
48 He went to heaven and became the governor of all the Pitris; all the
49 good people who die, go, and live with him for a long time. He is
50 very pure and holy person, chaste and good, as his name (Yama)
51 implies.

52 So the boy went to Yama's world. But even gods are

1 sometimes not at home, and three days this boy had to wait there.
2 After the third day Yama returned. "O learned one," said Yama, "you
3 have been waiting here for three days without food, and you are a
4 guest worthy of respect. Salutation to thee, O Brahmin, and welfare
5 to me! I am very sorry I was not at home. But for that I will make
6 amends. Ask three boons, one for each day." And the boy asked,
7 "My first boon is that my father's anger against me may pass away;
8 that he will be kind to me and recognise me when you allow me to
9 depart." Yama granted this fully. The next boon was that he wanted
10 to know about a certain sacrifice which took people to heaven. Now
11 we have seen that the oldest idea which we got in the Samhita
12 portion of the Vedas was only about heaven where they had bright
13 bodies and lived with the fathers. Gradually other ideas came, but
14 they were not satisfying; there was still need for something higher.
15 Living in heaven would not be very different from life in this world.
16 At best, it would only be a very healthy rich man's life, with plenty
17 of sense-enjoyments and a sound body which knows no disease. It
18 would be this material world, only a little more refined; and we
19 have seen the difficulty that the external material world can never
20 solve the problem. So no heaven can solve the problem. If this
21 world cannot solve the problem, no multiplication of this world can
22 do so, because we must always remember that matter is only an
23 infinitesimal part of the phenomena of nature. The vast part of
24 phenomena which we actually see is not matter. For instance, in
25 every moment of our life what a great part is played by thought and
26 feeling, compared with the material phenomena outside! How vast
27 is this internal world with its tremendous activity! The sense-
28 phenomena are very small compared with it. The heaven solution
29 commits this mistake; it insists that the whole of phenomena is only
30 in touch, taste, sight, etc. So this idea of heaven did not give full
31 satisfaction to all. Yet Nachiketas asks, as the second boon, about
32 some sacrifice through which people might attain to this heaven.
33 There was an idea in the Vedas that these sacrifices pleased the
34 gods and took human beings to heaven.

35 In studying all religions you will notice the fact that whatever
36 is old becomes holy. For instance, our forefathers in India used to
37 write on birch bark, but in time they learnt how to make paper. Yet
38 the birch bark is still looked upon as very holy. When the utensils is
39 which they used to cook in ancient times were improved upon, the
40 old ones became holy; and nowhere is this idea more kept up than
41 in India. Old methods, which must be nine or ten thousand years
42 old, as of rubbing two sticks together to make fire, are still
43 followed. At the time of sacrifice no other method will do. So with
44 the other branch of the Asiatic Aryans. Their modern descendants
45 still like to obtain fire from lightning, showing that they used to get
46 fire in this way. Even when they learnt other customs, they kept up
47 the old ones, which then became holy. So with the Hebrews. They
48 used to write on parchment. They now write on paper, but
49 parchment is very holy. So with all nations. Every rite which you
50 now consider holy was simply an old custom, and the Vedic sacrifice
51 were of this nature. In course of time, as they found better methods
52 of life, their ideas were much improved; still these old forms
53 remained, and from time to time they were practised and received a

1 holy significance.

2 Then, a body of men made it their business to carry on these
3 sacrifices. These were the priests, who speculated on the sacrifices,
4 and the sacrifices became everything to them. The gods came to
5 enjoy the fragrance of the sacrifices, and it was considered that
6 everything in this world could be got by the power of sacrifices. If
7 certain oblations were made, certain hymns chanted, certain
8 peculiar forms of altars made, the gods would grant everything. So
9 Nachiketas asks by what form of sacrifice a man can go to heaven.
10 The second boon was also readily granted by Yama who promised
11 that this sacrifice should henceforth be named after Nachiketas.

12 Then the third boon comes, and with that the Upanishad
13 proper begins. The boy said, "There is this difficulty: when a man
14 dies some say he is, others that he is not. Instructed by you I desire
15 to understand this." But Yama was frightened. He had been very
16 glad to grant the other two boons. Now he said, "The gods in
17 ancient times were puzzled on this point. This subtle law is not easy
18 to understand. Choose some other boon, O Nachiketas, do not press
19 me on this point, release me."

20 The boy was determined, and said, "What you have said is
21 true, O Death, that even the gods had doubts on this point, and it is
22 no easy matter to understand. But I cannot obtain another exponent
23 like you and there is no other boon equal to this."

24 Death said, "Ask for sons and grandsons who will live one
25 hundred years, many cattle, elephants, gold, and horses. Ask for
26 empire on this earth and live as many years as you like. Or choose
27 any other boon which you think equal to these--wealth and long life.
28 Or be thou a king, O Nachiketas, on the wide earth. I will make thee
29 the enjoyer of all desires. Ask for all those desires which are
30 difficult to obtain in the world. These heavenly maidens with
31 chariots and music, which are not to be obtained by man, are yours.
32 Let them serve you, O Nachiketas, but do not question me as to
33 what comes after death."

34 Nachiketas said, "These are merely things of a day, O Death,
35 they wear away the energy of all the sense-organs. Even the longest
36 life is very short. These horses and chariots, dances and songs, may
37 remain with Thee. Man cannot be satisfied by wealth. Can we retain
38 wealth when we behold Thee? We shall live only so long as Thou
39 desirest. Only the boon which I have asked is chosen by me."

40 Yama was pleased with this answer and said, "Perfection is
41 one thing and enjoyment another; these two having different ends,
42 engage men differently. He who chooses perfection becomes pure.
43 He who chooses enjoyment misses his true end. Both perfection
44 and enjoyment present themselves to man; the wise man having
45 examined both distinguishes one from the other. He chooses
46 perfection as being superior to enjoyment, but the foolish man
47 chooses enjoyment for the pleasure of his body. O Nachiketas,
48 having thought upon the things which are only apparently
49 desirable, thou hast wisely abandoned them." Death then
50 proceeded to teach Nachiketas.

1 We now get a very developed idea of renunciation and Vedic
2 morality, that until one has conquered the desires for enjoyment the
3 truth will not shine in him. So long as these vain desires of our
4 senses are clamouring and as it were dragging us outwards every
5 moment, making us slaves to everything outside--to a little colour, a
6 little taste, a little touch--notwithstanding all our pretensions, how
7 can the truth express itself in our hearts?

8 Yama said, "That which is beyond never rises before the mind
9 of a thoughtless child deluded by the folly of riches. 'This world
10 exists, the other does not,' thinking thus they come again and again
11 under my power. To understand this truth is very difficult. Many,
12 even hearin it continually, do not understand it, for the speaker
13 must be wonderful, so must the hearer. The teacher must be
14 wonderful, so must be the taught. Neither is the mind to be
15 disturbed by vain arguments, for it is no more a question of
16 argument, it is a question of fact." We have always heard that every
17 religion insists on our having faith. We have been taught to believe
18 blindly. Well, this idea of blind faith is objectionable, no doubt, but
19 analysing it, we find that behind it is a very great truth. What it
20 really means is what we read now. The mind is not to be ruffled by
21 vain arguments, because argument will not help us to know God. It
22 is a question of fact, and not of argument. All argument and
23 reasoning must be based upon certain perceptions. Without these,
24 there cannot be any argument. Reasoning is the method of
25 comparison between certain facts which we have already
26 perceived. If these perceived facts are not there already, there
27 cannot be any reasoning. If this is true of external phenomena, why
28 should it not be so of the internal? The chemist takes certain
29 chemicals and certain results are produced. This is a fact; you see
30 it, sense it, and make that the basis on which to build all your
31 chemical arguments. So with the physicists, so with all other
32 sciences. All knowledge must stand on perception of certain facts,
33 and upon that we have to build our reasoning. But, curiously
34 enough the vast majority of mankind think, especially at the present
35 time, that no such perception is possible in religion, that religion
36 can only be apprehended by vain arguments. Therefore we are told
37 not to disturb the mind by vain arguments. Religion is a question of
38 fact, not of talk. We have to analyse our own souls and to find what
39 is there. We have to understand it and to realise what is
40 understood. That is religion. No amount of talk will make religion.
41 So the question whether there is a God or not can never be proved
42 by argument, for the arguments are as much on one side as on the
43 other. But if there is a God, He is in our own hearts. Have you even
44 seen Him? The question as to whether this world exists or not has
45 not yet been decided, and the debate between the idealists and the
46 realists is endless. Yet we know that the world exists, that it goes
47 on. We only change the meaning of words. So, with all the questions
48 of life, we must come to facts. There are certain religious facts
49 which, as in external science, have to be perceived, and upon them
50 religion will be built. Of course, the extreme claim that you must
51 believe every dogma of a religion is degrading to the human mind.
52 The man who asks you to believe everything, degrades himself, and,
53 if you believe, degrades you too. The sages of the world have only

1 the right to tell us that they have analysed their minds and have
2 found these facts, and if we do the same we shall also believe, and
3 not before. That is all that there is in religion. But you must always
4 remember this, that as a matter of fact 99.9 per cent of those who
5 attack religion have never analysed their minds, have never
6 struggled to get at the facts. So their arguments do not have any
7 weight against religion, any more than the words of a blind man
8 who cries out, "You are all fools who believe in the sun," would
9 affect us.

10 This is one great idea to learn and to hold onto, this idea of
11 realisation. This turmoil and fight and difference in religions will
12 cease only when we understand that religion is not in books and
13 temples. It is an actual perception. Only the man who has actually
14 perceived God and soul has religion. There is no real difference
15 between the highest ecclesiastical giant who can talk by the
16 volume, and the lowest, most ignorant materialist. We are all
17 atheists; let us confess it. Mere intellectual assent does not make us
18 religious. Take a Christian, or a Mohammedan, or a follower of any
19 other religion in the world. Any man who truly realised the truth of
20 the Sermon on the Mount would be perfect, and become a god
21 immediately. Yet it is said that there are many millions of Christians
22 in the world. What is meant is that mankind may at some time try to
23 realise that Sermon. No one in twenty millions is a real Christian.

24 So, in India, there are said to be three hundred millions of
25 Vedantins. But if there were one in a thousand who had actually
26 realised religion, this world would soon be greatly changed. We are
27 all atheists, and yet we try to fight the man who admits it. We are all
28 in the dark; religion is to us a mere intellectual assent, a mere talk,
29 a mere nothing. We often consider a man religious who can talk
30 well. But this is not religion. "Wonderful methods of joining words,
31 rhetorical powers, and explaining texts of the books in various
32 ways--these are only for the enjoyment of the learned, and not
33 religion." Religion comes when that actual realisation in our own
34 soul begins. That will be the dawn of religion; and then alone we
35 shall be moral. Now we are not much more moral than the animals.
36 We are only held down by the whips of society. If society said today,
37 "I will not punish you if you steal", we should just make a rush for
38 each other's property. It is the policeman that makes us moral. It is
39 social opinion that makes us moral, and really we are little better
40 than animals. We understand how much this is so in the secret of
41 our own hearts. So let us not be hypocrites. Let us confess that we
42 are not religious and have no right to look down on others. We are
43 all brothers, and we shall be truly moral when we have realised
44 religion.

45 If you have seen a certain country, and a man forces you to
46 say that you have not seen it, still in your heart of hearts you know
47 you have. So, when you see religion and God in a more intense
48 sense than you see this external world, nothing will be able to
49 shake your belief. Then you have real faith. That is what is meant by
50 the words in your Gospel, "He who has faith even as a grain of
51 mustard seed." Then you will know the Truth because you have
52 become the Truth.

1 This is the watchword of Vedanta--realise religion, no talking
2 will do. But it is done with great difficulty. He has hidden Himself
3 inside the atom, this Ancient One who resides in the inmost recess
4 of every human heart. The sages realised Him through the power of
5 introspection, and got beyond both joy and misery, beyond what we
6 call virtue and vice, beyond good and bad deeds, beyond being and
7 non-being; he who has seen Him has seen the Reality. But what
8 then about heaven? It was the idea of happiness minus
9 unhappiness. That is to say, what we want is the joys of this life
10 minus its sorrows. That is a very good idea, no doubt; it comes
11 naturally; but it is a mistake throughout, because there is no such
12 thing as absolute good, nor any such thing as absolute evil.

13 You have all heard of that rich man in Rome who learnt one
14 day that he had only about a million pounds of his property left; he
15 said, "What shall I do tomorrow?" and forthwith committed suicide.
16 A million pounds was poverty to him. What is joy, and what is
17 sorrow? It is a vanishing quantity, continually vanishing. When I
18 was a child I thought if I could be a cabman, it would be the very
19 acme of happiness for me to drive about. I do not think so now. To
20 what joy will you cling? This is the one point we must all try to
21 understand, and it is one of the last superstitions to leave us.
22 Everyone's idea of pleasure is different. I have seen a man who is
23 not happy unless he swallows a lump of opium every day. He may
24 dream of a heaven where the land is made of opium. That would be
25 a very bad heaven for me. Again and again in Arabian poetry we
26 read of heaven with beautiful gardens, through which rivers run. I
27 lived much of my life in a country where there is too much water;
28 many villages are flooded and thousands of lives are sacrificed
29 every year. So, my heaven would not have gardens through which
30 rivers flow; I would have a land where very little rain falls. Our
31 pleasures are always changing. If a young man dreams of heaven,
32 he dreams of a heaven where he will have a beautiful wife. When
33 that same man becomes old he does not want a wife. It is our
34 necessities which make our heaven, and the heaven changes with
35 the change of our necessities. If we had a heaven like that desired
36 by those to whom sense-enjoyment is the very end of existence,
37 then we would not progress. That would be the most terrible curse
38 we could pronounce on the soul. Is this all we can come to? A little
39 weeping and dancing, and then to die like a dog! What a curse you
40 pronounce on the head of humanity when you long for these things!
41 That is what you do when you cry after the joys of this world, for
42 you do not know what true joy is. What philosophy insists on is not
43 to give up joys, but to know what joy really is. The Norwegian
44 heaven is a tremendous fighting place where they all sit before
45 Odin; they have a wild boar hunt, and then they go to war and slash
46 each other to pieces. But in some way or other, after a few hours of
47 such fighting, the wounds are all healed up, and they go into a hall
48 where the boar has been roasted and have a carousal. And then the
49 wild boar takes form again, ready to be hunted the next day. This is
50 much the same thing as our heaven, not a whit worse, only our
51 ideas may be a little more refined. We want to hunt wild boars, and
52 get to a place where all enjoyments will continue, just as the
53 Norwegian imagines that the wild boar is hunted and eaten every

1 day, and recovers the next day.

2 Now, philosophy insists that there is a joy which is absolute,
3 which never changes. That joy cannot be the joys and pleasures we
4 have in this life, and yet Vedanta shows that everything that is
5 joyful in this life is but a particle of that real joy, because that is the
6 only joy there is. Every moment really we are enjoying the absolute
7 bliss, though covered up, misunderstood, and caricatured.
8 Wherever there is any blessing, blissfulness, or joy, even the joy of
9 the thief in stealing, it is that absolute bliss coming out, only it has
10 become obscured, muddled up, as it were, with all sorts of
11 extraneous conditions, and misunderstood. But to understand that,
12 we have to go through the negation, and then the positive side will
13 begin. We have to give up ignorance and all that is false, and then
14 truth will begin to reveal itself to us. When we have grasped the
15 truth, things which we gave up at first will take new shape and
16 form, will appear to us in a new light, and become deified. They will
17 have become sublimated, and then we shall understand them in
18 their true light. But to understand them, we have first to get a
19 glimpse of truth; we must give them up at first, and then we get
20 them back again, deified. We have to give up all miseries and
21 sorrows, all our little joys.

22 "That which all the Vedas declare, which is proclaimed by all
23 penances, seeking which men lead lives of continence, I will tell you
24 in one word--it is 'Om'." You will find this word "Om" praised very
25 much in the Vedas, and it is held to be very sacred.

26 Now Yama answers the question: "What becomes of a man
27 when the body dies?" "This Wise One never dies, is never born, It
28 arises from nothing, and nothing arises from It. Unborn, Eternal,
29 Everlasting, this Ancient One can never be destroyed with the
30 destruction of the body. If the slayer thinks he can slay, or if the
31 slain thinks he is slain, they both do not know the truth, for the Self
32 neither slays nor is slain." A most tremendous position. I should like
33 to draw your attention to the adjective in the first line, which is
34 "wise". As we proceed we shall find that the ideal of the Vedanta is
35 that all wisdom and all purity are in the soul already, dimly
36 expressed or better expressed--that is all the difference. The
37 difference between man and man, and all things in the whole
38 creation, is not in kind but only in degree. The background, the
39 reality, of everyone is that same Eternal, Ever Blessed, Ever Pure,
40 and Ever Perfect One. It is the Atman, the Soul, in the saint and the
41 sinner, in the happy and the miserable, in the beautiful and the ugly,
42 in men and in animals; it is the same throughout. It is the shining
43 One. The difference is caused by the power of expression. In some
44 It is expressed more, in others less, but this difference of
45 expression has no effect upon the Atman. If in their dress one man
46 shows more of his body than another, it does not make any
47 difference in their bodies; the difference is in their dress. We had
48 better remember here that throughout the Vedanta philosophy,
49 there is no such thing as good and bad, they are not two different
50 things; the same thing is good or bad, and the difference is only in
51 degree. The very thing I call pleasurable today, tomorrow under
52 better circumstances I may call pain. The fire that warms us can

1 also consume us; it is not the fault of the fire. Thus, the Soul being
2 pure and perfect, the man who does evil is giving the lie unto
3 himself, he does not know the nature of himself. Even in the
4 murderer the pure Soul is there; It dies not. It was his mistake; he
5 could not manifest It; he had covered It up. Nor in the man who
6 thinks that he is killed is the Soul killed; It is eternal. It can never
7 be killed, never destroyed. "Infinitely smaller than the smallest,
8 infinitely larger than the largest, this Lord of all is present in the
9 depths of every human heart. The sinless, bereft of all misery, see
10 Him through the mercy of the Lord; the Bodiless, yet dwelling in
11 the body; the Spaceless, yet seeming to occupy space;

12 Infinite, Omnipresent: knowing such to be the Soul, the sages
13 never are miserable."

14 "This Atman is not to be realised by the power of speech, nor
15 by a vast intellect, nor by the study of the Vedas." This is a very bold
16 utterance. As I told you before, the sages were very bold thinkers,
17 and never stopped at anything. You will remember that in India
18 these Vedas are regarded in a much higher light than even the
19 Christians regard their Bible. Your idea of revelation is that a man
20 was inspired by God; but in India the idea is that things exist
21 because they are in the Vedas. In and through the Vedas the whole
22 creation has come. All that is called knowledge is in the Vedas.
23 Every word is sacred and eternal, eternal as the soul, without
24 beginning and without end. The whole of the Creator's mind is in
25 this book, as it were. That is the light in which the Vedas are held.
26 Why is this thing moral? Because the Vedas say so. Why is that
27 thing immoral? Because the Vedas say so. In spite of that, look at
28 the boldness of these sages who proclaimed that the truth is not to
29 be found by much study of the Vedas. "With whom the Lord is
30 pleased, to that man He expresses Himself." But then, the objection
31 may be advanced that this is something like partisanship. But Yama
32 explains, "Those who are evil-doers, whose minds are not peaceful,
33 can never see the Light. It is to those who are true in heart, pure in
34 deed, whose senses are controlled, that this Self manifests Itself."

35 Here is a beautiful figure. Picture the Self to be the rider and
36 this body the chariot, the intellect to be the charioteer, mind the
37 reins, and the senses the horses. He whose horses are well broken,
38 and whose reins are strong and kept well in the hands of the
39 charioteer (the intellect) reaches the goal which is the state of Him,
40 the Omnipresent. But the man whose horses (the senses) are not
41 controlled, nor the reins (the mind) well managed, goes to
42 destruction. This Atman in all beings does not manifest Himself to
43 the eyes or the senses, but those whose minds have become
44 purified and refined realise Him. Beyond all sound, all sight, beyond
45 form, absolute, beyond all taste and touch, infinite, without
46 beginning and without end, even beyond nature, the Unchangeable;
47 he who realises Him, frees himself from the jaws of death. But it is
48 very difficult. It is, as it were, walking on the edge of a razor; the
49 way is long and perilous, but struggle on, do not despair. Awake,
50 arise, and stop not till the goal is reached.

51 The one central idea throughout all the Upanishads is that of
52 realisation. A great many questions will arise from time to time, and

1 especially to the modern man. There will be the question of utility,
2 there will be various other questions, but in all we shall find that we
3 are prompted by our past associations. It is association of ideas that
4 has such a tremendous power over our minds. To those who from
5 childhood have always heard of a Personal God and the personality
6 of the mind, these ideas will of course appear very stern and harsh,
7 but if they listen to them and think over them, they will become part
8 of their lives and will no longer frighten them. The great question
9 that generally arises is the utility of philosophy. To that there can be
10 only one answer: if on the utilitarian ground it is good for men to
11 seek for pleasure, why should not those whose pleasure is in
12 religious speculation seek for that? Because sense-enjoyments
13 please many, they seek for them, but there may be others whom
14 they do not please, who want higher enjoyment. The dog's pleasure
15 is only in eating and drinking. The dog cannot understand the
16 pleasure of the scientist who gives up everything, and, perhaps,
17 dwells on the top of a mountain to observe the position of certain
18 stars. The dogs may smile at him and think he is a madman.
19 Perhaps this poor scientist never had money enough to marry even,
20 and lives very simply. May be, the dog laughs at him. But the
21 scientist says, "My dear dog, your pleasure is only in the senses
22 which you enjoy, and you know nothing beyond; but for me this is
23 the most enjoyable life, and if you have the right to seek your
24 pleasure in your own way, so have I in mine." The mistake is that we
25 want to tie the whole world down to our own plane of thought and
26 to make our mind the measure of the whole universe. To you, the
27 old sense-things are, perhaps, the greatest pleasure, but it is not
28 necessary that my pleasure should be the same, and when you
29 insist upon that, I differ from you. That is the difference between
30 the worldly utilitarian man and the religious man. The first man
31 says, "See how happy I am. I get money, but do not bother my head
32 about religion. It is too unsearchable, and I am happy without it."
33 So far, so good; good for all utilitarians. But this world is terrible. If
34 a man gets happiness in any way excepting by injuring his fellow-
35 beings, godspeed him; but when this man comes to me and says,
36 "You too must do these things, you will be a fool if you do not," I say,
37 "You are wrong, because the very things, which are pleasurable to
38 you, have not the slightest attraction to me. If I had to go after a
39 few handfuls of gold, my life would not be worth living! I should
40 die." That is the answer the religious man would make. The fact is
41 that religion is possible only for those who have finished with these
42 lower things. We must have our own experiences, must have our
43 full run. It is only when we have finished this run that the other
44 world opens.

45 The enjoyments of the senses sometimes assume another
46 phase which is dangerous and tempting. You will always hear the
47 idea--in very old times, in every religion--that a time will come when
48 all the miseries of life will cease, and only its joys and pleasures will
49 remain, and this earth will become a heaven. That I do not believe.
50 This earth will always remain this same world. It is a most terrible
51 thing to say, yet I do not see my way out of it. The misery in the
52 world is like chronic rheumatism in the body; drive it from one part
53 and it goes to another, drive it from there and you will feel it

1 somewhere else. Whatever you do, it is still there. In olden times
2 people lived in forests, and ate each other; in modern times they do
3 not eat each other's flesh, but they cheat one another. Whole
4 countries and cities are ruined by cheating. That does not show
5 much progress. I do not see that what you call progress in the
6 world is other than the multiplication of desires. If one thing is
7 obvious to me it is this that desires bring all misery; it is the state of
8 the beggar, who is always begging for something, and unable to see
9 anything without the wish to possess it, is always longing, longing
10 for more. If the power to satisfy our desire is increasing in
11 arithmetical progression, the power of desire is increased in
12 geometrical progression. The sum total of happiness and misery in
13 this world is at least the same throughout. If a wave rises in the
14 ocean it makes a hollow somewhere. If happiness comes to one
15 man, unhappiness comes to another or, perhaps, to some animal.
16 Men are increasing in numbers and some animals are decreasing;
17 we are killing them off, and taking their land; we are taking all
18 means of sustenance from them. How can we say, then, that
19 happiness is increasing? The strong race eats up the weaker, but do
20 you think that the strong race will be very happy? No; they will
21 begin to kill each other. I do not see on practical grounds how this
22 world can become a heaven. Facts are against it. On theoretical
23 grounds also, I see it cannot be.

24 Perfection is always infinite. We are this infinite already, and
25 we are trying to manifest that infinity. You and I, and all beings, are
26 trying to manifest it. So far it is all right. But from this fact some
27 German philosophers have started a peculiar theory--that this
28 manifestation will become higher and higher until we attain perfect
29 manifestation, until we have become perfect beings. What is meant
30 by perfect manifestation? Perfection means infinity, and
31 manifestation means limit, and so it means that we shall become
32 unlimited limiteds, which is self-contradictory. Such a theory may
33 please children; but it is poisoning their minds with lies, and is very
34 bad for religion. But we know that this world is a degradation, that
35 man is a degradation of God, and that Adam fell. There is no
36 religion today that does not teach that man is a degradation. We
37 have been degraded down to the animal, and are now going up, to
38 emerge out of this bondage. But we shall never be able entirely to
39 manifest the Infinite here. We shall struggle hard, but there will
40 come a time when we shall find that it is impossible to be perfect
41 here, while we are bound by the senses. And then the march back
42 to our original state of Infinity will be sounded.

43 This is renunciation. We shall have to get out of the difficulty
44 by reversing the process by which we got in, and then morality and
45 charity will begin. What is the watchword of all ethical codes? "Not
46 I, but thou", and this "I" is the outcome of the Infinite behind, trying
47 to manifest Itself on the outside world. This little "I" is the result,
48 and it will have to go back and join the Infinite, its own nature.
49 Every time you say, "Not I, my brother, but thou", you are trying to
50 go back, and every time you say "I, and not thou", you take the false
51 step of trying to manifest the Infinite through the sense-world. That
52 brings struggles and evils into the world, but after a time

1 renunciation must come, eternal renunciation. That little "I" is dead
2 and gone. Why care so much for this little life? All these vain
3 desires of living and enjoying this life, here or in some other place,
4 bring death.

5 If we are developed from animals, the animals also may be
6 degraded men. How do you know it is not so? You have seen that
7 the proof of evolution is simply this: you find a series of bodies from
8 the lowest to the highest rising in a gradually ascending scale. But
9 from that how can you insist that it is always from the lower
10 upwards, and never from the higher downwards? The argument
11 applies both ways, and if anything is true, I believe it is that the
12 series is repeating itself in going up and down. How can you have
13 evolution without involution? Our struggle for the higher life shows
14 that we have been degraded from a high state. It must be so, only it
15 may vary as to details. I always cling to the idea set forth with one
16 voice by Christ, Buddha, and the Vedanta, that we must all come to
17 perfection in time, but only by giving up this imperfection. This
18 world is nothing. It is at best only a hideous caricature, a shadow of
19 the Reality. We must go to the Reality. Renunciation will take us to
20 It. Renunciation is the very basis of our true life; every moment of
21 goodness and real life that we enjoy is when we do not think of
22 ourselves. This little separate self must die. Then we shall find that
23 we are in the Real, and that Reality is God, and He is our own true
24 nature, and He is always in us and with us. Let us live in Him and
25 stand in Him. It is the only joyful state of existence. Life on the
26 plane of the Spirit is the only life, and let us all try to attain to this
27 realisation.

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

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"The Self-existent One projected the senses outwards and, therefore, a man looks outward, not within himself. A certain wise one, desiring immortality, with inverted senses, perceived the Self within." As I have already said, the first inquiry that we find in the Vedas was concerning outward things, and then a new idea came that the reality of things is not to be found in the external world; not by looking outwards, but by turning the eyes, as it is literally expressed, inwards. And the word used for the Soul is very significant: it is He who has gone inward, the innermost reality of our being, the heart centre, the core, from which, as it were, everything comes out; the central sun of which the mind, the body, the sense-organs, and everything else we have are but rays going outwards. "Men of childish intellect, ignorant persons, run after desires which are external, and enter the trap of far-reaching death, but the wise, understanding immortality, never seek for the Eternal in this life of finite things." The same idea is here made clear that in this external world, which is full of finite things, it is impossible to see and find the Infinite. The Infinite must be sought in that alone which is infinite, and the only thing infinite about us is that which is within us, our own soul. Neither the body, nor the mind, nor even our thoughts, nor the world we see around us, are infinite. The Seer, He to whom they all belong, the Soul of man, He who is awake in the internal man, alone is infinite, and to seek for the Infinite Cause of this whole universe we must go there. In the Infinite Soul alone we can find it. What is here is there too, and what is there is here also. He who sees the manifold goes from death to death." We have seen how at first there was the desire to go to heaven. When these ancient Aryans became dissatisfied with the world around them, they naturally thought that after death they would go to some place where there would be all happiness without any misery; these places they multiplied and called Svargas--the word may be translated as heavens--where there would be joy for ever, the body would become perfect, and also the mind, and there they would live with their forefathers. But as soon as philosophy came, men found that this was impossible and absurd. The very idea of an infinite in place would be a contradiction in terms, as a place must begin and continue in time. Therefore they had to give up this idea. They found out that the gods who lived in these heavens had once been human beings on earth, who through their good works had become gods, and the godhoods, as they call them, were different states, different positions; none of the gods spoken of in the Vedas are permanent individuals.

For instance, Indra and Varuna are not the names of certain persons, but the names of positions as governors and so on. The Indra who had lived before is not the same person as the Indra of the present day; he has passed away, and another man from earth has filled his place. So with all the other gods. These are certain positions, which are filled successively by human souls who have raised themselves to the condition of gods, and yet even they die. In the old Rig-Veda we find the word "immortality" used with regard to

1 these gods, but later on it is dropped entirely, for they found that
2 immortality which is beyond time and space cannot be spoken of
3 with regard to any physical form, however subtle it may be.
4 However fine it may be, it must have a beginning in time and space,
5 for the necessary factors that enter into the make-up of form are in
6 space. Try to think of a form without space; it is impossible. Space
7 is one of the materials, as it were, which make up the form, and this
8 is continually changing. Space and time are in Maya, and this idea
9 is expressed in the line--"What is here, that is there too." If there
10 are these gods, they must be bound by the same laws that apply
11 here, and all laws involved destruction and renewal again and
12 again. These laws are moulding matter into different forms, and
13 crushing them out again. Everything born must die; and so, if there
14 are heavens, the same laws must hold good there.

15 In this world we find that all happiness is followed by misery
16 as its shadow. Life has its shadow, death. They must go together,
17 because they are not contradictory, not two separate existences,
18 but different manifestations of the same unit, life and death, sorrow
19 and happiness, good and evil. The dualistic conception that good
20 and evil are two separate entities, and that they are both going on
21 eternally, is absurd on the face of it. They are the diverse
22 manifestations of one and the same fact, one time appearing as
23 bad, and at another time as good. The difference does not exist in
24 kind, but only in degree. They differ from each other in degree of
25 intensity. We find as a fact that the same nerve systems carry good
26 and bad sensations alike, and when the nerves are injured, neither
27 sensation comes to us. If a certain nerve is paralysed, we do not get
28 the pleasurable feelings that used to come along the wire; and at
29 the same time we do not get the painful feelings either. They are
30 never two, but the same. Again, the same thing produces pleasure
31 and pain at different times of life. The same phenomenon will
32 produce pleasure in one, and pain in another. The eating of meat
33 produces pleasure to a man, but pain to the animal which is eaten.
34 There has never been anything which gives pleasure to all alike.
35 Some are pleased, other displeased. So on it will go. Therefore, this
36 duality of existence is denied. And what follows? I told you in my
37 last lecture that we can never have ultimately everything good on
38 this earth and nothing bad. It may have disappointed and
39 frightened some of you, but I cannot help it, and I am open to
40 conviction when I am shown to the contrary; but until that can be
41 proved to me, and I can find that it is true, I cannot say so.

42 The general argument against my statement, and apparently
43 a very convincing one, is this that in the course of evolution, all that
44 is evil in what we see around us is gradually being eliminated, and
45 the result is that if this elimination continues for millions of years, a
46 time will come when all the evil will have been extirpated, and the
47 good alone will remain. This is apparently a very sound argument.
48 Would to God it were true! But there is a fallacy in it. and it is this
49 that it takes for granted that both good and evil are things that are
50 eternally fixed. It takes for granted that there is a definite mass of
51 evil, which may be represented by a hundred, and likewise of good,
52 and that this mass of evil is being diminished every day, leaving only

1 the good. But is this so? The history of the world shows that evil is a
2 continuously increasing quantity, as well as good. Take the lowest
3 man; he lives in a forest. His sense of enjoyment is very small, and
4 so also is his power to suffer. His misery is entirely on the sense-
5 plane. If he does not get plenty of food, he is miserable; but give
6 him plenty of food and freedom to rove and to hunt, and he is
7 perfectly happy. His happiness consists only in the senses, and so
8 does his misery also. But if that man increases in knowledge, his
9 happiness will increase, the intellect will open to him, and his
10 sense-enjoyment will evolve into intellectual enjoyment. He will feel
11 pleasure in reading a beautiful poem, and a mathematical problem
12 will be of absorbing interest to him. But, with these, the finer
13 nerves will become more and more susceptible to miseries of
14 mental pain, of which the savage does not think. Take a very simple
15 illustration. In Tibet there is no marriage, and there is no jealousy,
16 yet we know that marriage is a much higher state. The Tibetans
17 have not known the wonderful enjoyment, the blessing of chastity,
18 the happiness of having a chaste, virtuous wife, or a chaste,
19 virtuous husband. These people cannot feel that. And similarly they
20 do not feel the intense jealousy of the chaste wife or husband, or
21 the misery caused by unfaithfulness on either side, with all the
22 heart-burnings and sorrows which believers in chastity experience.
23 On one side, the latter gain happiness, but on the other, they suffer
24 misery too.

25 Take your country which is the richest in the world, and
26 which is more luxurious than any other, and see how intense in the
27 misery, how many more lunatics you have, compared with other
28 races, only because the desires are so keen. A man must keep up a
29 high standard of living, and the amount of money he spends in one
30 year would be a fortune to a man in India. You cannot preach to him
31 of simple living because society demands so much of him. The
32 wheel of society is rolling on; it stops not for the widow's tears or
33 orphans' wails. This is the state of things everywhere. Your sense of
34 enjoyment is developed, your society is very much more beautiful
35 than some others. You have so many more things to enjoy. But those
36 who have fewer have much less misery. You can argue thus
37 throughout, the higher the ideal you have in the brain, the greater
38 is your enjoyment, and the more profound your misery. One is like
39 the shadow of the other. That the evils are being eliminated may be
40 true, but if so, the good also must be dying out. But are not evils
41 multiplying fast, and good diminishing, if I may so put it? If good
42 increases in arithmetical progression, evil increases in geometrical
43 progression. And this is Maya. This is neither optimism nor
44 pessimism. Vedanta does not take the position that this world is
45 only a miserable one. That would be untrue. At the same time, it is a
46 mistake to say that this world is full of happiness and blessings.

47 So it is useless to tell children that this world is all good, all
48 flowers, all milk and honey. That is what we have all dreamt. At the
49 same time it is erroneous to think, because one man has suffered
50 more than another, that all is evil. It is this duality, this play of good
51 and evil that makes our world of experiences. At the same time the
52 Vedanta says, "Do not think that good and evil are two, are two

1 separate essences, for they are one and the same thing, appearing
2 in different degrees and in different guises and producing
3 differences of feeling in the same mind." So, the first thought of the
4 Vedanta is the finding of unity in the external; the One Existence
5 manifesting Itself, however different It may appear in
6 manifestation. Think of the old crude theory of the Persians--two
7 gods creating this world, the good god doing everything that is
8 good, and the bad one, everything bad. On the very face of it, you
9 see the absurdity, for if it be carried out, every law of nature must
10 have two parts, one of which is manipulated by one god, and then
11 he goes away and the other god manipulates the other part. There
12 the difficulty comes that both are working in the same world, and
13 these two gods keep themselves in harmony by injuring one portion
14 and doing good to another. This is a crude case, of course, the
15 crudest way of expressing the duality of existence. But, take the
16 more advanced, the more abstract theory that this world is partly
17 good and partly bad. This also is absurd, arguing from the same
18 standpoint. It is the law of unity that gives us our food, and it is the
19 same law that kills many through accidents or misadventure.

20 We find, then, that this world is neither optimistic nor
21 pessimistic; it is a mixture of both, and as we go on we shall find
22 that the whole blame is taken away from nature and put upon our
23 shoulders. At the same time the Vedanta shows the way out, but not
24 by denial of evil, because it analyses boldly the fact as it is and does
25 not seek to conceal anything. It is not hopeless; it is not agnostic. It
26 finds out a remedy, but it wants to place that remedy on adamant
27 foundations; not by shutting the child's mouth and blinding its eyes
28 with something which is untrue, and which the child will find out in
29 a few days. I remember when I was young, a young man's father
30 died and left him poorly off, with a large family to support, and he
31 found that his father's friends were unwilling to help him. He had a
32 conversation with a clergyman who offered this consolation, "Oh, it
33 is all good, all is sent for our good." That is the old method of trying
34 to put a piece of gold leaf on an old sore. It is a confession of
35 weakness, or absurdity. The young man went away, and six months
36 afterwards a son was born to the clergyman, and he gave a
37 thanksgiving party to which the young man was invited. The
38 clergyman prayed, "Thank God for His mercies." And the young
39 man stood up and said, "Stop, this is all misery." The clergyman
40 asked, "What?" "Because when my father died you said it was good,
41 though apparently evil; so now, this is apparently good, but really
42 evil." Is this the way to cure the misery of the world? Be good and
43 have mercy on those who suffer. Do not try to patch it up, nothing
44 will cure this world; go beyond it.

45 This is a world of good and evil. Wherever there is good, evil
46 follows, but beyond and behind all these manifestations, all these
47 contradictions, the Vedanta finds out that Unity. It says, "Give up
48 what is evil and give up what is good." What remains then? Behind
49 good and evil stands something which is yours, the real you, beyond
50 every evil, and beyond every good too, and it is that which is
51 manifesting itself as good and bad. Know that first, and then and
52 then alone you will be a true optimist, and not before; for then you

1 will be able to control everything. Control these manifestations and
2 you will be at liberty to manifest the real "you". First be master of
3 yourself, stand up and be free, go beyond the pale of these laws, for
4 these laws do not absolutely govern you, they are only part of your
5 being. First find out that you are not the slave of nature, never were
6 and never will be; that this nature, infinite as you may think it, is
7 only finite, a drop in the ocean, and your Soul is the ocean; you are
8 beyond the stars, the sun, and the moon. They are like mere
9 bubbles compared with your infinite being. Know that, and you will
10 control both good and evil. Then alone the whole vision will change
11 and you will stand up and say, "How beautiful is good and how
12 wonderful is evil!"

13 That is what the Vedanta teaches. It does not propose any
14 slipshod remedy by covering wounds with gold leaf and the more
15 the wound festers, putting on more gold leaf. This life is a hard fact;
16 work your way through it boldly, though it may be adamant; no
17 matter, the soul is stronger. It lays no responsibility on little gods;
18 for you are the makers of your own fortunes. You make yourselves
19 suffer, you make good and evil, and it is you who put your hands
20 before your eyes and say it is dark. Take your hands away and see
21 the light; you are effulgent, you are perfect already, from the very
22 beginning. We now understand the verse: "He goes from death to
23 death who sees the many here." See that One and be free.

24 How are we to see it? This mind, so deluded, so weak, so
25 easily led, even this mind can be strong and may catch a glimpse of
26 that knowledge, that Oneness, which saves us from dying again and
27 again. As rain falling upon a mountain flows in various streams
28 down the sides of the mountain, so all the energies which you see
29 here are from that one Unit. It has become manifold falling upon
30 Maya. Do not run after the manifold; go towards the One. "He is in
31 all that moves; He is in all that is pure; He fills the universe; He is
32 in the sacrifice; He is the guest in the house; He is in man, in water,
33 in animals, in truth; He is the Great One. As fire coming into this
34 world is manifesting itself in various forms, even so, that one Soul
35 of the universe is manifesting Himself in all these various forms. As
36 air coming into this universe manifests itself in various forms, even
37 so, the One Soul of all souls, of all beings, is manifesting Himself in
38 all forms." This is true for you when you have understood this Unity,
39 and not before. Then is all optimism, because He is seen
40 everywhere. The question is that if all this be true that that Pure
41 One--the Self, the Infinite--has entered all this, how is it that He
42 suffers, how is it that He becomes miserable, impure? He does not,
43 says the Upanishad. "As the sun is the cause of the eyesight of
44 every being, yet is not made defective by the defect in any eye,
45 even so the Self of all is not affected by the miseries of the body, or
46 by any misery that is around you." I may have some disease and see
47 everything yellow, but the sun is not affected by it. "He is the One,
48 the Creator of all, the Ruler of all, the Internal Soul of every being--
49 He who makes His Oneness manifold. Thus sages who realise Him
50 as the Soul of their souls, unto them belongs eternal peace; unto
51 none else, unto none else. He who in this world of evanescence
52 finds Him who never changes, he who in this universe of death finds

1 that One Life, he who in this manifold finds that Oneness, and all
2 those who realise Him as the Soul of their souls, to them belongs
3 eternal peace; unto none else, unto none else. Where to find Him in
4 the external world, where to find Him in the suns, and moons, and
5 stars? There the sun cannot illumine, nor the moon, nor the stars,
6 the flash of lightning cannot illumine the place; what to speak of
7 this mortal fire? He shining, everything else shines. It is His light
8 that they have borrowed, and He is shining through them." Here is
9 another beautiful simile. Those of you who have been in India and
10 have seen how the banyan tree comes from one root and spreads
11 itself far around, will understand this. He is that banyan tree; He is
12 the root of all and has branched out until He has become this
13 universe, and however far He extends, every one of these trunks
14 and branches is connected.

15 Various heavens are spoken of in the Brahmana portion of the
16 Vedas, but the philosophical teaching of the Upanishads gives up
17 the idea of going to heaven. Happiness is not in this heaven or in
18 that heaven, it is in the soul; places do not signify anything. Here is
19 another passage which shows the different states of realisation. "In
20 the heaven of the forefathers, as a man sees things in a dream, so
21 the Real Truth is seen." As in dreams we see things hazy and not so
22 distinct, so we see the Reality there. There is another heaven called
23 the Gandharva, in which it is still less clear; as a man sees his own
24 reflection in the water, so is the Reality seen there. The highest
25 heaven, of which the Hindus conceive is called the Brahmaloaka; and
26 in this, the Truth is seen much more clearly, like light and shade,
27 but not yet quite distinctly. But as a man sees his own face in a
28 mirror, perfect, distinct, and clear, so is the Truth shining in the soul
29 of man. The highest heaven, therefore, is in our own souls; the
30 greatest temple of worship is the human soul, greater than all
31 heavens, says the Vedanta; for in no heaven anywhere, can we
32 understand the reality as distinctly and clearly as in this life, in our
33 own soul. Changing places does not help one much. I thought while
34 I was in India that the cave would give me clearer vision. I found it
35 was not so. Then I thought the forest would do so, then, Varanasi.
36 But the same difficulty existed everywhere, because we make our
37 own worlds. If I am evil, the whole world is evil to me. That is what
38 the Upanishad says. And the same thing applies to all worlds. If I
39 die and go to heaven, I should find the same, for until I am pure it is
40 no use going to caves, or forests, or to Varanasi, or to heaven, and if
41 I have polished my mirror, it does not matter where I live, I get the
42 Reality just as It is.

43 So it is useless, running hither and thither, and spending
44 energy in vain, which should be spent only in polishing the mirror.
45 The same idea is expressed again: "None sees Him, none sees His
46 form with the eyes. It is in the mind, in the pure mind, that He is
47 seen, and thus immortality is gained."

48 Those who were at the summer lectures on Raja-Yoga will be
49 interested to know that what was taught then was a different kind
50 of Yoga. The Yoga which we are now considering consists chiefly in
51 controlling the senses. When the senses are held as slaves by the
52 human soul, when they can no longer disturb the mind, then the

1 Yogi has reached the goal. "When all vain desires of the heart have
2 been given up, then this very mortal becomes immortal, then he
3 becomes one with God even here. When all the knots of the heart
4 are cut asunder, then the mortal becomes immortal, and he enjoys
5 Brahman here." Here, on earth, nowhere else.

6 A few words ought to be said here. You will generally hear
7 that this Vedanta, this philosophy and other Eastern systems, look
8 only to something beyond, letting go the enjoyments and struggle of
9 this life. This idea is entirely wrong. It is only ignorant people who
10 do not know anything of Eastern thought, and never had brain
11 enough to understand anything of its real teaching, that tell you so.
12 On the contrary, we read in our scriptures that our philosophers do
13 not want to go to other worlds, but depreciate them as places
14 where people weep and laugh for a little while only, and then die.
15 As long as we are weak we shall have to go through these
16 experiences; but whatever is true, is here, and that is the human
17 soul. And this also is insisted upon, that by committing suicide, we
18 cannot escape the inevitable; we cannot evade it. But the right path
19 is hard to find. The Hindu is just as practical as the Western, only
20 we differ in our views of life. The one says, build a good house, let
21 us have good clothes and food, intellectual culture, and so on, for
22 this is the whole of life; and in that he is immensely practical. But
23 the Hindu says, true knowledge of the world means knowledge of
24 the soul, metaphysics; and he wants to enjoy that life. In America
25 there was a great agnostic, a very noble man, a very good man, and
26 a very fine speaker. He lectured on religion, which he said was of no
27 use; why bother our heads about other worlds? He employed this
28 simile; we have an orange here, and we want to squeeze all the
29 juice out of it. I met him once and said, "I agree with you entirely. I
30 have some fruit, and I too want to squeeze out the juice. Our
31 difference lies in the choice of the fruit. You want an orange, and I
32 prefer a mango. You think it is enough to live here and eat and
33 drink and have a little scientific knowledge; but you have no right to
34 say that that will suit all tastes. Such a conception is nothing to me.
35 If I had only to learn how an apple falls to the ground, or how an
36 electric current shakes my nerves, I would commit suicide. I want
37 to understand the heart of things, the very kernel itself. Your study
38 is the manifestation of life, mine is the life itself. My philosophy says
39 you must know that and drive out from your mind all thoughts of
40 heaven and hell and all other superstitions, even though they exist
41 in the same sense that this world exists. I must know the heart of
42 this life, its very essence, what it is, not only how it works and what
43 are its manifestations. I want the *why* of everything. I leave the
44 *how* to children. As one of your countrymen said, 'While I am
45 smoking a cigarette, if I were to write a book, it would be the
46 science of the cigarette.' It is good and great to be scientific, God
47 bless them in their search; but when a man says that is all, he is
48 talking foolishly, not caring to know the *raison d'être* of life, never
49 studying existence itself. I may argue that all your knowledge is
50 nonsense, without a basis. You are studying the manifestations of
51 life, and when I ask you what life is, you say you do not know. You
52 are welcome to your study, but leave me to mine."

1 I am practical, very practical, in my own way. So your idea
2 that only the West is practical is nonsense. You are practical in your
3 way, and I in another. There are different types of men and minds. If
4 in the East a man is told that he will find the truth by standing on
5 one leg all his life, he will pursue that method. If in the West men
6 hear that there is a gold mine somewhere in an uncivilised country,
7 thousands will face the dangers there, in the hope of getting the
8 gold; and, perhaps, only one succeeds. The same men have heard
9 that they have souls but are content to leave the care of them to the
10 church. The first man will not go near the savages, he says it may
11 be dangerous. But if we tell him that on the top of a high mountain
12 lives a wonderful sage who can give him knowledge of the soul, he
13 tries to climb up to him, even if he be killed in the attempt. Both
14 types of men are practical, but the mistake lies in regarding this
15 world as the whole of life. Yours is the vanishing point of enjoyment
16 of the senses--there is nothing permanent in it, it only brings more
17 and more misery--while mine brings eternal peace.

18 I do not say your view is wrong, you are welcome to it. Great
19 good and blessing come out of it, but do not, therefore, condemn
20 my view. Mine also is practical in its own way. Let us all work out
21 our own plans. Would to God all of us were equally practical on both
22 sides. I have seen some scientists who were equally practical, both
23 as scientists and as spiritual men, and it is my great hope that in
24 course of time the whole of humanity will be efficient in the same
25 manner. When a kettle of water is coming to the boil, if you watch
26 the phenomena, you find first one bubble rising, and then another
27 and so on, until at last they all join, and a tremendous commotion
28 takes place. This world is very similar. Each individual is like a
29 bubble, and the nations, resemble many bubbles. Gradually these
30 nations are joining, and I am sure the day will come when
31 separation will vanish and that Oneness to which we are all going
32 will become manifest. A time must come when every man will be as
33 intensely practical in the scientific world as in the spiritual, and
34 then that Oneness, the harmony of Oneness, will pervade the whole
35 world. The whole of mankind will become Jivanmuktas--free whilst
36 living. We are all struggling towards that one end through our
37 jealousies and hatreds, through our love and co-operation. A
38 tremendous stream is flowing towards the ocean carrying us all
39 along with it; and though like straws and scraps of paper we may at
40 times float aimlessly about, in the long run we are sure to join the
41 Ocean of Life and Bliss.

THE FREEDOM OF THE SOUL

(Delivered in London, 5th November 1896)

The Katha Upanishad, which we have been studying, was written much later than that to which we now turn--the Chhandogya. The language is more modern, and the thought more organised. In the older Upanishads the language is very archaic, like that of the hymn portion of the Vedas, and one has to wade sometimes through quite a mass of unnecessary things to get at the essential doctrines. The ritualistic literature about which I told you, which forms the second division of the Vedas, has left a good deal of its mark upon this old Upanishad, so that more than half of it is still ritualistic. There is, however, one great gain in studying the very old Upanishads. You trace, as it were, the historical growth of spiritual ideas. In the more recent Upanishads, the spiritual ideas have been collected and brought into one place; as in the Bhagavad-Gita, for instance, which we may, perhaps, look upon as the last of the Upanishads, you do not find any inkling of these ritualistic ideas. The Gita is like a bouquet composed of beautiful flowers of spiritual truths collected from the Upanishads. But in the Gita you cannot study the rise of the spiritual ideas, you cannot trace them to their source. To do that, as has been pointed out by many, you must study the Vedas. The great idea of holiness that has been attached to these books has preserved them, more than any other book in the world, from mutilation. In them, thoughts at their highest and at their lowest have all been preserved, the essential and the non-essential, the most ennobling teachings and the simplest matters of detail stand side by side; for nobody has dared to touch them. Commentators came and tried to smooth them down and to bring out wonderful new ideas from the old things; they tried to find spiritual ideas in even the most ordinary statements, but the texts remained, and as such, they are the most wonderful historical study. We all know that in the scriptures of every religion changes were made to suit the growing spirituality of later times; one word was changed here and another put in there, and so on. This, probably, has not been done with the Vedic literature, or if ever done, it is almost imperceptible. So we have this great advantage, we are able to study thoughts in their original significance, to note how they developed, how from materialistic ideas finer and finer spiritual ideas are evolved, until they attained their greatest height in the Vedanta. Descriptions of some of the old manners and customs are also there, but they do not appear much in the Upanishads. The language used is peculiar, terse, mnemonic.

The writers of these books simply jotted down these lines as helps to remember certain facts which they supposed were already well known. In a narrative, perhaps, which they are telling, they take it for granted that it is well known to everyone they are addressing. Thus a great difficulty arises, we scarcely know the real meaning of any one of these stories, because the traditions have nearly died out, and the little that is left of them has been very much exaggerated. Many new interpretations have been put upon

1 them, so that when you find them in the Puranas they have already
2 become lyrical poems. Just as in the West, we find this prominent
3 fact in the political development of Western races that they cannot
4 bear absolute rule, that they are always trying to prevent any one
5 man from ruling over them, and are gradually advancing to higher
6 and higher democratic ideas, higher and higher ideas of physical
7 liberty, so, in Indian metaphysics, exactly the same phenomenon
8 appears in the development of spiritual life. The multiplicity of gods
9 gave place to one God of the universe, and in the Upanishads there
10 is a rebellion even against that one God. Not only was the idea of
11 many governors of the universe ruling their destinies unbearable,
12 but it was also intolerable that there should be one person ruling
13 this universe. This is the first thing that strikes us. The idea grows
14 and grows, until it attains its climax. In almost all of the
15 Upanishads, we find the climax coming at the last, and that is the
16 dethroning of this God of the universe. The personality of God
17 vanishes, the impersonality comes. God is no more a person, no
18 more a human being, however magnified and exaggerated, who
19 rules this universe, but He has become an embodied principle in
20 every being, immanent in the whole universe. It would be illogical
21 to go from the Personal God to the Impersonal, and at the same
22 time to leave man as a person. So the personal man is broken down,
23 and man as principle is built up. The person is only a phenomenon,
24 the principle is behind it. Thus from both sides, simultaneously, we
25 find the breaking down of personalities and the approach towards
26 principles, the Personal God approaching the Impersonal, the
27 personal man approaching the Impersonal Man. Then come the
28 succeeding stages of the gradual convergence of the two advancing
29 lines of the Impersonal God and the Impersonal Man. And the
30 Upanishads embody the stages through which these two lines at
31 last become one, and the last word of each Upanishad is, "Thou art
32 That". There is but One Eternally Blissful Principle, and that One is
33 manifesting Itself as all this variety.

34 Then came the philosophers. The work of the Upanishads
35 seems to have ended at that point; the next was taken up by the
36 philosophers. The framework was given them by the Upanishads,
37 and they had to fill in the details. So, many questions would
38 naturally arise. Taking for granted that there is but One Impersonal
39 Principle which is manifesting Itself in all these manifold forms,
40 how is it that the One becomes many? It is another way of putting
41 the same old question which in its crude form comes into the
42 human heart as the inquiry into the cause of evil and so forth. Why
43 does evil exist in the world, and what is its cause? But the same
44 question has now become refined, abstracted. No more is it asked
45 from the platform of the senses why we are unhappy, but from the
46 platform of philosophy. How is it that this One Principle becomes
47 manifold? And the answer, as we have seen, the best answer that
48 India has produced is the theory of Maya which says that It really
49 has not become manifold, that It really has not lost any of Its real
50 nature. Manifoldness is only apparent. Man is only apparently a
51 person, but in reality he is the Impersonal Being. God is a person
52 only apparently, but really He is the Impersonal Being.

1 Even in this answer there have been succeeding stages, and
2 philosophers have varied in their opinions. All Indian philosophers
3 did not admit this theory of Maya. Possibly most of them did not.
4 There are dualists, with a crude sort of dualism, who would not
5 allow the question to be asked, but stifled it at its very birth. They
6 said, "You have no right to ask such a question, you have no right to
7 ask for an explanation; it is simply the will of God, and we have to
8 submit to it quietly. There is no liberty for the human soul.
9 Everything is predestined--what we shall do, have, enjoy, and suffer;
10 and when suffering comes, it is our duty to endure it patiently; if we
11 do not, we shall be punished all the more. How do we know that?
12 Because the Vedas say so." And thus they have their texts and their
13 meanings and they want to enforce them.

14 There are others who, though not admitting the Maya theory,
15 stand midway. They say that the whole of this creation forms, as it
16 were, the body of God. God is the Soul of all souls and of the whole
17 of nature. In the case of individual souls, contraction comes from
18 evil doing. When a man does anything evil, his soul begins to
19 contract and his power is diminished and goes on decreasing, until
20 he does good works, when it expands again. One idea seems to be
21 common in all the Indian systems, and I think, in every system in
22 the world, whether they know it or not, and that is what I should
23 call the divinity of man. There is no one system in the world, no real
24 religion, which does not hold the idea that the human soul,
25 whatever it be, or whatever its relation to God, is essentially pure
26 and perfect, whether expressed in the language of mythology,
27 allegory, or philosophy. Its real nature is blessedness and power, not
28 weakness and misery. Somehow or other this misery has come. The
29 crude systems may call it a personified evil, a devil, or an Ahriman,
30 to explain how this misery came. Other systems may try to make a
31 God and a devil in one, who makes some people miserable and
32 others happy, without any reason whatever. Others again, more
33 thoughtful, bring in the theory of Maya and so forth. But one fact
34 stands out clearly, and it is with this that we have to deal. After all,
35 these philosophical ideas and systems are but gymnastics of the
36 mind, intellectual exercises. The one great idea that to me seems to
37 be clear, and comes out through masses of superstition in every
38 country and in every religion, is the one luminous idea that man is
39 divine, that divinity is our nature.

40 Whatever else comes is a mere superimposition, as the
41 Vedanta calls it. Something has been superimposed, but that divine
42 nature never dies. In the most degraded as well as in the most
43 saintly it is ever present. It has to be called out, and it will work
44 itself out. We have to ask, and it will manifest itself. The people of
45 old knew that fire lived in the flint and in dry wood, but friction was
46 necessary to call it out. So this fire of freedom and purity is the
47 nature of every soul, and not a quality, because qualities can be
48 acquired and therefore can be lost. The soul is one with Freedom,
49 and the soul is one with Existence, and the soul is one with
50 Knowledge. The Sat-Chit-Ananda--Existence-Knowledge-Bliss
51 Absolute--is the nature, the birthright of the Soul, and all the
52 manifestations that we see are Its expressions, dimly or brightly

1 manifesting Itself. Even death is but a manifestation of that Real
2 Existence. Birth and death, life and decay, degeneration and
3 regeneration--are all manifestations of that Oneness. So,
4 knowledge, however it manifests itself, either as ignorance or as
5 learning, is but the manifestation of that same Chit, the essence of
6 knowledge; the difference is only in degree, and not in kind. The
7 difference in knowledge between the lowest worm that crawls
8 under our feet and the highest genius that the world may produce is
9 only of degree, and not of kind. The Vedantin thinker boldly says
10 that the enjoyments in this life, even the most degraded joys, are
11 but manifestations of that One Divine Bliss, the Essence of the Soul.

12 This idea seems to be the most prominent in Vedanta, and, as
13 I have said, it appears to me that every religion holds it. I have yet
14 to know the religion which does not. It is the one universal idea
15 working through all religions. Take the Bible for instance. You find
16 there the allegorical statement that the first man Adam was pure,
17 and that his purity was obliterated by his evil deeds afterwards. It is
18 clear from this allegory that they thought that the nature of the
19 primitive man was perfect. The impurities that we see, the
20 weaknesses that we feel, are but superimpositions on that nature,
21 and the subsequent history of the Christian religion shows that they
22 also believe in the possibility, nay, the certainty of regaining that old
23 state. This is the whole history of the Bible, Old and New
24 Testaments together. So with the Mohammedans: they also believed
25 in Adam and the purity of Adam and through Mohammed the way
26 was opened to regain that lost state. So with the Buddhists: they
27 believe in the state called Nirvana which is beyond this relative
28 world.

29 It is exactly the same as the Brahman of the Vedantins, and
30 the whole system of the Buddhists is founded upon the idea of
31 regaining that lost state of Nirvana. In every system we find this
32 doctrine present, that you cannot get anything which is not yours
33 already. You are indebted to nobody in this universe. You claim your
34 own birthright, as it has been most poetically expressed by a great
35 Vedantin philosopher, in the title of one of his books--"The
36 attainment of our own empire". That empire is ours; we have lost it
37 and we have to regain it. The Mayavadin, however, says that this
38 losing of the empire was a hallucination; you never lost it. This is
39 the only difference.

40 Although all the systems agree so far that we had the empire,
41 and that we have lost it, they give us varied advice as to how to
42 regain it. One says that you must perform certain ceremonies, pay
43 certain sums of money to certain idols, eat certain sorts of food, live
44 in a peculiar fashion to regain that empire. Another says that if you
45 weep and prostrate yourselves and ask pardon of some Being
46 beyond nature, you will regain that empire. Again, another says if
47 you love such a Being with all your heart, you will regain that
48 empire. All this varied advice is in the Upanishads. As I go on, you
49 will find it so. But the last and greatest counsel is that you need not
50 weep at all. You need not go through all these ceremonies, and
51 need not take any notice of how to regain your empire, because you
52 never lost it. Why should you go to seek for what you never lost?

1 You are pure already, you are free already. If you think you are free,
2 free you are this moment, and if you think you are bound, bound
3 you will be. This is a very bold statement, and as I told you at the
4 beginning of this course, I shall have to speak to you very boldly. It
5 may frighten you now, but when you think over it, and realise it in
6 your own life, then you will come to know that what I say is true.
7 For, supposing that freedom is not your nature, by no manner of
8 means can you become free. Supposing you were free and in some
9 way you lost that freedom, that shows you were not free to begin
10 with. Had you been free, what could have made you lose it? The
11 independent can never be made dependent; if it is really
12 dependent, its independence was a hallucination.

13 Of the two sides, then, which will you take? If you say that the
14 soul was by its own nature pure and free, it naturally follows that
15 there was nothing in this universe which could make it bound or
16 limited. But if there was anything in nature which could bind the
17 soul, it naturally follows that it was not free, and your statement
18 that it was free is a delusion. So if it is possible for us to attain to
19 freedom, the conclusion is inevitable that the soul is by its nature
20 free. It cannot be otherwise. Freedom means independence of
21 anything outside, and that means that nothing outside itself could
22 work upon it as a cause. The soul is causeless, and from this follow
23 all the great ideas that we have. You cannot establish the
24 immortality of the soul, unless you grant that it is by its nature free,
25 or in other words, that it cannot be acted upon by anything outside.
26 For death is an effect produced by some outside cause. I drink
27 poison and I die, thus showing that my body can be acted upon by
28 something outside that is called poison. But if it be true that the
29 soul is free, it naturally follows that nothing can affect it, and it can
30 never die. Freedom, immortality, blessedness, all depend upon the
31 soul being beyond the law of causation, beyond this Maya. Of these
32 two which will you take? Either make the first a delusion, or make
33 the second a delusion. Certainly I will make the second a delusion.
34 It is more consonant with all my feelings and aspirations. I am
35 perfectly aware that I am free by nature, and I will not admit that
36 this bondage is true and my freedom a delusion.

37 This discussion goes on in all philosophies, in some form or
38 other. Even in the most modern philosophies you find the same
39 discussion arising. There are two parties. One says that there is no
40 soul, that the idea of soul is a delusion produced by the repeated
41 transit of particles of matter, bringing about the combination which
42 you call the body or the brain; that the impression of freedom is the
43 result of the vibrations and motions and continuous transit of these
44 particles. There were Buddhistic sects who held the same view and
45 illustrated it by this example: If you take a torch and whirl it round
46 rapidly, there will be a circle of light. That circle does not really
47 exist, because the torch is changing place every moment. We are
48 but bundles of little particles, which in their rapid whirling produce
49 the delusion of a permanent soul. The other party states that in the
50 rapid succession of thought, matter occurs as a delusion, and does
51 not really exist. So we see one side claiming that spirit is a delusion
52 and the other, that matter is a delusion. Which side will you take?

1 Of course, we will take the spirit and deny matter. The arguments
2 are similar for both, only on the spirit side the argument is little
3 stronger. For nobody has ever seen what matter is. We can only feel
4 ourselves. I never knew a man who could feel matter outside of
5 himself. Nobody was ever able to jump outside of himself. Therefore
6 the argument is a little stronger on the side of the spirit. Secondly,
7 the spirit theory explains the universe, while materialism does not.
8 Hence the materialistic explanation is illogical. If you boil down all
9 the philosophies and analyse them, you will find that they are
10 reduced to one or the other of these two positions. So here, too, in a
11 more intricate form, in a more philosophical form, we find the same
12 question about natural purity and freedom. One side says that the
13 first is a delusion, and the other, that the second is a delusion. And,
14 of course, we side with the second, in believing that our bondage is
15 a delusion.

16 The solution of the Vedanta is that we are not bound, we are
17 free already. Not only so, but to say or to think that we are bound is
18 dangerous--it is a mistake, it is self-hypnotism. As soon as you say, "I
19 am bound," "I am weak," "I am helpless," woe unto you; you rivet
20 one more chain upon yourself. Do not say it, do not think it. I have
21 heard of a man who lived in a forest and used to repeat day and
22 night, "Shivoham"--I am the Blessed One--and one day a tiger fell
23 upon him and dragged him away to kill him; people on the other
24 side of the river saw it, and heard the voice so long as the voice
25 remained in him, saying "Shivoham"--even in the very jaws of the
26 tiger. There have been many such men. There have been cases of
27 men who, while being cut to pieces, have blessed their enemies. "I
28 am He, I am He; and so art thou. I am pure and perfect and so are
29 all my enemies. You are He, and so am I." That is the position of
30 strength. Nevertheless, there are great and wonderful things in the
31 religions of the dualists; wonderful is the idea of the Personal God
32 apart from nature, whom we worship and love. Sometimes this idea
33 is very soothing. But, says the Vedanta, the soothing is something
34 like the effect that comes from an opiate, not natural. It brings
35 weakness in the long run, and what this world wants today, more
36 than it ever did before, is strength. It is weakness, says the
37 Vedanta, which is the cause of all misery in this world. Weakness is
38 the one cause of suffering. We become miserable because we are
39 weak. We lie, steal, kill, and commit other crimes, because we are
40 weak. We suffer because we are weak. We die because we are
41 weak. Where there is nothing to weaken us, there is no death nor
42 sorrow. We are miserable through delusion. Give up the delusion,
43 and the whole thing vanishes. It is plain and simple indeed.
44 Through all these philosophical discussions and tremendous mental
45 gymnastics we come to this one religious idea, the simplest in the
46 whole world.

47 The monistic Vedanta is the simplest form in which you can
48 put truth. To teach dualism was a tremendous mistake made in
49 India and elsewhere, because people did not look at the ultimate
50 principles, but only thought of the process which is very intricate
51 indeed. To many, these tremendous philosophical and logical
52 propositions were alarming. They thought these things could not be

1 made universal, could not be followed in everyday practical life, and
2 that under the guise of such a philosophy much laxity of living
3 would arise.

4 But I do not believe at all that monistic ideas preached to the
5 world would produce immorality and weakness. On the contrary, I
6 have reason to believe that it is the only remedy there is. If this be
7 the truth, why let people drink ditch water when the stream of life
8 is flowing by? If this be the truth, that they are all pure, why not at
9 this moment teach it to the whole world? Why not teach it with the
10 voice of thunder to every man that is born, to saints and sinners,
11 men, women, and children, to the man on the throne and to the man
12 sweeping the streets?

13 It appears now a very big and a very great undertaking; to
14 many it appears very startling, but that is because of superstition,
15 nothing else. By eating all sorts of bad and indigestible food, or by
16 starving ourselves, we are incompetent to eat a good meal. We have
17 listened to words of weakness from our childhood. You hear people
18 say that they do not believe in ghosts, but at the same time, there
19 are very few who do not get a little creepy sensation in the dark. It
20 is simply superstition. So with all religious superstitions. There are
21 people in this country who, if I told them there was no such being
22 as the devil, will think all religion is gone. Many people have said to
23 me, how can there be religion without a devil? How can there be
24 religion without someone to direct us? How can we live without
25 being ruled by somebody? We like to be so treated, because we
26 have become used to it. We are not happy until we feel we have
27 been reprimanded by somebody every day. The same superstition!
28 But however terrible it may seem now, the time will come when we
29 shall look back, each one of us, and smile at every one of those
30 superstitions which covered the pure and eternal soul, and repeat
31 with gladness, with truth, and with strength, I am free, and was
32 free, and always will be free. This monistic idea will come out of
33 Vedanta, and it is the one idea that deserves to live. The scriptures
34 may perish tomorrow. Whether this idea first flashed in the brains
35 of Hebrews or of people living in the Arctic regions, nobody cares.
36 For this is the truth and truth is eternal; and truth itself teaches
37 that it is not the special property of any individual or nation. Men,
38 animals, and gods are all common recipients of this one truth. Let
39 them all receive it. Why make life miserable? Why let people fall
40 into all sorts of superstitions? I will give ten thousand lives, if
41 twenty of them will give up their superstition. Not only in this
42 country, but in the land of its very birth, if you tell people this truth,
43 they are frightened. They say, "This idea is for Sannyasins who give
44 up the world and live in the forests; for them it is all right. But for
45 us poor householders, we must all have some sort of fear, we must
46 have ceremonies," and so on.

47 Dualistic ideas have ruled the world long enough, and this is
48 the result. Why not make a new experiment? It may take ages for
49 all minds to receive monism, but why not begin now? If we have
50 told it to twenty persons in our lives, we have done a great work.

51 There is one idea which often militates against it. It is this. It
52 is all very well to say, "I am the Pure, the Blessed," but I cannot

1 show it always in my life. That is true; the ideal is always very hard.
2 Every child that is born sees the sky overhead very far away, but is
3 that any reason why we should not look towards the sky? Would it
4 mend matters to go towards superstition? If we cannot get nectar,
5 would it mend matters for us to drink poison? Would it be any help
6 for us, because we cannot realise the truth immediately, to go into
7 darkness and yield to weakness and superstition?

8 I have no objection to dualism in many of its forms. I like most
9 of them, but I have objections to every form of teaching which
10 inculcates weakness. This is the one question I put to every man,
11 woman, or child, when they are in physical, mental, or spiritual
12 training. Are you strong? Do you feel strength?--for I know it is
13 truth alone that gives strength. I know that truth alone gives life,
14 and nothing but going towards reality will make us strong, and
15 none will reach truth until he is strong. Every system, therefore,
16 which weakens the mind, makes one superstitious, makes one
17 mope, makes one desire all sorts of wild impossibilities, mysteries,
18 and superstitions, I do not like, because its effect is dangerous.
19 Such systems never bring any good; such things create morbidity in
20 the mind, make it weak, so weak that in course of time it will be
21 almost impossible to receive truth or live up to it. Strength,
22 therefore, is the one thing needful. Strength is the medicine for the
23 world's disease. Strength is the medicine which the poor must have
24 when tyrannised over by the rich. Strength is the medicine that the
25 ignorant must have when oppressed by the learned; and it is the
26 medicine that sinners must have when tyrannised over by other
27 sinners; and nothing gives such strength as this idea of monism.
28 Nothing makes us so moral as this idea of monism. Nothing makes
29 us work so well at our best and highest as when all responsibility is
30 thrown upon ourselves. I challenge everyone of you. How will you
31 behave if I put a little baby in your hands? Your whole life will be
32 changed for the moment; whatever you may be, you must become
33 selfless for the time being. You will give up all your criminal ideas
34 as soon as responsibility is thrown upon you--your whole character
35 will change. So if the whole responsibility is thrown upon our own
36 shoulders, we shall be at our highest and best; when we have
37 nobody to grope towards, no devil to lay our blame upon, no
38 Personal God to carry our burdens, when we are alone responsible,
39 then we shall rise to our highest and best. I am responsible for my
40 fate, I am the bringer of good unto myself, I am the bringer of evil. I
41 am the Pure and Blessed One. We must reject all thoughts that
42 assert the contrary. "I have neither death nor fear, I have neither
43 caste nor creed, I have neither father nor mother nor brother,
44 neither friend nor foe, for I am Existence, Knowledge, and Bliss
45 Absolute; I am the Blissful One, I am the Blissful One. I am not
46 bound either by virtue or vice, by happiness or misery. Pilgrimages
47 and books and ceremonials can never bind me. I have neither
48 hunger nor thirst; the body is not mind, nor am I subject to the
49 superstitions and decay that come to the body, I am Existence,
50 Knowledge, and Bliss Absolute; I am the Blissful One, I am the
51 Blissful One."

52 This, says the Vedanta, is the only prayer that we should

1 have. This is the only way to reach the goal, to tell ourselves, and to
2 tell everybody else, that we are divine. And as we go on repeating
3 this, strength comes. He who falters at first will get stronger and
4 stronger, and the voice will increase in volume until the truth takes
5 possession of our hearts, and courses through our veins, and
6 permeates our bodies. Delusion will vanish as the light becomes
7 more and more effulgent, load after load of ignorance will vanish,
8 and then will come a time when all else has disappeared and the
9 Sun alone shines.

THE COSMOS - The Macrocosm

(Delivered in New York, 19th January 1896)

The flowers that we see all around us are beautiful, beautiful is the rising of the morning sun, beautiful are the variegated hues of nature. The whole universe is beautiful, and man has been enjoying it since his appearance on earth. Sublime and awe-inspiring are the mountains; the gigantic rushing rivers rolling towards the sea, the trackless deserts, the infinite ocean, the starry heavens--all these are awe-inspiring, sublime, and beautiful indeed. The whole mass of existence which we call nature has been acting on the human mind since time immemorial. It has been acting on the thought of man, and as its reaction has come out the question: What are these, whence are they? As far back as the time of the oldest portion of that most ancient human composition, the Vedas, we find the same question asked: "Whence is this? When there was neither aught nor naught, and darkness was hidden in darkness, who projected this universe? How? Who knows the secret?" And the question has come down to us at the present time. Millions of attempts have been made to answer it, yet millions of times it will have to be answered again. It is not that each answer was a failure; every answer to this question contained a part of truth, and this truth gathers strength as time rolls on. I will try to present before you the outline of the answer that I have gathered from the ancient philosophers of India, in harmony with modern knowledge.

We find that in this oldest of questions a few points had been already solved. The first is that there was a time when there was "neither aught nor naught", when this world did not exist; our mother earth with the seas and oceans, the rivers, and mountains, cities and villages, human races, animals, plants, birds, and planets and luminaries, all this infinite variety of creation, had no existence. Are we sure of that? We will try to trace how this conclusion is arrived at. What does man see around him? Take a little plant. He puts a seed in the ground, and later, he finds a plant peep out, lift itself slowly above the ground, and grow and grow, till it becomes a gigantic tree. Then it dies, leaving only the seed. It completes a circle--it comes out of the seed, becomes a tree, and ends in the seed again. Look at a bird, how from the egg it springs, lives its life, and then dies, leaving other eggs, seeds of future birds. So with the animals, so with man. Everything in nature begins, as it were, from certain seeds, certain rudiments, certain fine forms, and becomes grosser and grosser, and develops, going on that way for a certain time, and then again goes back to that fine form, and subsides. The raindrop in which the beautiful sunbeam is playing was drawn in the form of vapour from the ocean, went far away into the air, and reached a region where it changed into water, and dropped down in its present form--to be converted in vapour again. So with everything in nature by which we are surrounded. We know that the huge mountains are being worked upon by glaciers and rivers, which are slowly but surely pounding them and pulverising them into sand, that drifts away into the ocean where it settles down on its bed, layer after layer, becoming hard as rocks, once more to be heaped up into mountains of a future generation. Again they will be

1 pounded and pulverised, and thus the course goes on. From sand
2 rise these mountains; unto sand they go.

3 If it be true that nature is uniform throughout, if it be true,
4 and so far no human experience has contradicted it, that the same
5 method under which a small grain of sand is created, works in
6 creating the gigantic suns and stars and all this universe, if it be
7 true that the whole of this universe is built on exactly the same plan
8 as the atom, if it be true that the same law prevails throughout the
9 universe, then, as it has been said in the Vedas, "Knowing one lump
10 of clay we know the nature of all the clay that is in the universe."
11 Take up a little plant and study its life, and we know the universe as
12 it is. If we know one grain of sand, we understand the secret of the
13 whole universe. Applying this course of reasoning to phenomena,
14 we find, in the first place, that everything is almost similar at the
15 beginning and the end. The mountain comes from the sand, and
16 goes back to the sand; the river comes out of vapour, and goes back
17 to vapour; plant life comes from the seed, and goes back to the
18 seed; human life comes out of human germs, and goes back to
19 human germs. The universe with its stars and planets has come out
20 of a nebulous state and must go back to it. What do we learn from
21 this? That the manifested or the grosser state is the effect, and the
22 finer state the cause. Thousands of years ago, it was demonstrated
23 by Kapila, the great father of all philosophy, that destruction means
24 going back to the cause. If this table here is destroyed, it will go
25 back to its cause, to those fine forms and particles which,
26 combined, made this form which we call a table. If a man dies, he
27 will go back to the elements which gave him his body; if this earth
28 dies, it will go back to the elements which gave it form. This is what
29 is called destruction, going back to the cause. Therefore we learn
30 that the effect is the same as the cause, not different. It is only in
31 another form. This glass is an effect, and it had its cause, and this
32 cause is present in this form. A certain amount of the material
33 called glass plus the force in the hands of the manufacturer, are the
34 causes, the instrumental and the material, which, combined,
35 produced this form called a glass. The force which was in the hands
36 of the manufacturer is present in the glass as the power of
37 adhesion, without which the particles would fall apart; and the
38 glass material is also present. The glass is only a manifestation of
39 these fine causes in a new shape, and if it be broken into pieces, the
40 force which was present in the form of adhesion will go back and
41 join its own element, and the particles of glass will remain the same
42 until they take new forms.

43 Thus we find that the effect is never different from the cause.
44 It is only that this effect is a reproduction of the cause in a grosser
45 form. Next, we learn that all these particular forms which we call
46 plants, animals, or men are being repeated *ad infinitum*, rising and
47 falling. The seed produces the tree. The tree produces the seed,
48 which again comes up as another tree, and so on and on; there is no
49 end to it. Water-drops roll down the mountains into the ocean, and
50 rise again as vapour, go back to the mountains and again come
51 down to the ocean. So, rising and falling, the cycle goes on. So with
52 all lives, so with all existence that we can see, feel, hear, or

1 imagine. Everything that is within the bounds of our knowledge is
2 proceeding in the same way, like breathing in and breathing out in
3 the human body. Everything in creation goes on in this form, one
4 wave rising, another falling, rising again, falling again. Each wave
5 has its hollow, each hollow has its wave. The same law must apply
6 to the universe taken as a whole, because of its uniformity. This
7 universe must be resolved into its causes; the sun, moon, stars, and
8 earth, the body and mind, and everything in this universe must
9 return to their finer causes, disappear, be destroyed as it were. But
10 they will live in the causes as fine forms. Out of these fine forms
11 they will emerge again as new earths, suns, moons, and stars.

12 There is one fact more to learn about this rising and falling.
13 The seed comes out of the tree; it does not immediately become a
14 tree but has a period of inactivity, or rather, a period of very fine
15 unmanifested action. The seed has to work for some time beneath
16 the soil. It breaks into pieces, degenerates as it were, and
17 regeneration comes out of that degeneration. In the beginning, the
18 whole of this universe has to work likewise for a period in that
19 minute form, unseen and unmanifested, which is called chaos, and
20 out of that comes a new projection. The whole period of one
21 manifestation of the universe--its going down into the finer form,
22 remaining there for some time, and coming out again--is, in
23 Sanskrit, called a Kalpa or Cycle. Next comes a very important
24 question especially for modern times. We see that the finer forms
25 develop slowly and slowly, and gradually becomes grosser and
26 grosser. We have seen that the cause is the same as the effect, and
27 the effect is only the cause in another form. Therefore this whole
28 universe cannot be produced out of nothing. Nothing comes without
29 a cause, and the cause is the effect in another form.

30 Out of what has this universe been produced then? From a
31 preceding fine universe. Out of what has man been produced? The
32 preceding fine form. Out of what has the tree been produced? Out
33 of the seed; the whole of the tree was there in the seed. It comes
34 out and becomes manifest. So, the whole of this universe has been
35 created out of this very universe existing in a minute form. It has
36 been made manifest now. It will go back to that minute form, and
37 again will be made manifest. Now we find that the fine forms slowly
38 come out and become grosser and grosser until they reach their
39 limit, and when they reach their limit they go back further and
40 further, becoming finer and finer again. This coming out of the fine
41 and becoming gross, simply changing the arrangements of its parts,
42 as it were, is what in modern times called evolution. This is very
43 true, perfectly true; we see it in our lives. No rational man can
44 possibly quarrel with these evolutionists. But we have to learn one
45 thing more. We have to go one step further, and what is that? That
46 every evolution is preceded by an involution. The seed is the father
47 of the tree, but another tree was itself the father of the seed. The
48 seed is the fine form out of which the big tree comes, and another
49 big tree was the form which is involved in that seed. The whole of
50 this universe was present in the cosmic fine universe. The little cell,
51 which becomes afterwards the man, was simply the involved man
52 and becomes evolved as a man. If this is clear, we have no quarrel

1 with the evolutionists, for we see that if they admit this step,
2 instead of their destroying religion, they will be the greatest
3 supporters of it.

4 We see then, that nothing can be created out of nothing.
5 Everything exists through eternity, and will exist through eternity.
6 Only the movement is in succeeding waves and hollows, going back
7 to fine forms, and coming out into gross manifestations. This
8 involution and evolution is going on throughout the whole of nature.
9 The whole series of evolution beginning with the lowest
10 manifestation of life and reaching up to the highest, the most
11 perfect man, must have been the involution of something else. The
12 next question is: The involution of what? What was involved? God.
13 The evolutionist will tell you that your idea that it was God is wrong.
14 Why? Because you see God is intelligent, but we find that
15 intelligence develops much later on in the course of evolution. It is
16 in man and the higher animals that we find intelligence, but millions
17 of years have passed in this world before this intelligence came.
18 This objection of the evolutionists does not hold water, as we shall
19 see by applying our theory. The tree comes out of the seed, goes
20 back to the seed; the beginning and the end are the same. The
21 earth comes out of its cause and returns to it. We know that if we
22 can find the beginning we can find the end. *E converso*, if we find
23 the end we can find the beginning. If that is so, take this whole
24 evolutionary series, from the protoplasm at the one end to the
25 perfect man at the other, and this whole series is one life. In the end
26 we will find the perfect man, so in the beginning it must have been
27 the same. Therefore, the protoplasm was the involution of the
28 highest intelligence. You may not see it but that involved
29 intelligence is what is uncoiling itself until it becomes manifested in
30 the most perfect man. That can be mathematically demonstrated. If
31 the law of conservation of energy is true, you cannot get anything
32 out of a machine unless you put it in there first. The amount of work
33 that you get out of an engine is exactly the same as you have put
34 into it in the form of water and coal, neither more nor less. The
35 work I am doing now is just what I put into me, in the shape of air,
36 food, and other things. It is only a question of change and
37 manifestation. There cannot be added in the economy of this
38 universe one particle of matter or one foot-pound of force, nor can
39 one particle of matter or one foot-pound of force be taken out. If
40 that be the case, what is this intelligence? If it was not present in
41 the protoplasm, it must have come all of a sudden, something
42 coming out of nothing, which is absurd. It, therefore, follows
43 absolutely that the perfect man, the free man, the God-man, who
44 has gone beyond the laws of nature, and transcended everything,
45 who has no more to go through this process of evolution, through
46 birth and death, that man called the "Christ-man" by the Christians,
47 and the "Buddha-man" by the Buddhists, and the "Free" by the
48 Yogis--that perfect man who is at one end of the chain of evolution
49 was involved in the cell of the protoplasm, which is at the other end
50 of the same chain.

51 Applying the same reason to the whole of the universe, we
52 see that intelligence must be the Lord of creation, the cause. What

1 is the most evolved notion that man has of this universe? It is
2 intelligence, the adjustment of part to part, the display of
3 intelligence, of which the ancient design theory was an attempt at
4 expression. The beginning was, therefore, intelligence. At the
5 beginning that intelligence becomes involved, and in the end that
6 intelligence gets evolved. The sum total of the intelligence
7 displayed in the universe must, therefore, be the involved universal
8 intelligence unfolding itself. This universal intelligence is what we
9 call God. Call it by any other name, it is absolutely certain that in
10 the beginning there is that Infinite cosmic intelligence. This cosmic
11 intelligence gets involved, and it manifests, evolves itself, until it
12 becomes the perfect man, the "Christ-man," the "Buddha-man."
13 Then it goes back to its own source. That is why all the scriptures
14 say, "In Him we live and move and have our being." That is why all
15 the scriptures preach that we come from God and go back to God.
16 Do not be frightened by theological terms; if terms frighten you,
17 you are not fit to be philosophers. This cosmic intelligence is what
18 the theologians call God.

19 I have been asked many times, "Why do you use that old
20 word, God?" Because it is the best word for our purpose; you
21 cannot find a better word than that, because all the hopes,
22 aspirations, and happiness of humanity have been centred in that
23 word. It is impossible now to change the word. Words like these
24 were first coined by great saints who realised their import and
25 understood their meaning. But as they become current in society,
26 ignorant people take these words, and the result is that they lose
27 their spirit and glory. The word God has been used from time
28 immemorial, and the idea of this cosmic intelligence, and all that is
29 great and holy, is associated with it. Do you mean to say that
30 because some fool says it is not all right, we should throw it away?
31 Another man may come and say, "Take *my* word," and another
32 again, "Take *my* word." So there will be no end to foolish words.
33 Use the old word, only use it in the true spirit, cleanse it of
34 superstition, and realise fully what this great ancient word means.
35 If you understand the power of the laws of association, you will
36 know that these words are associated with innumerable majestic
37 and powerful ideas; they have been used and worshipped by
38 millions of human souls and associated by them with all that is
39 highest and best, all that is rational, all that is lovable, and all that
40 is great and grand in human nature. And they come as suggestions
41 of these associations, and cannot be given up. If I tried to express
42 all these by only telling you that God created the universe, it would
43 have conveyed no meaning to you. Yet, after all this struggle, we
44 have come back to Him, the Ancient and Supreme One.

45 We now see that all the various forms of cosmic energy, such
46 as matter, thought, force, intelligence and so forth, are simply the
47 manifestations of that cosmic intelligence, or, as we shall call it
48 henceforth, the Supreme Lord. Everything that you see, feel, or
49 hear, the whole universe, is His creation, or to be a little more
50 accurate, is His projection; or to be still more accurate, is the Lord
51 Himself. It is He who is shining as the sun and the stars, He is the
52 mother earth. He is the ocean Himself. He comes as gentle

1 showers, He is the gentle air that we breathe in, and He it is who is
2 working as force in the body. He is the speech that is uttered, He is
3 the man who is talking. He is the audience that is here. He is the
4 platform on which I stand, He is the light that enables me to see
5 your faces. It is all He. He Himself is both the material and the
6 efficient cause of this universe, and He it is that gets involved in the
7 minute cell, and evolves at the other end and becomes God again.
8 He it is that comes down and becomes the lowest atom, and slowly
9 unfolding His nature, rejoins Himself. This is the mystery of the
10 universe. "Thou art the man, Thou art the woman, Thou art the
11 strong man walking in the pride of youth, Thou art the old man
12 tottering on crutches, Thou art in everything. Thou art everything,
13 O Lord." This is the only solution of the Cosmos that satisfies the
14 human intellect. In one word, we are born of Him, we live in Him,
15 and unto Him we return.

THE COSMOS - The Microcosm

(Delivered in New York, 26th January 1896)

The human mind naturally wants to get outside, to peer out of the body, as it were, through the channels of the organs. The eye must see, the ear must hear, the senses must sense the external world--and naturally the beauties and sublimities of nature captivate the attention of man first. The first questions that arose in the human soul were about the external world. The solution of the mystery was asked of the sky, of the stars, of the heavenly bodies, of the earth, of the rivers, of the mountains, of the ocean; and in all ancient religions we find traces of how the groping human mind at first caught at everything external. There was a river-god, a sky-god, a cloud-god, a rain-god; everything external, all of which we now call the powers of nature, became metamorphosed, transfigured, into wills, into gods, into heavenly messengers. As the question went deeper and deeper, these external manifestations failed to satisfy the human mind, and finally the energy turned inward, and the question was asked of man's own soul. From the macrocosm the question was reflected back to the microcosm; from the external world the question was reflected to the internal. From analysing the external nature, man is led to analyse the internal; this questioning of the internal man comes with a higher state of civilisation, with a deeper insight into nature, with a higher state of growth.

The subject of discussion this afternoon is this internal man. No question is so near and dear to man's heart as that of the internal man. How many millions of times, in how many countries has this question been asked! Sages and kings, rich and poor, saints and sinners, every man, every woman, all have from time to time asked this question. Is there nothing permanent in this evanescent human life? Is there nothing, they have asked, which does not die away when this body dies? Is there not something living when this frame crumbles into dust? Is there not something which survives the fire which burns the body into ashes? And if so, what is its destiny? Where does it go? Whence did it come? These questions have been asked again and again, and so long as this creation lasts, so long as there are human brains to think, this question will have to be asked. Yet, it is not that the answer did not come; each time the answer came, and as time rolls on, the answer will gain strength more and more. The question was answered once for all thousands of years ago, and through all subsequent time it is being restated, reillustrated, made clearer to our intellect. What we have to do, therefore, is to make a restatement of the answer. We do not pretend to throw any new light on those all-absorbing problems, but only to put before you the ancient truth in the language of modern times, to speak the thoughts of the ancients in the language of the moderns, to speak the thoughts of the philosophers in the language of the people, to speak the thoughts of the angels in the language of man, to speak the thoughts of God in the language of poor humanity, so that man will understand them; for the same divine

1 essence from which the ideas emanated is ever present in man,
2 and, therefore, he can always understand them.

3 I am looking at you. How many things are necessary for this
4 vision? First, the eyes. For if I am perfect in every other way, and
5 yet have no eyes, I shall not be able to see you. Secondly, the real
6 organ of vision. For the eyes are not the organs. They are but the
7 instruments of the vision, and behind them is the real organ, the
8 nerve centre in the brain. If that centre be injured, a man may have
9 the clearest pair of eyes, yet he will not be able to see anything. So,
10 it is necessary that this centre, or the real organ, be there. Thus,
11 with all our senses. The external ear is but the instrument for
12 carrying the vibration of sound inward to the centre. Yet, that is not
13 sufficient. Suppose in your library you are intently reading a book,
14 and the clock strikes, yet you do not hear it. The sound is there, the
15 pulsations in the air are there, the ear and the centre are also
16 there, and these vibrations have been carried through the ear to the
17 centre, and yet you do not hear it. What is wanting? The mind is not
18 there. Thus we see that the third thing necessary is, that the mind
19 must be there. First the external instruments, then the organ to
20 which this external instrument will carry the sensation, and lastly
21 the organ itself must be joined to the mind. When the mind is not
22 joined to the organ, the organ and the ear may take the impression,
23 and yet we shall not be conscious of it. The mind, too, is only the
24 carrier; it has to carry the sensation still forward, and present it to
25 the intellect. The intellect is the determining faculty and decides
26 upon what is brought to it. Still this is not sufficient. The intellect
27 must carry it forward and present the whole thing before the ruler
28 in the body, the human soul, the king on the throne. Before him this
29 is presented, and then from him comes the order, what to do or
30 what not to do; and the order goes down in the same sequence to
31 the intellect, to the mind, to the organs, and the organs convey it to
32 the instruments, and the perception is complete.

33 The instruments are in the external body, the gross body of
34 man; but the mind and the intellect are not. They are in what is
35 called in Hindu philosophy the finer body, and what in Christian
36 theology you read of as the spiritual body of man; finer, very much
37 finer than the body, and yet not the soul. This soul is beyond them
38 all. The external body perishes in a few years; any simple cause
39 may disturb and destroy it. The finer body is not so easily
40 perishable; yet it sometimes degenerates, and at other times
41 becomes strong. We see how, in the old man, the mind loses its
42 strength, how, when the body is vigorous, the mind becomes
43 vigorous, how various medicines and drugs affect it, how everything
44 external acts on it, and how it reacts on the external world. Just as
45 the body has its progress and decadence, so also has the mind, and,
46 therefore, the mind is not the soul, because the soul can neither
47 decay nor degenerate. How can we know that? How can we know
48 that there is something behind this mind? Because knowledge
49 which is self-illuminating and the basis of intelligence cannot
50 belong to dull, dead matter. Never was seen any gross matter which
51 had intelligence as its own essence. No dull or dead matter can
52 illumine itself. It is intelligence that illumines all matter. This hall is

1 here only through intelligence because, as a hall, its existence
2 would be unknown unless some intelligence built it. This body is not
3 self-luminous; if it were, it would be so in a dead man also. Neither
4 can the mind nor the spiritual body be self-luminous. They are not
5 of the essence of intelligence. That which is self-luminous cannot
6 decay. The luminosity of that which shines through a borrowed light
7 comes and goes; but that which is light itself, what can make that
8 come and go, flourish and decay? We see that the moon waxes and
9 wanes, because it shines through the borrowed light of the sun. If a
10 lump of iron is put into the fire and made red-hot, it glows and
11 shines, but its light will vanish, because it is borrowed. So,
12 decadence is possible only of that light which is borrowed and is
13 not of its own essence.

14 Now we see that the body, the external shape, has no light as
15 its own essence, is not self-luminous, and cannot know itself;
16 neither can the mind. Why not? Because the mind waxes and
17 wanes, because it is vigorous at one time and weak at another,
18 because it can be acted upon by anything and everything. Therefore
19 the light which shines through the mind is not its own. Whose is it
20 then? It must belong to that which has it as its own essence, and as
21 such, can never decay or die, never become stronger or weaker; it
22 is self-luminous, it is luminosity itself. It cannot be that the soul
23 knows, it *is* knowledge. It cannot be that the soul has existence,
24 but it *is* existence. It cannot be that the soul is happy, it *is*
25 happiness itself. That which is happy has borrowed its happiness;
26 that which has knowledge has received its knowledge; and that
27 which has relative existence has only a reflected existence.
28 Wherever there are qualities these qualities have been reflected
29 upon the substance, but the soul has not knowledge, existence, and
30 blessedness as its qualities, they are the essence of the soul.

31 Again, it may be asked, why shall we take this for granted?
32 Why shall we admit that the soul has knowledge, blessedness,
33 existence, as its essence, and has not borrowed them? It may be
34 argued, why not say that the soul's luminosity, the soul's
35 blessedness, the soul's knowledge, are borrowed in the same way
36 as the luminosity of the body is borrowed from the mind? The
37 fallacy of arguing in this way will be that there will be no limit.
38 From whom were these borrowed? If we say from some other
39 source, the same question will be asked again. So, at last we shall
40 have to come to one who is self-luminous; to make matters short
41 then, the logical way is to stop where we get self-luminosity, and
42 proceed no further.

43 We see, then, that this human being is composed first of this
44 external covering, the body; secondly, the finer body, consisting of
45 mind, intellect, and egoism. Behind them is the real Self of man. We
46 have seen that all the qualities and powers of the gross body are
47 borrowed from the mind, and the mind, the finer body, borrows its
48 powers and luminosity from the soul, standing behind.

49 A great many questions now arise about the nature of this
50 soul. If the existence of the soul is drawn from the argument that it
51 is self-luminous, that knowledge, existence, blessedness are its
52 essence, it naturally follows that this soul cannot have been

1 created. A self-luminous existence, independent of any other
2 existence, could never have been the outcome of anything. It always
3 existed; there was never a time when it did not exist, because if the
4 soul did not exist, where was time? Time is in the soul; it is when
5 the soul reflects its powers on the mind and the mind thinks, that
6 time comes. When there was no soul, certainly there was no
7 thought, and without thought, there was no time. How can the soul,
8 therefore, be said to be existing in time, when time itself exists in
9 the soul? It has neither birth nor death, but it is passing through all
10 these various stages. It is manifesting slowly and gradually from
11 lower to higher, and so on. It is expressing its own grandeur,
12 working through the mind on the body; and through the body it is
13 grasping the external world and understanding it. It takes up a
14 body and uses it; and when that body has failed and is used up, it
15 takes another body; and so on it goes.

16 Here comes a very interesting question, that question which
17 is generally known as the reincarnation of the soul. Sometimes
18 people get frightened at the idea, and superstition is so strong that
19 thinking men even believe that they are the outcome of nothing,
20 and then, with the grandest logic, try to deduce the theory that
21 although they have come out of zero, they will be eternal ever
22 afterwards. Those that come out of zero will certainly have to go
23 back to zero. Neither you, nor I nor anyone present, has come out
24 of zero, nor will go back to zero. We have been existing eternally,
25 and will exist, and there is no power under the sun or above the sun
26 which can undo your or my existence or send us back to zero. Now
27 this idea of reincarnation is not only not a frightening idea, but is
28 most essential for the moral well-being of the human race.

29 It is the only logical conclusion that thoughtful men can arrive
30 at. If you are going to exist in eternity hereafter, it must be that you
31 have existed through eternity in the past: it cannot be otherwise. I
32 will try to answer a few objections that are generally brought
33 against the theory. Although many of you will think they are very
34 silly objections, still we have to answer them, for sometimes we find
35 that the most thoughtful men are ready to advance the silliest
36 ideas. Well has it been said that there never was an idea so absurd
37 that it did not find philosophers to defend it. The first objection is,
38 why do we not remember our past? Do we remember all our past in
39 this life? How many of you remember what you did when you were
40 babies? None of you remember your early childhood, and if upon
41 memory depends your existence, then this argument proves that
42 you did not exist as babies, because you do not remember your
43 babyhood. It is simply unmitigated nonsense to say that our
44 existence depends on our remembering it. Why should we
45 remember the past? That brain is gone, broken to pieces, and a new
46 brain has been manufactured. What has come to this brain is the
47 resultant, the sum total of the impression acquired in our past, with
48 which the mind has come to inhabit the new body.

49 I, as I stand here, am the effect, the result, of all the infinite
50 past which is tacked on to me. And why is it necessary for me to
51 remember all the past? When a great ancient sage, a seer, or a
52 prophet of old, who came face to face with the truth, says

1 something, these modern men stand up and say, "Oh, he was a
2 fool!" But just use another name, "Huxley says it, or Tyndall"; then
3 it must be true, and they take it for granted. In place of ancient
4 superstitions they have erected modern superstitions, in place of
5 the old Popes of religion they have installed modern Popes of
6 science. So we see that this objection as to memory is not valid, and
7 that is about the only serious objection that is raised against this
8 theory. Although we have seen that it is not necessary for the theory
9 that there shall be the memory of past lives, yet at the same time,
10 we are in a position to assert that there are instances which show
11 that this memory does come, and that each one of us will get back
12 this memory in that life in which he will become free. Then alone
13 you will find that this world is but a dream; then alone you will
14 realise in the soul of your soul that you are but actors and the world
15 is a stage; then alone will the idea of non-attachment come to you
16 with the power of thunder; then all this thirst for enjoyment, this
17 clinging on to life and this world will vanish for ever; then the mind
18 will see clearly as daylight how many times all these existed for
19 you, how many millions of times you had fathers and mothers, sons
20 and daughters, husbands and wives, relatives and friends, wealth
21 and power. They came and went. How many times you were on the
22 topmost crest of the wave, and how many times you were down at
23 the bottom of despair! When memory will bring all these to you,
24 then alone will you stand as a hero and smile when the world
25 frowns upon you. Then alone will you stand up and say, "I care not
26 for thee even, O Death; what terrors hast thou for me?" This will
27 come to all.

28 Are there any arguments, any rational proofs for this
29 reincarnation of the soul? So far we have been giving the negative
30 side, showing that the opposite arguments to disprove it are not
31 valid. Are there any positive proofs? There are; and most valid ones,
32 too. No other theory except that of reincarnation accounts for the
33 wide divergence that we find between man and man in their powers
34 to acquire knowledge. First, let us consider the process by means of
35 which knowledge is acquired. Suppose I go into the street and see a
36 dog. How do I know it is a dog? I refer it to my mind, and in my
37 mind are groups of all my past experiences, arranged and pigeon-
38 holed, as it were.

39 As soon as a new impression comes, I take it up and refer it to
40 some of the old pigeon-holes, and as soon as I find a group of the
41 same impressions already existing, I place it in that group, and I am
42 satisfied. I know it is a dog, because it coincides with the
43 impressions already there. When I do not find the cognates of this
44 new experience inside, I become dissatisfied. When, not finding the
45 cognates of an impression, we become dissatisfied, this state of
46 mind is called "ignorance"; but, when, finding the cognates of an
47 impression already existing, we become satisfied, this is called
48 "knowledge". When one apple fell, men became dissatisfied. Then
49 gradually they found out the group. What was the group they
50 found? That all apples fell, so they called it "gravitation". Now we
51 see that without a fund of already existing experience, any new
52 experience would be impossible, for there would be nothing to

1 which to refer the new impression. So, if, as some of the European
2 philosophers think, a child came into the world with what they call
3 *tabula rasa*, such a child would never attain to any degree of
4 intellectual power, because he would have nothing to which to refer
5 his new experiences. We see that the power of acquiring knowledge
6 varies in each individual, and this shows that each one of us has
7 come with his own fund of knowledge. Knowledge can only be got
8 in one way, the way of experience; there is no other way to know. If
9 we have not experienced it in this life, we must have experienced it
10 in other lives. How is it that the fear of death is everywhere? A little
11 chicken is just out of an egg and an eagle comes, and the chicken
12 flies in fear to its mother. There is an old explanation (I should
13 hardly dignify it by such a name). It is called instinct. What makes
14 that little chicken just out of the egg afraid to die? How is it that as
15 soon as a duckling hatched by a hen comes near water, it jumps into
16 it and swims? It never swam before, nor saw anything swim. People
17 call it instinct. It is a big word, but it leaves us where we were
18 before. Let us study this phenomenon of instinct. A child begins to
19 play on the piano. At first she must pay attention to every key she is
20 fingering, and as she goes on and on for months and years, the
21 playing becomes almost involuntary, instinctive. What was first
22 done with conscious will does not require later on an effort of the
23 will. This is not yet a complete proof. One half remains, and that is
24 that almost all the actions which are now instinctive can be brought
25 under the control of the will. Each muscle of the body can be
26 brought under control. This is perfectly well known. So the proof is
27 complete by this double method, that what we now call instinct is
28 degeneration of voluntary actions; therefore, if the analogy applies
29 to the whole of creation, if all nature is uniform, then what is
30 instinct in lower animals, as well as in men, must be the
31 degeneration of will.

32 Applying the law we dwelt upon under macrocosm, that each
33 involution presupposes an evolution, and each evolution and
34 involution, we see that instinct is involved reason. What we call
35 instinct in men or animals must therefore be involved, degenerated,
36 voluntary actions, and voluntary actions are impossible without
37 experience. Experience started that knowledge, and that
38 knowledge is there. The fear of death, the duckling taking to the
39 water, and all involuntary actions in the human being which have
40 become instinctive, are the results of past experiences. So far we
41 have proceeded very clearly, and so far the latest science is with us.
42 But here comes one more difficulty. The latest scientific men are
43 coming back to the ancient sages, and as far as they have done so,
44 there is perfect agreement. They admit that each man and each
45 animal is born with a fund of experience, and that all these actions
46 in the mind are the result of past experience. "But what," they ask,
47 "is the use of saying that that experience belongs to the soul? Why
48 not say it belongs to the body, and the body alone? Why not say it is
49 hereditary transmission?" This is the last question. Why not say that
50 all the experience with which I am born is the resultant effect of all
51 the past experience of my ancestors? The sum total of the
52 experience from the little protoplasm up to the highest human
53 being is in me, but it has come from body to body in the course of

1 hereditary transmission. Where will the difficulty be? This question
2 is very nice, and we admit some part of this hereditary
3 transmission. How far? As far as furnishing the material. We, by our
4 past actions, conform ourselves to a certain birth in a certain body,
5 and the only suitable material for that body comes from the parents
6 who have made themselves fit to have that soul as their offspring.

7 The simple hereditary theory takes for granted the most
8 astonishing proposition without any proof, that mental experience
9 can be recorded in matters, that mental experience can be involved
10 in matter. When I look at you, in the lake of my mind there is a
11 wave. That wave subsides, but it remains in fine form, as an
12 impression. We understand a physical impression remaining in the
13 body. But what proof is there for assuming that the mental
14 impression can remain in the body, since the body goes to pieces?
15 What carries it? Even granting it were possible for each mental
16 impression to remain in the body, that every impression, beginning
17 from the first man down to my father, was in my father's body, how
18 could it be transmitted to me? Through the bioplasmic cell? How
19 could that be? Because the father's body does not come to the child
20 *in toto*. The same parents may have a number of children; then,
21 from this theory of hereditary transmission, where the impression
22 and the impressed (that is to say, material) are one, it rigorously
23 follows that by the birth of every child the parents must lose a part
24 of their own impressions, or, if the parents should transmit the
25 whole of their impressions, then, after the birth of the first child,
26 their minds would be a vacuum.

27 Again, if in the bioplasmic cell the infinite amount of
28 impressions from all time has entered, where and how is it? This is
29 a most impossible position, and until these physiologists can prove
30 how and where those impressions live in that cell, and what they
31 mean by a mental impression sleeping in the physical cell, their
32 position cannot be taken for granted. So far it is clear then, that this
33 impression is in the mind, that the mind comes to take its birth and
34 rebirth, and uses the material which is most proper for it, and that
35 the mind which has made itself fit for only a particular kind of body
36 will have to wait until it gets that material. This we understand. The
37 theory then comes to this, that there is hereditary transmission so
38 far as furnishing the material to the soul is concerned. But the soul
39 migrates and manufactures body after body, and each thought we
40 think, and each deed we do, is stored in it in fine forms, ready to
41 spring up again and take a new shape. When I look at you a wave
42 rises in my mind. It dives down, as it were, and becomes finer and
43 finer, but it does not die. It is ready to start up again as a wave in
44 the shape of memory. So all these impressions are in my mind, and
45 when I die the resultant force of them will be upon me. A ball is
46 here, and each one of us takes a mallet in his hands and strikes the
47 ball from all sides; the ball goes from point to point in the room, and
48 when it reaches the door it flies out. What does it carry out with it?
49 The resultant of all these blows. That will give it its direction. So,
50 what directs the soul when the body dies? The resultant, the sum
51 total of all the works it has done, of the thoughts it has thought. If
52 the resultant is such that it has to manufacture a new body for

1 further experience, it will go to those parents who are ready to
2 supply it with suitable material for that body. Thus, from body to
3 body it will go, sometimes to a heaven, and back again to earth,
4 becoming man, or some lower animal. This way it will go on until it
5 has finished its experience, and completed the circle. It then knows
6 its own nature, knows what it is, and ignorance vanishes, its powers
7 become manifest, it becomes perfect; no more is there any
8 necessity for the soul to work through physical bodies, nor is there
9 any necessity for it to work through finer, or mental bodies. It
10 shines in its own light, and is free, no more to be born, no more to
11 die.

12 We will not go now into the particulars of this. But I will bring
13 before you one more point with regard to this theory of
14 reincarnation. It is the theory that advances the freedom of the
15 human soul. It is the one theory that does not lay the blame of all
16 our weakness upon somebody else, which is a common human
17 fallacy. We do not look at our own faults; the eyes do not see
18 themselves, they see the eyes of everybody else. We human beings
19 are very slow to recognise our own weakness, our own faults, so
20 long as we can lay the blame upon somebody else. Men in general
21 lay all the blame of life upon their fellow-men, or, failing that, on
22 God, or they conjure up a ghost, and say it is fate. Where is fate,
23 and who is fate? We reap what we sow. We are the makers of our
24 own fate. None else has the blame, none has the praise. The wind is
25 blowing; those vessels whose sails are unfurled catch it, and go
26 forward on their way, but those which have their sails furled do not
27 catch the wind. Is that the fault of the wind? Is it the fault of the
28 merciful Father, whose wind of mercy is blowing without ceasing,
29 day and night, whose mercy knows no decay, is it His fault that
30 some of us are happy and some unhappy? We make our own
31 destiny. His sun shines for the weak as well as for the strong. His
32 wind blows for saint and sinner alike. He is the Lord of all, the
33 Father of all, merciful, and impartial. Do you mean to say that He,
34 the Lord of creation, looks upon the petty things of our life in the
35 same light as we do? What a degenerate idea of God that would be!
36 We are like little puppies, making life-and-death struggles here and
37 foolishly thinking that even God Himself will take it as seriously as
38 we do. He knows what the puppies' play means. Our attempts to lay
39 the blame on Him, making Him the punisher, and the rewarder, are
40 only foolish. He neither punishes, nor rewards any. His infinite
41 mercy is open to every one, at all times, in all places, under all
42 conditions, unfailing, unswerving. Upon *us* depends how we use it.
43 Upon *us* depends how we utilise it. Blame neither man, nor God,
44 nor anyone in the world. When you find yourselves suffering, blame
45 yourselves, and try to do better.

46 This is the only solution of the problem. Those that blame
47 others--and, alas! the number of them is increasing every day--are
48 generally miserable with helpless brains; they have brought
49 themselves to that pass through their own mistakes and blame
50 others, but this does not alter their position. It does not serve them
51 in any way. This attempt to throw the blame upon others only
52 weakens them the more. Therefore, blame none for your own faults,

1 stand upon your own feet, and take the whole responsibility upon
2 yourselves. Say, "This misery that I am suffering is of my own doing,
3 and that very thing proves that it will have to be undone by me
4 alone." That which I created, I can demolish; that which is created
5 by some one else I shall never be able to destroy. Therefore, stand
6 up, be bold, be strong. Take the whole responsibility on your own
7 shoulders, and know that you are the creator of your own destiny.
8 All the strength and succour you want is within yourselves.
9 Therefore, make your own future. "Let the dead past bury its dead."
10 The infinite future is before you, and you must always remember
11 that each word, thought, and deed, lays up a store for you and that
12 as the bad thoughts and bad works are ready to spring upon you
13 like tigers, so also there is the inspiring hope that the good
14 thoughts and good deeds are ready with the power of a hundred
15 thousand angels to defend you always and for ever.

IMMORTALITY

What question has been asked a greater number of times, what idea has led men more to search the universe for an answer, what question is nearer and dearer to the human heart, what question is more inseparably connected with our existence, than this one, the immortality of the human soul? It has been the theme of poets and sages, of priests and prophets; kings on the throne have discussed it, beggars on the street have dreamt of it. The best of humanity have approached it, and the worst of men have not hoped for it. The interest in the theme has not died, yet, nor will it die so long as human nature exists. Various answers have been presented to the world by various minds. Thousands, again, in every period of history have given up the discussion, and yet the question remains fresh as ever. Often in the turmoil and struggle of our lives we seem to forget it, but suddenly some one dies--one, perhaps, whom we loved, one near and dear to our hearts, is snatched away from us--and the struggle, the din and turmoil of the world around us, cease for a moment, and the soul asks the old question, "What after this?" "What becomes of the soul?"

All human knowledge proceeds out of experience; we cannot know anything except by experience. All our reasoning is based upon generalised experience, all our knowledge is but harmonised experience. Looking around us, what do we find? A continuous change. The plant comes out of the seed, grows into the tree, completes the circles, and comes back to the seed. The animal comes, lives a certain time, dies, and completes the circle. So does man. The mountains slowly but surely crumble away, the rivers slowly but surely dry up, rains come out of the sea, and go back to the sea. Everywhere circles are being completed, birth, growth, development, and decay following each other with mathematical precision. This is our everyday experience. Inside of it all, behind all this vast mass of what we call life, of millions of forms and shapes, millions upon millions of varieties, beginning from the lowest atom to the highest spiritualised man, we find existing a certain unity. Every day we find that the wall that was thought to be dividing one thing and another is being broken down, and all matter is coming to be recognised by modern science as one substance, manifesting in different ways and in various forms; the one life that runs through all like a continuous chain, of which all these various forms represent the links, link after link, extending almost infinitely, but of the same one chain. This is what is called evolution. It is an old, old idea, as old as human society, only it is getting fresher and fresher as human knowledge is progressing. There is one thing more, which the ancients perceived, but which in modern times is not yet so clearly perceived, and that is involution. The seed is becoming the plant; a grain of sand never becomes a plant. It is the father that becomes a child; a lump of clay never becomes the child. From what does this evolution come, is the question. What was the seed? It was the same as the tree. All the possibilities of a future tree are in that seed; all the possibilities of a future man are in the little baby; all the possibilities of any future life are in the germ. What is this? The ancient philosophers of India called it involution. We find

1 then, that every evolution presupposes an involution. Nothing can
2 be evolved which is not already there. Here, again, modern science
3 comes to our help. You know by mathematical reasoning that the
4 sum total of the energy that is displayed in the universe is the same
5 throughout. You cannot take away one atom of matter or one foot-
6 pound of force. You cannot add to the universe one atom of matter
7 or one foot-pound of force. As such, evolution does not come out of
8 zero; then, where does it come from? From previous involution. The
9 child is the man involved, and the man is the child evolved. The
10 seed is the tree involved, and the tree is the seed evolved. All the
11 possibilities of life are in the germ. The problem becomes a little
12 clearer. Add to it the first idea of continuation of life. From the
13 lowest protoplasm to the most perfect human being there is really
14 but one life. Just as in one life we have so many various phases of
15 expression, the protoplasm developing into the baby, the child, the
16 young man, the old man, so, from that protoplasm up to the most
17 perfect man we get one continuous life, one chain. This is evolution,
18 but we have seen that each evolution presupposes an involution.
19 The whole of this life which slowly manifests itself evolves itself
20 from the protoplasm to the perfected human being--the Incarnation
21 of God on earth--the whole of this series is but one life, and the
22 whole of this manifestation must have been involved in that very
23 protoplasm. This whole life, this very God on earth, was involved in
24 it and slowly came out, manifesting itself slowly, slowly, slowly. The
25 highest expression must have been there in the germ state in
26 minute form; therefore this one force, this whole chain, is the
27 involution of that cosmic life which is everywhere. It is this one
28 mass of intelligence which, from the protoplasm up to the most
29 perfected man, is slowly and slowly uncoiling itself. Not that it
30 grows. Take off all ideas of growth from your mind. With the idea of
31 growth is associated something coming from outside, something
32 extraneous, which would give the lie to the truth that the Infinite
33 which lies latent in every life is independent of all external
34 conditions. It can never grow; It was always there, and only
35 manifests Itself.

36 The effect is the cause manifested. There is no essential
37 difference between the effect and the cause. Take this glass, for
38 instance. There was the material, and that material plus the will of
39 the manufacturer made the glass; and these two were its causes
40 and are present in it. In what form is the will present? As adhesion.
41 If the force were not here, each particle would fall away. What is
42 the effect then? It is the same as the cause, only taking a different
43 form, a different composition. When the cause is changed and
44 limited for a time, it becomes the effect. We must remember this.
45 Applying it to our idea of life, the whole of the manifestation of this
46 one series, from the protoplasm up to the most perfect man, must
47 be the very same thing as cosmic life. First it got involved and
48 became finer; and out of that fine something, which was the cause,
49 it has gone on evolving, manifesting itself, and becoming grosser.

50 But the question of immortality is not yet settled. We have
51 seen that everything in this universe is indestructible. There is
52 nothing new; there will be nothing new. The same series of

1 manifestations are presenting themselves alternately like a wheel,
2 coming up and going down. All motion in this universe is in the form
3 of waves, successively rising and falling. Systems after systems are
4 coming out of fine forms, evolving themselves, and taking grosser
5 forms, again melting down, as it were, and going back to the fine
6 forms. Again they rise out of that, evolving for a certain period and
7 slowly going back to the cause. So with all life. Each manifestation
8 of life is coming up and then going back again. What goes down?
9 The form. The form breaks to pieces, but it comes up again. In one
10 sense bodies and forms even are eternal. How? Suppose we take a
11 number of dice and throw them, and they fall in this ratio--6--5--3--4.
12 We take the dice up and throw them again and again; there must be
13 a time when the same numbers will come again; the same
14 combination must come. Now each particle, each atom, that is in
15 this universe, I take for such a die, and these are being thrown out
16 and combined again and again. All these forms before you are one
17 combination. Here are the forms of a glass, a table, a pitcher of
18 water, and so forth. This is one combination; in time, it will all
19 break. But there must come a time when exactly the same
20 combination comes again, when you will be here, and this form will
21 be here, this subject will be talked, and this pitcher will be here. An
22 infinite number of times this has been, and an infinite number of
23 times this will be repeated. Thus far with the physical forms. What
24 do we find? That even the combination of physical forms is eternally
25 repeated.

26 A most interesting conclusion that follows from this theory is
27 the explanation of facts such as these: Some of you, perhaps, have
28 seen a man who can read the past life of others and foretell the
29 future. How is it possible for any one to see what the future will be,
30 unless there is a regulated future? Effects of the past will recur in
31 the future, and we see that it is so. You have seen the big Ferris
32 Wheel² in Chicago. The wheel revolves, and the little rooms in the
33 wheel are regularly coming one after another; one set of persons
34 gets into these, and after they have gone round the circle, they get
35 out, and a fresh batch of people gets in. Each one of these batches
36 is like one of these manifestations, from the lowest animals to the
37 highest man. Nature is like the chain of the Ferris Wheel, endless
38 and infinite, and these little carriages are the bodies or forms in
39 which fresh batches of souls are riding, going up higher and higher
40 until they become perfect and come out of the wheel. But the wheel
41 goes on. And so long as the bodies are in the wheel, it can be
42 absolutely and mathematically foretold where they will go, but not
43 so of the souls. Thus it is possible to read the past and the future of
44 nature with precision. We see, then, that there is recurrence of the
45 same material phenomena at certain periods, and that the same
46 combinations have been taking place through eternity. But that is
47 not the immortality of the soul. No force can die, no matter can be

1 ² "An amusement device consisting of a giant power-driven steel wheel,
2 revolvable on its stationary axle, and carrying a number of balanced passenger
3 cars around its rim." Webster, G.W.G. Ferris erected the first of its kind for the
4 Chicago Exposition of 1893. In India we have a corresponding wooden device
5 very common in fairs. Ed.
6

1 annihilated. What becomes of it? It goes on changing, backwards
2 and forwards, until it returns to the source from which it came.
3 There is no motion in a straight line. Everything moves in a circle; a
4 straight line, infinitely produced, becomes a circle. If that is the
5 case, there cannot be eternal degeneration for any soul. It cannot
6 be. Everything must complete the circle, and come back to its
7 source. What are you and I and all these souls? In our discussion of
8 evolution and involution, we have seen that you and I must be part
9 of the cosmic consciousness, cosmic life, cosmic mind, which got
10 involved and we must complete the circle and go back to this
11 cosmic intelligence which is God. This cosmic intelligence is what
12 people call Lord, or God, or Christ, or Buddha, or Brahman, what
13 the materialists perceive as force, and the agnostics as that infinite,
14 inexpressible beyond; and we are all part of that.

15 This is the second idea, yet this is not sufficient; there will be
16 still more doubts. It is very good to say that there is no destruction
17 for any force. But all the forces and forms that we see are
18 combinations. This form before us is a composition of several
19 component parts, and so every force that we see is similarly
20 composite. If you take the scientific idea of force, and call it the sum
21 total, the resultant of several forces, what becomes of your
22 individuality? Everything that is a compound must sooner or later
23 go back to its component parts. Whatever in this universe is the
24 result of the combination of matter or force must sooner or later go
25 back to its components. Whatever is the result of certain causes
26 must die, must be destroyed. It gets broken up, dispersed, and
27 resolved back into its components. Soul is not a force; neither is it
28 thought. It is the manufacturer of thought, but not thought itself; it
29 is the manufacturer of the body, but not the body. Why so? We see
30 that the body cannot be the soul. Why not? Because it is not
31 intelligent. A corpse is not intelligent, nor a piece of meat in a
32 butcher's shop. What do we mean by intelligence? Reactive power.
33 We want to go a little more deeply into this. Here is a pitcher; I see
34 it. How? Rays of light from the pitcher enter my eyes, and make a
35 picture in my retina, which is carried to the brain. Yet there is no
36 vision. What the physiologists call the sensory nerves carry this
37 impression inwards. But up to this there is no reaction. The nerve
38 centre in the brain carries the impression to the mind, and the mind
39 reacts, and as soon as this reaction comes, the pitcher flashes
40 before it. Take a more commonplace example. Suppose you are
41 listening to me intently and a mosquito is sitting on the tip of your
42 nose and giving you that pleasant sensation which mosquitos can
43 give; but you are so intent on hearing me that you do not feel the
44 mosquito at all. What has happened? The mosquito has bitten a
45 certain part of your skin, and certain nerves are there. They have
46 carried a certain sensation to the brain, and the impression is there,
47 but the mind, being otherwise occupied, does not react, so you are
48 not aware of the presence of the mosquito. When a new impression
49 comes, if the mind does not react, we shall not be conscious of it,
50 but when the reaction comes we feel, we see, we hear, and so forth.
51 With this reaction comes illumination, as the Samkhya philosophers
52 call it. We see that the body cannot illuminate, because in the
53 absence of attention no sensation is possible. Cases have been

1 known where, under peculiar conditions, a man who had never
2 learnt a particular language was found able to speak it. Subsequent
3 inquiries proved that the man had, when a child, lived among
4 people who spoke that language and the impressions were left in
5 the brain.

6 These impressions remained stored up there, until through
7 some cause the mind reacted, and illumination came, and then the
8 man was able to speak the language. This shows that the mind
9 alone is not sufficient, that the mind itself is an instrument in the
10 hands of someone. In the case of that boy the mind contained that
11 language, yet he did not know it, but later there came a time when
12 he did. It shows that there is someone besides the mind; and when
13 the boy was a baby, that someone did not use the power; but when
14 the boy grew up, he took advantage of it, and used it. First, here is
15 the body, second, the mind, or instrument of thought, and third
16 behind this mind is the Self of man. The Sanskrit word is Atman. As
17 modern philosophers have identified thought with molecular
18 changes in the brain, they do not know how to explain such a case,
19 and generally deny it. The mind is intimately connected with the
20 brain which dies every time the body changes. The Self is the
21 illuminator, and the mind is the instrument in Its hands, and
22 through that instrument It gets hold of the external instrument, and
23 thus comes perception. The external instruments get hold of the
24 impressions and carry them to the organs, for you must remember
25 always, that the eyes and ears are only receivers--it is the internal
26 organs, the brain centres, which act. In Sanskrit these centres are
27 called Indriyas, and they carry sensations to the mind, and the mind
28 presents them further back to another state of the mind, which in
29 Sanskrit is called Chitta, and there they are organised into will, and
30 all these present them to the King of kings inside, the Ruler on His
31 throne, the Self of man. He then sees and gives His orders. Then
32 the mind immediately acts on the organs, and the organs on the
33 external body. The real Perceiver, the real Ruler, the Governor, the
34 Creator, the Manipulator of all this is the Self of man.

35 We see, then, that the Self of man is not the body, neither is It
36 thought. It cannot be a compound. Why not? Because everything
37 that is a compound can be seen or imagined. That which we cannot
38 imagine or perceive, which we cannot bind together, is not force or
39 matter, cause or effect, and cannot be a compound. The domain of
40 compounds is only so far as our mental universe, our thought
41 universe extends. Beyond this it does not hold good; it is as far as
42 law reigns, and if there is anything beyond law, it cannot be a
43 compound at all. The Self of man being beyond the law of causation,
44 is not a compound. It is ever free and is the Ruler of everything that
45 is within law. It will never die, because death means going back to
46 the component parts, and that which was never a compound can
47 never die. It is sheer nonsense to say It dies.

48 We are now treading on finer and finer ground, and some of
49 you, perhaps, will be frightened. We have seen that this Self, being
50 beyond the little universe of matter and force and thought, is a
51 simple; and as a simple It cannot die. That which does not die
52 cannot live. For life and death are the obverse and reverse of the

1 same coin. Life is another name for death, and death for life. One
2 particular mode of manifestation is what we call life; another
3 particular mode of manifestation of the same thing is what we call
4 death. When the wave rises on the top it is life; and when it falls
5 into the hollow it is death. If anything is beyond death, we naturally
6 see it must also be beyond life. I must remind you of the first
7 conclusion that the soul of man is part of the cosmic energy that
8 exists, which is God. We now find that it is beyond life and death.
9 You were never born, and you will never die. What is this birth and
10 death that we see around us? This belongs to the body only because
11 the soul is omnipresent. "How can that be?" you may ask. "So many
12 people are sitting here, and you say the soul is omnipresent?" What
13 is there, I ask, to limit anything that is beyond law, beyond
14 causation? This glass is limited; it is not omnipresent, because the
15 surrounding matter forces it to take that form, does not allow it to
16 expand. It is conditioned by everything around it, and is, therefore,
17 limited. But that which is beyond law, where there is nothing to act
18 upon it, how can that be limited? It must be omnipresent. You are
19 everywhere in this universe. How is it then that I am born and I am
20 going to die, and all that? That is the talk of ignorance,
21 hallucination of the brain. You were neither born, nor will you die.
22 You have had neither birth, nor will have rebirth, nor life, nor
23 incarnation, nor anything. What do you mean by coming and going?
24 All shallow nonsense. You are everywhere. Then what is this coming
25 and going? It is the hallucination produced by the change of this
26 fine body which you call the mind. That is going on. Just a little
27 speck of cloud passing before the sky. As it moves on and on, it may
28 create the delusion that the sky moves. Sometimes you see a cloud
29 moving before the moon, and you think that the moon is moving.
30 When you are in a train you think the land is flying, or when you are
31 in a boat, you think the water moves. In reality you are neither
32 going nor coming, you are not being born, nor going to be reborn;
33 you are infinite, ever-present, beyond all causation, and ever-free.
34 Such a question is out of place, it is arrant nonsense. How could
35 there be mortality when there was no birth?

36 One step more we will have to take to come to a logical
37 conclusion There is no half-way house. You are metaphysicians, and
38 there is no crying quarter. If then we are beyond all law, we must be
39 omniscient, ever-blessed; all knowledge must be in us and all power
40 and blessedness. Certainly. You are the omniscient, omnipresent
41 being of the universe. But of such beings can there be many? Can
42 there be a hundred thousand millions of the omnipresent being?
43 Certainly not. Then, what becomes of us all? You are only one; there
44 is only one such Self, and that One Self is you. Standing behind this
45 little nature is what we call the Soul. There is only One Being, One
46 Existence, the ever-blessed, the omnipresent, the omniscient, the
47 birthless, the deathless. "Through His control the sky expands,
48 through His control the air breathes, through His control the sun
49 shines, and through His control all live. He is the Reality in nature,
50 He is the Soul of your soul, nay, more, you are He, you are one with
51 Him." Wherever there are two, there is fear, there is danger, there
52 is conflict, there is strife. When it is all One, who is there to hate,
53 who is there to struggle with? When it is all He, with whom can you

1 fight? This explains the true nature of life; this explains the true
2 nature of being. This is perfection, and this is God. As long as you
3 see the many, you are under delusion. "In this world of many he
4 who sees the One, in this ever-changing world he who sees Him
5 who never changes, as the Soul of his own soul, as his own Self, he
6 is free, he is blessed, he has reached the goal." Therefore know that
7 thou art He; thou art the God of this universe, "Tat Tvam Asi" (That
8 thou art). All these various ideas that I am a man or a woman, or
9 sick or healthy, or strong or weak, or that I hate or I love, or have a
10 little power, are but hallucinations. Away with them! What makes
11 you weak? What makes you fear? You are the One Being in the
12 universe. What frightens you? Stand up then and be free. Know that
13 every thought and word that weakens you in this world is the only
14 evil that exists. Whatever makes men weak and fear is the only evil
15 that should be shunned. What can frighten you? If the suns come
16 down, and the moons crumble into dust, and systems after systems
17 are hurled into annihilation, what is that to you? Stand as a rock;
18 you are indestructible. You are the Self, the God of the universe.
19 Say--"I am Existence Absolute, Bliss Absolute, Knowledge Absolute,
20 I am He," and like a lion breaking its cage, break your chain and be
21 free for ever. What frightens you, what holds you down?

22 Only ignorance and delusion; nothing else can bind you. You
23 are the Pure One, the Ever-blessed.

24 Silly fools tell you that you are sinners, and you sit down in a
25 corner and weep. It is foolishness, wickedness, downright rascality
26 to say that you are sinners! You are all God. See you not God and
27 call Him man? Therefore, if you dare, stand on that--mould your
28 whole life on that. If a man cuts your throat, do not say no, for you
29 are cutting your own throat. When you help a poor man, do not feel
30 the least pride. That is worship for you, and not the cause of pride.
31 Is not the whole universe you? Where is there any one that is not
32 you? You are the Soul of this universe. You are the sun, moon, and
33 stars, it is you that are shining everywhere. The whole universe is
34 you. Whom are you going to hate or to fight? Know, then, that thou
35 art He, and model your whole life accordingly; and he who knows
36 this and models his life accordingly will no more grovel in darkness.

THE ATMAN

(Delivered in America)

Many of you have read Max Muller's celebrated book, *Three Lectures on the Vedanta Philosophy*, and some of you may, perhaps, have read, in German, Professor Deussen's book on the same philosophy. In what is being written and taught in the West about the religious thought of India, one school of Indian thought is principally represented, that which is called Advaitism, the monistic side of Indian religion; and sometimes it is thought that all the teachings of the Vedas are comprised in that one system of philosophy. There are, however, various phases of Indian thought; and, perhaps this non-dualistic form is in the minority as compared with the other phases. From the most ancient times there have been various sects of thought in India, and as there never was a formulated or recognised church or any body of men to designate the doctrines which should be believed by each school, people were very free to choose their own form, make their own philosophy and establish their own sects. We, therefore, find that from the most ancient times India was full of religious sects. At the present time, I do not know how many hundreds of sects we have in India, and several fresh ones are coming into existence every year. It seems that the religious activity of that nation is simply inexhaustible.

Of these various sects, in the first place, there can be made two main divisions, the orthodox and the unorthodox. Those that believe in the Hindu scriptures, the Vedas, as eternal revelations of truth, are called orthodox, and those that stand on the other authorities, rejecting the Vedas, are the heterodox in India. The chief modern unorthodox Hindu sects are the Jains and the Buddhists. Among the orthodox some declare that the scriptures are of a much higher authority than reason; others again say that only that portion of the scriptures which is rational should be taken and the rest rejected.

Of the three orthodox divisions, the Sankhyas, the Naiyayikas, and the Mimamsakas, the former two, although they existed as philosophical schools, failed to form any sect. The one sect that now really covers India is that of the later Mimamsakas or the Vedantists. Their philosophy is called Vedantism. All the schools of Hindu philosophy start from the Vedanta or Upanishads, but the monists took the name to themselves as a specialty, because they wanted to base the whole of their theology and philosophy upon the Vedanta and nothing else. In the course of time the Vedanta prevailed, and all the various sects of India that now exist can be referred to one or other of its schools. Yet these schools are not unanimous in their opinions.

We find that there are three principal variations among the Vedantists. On one point they all agree, that is that they all believe in God. All these Vedantists also believe the Vedas to be the revealed word of God, not exactly in the same sense, perhaps, as the Christians or Mohammedans believe, but in a very peculiar sense. Their idea is that the Vedas are an expression of the knowledge of God, and as God is eternal, His knowledge is eternally

1 with Him, and so are the Vedas eternal. There is another common
2 ground of belief: that of creation in cycles, that the whole of
3 creation appears and disappears; that it is projected and becomes
4 grosser and grosser, and at the end of an incalculable period of
5 time it becomes finer and finer, when it dissolves and subsides, and
6 then comes a period of rest. Again it begins to appear and goes
7 through the same process. They postulate the existence of a
8 material which they call Akasha, which is something like the ether
9 of the scientists, and a power which they call Prana. About this
10 Prana they declare that by its vibration the universe is produced.
11 When a cycle ends, all this manifestation of nature becomes finer
12 and finer and dissolves into that Akasha which cannot be seen or
13 felt, yet out of which everything is manufactured. All the forces that
14 we see in nature, such as gravitation, attraction, and repulsion, or
15 as thought, feeling, and nervous motion--all these various forces
16 resolve into that Prana, and the vibration of the Prana ceases. In
17 that state it remains until the beginning of the next cycle. Prana
18 then begins to vibrate, and that vibration acts upon the Akasha, and
19 all these forms are thrown out in regular succession.

20 The first school I will tell you about is styled the dualistic
21 school. The dualists believe that God, who is the creator of the
22 universe and its ruler, is eternally separate from nature, eternally
23 separate from the human soul. God is eternal; nature is eternal; so
24 are all souls. Nature and the souls become manifested and change,
25 but God remains the same. According to the dualists, again, this
26 God is personal in that He has qualities, not that He has a body. He
27 has human attributes; He is merciful, He is just, He is powerful, He
28 is almighty, He can be approached, He can be prayed to, He can be
29 loved, He loves in return, and so forth. In one word, He is a human
30 God, only infinitely greater than man; He has none of the evil
31 qualities which men have. "He is the repository of an infinite
32 number of blessed qualities"--that is their definition. He cannot
33 create without materials, and nature is the material out of which He
34 creates the whole universe. There are some non-Vedantic dualists,
35 called "Atomists", who believe that nature is nothing but an infinite
36 number of atoms, and God's will, acting upon these atoms, creates.
37 The Vedantists deny the atomic theory; they say it is perfectly
38 illogical. The indivisible atoms are like geometrical points without
39 parts or magnitude; but something without parts or magnitude, if
40 multiplied an infinite number of times, will remain the same.
41 Anything that has no parts will never make something that has
42 parts; any number of zeros added together will not make one single
43 whole number. So, if these atoms are such that they have no parts
44 or magnitude, the creation of the universe is simply impossible out
45 of such atoms. Therefore, according to the Vedantic dualists, there
46 is what they call indiscrete or undifferentiated nature, and out of
47 that God creates the universe. The vast mass of Indian people are
48 dualists. Human nature ordinarily cannot conceive of anything
49 higher. We find that ninety per cent of the population of the earth
50 who believe in any religion are dualists. All the religions of Europe
51 and Western Asia are dualistic; they have to be. The ordinary man
52 cannot think of anything which is not concrete. He naturally likes to
53 cling to that which his intellect can grasp. That is to say, he can only

1 conceive of higher spiritual ideas by bringing them down to his own
2 level. He can only grasp abstract thoughts by making them
3 concrete. This is the religion of the masses all over the world. They
4 believe in a God who is entirely separate from them, a great king, a
5 high, mighty monarch, as it were. At the same time they make Him
6 purer than the monarchs of the earth; they give Him all good
7 qualities and remove the evil qualities from Him. As if it were ever
8 possible for good to exist without evil; as if there could be any
9 conception of light without a conception of darkness!

10 With all the dualistic theories the first difficulty is, how is it
11 possible that under the rule of a just and merciful God, the
12 repository of an infinite number of good qualities, there can be so
13 many evils in this world? This question arose in all dualistic
14 religions, but the Hindus never invented a Satan as an answer to it.
15 The Hindus with one accord laid the blame on man, and it was easy
16 for them to do so. Why? Because, as I have just now told you, they
17 did not believe that souls were created out of nothing. We see in
18 this life that we can shape and form our future; every one of us,
19 every day, is trying to shape the morrow. Today we fix the fate of the
20 morrow; tomorrow we shall fix the fate of the day after, and so on.
21 It is quite logical that this reasoning can be pushed backward too. If
22 by our own deeds we shape our destiny in the future, why not apply
23 the same rule to the past? If, in an infinite chain, a certain number
24 of links are alternately repeated, then, if one of these groups of
25 links be explained, we can explain the whole chain. So, in this
26 infinite length of time, if we can cut off one portion and explain that
27 portion and understand it, then, if it be true that nature is uniform,
28 the same explanation must apply to the whole chain of time. If it be
29 true that we are working out our own destiny here within this short
30 space of time, if it be true that everything must have a cause as we
31 see it now, it must also be true that that which we are now is the
32 effect of the whole of our past; therefore, no other person is
33 necessary to shape the destiny of mankind but man himself. The
34 evils that are in the world are caused by none else but ourselves.
35 We have caused all this evil; and just as we constantly see misery
36 resulting from evil actions, so can we also see that much of the
37 existing misery in the world is the effect of the past wickedness of
38 man. Man alone, therefore, according to this theory, is responsible.
39 God is not to blame, He, the eternally merciful Father, is not to
40 blame at all. "We reap what we sow."

41 Another peculiar doctrine of the dualists, is, that every soul
42 must eventually come to salvation. No one will be left out. Through
43 various vicissitudes, through various sufferings and enjoyments,
44 each one of them will come out in the end. Come out of what? The
45 one common idea of all Hindu sects is that all souls have to get out
46 of this universe. Neither the universe which we see and feel, nor
47 even an imaginary one, can be right, the real one, because both are
48 mixed up with good and evil. According to the dualists, there is
49 beyond this universe a place full of happiness and good only; and
50 when that place is reached, there will be no more necessity of being
51 born and reborn, of living and dying; and this idea is very dear to
52 them. No more disease there, and no more death. There will be

1 eternal happiness, and they will be in the presence of God for all
2 time and enjoy Him for ever. They believe that all beings, from the
3 lowest worm up to the highest angels and gods, will all, sooner or
4 later, attain to that world where there will be no more misery. But
5 our world will never end; it goes on infinitely, although moving in
6 waves. Although moving in cycles it never ends. The number of
7 souls that are to be saved, that are to be perfected, is infinite. Some
8 are in plants, some are in the lower animals, some are in men, some
9 are in gods, but all of them, even in the highest gods, are imperfect,
10 are in bondage. What is the bondage? The necessity of being born
11 and the necessity of dying. Even the highest gods die. What are
12 these gods? They mean certain states, certain offices. For instance,
13 Indra the king of gods, means a certain office; some soul which was
14 very high has gone to fill that post in this cycle, and after this cycle
15 he will be born again as man and come down to this earth, and the
16 man who is very good in this cycle will go and fill that post in the
17 next cycle. So with all these gods; they are certain offices which
18 have been filled alternately by millions and millions of souls, who,
19 after filling those offices, came down and become men. Those who
20 do good works in this world and help others, but with an eye to
21 reward, hoping to reach heaven or to get the praise of their fellow-
22 men, must when they die, reap the benefit of those good works--
23 they become these gods. But that is not salvation; salvation never
24 will come through hope of reward. Whatever man desires the Lord
25 gives him. Men desire power, they desire prestige, they desire
26 enjoyments as gods, and they get these desires fulfilled, but no
27 effect of work can be eternal. The effect will be exhausted after a
28 certain length of time; it may be aeons, but after that it will be
29 gone, and these gods must come down again and become men and
30 get another chance for liberation. The lower animals will come up
31 and become men, become gods, perhaps, then become men again,
32 or go back to animals, until the time when they will get rid of all
33 desire for enjoyment, the thirst for life, this clinging on to the "me
34 and mine". This "me and mine" is the very root of all the evil in the
35 world. If you ask a dualist, "Is your child yours?" he will say, "It is
36 God's. My property is not mine, it is God's." Everything should be
37 held as God's.

38 Now, these dualist sects in India are great vegetarians, great
39 preachers of non-killing of animals. But their ideas about it is quite
40 different from that of the Buddhist. If you ask a Buddhist, "Why do
41 you preach against killing any animal?" he will answer, "We have no
42 right to take any life;" and if you ask a dualist, "Why do you not kill
43 any animal?" he says, "Because it is the Lord's." So the dualist says
44 that this "me and mine" is to be applied to God and God alone; He is
45 the only "me" and everything is His. When a man has come to the
46 state when he has no "me and mine," when everything is given up
47 to the Lord, when he loves everybody and is ready even to give up
48 his life for an animal, without any desire for reward, then his heart
49 will be purified, and when the heart has been purified, into that
50 heart will come the love of God. God is the centre of attraction for
51 every soul, and the dualist says, "A needle covered up with clay will
52 not be attracted by a magnet, but as soon as the clay is washed off,
53 it will be attracted." God is the magnet and human soul is the

1 needle, and its evil works, the dirt and dust that cover it. As soon as
2 the soul is pure it will by natural attraction come to God and remain
3 with Him for ever, but remain eternally separate. The perfected
4 soul, if it wishes, can take any form; it is able to take a hundred
5 bodies, if it wishes, or have none at all, if it so desires. It becomes
6 almost almighty, except that it cannot create; that power belongs to
7 God alone. None, however perfect, can manage the affairs of the
8 universe; that function belongs to God. But all souls, when they
9 become perfect, become happy for ever and live eternally with God.
10 This is the dualistic statement.

11 One other idea the dualists preach. They protest against the
12 idea of praying to God, "Lord, give me this and give me that." They
13 think that should not be done. If a man must ask some material gift,
14 he should ask inferior beings for it; ask one of these gods, or angels
15 or a perfected being for temporal things. God is only to be loved. It
16 is almost a blasphemy to pray to God, "Lord, give me this, and give
17 me that." According to the dualists, therefore, what a man wants,
18 he will get sooner or later, by praying to one of the gods; but if he
19 wants salvation, he must worship God. This is the religion of the
20 masses of India.

21 The real Vedanta philosophy begins with those known as the
22 qualified non-dualists. They make the statement that the effect is
23 never different from the cause; the effect is but the cause
24 reproduced in another form. If the universe is the effect and God
25 the cause, it must be God Himself--it cannot be anything but that.
26 They start with the assertion that God is both the efficient and the
27 material cause of the universe; that He Himself is the creator, and
28 He Himself is the material out of which the whole of nature is
29 projected. The word "creation" in your language has no equivalent
30 in Sanskrit, because there is no sect in India which believes in
31 creation, as it is regarded in the West, as something coming out of
32 nothing. It seems that at one time there were a few that had some
33 such idea, but they were very quickly silenced. At the present time I
34 do not know of any sect that believes this. What we mean by
35 creation is projection of that which already existed. Now, the whole
36 universe, according to this sect, is God Himself. He is the material
37 of the universe. We read in the Vedas, "As the Urnanabhi (spider)
38 spins the thread out of its own body,...even so the whole universe
39 has come out of the Being."

40 If the effect is the cause reproduced, the question is: "How is
41 it that we find this material, dull, unintelligent universe produced
42 from a God, who is not material, but who is eternal intelligence?
43 How, if the cause is pure and perfect, can the effect be quite
44 different?" What do these qualified non-dualists say? Theirs is a
45 very peculiar theory. They say that these three existences, God,
46 nature, and the soul, are one. God is, as it were, the Soul, and
47 nature and souls are the body of God. Just as I have a body and I
48 have a soul, so the whole universe and all souls are the body of God,
49 and God is the Soul of souls. Thus, God is the material cause of the
50 universe. The body may be changed--may be young or old, strong or
51 weak--but that does not affect the soul at all. It is the same eternal
52 existence, manifesting through the body. Bodies come and go, but

1 the soul does not change. Even so the whole universe is the body of
2 God, and in that sense it is God. But the change in the universe
3 does not affect God. Out of this material He creates the universe,
4 and at the end of a cycle His body becomes finer, it contracts; at the
5 beginning of another cycle it becomes expanded again, and out of it
6 evolve all these different worlds.

7 Now both the dualists and qualified non-dualists admit that
8 the soul is by its nature pure, but through its own deeds it becomes
9 impure. The qualified non-dualists express it more beautifully than
10 the dualists, by saying that the soul's purity and perfection become
11 contracted and again become manifest, and what we are now trying
12 to do is to remanifest the intelligence, the purity, the power which is
13 natural to the soul. Souls have a multitude of qualities, but not that
14 of almightiness or all-knowingness. Every wicked deed contracts
15 the nature of the soul, and every good deed expands it, and these
16 souls, are all parts of God. "As from a blazing fire fly millions of
17 sparks of the same nature, even so from this Infinite Being, God,
18 these souls have come." Each has the same goal. The God of the
19 qualified non-dualists is also a Personal God, the repository of an
20 infinite number of blessed qualities, only He is interpenetrating
21 everything in the universe. He is immanent in everything and
22 everywhere; and when the scriptures say that God is everything, it
23 means that God is interpenetrating everything, not that God has
24 become the wall, but that God is in the wall. There is not a particle,
25 not an atom in the universe where He is not. Souls are all limited;
26 they are not omnipresent. When they get expansion of their powers
27 and become perfect, there is no more birth and death for them;
28 they live with God for ever.

29 Now we come to Advaitism, the last and, what we think, the
30 fairest flower of philosophy and religion that any country in any age
31 has produced, where human thought attains its highest expression
32 and even goes beyond the mystery which seems to be impenetrable.
33 This is the non-dualistic Vedantism. It is too abstruse, too elevated
34 to be the religion of the masses. Even in India, its birthplace, where
35 it has been ruling supreme for the last three thousand years, it has
36 not been able to permeate the masses. As we go on we shall find
37 that it is difficult for even the most thoughtful man and woman in
38 any country to understand Advaitism. We have made ourselves so
39 weak; we have made ourselves so low. We may make great claims,
40 but naturally we want to lean on somebody else. We are little, weak
41 plants, always wanting a support. How many times I have been
42 asked for a "comfortable religion!" Very few men ask for the truth,
43 fewer dare to learn the truth, and fewest of all dare to follow it in
44 all its practical bearings. It is not their fault; it is all weakness of
45 the brain. Any new thought, especially of a high kind, creates a
46 disturbance, tries to make a new channel, as it were, in the brain
47 matter, and that unhinges the system, throws men off their balance.
48 They are used to certain surroundings, and have to overcome a
49 huge mass of ancient superstitions, ancestral superstition, class
50 superstition, city superstition, country superstition, and behind all,
51 the vast mass of superstition that is innate in every human being.
52 Yet there are a few brave souls in the world who dare to conceive

1 the truth, who dare to take it up, and who dare to follow it to the
2 end.

3 What does the Advaitist declare? He says, if there is a God,
4 that God must be both the material and the efficient cause of the
5 universe. Not only is He the creator, but He is also the created. He
6 Himself is this universe. How can that be? God, the pure, the spirit,
7 has become the universe? Yes, apparently so. That which all
8 ignorant people see as the universe does not really exist. What are
9 you and I and all these things we see? Mere self-hypnotism; there is
10 but one Existence, the Infinite, the Ever-blessed One. In that
11 Existence we dream all these various dreams. It is the Atman,
12 beyond all, the Infinite, beyond the known, beyond the knowable; in
13 and through That we see the universe. It is the only Reality. It is
14 this table; It is the audience before me; It is the wall; It is
15 everything, minus the name and form. Take away the form of the
16 table, take away the name; what remains is It. The Vedantist does
17 not call It either He or She--these are fictions, delusions of the
18 human brain--there is no sex in the soul. People who are under
19 illusion, who have become like animals, see a woman or a man;
20 living gods do not see men or women. How can they who are
21 beyond everything have any sex idea? Everyone and everything is
22 the Atman--the Self--the sexless, the pure, the ever-blessed. It is the
23 name, the form, the body, which are material, and they make all this
24 difference. If you take away these two differences of name and
25 form, the whole universe is one; there are no two, but one
26 everywhere. You and I are one. There is neither nature, nor God,
27 nor the universe, only that one Infinite Existence, out of which,
28 through name and form, all these are manufactured. How to know
29 the Knower? It cannot be known. How can you see your own Self?
30 You can only reflect yourself. So all this universe is the reflection of
31 that One Eternal Being, the Atman, and as the reflection falls upon
32 good or bad reflectors, so good or bad images are cast up. Thus in
33 the murderer, the reflector is bad and not the Self. In the saint the
34 reflector is pure. The Self--the Atman--is by Its own nature pure. It
35 is the same, the one Existence of the universe that is reflecting
36 Itself from the lowest worm to the highest and most perfect being.
37 The whole of this universe is one Unity, one Existence, physically,
38 mentally, morally and spiritually. We are looking upon this one
39 Existence in different forms and creating all these images upon It.
40 To the being who has limited himself to the condition of man, It
41 appears as the world of man. To the being who is on a higher plane
42 of existence, It may seem like heaven. There is but one Soul in the
43 universe, not two. It neither comes nor goes. It is neither born, nor
44 dies, nor reincarnates. How can It die? Where can It go? All these
45 heavens, all these earths, and all these places are vain imaginations
46 of the mind. They do not exist, never existed in the past, and never
47 will exist in the future.

48 I am omnipresent, eternal. Where can I go? Where am I not
49 already? I am reading this book of nature. Page after page I am
50 finishing and turning over, and one dream of life after another goes
51 away. Another page of life is turned over; another dream of life
52 comes, and it goes away, rolling and rolling, and when I have

1 finished my reading, I let it go and stand aside, I throw away the
2 book, and the whole thing is finished. What does the Advaitist
3 preach? He dethrones all the gods that ever existed, or ever will
4 exist in the universe and places on that throne the Self of man, the
5 Atman, higher than the sun and the moon, higher than the heavens,
6 greater than this great universe itself. No books, no scriptures, no
7 science can ever imagine the glory of the Self that appears as man,
8 the most glorious God that ever was, the only God that ever existed,
9 exists, or ever will exist. I am to worship, therefore, none but
10 myself. "I worship my Self," says the Advaitist. To whom shall I bow
11 down? I salute my Self. To whom shall I go for help? Who can help
12 me, the Infinite Being of the universe? These are foolish dreams,
13 hallucinations; who ever helped any one? None. Wherever you see a
14 weak man, a dualist, weeping and wailing for help from somewhere
15 above the skies, it is because he does not know that the skies also
16 are in him. He wants help from the skies, and the help comes. We
17 see that it comes; but it comes from within himself, and he mistakes
18 it as coming from without. Sometimes a sick man lying on his bed
19 may hear a tap on the door. He gets up and opens it and finds no
20 one there. He goes back to bed, and again he hears a tap. He gets
21 up and opens the door. Nobody is there. At last he finds that it was
22 his own heartbeat which he fancied was a knock at the door. Thus
23 man, after this vain search after various gods outside himself,
24 completes the circle, and comes back to the point from which he
25 started --the human soul, and he finds that the God whom he was
26 searching in hill and dale, whom he was seeking in every brook, in
27 every temple, in churches and heavens, that God whom he was
28 even imagining as sitting in heaven and ruling the world, is his own
29 Self. I am He, and He is I. None but I was God, and this little I
30 never existed.

31 Yet, how could that perfect God have been deluded? He never
32 was. How could a perfect God have been dreaming? He never
33 dreamed. Truth never dreams. The very question as to whence this
34 illusion arose is absurd. Illusion arises from illusion alone. There
35 will be no illusion as soon as the truth is seen. Illusion always rests
36 upon illusion; it never rests upon God, the Truth, the Atman. You
37 are never in illusion; it is illusion that is in you, before you. A cloud
38 is here; another comes and pushes it aside and takes its place. Still
39 another comes and pushes that one away. As before the eternal
40 blue sky, clouds of various hue and colour come, remain for a short
41 time and disappear, leaving it the same eternal blue, even so are
42 you, eternally pure, eternally perfect. You are the veritable Gods of
43 the universe; nay, there are not two--there is but One. It is a
44 mistake to say, "you and I"; say "I". It is I who am eating in millions
45 of mouths; how can I be hungry? It is I who am working through an
46 infinite number of hands; how can I be inactive? It is I who am
47 living the life of the whole universe; where is death for me? I am
48 beyond all life, beyond all death. Where shall I seek for freedom? I
49 am free by my nature. Who can bind me--the God of this universe?
50 The scriptures of the world are but little maps, wanting to delineate
51 my glory, who am the only existence of the universe. Then what are
52 these books to me? Thus says the Advaitist.

1 "Know the truth and be free in a moment." All the darkness
2 will then vanish. When man has seen himself as one with the
3 Infinite Being of the universe, when all separateness has ceased,
4 when all men and women, all gods and angels, all animals and
5 plants, and the whole universe have melted into that Oneness, then
6 all fear disappears. Can I hurt myself? Can I kill myself? Can I
7 injure myself? Whom to fear? Can you fear yourself? Then will all
8 sorrow disappear. What can cause me sorrow? I am the One
9 Existence of the universe. Then all jealousies will disappear; of
10 whom to be jealous? Of myself? Then all bad feelings disappear.
11 Against whom can I have bad feeling? Against myself? There is
12 none in the universe but I. And this is the one way, says the
13 Vedantist, to Knowledge. Kill out this differentiation, kill out this
14 superstition that there are many. "He who in this world of many
15 sees that One, he who in this mass of insentiency sees that one
16 Sentient Being, he who in this world of shadows catches that
17 Reality, unto him belongs eternal peace, unto none else, unto none
18 else."

19 These are the salient points of the three steps which Indian
20 religious thought has taken in regard to God. We have seen that it
21 began with the Personal, the extra-cosmic God. It went from the
22 external to the internal cosmic body, God immanent in the universe,
23 and ended in identifying the soul itself with that God, and making
24 one Soul, a unit of all these various manifestations in the universe.
25 This is the last word of the Vedas. It begins with dualism, goes
26 through a qualified monism and ends in perfect monism. We know
27 how very few in this world can come to the last, or even dare
28 believe in it, and fewer still dare act according to it. Yet we know
29 that therein lies the explanation of all ethics, of all morality and all
30 spirituality in the universe. Why is it that everyone says, "Do good
31 to others?" Where is the explanation? Why is it that all great men
32 have preached the brotherhood of mankind, and greater men the
33 brotherhood of all lives? Because whether they were conscious of it
34 or not, behind all that, through all their irrational and personal
35 superstitions, was peering forth the eternal light of the Self denying
36 all manifoldness, and asserting that the whole universe is but one.

37 Again, the last word gave us one universe, which through the
38 senses we see as matter, through the intellect as souls, and through
39 the spirit as God. To the man who throws upon himself veils, which
40 the world calls wickedness and evil, this very universe will change
41 and become a hideous place; to another man, who wants
42 enjoyments, this very universe will change its appearance and
43 become a heaven, and to the perfect man the whole thing will
44 vanish and become his own Self.

45 Now, as society exists at the present time, all these three
46 stages are necessary; the one does not deny the other, one is simply
47 the fulfilment of the other. The Advaitist or the qualified Advaitist
48 does not say that dualism is wrong; it is a right view, but a lower
49 one. It is on the way to truth; therefore let everybody work out his
50 own vision of this universe, according to his own ideas. Injure none,
51 deny the position of none; take man where he stands and, if you
52 can, lend him a helping hand and put him on a higher platform, but

1 do not injure and do not destroy. All will come to truth in the long
2 run. "When all the desires of the heart will be vanquished, then this
3 very mortal will become immortal"--then the very man will become
4 God.

THE ATMAN: ITS BONDAGE AND FREEDOM

(Delivered in America)

According to the Advaita philosophy, there is only one thing real in the universe, which it calls Brahman; everything else is unreal, manifested and manufactured out of Brahman by the power of Maya. To reach back to that Brahman is our goal. We are, each one of us, that Brahman, that Reality, plus this Maya. If we can get rid of this Maya or ignorance, then we become what we really are. According to this philosophy, each man consists of three parts--the body, the internal organ or the mind, and behind that, what is called the Atman, the Self. The body is the external coating and the mind is the internal coating of the Atman who is the real perceiver, the real enjoyer, the being in the body who is working the body by means of the internal organ or the mind.

The Atman is the only existence in the human body which is immaterial. Because it is immaterial, it cannot be a compound, and because it is not a compound, it does not obey the law of cause and effect, and so it is immortal. That which is immortal can have no beginning because everything with a beginning must have an end. It also follows that it must be formless; there cannot be any form without matter. Everything that has form must have a beginning and an end. We have none of us seen a form which had not a beginning and will not have an end. A form comes out of a combination of force and matter. This chair has a peculiar form, that is to say a certain quantity of matter is acted upon by a certain amount of force and made to assume a particular shape. The shape is the result of a combination of matter and force. The combination cannot be eternal; there must come to every combination a time when it will dissolve. So all forms have a beginning and an end. We know our body will perish; it had a beginning and it will have an end. But the Self having no form, cannot be bound by the law of beginning and end. It is existing from infinite time; just as time is eternal, so is the Self of man eternal. Secondly, it must be all-pervading. It is only form that is conditioned and limited by space; that which is formless cannot be confined in space. So, according to Advaita Vedanta, the Self, the Atman, in you, in me, in every one, is omnipresent. You are as much in the sun now as in this earth, as much in England as in America. But the Self acts through the mind and the body, and where they are, its action is visible.

Each work we do, each thought we think, produces an impression, called in Sanskrit Samskara, upon the mind and the sum total of these impressions becomes the tremendous force which is called "character". The character of a man is what he has created for himself; it is the result of the mental and physical actions that he has done in his life. The sum total of the Samskaras is the force which gives a man the next direction after death. A man dies; the body falls away and goes back to the elements; but the Samskaras remain, adhering to the mind which, being made of fine material, does not dissolve, because the finer the material, the more persistent it is. But the mind also dissolves in the long run, and that is what we are struggling for. In this connection, the best

1 illustration that comes to my mind is that of the whirlwind. Different
2 currents of air coming from different directions meet and at the
3 meeting-point become united and go on rotating; as they rotate,
4 they form a body of dust, drawing in bits of paper, straw, etc., at one
5 place, only to drop them and go on to another, and so go on
6 rotating, raising and forming bodies out of the materials which are
7 before them.

8 Even so the forces, called Prana in Sanskrit, come together
9 and form the body and the mind out of matter, and move on until
10 the body falls down, when they raise other materials to make
11 another body, and when this falls, another rises, and thus the
12 process goes on. Force cannot travel without matter. So when the
13 body falls down, the mind-stuff remains, Prana in the form of
14 Samskaras acting on it; and then it goes on to another point, raises
15 up another whirl from fresh materials, and begins another motion;
16 and so it travels from place to place until the force is all spent; and
17 then it falls down, ended. So when the mind will end, be broken to
18 pieces entirely, without leaving any Samskara, we shall be entirely
19 free, and until that time we are in bondage; until then the Atman is
20 covered by the whirl of the mind, and imagines it is being taken
21 from place to place. When the whirl falls down, the Atman finds that
22 It is all-pervading. It can go where It likes, is entirely free, and is
23 able to manufacture any number of minds or bodies It likes; but
24 until then It can go only with the whirl. This freedom is the goal
25 towards which we are all moving.

26 Suppose there is a ball in this room, and we each have a
27 mallet in our hands and begin to strike the ball, giving it hundreds
28 of blows, driving it from point to point, until at last it flies out of the
29 room. With what force and in what direction will it go out? These
30 will be determined by the forces that have been acting upon it all
31 through the room. All the different blows that have been given will
32 have their effects. Each one of our actions, mental and physical, is
33 such a blow. The human mind is a ball which is being hit. We are
34 being hit about this room of the world all the time, and our passage
35 out of it is determined by the force of all these blows. In each case,
36 the speed and direction of the ball is determined by the hits it has
37 received; so all our actions in this world will determine our future
38 birth. Our present birth, therefore, is the result of our past. This is
39 one case: suppose I give you an endless chain, in which there is a
40 black link and a white link alternately, without beginning and
41 without end, and suppose I ask you the nature of the chain. At first
42 you will find a difficulty in determining its nature, the chain being
43 infinite at both ends, but slowly you find out it is a chain. You soon
44 discovered that this infinite chain is a repetition of the two links,
45 black and white, and these multiplied infinitely become a whole
46 chain. If you know the nature of one of these links, you know the
47 nature of the whole chain, because it is a perfect repetition. All our
48 lives, past, present, and future, form, as it were, an infinite chain,
49 without beginning and without end, each link of which is one life,
50 with two ends, birth and death. What we are and do here is being
51 repeated again and again, with but little variation. So if we know
52 these two links, we shall know all the passages we shall have to

1 pass through in this world. We see, therefore, that our passage into
2 this world has been exactly determined by our previous passages.
3 Similarly we are in this world by our own actions. Just as we go out
4 with the sum total of our present actions upon us, so we see that we
5 come into it with the sum total of our past actions upon us; that
6 which takes us out is the very same thing that brings us in. What
7 brings us in? Our past deeds. What takes us out? Our own deeds
8 *here*, and so on and on we go. Like the caterpillar that takes the
9 thread from its own mouth and builds its cocoon and at last finds
10 itself caught inside the cocoon, we have bound ourselves by our
11 own actions, we have thrown the network of our actions around
12 ourselves. We have set the law of causation in motion, and we find it
13 hard to get ourselves out of it. We have set the wheel in motion, and
14 we are being crushed under it. So this philosophy teaches us that
15 we are uniformly being bound by our own actions, good or bad.

16 The Atman never comes nor goes, is never born nor dies. It is
17 nature moving before the Atman, and the reflection of this motion is
18 on the Atman; and the Atman ignorantly thinks it is moving, and not
19 nature. When the Atman thinks that, it is in bondage; but when it
20 comes to find it never moves, that it is omnipresent, then freedom
21 comes. The Atman in bondage is called Jiva. Thus you see that when
22 it is said that the Atman comes and goes, it is said only for facility of
23 understanding, just as for convenience in studying astronomy you
24 are asked to suppose that the sun moves round the earth, though
25 such is not the case. So the Jiva, the soul, comes to higher or lower
26 states. This is the well-known law of reincarnation; and this law
27 binds all creation.

28 People in this country think it too horrible that man should
29 come up from an animal. Why? What will be the end of these
30 millions of animals? Are they nothing? If we have a soul, so have
31 they, and if they have none, neither have we. It is absurd to say that
32 man alone has a soul, and the animals none. I have seen men worse
33 than animals.

34 The human soul has sojourned in lower and higher forms,
35 migrating from one to another, according to the Samskaras or
36 impressions, but it is only in the highest form as man that it attains
37 to freedom. The man form is higher than even the angel form, and
38 of all forms it is the highest; man is the highest being in creation,
39 because he attains to freedom.

40 All this universe was in Brahman, and it was, as it were,
41 projected out of Him, and has been moving on to go back to the
42 source from which it was projected, like the electricity which comes
43 out of the dynamo, completes the circuit, and returns to it. The
44 same is the case with the soul. Projected from Brahman, it passed
45 through all sorts of vegetable and animal forms, and at last it is in
46 man, and man is the nearest approach to Brahman. To go back to
47 Brahman from which we have been projected is the great struggle
48 of life. Whether people know it or not does not matter. In the
49 universe, whatever we see of motion, or struggles in mineral or
50 plants or animals is an effort to come back to the centre and be at
51 rest. There was an equilibrium, and that has been destroyed; and
52 all parts and atoms and molecules are struggling to find their lost

1 equilibrium again. In this struggle they are combining and re-
2 forming, giving rise to all the wonderful phenomena of nature. All
3 struggles and competitions in animal life, plant life, and everywhere
4 else, all social struggles and wars are but expressions of that
5 eternal struggle to get back to that equilibrium.

6 The going from birth to death, this travelling, is what is called
7 Samsara in Sanskrit, the round of birth and death literally. All
8 creation, passing through this round, will sooner or later become
9 free. The question may be raised that if we all shall come to
10 freedom, why should we *struggle* to attain it? If every one is going
11 to be free, we will sit down and wait. It is true that every being will
12 become free, sooner or later; no one can be lost. Nothing can come
13 to destruction; everything must come up. If that is so, what is the
14 use of our struggling? In the first place, the struggle is the only
15 means that will bring us to the centre, and in the second place, we
16 do not know why we struggle. We have to. "Of thousands of men
17 some are awakened to the idea that they will become free." The
18 vast masses of mankind are content with material things, but there
19 are some who awake, and want to get back, who have had enough
20 of this playing, down here. These struggle consciously, while the
21 rest do it unconsciously.

22 The alpha and omega of Vedanta philosophy is to "give up the
23 world," giving up the unreal and taking the real. Those who are
24 enamoured of the world may ask, "Why should we attempt to get
25 out of it, to go back to the centre? Suppose we have all come from
26 God, but we find this world is pleasurable and nice; then why
27 should we not rather try to get more and more of the world? Why
28 should we try to get out of it?" They say, look at the wonderful
29 improvements going on in the world every day, how much luxury is
30 being manufactured for it. This is very enjoyable. Why should we go
31 away, and strive for something which is not this? The answer is that
32 the world is certain to die, to be broken into pieces and that many
33 times we have had the same enjoyments. All the forms which we
34 are seeing now have been manifested again and again, and the
35 world in which we live has been here many times before. I have
36 been here and talked to you many times before. You will know that
37 it must be so, and the very words that you have been listening to
38 now, you have heard many times before. And many times more it
39 will be the same. Souls were never different, the bodies have been
40 constantly dissolving and recurring. Secondly, these things
41 periodically occur. Suppose here are three or four dice, and when
42 we throw them, one come up five, another four, another three, and
43 another two. If you keep on throwing, there must come times when
44 those very same numbers will recur. Go on throwing, and no matter
45 how long may be the interval, those numbers must come again. It
46 cannot be asserted in how many throws they will come again; this is
47 the law of chance. So with souls and their associations. However
48 distant may be the periods, the same combinations and dissolutions
49 will happen again and again. The same birth, eating and drinking,
50 and then death, come round again and again. Some never find
51 anything higher than the enjoyments of the world, but those who
52 want to soar higher find that these enjoyments are never final, are

1 only by the way.

2 Every form, let us say, beginning from the little worm and
3 ending in man, is like one of the cars of the Chicago Ferris Wheel
4 which is in motion all the time, but the occupants change. A man
5 goes into a car, moves with the wheel, and comes out. The wheel
6 goes on and on. A soul enters one form, resides in it for a time, then
7 leaves it and goes into another and quits that again for a third. Thus
8 the round goes on till it comes out of the wheel and becomes free.

9 Astonishing powers of reading the past and the future of a
10 man's life have been known in every country and every age. The
11 explanation is that so long as the Atman is within the realm of
12 causation--though its inherent freedom is not entirely lost and can
13 assert itself, even to the extent of taking the soul out of the causal
14 chain, as it does in the case of men who become free--its actions are
15 greatly influenced by the causal law and thus make it possible for
16 men, possessed with the insight to trace the sequence of effects, to
17 tell the past and the future.

18 So long as there is desire or want, it is a sure sign that there
19 is imperfection. A perfect, free being cannot have any desire. God
20 cannot want anything. If He desires, He cannot be God. He will be
21 imperfect. So all the talk about God desiring this and that, and
22 becoming angry and pleased by turns is babies' talk, but means
23 nothing. Therefore it has been taught by all teachers, "Desire
24 nothing, give up all desires and be perfectly satisfied."

25 A child comes into the world crawling and without teeth, and
26 the old man gets out without teeth and crawling. The extremes are
27 alike, but the one has no experience of the life before him, while the
28 other has gone through it all. When the vibrations of ether are very
29 low, we do not see light, it is darkness; when very high, the result is
30 also darkness. The extremes generally appear to be the same,
31 though one is as distant from the other as the poles. The wall has
32 no desires, so neither has the perfect man. But the wall is not
33 sentient enough to desire, while for the perfect man there is
34 nothing to desire. There are idiots who have no desires in this
35 world, because their brain is imperfect. At the same time, the
36 highest state is when we have no desires, but the two are opposite
37 poles of the same existence. One is near the animal, and the other
38 near to God.

THE REAL AND THE APPARENT MAN

(Delivered in New York)

Here we stand, and our eyes look forward sometimes miles ahead. Man has been doing that since he began to think. He is always looking forward, looking ahead. He wants to know where he goes even after the dissolution of his body. Various theories have been propounded, system after system has been brought forward to suggest explanations. Some have been rejected, while others have been accepted, and thus it will go on, so long as man is here, so long as man thinks. There is some truth in each of these systems. There is a good deal of what is not truth in all of them. I shall try to place before you the sum and substance, the result, of the inquiries in this line that have been made in India. I shall try to harmonise the various thoughts on this subject, as they have come up from time to time among the Indian philosophers. I shall try to harmonise the psychologists and the metaphysicians, and, if possible, I shall harmonise them with modern scientific thinkers also.

The one theme of Vedanta philosophy is the search after unity. The Hindu mind does not care for the particular; it is always after the general, nay, the universal. "What is that, by knowing which everything else is to be known?" That is the one theme. "As through the knowledge of one lump of clay all that is of clay is known, so, what is that, by knowing which this whole universe itself will be known?" That is the one search. The whole of this universe, according to the Hindu philosophers, can be resolved into one material, which they call Akasha. Everything that we see around us, feel, touch, taste, is simply a differentiated manifestation of this Akasha. It is all-pervading, fine. All that we call solids, liquids, or gases, figures, forms, or bodies, the earth, sun, moon, and stars--everything is composed of this Akasha.

What force is it which acts upon this Akasha and manufactures this universe out of it? Along with Akasha exists universal power; all that is power in the universe, manifesting as force or attraction--nay, even as thought--is but a different manifestation of that one power which the Hindus call Prana. This Prana, acting on Akasha, is creating the whole of this universe. In the beginning of a cycle, this Prana, as it were, sleeps in the infinite ocean of Akasha. It existed motionless in the beginning. Then arises motion in this ocean of Akasha by the action of this Prana, and as this Prana begins to move, to vibrate, out of this ocean come the various celestial systems, suns, moons, stars, earth, human beings, animals, plants, and the manifestations of all the various forces and phenomena. Every manifestation of power, therefore, according to them, is this Prana. Every material manifestation is Akasha. When this cycle will end, all that we call solid will melt away into the next form, the next finer or the liquid form; that will melt into the gaseous, and that into finer and more uniform heat vibrations, and all will melt back into the original Akasha, and what we now call attraction, repulsion, and motion, will slowly resolve into the original Prana. Then this Prana is said to sleep for a period, again to emerge and to throw out all those forms; and when this period will

1 end, the whole thing will subside again. Thus this process of
2 creation is going down, and coming up, oscillating backwards and
3 forwards. In the language of modern science, it is becoming static
4 during one period, and during another period it is becoming
5 dynamic. At one time it becomes potential, and at the next period it
6 becomes active. This alteration has gone on through eternity.

7 Yet, this analysis is only partial. This much has been known
8 even to modern physical science. Beyond that, the research of
9 physical science cannot reach. But the inquiry does not stop in
10 consequence. We have not yet found that one, by knowing which
11 everything else will be known. We have resolved the whole universe
12 into two components, into what are called matter and energy, or
13 what the ancient philosophers of India called Akasha and Prana.
14 The next step is to resolve this Akasha and the Prana into their
15 origin. Both can be resolved into the still higher entity which is
16 called mind. It is out of mind, the Mahat, the universally existing
17 thought-power, that these two have been produced. Thought is a
18 still finer manifestation of being than either Akasha or Prana. It is
19 thought that splits itself into these two. The universal thought
20 existed in the beginning, and that manifested, changed, evolved
21 itself into these two Akasha and Prana: and by the combination of
22 these two the whole universe has been produced.

23 We next come to psychology. I am looking at you. The external
24 sensations are brought to me by the eyes; they are carried by the
25 sensory nerves to the brain. The eyes are not the organs of vision.
26 They are but the external instruments, because if the real organ
27 behind, that which carries the sensation to the brain, is destroyed, I
28 may have twenty eyes, yet I cannot see you. The picture on the
29 retina may be as complete as possible, yet I shall not see you.
30 Therefore, the organ is different from its instruments; behind the
31 instruments, the eyes, there must be the organ. So it is with all the
32 sensations. The nose is not the sense of smell; it is but the
33 instrument, and behind it is the organ. With every sense we have,
34 there is first the external instrument in the physical body; behind
35 that, in the same physical body, there is the organ; yet these are not
36 sufficient. Suppose I am talking to you, and you are listening to me
37 with close attention. Something happens, say, a bell rings; you will
38 not, perhaps, hear the bell ring. The pulsations of that sound came
39 to your ear, struck the tympanum, the impression was carried by
40 the nerve into the brain; if the whole process was complete up to
41 carrying the impulse to the brain, why did you not hear? Something
42 else was wanting--the mind was not attached to the organ. When
43 the mind detaches itself from the organ, the organ may bring any
44 news to it, but the mind will not receive it. When it attaches itself
45 to the organ, then alone is it possible for the mind to receive the news.
46 Yet, even that does not complete the whole. The instruments may
47 bring the sensation from outside, the organs may carry it inside, the
48 mind may attach itself to the organ, and yet the perception may not
49 be complete. One more factor is necessary; there must be a
50 reaction within. With this reaction comes knowledge. That which is
51 outside sends, as it were, the current of news into my brain. My
52 mind takes it up, and presents it to the intellect, which groups it in

1 relation to pre-received impressions and sends a current of
2 reaction, and with that reaction comes perception. Here, then, is
3 the will. The state of mind which reacts is called Buddhi, the
4 intellect. Yet, even this does not complete the whole. One step more
5 is required. Suppose here is a camera and there is a sheet of cloth,
6 and I try to throw a picture on that sheet. What am I to do? I am to
7 guide various rays of light through the camera to fall upon the
8 sheet and become grouped there. Something is necessary to have
9 the picture thrown upon, which does not move. I cannot form a
10 picture upon something which is moving; that something must be
11 stationary, because the rays of light which I throw on it are moving,
12 and these moving rays of light, must be gathered, unified, co-
13 ordinated, and completed upon something which is stationary.
14 Similar is the case with the sensations which these organs of ours
15 are carrying inside and presenting to the mind, and which the mind
16 in its turn is presenting to the intellect. This process will not be
17 complete unless there is something permanent in the background
18 upon which the picture, as it were, may be formed, upon which we
19 may unify all the different impressions. What is it that gives unity to
20 the changing whole of our being? What is it that keeps up the
21 identity of the moving thing moment after moment? What is it upon
22 which all our different impressions are pieced together, upon which
23 the perceptions, as it were, come together, reside, and form a
24 united whole? We have found that to serve this end there must be
25 something, and we also see that that something must be, relatively
26 to the body and mind, motionless. The sheet of cloth upon which the
27 camera throws the picture is, relatively to the rays of light,
28 motionless, else there will be no picture. That is to say, the
29 perceiver must be an individual. This something upon which the
30 mind is painting all these pictures, this something upon which our
31 sensations, carried by the mind and intellect, are placed and
32 grouped and formed into a unity, is what is called the soul of man.

33 We have seen that it is the universal cosmic mind that splits
34 itself into the Akasha and Prana, and beyond mind we have found
35 the soul in us. In the universe, behind the universal mind, there is a
36 Soul that exists, and it is called God. In the individual it is the soul
37 of man. In this universe, in the cosmos, just as the universal mind
38 becomes evolved into Akasha and Prana, even so, we may find that
39 the Universal Soul Itself becomes evolved as mind. Is it really so
40 with the individual man? Is his mind the creator of his body, and his
41 soul the creator of his mind? That is to say, are his body, his mind,
42 and his soul three different existences or are they three in one or,
43 again, are they different states of existence of the same unit being?
44 We shall gradually try to find an answer to this question. The first
45 step that we have now gained is this: here is this external body,
46 behind this external body are the organs, the mind, the intellect,
47 and behind this is the soul. At the first step, we have found, as it
48 were, that the soul is separate from the body, separate from the
49 mind itself.

50 Opinions in the religious world become divided at this point,
51 and the departure is this. All those religious views which generally
52 pass under the name of dualism hold that this soul is qualified, that

1 it is of various qualities, that all feelings of enjoyment, pleasure,
2 and pain really belong to the soul. The non-dualists deny that the
3 soul has any such qualities; they say it is unqualified.

4 Let me first take up the dualists, and try to present to you
5 their position with regard to the soul and its destiny; next, the
6 system that contradicts them; and lastly, let us try to find the
7 harmony which non-dualism will bring to us. This soul of man,
8 because it is separate from the mind and body, because it is not
9 composed of Akasha and Prana, must be immortal. Why? What do
10 we mean by mortality? Decomposition. And that is only possible for
11 things that are the result of composition; anything that is made of
12 two or three ingredients must become decomposed. That alone
13 which is not the result of composition can never become
14 decomposed, and, therefore, can never die. It is immortal. It has
15 been existing throughout eternity; it is uncreate. Every item of
16 creation is simply a composition; no one ever saw creation come out
17 of nothing. All that we know of creation is the combination of
18 already existing things into newer forms. That being so, this soul of
19 man, being simple, must have been existing for ever, and it will
20 exist for ever. When this body falls off, the soul lives on. According
21 to the Vedantists, when this body dissolves, the vital forces of the
22 man go back to his mind and the mind becomes dissolved, as it
23 were, into the Prana, and that Prana enters the soul of man, and the
24 soul of man comes out, clothed, as it were, with what they call the
25 fine body, the mental body, or spiritual body, as you may like to call
26 it. In this body are the Samskaras of the man. What are the
27 Samskaras? This mind is like a lake, and every thought is like a
28 wave upon that lake. Just as in the lake waves rise and then fall
29 down and disappear, so these thought-waves are continually rising
30 in the mind-stuff and then disappearing, but they do not disappear
31 for ever. They become finer and finer, but they are all there, ready
32 to start up at another time when called upon to do so. Memory is
33 simply calling back into wave-form some of those thoughts which
34 have gone into that finer state of existence. Thus, everything that
35 we have thought, every action that we have done, is lodged in the
36 mind; it is all there in fine form, and when a man dies, the sum total
37 of these impressions is in the mind, which again works upon a little
38 fine material as a medium. The soul, clothed as it were, with these
39 impressions and the fine body, passes out, and the destiny of the
40 soul is guided by the resultant of all the different forces
41 represented by the different impressions. According to us, there are
42 three different goals for the soul.

43 Those that are very spiritual, when they die, follow the solar
44 rays and reach what is called the solar sphere, through which they
45 reach what is called the lunar sphere and through that they reach
46 what is called the sphere of lightning, and there they meet with
47 another soul who is already blessed, and he guides the new-comer
48 forward to the highest of all spheres, which is called the
49 Brahmaloka, the sphere of Brahma. There these souls attain to
50 omniscience and omnipotence, become almost as powerful and all-
51 knowing as God Himself; and they reside there for ever, according
52 to the dualists, or, according to the non-dualists, they become one

1 with the Universal at the end of the cycle. The next class of
2 persons, who have been doing good work with selfish motives, are
3 carried by the results of their good works, when they die, to what is
4 called lunar sphere, where there are various heavens, and there
5 they acquire fine bodies, the bodies of gods. They become gods and
6 live there and enjoy the blessing of heaven for a long period; and
7 after that period is finished, the old Karma is again upon them, and
8 so they fall back again to the earth; they come down through the
9 spheres of air and clouds and all these various regions, and, at last,
10 reach the earth through raindrops. There on the earth they attach
11 themselves to some cereal which is eventually eaten by some man
12 who is fit to supply them with material to make a new body. The last
13 class, namely, the wicked, when they die, become ghosts or
14 demons, and live somewhere between the lunar sphere and this
15 earth. Some try to disturb mankind, some are friendly; and after
16 living there for some time they also fall back to the earth and
17 become animals. After living for some time in an animal body they
18 get released, and come back, and become men again, and thus get
19 one more chance to work out their salvation. We see, then, that
20 those who have nearly attained to perfection, in whom only very
21 little of impurity remains, go to the Brahmaloaka through the rays of
22 the sun; those who were a middling sort of people, who did some
23 good work here with the idea of going to heaven, go to the heavens
24 in the lunar sphere and there obtain god-bodies; but they have
25 again to become men and so have one more chance to become
26 perfect. Those that are very wicked become ghosts and demons,
27 and then they may have to become animals; after that they become
28 men again and get another chance to perfect themselves. This earth
29 is called the Karma-Bhumi, the sphere of Karma. Here alone man
30 makes his good or bad Karma. When a man wants to go to heaven
31 and does good works for that purpose, he becomes as good and
32 does not as such store up any bad Karma. He just enjoys the effects
33 of the good work he did on earth; and when this good Karma is
34 exhausted, there comes upon him the resultant force of all the evil
35 Karma he had previously stored up in life, and that brings him down
36 again to this earth. In the same way, those that become ghosts
37 remain in that state, not giving rise to fresh Karma, but suffer the
38 evil results of their past misdeeds, and later on remain for a time in
39 an animal body without causing any fresh Karma. When that period
40 is finished, they too become men again. The states of reward and
41 punishment due to good and bad Karmas are devoid of the force
42 generating fresh Karma; they have only to be enjoyed or suffered. If
43 there is an extraordinarily good or an extraordinarily evil Karma, it
44 bears fruit very quickly. For instance, if a man has been doing many
45 evil things all his life, but does one good act, the result of that good
46 act will immediately appear, but when that result has been gone
47 through, all the evil acts must produce their results also. All men
48 who do certain good and great acts, but the general tenor of whose
49 lives has not been correct, will become gods; and after living for
50 some time in god-bodies, enjoying the powers of gods, they will
51 have again to become men; when the power of the good acts is thus
52 finished, the old evil comes up to be worked out. Those who do
53 extraordinarily evil acts have to put on ghost and devil bodies, and

1 when the effect of those evil actions is exhausted, the little good
2 action which remains associated with them, makes them again
3 become men. The way to Brahmaloaka, from which there is no more
4 fall or return, is called Devayana, i.e. the way to God; the way to
5 heaven is known as Pitriyana, i.e. the way to the fathers.

6 Man, therefore, according to the Vedanta philosophy, is the
7 greatest being that is in the universe, and this world of work the
8 best place in it, because only herein is the greatest and the best
9 chance for him to become perfect. Angels or gods, whatever you
10 may call them, have all to become men, if they want to become
11 perfect. This is the great centre, the wonderful poise, and the
12 wonderful opportunity--this human life.

13 We came next to the other aspect of philosophy. There are
14 Buddhists who deny the whole theory of the soul that I have just
15 now been propounding. "What use is there," says the Buddhist, "to
16 assume something as the substratum, as the background of this
17 body and mind? Why may we not allow thoughts to run on? Why
18 admit a third substance beyond this organism, composed of mind
19 and body, a third substance called the soul? What is its use? Is not
20 this organism sufficient to explain itself? Why take anew a third
21 something?" These arguments are very powerful. This reasoning is
22 very strong. So far as outside research goes, we see that this
23 organism is a sufficient explanation of itself--at least, many of us see
24 it in that light. Why then need there be a soul as substratum, as a
25 something which is neither mind nor body but stands as a
26 background for both mind and body? Let there be only mind and
27 body. Body is the name of a stream of matter continuously
28 changing. Mind is the name of a stream of consciousness or thought
29 continuously changing. What produces the apparent unity between
30 these two? This unity does not really exist, let us say. Take, for
31 instance, a lighted torch, and whirl it rapidly before you. You see a
32 circle of fire. The circle does not really exist, but because the torch
33 is continually moving, it leaves the appearance of a circle. So there
34 is no unity in this life; it is a mass of matter continually rushing
35 down, and the whole of this matter you may call one unity, but no
36 more. So is mind; each thought is separate from every other
37 thought; it is only the rushing current that leaves behind the illusion
38 of unity; there is no need of a third substance. This universal
39 phenomenon of body and mind is all that really is; do not posit
40 something behind it. You will find that this Buddhist thought has
41 been taken up by certain sects and schools in modern times, and all
42 of them claim that it is new--their own invention. This has been the
43 central idea of most of the Buddhistic philosophies, that this world
44 is itself all-sufficient; that you need not ask for any background at
45 all; all that is, is this sense-universe; what is the use of thinking of
46 something as a support to this universe? Everything is the
47 aggregate of qualities; why should there be a hypothetical
48 substance in which they should inhere? The idea of substance
49 comes from the rapid interchange of qualities, not from something
50 unchangeable which exists behind them. We see how wonderful
51 some of these arguments are, and they appeal easily to the ordinary
52 experience of humanity--in fact, not one in a million can think of

1 anything other than phenomena. To the vast majority of men nature
2 appears to be only a changing, whirling, combining, mingling mass
3 of change. Few of us every have a glimpse of the calm sea behind.
4 For us it is always lashed into waves; this universe appears to us
5 only as a tossing mass of waves. Thus we find these two opinions.
6 One is that there is something behind both body and mind which is
7 an unchangeable and immovable substance; and the other is that
8 there is no such thing as immovability or unchangeability in the
9 universe; it is all change and nothing but change. The solution of
10 this difference comes in the next step of thought, namely, the non-
11 dualistic.

12 It says that the dualists are right in finding something behind
13 all, as a background which does not change; we cannot conceive
14 change without there being something unchangeable. We can only
15 conceive of anything that is changeable, by knowing something
16 which is less changeable, and this also must appear more
17 changeable in comparison with something else which is less
18 changeable, and so on and on, until we are bound to admit that
19 there must be something which never changes at all. The whole of
20 this manifestation must have been in a state of non-manifestation,
21 calm and silent, being the balance of opposing forces, so to say,
22 when no force operated, because force acts when a disturbance of
23 the equilibrium comes in. The universe is ever hurrying on to return
24 to that state of equilibrium again. If we are certain of any fact
25 whatsoever, we are certain of this. When the dualists claim that
26 there is something which does not change, they are perfectly right,
27 but their analysis that it is an underlying something which is
28 neither the body nor the mind, a something separate from both, is
29 wrong. So far as the Buddhists say that the whole universe is a
30 mass of change, they are perfectly right; so long as I am separate
31 from the universe, so long as I stand back and look at something
32 before me, so long as there are two things--the looker-on and the
33 thing looked upon--it will appear always that the universe is one of
34 change, continuously changing all the time. But the reality is that
35 there is both change and changelessness in this universe. It is not
36 that the soul and the mind and the body are three separate
37 existences, for this organism made of these three is really one. It is
38 the same thing which appears as the body, as the mind, and as the
39 thing beyond mind and body, but it is not at the same time all these.
40 He who sees the body does not see the mind even, he who sees the
41 mind does not see that which he calls the soul, and he who sees the
42 soul--for him body and mind have vanished. He who sees only
43 motion never sees absolute calm, and he who sees absolute calm--
44 for him motion has vanished. A rope is taken for a snake. He who
45 sees the rope as the snake, for him the rope has vanished, and
46 when the delusion ceases and he looks at the rope, the snake has
47 vanished.

48 There is then but one all-comprehending existence, and that
49 one appears as manifold. This Self or Soul or Substance is all that
50 exists in the universe. That Self or Substance or Soul is, in the
51 language of non-dualism, the Brahman appearing to be manifold by
52 the interposition of name and form. Look at the waves in the sea.

1 Not one wave is really different from the sea, but what makes the
2 wave apparently different? Name and form; the form of the wave
3 and the name which we give to it, "wave". This is what makes it
4 different from the sea. When name and form go, it is the same sea.
5 Who can make any real difference between the wave and the sea?
6 So this whole universe is that one Unit Existence; name and form
7 have created all these various differences. As when the sun shines
8 upon millions of globules of water, upon each particle is seen a most
9 perfect representation of the sun, so the one Soul, the one Self, the
10 one Existence of the universe, being reflected on all these
11 numerous globules of varying names and forms, appears to be
12 various. But it is in reality only one. There is no "I" nor "you"; it is
13 all one. It is either all "I" or all "you". This idea of duality, of two, is
14 entirely false, and the whole universe, as we ordinarily know it, is
15 the result of this false knowledge. When discrimination comes and
16 man finds there are not two but one, he finds that he is himself this
17 universe. "It is I who am this universe as it now exists, a continuous
18 mass of change. It is I who am beyond all changes, beyond all
19 qualities, the eternally perfect, the eternally blessed."

20 There is, therefore, but one Atman, one Self, eternally pure,
21 eternally perfect, unchangeable, unchanged; it has never changed;
22 all these various changes in the universe are but appearances in
23 that one Self.

24 Upon it name and form have painted all these dreams; it is
25 the form that makes the wave different from the sea. Suppose the
26 wave subsides, will the form remain? No, it will vanish. The
27 existence of the wave was entirely dependent upon the existence of
28 the sea, but the existence of the sea was not at all dependent upon
29 the existence of the wave. The form remains so long as the wave
30 remains, but as soon as the wave leaves it, it vanishes, it cannot
31 remain. This name and form is the outcome of what is called Maya.
32 It is this Maya that is making individuals, making one appear
33 different from another. Yet it has no existence. Maya cannot be said
34 to exist. Form cannot be said to exist, because it depends upon the
35 existence of another thing. It cannot be said as not to exist, seeing
36 that it makes all this difference. According to the Advaita
37 philosophy, then, this Maya or ignorance--or name and form, or, as
38 it has been called in Europe, "time, space, and causality"--is out of
39 this one Infinite Existence showing us the manifoldness of the
40 universe; in substance, this universe is one. So long as any one
41 thinks that there are two ultimate realities, he is mistaken. When he
42 has come to know that there is but one, he is right. This is what is
43 being proved to us every day, on the physical plane, on the mental
44 plane, and also on the spiritual plane. Today it has been
45 demonstrated that you and I, the sun, the moon, and the stars are
46 but the different names of different spots in the same ocean of
47 matter, and that this matter is continuously changing in its
48 configuration. This particle of energy that was in the sun several
49 months ago may be in the human being now; tomorrow it may be in
50 an animal, the day after tomorrow it may be in a plant. It is ever
51 coming and going. It is all one unbroken, infinite mass of matter,
52 only differentiated by names and forms. One point is called the sun;

1 another, the moon; another, the stars; another, man; another,
2 animal; another, plant; and so on. And all these names are fictitious;
3 they have no reality, because the whole is a continuously changing
4 mass of matter. This very same universe, from another standpoint,
5 is an ocean of thought, where each one of us is a point called a
6 particular mind. You are a mind, I am a mind, everyone is a mind;
7 and the very same universe viewed from the standpoint of
8 knowledge, when the eyes have been cleared of delusions, when
9 the mind has become pure, appears to be the unbroken Absolute
10 Being, the ever pure, the unchangeable, the immortal.

11 What then becomes of all this threefold eschatology of the
12 dualist, that when a man dies he goes to heaven, or goes to this or
13 that sphere, and that the wicked persons become ghosts, and
14 become animals, and so forth? None comes and none goes, says the
15 non-dualist. How can you come and go? You are infinite; where is
16 the place for you to go? In a certain school a number of little
17 children were being examined. The examiner had foolishly put all
18 sorts of difficult questions to the little children. Among others there
19 was this question: "Why does not the earth fall?" His intention was
20 to bring out the idea of gravitation or some other intricate scientific
21 truth from these children. Most of them could not even understand
22 the question, and so they gave all sorts of wrong answers. But one
23 bright little girl answered it with another question: "Where shall it
24 fall?" The very question of the examiner was nonsense on the face
25 of it. There is no up and down in the universe; the idea is only
26 relative. So it is with regard to the soul; the very question of birth
27 and death in regard to it is utter nonsense. Who goes and who
28 comes? Where are you not? Where is the heaven that you are not in
29 already? Omnipresent is the Self of man. Where is it to go? Where
30 is it not to go? It is everywhere. So all this childish dream and
31 puerile illusion of birth and death, of heavens and higher heavens
32 and lower worlds, all vanish immediately for the perfect. For the
33 nearly perfect it vanishes after showing them the several scenes up
34 to Brahmaloaka. It continues for the ignorant.

35 How is it that the whole world believes in going to heaven,
36 and in dying and being born? I am studying a book, page after page
37 is being read and turned over. Another page comes and is turned
38 over. Who changes? Who comes and goes? Not I, but the book. This
39 whole nature is a book before the soul, chapter after chapter is
40 being read and turned over, and every now and then a scene opens.
41 That is read and turned over. A fresh one comes, but the soul is
42 ever the same--eternal. It is nature that is changing, not the soul of
43 man. This never changes.

44 Birth and death are in nature, not in you. Yet the ignorant are
45 deluded; just as we under delusion think that the sun is moving and
46 not the earth, in exactly the same way we think that we are dying,
47 and not nature. These are all, therefore, hallucinations. Just as it is
48 a hallucination when we think that the fields are moving and not the
49 railway train, exactly in the same manner is the hallucination of
50 birth and death. When men are in a certain frame of mind, they see
51 this very existence as the earth, as the sun, the moon, the stars; and
52 all those who are in the same state of mind see the same things.

1 Beyond you and me there may be millions of beings on different
2 planes of existence. They will never see us, nor we them; we only
3 see those who are in the same state of mind and on the same plane
4 with us. Those musical instruments respond which have the same
5 attunement of vibration, as it were; if the state of vibration, which
6 they call "man-vibration", should be changed, no longer would men
7 be seen here; the whole "man-universe" would vanish, and instead
8 of that, other scenery would come before us, perhaps gods and the
9 god-universe, or perhaps, for the wicked man, devils and the
10 diabolic world; but all would be only different views of the one
11 universe. It is this universe which, from the human plane, is seen as
12 the earth, the sun, the moon, the stars, and all such things--it is this
13 very universe which, seen from the plane of wickedness, appears as
14 a place of punishment. And this very universe is seen as heaven by
15 those who want to see it as heaven. Those who have been dreaming
16 of going to a God who is sitting on a throne, and of standing there
17 praising Him all their lives, when they die, will simply see a vision
18 of what they have in their minds; this very universe will simply
19 change into a vast heaven, with all sorts of winged beings flying
20 about and a God sitting on a throne. These heavens are all of man's
21 own making. So what the dualist says is true, says the Advaitin, but
22 it is all simply of his own making. These spheres and devils and
23 gods and reincarnations and transmigrations are all mythology; so
24 also is this human life. The great mistake that men always make is
25 to think that this life alone is true. They understand it well enough
26 when other things are called mythologies, but are never willing to
27 admit the same of their own position. The whole thing as it appears
28 is mere mythology, and the greatest of all lies is that we are bodies,
29 which we never were nor ever can be. It is the greatest of all lies
30 that we are mere men; we are the God of the universe. In
31 worshipping God we have been always worshipping our own hidden
32 Self. The worst lie that you ever tell yourself is that you were born a
33 sinner or a wicked man. He alone is a sinner who sees a sinner in
34 another man. Suppose there is a baby here, and you place a bag of
35 gold on the table. Suppose a robber comes and takes the gold away.
36 To the baby it is all the same; because there is no robber inside,
37 there is no robber outside. To sinners and vile men, there is vileness
38 outside, but not to good men. So the wicked see this universe as a
39 hell, and the partially good see it as heaven, while the perfect
40 beings realise it as God Himself. Then alone the veil falls from the
41 eyes, and the man, purified and cleansed, finds his whole vision
42 changed. The bad dreams that have been torturing him for millions
43 of years, all vanish, and he who was thinking of himself either as a
44 man, or a god, or a demon, he who was thinking of himself as living
45 in low places, in high places, on earth, in heaven, and so on, finds
46 that he is really omnipresent; that all time is in him, and that he is
47 not in time; that all the heavens are in him, that he is not in any
48 heaven; and that all the gods that man ever worshipped are in him,
49 and that he is not in any one of those gods. He was the
50 manufacturer of gods and demons, of men and plants and animals
51 and stones, and the real nature of man now stands unfolded to him
52 as being higher than heaven, more perfect than this universe of
53 ours, more infinite than infinite time, more omnipresent than the

1 omnipresent ether. Thus alone man becomes fearless, and becomes
2 free. Then all delusions cease, all miseries vanish, all fears come to
3 an end for ever. Birth goes away and with it death; pains fly, and
4 with them fly away pleasures; earths vanish, and with them vanish
5 heavens; bodies vanish, and with them vanishes the mind also. For
6 that man disappears the whole universe, as it were. This searching,
7 moving, continuous struggle of forces stops for ever, and that which
8 was manifesting itself as force and matter, as struggles of nature,
9 as nature itself, as heavens and earths and plants and animals and
10 men and angels, all that becomes transfigured into one infinite,
11 unbreakable, unchangeable existence, and the knowing man finds
12 that he is one with that existence. "Even as clouds of various
13 colours come before the sky, remain there for a second, and then
14 vanish away," even so before this soul are all these visions coming,
15 of earths and heavens, of the moon and the gods, of pleasures and
16 pains; but they all pass away leaving the one infinite, blue,
17 unchangeable sky. The sky never changes; it is the clouds that
18 change. It is a mistake to think that the sky is changed. It is a
19 mistake to think that we are impure, that we are limited, that we
20 are separate. The real man is the one Unit Existence.

21 Two questions now arise. The first is: "Is it possible to realise
22 this? So far it is doctrine, philosophy, but is it possible to realise it?"
23 It is. There are men still living in this world for whom delusion has
24 vanished for ever. Do they immediately die after such realisation?
25 Not so soon as we should think. Two wheels joined by one pole are
26 running together. If I get hold of one of the wheels and, with an axe,
27 cut the pole asunder, the wheel which I have got hold of stops, but
28 upon the other wheel is its past momentum, so it runs on a little and
29 then falls down.

30 This pure and perfect being, the soul, is one wheel, and this
31 external hallucination of body and mind is the other wheel, joined
32 together by the pole of work, of Karma. Knowledge is the axe which
33 will sever the bond between the two, and the wheel of the soul will
34 stop--stop thinking that it is coming and going, living and dying,
35 stop thinking that it is nature and has wants and desires, and will
36 find that it is perfect, desireless. But upon the other wheel, that of
37 the body and mind, will be the momentum of past acts; so it will live
38 for some time, until that momentum of past work is exhausted, until
39 that momentum is worked away, and then the body and mind fall,
40 and the soul becomes free. No more is there any going to heaven
41 and coming back, not even any going to the Brahmaloaka, or to any
42 of the highest of the spheres, for where is he to come from, or to go
43 to? The man who has in this life attained to this state, for whom, for
44 a minute at least, the ordinary vision of the world has changed and
45 the reality has been apparent, he is called the "Living Free". This is
46 the goal of the Vedantin, to attain freedom while living.

47 Once in Western India I was travelling in the desert country
48 on the coast of the Indian Ocean. For days and days I used to travel
49 on foot through the desert, but it was to my surprise that I saw
50 every day beautiful lakes, with trees all around them, and the
51 shadows of the trees upside down and vibrating there. "How
52 wonderful it looks and they call this a desert country!" I said to

1 myself. Nearly a month I travelled, seeing these wonderful lakes
2 and trees and plants. One day I was very thirsty and wanted to have
3 a drink of water, so I started to go to one of these clear, beautiful
4 lakes, and as I approached, it vanished. And with a flash it came to
5 my brain, "This is the mirage about which I have read all my life,"
6 and with that came also the idea that throughout the whole of this
7 month, every day, I had been seeing the mirage and did not know it.
8 The next morning I began my march. There was again the lake, but
9 with it came also the idea that it was the mirage and not a true
10 lake. So is it with this universe. We are all travelling in this mirage
11 of the world day after day, month after month, year after year, not
12 knowing that it is a mirage. One day it will break up, but it will
13 come back again; the body has to remain under the power of past
14 Karma, and so the mirage will come back. This world will come
15 back upon us so long as we are bound by Karma: men, women,
16 animals, plants, our attachments and duties, all will come back to
17 us, but not with the same power. Under the influence of the new
18 knowledge the strength of Karma will be broken, its poison will be
19 lost. It becomes transformed, for along with it there comes the idea
20 that we know it now, that the sharp distinction between the reality
21 and the mirage has been known.

22 This world will not then be the same world as before. There
23 is, however, a danger here. We see in every country people taking
24 up this philosophy and saying, "I am beyond all virtue and vice; so I
25 am not bound by any moral laws; I may do anything I like." You may
26 find many fools in this country at the present time, saying, "I am not
27 bound; I am God Himself; let me do anything I like." This is not
28 right, although it is true that the soul is beyond all laws, physical,
29 mental, or moral. Within law is bondage; beyond law is freedom. It
30 is also true that freedom is of the nature of the soul, it is its
31 birthright: that real freedom of the soul shines through veils of
32 matter in the form of the apparent freedom of man. Every moment
33 of your life you feel that you are free. We cannot live, talk, or
34 breathe for a moment without feeling that we are free; but, at the
35 same time, a little thought shows us that we are like machines and
36 not free. What is true then? Is this idea of freedom a delusion? One
37 party holds that the idea of freedom is a delusion; another says that
38 the idea of bondage is a delusion. How does this happen? Man is
39 really free, the real man cannot but be free. It is when he comes
40 into the world of Maya, into name and form, that he becomes
41 bound. Free will is a misnomer. Will can never be free. How can it
42 be? It is only when the real man has become bound that his will
43 comes into existence, and not before. The will of man is bound, but
44 that which is the foundation of that will is eternally free. So, even in
45 the state of bondage which we call human life or god-life, on earth
46 or in heaven, there yet remains to us that recollection of the
47 freedom which is ours by divine right. And consciously or
48 unconsciously we are all struggling towards it. When a man has
49 attained his own freedom, how can he be bound by any law? No law
50 in this universe can bind him, for this universe itself is his.

51 He is the whole universe. Either say he is the whole universe
52 or say that to him there is no universe. How can he have then all

1 these little ideas about sex and about country? How can he say, I
2 am a man, I am a woman, I am a child? Are they not lies? He knows
3 that they are. How can he say that these are man's rights, and
4 these others are woman's rights? Nobody has rights; nobody
5 separately exists. There is neither man nor woman; the soul is
6 sexless, eternally pure. It is a lie to say that I am a man or a woman,
7 or to say that I belong to this country or that. All the world is my
8 country, the whole universe is mine, because I have clothed myself
9 with it as my body. Yet we see that there are people in this world
10 who are ready to assert these doctrines, and at the same time do
11 things which we should call filthy; and if we ask them why they do
12 so, they tell us that it is our delusion and that they can do nothing
13 wrong. What is the test by which they are to be judged? The test is
14 here.

15 Though evil and good are both conditioned manifestations of
16 the soul, yet evil is the most external coating, and good is the
17 nearer coating of the real man, the Self.

18 And unless a man cuts through the layer of evil he cannot
19 reach the layer of good, and unless he has passed through both the
20 layers of good and evil he cannot reach the Self. He who reaches
21 the Self, what remains attached to him? A little Karma, a little bit of
22 the momentum of past life, but it is all good momentum. Until the
23 bad momentum is entirely worked out and past impurities are
24 entirely burnt, it is impossible for any man to see and realise truth.
25 So, what is left attached to the man who has reached the Self and
26 seen the truth is the remnant of the good impressions of past life,
27 the good momentum. Even if he lives in a body and works
28 incessantly, he works only to do good; his lips speak only
29 benediction to all; his hands do only good works; his mind can only
30 think good thoughts; his presence is a blessing wherever he goes.
31 He is himself a living blessing. Such a man will, by his very
32 presence, change even the most wicked persons into saints. Even if
33 he does not speak, his very presence will be a blessing to mankind.
34 Can such men do any evil; can they do wicked deeds? There is, you
35 must remember, all the difference of pole to pole between
36 realisation and mere talking. Any fool can talk. Even parrots talk.
37 Talking is one thing, and realising is another. Philosophies, and
38 doctrines, and arguments, and books, and theories, and churches,
39 and sects, and all these things are good in their own way; but when
40 that realisation comes, these things drop away. For instance, maps
41 are good, but when you see the country itself, and look again at the
42 maps, what a great difference you find! So those that have realised
43 truth do not require the ratiocinations of logic and all other
44 gymnastics of the intellect to make them understand the truth; it is
45 to them the life of their lives, concretised, made more than tangible.
46 It is, as the sages of the Vedanta say, "even as a fruit in your hand";
47 you can stand up and say, it is here. So those that have realised the
48 truth will stand up and say, "Here is the Self". You may argue with
49 them by the year, but they will smile at you; they will regard it all as
50 a child's prattle; they will let the child prattle on. They have realised
51 the truth and are full. Suppose you have seen a country, and
52 another man comes to you and tries to argue with you that that

1 country never existed, he may go on arguing indefinitely, but your
2 only attitude of mind towards him must be to hold that the man is fit
3 for a lunatic asylum. So the man of realisation says, "All this talk in
4 the world about its little religions is but prattle; realisation is the
5 soul, the very essence of religion." Religion can be realised. Are you
6 ready? Do you want it? You will get the realisation if you do, and
7 then you will be truly religious. Until you have attained realisation
8 there is no difference between you and atheists. The atheists are
9 sincere, but the man who says that he believes in religion and never
10 attempts to realise it is not sincere.

11 The next question is to know what comes after realisation.
12 Suppose we have realised this oneness of the universe, that we are
13 that one Infinite Being, and suppose we have realised that this Self
14 is the only Existence and that it is the same Self which is
15 manifesting in all these various phenomenal forms, what becomes
16 of us after that? Shall we become inactive, get into a corner and sit
17 down there and die away? "What good will it do to the world?" That
18 old question! In the first place, why should it do good to the world?
19 Is there any reason why it should? What right has any one to ask
20 the question, "What good will it do to the world?" What is meant by
21 that? A baby likes candies. Suppose you are conducting
22 investigations in connection with some subject of electricity and the
23 baby asks you, "Does it buy candies?" "No" you answer. "Then what
24 good will it do?" says the baby. So men stand up and say, "What
25 good will this do to the world; will it give us money?" "No." "Then
26 what good is there in it?" That is what men mean by doing good to
27 the world. Yet religious realisation does all the good to the world.
28 People are afraid that when they attain to it, when they realise that
29 there is but one, the fountains of love will be dried up, that
30 everything in life will go away, and that all they love will vanish for
31 them, as it were, in this life and in the life to come. People never
32 stop to think that those who bestowed the least thought on their
33 own individualities have been the greatest workers in the world.
34 Then alone a man loves when he finds that the object of his love is
35 not any low, little, mortal thing. Then alone a man loves when he
36 finds that the object of his love is not a clod of earth, but it is the
37 veritable God Himself. The wife will love the husband the more
38 when she thinks that the husband is God Himself. The husband will
39 love the wife the more when he knows that the wife is God Himself.
40 That mother will love the children more who thinks that the
41 children are God Himself. That man will love his greatest enemy
42 who knows that that very enemy is God Himself. That man will love
43 a holy man who knows that the holy man is God Himself, and that
44 very man will also love the unholyest of men because he knows the
45 background of that unholyest of men is even He, the Lord. Such a
46 man becomes a world-mover for whom his little self is dead and
47 God stands in its place. The whole universe will become
48 transfigured to him. That which is painful and miserable will all
49 vanish; struggles will all depart and go. Instead of being a prison-
50 house, where we every day struggle and fight and compete for a
51 morsel of bread, this universe will then be to us a playground.
52 Beautiful will be this universe then! Such a man alone has the right
53 to stand up and say, "How beautiful is this world!" He alone has the

1 right to say that it is all good. This will be the great good to the
2 world resulting from such realisation, that instead of this world
3 going on with all its friction and clashing, if all mankind today
4 realise only a bit of that great truth, the aspect of the whole world
5 will be changed, and, in place of fighting and quarrelling, there
6 would be a reign of peace. This indecent and brutal hurry which
7 forces us to go ahead of every one else will then vanish from the
8 world. With it will vanish all struggle, with it will vanish all hate,
9 with it will vanish all jealousy, and all evil will vanish away for ever.
10 Gods will live then upon this earth. This very earth will then become
11 heaven, and what evil can there be when gods are playing with
12 gods, when gods are working with gods, and gods are loving gods?
13 That is the great utility of divine realisation. Everything that you see
14 in society will be changed and transfigured then. No more will you
15 think of man as evil; and that is the first great gain. No more will
16 you stand up and sneeringly cast a glance at a poor man or woman
17 who has made a mistake. No more, ladies, will you look down with
18 contempt upon the poor woman who walks the street in the night,
19 because you will see even there God Himself. No more will you
20 think of jealousy and punishments. They will all vanish; and love,
21 the great ideal of love, will be so powerful that no whip and cord
22 will be necessary to guide mankind aright.

23 If one millionth part of the men and women who live in this
24 world simply sit down and for a few minutes say, "You are all God, O
25 ye men and O ye animals and living beings, you are all the
26 manifestations of the one living Deity!" the whole world will be
27 changed in half an hour. Instead of throwing tremendous bomb-
28 shells of hatred into every corner, instead of projecting currents of
29 jealousy and evil thought, in every country people will think that it
30 is all He. He is all that you see and feel. How can you see evil until
31 there is evil in you? How can you see the thief, unless he is there,
32 sitting in the heart of your heart? How can you see the murderer
33 until you are yourself the murderer? Be good, and evil will vanish
34 for you. The whole universe will thus be changed. This is the
35 greatest gain to society. This is the great gain to the human
36 organism. These thoughts were thought out, worked out amongst
37 individuals in ancient times in India. For various reasons, such as
38 the exclusiveness of the teachers and foreign conquest, those
39 thoughts were not allowed to spread. Yet they are grand truths; and
40 wherever they have been working, man has become divine. My
41 whole life has been changed by the touch of one of these divine
42 men, about whom I am going to speak to you next Sunday; and the
43 time is coming when these thoughts will be cast abroad over the
44 whole world. Instead of living in monasteries, instead of being
45 confined to books of philosophy to be studied only by the learned,
46 instead of being the exclusive possession of sects and of a few of
47 the learned, they will all be sown broadcast over the whole world,
48 so that they may become the common property of the saint and the
49 sinner, of men and women and children, of the learned and of the
50 ignorant. They will then permeate the atmosphere of the world, and
51 the very air that we breathe will say with every one of its
52 pulsations, "Thou art That". And the whole universe with its myriads
53 of suns and moons, through everything that speaks, with one voice

1 will say, "Thou art That".

PRACTICAL VEDANTA - PART I

(Delivered in London, 10th November 1896)

I have been asked to say something about the practical position of the Vedanta philosophy. As I have told you, theory is very good indeed, but how are we to carry it into practice? If it be absolutely impracticable, no theory is of any value whatever, except as intellectual gymnastics. The Vedanta, therefore, as a religion must be intensely practical. We must be able to carry it out in every part of our lives. And not only this, the fictitious differentiation between religion and the life of the world must vanish, for the Vedanta teaches oneness--one life throughout. The ideals of religion must cover the whole field of life, they must enter into all our thoughts, and more and more into practice. I will enter gradually on the practical side as we proceed. But this series of lectures is intended to be a basis, and so we must first apply ourselves to theories and understand how they are worked out, proceeding from forest caves to busy streets and cities; and one peculiar feature we find is that many of these thoughts have been the outcome, not of retirement into forests, but have emanated from persons whom we expect to lead the busiest lives--from ruling monarchs.

Shvetaketu was the son of Aruni, a sage, most probably a recluse. He was brought up in the forest, but he went to the city of the Panchalas and appeared at the court of the king, Pravahana Jaivali. The king asked him, "Do you know how beings depart hence at death?" "No, sir." "Do you know how they return hither?" "No, sir." "Do you know the way of the fathers and the way of the gods?" "No, sir." Then the king asked other questions. Shvetaketu could not answer them. So the king told him that he knew nothing. The boy went back to his father, and the father admitted that he himself could not answer these questions. It was not that he was unwilling to answer these questions. It was not that he was unwilling to teach the boy, but he did not know these things. So he went to the king and asked to be taught these secrets. The king said that these things had been hitherto known only among kings; the priests never knew them. He, however, proceeded to teach him what he desired to know. In various Upanishads we find that this Vedanta philosophy is not the outcome of meditation in the forests only, but that the very best parts of it were thought out and expressed by brains which were busiest in the everyday affairs of life. We cannot conceive any man busier than an absolute monarch, a man who is ruling over millions of people, and yet, some of these rulers were deep thinkers.

Everything goes to show that this philosophy must be very practical; and later on, when we come to the Bhagavad-Gita--most of you, perhaps, have read it, it is the best commentary we have on the Vedanta philosophy--curiously enough the scene is laid on the battlefield, where Krishna teaches this philosophy to Arjuna; and the doctrine which stands out luminously in every page of the Gita is intense activity, but in the midst of it, eternal calmness. This is the secret of work, to attain which is the goal of the Vedanta. Inactivity, as we understand it in the sense of passivity, certainly

1 cannot be the goal. Were it so, then the walls around us would be
2 the most intelligent; they are inactive. Clods of earth, stumps of
3 trees, would be the greatest sages in the world; they are inactive.
4 Nor does inactivity become activity when it is combined with
5 passion. Real activity, which is the goal of Vedanta, is combined
6 with eternal calmness, the calmness which cannot be ruffled, the
7 balance of mind which is never disturbed, whatever happens. And
8 we all know from our experience in life that that is the best attitude
9 for work.

10 I have been asked many times how we can work if we do not
11 have the passion which we generally feel for work. I also thought in
12 that way years ago, but as I am growing older, getting more
13 experience, I find it is not true. The less passion there is, the better
14 we work. The calmer we are, the better for us, and the more the
15 amount of work we can do. When we let loose our feelings, we
16 waste so much energy, shatter our nerves, disturb our minds, and
17 accomplish very little work. The energy which ought to have gone
18 out as work is spent as mere feeling, which counts for nothing. It is
19 only when the mind is very calm and collected that the whole of its
20 energy is spent in doing good work. And if you read the lives of the
21 great workers which the world has produced, you will find that they
22 were wonderfully calm men. Nothing, as it were, could throw them
23 off their balance. That is why the man who becomes angry never
24 does a great amount of work, and the man whom nothing can make
25 angry accomplishes so much. The man who gives way to anger, or
26 hatred, or any other passion, cannot work; he only breaks himself to
27 pieces, and does nothing practical. It is the calm, forgiving,
28 equable, well-balanced mind that does the greatest amount of work.

29 The Vedanta preaches the ideal; and the ideal, as we know, is
30 always far ahead of the real, of the practical, as we may call it.
31 There are two tendencies in human nature: one to harmonise the
32 ideal with the life, and the other to elevate the life to the ideal. It is
33 a great thing to understand this, for the former tendency is the
34 temptation of our lives. I think that I can only do a certain class of
35 work. Most of it, perhaps, is bad; most of it, perhaps, has a motive
36 power of passion behind it, anger, or greed, or selfishness. Now if
37 any man comes to preach to me a certain ideal, the first step
38 towards which is to give up selfishness, to give up self-enjoyment, I
39 think that is impractical. But when a man brings an ideal which can
40 be reconciled with my selfishness, I am glad at once and jump at it.
41 That is the ideal for me. As the word "orthodox" has been
42 manipulated into various forms, so has been the word "practical".
43 "My doxy is orthodoxy; your doxy is heterodoxy." So with
44 practicality. What I think is practical, is to me the only practicality
45 in the world. If I am a shopkeeper, I think shopkeeping the only
46 practical pursuit in the world. If I am a thief, I think stealing is the
47 best means of being practical; others are not practical. You see how
48 we all use this word practical for things we like and can do.
49 Therefore I will ask you to understand that Vedanta, though it is
50 intensely practical, is always so in the sense of the ideal. It does not
51 preach an impossible ideal, however high it be, and it is high
52 enough for an ideal. In one word, this ideal is that you are divine,

1 "Thou art That". This is the essence of Vedanta; after all its
2 ramifications and intellectual gymnastics, you know the human soul
3 to be pure and omniscient, you see that such superstitions as birth
4 and death would be entire nonsense when spoken of in connection
5 with the soul. The soul was never born and will never die, and all
6 these ideas that we are going to die and are afraid to die are mere
7 superstitions. And all such ideas as that we can do this or cannot do
8 that are superstitions. We can do everything. The Vedanta teaches
9 men to have faith in themselves first. As certain religions of the
10 world say that a man who does not believe in a Personal God
11 outside of himself is an atheist, so the Vedanta says, a man who
12 does not believe in himself is an atheist. Not believing in the glory
13 of our own soul is what the Vedanta calls atheism. Tomany this is,
14 no doubt, a terrible idea; and most of us think that this ideal can
15 never be reached; but the Vedanta insists that it can be realised by
16 every one. There is neither man nor woman or child, nor difference
17 of race or sex, nor anything that stands as a bar to the realisation of
18 the ideal, because Vedanta shows that it is realised already, it is
19 already there.

20 All the powers in the universe are already ours. It is we who
21 have put our hands before our eyes and cry that it is dark. Know
22 that there is no darkness around us. Take the hands away and there
23 is the light which was from the beginning. Darkness never existed,
24 weakness never existed. We who are fools cry that we are weak; we
25 who are fools cry that we are impure. Thus Vedanta not only insists
26 that the ideal is practical, but that it has been so all the time; and
27 this Ideal, this Reality, is our own nature. Everything else that you
28 see is false, untrue. As soon as you say, "I am a little mortal being,"
29 you are saying something which is not true, you are giving the lie to
30 yourselves, you are hypnotising yourselves into something vile and
31 weak and wretched.

32 The Vedanta recognises no sin, it only recognises error. And
33 the greatest error, says the Vedanta, is to say that you are weak,
34 that you are a sinner, a miserable creature, and that you have no
35 power and you cannot do this and that. Every time you think in that
36 way, you, as it were, rivet one more link in the chain that binds you
37 down, you add one more layer of hypnotism on to your own soul.
38 Therefore, whosoever thinks he is weak is wrong, whosoever thinks
39 he is impure is wrong, and is throwing a bad thought into the world.
40 This we must always bear in mind that in the Vedanta there is no
41 attempt at reconciling the present life--the hypnotised life, this false
42 life which we have assumed--with the ideal; but this false life must
43 go, and the real life which is always existing must manifest itself,
44 must shine out. No man becomes purer and purer, it is a matter of
45 greater manifestation. The veil drops away, and the native purity of
46 the soul begins to manifest itself. Everything is ours already--infinite
47 purity, freedom, love, and power.

48 The Vedanta also says that not only can this be realised in the
49 depths of forests or caves, but by men in all possible conditions of
50 life. We have seen that the people who discovered these truths
51 were neither living in caves nor forests, nor following the ordinary
52 vocations of life, but men who, we have every reason to believe, led

1 the busiest of lives, men who had to command armies, to sit on
2 thrones, and look to the welfare of millions--and all these, in the
3 days of absolute monarchy, and not as in these days when a king is
4 to a great extent a mere figurehead. Yet they could find time to
5 think out all these thoughts, to realise them, and to teach them to
6 humanity. How much more then should it be practical for us whose
7 lives, compared with theirs, are lives of leisure? That we cannot
8 realise them is a shame to us, seeing that we are comparatively free
9 all the time, having very little to do. My requirements are as
10 nothing compared with those of an ancient absolute monarch. My
11 wants are as nothing compared with the demands of Arjuna on the
12 battlefield of Kurukshetra, commanding a huge army; and yet he
13 could find time in the midst of the din and turmoil of battle to talk
14 the highest philosophy and to carry it into his life also. Surely we
15 ought to be able to do as much in this life of ours--comparatively
16 free, easy, and comfortable. Most of us here have more time than
17 we think we have, if we really want to use it for good. With the
18 amount of freedom we have we can attain to two hundred ideals in
19 this life, if we will, but we must not degrade the ideal to the actual.
20 One of the most insinuating things comes to us in the shape of
21 persons who apologise for our mistakes and teach us how to make
22 special excuses for all our foolish wants and foolish desires; and we
23 think that their ideal is the only ideal we need have. But it is not so.
24 The Vedanta teaches no such thing. The actual should be reconciled
25 to the ideal, the present life should be made to coincide with life
26 eternal.

27 For you must always remember that the one central ideal of
28 Vedanta is this oneness. There are no two in anything, no two lives,
29 nor even two different kinds of life for the two worlds. You will find
30 the Vedas speaking of heavens and things like that at first; but later
31 on, when they come to the highest ideals of their philosophy, they
32 brush away all these things. There is but one life, one world, one
33 existence. Everything is that One, the difference is in degree and
34 not in kind. The Vedanta entirely denies such ideas as that animals
35 are separate from men, and that they were made and created by
36 God to be used for our food.

37 Some people have been kind enough to start an anti-
38 vivisection society. I asked a member, "Why do you think, my friend,
39 that it is quite lawful to kill animals for food, and not to kill one or
40 two for scientific experiments?" He replied, "Vivisection is most
41 horrible, but animals have been given to us for food." Oneness
42 includes all animals. If man's life is immortal, so also is the animal's.
43 The difference is only in degree and not in kind. The amoeba and I
44 are the same, the difference is only in degree; and from the
45 standpoint of the highest life, all these differences vanish. A man
46 may see a great deal of difference between grass and a little tree,
47 but if you mount very high, the grass and the biggest tree will
48 appear much the same. So, from the standpoint of the highest ideal,
49 the lowest animal and the highest man are the same. If you believe
50 there is a God, the animals and the highest creatures must be the
51 same. A God who is partial to his children called men, and cruel to
52 his children called brute beasts, is worse than a demon. I would

1 rather die a hundred times than worship such a God. My whole life
2 would be a fight with such a God. But there is no difference, and
3 those who say there is, are irresponsible, heartless people who do
4 not know. Here is a case of the word practical used in a wrong
5 sense. I myself may not be a very strict vegetarian, but I
6 understand the ideal. When I eat meat I know it is wrong. Even if I
7 am bound to eat it under certain circumstances, I know it is cruel. I
8 must not drag my ideal down to the actual and apologize for my
9 weak conduct in this way. The ideal is not to eat flesh, not to injure
10 any being, for all animals are my brothers. If you can think of them
11 as your brothers, you have made a little headway towards the
12 brotherhood of all souls, not to speak of the brotherhood of man!
13 That is child's play. You generally find that this is not very
14 acceptable to many, because it teaches them to give up the actual,
15 and go higher up to the ideal. But if you bring out a theory which is
16 reconciled with their present conduct, they regard it as entirely
17 practical.

18 There is this strongly conservative tendency in human nature:
19 we do not like to move one step forward. I think of mankind just as I
20 read of persons who become frozen in snow; all such, they say, want
21 to go to sleep, and if you try to drag them up, they say, "Let me
22 sleep; it is so beautiful to sleep in the snow", and they die there in
23 that sleep. So is our nature. That is what we are doing all our life,
24 getting frozen from the feet upwards, and yet wanting to sleep.
25 Therefore you must struggle towards the ideal, and if a man comes
26 who wants to bring that ideal down to your level, and teach a
27 religion that does not carry that highest ideal, do not listen to him.
28 To me that is an impracticable religion. But if a man teaches a
29 religion which presents the highest ideal, I am ready for him.
30 Beware when anyone is trying to apologize for sense vanities and
31 sense weaknesses. If anyone wants to preach that way to us, poor,
32 sense-bound clods of earth as we have made ourselves by following
33 that teaching, we shall never progress. I have seen many of these
34 things, I have had some experience of the world, and my country is
35 the land where religious sects grow like mushrooms. Every year
36 new sects arise. But one thing I have marked, that it is only those
37 that never want to reconcile the man of flesh with the man of truth
38 that make progress. Wherever there is this false idea of reconciling
39 fleshly vanities with the highest ideals, of dragging down God to the
40 level of man, there comes decay. Man should not be degraded to
41 worldly slavery, but should be raised up to God.

42 At the same time, there is another side to the question. We
43 must not look down with contempt on others. All of us are going
44 towards the same goal. The difference between weakness and
45 strength is one of degree; the difference between virtue and vice is
46 one of degree; the difference between heaven and hell is one of
47 degree; the difference between life and death is one of degree; all
48 differences in this world are of degree, and not of kind, because
49 oneness is the secret of everything. All is One, which manifests
50 Itself, either as thought, or life, or soul, or body, and the difference
51 is only in degree. As such, we have no right to look down with
52 contempt upon those who are not developed exactly in the same

1 degree as we are. Condemn none; if you can stretch out a helping
2 hand, do so. If you cannot, fold your hands, bless your brother, and
3 let them go their own way. Dragging down and condemning is not
4 the way to work. Never is work accomplished in that way. We spend
5 our energies in condemning others. Criticism and condemnation is
6 a vain way of spending our energies, for in the long run we come to
7 learn that all are seeing the same thing, are more or less
8 approaching the same ideal, and that most of our differences are
9 merely differences of expression.

10 Take the idea of sin. I was telling you just now the Vedantic
11 idea of it, and the other idea is that man is a sinner. They are
12 practically the same, only the one takes the positive and the other
13 the negative side. One shows to man his strength and the other his
14 weakness. There may be weakness, says the Vedanta, but never
15 mind, we want to grow. Disease was found out as soon as man was
16 born. Everyone knows his disease; it requires no one to tell us what
17 our diseases are. But thinking all the time that we are diseased will
18 not cure us--medicine is necessary. We may forget anything outside,
19 we may try to become hypocrites to the external world, but in our
20 heart of hearts we all know our weaknesses. But, says the Vedanta,
21 being reminded of weakness does not help much; give strength, and
22 strength does not come by thinking of weakness all the time. The
23 remedy for weakness is not brooding over weakness, but thinking of
24 strength. Teach men of the strength that is already within them.
25 Instead of telling them they are sinners, the Vedanta takes the
26 opposite position, and says, "You are pure and perfect, and what
27 you call sin does not belong to you." Sins are very low degrees of
28 Self-manifestation; manifest your Self in a high degree. That is the
29 one thing to remember; all of us can do that. Never say, "No", never
30 say, "I cannot", for you are infinite. Even time and space are as
31 nothing compared with your nature. You can do anything and
32 everything, you are almighty.

33 These are the principles of ethics, but we shall now come
34 down lower and work out the details. We shall see how this Vedanta
35 can be carried into our everyday life, the city life, the country life,
36 the national life, and the home life of every nation. For, if a religion
37 cannot help man wherever he may be, wherever he stands, it is not
38 of much use; it will remain only a theory for the chosen few.
39 Religion, to help mankind, must be ready and able to help him in
40 whatever condition he is, in servitude or in freedom, in the depths
41 of degradation or on the heights of purity; everywhere, equally, it
42 should be able to come to his aid. The principle of Vedanta, or the
43 ideal of religion, or whatever you may call it, will be fulfilled by its
44 capacity for performing this great function.

45 The ideal of faith in ourselves is of the greatest help to us. If
46 faith in ourselves had been more extensively taught and practised, I
47 am sure a very large portion of the evils and miseries that we have
48 would have vanished. Throughout the history of mankind, if any
49 motive power has been more potent than another in the lives of all
50 great men and women, it is that of faith in themselves. Born with
51 the consciousness that they were to be great, they became great.
52 Let a man go down as low as possible; there must come a time

1 when out of sheer desperation he will take an upward curve and
2 will learn to have faith in himself. But it is better for us that we
3 should know it from the very first. Why should we have all these
4 bitter experiences in order to gain faith in ourselves? We can see
5 that all the difference between man and man is owing to the
6 existence of non-existence of faith in himself. Faith in ourselves will
7 do everything. I have experienced it in my own life, and am still
8 doing so; and as I grow older that faith is becoming stronger and
9 stronger. He is an atheist who does not believe in himself. The old
10 religion said that he was an atheist who did not believe in God. The
11 new religion says that he is the atheist who does not believe in
12 himself. But it is not selfish faith, because the Vedanta, again, is the
13 doctrine of oneness. It means faith in all, because you are all. Love
14 for yourselves means love for all, love for animals, love for
15 everything, for you are all one. It is the great faith which will make
16 the world better. I am sure of that. He is the highest man who can
17 say with truth, "I know all about myself." Do you know how much
18 energy, how many powers, how many forces are still lurking behind
19 that frame of yours? What scientist has known all that is in man?
20 Millions of years have passed since man first came here, and yet
21 but one infinitesimal part of his powers has been manifested.
22 Therefore, you must not say that you are weak. How do you know
23 what possibilities lie behind that degradation on the surface? You
24 know but little of that which is within you. For behind you is the
25 ocean of infinite power and blessedness.

26 "This Atman is first to be heard of." Hear day and night that
27 you are that Soul. Repeat it to yourselves day and night till it enters
28 into your very veins, till it tingles in every drop of blood, till it is in
29 your flesh and bone. Let the whole body be full of that one ideal, "I
30 am the birthless, the deathless, the blissful, the omniscient, the
31 omnipotent, ever-glorious Soul." Think on it day and night; think on
32 it till it becomes part and parcel of your life. Meditate upon it, and
33 out of that will come work. "Out of the fullness of the heart the
34 mouth speaketh," and out of the fullness of the heart the hand
35 worketh also. Action will come. Fill yourselves with the idea;
36 whatever you do, think well on it. All your actions will be magnified,
37 transformed, deified, by the very power of the thought. If matter is
38 powerful, thought is omnipotent. Bring this thought to bear upon
39 your life, fill yourselves with the thought of your almightiness, your
40 majesty, and your glory. Would to God no superstitions had been put
41 into your head! Would to God we had not been surrounded from our
42 birth by all these superstitious influences and paralysing ideas of
43 our weakness and vileness! Would to God that mankind had had an
44 easier path through which to attain to the noblest and highest
45 truths! But man had to pass through all this; do not make the path
46 more difficult for those who are coming after you.

47 These are sometimes terrible doctrines to teach. I know
48 people who get frightened at these ideas, but for those who want to
49 be practical, this is the first thing to learn. Never tell yourselves or
50 others that you are weak.

51 Do good if you can, but do not injure the world. You know in
52 your inmost heart that many of your limited ideas, this humbling of

1 yourself and praying and weeping to imaginary beings are
2 superstitions. Tell me one case where these prayers have been
3 answered. All the answers that came were from your own hearts.
4 You know there are no ghosts, but no sooner are you in the dark
5 than you feel a little creepy sensation. That is so because in our
6 childhood we have had all these fearful ideas put into our heads.
7 But do not teach these things to others through fear of society and
8 public opinion, through fear of incurring the hatred of friends, or
9 for fear of losing cherished superstitions. Be masters of all these.
10 What is there to be taught more in religion than the oneness of the
11 universe and faith in one's self? All the works of mankind for
12 thousands of years past have been towards this one goal, and
13 mankind is yet working it out. It is your turn now and you already
14 know the truth. For it has been taught on all sides. Not only
15 philosophy and psychology, but materialistic sciences have declared
16 it. Where is the scientific man today who fears to acknowledge the
17 truth of this oneness of the universe? Who is there who dares talk
18 of many worlds? All these are superstitions. There is only one life
19 and one world, and this one life and one world is appearing to us as
20 manifold. This manifoldness is like a dream. When you dream one
21 dream passes away and another comes. You do not live in your
22 dreams. The dreams come one after another, scene after scene
23 unfolds before you. So it is in this world of ninety per cent misery
24 and ten per cent happiness. Perhaps after a while it will appear as
25 ninety per cent happiness, and we shall call it heaven, but a time
26 comes to the sage when the whole thing vanishes, and this world
27 appears as God Himself, and his own soul as God. It is not therefore
28 that there are many worlds, it is not that there are many lives. All
29 this manifoldness is the manifestation of that One. That One is
30 manifesting Himself as many, as matter, spirit, mind, thought, and
31 everything else. It is that One, manifesting Himself as many.
32 Therefore the first step for us to take is to teach the truth to
33 ourselves and to others.

34 Let the world resound with this ideal, and let superstitions
35 vanish. Tell it to men who are weak and persist in telling it. You are
36 the Pure One; awake and arise, O mighty one, this sleep does not
37 become you. Awake and arise, it does not befit you. Think not that
38 you are weak and miserable. Almighty, arise and awake, and
39 manifest your own nature. It is not fitting that you think yourself a
40 sinner. It is not fitting that you think yourself weak. Say that to the
41 world, say it to yourselves, and see what a practical result comes,
42 see how with an electric flash everything is manifested, how
43 everything is changed. Tell that to mankind, and show them their
44 power. Then we shall learn how to apply it in our daily lives.

45 To be able to use what we call Viveka (discrimination), to
46 learn how in every moment of our lives, in every one of our actions,
47 to discriminate between what is right and wrong, true and false, we
48 shall have to know the test of truth, which is purity, oneness.
49 Everything that makes for oneness is truth. Love is truth, and
50 hatred is false, because hatred makes for multiplicity. It is hatred
51 that separates man from man; therefore it is wrong and false. It is a
52 disintegrating power; it separates and destroys.

1 Love binds, love makes for that oneness. You become one, the
2 mother with the child, families with the city, the whole world
3 becomes one with the animals. For love is Existence, God Himself;
4 and all this is the manifestation of that One Love, more or less
5 expressed. The difference is only in degree, but it is the
6 manifestation of that One Love throughout. Therefore in all our
7 actions we have to judge whether it is making for diversity or for
8 oneness. If for diversity we have to give it up, but if it makes for
9 oneness we are sure it is good. So with our thoughts; we have to
10 decide whether they make for disintegration, multiplicity, or for
11 oneness, binding soul to soul and bringing one influence to bear. If
12 they do this, we will take them up, and if not, we will throw them off
13 as criminal.

14 The whole idea of ethics is that it does not depend on
15 anything unknowable, it does not teach anything unknown, but in
16 the language of the Upanishad, "The God whom you worship as an
17 unknown God, the same I preach unto thee." It is through the Self
18 that you know anything. I see the chair; but to see the chair, I have
19 first to perceive myself and then the chair. It is in and through the
20 Self that the chair is perceived. It is in and through the Self that you
21 are known to me, that the whole world is known to me; and
22 therefore to say this Self is unknown is sheer nonsense. Take off the
23 Self and the whole universe vanishes. In and through the Self all
24 knowledge comes. Therefore it is the best known of all. It is
25 yourself, that which you call I. You may wonder how this I of me can
26 be the I of you. You may wonder how this limited I can be the
27 unlimited Infinite, but it is so. The limited is a mere fiction. The
28 Infinite has been covered up, as it were, and a little of It is
29 manifesting as the I. Limitation can never come upon the unlimited;
30 it is a fiction. The Self is known, therefore, to every one of us--man,
31 woman, or child--and even to animals. Without knowing Him we can
32 neither live nor move, nor have our being; without knowing this
33 Lord of all, we cannot breathe or live a second. The God of the
34 Vedanta is the most known of all and is not the outcome of
35 imagination.

36 If this is not preaching a practical God, how else could you
37 teach a practical God? Where is there a more practical God than He
38 whom I see before me--a God omnipresent, in every being, more
39 real than our senses? For you are He, the Omnipresent God
40 Almighty, the Soul of your souls, and if I say you are not, I tell an
41 untruth. I know it, whether at all times I realise it or not. He is the
42 Oneness, the Unity of all, the Reality of all life and all existence.

43 These ideas of the ethics of Vedanta have to be worked out in
44 detail, and, therefore, you must have patience. As I have told you,
45 we want to take the subject in detail and work it up thoroughly, to
46 see how the ideas grow from very low ideals, and how the one great
47 Ideal of oneness has developed and become shaped into the
48 universal love; and we ought to study these in order to avoid
49 dangers. The world cannot find time to work it up from the lowest
50 steps. But what is the use of our standing on higher steps if we
51 cannot give the truth to others coming afterwards? Therefore, it is
52 better to study it in all its workings; and first, it is absolutely

1 necessary to clear the intellectual portion, although we know that
2 intellectuality is almost nothing; for it is the heart that is of most
3 importance. It is through the heart that the Lord is seen, and not
4 through the intellect. The intellect is only the street-cleaner,
5 cleansing the path for us, a secondary worker, the policeman; but
6 the policeman is not a positive necessity for the workings of society.
7 He is only to stop disturbances, to check wrong-doing, and that is
8 all the work required of the intellect. When you read intellectual
9 books, you think when you have mastered them, "Bless the Lord
10 that I am out of them", because the intellect is blind and cannot
11 move of itself, it has neither hands nor feet. It is feeling that works,
12 that moves with speed infinitely superior to that of electricity or
13 anything else. Do you feel?--that is the question. If you do, you will
14 see the Lord. It is the feeling that you have today that will be
15 intensified, deified, raised to the highest platform, until it feels
16 everything, the oneness in everything, till it feels God in itself and
17 in others. The intellect can never do that. "Different methods of
18 speaking words, different methods of explaining the texts of books,
19 these are for the enjoyment of the learned, not for the salvation of
20 the soul" (*Vivekachudamani*, 58).

21 Those of you who have read Thomas a Kempis know how in
22 every page he insists on this, and almost every holy man in the
23 world has insisted on it. Intellect is necessary, for without it we fall
24 into crude errors and make all sorts of mistakes. Intellect checks
25 these; but beyond that, do not try to build anything upon it. It is an
26 inactive, secondary help; the real help is feeling, love. Do you feel
27 for others? If you do, you are growing in oneness. If you do not feel
28 for others, you may be the most intellectual giant ever born, but you
29 will be nothing; you are but dry intellect, and you will remain so.
30 And if you feel, even if you cannot read any book and do not know
31 any language, you are in the right way. The Lord is yours.

32 Do you not know from the history of the world where the
33 power of the prophets lay? Where was it? In the intellect? Did any
34 of them write a fine book on philosophy, on the most intricate
35 ratiocinations of logic? Not one of them. They only spoke a few
36 words. Feel like Christ and you will be a Christ; feel like Buddha
37 and you will be a Buddha. It is feeling that is the life, the strength,
38 the vitality, without which no amount of intellectual activity can
39 reach God. Intellect is like limbs without the power of locomotion. It
40 is only when feeling enters and gives them motion that they move
41 and work on others. That is so all over the world, and it is a thing
42 which you must always remember. It is one of the most practical
43 things in Vedantic morality, for it is the teaching of the Vedanta that
44 you are all prophets, and all must be prophets. The book is not the
45 proof of your conduct, but you are the proof of the book. How do
46 you know that a book teaches truth? Because you are truth and feel
47 it. That is what the Vedanta says. What is the proof of the Christs
48 and Buddhas of the world? That you and I feel like them.

49 That is how you and I understand that they were true. Our
50 prophet-soul is the proof of their prophet-soul. Your godhead is the
51 proof of God Himself. If you are not a prophet, there never has been
52 anything true of God. If you are not God, there never was any God,

1 and never will be. This, says the Vedanta, is the ideal to follow.
2 Every one of us will have to become a prophet, and you are that
3 already. Only *know* it. Never think there is anything impossible for
4 the soul. It is the greatest heresy to think so. If there is sin, this is
5 the only sin--to say that you are weak, or others are weak.

PRACTICAL VEDANTA - PART II

(Delivered in London, 12th November 1896)

I will relate to you a very ancient story from the Chhandogya Upanishad, which tells how knowledge came to a boy. The form of the story is very crude, but we shall find that it contains a principle. A young boy said to his mother, "I am going to study the Vedas. Tell me the name of my father and my caste." The mother was not a married woman, and in India the child of a woman who has not been married is considered an outcast; he is not recognised by society and is not entitled to study the Vedas. So the poor mother said, "My child, I do not know your family name; I was in service, and served in different places; I do not know who your father is, but my name is Jabala and your name is Satyakama." The little child went to a sage and asked to be taken as a student. The sage asked him, "What is the name of your father, and what is your caste?" The boy repeated to him what he had heard from his mother. The sage at once said, "None but a Brahmin could speak such a damaging truth about himself. You are a Brahmin and I will teach you. You have not swerved from the truth." So he kept the boy with him and educated him.

Now come some of the peculiar methods of education in ancient India. This teacher gave Satyakama four hundred lean, weak cows to take care of, and sent him to the forest. There he went and lived for some time. The teacher had told him to come back when the herd would increase to the number of one thousand. After a few years, one day Satyakama heard a big bull in the herd saying to him, "We are a thousand now; take us back to your teacher. I will teach you a little of Brahman." "Say on, sir," said Satyakama. Then the bull said, "The East is a part of the Lord, so is the West, so is the South, so is the North. The four cardinal points are the four parts of Brahman. Fire will also teach you something of Brahman." Fire was a great symbol in those days, and every student had to procure fire and make offerings. So on the following day, Satyakama started for his Guru's house, and when in the evening he had performed his oblation, and worshipped at the fire, and was sitting near it, he heard a voice come from the fire, "O Satyakama." "Speak, Lord," said Satyakama. (Perhaps you may remember a very similar story in the Old Testament, how Samuel heard a mysterious voice.) "O Satyakama, I am come to teach you a little of Brahman. This earth is a portion of that Brahman. The sky and heaven are portions of It. The ocean is a part of that Brahman." Then the fire said that a certain bird would also teach him something. Satyakama continued his journey and on the next day when he had performed his evening sacrifice a swan came to him and said, "I will teach you something about Brahman. This fire which you worship, O Satyakama, is a part of that Brahman. The sun is a part, the moon is a part, the lightning is a part of that Brahman. A bird called Madgu will tell you more about it." The next evening that bird came, and a similar voice was heard by Satyakama, "I will tell you something about Brahman. Breath is a part of Brahman, sight is a part, hearing is a part, the mind is a part." Then the boy arrived at his

1 teacher's place and presented himself before him with due
2 reverence. No sooner had the teacher seen this disciple than he
3 remarked: "Satyakama, thy face shines like that of a knower of
4 Brahman! Who then has taught thee?" "Beings other than men,"
5 replied Satyakama. "But I wish that you should teach me, sir. For I
6 have heard from men like you that knowledge which is learnt from
7 a Guru alone leads to the supreme good." Then the sage taught him
8 the same knowledge which he had received from the gods. "And
9 nothing was left out, yea, nothing was left out."

10 Now, apart from the allegories of what the bull, the fire, and
11 the birds taught, we see the tendency of the thought and the
12 direction in which it was going in those days. The great idea of
13 which we here see the germ is that all these voices are inside
14 ourselves. As we understand these truths better, we find that the
15 voice is in our own heart, and the student understood that all the
16 time he was hearing the truth; but his explanation was not correct.
17 He was interpreting the voice as coming from the external world,
18 while all the time, it was within him. The second idea that we get is
19 that of making the knowledge of the Brahman practical. The world
20 is always seeking the practical possibilities of religion, and we find
21 in these stories how it was becoming more and more practical every
22 day. The truth was shown through everything with which the
23 students were familiar. The fire they were worshipping was
24 Brahman, the earth was a part of Brahman, and so on.

25 The next story belongs to Upakosala Kamalayana, a disciple
26 of this Satyakama, who went to be taught by him and dwelt with
27 him for some time. Now Satyakama went away on a journey, and
28 the student became very down-hearted; and when the teacher's
29 wife came and asked him why he was not eating, the boy said, "I am
30 too unhappy to eat." Then a voice came from the fire he was
31 worshipping, saying "This life is Brahman, Brahman is the ether,
32 and Brahman is happiness. Know Brahman." "I know, sir," the boy
33 replied, "that life is Brahman, but that It is ether and happiness I do
34 not know." Then it explained that the two words ether and
35 happiness signified one thing in reality, viz the sentient ether (pure
36 intelligence) that resides in the heart. So, it taught him Brahman as
37 life and as the ether in the heart. Then the fire taught him, "This
38 earth, food, fire, and sun whom you worship, are forms of Brahman.
39 The person that is seen in the sun, I am He. He who knows this and
40 meditates on Him, all his sins vanish and he has long life and
41 becomes happy. He who lives in the cardinal points, the moon, the
42 stars, and the water, I am He. He who lives in this life, the ether,
43 the heavens, and the lightning, I am He." Here too we see the same
44 idea of practical religion. The things which they were worshipping,
45 such as the fire, the sun, the moon, and so forth, and the voice with
46 which they were familiar, form the subject of the stories which
47 explain them and give them a higher meaning. And this is the real,
48 practical side of Vedanta. It does not destroy the world, but it
49 explains it; it does not destroy the person, but explains him; it does
50 not destroy the individuality, but explains it by showing the real
51 individuality. It does not show that this world is vain and does not
52 exist, but it says, "Understand what this world is, so that it may not

1 hurt you." The voice did not say to Upakosala that the fire which he
2 was worshipping, or the sun, or the moon, or the lightning, or
3 anything else, was all wrong, but it showed him that the same spirit
4 which was inside the sun, and the moon, and lightning, and the fire,
5 and the earth, was in him, so that everything became transformed,
6 as it were, in the eyes of Upakosala. The fire which was merely a
7 material fire before, in which to make oblations, assumed a new
8 aspect and became the Lord. The earth became transformed, life
9 became transformed, the sun, the moon, the stars, the lightning,
10 everything became transformed and deified. Their real nature was
11 known. The theme of the Vedanta is to see the Lord in everything,
12 to see things in their real nature, not as they appear to be. Then
13 another lesson is taught in the Upanishads: "He who shines through
14 the eyes is Brahman; He is the Beautiful One, He is the Shining
15 One. He shines in all these worlds." A certain peculiar light, a
16 commentator says, which comes to the pure man, is what is meant
17 by the light in the eyes, and it is said that when a man is pure such
18 a light will shine in his eyes, and that light belongs really to the
19 Soul within, which is everywhere. It is the same light which shines
20 in the planets, in the stars, and suns.

21 I will now read to you some other doctrine of these ancient
22 Upanishads, about birth and death and so on. Perhaps it will
23 interest you. Shvetaketu went to the king of the Panchalas, and the
24 king asked him, "Do you know where people go when they die? Do
25 you know how they come back? Do you know why the other world
26 does not become full?" The boy replied that he did not know. Then
27 he went to his father and asked him the same questions. The father
28 said, "I do not know," and he went to the king. The king said that
29 this knowledge was never known to the priests, it was only with the
30 kings, and that was the reason why kings ruled the world. This man
31 stayed with the king for some time, for the king said he would teach
32 him. "The other world, O Gautama, is the fire. The sun is its fuel.
33 The rays are the smoke. The day is the flame. The moon is the
34 embers. And the stars are the sparks. In this fire the gods pour
35 libation of faith and from this libation king Soma is born." So on he
36 goes. "You need not make oblation to that little fire: the whole world
37 is that fire, and this oblation, this worship, is continually going on.
38 The gods, and the angels, and everybody is worshipping it. Man is
39 the greatest symbol of fire, the body of man." Here also we see the
40 ideal becoming practical and Brahman is seen in everything. The
41 principle that underlies all these stories is that invented symbolism
42 may be good and helpful, but already better symbols exist than any
43 we can invent. You may invent an image through which to worship
44 God, but a better image already exists, the living man. You may
45 build a temple in which to worship God, and that may be good, but
46 a better one, a much higher one, already exists, the human body.

47 You remember that the Vedas have two parts, the ceremonial
48 and the knowledge portions. In time ceremonials had multiplied and
49 become so intricate that it was almost hopeless to disentangle
50 them, and so in the Upanishads we find that the ceremonials are
51 almost done away with, but gently, by explaining them. We see that
52 in old times they had these oblations and sacrifices, then the

1 philosophers came, and instead of snatching away the symbols from
2 the hands of the ignorant, instead of taking the negative position,
3 which we unfortunately find so general in modern reforms, they
4 gave them something to take their place. "Here is the symbol of
5 fire," they said. "Very good! But here is another symbol, the earth.
6 What a grand, great symbol! Here is this little temple, but the
7 whole universe is a temple; a man can worship anywhere. There are
8 the peculiar figures that men draw on the earth, and there are the
9 altars, but here is the greatest of altars, the living, conscious human
10 body, and to worship at this altar is far higher than the worship of
11 any dead symbols."

12 We now come to a peculiar doctrine. I do not understand
13 much of it myself. If you can make something out of it, I will read it
14 to you. When a man dies, who has by meditation purified himself
15 and got knowledge, he first goes to light, then from light to day,
16 from day to the light-half of the moon, from that to the six months
17 when the sun goes to the north, from that to the year, from the year
18 to the sun, from the sun to the moon, from the moon to the
19 lightning, and when he comes to the sphere of lightning, he meets a
20 person who is not human, and that person leads him to (the
21 conditioned) Brahman. This is the way of the gods. When sages and
22 wise persons die, they go that way and they do not return. What is
23 meant by this month and year, and all these things, no one
24 understands clearly. Each one gives his own meaning, and some say
25 it is all nonsense. What is meant by going to the world of the moon
26 and of the sun, and this person who comes to help the soul after it
27 has reached the sphere of lightning, no one knows. There is an idea
28 among the Hindus that the moon is a place where life exists, and
29 we shall see how life has come from there. Those that have not
30 attained to knowledge, but have done good work in this life, first go,
31 when they die, through smoke, then to night, then to the dark
32 fifteen days, then to the six months when the sun goes to the south,
33 and from that they go to the region of their forefathers, then to
34 ether, then to the region of the moon, and there become the food of
35 the gods, and later, are born as gods and live there so long as their
36 good works will permit. And when the effect of the good work has
37 been finished, they come back to earth by the same route. They first
38 become ether, and then air, and then smoke, and then mist, then
39 cloud, and then fall upon the earth as raindrops; then they get into
40 food, which is eaten up by human beings, and finally become their
41 children. Those whose works have been very good take birth in
42 good families, and those whose works have been bad take bad
43 births, even in animal bodies. Animals are continually coming to
44 and going from this earth. That is why the earth is neither full nor
45 empty.

46 Several ideas we can get also from this, and later on,
47 perhaps, we shall be able to understand it better, and we can
48 speculate a little upon what it means. The last part which deals with
49 how those who have been in heaven return, is clearer, perhaps,
50 than the first part; but the whole idea seems to be this that there is
51 no permanent heaven without realising God. Now some people who
52 have not realised God, but have done good work in this world, with

1 the view of enjoying the results, go, when they die, through this and
2 that place, until they reach heaven, and there they are born in the
3 same way as we are here, as children of the gods, and they live
4 there as long as their good works will permit. Out of this comes one
5 basic idea of the Vedanta that everything which has name and form
6 is transient. This earth is transient, because it has name and form,
7 and so the heavens must be transient, because there also name and
8 form remain. A heaven which is eternal will be contradictory in
9 terms, because everything that has name and form must begin in
10 time, exist in time, and end in time. These are settled doctrines of
11 the Vedanta, and as such the heavens are given up.

12 We have seen in the Samhita that the idea of heaven was that
13 it was eternal, much the same as is prevalent among
14 Mohammedans and Christians. The Mohammedans concretise it a
15 little more. They say it is a place where there are gardens, beneath
16 which rivers run. In the desert of Arabia water is very desirable, so
17 the Mohammedan always conceives of his heaven as containing
18 much water. I was born in a country where there are six months of
19 rain every year. I should think of heaven, I suppose, as a dry place,
20 and so also would the English people. These heavens in the Samhita
21 are eternal, and the departed have beautiful bodies and live with
22 their forefathers, and are happy ever afterwards. There they meet
23 with their parents, children, and other relatives, and lead very
24 much the same sort of life as here, only much happier. All the
25 difficulties and obstructions to happiness in this life have vanished,
26 and only its good parts and enjoyments remain. But however
27 comfortable mankind may consider this state of things, truth is one
28 thing and comfort is another. There are cases where truth is not
29 comfortable until we reach its climax. Human nature is very
30 conservative. It does something, and having once done that, finds it
31 hard to get out of it. The mind will not receive new thoughts,
32 because they bring discomfort.

33 In the Upanishads, we see a tremendous departure made. It
34 is declared that these heavens in which men live with the ancestors
35 after death cannot be permanent, seeing that everything which has
36 name and form must die.

37 If there are heavens with forms, these heavens must vanish in
38 course of time; they may last millions of years, but there must come
39 a time when they will have to go. With this idea came another that
40 these souls must come back to earth, and that heavens are places
41 where they enjoy the results of their good works, and after these
42 effects are finished they come back into this earth life again. One
43 thing is clear from this that mankind had a perception of the
44 philosophy of causation even at the early time. Later on we shall
45 see how our philosophers bring that out in the language of
46 philosophy and logic, but here it is almost in the language of
47 children. One thing you may remark in reading these books that it
48 is all internal perception. If you ask me if this can be practical, my
49 answer is, it has been practical first, and philosophical next. You
50 can see that first these things have been perceived and realised and
51 then written. This world spoke to the early thinkers. Birds spoke to
52 them, animals spoke to them, the sun and the moon spoke to them;

1 and little by little they realised things, and got into the heart of
2 nature. Not by cogitation, not by the force of logic, not by picking
3 the brains of others and making a big book, as is the fashion in
4 modern times, not even as I do, by taking up one of their writings
5 and making a long lecture, but by patient investigation and
6 discovery they found out the truth. Its essential method was
7 practice, and so it must be always. Religion is ever a practical
8 science, and there never was nor will be any theological religion. It
9 is practice first, and knowledge afterwards. The idea that souls
10 come back is already there. Those persons who do good work with
11 the idea of a result, get it, but the result is not permanent. There we
12 get the idea of causation very beautifully put forward, that the
13 effect is only commensurate with the cause. As the cause is, so the
14 effect will be. The cause being finite, the effect must be finite. If the
15 cause is eternal the effect can be eternal, but all these causes,
16 doing good work, and all other things, are only finite causes, and as
17 such cannot produce infinite result.

18 We now come to the other side of the question. As there
19 cannot be an eternal heaven, on the same grounds, there cannot be
20 an eternal hell. Suppose I am a very wicked man, doing evil every
21 minute of my life. Still, my whole life here, compared with my
22 eternal life, is nothing. If there be an eternal punishment, it will
23 mean that there is an infinite effect produced by a finite cause,
24 which cannot be. If I do good all my life, I cannot have an infinite
25 heaven; it would be making the same mistake. But there is a third
26 course which applies to those who have known the Truth, to those
27 who have realised It. This is the only way to get beyond this veil of
28 Maya--to realise what Truth is; and the Upanishads indicate what is
29 meant by realising the Truth.

30 It means recognising neither good nor bad, but knowing all as
31 coming from the Self; Self is in everything. It means denying the
32 universe; shutting your eyes to it; seeing the Lord in hell as well as
33 in heaven; seeing the Lord in death as well as in life. This is the line
34 of thought in the passage I have read to you; the earth is a symbol
35 of the Lord, the sky is the Lord, the place we fill is the Lord,
36 everything is Brahman. And this is to be seen, realised, not simply
37 talked or thought about. We can see as its logical consequence that
38 when the soul has realised that everything is full of the Lord, of
39 Brahman, it will not care whether it goes to heaven, or hell, or
40 anywhere else; whether it be born again on this earth or in heaven.
41 These things have ceased to have any meaning to that soul, because
42 every place is the same, every place is the temple of the Lord, every
43 place has become holy and the presence of the Lord is all that it
44 sees in heaven, or hell, or anywhere else. Neither good nor bad,
45 neither life nor death--only the one infinite Brahman exists.

46 According to the Vedanta, when a man has arrived at that
47 perception, he has become free, and he is the only man who is fit to
48 live in this world. Others are not. The man who sees evil, how can
49 he live in this world? His life is a mass of misery. The man who sees
50 dangers, his life is a misery; the man who sees death, his life is a
51 misery. That man alone can live in this world, he alone can say, "I
52 enjoy this life, and I am happy in this life," who has seen the Truth,

1 and the Truth in everything. By the by, I may tell you that the idea
2 of hell does not occur in the Vedas anywhere. It comes with the
3 Puranas much later. The worst punishment according to the Vedas
4 is coming back to earth, having another chance in this world. From
5 the very first we see the idea is taking the impersonal turn. The
6 ideas of punishment and reward are very material, and they are
7 only consonant with the idea of a human God, who loves one and
8 hates another, just as we do. Punishment and reward are only
9 admissible with the existence of such a God. They had such a God
10 in the Samhita, and there we find the idea of fear entering, but as
11 soon as we come to the Upanishads, the idea of fear vanishes, and
12 the impersonal idea takes its place. It is naturally the hardest thing
13 for man to understand, this impersonal idea, for he is always
14 clinging on to the person. Even people who are thought to be great
15 thinkers get disgusted at the idea of the Impersonal God. But to me
16 it seems so absurd to think of God as an embodied man. Which is
17 the higher idea, a living God, or a dead God? A God whom nobody
18 sees, nobody knows, or a God Known?

19 The Impersonal God is a living God, a principle. The
20 difference between personal and impersonal is this, that the
21 personal is only a man, and the impersonal idea is that He is the
22 angel, the man, the animal, and yet something more which we
23 cannot see, because impersonality includes all personalities, is the
24 sum total of everything in the universe, and infinitely more besides.
25 "As the one fire coming into the world is manifesting itself in so
26 many forms, and yet is infinitely more besides," so is the
27 Impersonal.

28 We want to worship a living God. I have seen nothing but God
29 all my life, nor have you. To see this chair you first see God, and
30 then the chair in and through Him. He is everywhere saying, "I am".
31 The moment you feel "I am", you are conscious of Existence. Where
32 shall we go to find God if we cannot see Him in our own hearts and
33 in every living being? "Thou art the man, Thou art the woman, Thou
34 art the girl, and Thou art the boy. Thou art the old man tottering
35 with a stick. Thou art the young man walking in the pride of his
36 strength." Thou art all that exists, a wonderful living God who is the
37 only fact in the universe. This seems to many to be a terrible
38 contradiction to the traditional God who lives behind a veil
39 somewhere and whom nobody ever sees. The priests only give us an
40 assurance that if we follow them, listen to their admonitions, and
41 walk in the way they mark out for us--then when we die, they will
42 give us a passport to enable us to see the face of God! What are all
43 these heaven ideas but simply modifications of this nonsensical
44 priestcraft?

45 Of course the impersonal idea is very destructive; it takes
46 away all trade from the priests, churches, and temples. In India
47 there is a famine now, but there are temples in each one of which
48 there are jewels worth a king's ransom! If the priests taught this
49 Impersonal idea to the people, their occupation would be gone. Yet
50 we have to teach it unselfishly, without priestcraft. You are God and
51 so am I; who obeys whom? Who worships whom? You are the
52 highest temple of God; I would rather worship you than any temple,

1 image, or Bible. Why are some people so contradictory in their
2 thought? They are like fish slipping through our fingers. They say
3 they are hard-headed practical men. Very good. But what is more
4 practical than worshipping here, worshipping you? I see you, feel
5 you, and I know you are God. The Mohammedan says, there is no
6 God but Allah. The Vedanta says, there is nothing that is not God. It
7 may frighten many of you, but you will understand it by degrees.
8 The living God is within you, and yet you are building churches and
9 temples and believing all sorts of imaginary nonsense. The only God
10 to worship is the human soul in the human body. Of course all
11 animals are temples too, but man is the highest, the Taj Mahal of
12 temples. If I cannot worship in that, no other temple will be of any
13 advantage. The moment I have realised God sitting in the temple of
14 every human body, the moment I stand in reverence before every
15 human being and see God in him--that moment I am free from
16 bondage, everything that binds vanishes, and I am free.

17 This is the most practical of all worship. It has nothing to do
18 with theorising and speculation. Yet it frightens many. They say it is
19 not right. They go on theorising about old ideals told them by their
20 grandfathers, that a God somewhere in heaven had told some one
21 that he was God. Since that time we have only theories. This is
22 practicality according to them, and our ideas are impractical! No
23 doubt, the Vedanta says that each one must have his own path, but
24 the path is not the goal. The worship of a God in heaven and all
25 these things are not bad, but they are only steps towards the Truth
26 and not the Truth itself. They are good and beautiful, and some
27 wonderful ideas are there, but the Vedanta says at every point, "My
28 friend, Him whom you are worshipping as unknown, I worship as
29 thee. He whom you are worshipping as unknown and are seeking
30 for, throughout the universe, has been with you all the time. You are
31 living through Him, and He is the Eternal Witness of the universe."
32 "He whom all the Vedas worship, nay, more, He who is always
33 present in the eternal 'I', He existing, the whole universe exists. He
34 is the light and life of the universe.

35 If the 'I' were not in you, you would not see the sun,
36 everything would be a dark mass. He shining, you see the world."

37 One question is generally asked, and it is this that this may
38 lead to a tremendous amount of difficulty. Everyone of us will think,
39 "I am God, and whatever I do or think must be good, for God can do
40 no evil." In the first place, even taking this danger of
41 misinterpretation for granted, can it be proved that on the other
42 side the same danger does not exist? They have been worshipping a
43 God in heaven separate from them, and of whom they are much
44 afraid. They have been born shaking with fear, and all their life they
45 will go on shaking. Has the world been made much better by this?
46 Those who have understood and worshipped a Personal God, and
47 those who have understood and worshipped an Impersonal God, on
48 which side have been the great workers of the world--gigantic
49 workers, gigantic moral powers? Certainly on the Impersonal. How
50 can you expect morality to be developed through fear? It can never
51 be. "Where one sees another, where one hears another, that is
52 Maya. When one does not see another, when one does not hear

1 another, when everything has become the Atman, who sees whom,
2 who perceives whom?" It is all He, and all I, at the same time. The
3 soul has become pure. Then, and then alone we understand what
4 love is. Love cannot come through fear, its basis is freedom. When
5 we really begin to love the world, then we understand what is
6 meant by brotherhood or mankind, and not before.

7 So, it is not right to say that the Impersonal idea will lead to a
8 tremendous amount of evil in the world, as if the other doctrine
9 never lent itself to works of evil, as if it did not lead to sectarianism
10 deluging the world with blood and causing men to tear each other
11 to pieces. "My God is the greatest god, let us decide it by a free
12 fight." That is the outcome of dualism all over the world. Come out
13 into the broad open light of day, come out from the little narrow
14 paths, for how can the infinite soul rest content to live and die in
15 small ruts? Come out into the universe of Light. Everything in the
16 universe is yours, stretch out your arms and embrace it with love. If
17 you ever felt you wanted to do that, you have felt God.

18 You remember that passage in the sermon of Buddha, how he
19 sent a thought of love towards the south, the north, the east, and
20 the west, above and below, until the whole universe was filled with
21 this love, so grand, great, and infinite. When you have that feeling,
22 you have true personality. The whole universe is one person; let go
23 the little things. Give up the small for the Infinite, give up small
24 enjoyments for infinite bliss. It is all yours, for the Impersonal
25 includes the Personal. So God is Personal and Impersonal at the
26 same time. And Man, the Infinite, Impersonal Man, is manifesting
27 Himself as person. We the infinite have limited ourselves, as it
28 were, into small parts. The Vedanta says that Infinity is our true
29 nature; it will never vanish, it will abide for ever. But we are
30 limiting ourselves by our Karma, which like a chain round our necks
31 has dragged us into this limitation. Break that chain and be free.
32 Trample law under your feet. There is no law in human nature,
33 there is no destiny, no fate. How can there be law in infinity?
34 Freedom is its watchword. Freedom is its nature, its birthright. Be
35 free, and then have any number of personalities you like. Then we
36 will play like the actor who comes upon the stage and plays the part
37 of a beggar. Contrast him with the actual beggar walking in the
38 streets. The scene is, perhaps, the same in both cases, the words
39 are, perhaps, the same, but yet what difference! The one enjoys his
40 beggary while the other is suffering misery from it. And what makes
41 this difference? the one is free and the other is bound. The actor
42 knows his beggary is not true, but that he has assumed it for play,
43 while the real beggar thinks that it is his too familiar state and that
44 he has to bear it whether he wills it or not. This is the law. So long
45 as we have no knowledge of our real nature, we are beggars,
46 jostled about by every force in nature; and made slaves of by
47 everything in nature; we cry all over the world for help, but help
48 never comes to us; we cry to imaginary beings, and yet it never
49 comes. But still we hope help will come, and thus in weeping,
50 wailing, and hoping, one life is passed, and the same play goes on
51 and on.

52 Be free; hope for nothing from anyone. I am sure if you look

1 back upon your lives you will find that you were always vainly trying
2 to get help from others which never came. All the help that has
3 come was from within yourselves. You only had the fruits of what
4 you yourselves worked for, and yet you were strangely hoping all
5 the time for help. A rich man's parlour is always full; but if you
6 notice, you do not find the same people there. The visitors are
7 always hoping that they will get something from those wealthy men,
8 but they never do. So are our lives spent in hoping, hoping, hoping,
9 which never comes to an end. Give up hope, says the Vedanta. Why
10 should you hope? You *have* everything, nay, you are everything.
11 What are you hoping for? If a king goes mad, and runs about trying
12 to find the king of his country, he will never find him, because he is
13 the king himself. He may go through every village and city in his
14 own country, seeking in every house, weeping and wailing, but he
15 will never find him, because he is the king himself. It is better that
16 we know we are God and give up this fool's search after Him; and
17 knowing that we are God we become happy and contented. Give up
18 all these mad pursuits, and then play your part in the universe, as
19 an actor on the stage.

20 The whole vision is changed, and instead of an eternal prison
21 this world has become a playground; instead of a land of
22 competition it is a land of bliss, where there is perpetual spring,
23 flowers bloom and butterflies flit about.

24 This very world becomes heaven, which formerly was hell. To
25 the eyes of the bound it is a tremendous place of torment, but to the
26 eyes of the free it is quite otherwise. This one life is the universal
27 life, heavens and all those places are here. All the gods are here,
28 the prototypes of man. The gods did not create man after their type,
29 but man created gods. And here are the prototypes, here is Indra,
30 here is Varuna, and all the gods of the universe. We have been
31 projecting our little doubles, and we are the originals of these gods,
32 we are the real, the only gods to be worshipped. This is the view of
33 the Vedanta, and this its practicality. When we have become free,
34 we need not go mad and throw up society and rush off to die in the
35 forest or the cave; we shall remain where we were, only we shall
36 understand the whole thing. The same phenomena will remain, but
37 with a new meaning. We do not know the world yet; it is only
38 through freedom that we see what it is, and understand its nature.
39 We shall see then that this so-called law, or fate, or destiny occupies
40 only an infinitesimal part of our nature. It was only one side, but on
41 the other side there was freedom all the time. We did not know this,
42 and that is why we have been trying to save ourselves from evil by
43 hiding our faces in the ground, like the hunted hare. Through
44 delusion we have been trying to forget our nature, and yet we could
45 not; it was always calling upon us, and all our search after God or
46 gods, or external freedom, was a search after our real nature. We
47 mistook the voice. We thought it was from the fire, or from a god or
48 the sun, or moon, or stars, but at last we have found that it was
49 from within ourselves. Within ourselves is this eternal voice
50 speaking of eternal freedom; its music is eternally going on. Part of
51 this music of the Soul has become the earth, the law, this universe,
52 but it was always ours and always will be. In one word, the ideal of

1 Vedanta is to know man as he really is, and this is its message, that
2 if you cannot worship your brother man, the manifested God, how
3 can you worship a God who is unmanifested?

4 Do you not remember what the Bible says, "If you cannot love
5 your brother whom you have seen, how can you love God whom you
6 have not seen?" If you cannot see God in the human face, how can
7 you see him in the clouds, or in images made of dull, dead matter,
8 or in mere fictitious stories of our brain? I shall call you religious
9 from the day you begin to see God in men and women, and then you
10 will understand what is meant by turning the left cheek to the man
11 who strikes you on the right. When you see man as God, everything,
12 even the tiger, will be welcome. Whatever comes to you is but the
13 Lord, the Eternal, the Blessed One, appearing to us in various
14 forms, as our father, and mother, and friend, and child--they are our
15 own soul playing with us.

16 As our human relationships can thus be made divine, so our
17 relationship with God may take any of these forms and we can look
18 upon Him as our father, or mother, or friend, or beloved. Calling
19 God Mother is a higher ideal than calling Him Father; and to call
20 Him Friend is still higher; but the highest is to regard Him as the
21 Beloved. The highest point of all is to see no difference between
22 lover and beloved. You may remember, perhaps, the old Persian
23 story, of how a lover came and knocked at the door of the beloved
24 and was asked, "Who are you?" He answered, "It is I", and there
25 was no response. A second time he came, and exclaimed, "I am
26 here", but the door was not opened. The third time he came, and
27 the voice asked from inside, "Who is there?" He replied, "I am
28 thyself, my beloved", and the door opened. So is the relation
29 between God and ourselves. He is in everything. He is everything.
30 Every man and woman is the palpable, blissful, living God. Who
31 says God is unknown? Who says He is to be searched after?

32 We have found God eternally. We have been living in Him
33 eternally; everywhere He is eternally known, eternally worshipped.

34 Then comes another idea, that other forms of worship are not
35 errors. This is one of the great points to be remembered, that those
36 who worship God through ceremonials and forms, however crude
37 we may think them to be, are not in error. It is the journey from
38 truth to truth, from lower truth to higher truth. Darkness is less
39 light; evil is less good; impurity is less purity. It must always be
40 borne in mind that we should see others with eyes of love, with
41 sympathy, knowing that they are going along the same path that we
42 have trodden. If you are free, you must know that all will be so
43 sooner or later, and if you are free, how can you see the
44 impermanent? If you are really pure, how do you see the impure?
45 For what is within, is without. We cannot see impurity without
46 having it inside ourselves. This is one of the practical sides of
47 Vedanta, and I hope that we shall all try to carry it into our lives.
48 Our whole life here is to carry this into practice, but the one great
49 point we gain is that we shall work with satisfaction and
50 contentment, instead of with discontent and dissatisfaction, for we
51 know that Truth is within us, we have It as our birthright, and we
52 have only to manifest It, and make It tangible.

PRACTICAL VEDANTA - PART III

(Delivered in London, 17th November 1896)

In the Chhandogya Upanishad we read that a sage called Narada came to another called Sanatkumara, and asked him various questions, of which one was, if religion was the cause of things as they are. And Sanatkumara leads him, as it were, step by step, telling him that there is something higher than this earth, and something higher than that, and so on, till he comes to Akasha, ether. Ether is higher than light, because in the ether are the sun and the moon, lightning and the stars; in ether we live, and in ether we die. Then the question arises, if there is anything higher than that, and Sanatkumara tells him of Prana. This Prana, according to the Vedanta, is the principle of life. It is like ether, an omnipresent principle; and all motion, either in the body or anywhere else, is the work of this Prana. It is greater than Akasha, and through it everything lives. Prana is in the mother, in the father, in the sister, in the teacher, Prana is the knower.

I will read another passage, where Shvetaketu asks his father about the Truth, and the father teaches him different things, and concludes by saying, "That which is the fine cause in all these things, of It are all these things made. That is the All, that is Truth, thou art That, O Shvetaketu." And then he gives various examples. "As a bee, O Shvetaketu, gathers honey from different flowers, and as the different honeys do not know that they are from various trees, and from various flowers, so all of us, having come to that Existence, know not that we have done so. Now, that which is that subtle essence, in It all that exists has its self. It is the True. It is the Self and thou, O Shvetaketu, are That." He gives another example of the rivers running down to the ocean. "As the rivers, when they are in the ocean, do not know that they have been various rivers, even so when we come out of that Existence, we do not know that we are That. O Shvetaketu, thou are That." So on he goes with his teachings.

Now there are two principles of knowledge. The one principle is that we know by referring the particular to the general, and the general to the universal; and the second is that anything of which the explanation is sought is to be explained so far as possible from its own nature. Taking up the first principle, we see that all our knowledge really consists of classifications, going higher and higher. When something happens singly, we are, as it were, dissatisfied. When it can be shown that the same thing happens again and again, we are satisfied and call it law. When we find that one apple falls, we are dissatisfied; but when we find that all apples fall, we call it the law of gravitation and are satisfied. The fact is that from the particular we deduce the general.

When we want to study religion, we should apply this scientific process. The same principle also holds good here, and as a fact we find that that has been the method all through. In reading these books from which I have been translating to you, the earliest idea that I can trace is this principle of going from the particular to

1 the general. We see how the "bright ones" became merged into one
2 principle; and likewise in the ideas of the cosmos we find the
3 ancient thinkers going higher and higher--from the fine elements
4 they go to finer and more embracing elements, and from these
5 particulars they come to one omnipresent ether, and from that even
6 they go to an all-embracing force, or Prana; and through all this
7 runs the principle, that one is not separate from the others. It is the
8 very ether that exists in the higher form of Prana, or the higher
9 form of Prana concretes, so to say, and becomes ether; and that
10 ether becomes still grosser, and so on.

11 The generalisation of the Personal God is another case in
12 point. We have seen how this generalisation was reached, and was
13 called the sum total of all consciousness. But a difficulty arises--it is
14 an incomplete generalisation. We take up only one side of the facts
15 of nature, the fact of consciousness, and upon that we generalise,
16 but the other side is left out. So, in the first place it is a defective
17 generalisation. There is another insufficiency, and that relates to
18 the second principle. Everything should be explained from its own
19 nature. There may have been people who thought that every apple
20 that fell to the ground was dragged down by a ghost, but the
21 explanation is the law of gravitation; and although we know it is not
22 a perfect explanation, yet it is much better than the other, because
23 it is derived from the nature of the thing itself, while the other
24 posits an extraneous cause. So throughout the whole range of our
25 knowledge; the explanation which is based upon the nature of the
26 thing itself is a scientific explanation, and an explanation which
27 brings in an outside agent is unscientific.

28 So the explanation of a Personal God as the creator of the
29 universe has to stand that test. If that God is outside of nature,
30 having nothing to do with nature, and this nature is the outcome of
31 the command of that God and produced from nothing, it is a very
32 unscientific theory, and this has been the weak point of every
33 Theistic religion throughout the ages. These two defects we find in
34 what is generally called the theory of monotheism, the theory of a
35 Personal God, with all the qualities of a human being multiplied
36 very much, who, by His will, created this universe out of nothing
37 and yet is separate from it. This leads us into two difficulties.

38 As we have seen, it is not a sufficient generalisation, and
39 secondly, it is not an explanation of nature from nature. It holds that
40 the effect is not the cause, that the cause is entirely separate from
41 the effect. Yet all human knowledge shows that the effect is but the
42 cause in another form. To this idea the discoveries of modern
43 science are tending every day, and the latest theory that has been
44 accepted on all sides is the theory of evolution, the principle of
45 which is that the effect is but the cause in another form, a
46 readjustment of the cause, and the cause takes the form of the
47 effect. The theory of creation out of nothing would be laughed at by
48 modern scientists.

49 Now, can religion stand these tests? If there be any religious
50 theories which can stand these two tests, they will be acceptable to
51 the modern mind, to the thinking mind. Any other theory which we
52 ask the modern man to believe, on the authority of priests, or

1 churches, or books, he is unable to accept, and the result is a
2 hideous mass of unbelief. Even in those in whom there is an
3 external display of belief, in their hearts there is a tremendous
4 amount of unbelief. The rest shrink away from religion, as it were,
5 give it up, regarding it as priestcraft only.

6 Religion has been reduced to a sort of national form. It is one
7 of our very best social remnants; let it remain. But the real
8 necessity which the grandfather of the modern man felt for it is
9 gone; he no longer finds it satisfactory to his reason. The idea of
10 such a Personal God, and such a creation, the idea which is
11 generally known as monotheism in every religion, cannot hold its
12 own any longer. In India it could not hold its own because of the
13 Buddhists, and that was the very point where they gained their
14 victory in ancient times. They showed that if we allow that nature is
15 possessed of infinite power, and that nature can work out all its
16 wants, it is simply unnecessary to insist that there is something
17 besides nature. Even the soul is unnecessary.

18 The discussion about substance and qualities is very old, and
19 you will sometimes find that the old superstition lives even at the
20 present day. Most of you have read how, during the Middle Ages,
21 and, I am sorry to say, even much later, this was one of the subjects
22 of discussion, whether qualities adhered to substance, whether
23 length, breadth, and thickness adhered to the substance which we
24 call dead matter, whether, the substance remaining, the qualities
25 are there or not. To this our Buddhist says, "You have no ground for
26 maintaining the existence of such a substance; the qualities are all
27 that exist; you do not see beyond them." This is just the position of
28 most of our modern agnostics. For it is this fight of the substance
29 and qualities that, on a higher plane, takes the form of the fight
30 between noumenon and phenomenon. There is the phenomenal
31 world, the universe of continuous change, and there is something
32 behind which does not change; and this duality of existence,
33 noumenon and phenomenon, some hold, is true, and others with
34 better reason claim that you have no right to admit the two, for
35 what we see, feel, and think is only the phenomenon. You have no
36 right to assert there is anything beyond phenomenon; and there is
37 no answer to this. The only answer we get is from the monistic
38 theory of the Vedanta. It is true that only one exists, and that one is
39 either phenomenon or noumenon. It is not true that there are two--
40 something changing, and, in and through that, something which
41 does not change; but it is the one and the same thing which appears
42 as changing, and which is in reality unchangeable. We have come to
43 think of the body, and mind, and soul as many, but really there is
44 only one; and that one is appearing in all these various forms. Take
45 the well-known illustration of the monists, the rope appearing as
46 the snake. Some people, in the dark or through some other cause,
47 mistake the rope for the snake, but when knowledge comes, the
48 snake vanishes and it is found to be a rope. By this illustration we
49 see that when the snake exists in the mind, the rope has vanished,
50 and when the rope exists, the snake has gone. When we see
51 phenomenon, and phenomenon only, around us, the noumenon has
52 vanished, but when we see the noumenon, the unchangeable, it

1 naturally follows that the phenomenon has vanished. Now, we
2 understand better the position of both the realist and the idealist.
3 The realist sees the phenomenon only, and the idealist looks to the
4 noumenon. For the idealist, the really genuine idealist, who has
5 truly arrived at the power of perception, whereby he can get away
6 from all ideas of change, for him the changeful universe has
7 vanished, and he has the right to say it is all delusion, there is no
8 change. The realist at the same time looks at the changeful. For him
9 the unchangeable has vanished, and he has a right to say this is all
10 real.

11 What is the outcome of this philosophy? It is that the idea of
12 Personal God is not sufficient. We have to get to something higher,
13 to the Impersonal idea. It is the only logical step that we can take.
14 Not that the personal idea would be destroyed by that, not that we
15 supply proof that the Personal God does not exist, but we must go
16 to the Impersonal for the explanation of the personal, for the
17 Impersonal is a much higher generalisation than the personal. The
18 Impersonal only can be Infinite, the personal is limited. Thus we
19 preserve the personal and do not destroy it. Often the doubt comes
20 to us that if we arrive at the idea of the Impersonal God, the
21 personal will be destroyed, if we arrive at the idea of the
22 Impersonal man, the personal will be lost. But the Vedantic idea is
23 not the destruction of the individual, but its real preservation. We
24 cannot prove the individual by any other means but by referring to
25 the universal, by proving that this individual is really the universal.
26 If we think of the individual as separate from everything else in the
27 universe, it cannot stand a minute. Such a thing never existed.

28 Secondly, by the application of the second principle, that the
29 explanation of everything must come out of the nature of the thing,
30 we are led to a still bolder idea, and one more difficult to
31 understand. It is nothing less than this, that the Impersonal Being,
32 our highest generalisation, is in ourselves, and we are That. "O
33 Shvetaketu, thou art That." You are that Impersonal Being; that God
34 for whom you have been searching all over the universe is all the
35 time yourself-yourself not in the personal sense but in the
36 Impersonal. The man we know now, the manifested, is personalised,
37 but the reality of this is the Impersonal. To understand the personal
38 we have to refer it to the Impersonal, the particular must be
39 referred to the general, and that Impersonal is the Truth, the Self of
40 man.

41 There will be various questions in connection with this, and I
42 shall try to answer them as we go on. Many difficulties will arise,
43 but first let us clearly understand the position of monism. As
44 manifested beings we appear to be separate, but our reality is one,
45 and the less we think of ourselves as separate from that One, the
46 better for us. The more we think of ourselves as separate from the
47 Whole, the more miserable we become. From this monistic
48 principle we get at the basis of ethics, and I venture to say that we
49 cannot get any ethics from anywhere else. We know that the oldest
50 idea of ethics was the will of some particular being or beings, but
51 few are ready to accept that now, because it would be only a partial
52 generalisation. The Hindus say we must not do this or that because

1 the Vedas say so, but the Christian is not going to obey the
2 authority of the Vedas. The Christian says you must do this and to
3 do that because the Bible says so. That will not be binding on those
4 who do not believe in the Bible. But we must have a theory which is
5 large enough to take in all these various grounds. Just as there are
6 millions of people who are ready to believe in a Personal Creator,
7 there have also been thousands of the brightest minds in this world
8 who felt that such ideas were not sufficient for them, and wanted
9 something higher, and wherever religion was not broad enough to
10 include all these minds, the result was that the brightest minds in
11 society were always outside of religion; and never was this so
12 marked as at the present time, especially in Europe.

13 To include these minds, therefore, religion must become
14 broad enough. Everything it claims must be judged from the
15 standpoint of reason. Why religions should claim that they are not
16 bound to abide by the standpoint of reason, no one knows. If one
17 does not take the standard of reason, there cannot be any true
18 judgment, even in the case of religions. One religion may ordain
19 something very hideous. For instance, the Mohammedan religion
20 allows Mohammedans to kill all who are not of their religion. It is
21 clearly stated in the Koran, "Kill the infidels if they do not become
22 Mohammedans." They must be put to fire and sword. Now if we tell
23 a Mohammedan that this is wrong, he will naturally ask, "How do
24 you know that? How do you know it is not good? My book says it is."
25 If you say your book is older, there will come the Buddhist, and say,
26 my book is much older still. Then will come the Hindu, and say, my
27 books are the oldest of all. Therefore referring to books will not do.
28 Where is the standard by which you can compare? You will say, look
29 at the Sermon on the Mount, and the Mohammedan will reply, look
30 at the Ethics of the Koran. The Mohammedan will say, who is the
31 arbiter as to which is the better of the two? Neither the New
32 Testament nor the Koran can be the arbiter in a quarrel between
33 them. There must be some independent authority, and that cannot
34 be any book, but something which is universal; and what is more
35 universal than reason? It has been said that reason is not strong
36 enough; it does not always help us to get at the Truth; many times it
37 makes mistakes, and, therefore, the conclusion is that we must
38 believe in the authority of a church! That was said to me by a
39 Roman Catholic, but I could not see the logic of it. On the other
40 hand I should say, if reason be so weak, a body of priests would be
41 weaker, and I am not going to accept their verdict, but I will abide
42 by my reason, because with all its weakness there is some chance
43 of my getting at truth through it; while, by the other means, there is
44 no such hope at all.

45 We should, therefore, follow reason and also sympathise with
46 those who do not come to any sort of belief, following reason. For it
47 is better that mankind should become atheist by following reason
48 than blindly believe in two hundred millions of gods on the
49 authority of anybody. What we want is progress, development,
50 realisation. No theories ever made men higher. No amount of books
51 can help us to become purer. The only power is in realisation, and
52 that lies in ourselves and comes from thinking. Let men think. A

1 clod of earth never thinks; but it remains only a lump of earth. The
2 glory of man is that he is a thinking being. It is the nature of man to
3 think and therein he differs from animals. I believe in reason and
4 follow reason having seen enough of the evils of authority, for I was
5 born in a country where they have gone to the extreme of authority.

6 The Hindus believe that creation has come out of the Vedas.
7 How do you know there is a cow? Because the word cow is in the
8 Vedas. How do you know there is a man outside? Because the word
9 man is there. If it had not been, there would have been no man
10 outside. That is what they say. Authority with a vengeance! And it is
11 not studied as I have studied it, but some of the most powerful
12 minds have taken it up and spun out wonderful logical theories
13 round it. They have reasoned it out, and there it stands--a whole
14 system of philosophy; and thousands of the brightest intellects have
15 been dedicated through thousands of years to the working out of
16 this theory. Such has been the power of authority, and great are the
17 dangers thereof. It stunts the growth of humanity, and we must not
18 forget that we want growth. Even in all relative truth, more than
19 the truth itself, we want the exercise. That is our life.

20 The monistic theory has this merit that it is the most rational
21 of all the religious theories that we can conceive of. Every other
22 theory, every conception of God which is partial and little and
23 personal is not rational. And yet monism has this grandeur that it
24 embraces all these partial conceptions of God as being necessary
25 for many. Some people say that this personal explanation is
26 irrational. But it is consoling; they want a consoling religion and we
27 understand that it is necessary for them. The clear light of truth
28 very few in this life can bear, much less live up to. It is necessary,
29 therefore, that this comfortable religion should exist; it helps many
30 souls to a better one. Small minds whose circumference is very
31 limited and which require little things to build them up, never
32 venture to soar high in thought. Their conceptions are very good
33 and helpful to them, even if only of little gods and symbols. But you
34 have to understand the Impersonal, for it is in and through that
35 alone that these others can be explained. Take, for instance, the
36 idea of a Personal God. A man who understands and believes in the
37 Impersonal--John Stuart Mill, for example--may say that a Personal
38 God is impossible, and cannot be proved. I admit with him that a
39 Personal God cannot be demonstrated. But He is the highest
40 reading of the Impersonal that can be reached by the human
41 intellect, and what else is the universe but various readings of the
42 Absolute? It is like a book before us, and each one has brought his
43 intellect to read it, and each one has to read it for himself. There is
44 something which is common in the intellect of all men; therefore
45 certain things appear to be the same to the intellect of mankind.
46 That you and I see a chair proves that there is something common
47 to both our minds. Suppose a being comes with another sense, he
48 will not see the chair at all; but all beings similarly constituted will
49 see the same things. Thus this universe itself is the absolute, the
50 unchangeable, the noumenon; and the phenomenon constitutes the
51 reading thereof. For you will first find that all phenomena are finite.
52 Every phenomenon that we can see, feel, or think of, is finite,

1 limited by our knowledge, and the Personal God as we conceive of
2 Him is in fact a phenomenon. The very idea of causation exists only
3 in the phenomenal world, and God as the cause of this universe
4 must naturally be thought of as limited, and yet He is the same
5 Impersonal God. This very universe, as we have seen, is the same
6 Impersonal Being read by our intellect. Whatever is reality in the
7 universe is that Impersonal Being, and the forms and conceptions
8 are given to it by our intellects. Whatever is real in this table is that
9 Being, and the table form and all other forms are given by our
10 intellects.

11 Now, motion, for instance, which is a necessary adjunct of the
12 phenomenal, cannot be predicated of the Universal. Every little bit,
13 every atom inside the universe, is in a constant state of change and
14 motion, but the universe as a whole is unchangeable, because
15 motion or change is a relative thing; we can only think of something
16 in motion in comparison with something which is not moving. There
17 must be two things in order to understand motion. The whole mass
18 of the universe, taken as a unit, cannot move. In regard to what will
19 it move? It cannot be said to change. With regard to what will it
20 change? So the whole is the absolute; but within it every particle is
21 in a constant state of flux and change. It is unchangeable and
22 changeable at the same time, Impersonal and Personal in one. This
23 is our conception of the universe, of motion and of God, and that is
24 what is meant by "Thou art That". Thus we see that the Impersonal
25 instead of doing away with the personal, the Absolute instead of
26 pulling down the relative, only explains it to the full satisfaction of
27 our reason and heart. The Personal God and all that exists in the
28 universe are the same Impersonal Being seen through our minds.
29 When we shall be rid of our minds, our little personalities, we shall
30 become one with It. This is what is meant by "Thou art That". For
31 we must know our true nature, the Absolute.

32 The finite, manifested man forgets his source and thinks
33 himself to be entirely separate. We, as personalised, differentiated
34 beings, forget our reality, and the teaching of monism is not that we
35 shall give up these differentiations, but we must learn to
36 understand what they are. We are in reality that Infinite Being, and
37 our personalities represent so many channels through which this
38 Infinite Reality is manifesting Itself; and the whole mass of changes
39 which we call evolution is brought about by the soul trying to
40 manifest more and more of its infinite energy. We cannot stop
41 anywhere on this side of the Infinite; our power, and blessedness,
42 and wisdom, cannot but grow into the Infinite. Infinite power and
43 existence and blessedness are ours, and we have not to acquire
44 them; they are our own, and we have only to manifest them.

45 This is the central idea of monism, and one that is so hard to
46 understand. From my childhood everyone around me taught
47 weakness; I have been told ever since I was born that I was a weak
48 thing. It is very difficult for me now to realise my own strength, but
49 by analysis and reasoning I gain knowledge of my own strength, I
50 realise it. All the knowledge that we have in this world, where did it
51 come from? It was within us. What knowledge is outside? None.
52 Knowledge was not in matter; it was in man all the time. Nobody

1 ever created knowledge; man brings it from within. It is lying there.
2 The whole of that big banyan tree which covers acres of ground,
3 was in the little seed which was, perhaps, no bigger than one eighth
4 of a mustard seed; all that mass of energy was there confined. The
5 gigantic intellect, we know, lies coiled up in the protoplasmic cell,
6 and why should not the infinite energy? We know that it is so. It
7 may seem like a paradox, but is true. Each one of us has come out
8 of one protoplasmic cell, and all the powers we possess were coiled
9 up there. You cannot say they came from food; for if you heap up
10 food mountains high, what power comes out of it? The energy was
11 there, potentially no doubt, but still there. So is infinite power in the
12 soul of man, whether he knows it or not. Its manifestation is only a
13 question of being conscious of it. Slowly this infinite giant is, as it
14 were, waking up, becoming conscious of his power, and arousing
15 himself; and with his growing consciousness, more and more of his
16 bonds are breaking, chains are bursting asunder, and the day is
17 sure to come when, with the full consciousness of his infinite power
18 and wisdom, the giant will rise to his feet and stand erect. Let us all
19 help to hasten that glorious consummation.

PRACTICAL VEDANTA - PART IV

(Delivered in London, 18th November 1896)

We have been dealing more with the universal so far. This morning I shall try to place before you the Vedantic ideas of the relation of the particular to the universal. As we have seen, in the dualistic form of Vedic doctrines, the earlier forms, there was a clearly defined particular and limited soul for every being. There have been a great many theories about this particular soul in each individual, but the main discussion was between the ancient Vedantists and the ancient Buddhists, the former believing in the individual soul as complete in itself, the latter denying *in toto* the existence of such an individual soul. As I told you the other day, it is pretty much the same discussion you have in Europe as to substance and quality, one set holding that behind the qualities there is something as substance, in which the qualities inhere; and the other denying the existence of such a substance as being unnecessary, for the qualities may live by themselves. The most ancient theory of the soul, of course, is based upon the argument of self-identity--"I am I"--that the I of yesterday is the I of today, and the I of today will be the I of tomorrow; that in spite of all the changes that are happening to the body, I yet believe that I am the same I. This seems to have been the central argument with those who believed in a limited, and yet perfectly complete, individual soul.

On the other hand, the ancient Buddhists denied the necessity of such an assumption. They brought forward the argument that all that we know, and all that we possibly can know, are simply these changes. The positing of an unchangeable and unchanging substance is simply superfluous, and even if there were any such unchangeable thing, we could never understand it, nor should we ever be able to cognise it in any sense of the word. The same discussion you will find at the present time going on in Europe between the religionists and the idealists on the one side, and the modern positivists and agnostics on the other; one set believing there is something which does not change (of whom the latest representative is your Herbert Spencer), that we catch a glimpse of something which is unchangeable. And the other is represented by the modern Comtists and modern Agnostics. Those of you who were interested a few years ago in the discussions between Herbert Spencer and Frederick Harrison might have noticed that it was the same old difficulty, the one party standing for a substance behind the changeful, and the other party denying the necessity for such an assumption. One party says we cannot conceive of changes without conceiving of something which does not change; the other party brings out the argument that this is superfluous; we can only conceive of something which is changing, and as to the unchanging, we can neither know, feel, nor sense it.

In India this great question did not find its solution in very ancient times, because we have seen that the assumption of a substance which is behind the qualities, and which is not the

1 qualities, can never be substantiated; nay, even the argument from
2 self-identity, from memory,—that I am the I of yesterday because I
3 remember it, and therefore I have been a continuous something—
4 cannot be substantiated. The other quibble that is generally put
5 forward is a mere delusion of words. For instance, a man may take
6 a long series of such sentences as "I do", "I go", "I dream", "I sleep",
7 "I move", and here you will find it claimed that the doing, going,
8 dreaming etc., have been changing, but what remained constant
9 was that "I". As such they conclude that the "I" is something which
10 is constant and an individual in itself, but all these changes belong
11 to the body. This, though apparently very convincing and clear, is
12 based upon the mere play on words. The "I" and the doing, going,
13 and dreaming may be separate in black and white, but no one can
14 separate them in his mind.

15 When I eat, I think of myself as eating—I am identified with
16 eating. When I run, I and the running are not two separate things.
17 Thus the argument from personal identity does not seem to be very
18 strong. The other argument from memory is also weak. If the
19 identity of my being is represented by my memory, many things
20 which I have forgotten are lost from that identity. And we know that
21 people under certain conditions forget their whole past. In many
22 cases of lunacy a man will think of himself as made of glass, or as
23 being an animal. If the existence of that man depends on memory,
24 he has become glass, which not being the case we cannot make the
25 identity of the Self depend on such a flimsy substance as memory.
26 Thus we see that the soul as a limited yet complete and continuing
27 identity cannot be established as separate from the qualities. We
28 cannot establish a narrowed-down, limited existence to which is
29 attached a bunch of qualities.

30 On the other hand, the argument of the ancient Buddhists
31 seems to be stronger—that we do not know, and cannot know,
32 anything that is beyond the bunch of qualities. According to them,
33 the soul consists of a bundle of qualities called sensations and
34 feelings. A mass of such is what is called the soul, and this mass is
35 continually changing.

36 The Advaitist theory of the soul reconciles both these
37 positions. The position of the Advaitist is that it is true that we
38 cannot think of the substance as separate from the qualities, we
39 cannot think of change and not-change at the same time; it would
40 be impossible. But the very thing which is the substance is the
41 quality; substance and quality are not two things. It is the
42 unchangeable that is appearing as the changeable. The
43 unchangeable substance of the universe is not something separate
44 from it. The noumenon is not something different from the
45 phenomena, but it is the very noumenon which has become the
46 phenomena. There is a soul which is unchanging, and what we call
47 feelings and perceptions, nay, even the body, are the very soul, seen
48 from another point of view. We have got into the habit of thinking
49 that we have bodies and souls and so forth, but really speaking,
50 there is only one.

51 When I think of myself as the body, I am only a body; it is
52 meaningless to say I am something else. And when I think of myself

1 as the soul, the body vanishes, and the perception of the body does
2 not remain. None can get the perception of the Self without his
3 perception of the body having vanished, none can get perception of
4 the substance without his perception of the qualities having
5 vanished.

6 The ancient illustration of Advaita, of the rope being taken for
7 a snake, may elucidate the point a little more. When a man mistakes
8 the rope for a snake, the rope has vanished, and when he takes it
9 for a rope, the snake has vanished, and the rope only remains. The
10 ideas of dual or treble existence come from reasoning on
11 insufficient data, and we read them in books or hear about them,
12 until we come under the delusion that we really have a dual
13 perception of the soul and the body; but such a perception never
14 really exists. The perception is either of the body or of the soul. It
15 requires no arguments to prove it, you can verify it in your own
16 minds.

17 Try to think of yourself as a soul, as a disembodied
18 something. You will find it to be almost impossible, and those few
19 who are able to do so will find that at the time when they realise
20 themselves as a soul they have no idea of the body. You have heard
21 of, or perhaps have seen, persons who on particular occasions had
22 been in peculiar states of mind, brought about by deep meditation,
23 self-hypnotism, hysteria, or drugs. From their experience you may
24 gather that when they were perceiving the internal something, the
25 external had vanished for them. This shows that whatever exists is
26 one. That one is appearing in these various forms, and all these
27 various forms give rise to the relation of cause and effect. The
28 relation of cause and effect is one of evolution--the one becomes the
29 other, and so on. Sometimes the cause vanishes, as it were, and in
30 its place leaves the effect. If the soul is the cause of the body, the
31 soul, as it were, vanishes for the time being, and the body remains;
32 and when the body vanishes, the soul remains. This theory fits the
33 arguments of the Buddhists that were levelled against the
34 assumption of the dualism of body and soul, by denying the duality,
35 and showing that the substance and the qualities are one and the
36 same thing appearing in various forms.

37 We have seen also that this idea of the unchangeable can be
38 established only as regards the whole, but never as regards the
39 part. The very idea of part comes from the idea of change or
40 motion. Everything that is limited we can understand and know,
41 because it is changeable; and the whole must be unchangeable,
42 because there is no other thing besides it in relation to which
43 change would be possible. Change is always in regard to something
44 which does not change, or which changes relatively less.

45 According to Advaita, therefore, the idea of the soul as
46 universal, unchangeable, and immortal can be demonstrated as far
47 as possible. The difficulty would be as regards the particular. What
48 shall we do with the old dualistic theories which have such a hold
49 upon us, and which we have all to pass through--these beliefs in
50 limited, little, individual souls?

51 We have seen that we are immortal with regard to the whole;

1 but the difficulty is, we desire so much to be immortal as parts of
2 the whole. We have seen that we are Infinite, and that that is our
3 real individuality. But we want so much to make these little souls
4 individual. What becomes of them when we find in our everyday
5 experience that these little souls are individuals, with only this
6 reservation that they are continuously growing individuals? They
7 are the same, yet not the same. The I of yesterday is the I of today,
8 and yet not so, it is changed somewhat. Now, by getting rid of the
9 dualistic conception, that in the midst of all these changes there is
10 something that does not change, and taking the most modern of
11 conception, that of evolution, we find that the "I" is a continuously
12 changing, expanding entity.

13 If it be true that man is the evolution of a mollusc, the mollusc
14 individual is the same as the man, only it has to become expanded a
15 great deal. From mollusc to man it has been a continuous expansion
16 towards infinity. Therefore the limited soul can be styled an
17 individual which is continuously expanding towards the Infinite
18 Individual. Perfect individuality will only be reached when it has
19 reached the Infinite, but on this side of the Infinite it is a
20 continuously changing, growing personality. One of the remarkable
21 features of the Advaitist system of Vedanta is to harmonise the
22 preceding systems. In many cases it helped the philosophy very
23 much; in some cases it hurt it. Our ancient philosophers knew what
24 you call the theory of evolution; that growth is gradual, step by
25 step, and the recognition of this led them to harmonise all the
26 preceding systems. Thus not one of these preceding ideas was
27 rejected. The fault of the Buddhistic faith was that it had neither
28 the faculty nor the perception of this continual, expansive growth,
29 and for this reason it never even made an attempt to harmonise
30 itself with the pre-existing steps towards the ideal. They were
31 rejected as useless and harmful.

32 This tendency in religion is most harmful. A man gets a new
33 and better idea, and then he looks back on those he has given up,
34 and forthwith decides they were mischievous and unnecessary. He
35 never thinks that, however crude they may appear from his present
36 point of view, they were very useful to him, that they were
37 necessary for him to reach his present state, and that everyone of
38 us has to grow in a similar fashion, living first on crude ideas,
39 taking benefit from them, and then arriving at a higher standard.
40 With the oldest theories, therefore, the Advaita is friendly. Dualism
41 and all systems that had preceded it are accepted by the Advaita
42 not in a patronising way, but with the conviction that they are true
43 manifestations of the same truth, and that they all lead to the same
44 conclusions as the Advaita has reached.

45 With blessing, and not with cursing, should be preserved all
46 these various steps through which humanity has to pass. Therefore
47 all these dualistic systems have never been rejected or thrown out,
48 but have been kept intact in the Vedanta; and the dualistic
49 conception of an individual soul, limited yet complete in itself, finds
50 its place in the Vedanta.

51 According to dualism, man dies and goes to other worlds, and
52 so forth; and these ideas are kept in the Vedanta in their entirety.

1 For with the recognition of growth in the Advaitist system, these
2 theories are given their proper place by admitting that they
3 represent only a partial view of the Truth.

4 From the dualistic standpoint this universe can only be looked
5 upon as a creation of matter or force, can only be looked upon as
6 the play of a certain will, and that will again can only be looked
7 upon as separate from the universe. Thus a man from such a
8 standpoint has to see himself as composed of a dual nature, body
9 and soul, and this soul, though limited, is individually complete in
10 itself. Such a man's ideas of immortality and of the future life would
11 necessarily accord with his idea of soul. These phases have been
12 kept in the Vedanta, and it is, therefore, necessary for me to
13 present to you a few of the popular ideas of dualism. According to
14 this theory, we have a body, of course, and behind the body there is
15 what they call a fine body. This fine body is also made of matter,
16 only very fine. It is the receptacle of all our Karma, of all our actions
17 and impressions, which are ready to spring up into visible forms.
18 Every thought that we think, every deed that we do, after a certain
19 time becomes fine, goes into seed form, so to speak, and lives in the
20 fine body in a potential form, and after a time it emerges again and
21 bears its results. These results condition the life of man. Thus he
22 moulds his own life. Man is not bound by any other laws excepting
23 those which he makes for himself. Our thoughts, our words and
24 deeds are the threads of the net which we throw round ourselves,
25 for good or for evil. Once we set in motion a certain power, we have
26 to take the full consequences of it. This is the law of Karma. Behind
27 the subtle body, lives Jiva or the individual soul of man. There are
28 various discussions about the form and the size of this individual
29 soul. According to some, it is very small like an atom; according to
30 others, it is not so small as that; according to others, it is very big,
31 and so on. This Jiva is a part of that universal substance, and it is
32 also eternal; without beginning it is existing, and without end it will
33 exist. It is passing through all these forms in order to manifest its
34 real nature which is purity. Every action that retards this
35 manifestation is called an evil action; so with thoughts. And every
36 action and every thought that helps the Jiva to expand, to manifest
37 its real nature, is good.

38 One theory that is held in common in India by the crudest
39 dualists as well as by the most advanced non-dualists is that all the
40 possibilities and powers of the soul are within it, and do not come
41 from any external source. They are in the soul in potential form,
42 and the whole work of life is simply directed towards manifesting
43 those potentialities.

44 They have also the theory of reincarnation which says that
45 after the dissolution of this body, the Jiva will have another, and
46 after that has been dissolved, it will again have another, and so on,
47 either here or in some other worlds; but this world is given the
48 preference, as it is considered the best of all worlds for our
49 purpose. Other worlds are conceived of as worlds where there is
50 very little misery, but for that very reason, they argue, there is less
51 chance of thinking of higher things there. As this world contains
52 some happiness and a good deal of misery, the Jiva some time or

1 other gets awakened, as it were, and thinks of freeing itself. But
2 just as very rich persons in this world have the least chance of
3 thinking of higher things, so the Jiva in heaven has little chance of
4 progress, for its condition is the same as that of a rich man, only
5 more intensified; it has a very fine body which knows no disease,
6 and is under no necessity of eating or drinking, and all its desires
7 are fulfilled. The Jiva lives there, having enjoyment after enjoyment,
8 and so forgets all about its real nature. Still there are some higher
9 worlds, where in spite of all enjoyments, its further evolution is
10 possible. Some dualists conceive of the goal as the highest heaven,
11 where souls will live with God for ever. They will have beautiful
12 bodies and will know neither disease nor death, nor any other evil,
13 and all their desires will be fulfilled. From time to time some of
14 them will come back to this earth and take another body to teach
15 human beings the way to God; and the great teachers of the world
16 have been such. They are already free, and were living with God in
17 the highest sphere; but their love and sympathy for suffering
18 humanity was so great that they came and incarnated again to
19 teach mankind the way to heaven.

20 Of course we know that the Advaita holds that this cannot be
21 the goal or the ideal; bodilessness must be the ideal. The ideal
22 cannot be finite. Anything short of the Infinite cannot be the ideal,
23 and there cannot be an infinite body. That would be impossible, as
24 body comes from limitation. There cannot be infinite thought,
25 because thought comes from limitation. We have to go beyond the
26 body, and beyond thought too, says the Advaita. And we have also
27 seen that, according to Advaita, this freedom is not to be attained, it
28 is already ours. We only forget it and deny it. Perfection is not to be
29 attained, it is already within us. Immortality and bliss are not to be
30 acquired, we possess them already; they have been ours all the
31 time.

32 If you dare declare that you are free, free you are this
33 moment. If you say you are bound, bound you will remain. This is
34 what Advaita boldly declares. I have told you the ideas of the
35 dualists. You can take whichever you like.

36 The highest ideal of the Vedanta is very difficult to
37 understand, and people are always quarrelling about it, and the
38 greatest difficulty is that when they get hold of certain ideas, they
39 deny and fight other ideas. Take up what suits you, and let others
40 take up what they need. If you are desirous of clinging to this little
41 individuality, to this limited manhood, remain in it, have all these
42 desires, and be content and pleased with them. If your experience
43 of manhood has been very good and nice, retain it as long as you
44 like; and you can do so, for you are the makers of your own
45 fortunes; none can compel you to give up your manhood. You will be
46 men as long as you like; none can prevent you. If you want to be
47 angels, you will be angels, that is the law. But there may be others
48 who do not want to be angels even. What right have you to think
49 that theirs is a horrible notion? You may be frightened to lose a
50 hundred pounds, but there may be others who would not even wink
51 if they lost all the money they had in the world. There have been
52 such men and still there are. Why do you dare to judge them

1 according to your standard? You cling on to your limitations, and
2 these little worldly ideas may be your highest ideal. You are
3 welcome to them. It will be to you as you wish. But there are others
4 who have seen the truth and cannot rest in these limitations, who
5 have done with these things and want to get beyond. The world
6 with all its enjoyments is a mere mud-puddle for them. Why do you
7 want to bind them down to your ideas? You must get rid of this
8 tendency once for all. Accord a place to everyone.

9 I once read a story about some ships that were caught in a
10 cyclone in the South Sea Islands, and there was a picture of it in the
11 *Illustrated London News*. All of them were wrecked except one
12 English vessel, which weathered the storm. The picture showed the
13 men who were going to be drowned, standing on the decks and
14 cheering the people who were sailing through the storm. Be brave
15 and generous like that. Do not drag others down to where you are.
16 Another foolish notion is that if we lose our little individuality, there
17 will be no morality, no hope for humanity. As if everybody had been
18 dying for humanity all the time! God bless you! If in every country
19 there were two hundred men and women really wanting to do good
20 to humanity, the millennium would come in five days. We know how
21 we are dying for humanity! These are all tall talks, and nothing else.
22 The history of the world shows that those who never thought of
23 their little individuality were the greatest benefactors of the human
24 race, and that the more men and women think of themselves, the
25 less are they able to do for others. One is unselfishness, and the
26 other selfishness. Clinging on to little enjoyments, and to desire the
27 continuation and repetition of this state of things is utter
28 selfishness. It arises not from any desire for truth, its genesis is not
29 in kindness for other beings, but in the utter selfishness of the
30 human heart, in the idea, "I will have everything, and do not care
31 for anyone else." This is as it appears to me. I would like to see
32 more moral men in the world like some of those grand old prophets
33 and sages of ancient times who would have given up a hundred
34 lives if they could by so doing benefit one little animal! Talk of
35 morality and doing good to others! Silly talk of the present time!

36 I would like to see moral men like Gautama Buddha, who did
37 not believe in a Personal God or a personal soul, never asked about
38 them, but was a perfect agnostic, and yet was ready to lay down his
39 life for anyone, and worked all his life for the good of all, and
40 thought only of the good of all. Well has it been said by his
41 biographer, in describing his birth, that he was born for the good of
42 the many, as a blessing to the many. He did not go to the forest to
43 meditate for his own salvation; he felt that the world was burning,
44 and that he must find a way out. "Why is there so much misery in
45 the world?"--was the one question that dominated his whole life. Do
46 you think we are so moral as the Buddha?

47 The more selfish a man, the more immoral he is. And so also
48 with the race. That race which is bound down to itself has been the
49 most cruel and the most wicked in the whole world. There has not
50 been a religion that has clung to this dualism more than that
51 founded by the Prophet of Arabia, and there has not been a religion
52 which has shed so much blood and been so cruel to other men. In

1 the Koran there is the doctrine that a man who does not believe
2 these teachings should be killed; it is a mercy to kill him! And the
3 surest way to get to heaven, where there are beautiful houris and
4 all sorts of sense-enjoyments, is by killing these unbelievers. Think
5 of the bloodshed there has been in consequence of such beliefs!

6 In the religion of Christ there was little of crudeness; there is
7 very little difference between the pure religion of Christ and that of
8 the Vedanta. You find there the idea of oneness; but Christ also
9 preached dualistic ideas to the people in order to give them
10 something tangible to take hold of, to lead them up to the highest
11 ideal. The same Prophet who preached, "Our Father which art in
12 heaven", also preached, "I and my Father are one", and the same
13 Prophet knew that through the "Father in heaven" lies the way to
14 the "I and my Father are one". There was only blessing and love in
15 the religion of Christ; but as soon as crudeness crept in, it was
16 degraded into something not much better than the religion of the
17 Prophet of Arabia. It was crudeness indeed--this fight for the little
18 self, this clinging on to the "I", not only in this life, but also in the
19 desire for its continuance even after death. This they declare to be
20 unselfishness; this the foundation of morality! Lord help us, if this
21 be the foundation of morality! And strangely enough, men and
22 women who ought to know better think all morality will be
23 destroyed if these little selves go and stand aghast at the idea that
24 morality can only stand upon their destruction. The watchword of
25 all well-being, of all moral good is not "I" but "thou". Who cares
26 whether there is a heaven or a hell, who cares if there is a soul or
27 not, who cares if there is an unchangeable or not? Here is the
28 world, and it is full of misery. Go out into it as Buddha did, and
29 struggle to lessen it or die in the attempt. Forget yourselves; this is
30 the first lesson to be learnt, whether you are a theist or an atheist,
31 whether you are an agnostic or a Vedantist, a Christian or a
32 Mohammedan. The one lesson obvious to all is the destruction of
33 the little self and the building up of the Real Self.

34 Two forces have been working side by side in parallel lines.
35 The one says "I", the other says "not I". Their manifestation is not
36 only in man but in animals, not only in animals but in the smallest
37 worms. The tigress that plunges her fangs into the warm blood of a
38 human being would give up her own life to protect her young. The
39 most depraved man who thinks nothing of taking the lives of his
40 brother men will, perhaps, sacrifice himself without any hesitation
41 to save his starving wife and children. Thus throughout creation
42 these two forces are working side by side; where you find the one,
43 you find the other too. The one is selfishness, the other is
44 unselfishness. The one is acquisition, the other is renunciation. The
45 one takes, the other gives. From the lowest to the highest, the
46 whole universe is the playground of these two forces. It does not
47 require any demonstration; it is obvious to all.

48 What right has any section of the community to base the
49 whole work and evolution of the universe upon one of these two
50 factors alone, upon competition and struggle? What right has it to
51 base the whole working of the universe upon passion and fight,
52 upon competition and struggle? That these exist we do not deny;

1 but what right has anyone to deny the working of the other force?
2 Can any man deny that love, this "not I", this renunciation is the
3 only positive power in the universe? That other is only the
4 misguided employment of the power of love; the power of love
5 brings competition, the real genesis of competition is in love. The
6 real genesis of evil is in unselfishness. The creator of evil is good,
7 and the end is also good. It is only misdirection of the power of
8 good. A man who murders another is, perhaps, moved to do so by
9 the love of his own child. His love has become limited to that one
10 little baby, to the exclusion of the millions of other human beings in
11 the universe. Yet, limited or unlimited, it is the same love. Thus the
12 motive power of the whole universe, in whatever way it manifests
13 itself, is that one wonderful thing, unselfishness, renunciation, love,
14 the real, the only living force in existence. Therefore the Vedantist
15 insists upon that oneness. We insist upon this explanation because
16 we cannot admit two causes of the universe. If we simply hold that
17 by limitation the same beautiful, wonderful love appears to be evil
18 or vile, we find the whole universe explained by the one force of
19 love. If not, two causes of the universe have to be taken for granted,
20 one good and the other evil, one love and the other hatred. Which is
21 more logical? Certainly the one-force theory.

22 Let us now pass on to things which do not possibly belong to
23 dualism. I cannot stay longer with the dualists, I am afraid. My idea
24 is to show that the highest ideal of morality and unselfishness goes
25 hand in hand with the highest metaphysical conception, and that
26 you need not lower your conception to get ethics and morality, but,
27 on the other hand, to reach a real basis of morality and ethics you
28 must have the highest philosophical and scientific conceptions.
29 Human knowledge is not antagonistic to human well-being. On the
30 contrary, it is knowledge alone that will save us in every
31 department of life--in knowledge is worship. The more we know the
32 better for us. The Vedantist says, the cause of all that is apparently
33 evil is the limitation of the unlimited. The love which gets limited
34 into little channels and seems to be evil eventually comes out at the
35 other end and manifests itself as God. The Vedanta also says that
36 the cause of all this apparent evil is in ourselves. Do not blame any
37 supernatural being, neither be hopeless and despondent, nor think
38 we are in a place from which we can never escape unless someone
39 comes and lends us a helping hand. That cannot be, says the
40 Vedanta. We are like silkworms; we make the thread out of our own
41 substance and spin the cocoon, and in course of time are
42 imprisoned inside. But this is not for ever. In that cocoon we shall
43 develop spiritual realisation, and like the butterfly come out free.
44 This network of Karma we have woven around ourselves; and in our
45 ignorance we feel as if we are bound, and weep and wail for help.
46 But help does not come from without; it comes from within
47 ourselves. Cry to all the gods in the universe. I cried for years, and
48 in the end I found that I was helped. But help came from within,
49 And I had to undo what I had done by mistake. That is the only way.
50 I had to cut the net which I had thrown round myself, and the
51 power to do this is within. Of this I am certain that not one
52 aspiration, well-guided or ill-guided in my life, has been in vain, but
53 that I am the resultant of all my past, both good and evil. I have

1 committed many mistakes in my life; but mark you, I am sure of this
2 that without every one of those mistakes I should not be what I am
3 today, and so am quite satisfied to have made them. I do not mean
4 that you are to go home and wilfully commit mistakes; do not
5 misunderstand me in that way. But do not mope because of the
6 mistakes you have committed, but know that in the end all will
7 come out straight. I cannot be otherwise, because goodness is our
8 nature, purity is our nature, and that nature can never be
9 destroyed. Our essential nature always remains the same.

10 What we are to understand is this, that what we call mistakes
11 or evil, we commit because we are weak, and we are weak because
12 we are ignorant. I prefer to call them mistakes. The word sin,
13 although originally a very good word, has got a certain flavour
14 about it that frightens me. Who makes us ignorant? We ourselves.
15 We put our hands over our eyes and weep that it is dark. Take the
16 hands away and there is light; the light exists always for us, the
17 self-effulgent nature of the human soul. Do you not hear what your
18 modern scientific men say? What is the cause of evolution? Desire.
19 The animal wants to do something, but does not find the
20 environment favourable, and therefore develops a new body. Who
21 develops it? The animal itself, its will. You have developed from the
22 lowest amoeba. Continue to exercise your will and it will take you
23 higher still. The will is almighty. If it is almighty, you may say, why
24 cannot I do everything? But you are thinking only of your little self.
25 Look back on yourselves from the state of the amoeba to the human
26 being; who made all that? Your own will. Can you deny then that it
27 is almighty? That which has made you come up so high can make
28 you go higher still. What you want is character, strengthening of the
29 will.

30 If I teach you, therefore, that your nature is evil, that you
31 should go home and sit in sackcloth and ashes and weep your lives
32 out because you took certain false steps, it will not help you, but
33 will weaken you all the more, and I shall be showing you the road to
34 more evil than good. If this room is full of darkness for thousands of
35 years and you come in and begin to weep and wail, "Oh the
36 darkness", will the darkness vanish? Strike a match and light comes
37 in a moment. What good will it do you to think all your lives, "Oh, I
38 have done evil, I have made many mistakes"? It requires no ghost to
39 tell us that. Bring in the light and the evil goes in a moment. Build
40 up your character, and manifest your real nature, the Effulgent, the
41 Resplendent, the Ever-Pure, and call It up in everyone that you see.
42 I wish that everyone of us had come to such a state that even in the
43 vilest of human beings we could see the Real Self within, and
44 instead of condemning them, say, "Rise thou effulgent one, rise thou
45 who art always pure, rise thou birthless and deathless, rise
46 almighty, and manifest thy true nature. These little manifestations
47 do not befit thee." This is the highest prayer that the Advaita
48 teaches. This is the one prayer, to remember our true nature, the
49 God who is always within us, thinking of it always as infinite,
50 almighty, ever-good, ever-beneficent, selfless, bereft of all
51 limitations. And because that nature is selfless, it is strong and
52 fearless; for only to selfishness comes fear. He who has nothing to

1 desire for himself, whom does he fear, and what can frighten him?
2 What fear has death for him? What fear has evil for him? So if we
3 are Advaitists, we must think from this moment that our old self is
4 dead and gone. The old Mr., Mrs., and Miss So-and-so are gone,
5 they were mere superstitions, and what remains is the ever-pure,
6 the ever-strong, the almighty, the all-knowing--that alone remains
7 for us, and then all fear vanishes from us. Who can injure us, the
8 omnipresent? All weakness has vanished from us, and our only
9 work is to arouse this knowledge in our fellow-beings. We see that
10 they too are the same pure self, only they do not know it; we must
11 teach them, we must help them to rouse up their infinite nature.
12 This is what I feel to be absolutely necessary all over the world.
13 These doctrines are old, older than many mountains possibly. All
14 truth is eternal. Truth is nobody's property; no race, no individual
15 can lay any exclusive claim to it. Truth is the nature of all souls.
16 Who can lay any special claim to it? But it has to be made practical,
17 to be made simple (for the highest truths are always simple), so
18 that it may penetrate every pore of human society, and become the
19 property of the highest intellects and the commonest minds, of the
20 man, woman, and child at the same time. All these ratiocinations of
21 logic, all these bundles of metaphysics, all these theologies and
22 ceremonies may have been good in their own time, but let us try to
23 make things simpler and bring about the golden days when every
24 man will be a worshipper, and the Reality in every man will be the
25 object of worship.

THE WAY TO THE REALISATION OF A UNIVERSAL RELIGION

(Delivered in the Universalist Church, Pasadena, California, 28th January 1900)

No search has been dearer to the human heart than that which brings to us light from God. No study has taken so much of human energy, whether in times past or present, as the study of the soul, of God, and of human destiny. However immersed we are in our daily occupations, in our ambitions, in our work, in the midst of the greatest of our struggles, sometimes there will come a pause; the mind stops and wants to know something beyond this world. Sometimes it catches glimpses of a realm beyond the senses, and a struggle to get at it is the result. Thus it has been throughout the ages, in all countries. Man has wanted to look beyond, wanted to expand himself; and all that we call progress, evolution, has been always measured by that one search, the search for human destiny, the search for God.

As our social struggles are represented amongst different nations by different social organisations, so is man's spiritual struggle represented by various religions; and as different social organisations are constantly quarrelling, are constantly at war with one another, so these spiritual organisations have been constantly at war with one another, constantly quarrelling. Men belonging to a particular social organisation claim that the right to live only belongs to them; and so long as they can, they want to exercise that right at the cost of the weak. We know that just now there is a fierce struggle of that sort going on in South Africa. Similarly, each religious sect has claimed the exclusive right to live. And thus we find that though there is nothing that has brought to man more blessings than religion, yet at the same time, there is nothing that has brought more horror than religion. Nothing has made more for peace and love than religion; nothing has engendered fiercer hatred than religion. Nothing has made the brotherhood of man more tangible than religion; nothing has bred more bitter enmity between man and man than religion. Nothing has built more charitable institutions, more hospitals for men, and even for animals, than religion; nothing has deluged the world with more blood than religion. We know, at the same time, that there has always been an undercurrent of thought; there have been always parties of men, philosophers, students of comparative religion who have tried and are still trying to bring about harmony in the midst of all these jarring and discordant sects. As regards certain countries, these attempts have succeeded, but as regards the whole world, they have failed.

There are some religions which have come down to us from the remotest antiquity, which are imbued with the idea that all sects should be allowed to live, that every sect has a meaning, a great idea, imbedded within itself, and, therefore it is necessary for the good of the world and ought to be helped. In modern times the same idea is prevailing and attempts are made from time to time to reduce it to practice. These attempts do not always come up to our

1 expectations, up to the required efficiency. Nay, to our great
2 disappointment, we sometimes find that we are quarrelling all the
3 more.

4 Now, leaving aside dogmatic study, and taking a common-
5 sense view of the thing, we find at the start that there is a
6 tremendous life-power in all the great religions of the world. Some
7 may say that they are ignorant of this, but ignorance is no excuse. If
8 a man says "I do not know what is going on in the external world,
9 therefore things that are going on in the external world do not
10 exist", that man is inexcusable. Now those of you that watch the
11 movement of religious thought all over the world are perfectly
12 aware that not one of the great religions of the world has died; not
13 only so, each one of them is progressive. Christians are multiplying,
14 Mohammedans are multiplying, the Hindus are gaining ground, and
15 the Jews also are increasing, and by their spreading all over the
16 world and increasing rapidly, the fold of Judaism is constantly
17 expanding.

18 Only one religion of the world--an ancient, great religion--has
19 dwindled away, and that is the religion of Zoroastrianism, the
20 religion of the ancient Persians. Under the Mohammedan conquest
21 of Persia about a hundred thousand of these people came and took
22 shelter in India and some remained in ancient Persia. Those that
23 were in Persia, under the constant persecution of the
24 Mohammedans, dwindled down till there are at most only ten
25 thousand; in India there are about eighty thousand of them, but
26 they do not increase. Of course, there is an initial difficulty; they do
27 not convert others to their religion. And then, this handful of
28 persons living in India, with the pernicious custom of cousin
29 marriage, do not multiply. With this single exception, all the great
30 religions are living, spreading, and increasing. We must remember
31 that all the great religions of the world are very ancient, not one
32 has been formed at the present time, and that every religion of the
33 world owes its origin to the country between the Ganga and the
34 Euphrates; not one great religion has arisen in Europe, not one in
35 America, not one; every religion is of Asiatic origin and belongs to
36 that part of the world. If what the modern scientists say is true, that
37 the survival of the fittest is the test, these religions prove by their
38 still living that they are yet fit for some people. There is a reason
39 why they should live, they bring good to many. Look at the
40 Mohammedans, how they are spreading in some places in Southern
41 Asia, and spreading like fire in Africa. The Buddhists are spreading
42 all over Central Asia, all the time. The Hindus, like the Jews, do not
43 convert others; still gradually, other races are coming within
44 Hinduism and adopting the manners and customs of the Hindus and
45 falling into line with them. Christianity, you all know, is spreading--
46 though I am not sure that the results are equal to the energy put
47 forth. The Christians' attempt at propaganda has one tremendous
48 defect--and that is the defect of all Western institutions: the
49 machine consumes ninety per cent of the energy, there is too much
50 machinery. Preaching has always been the business of the Asiatics.
51 The Western people are grand in organisation, social institutions,
52 armies, governments, etc.; but when it comes to preaching religion,

1 they cannot come near the Asiatic, whose business it has been all
2 the time, and he knows it, and he does not use too much machinery.

3 This then is a fact in the present history of the human race,
4 that all these great religions exist and are spreading and
5 multiplying. Now, there is a meaning, certainly, to this; and had it
6 been the will of an All-wise and All-merciful Creator that one of
7 these religions should exist and the rest should die, it would have
8 become a fact long, long ago. If it were a fact that only one of these
9 religions is true and all the rest are false, by this time it would have
10 covered the whole ground. But this is not so; not one has gained all
11 the ground. All religions sometimes advance--sometimes decline.
12 Now, just think of this: in your own country there are more than
13 sixty millions of people, and only twenty-one millions professing
14 religions of all sorts. So it is not always progress. In every country,
15 probably, if the statistics are taken, you would find that religions
16 are sometimes progressing and sometimes going back. Sects are
17 multiplying all the time. If the claims of a religion that it has all the
18 truth and God has given it all this truth in a certain book were true,
19 why are there so many sects? Fifty years do not pass before there
20 are twenty sects founded upon the same book. If God has put all the
21 truth in certain books, He does not give us those books in order that
22 we may quarrel over texts. That seems to be the fact. Why is it?
23 Even if a book were given by God which contained all the truth
24 about religion, it would not serve the purpose because nobody
25 could understand the book. Take the Bible, for instance, and all the
26 sects that exist amongst Christians; each one puts its own
27 interpretation upon the same text, and each says that it alone
28 understands that text and all the rest are wrong. So with every
29 religion. There are many sects among the Mohammedans and
30 among the Buddhists, and hundreds among the Hindus. Now, I
31 bring these facts before you in order to show you that any attempt
32 to bring all humanity to one method of thinking in spiritual things
33 has been a failure and always will be a failure. Every man that
34 starts a theory, even at the present day, finds that if he goes twenty
35 miles away from his followers, they will make twenty sects. You see
36 that happening all the time. You cannot make all conform to the
37 same ideas: that is a fact, and I thank God that it is so. I am not
38 against any sect. I am glad that sects exist, and I only wish they
39 may go on multiplying more and more. Why? Simply because of
40 this: If you and I and all who are present here were to think exactly
41 the same thoughts, there would be no thoughts for us to think. We
42 know that two or more forces must come into collision in order to
43 produce motion. It is the clash of thought, the differentiation of
44 thought, that awakes thought. Now, if we all thought alike, we
45 would be like Egyptian mummies in a museum looking vacantly at
46 one another's faces--no more than that! Whirls and eddies occur
47 only in a rushing, living stream. There are no whirlpools in
48 stagnant, dead water. When religions are dead, there will be no
49 more sects; it will be the perfect peace and harmony of the grave.
50 But so long as mankind thinks, there will be sects. Variation is the
51 sign of life, and it must be there. I pray that they may multiply so
52 that at last there will be as many sects as human beings, and each
53 one will have his own method, his individual method of thought in

1 religion.

2 But this thing exists already. Each one of us is thinking in his
3 own way, but his natural course has been obstructed all the time
4 and is still being obstructed. If the sword is not used directly, other
5 means will be used. Just hear what one of the best preachers in
6 New York says: he preaches that the Filipinos should be conquered
7 because that is the only way to teach Christianity to them! They are
8 already Catholics; but he wants to make them Presbyterians, and
9 for this, he is ready to lay all this terrible sin of bloodshed upon his
10 race. How terrible! And this man is one of the greatest preachers of
11 this country, one of the best informed men. Think of the state of the
12 world when a man like that is not ashamed to stand up and utter
13 such arrant nonsense; and think of the state of the world when an
14 audience cheers him! Is this civilisation? It is the old blood-
15 thirstiness of the tiger, the cannibal, the savage, coming out once
16 more under new names, new circumstances. What else can it be? If
17 the state of things is such now, think of the horrors through which
18 the world passed in olden times, when every sect was trying by
19 every means in its power to tear to pieces the other sects. History
20 shows that. The tiger in us is only asleep; it is not dead. When
21 opportunities come, it jumps up and, as of old, uses its claws and
22 fangs. Apart from the sword, apart from material weapons, there
23 are weapons still more terrible--contempt, social hatred, and social
24 ostracism. Now, these are the most terrible of all inflictions that are
25 hurled against persons who do not think exactly in the same way as
26 we do.

27 And why should everybody think just as we do? I do not see
28 any reason. If I am a rational man, I should be glad they do not
29 think just as I do. I do not want to live in a grave-like land; I want to
30 be a man in a world of men. Thinking beings must differ; difference
31 is the first sign of thought. If I am a thoughtful man, certainly I
32 ought to like to live amongst thoughtful persons where there are
33 differences of opinion.

34 Then arises the question: How can all these varieties be true?
35 If one thing is true, its negation is false. How can contradictory
36 opinions be true at the same time? This is the question which I
37 intend to answer. But I will first ask you: Are all the religions of the
38 world really contradictory? I do not mean the external forms in
39 which great thoughts are clad. I do not mean the different
40 buildings, languages, rituals, books, etc. employed in various
41 religions, but I mean the internal soul of every religion. Every
42 religion has a soul behind it, and that soul may differ from the soul
43 of another religion; but are they contradictory? Do they contradict
44 or supplement each other? --that is the question. I took up the
45 question when I was quite a boy, and have been studying it all my
46 life. Thinking that my conclusion may be of some help to you, I
47 place it before you. I believe that they are not contradictory; they
48 are supplementary. Each religion, as it were, takes up one part of
49 the great universal truth, and spends its whole force in embodying
50 and typifying that part of the great truth. It is, therefore, addition,
51 not exclusion. That is the idea. System after system arises, each one
52 embodying a great idea, and ideals must be added to ideals. And

1 this is the march of humanity. Man never progresses from error to
2 truth, but from truth to truth, from lesser truth to higher truth--but
3 it is never from error to truth. The child may develop more than the
4 father, but was the father inane? The child is the father plus
5 something else. If your present state of knowledge is much greater
6 than it was when you were a child, would you look down upon that
7 stage now? Will you look back and call it inanity? Why, your present
8 stage is the knowledge of the child plus something more.

9 Then, again, we also know that there may be almost
10 contradictory points of view of the same thing, but they will all
11 indicate the same thing. Suppose a man is journeying towards the
12 sun, and as he advances he takes a photograph of the sun at every
13 stage. When he comes back, he has many photographs of the sun,
14 which he places before us. We see that not two are alike, and yet,
15 who will deny that all these are photographs of the same sun, from
16 different standpoints? Take four photographs of this church from
17 different corners: how different they would look, and yet they would
18 all represent this church. In the same way, we are all looking at
19 truth from different standpoints, which vary according to our birth,
20 education, surroundings, and so on. We are viewing truth, getting
21 as much of it as these circumstances will permit, colouring the
22 truth with our own heart, understanding it with our own intellect,
23 and grasping it with our own mind. We can only know as much of
24 truth as is related to us, as much of it as we are able to receive.
25 This makes the difference between man and man, and occasions
26 sometimes even contradictory ideas; yet we all belong to the same
27 great universal truth.

28 My idea, therefore, is that all these religions are different
29 forces in the economy of God, working for the good of mankind; and
30 that not one can become dead, not one can be killed. Just as you
31 cannot kill any force in nature, so you cannot kill any one of these
32 spiritual forces. You have seen that each religion is living. From
33 time to time it may retrograde or go forward. At one time, it may be
34 shorn of a good many of its trappings; at another time it may be
35 covered with all sorts of trappings; but all the same, the soul is ever
36 there, it can never be lost. The ideal which every religion
37 represents is never lost, and so every religion is intelligently on the
38 march.

39 And that universal religion about which philosophers and
40 others have dreamed in every country already exists. It is here. As
41 the universal brotherhood of man is already existing, so also is
42 universal religion. Which of you, that have travelled far and wide,
43 have not found brothers and sisters in every nation? I have found
44 them all over the world. Brotherhood already exists; only there are
45 numbers of persons who fail to see this and only upset it by crying
46 for new brotherhoods. Universal religion, too, is already existing. If
47 the priests and other people that have taken upon themselves the
48 task of preaching different religions simply cease preaching for a
49 few moments, we shall see it is there. They are disturbing it all the
50 time, because it is to their interest. You see that priests in every
51 country are very conservative. Why is it so? There are very few
52 priests who lead the people; most of them are led by the people and

1 are their slaves and servants. If you say it is dry, they say it is so; if
2 you say it is black, they say it is black. If the people advance, the
3 priests must advance. They cannot lag behind. So, before blaming
4 the priests--it is the fashion to blame the priest--you ought to blame
5 yourselves. You only get what you deserve. What would be the fate
6 of a priest who wants to give you new and advanced ideas and lead
7 you forward? His children would probably starve, and he would be
8 clad in rags. He is governed by the same worldly law as you are. "If
9 you go on," he says, "let us march." Of course, there are exceptional
10 souls, not cowed down by public opinion. They see the truth and
11 truth alone they value. Truth has got hold of them, has got
12 possession of them, as it were, and they cannot but march ahead.
13 They never look backward, and for them there are no people. God
14 alone exists for them, He is the Light before them, and they are
15 following that Light.

16 I met a Mormon gentleman in this country, who tried to
17 persuade me to his faith. I said, "I have great respect for your
18 opinions, but in certain points we do not agree--I belong to a
19 monastic order, and you believe in marrying many wives. But why
20 don't you go to India to preach?" Then he was astonished. he said,
21 "Why, you don't believe in any marriage at all, and we believe in
22 polygamy, and yet you ask me to go to your country!" I said, "Yes;
23 my countrymen will hear every religious thought wherever it may
24 come from. I wish you would go to India, first, because I am a great
25 believer in sects. Secondly, there are many men in India who are
26 not at all satisfied with any of the existing sects, and on account of
27 this dissatisfaction, they will not have anything to do with religion,
28 and possibly, you might get some of them." The greater the number
29 of sects, the more chance of people getting religion. In the hotel,
30 where there are all sorts of food, everyone has a chance to get his
31 appetite satisfied. So I want sects to multiply in every country, that
32 more people may have a chance to be spiritual. Do not think that
33 people do not like religion. I do not believe that. The preachers
34 cannot give them what they need. The same man that may have
35 been branded as an atheist, as a materialist, or what not, may meet
36 a man who gives him the truth needed by him, and he may turn out
37 the most spiritual man in the community. We can eat only in our
38 own way. For instance, we Hindus eat with our fingers. Our fingers
39 are suppler than yours, you cannot use your fingers the same way.
40 Not only the food should be supplied, but it should be taken in your
41 own particular way. Not only must you have the spiritual ideas, but
42 they must come to you according to your own method. They must
43 speak your own language, the language of your soul, and then alone
44 they will satisfy you. When the man comes who speaks my language
45 and gives truth in my language, I at once understand it and receive
46 it for ever. This is a great fact.

47 Now from this we see that there are various grades and types
48 of human minds and what a task religions take upon them! A man
49 brings forth two or three doctrines and claims that his religion
50 ought to satisfy all humanity. He goes out into the world, God's
51 menagerie, with a little cage in hand, and says, "God and the
52 elephant and everybody has to go into this. Even if we have to cut

1 the elephant into pieces, he must go in." Again, there may be a sect
2 with a few good ideas. Its followers say, "All men must come in!"
3 "But there is no room for them." "Never mind! Cut them to pieces;
4 get them in anyhow; if they don't get in, why, they will be damned."
5 No preacher, no sect, have I ever met that pauses and asks, "Why is
6 it that people do not listen to us?" Instead, they curse the people
7 and say, "The people are wicked." They never ask, "How is it that
8 people do not listen to my words? Why cannot I make them see the
9 truth? Why cannot I speak in their language? Why cannot I open
10 their eyes?" Surely, they ought to know better, and when they find
11 people do not listen to them, if they curse anybody, it should be
12 themselves. But it is always the people's fault! They never try to
13 make their sect large enough to embrace every one.

14 Therefore we at once see why there has been so much
15 narrow-mindedness, the part always claiming to be the whole; the
16 little, finite unit always laying claim to the infinite. Think of little
17 sects, born within a few hundred years out of fallible human brains,
18 making this arrogant claim of knowledge of the whole of God's
19 infinite truth! Think of the arrogance of it! If it shows anything, it is
20 this, how vain human beings are. And it is no wonder that such
21 claims have always failed, and, by the mercy of the Lord, are always
22 destined to fail. In this line the Mohammedans were the best off;
23 every step forward was made with the sword--the Koran in the one
24 hand and the sword in the other: "Take the Koran, or you must die;
25 there is no alternative!" You know from history how phenomenal
26 was their success; for six hundred years nothing could resist them,
27 and then there came a time when they had to cry halt. So will it be
28 with other religions if they follow the same methods. We are such
29 babes! We always forget human nature. When we begin life, we
30 think that our fate will be something extraordinary, and nothing can
31 make us disbelieve that. But when we grow old, we think
32 differently. So with religions. In their early stages, when they
33 spread a little, they get the idea that they can change the minds of
34 the whole human race in a few years, and go on killing and
35 massacring to make converts by force; then they fail, and begin to
36 understand better. We see that these sects did not succeed in what
37 they started out to do, which was a great blessing. Just think if one
38 of those fanatical sects had succeeded all over the world, where
39 would man be today? Now, the Lord be blessed that they did not
40 succeed! Yet, each one represents a great truth; each religion
41 represents a particular excellence--something which is its soul.
42 There is an old story which comes to my mind: There were some
43 ogresses who used to kill people and do all sorts of mischief; but
44 they themselves could not be killed, until someone found out that
45 their souls were in certain birds, and so long as the birds were safe
46 nothing could destroy the ogresses. So, each one of us has, as it
47 were, such a bird, where our soul is; has an ideal, a mission to
48 perform in life. Every human being is an embodiment of such an
49 ideal, such a mission. Whatever else you may lose, so long as that
50 ideal is not lost, and that mission is not hurt, nothing can kill you.
51 Wealth may come and go, misfortunes may pile mountains high, but
52 if you have kept the ideal entire, nothing can kill you. You may have
53 grown old, even a hundred years old, but if that mission is fresh and

1 young in your heart, what can kill you? But when that ideal is lost
2 and that mission is hurt, nothing can save you. All the wealth, all
3 the power of the world will not save you. And what are nations but
4 multiplied individuals? So, each nation has a mission of its own to
5 perform in this harmony of races; and so long as that nation keeps
6 to that ideal, that nation nothing can kill; but if that nation gives up
7 its mission in life and goes after something else, its life becomes
8 short, and it vanishes.

9 And so with religions. The fact that all these old religions are
10 living today proves that they must have kept that mission intact; in
11 spite of all their mistakes, in spite of all difficulties, in spite of all
12 quarrels, in spite of all the incrustation of forms and figures, the
13 heart of every one of them is sound--it is a throbbing, beating, living
14 heart. They have not lost, any one of them, the great mission they
15 came for. And it is splendid to study that mission. Take
16 Mohammedanism, for instance. Christian people hate no religion in
17 the world so much as Mohammedanism. They think it is the very
18 worst form of religion that ever existed. As soon as a man becomes
19 a Mohammedan, the whole of Islam receives him as a brother with
20 open arms, without making any distinction, which no other religion
21 does. If one of your American Indians becomes a Mohammedan, the
22 Sultan of Turkey would have no objection to dine with him. If he has
23 brains, no position is barred to him. In this country, I have never yet
24 seen a church where the white man and the negro can kneel side by
25 side to pray. Just think of that: Islam makes its followers all equal--
26 so, that, you see, is the peculiar excellence of Mohammedanism. In
27 many places in the Koran you find very sensual ideas of life. Never
28 mind. What Mohammedanism comes to preach to the world is this
29 practical brotherhood of all belonging to their faith. That is the
30 essential part of the Mohammedan religion; and all the other ideas
31 about heaven and of life etc. are not Mohammedanism. They are
32 accretions.

33 With the Hindus you will find one national idea--spirituality. In
34 no other religion, in no other sacred books of the world, will you
35 find so much energy spent in defining the idea of God. They tried to
36 define the ideal of soul so that no earthly touch might mar it. The
37 spirit must be divine; and spirit understood as spirit must not be
38 made into a man. The same idea of unity, of the realisation of God,
39 the omnipresent, is preached throughout. They think it is all
40 nonsense to say that He lives in heaven, and all that. It is a mere
41 human, anthropomorphic idea. All the heaven that ever existed is
42 now and here. One moment in infinite time is quite as good as any
43 other moment. If you believe in a God, you can see Him even now.
44 We think religion begins when you have realised something. It is
45 not believing in doctrines, nor giving intellectual assent, nor making
46 declarations. If there is a God, have you seen Him? If you say "no",
47 then what right have you to believe in Him? If you are in doubt
48 whether there is a God, why do you not struggle to see Him? Why
49 do you not renounce the world and spend the whole of your life for
50 this one object? Renunciation and spirituality are the two great
51 ideas of India, and it is because India clings to these ideas that all
52 her mistakes count for so little.

1 With the Christians, the central idea that has been preached
2 by them is the same: "Watch and pray, for the kingdom of Heaven is
3 at hand"--which means, purify your minds and be ready! And that
4 spirit never dies. You recollect that the Christians are, even in the
5 darkest days, even in the most superstitious Christian countries,
6 always trying to prepare themselves for the coming of the Lord, by
7 trying to help others, building hospitals and so on. So long as the
8 Christians keep to that ideal, their religion lives.

9 Now an ideal presents itself to my mind. It may be only a
10 dream. I do not know whether it will ever be realised in this world,
11 but sometimes it is better to dream a dream, than die on hard facts.
12 Great truths, even in a dream are good, better than bad facts. So,
13 let us dream a dream.

14 You know that there are various grades of mind. You may be a
15 matter-of-fact, common-sense rationalist: you do not care for forms
16 and ceremonies; you want intellectual, hard, ringing facts, and they
17 alone will satisfy you. Then there are the Puritans, the
18 Mohammedans, who will not allow a picture or a statue in their
19 place of worship. Very well! But there is another man who is more
20 artistic. He wants a great deal of art--beauty of lines and curves,
21 the colours, flowers, forms; he wants candles, lights, and all the
22 insignia and paraphernalia of ritual, that he may see God. His mind
23 takes God in those forms, as yours takes Him through the intellect.
24 Then, there is the devotional man, whose soul is crying for God: he
25 has no other idea but to worship God, and to praise Him. Then
26 again, there is the philosopher, standing outside all these, mocking
27 at them. He thinks, "What nonsense they are! What ideas about
28 God!"

29 They may laugh at one another, but each one has a place in
30 this world. All these various minds, all these various types are
31 necessary. If there ever is going to be an ideal religion, it must be
32 broad and large enough to supply food for all these minds. It must
33 supply the strength of philosophy to the philosopher, the devotee's
34 heart to the worshipper; to the ritualist, it will give all that the most
35 marvellous symbolism can convey; to the poet, it will give as much
36 of heart as he can take in, and other things besides. To make such a
37 broad religion, we shall have to go back to the time when religions
38 began and take them all in.

39 Our watchword, then, will be acceptance, and not exclusion.
40 Not only toleration, for so-called toleration is often blasphemy, and I
41 do not believe in it. I believe in acceptance. Why should I tolerate?
42 Toleration means that I think that you are wrong and I am just
43 allowing you to live. Is it not a blasphemy to think that you and I are
44 allowing others to live? I accept all religions that were in the past,
45 and worship with them all; I worship God with every one of them, in
46 whatever form they worship Him. I shall go to the mosque of the
47 Mohammedan; I shall enter the Christian's church and kneel before
48 the crucifix; I shall enter the Buddhistic temple, where I shall take
49 refuge in Buddha and in his Law. I shall go into the forest and sit
50 down in meditation with the Hindu, who is trying to see the Light
51 which enlightens the heart of every one.

1 Not only shall I do all these, but I shall keep my heart open
2 for all that may come in the future. Is God's book finished? Or is it
3 still a continuous revelation going on? It is a marvellous book--these
4 spiritual revelations of the world. The Bible, the Vedas, the Koran,
5 and all other sacred books are but so many pages, and an infinite
6 number of pages remain yet to be unfolded. I would leave it open
7 for all of them. We stand in the present, but open ourselves to the
8 infinite future. We take in all that has been in the past, enjoy the
9 light of the present, and open every window of the heart for all that
10 will come in the future. Salutation to all the prophets of the past, to
11 all the great ones of the present, and to all that are to come in the
12 future!

THE IDEAL OF A UNIVERSAL RELIGION

HOW IT MUST EMBRACE DIFFERENT TYPES OF MINDS AND METHODS

Wheresoever our senses reach, or whatsoever our minds imagine, we find therein the action and reaction of two forces, the one counteracting the other and causing the constant play of the mixed phenomena that we see around us, and of those which we feel in our minds. In the external world, the action of these opposite forces is expressing itself as attraction and repulsion, or as centripetal and centrifugal forces; and in the internal, as love and hatred, good and evil. We repel some things, we attract others. We are attracted by one, we are repelled by another. Many times in our lives we find that without any reason whatsoever we are, as it were, attracted towards certain persons; at other times, similarly, we are repelled by others. This is patent to all, and the higher the field of action, the more potent, the more remarkable, are the influences of these opposite forces. Religion is the highest plane of human thought and life, and herein we find that the workings of these two forces have been most marked. The intensest love that humanity has ever known has come from religion, and the most diabolical hatred that humanity has known has also come from religion. The noblest words of peace that the world has ever heard have come from men on the religious plane, and the bitterest denunciation that the world has ever known has been uttered by religious men. The higher the object of any religion and the finer its organisation, the more remarkable are its activities. No other human motive has deluged the world with blood so much as religion; at the same time, nothing has brought into existence so many hospitals and asylums for the poor; no other human influence has taken such care, not only of humanity, but also of the lowest of animals, as religion has done. Nothing makes us so cruel as religion, and nothing makes us so tender as religion. This has been so in the past, and will also, in all probability, be so in the future. Yet out of the midst of this din and turmoil, this strife and struggle, this hatred and jealousy of religions and sects, there have arisen, from time to time, potent voices, drowning all this noise--making themselves heard from pole to pole, as it were--proclaiming peace and harmony. Will it ever come?

Is it possible that there should ever reign unbroken harmony in this plane of mighty religious struggle. The world is exercised in the latter part of this century by the question of harmony; in society, various plans are being proposed, and attempts are made to carry them into practice; but we know how difficult it is to do so. People find that it is almost impossible to mitigate the fury of the struggle of life, to tone down the tremendous nervous tension that is in man. Now, if it is so difficult to bring harmony and peace to the physical plane of life--the external, gross, and outward side of it--then a thousand times more difficult is it to bring peace and harmony to rule over the internal nature of man. I would ask you for the time being to come out of the network of words. We have all been

1 hearing from childhood of such things as love, peace, charity,
2 equality, and universal brotherhood; but they have become to us
3 mere words without meaning, words which we repeat like parrots,
4 and it has become quite natural for us to do so. We cannot help it.
5 Great souls, who first felt these great ideas in their hearts,
6 manufactured these words; and at that time many understood their
7 meaning. Later on, ignorant people have taken up those words to
8 play with them and made religion a mere play upon words, and not
9 a thing to be carried into practice. It becomes "my father's
10 religion", "our nation's religion", "our country's religion", and so
11 forth. It becomes only a phase of patriotism to profess any religion,
12 and patriotism is always partial. To bring harmony into religion
13 must always be difficult. Yet we will consider this problem of the
14 harmony of religions.

15 We see that in every religion there are three parts--I mean in
16 every great and recognised religion. First, there is the philosophy
17 which presents the whole scope of that religion, setting forth its
18 basic principles, the goal and the means of reaching it. The second
19 part is mythology, which is philosophy made concrete. It consists of
20 legends relating to the lives of men, or of supernatural beings, and
21 so forth. It is the abstractions of philosophy concretised in the more
22 or less imaginary lives of men and supernatural beings. The third
23 part is the ritual. This is still more concrete and is made up of forms
24 and ceremonies, various physical attitudes, flowers and incense,
25 and many other things, that appeal to the senses. In these consists
26 the ritual. You will find that all recognised religions have these
27 three elements. Some lay stress on one, some on another. Let us
28 now take into consideration the first part, philosophy. Is there one
29 universal philosophy? Not yet. Each religion brings out its own
30 doctrines and insists upon them as being the only true ones. And
31 not only does it do that, but it thinks that he who does not believe in
32 them must go to some horrible place. Some will even draw the
33 sword to compel others to believe as they do. This is not through
34 wickedness, but through a particular disease of the human brain
35 called fanaticism. They are very sincere, these fanatics, the most
36 sincere of human beings; but they are quite as irresponsible as
37 other lunatics in the world. This disease of fanaticism is one of the
38 most dangerous of all diseases. All the wickedness of human nature
39 is roused by it. Anger is stirred up, nerves are strung high, and
40 human beings become like tigers.

41 Is there any mythological similarity, is there any mythological
42 harmony, any universal mythology accepted by all religions?
43 Certainly not. All religions have their own mythology, only each of
44 them says, "My stories are not mere myths." Let us try to
45 understand the question by illustration. I simply mean to illustrate,
46 I do not mean criticism of any religion. The Christian believes that
47 God took the shape of a dove and came down to earth; to him this is
48 history, and not mythology. The Hindu believes that God is
49 manifested in the cow. Christians say that to believe so is mere
50 mythology, and not history, that it is superstition. The Jews think
51 that if an image be made in the form of a box, or a chest, with an
52 angel on either side, then it may be placed in the Holy of Holies; it

1 is sacred to Jehovah; but if the image be made in the form of a
2 beautiful man or woman, they say, "This is a horrible idol; break it
3 down!" This is our unity in mythology! If a man stands up and says,
4 "My prophet did such and such a wonderful thing", others will say,
5 "That is only superstition", but at the same time they say that their
6 own prophet did still more wonderful things, which they hold to be
7 historical. Nobody in the world, as far as I have seen, is able to
8 make out the fine distinction between history and mythology, as it
9 exists in the brains of these persons. All such stories, to whatever
10 religion they may belong, are really mythological, mixed up
11 occasionally, it may be with, a little history.

12 Next come the rituals. One sect has one particular form of
13 ritual and thinks that that is holy, while the rituals of another sect
14 are simply arrant superstition. If one sect worships a peculiar sort
15 of symbol, another sect says, "Oh, it is horrible!" Take, for instance,
16 a general form of symbol. The phallus symbol is certainly a sexual
17 symbol, but gradually that aspect of it has been forgotten, and it
18 stands now as a symbol of the Creator. Those nations which have
19 this as their symbol never think of it as the phallus; it is just a
20 symbol, and there it ends. But a man from another race or creed
21 sees in it nothing but the phallus, and begins to condemn it; yet at
22 the same time he may be doing something which to the so-called
23 phallic worshippers appears most horrible. Let me take two points
24 for illustration, the phallus symbol and the sacrament of the
25 Christians. To the Christians the phallus is horrible, and to the
26 Hindus the Christian sacrament is horrible. They say that the
27 Christian sacrament, the killing of a man and the eating of his flesh
28 and the drinking of his blood to get the good qualities of that man,
29 is cannibalism. This is what some of the savage tribes do; if a man
30 is brave, they kill him and eat his heart, because they think that it
31 will give them the qualities of courage and bravery possessed by
32 that man. Even such a devout Christian as Sir John Lubbock admits
33 this and says that the origin of this Christian symbol is in this
34 savage idea. The Christians, of course, do not admit this view of its
35 origin; and what it may imply never comes to their mind. It stands
36 for holy things, and that is all they want to know. So even in rituals
37 there is no universal symbol, which can command general
38 recognition and acceptance. Where then is any universality? How is
39 it possible then to have a universal form of religion? That, however,
40 already exists. And let us see what it is.

41 We all hear about universal brotherhood, and how societies
42 stand up especially to preach this. I remember an old story. In
43 India, taking wine is considered very bad. There were two brothers
44 who wished, one night, to drink wine secretly; and their uncle, who
45 was a very orthodox man, was sleeping in a room quite close to
46 theirs. So, before they began to drink, they said to each other, "We
47 must be very silent, or uncle will wake up." When they were
48 drinking, they continued repeating to each other "Silence! Uncle
49 will wake up", each trying to shout the other down. And, as the
50 shouting increased, the uncle woke up, came into the room, and
51 discovered the whole thing. Now, we all shout like these drunken
52 men, "Universal brotherhood! We are all equal, therefore let us

1 make a sect." As soon as you make a sect you protest against
2 equality, and equality is no more. Mohammedans talk of universal
3 brotherhood, but what comes out of that in reality? Why, anybody
4 who is not a Mohammedan will not be admitted into the
5 brotherhood; he will more likely have his throat cut. Christians talk
6 of universal brotherhood; but anyone who is not a Christian must go
7 to that place where he will be eternally barbecued.

8 And so we go on in this world in our search after universal
9 brotherhood and equality. When you hear such talk in the world, I
10 would ask you to be a little reticent, to take care of yourselves, for,
11 behind all this talk is often the intensest selfishness. "In the winter
12 sometimes a thunder-cloud comes up; it roars and roars, but it does
13 not rain; but in the rainy season the clouds speak not, but deluge
14 the world with water." So those who are *really* workers, and *really*
15 feel at heart the universal brotherhood of man, do not talk much, do
16 not make little sects for universal brotherhood; but their acts, their
17 movements, their whole life, show out clearly that they in truth
18 possess the feeling of brotherhood for mankind, that they have love
19 and sympathy for all. They do not speak, they do and they *live*. This
20 world is too full of blustering talk. We want a little more earnest
21 work, and less talk.

22 So far we see that it is hard to find any universal features in
23 regard to religion, and yet we know that they exist. We are all
24 human beings, but are we all equal? Certainly not. Who says we are
25 equal? Only the lunatic. Are we all equal in our brains, in our
26 powers, in our bodies? One man is stronger than another, one man
27 has more brain power than another. If we are all equal, why is there
28 this inequality? Who made it? We. Because we have more or less
29 powers, more or less brain, more or less physical strength, it must
30 make a difference between us. Yet we know that the doctrine of
31 equality appeals to our heart. We are all human beings; but some
32 are men, and some are women. Here is a black man, there is a
33 white man; but all are men, all belong to one humanity. Various are
34 our faces; I see no two alike, yet we are all human beings. Where is
35 this one humanity? I find a man or a woman, either dark or fair; and
36 among all these faces I know that there is an abstract humanity
37 which is common to all. I may not find it when I try to grasp it, to
38 sense it, and to actualise it, yet I know for certain that it is there. If
39 I am sure of anything, it is of this humanity which is common to us
40 all. It is through this generalised entity that I see you as a man or a
41 woman. So it is with this universal religion, which runs through all
42 the various religions of the world in the form of God; it must and
43 does exist through eternity. "I am the thread that runs through all
44 these pearls," and each pearl is a religion or even a sect thereof.
45 Such are the different pearls, and the Lord is the thread that runs
46 through all of them; only the majority of mankind are entirely
47 unconscious of it.

48 Unity in variety is the plan of the universe. We are all men,
49 and yet we are all distinct from one another. As a part of humanity I
50 am one with you, and as Mr. So-and-so I am different from you. As a
51 man you are separate from the woman; as a human being you are
52 one with the woman. As a man you are separate from the animal,

1 but as living beings, man, woman, animal, and plant are all one; and
2 as existence, you are one with the whole universe. That universal
3 existence is God, the ultimate Unity in the universe. In Him we are
4 all one. At the same time, in manifestation, these differences must
5 always remain. In our work, in our energies, as they are being
6 manifested outside, these differences must always remain. We find
7 then that if by the idea of a universal religion it is meant that one
8 set of doctrines should be believed in by all mankind, it is wholly
9 impossible. It can never be, there can never be a time when all
10 faces will be the same. Again, if we expect that there will be one
11 universal mythology, that is also impossible; it cannot be. Neither
12 can there be one universal ritual. Such a state of things can never
13 come into existence; if it ever did, the world would be destroyed,
14 because variety is the first principle of life. What makes us formed
15 beings? Differentiation. Perfect balance would be our destruction.
16 Suppose the amount of heat in this room, the tendency of which is
17 towards equal and perfect diffusion, gets that kind of diffusion, then
18 for all practical purposes that heat will cease to be. What makes
19 motion possible in this universe? Lost balance. The unity of
20 sameness can come only when this universe is destroyed, otherwise
21 such a thing is impossible. Not only so, it would be dangerous to
22 have it. We must not wish that all of us should think alike. There
23 would then be no thought to think. We should be all alike, as the
24 Egyptian mummies in a museum, looking at each other without a
25 thought to think. It is this difference, this differentiation, this losing
26 of the balance between us, which is the very soul of our progress,
27 the soul of all our thought. This must always be.

28 What then do I mean by the ideal of a universal religion? I do
29 not mean any one universal philosophy, or any one universal
30 mythology, or any one universal ritual held alike by all; for I know
31 that this world must go on working, wheel within wheel, this
32 intricate mass of machinery, most complex, most wonderful. What
33 can we do then? We can make it run smoothly, we can lessen the
34 friction, we can grease the wheels, as it were. How? By recognising
35 the natural necessity of variation. Just as we have recognised unity
36 by our very nature, so we must also recognise variation. We must
37 learn that truth may be expressed in a hundred thousand ways, and
38 that each of these ways is true as far as it goes. We must learn that
39 the same thing can be viewed from a hundred different standpoints,
40 and yet be the same thing. Take for instance the sun. Suppose a
41 man standing on the earth looks at the sun when it rises in the
42 morning; he sees a big ball. Suppose he starts on a journey towards
43 the sun and takes a camera with him, taking photographs at every
44 stage of his journey, until he reaches the sun. The photographs of
45 each stage will be seen to be different from those of the other
46 stages; in fact, when he gets back, he brings with him so many
47 photographs of so many different suns, as it would appear; and yet
48 we know that the same sun was photographed by the man at the
49 different stages of his progress. Even so is it with the Lord. Through
50 high philosophy or low, through the most exalted mythology or the
51 grossest, through the most refined ritualism or arrant fetishism,
52 every sect, every soul, every nation, every religion, consciously or
53 unconsciously, is struggling upward, towards God; every vision of

1 truth that man has, is a vision of Him and of none else. Suppose we
2 all go with vessels in our hands to fetch water from a lake. One has
3 a cup, another a jar, another a bucket, and so forth, and we all fill
4 our vessels. The water in each case naturally takes the form of the
5 vessel carried by each of us. He who brought the cup has the water
6 in the form of a cup; he who brought the jar--his water is in the
7 shape of a jar, and so forth; but, in every case, water, and nothing
8 but water, is in the vessel. So it is in the case of religion; our minds
9 are like these vessels, and each one of us is trying to arrive at the
10 realisation of God. God is like that water filling these different
11 vessels, and in each vessel the vision of God comes in the form of
12 the vessel. Yet He is One. He is God in every case. This is the only
13 recognition of universality that we can get.

14 So far it is all right theoretically. But is there any way of
15 practically working out this harmony in religions? We find that this
16 recognition that all the various views of religion are true has been
17 very very old. Hundreds of attempts have been made in India, in
18 Alexandria, in Europe, in China, in Japan, in Tibet, and lastly in
19 America, to formulate a harmonious religious creed, to make all
20 religions come together in love. They have all failed, because they
21 did not adopt any practical plan. Many have admitted that all the
22 religions of the world are right, but they show no practical way of
23 bringing them together, so as to enable each of them to maintain its
24 own individuality in the conflux. That plan alone is practical which
25 does not destroy the individuality of any man in religion and at the
26 same time shows him a point of union with all others. But so far, all
27 the plans of religious harmony that have been tried, while
28 proposing to take in all the various views of religion, have, in
29 practice, tried to bind them all down to a few doctrines, and so have
30 produced more new sects, fighting, struggling, and pushing against
31 each other.

32 I have also my little plan. I do not know whether it will work
33 or not, and I want to present it to you for discussion. What is my
34 plan? In the first place I would ask mankind to recognise this
35 maxim, "Do not destroy". Iconoclastic reformers do no good to the
36 world. Break not, pull not anything down, but build. Help, if you
37 can; if you cannot, fold your hands and stand by and see things go
38 on. Do not injure, if you cannot render help. Say not a word against
39 any man's convictions so far as they are sincere. Secondly, take man
40 where he stands, and from there give him a lift. If it be true that
41 God is the centre of all religions, and that each of us is moving
42 towards Him along one of these radii, then it is certain that all of us
43 *must* reach that centre. And at the centre, where all the radii meet,
44 all our differences will cease; but until we reach there, differences
45 there must be. All these radii converge to the same centre. One,
46 according to his nature, travels along one of these lines, and
47 another, along another; and if we all push onward along our own
48 lines, we shall surely come to the centre, because, "All roads lead to
49 Rome". Each of us is naturally growing and developing according to
50 his own nature; each will in time come to know the highest truth,
51 for after all, men must teach themselves. What can you and I do?
52 Do you think you can teach even a child? You cannot. The child

1 teaches himself. Your duty is to afford opportunities and to remove
2 the obstacles. A plant grows. Do *you* make the plant grow? Your
3 duty is to put a hedge round it and see that no animal eats up the
4 plant, and there your duty ends. The plant grows of itself. So it is in
5 regard to the spiritual growth of every man. None can teach you;
6 none can make a spiritual man of you. You have to teach yourself;
7 your growth must come from inside.

8 What can an external teacher do? He can remove the
9 obstructions a little, and there his duty ends. Therefore help, if you
10 can; but do not destroy. Give up all ideas that *you* can make men
11 spiritual. It is impossible. There is no other teacher to you than your
12 own soul. Recognise this. What comes of it? In society we see so
13 many different natures. There are thousands and thousands of
14 varieties of minds and inclinations. A thorough generalisation of
15 them is impossible, but for our practical purpose it is sufficient to
16 have them characterised into four classes. First, there is the active
17 man, the worker; he wants to work, and there is tremendous energy
18 in his muscles and his nerves. His aim is to work--to build hospitals,
19 do charitable deeds, make streets, to plan and to organise. Then
20 there is the emotional man who loves the sublime and the beautiful
21 to an excessive degree. He loves to think of the beautiful, to enjoy
22 the aesthetic side of nature, and adore Love and the God of Love.
23 He loves with his whole heart the great souls of all times, the
24 prophets of religions, and the Incarnations of God on earth; he does
25 not care whether reason can or cannot prove that Christ or Buddha
26 existed; he does not care for the exact date when the Sermon on
27 the Mount was preached, or for the exact moment of Krishna's
28 birth; what he cares for is their personalities, their lovable figures.
29 Such is his ideal. This is the nature of the lover, the emotional man.
30 Then, there is the mystic whose mind wants to analyse its own self,
31 to understand the workings of the human mind, what the forces are
32 that are working inside, and how to know, manipulate, and obtain
33 control over them. This is the mystical mind. Then, there is the
34 philosopher who wants to weigh everything and use his intellect
35 even beyond the possibilities of all human philosophy.

36 Now a religion, to satisfy the largest proportion of mankind,
37 must be able to supply food for all these various types of minds; and
38 where this capability is wanting, the existing sects all become one-
39 sided. Suppose you go to a sect which preaches love and emotion.
40 They sing and weep, and preach love. But as soon as you say, "My
41 friend, that is all right, but I want something stronger than this--a
42 little reason and philosophy; I want to understand things step by
43 step and more rationally", they say, "Get out"; and they not only ask
44 you to get out but would send you to the other place, if they could.
45 The result is that that sect can only help people of an emotional
46 turn of mind. They not only do *not* help others, but try to destroy
47 them; and the most wicked part of the whole thing is that they will
48 not only not help others, but do not believe in their sincerity. Again,
49 there are philosophers who talk of the wisdom of India and the East
50 and use big psychological terms, fifty syllables long, but if an
51 ordinary man like me goes to them and says, "Can you tell me
52 anything to make me spiritual?" , the first thing they would do

1 would be to smile and say, "Oh, you are too far below us in your
2 reason. What can you understand about spirituality?" These are
3 high-up philosophers. They simply show you the door. Then there
4 are the mystical sects who speak all sorts of things about different
5 planes of existence, different states of mind, and what the power of
6 the mind can do, and so on; and if you are an ordinary man and say,
7 "Show me anything good that I can do; I am not much given to
8 speculation; can you give me anything that will suit me?", they will
9 smile and say, "Listen to that fool; he knows nothing, his existence
10 is for nothing." And this is going on everywhere in the world. I
11 would like to get extreme exponents of all these different sects, and
12 shut them up in a room, and photograph their beautiful derisive
13 smiles!

14 This is the existing condition of religion, the existing condition
15 of things. What I want to propagate is a religion that will be equally
16 acceptable to all minds; it must be equally philosophic, equally
17 emotional, equally mystic, and equally conducive to action. If
18 professors from the colleges come, scientific men and physicists,
19 they will court reason. Let them have it as much as they want.
20 There will be a point beyond which they will think they cannot go,
21 without breaking with reason. They will say, "These ideas of God
22 and salvation are superstitious, give them up!" I say, "Mr.
23 Philosopher, this body of yours is a bigger superstition. Give *it* up,
24 don't go home to dinner or to your philosophic chair. Give up the
25 body, and if you cannot, cry quarter and sit down." For religion must
26 be able to show how to realise the philosophy that teaches us that
27 this world is one, that there is but one Existence in the universe.
28 Similarly, if the mystic comes, we must welcome him, be ready to
29 give him the science of mental analysis, and practically
30 demonstrate it before him. And if emotional people come, we must
31 sit, laugh, and weep with them in the name of the Lord; we must
32 "drink the cup of love and become mad". If the energetic worker
33 comes, we must work with him, with all the energy that we have.
34 And this combination will be the ideal of the nearest approach to a
35 universal religion. Would to God that all men were so constituted
36 that in their minds *all* these elements of philosophy, mysticism,
37 emotion, and of work were equally present in full! That is the ideal,
38 my ideal of a perfect man. Everyone who has only one or two of
39 these elements of character, I consider "one-sided"; and this world
40 is almost full of such "one-sided" men, with knowledge of that one
41 road only in which they move; and anything else is dangerous and
42 horrible to them. To become harmoniously balanced in all these four
43 directions is *my* ideal of religion. And this religion is attained by
44 what we, in India, call Yoga-union. To the worker, it is union
45 between men and the whole of humanity; to the mystic, between his
46 lower and Higher Self; to the lover, union between himself and the
47 God of Love; and to the philosopher, it is the union of *all* existence.
48 This is what is meant by Yoga. This is a Sanskrit term, and these
49 four divisions of Yoga have in Sanskrit different name. The man who
50 seeks after this kind of union is called a Yogi. The worker is called
51 the Karma-Yogi. He who seeks the union through love is called the
52 Bhakti-Yogi. He who seeks it through mysticism is called the Raja-
53 Yogi. And he who seeks it through philosophy is called the Jnana-

1 Yogi. So this word Yogi comprises them all.

1 Now first of all let me take up Raja-Yoga. What is this Raja-
2 Yoga, this controlling of the mind? In this country you are
3 associating all sorts of hobgoblins with the word Yoga, I am afraid.
4 Therefore, I must start by telling you that it has nothing to do with
5 such things. No one of these Yogas gives up reason, no one of them
6 asks you to be hoodwinked, or to deliver your reason into the hands
7 of priests of any type whatsoever. No one of them asks that you
8 should give your allegiance to any superhuman messenger. Each
9 one of them tells you to *cling* to your reason to hold fast to it. We
10 find in all beings three sorts of instruments of knowledge. The first
11 is instinct, which you find most highly developed in animals; this is
12 the lowest instrument of knowledge. What is the second instrument
13 of knowledge? Reasoning. You find that most highly developed in
14 man. Now in the first place, instinct is an inadequate instrument; to
15 animals, the sphere of action is very limited, and within that limit
16 instinct acts. When you come to man, you see it is largely developed
17 into reason. The sphere of action also has here become enlarged.
18 Yet even reason is still very insufficient. Reason can go only a little
19 way and then it stops, it cannot go any further; and if you try to
20 push it, the result is helpless confusion, reason itself becomes
21 unreasonable. Logic becomes argument in a circle. Take, for
22 instance, the very basis of our perception, matter and force. What is
23 matter? That which is acted upon by force. And force? That which
24 acts upon matter. You see the complication, what the logicians call
25 see-saw, one idea depending on the other, and this again depending
26 on that. You find a mighty barrier before reason, beyond which
27 reasoning cannot go; yet it always feels impatient to get into the
28 region of the Infinite beyond. This world, this universe which our
29 senses feel, or our mind thinks, is but one atom, so to say, of the
30 Infinite, projected on to the plane of consciousness; and within that
31 narrow limit, defined by the network of consciousness, works our
32 reason, and not beyond. Therefore, there must be some other
33 instrument to take us beyond, and that instrument is called
34 inspiration. So instinct, reason, and inspiration are the three
35 instruments of knowledge. Instinct belongs to animals, reason to
36 man, and inspiration to God-men. But in all human beings are to be
37 found, in a more or less developed condition, the germs of all these
38 three instruments of knowledge. To have these mental instruments
39 evolved, the germs must be there. And this must also be
40 remembered that one instrument is a development of the other, and
41 therefore does not contradict it. It is reason that develops into
42 inspiration, and therefore inspiration does not contradict reason,
43 but fulfils it. Things which reason cannot get at are brought to light
44 by inspiration; and they do not contradict reason. The old man does
45 not contradict the child, but fulfils the child. Therefore you must
46 always bear in mind that the great danger lies in mistaking the
47 lower form of instrument to be the higher. Many times instinct is
48 presented before the world as inspiration, and then come all the
49 spurious claims for the gift of prophecy. A fool or a semi-lunatic
50 thinks that the confusion going on in his brain is inspiration, and he
51 wants men to follow him. The most contradictory irrational
52 nonsense that has been preached in the world is simply the
53 instinctive jargon of confused lunatic brains trying to pass for the

1 language of inspiration.

2 The first test of true teaching must be, that the teaching
3 should not contradict reason. And you may see that such is the
4 basis of all these Yogas. We take the Raja-Yoga, the psychological
5 Yoga, the psychological way to union. It is a vast subject, and I can
6 only point out to you now the central idea of this Yoga. We have but
7 one method of acquiring knowledge. From the lowest man to the
8 highest Yogi, all have to use the same method; and that method is
9 what is called concentration. The chemist who works in his
10 laboratory concentrates all the powers of his mind, brings them into
11 one focus, and throws them on the elements; and the elements
12 stand analysed, and thus his knowledge comes. The astronomer has
13 also concentrated the powers of his mind and brought them into
14 one focus; and he throws them on to objects through his telescope;
15 and stars and systems roll forward and give up their secrets to him.
16 So it is in every case--with the professor in his chair, the student
17 with his book--with every man who is working to know. You are
18 hearing me, and if my words interest you, your mind will become
19 concentrated on them; and then suppose a clock strikes, you will
20 not hear it, on account of this concentration; and the more you are
21 able to concentrate your mind, the better you will understand me;
22 and the more I concentrate my love and powers, the better I shall
23 be able to give expression to what I want to convey to you. The
24 more this power of concentration, the more knowledge is acquired,
25 because this is the one and only method of acquiring knowledge.
26 Even the lowest shoeblick, if he gives more concentration, will
27 black shoes better; the cook with concentration will cook a meal all
28 the better. In making money, or in worshipping God, or in doing
29 anything, the stronger the power of concentration, the better will
30 that thing be done. This is the one call, the one knock, which opens
31 the gates of nature, and lets out floods of light. This, the power of
32 concentration, is the only key to the treasure-house of knowledge.
33 The system of Raja-Yoga deals almost exclusively with this. In the
34 present state of our body we are so much distracted, and the mind
35 is frittering away its energies upon a hundred sorts of things. As
36 soon as I try to calm my thoughts and concentrate my mind upon
37 any one object of knowledge, thousands of undesired impulses rush
38 into the brain, thousands of thoughts rush into the mind and disturb
39 it. How to check it and bring the mind under control is the whole
40 subject of study in Raja-Yoga.

41 Now take Karma-Yoga, the attainment of God through work. It
42 is evident that in society there are many persons who seem to be
43 born for some sort of activity or other, whose minds cannot be
44 concentrated on the plane of thought alone, and who have but one
45 idea, concretised in work, visible and tangible. There must be a
46 science for this kind of life too. Each one of us is engaged in some
47 work, but the majority of us fritter away the greater portion of our
48 energies, because we do not know the secret of work. Karma-Yoga
49 explains this secret and teaches where and how to work, how to
50 employ to the greatest advantage the largest part of our energies in
51 the work that is before us. But with this secret we must take into
52 consideration the great objection against work, namely that it

1 causes pain. All misery and pain come from attachment. I want to
2 do work, I want to do good to a human being; and it is ninety to one
3 that that human being whom I have helped will prove ungrateful
4 and go against me; and the result to me is pain. Such things deter
5 mankind from working; and it spoils a good portion of the work and
6 energy of mankind, this fear of pain and misery. Karma-Yoga
7 teaches us how to work for work's sake, unattached, without caring
8 who is helped, and what for. The Karma-Yogi works because it is his
9 nature, because he *feels* that it is good for him to do so, and he has
10 no object beyond that. His position in this world is that of a giver,
11 and he never cares to receive anything. He knows that he is giving,
12 and does not ask for anything in return and, therefore, he eludes
13 the grasp of misery. The grasp of pain, whenever it comes, is the
14 result of the reaction of "attachment".

15 There is then the Bhakti-Yoga for the man of emotional
16 nature, the lover. He wants to love God, he relies upon and uses all
17 sorts of rituals, flowers, incense, beautiful buildings, forms and all
18 such things. Do you mean to say they are wrong? One fact I must
19 tell you. It is good for you to remember, in this country especially,
20 that the world's great spiritual giants have all been produced only
21 by those religious sects which have been in possession of very rich
22 mythology and ritual. All sects that have attempted to worship God
23 without any form or ceremony have crushed without mercy
24 everything that is beautiful and sublime in religion. Their religion is
25 a fanaticism at best, a dry thing. The history of the world is a
26 standing witness to this fact. Therefore do not decry these rituals
27 and mythologies. Let people have them; let those who so desire
28 have them. Do not exhibit that unworthy derisive smile, and say,
29 "They are fools; let them have it." Not so; the greatest men I have
30 seen in my life, the most wonderfully developed in spirituality, have
31 all come through the discipline of these rituals. I do not hold myself
32 worthy to sit at their feet, and for *me* to criticise *them* ! How do I
33 know how these ideas act upon the human mind, which of them I
34 am to accept and which to reject? We are apt to criticise everything
35 in the world without sufficient warrant. Let people have all the
36 mythology they want, with its beautiful inspirations; for you must
37 always bear in mind that emotional natures do not care for abstract
38 definitions of truth. God to them is something tangible, the only
39 thing that is real; they feel, hear, and see Him, and love Him. Let
40 them have their God. Your rationalist seems to them to be like the
41 fool who, when he saw a beautiful statue, wanted to break it to find
42 out of what material it was made. Bhakti-Yoga teaches them how to
43 love, without any ulterior motives, loving God and loving the good
44 because it is good to do so, not for going to heaven, nor to get
45 children, wealth, or anything else. It teaches them that love itself is
46 the highest recompense of love--that God Himself is love. It teaches
47 them to pay all kinds of tribute to God as the Creator, the
48 Omnipresent, Omniscient, Almighty Ruler, the Father and the
49 Mother. The highest phrase that can express Him, the highest idea
50 that the human mind can conceive of Him, is that He is the God of
51 Love. Wherever there is love, it is He. "Wherever there is any love,
52 it is He, the Lord is present there." Where the husband kisses the
53 wife, He is there in the kiss; where the mother kisses the child, He

1 is there in the kiss; where friends clasp hands, He, the Lord, is
2 present as the God of Love. When a great man loves and wishes to
3 help mankind, He is there giving freely His bounty out of His love to
4 mankind. Wherever the heart expands, He is there manifested. This
5 is what the Bhakti-Yoga teaches.

6 We lastly come to the Jnana-Yogi, the philosopher, the thinker,
7 he who wants to go beyond the visible. He is the man who is not
8 satisfied with the little things of this world. His idea is to go beyond
9 the daily routine of eating, drinking, and so on; not even the
10 teaching of thousands of books will satisfy him. Not even all the
11 sciences will satisfy him; at best, they only bring this little world
12 before him. What else will give satisfaction? Not even myriads of
13 systems of worlds will satisfy him; they are to him but a drop in the
14 ocean of existence. His soul wants to go beyond all that into the
15 very heart of being, by seeing Reality as It is; by realising It, by
16 being It, by becoming one with that Universal Being. That is the
17 philosopher. To say that God is the Father or the Mother, the
18 Creator of this universe, its Protector and Guide, is to him quite
19 inadequate to express Him. To him, God is the life of his life, the
20 soul of his soul. God is his own Self. Nothing else remains which is
21 other than God. All the mortal parts of him become pounded by
22 weighty strokes of philosophy and are brushed away. What at last
23 truly remains is God Himself.

24 Upon the same tree there are two birds, one on the top, the
25 other below. The one on the top is calm, silent, and majestic,
26 immersed in his own glory; the one on the lower branches, eating
27 sweet and bitter fruits by turns, hopping from branch to branch, is
28 becoming happy and miserable by turns. After a time the lower bird
29 eats an exceptionally bitter fruit and gets disgusted and looks up
30 and sees the other bird, that wondrous one of golden plumage, who
31 eats neither sweet nor bitter fruit, who is neither happy nor
32 miserable, but calm, Self-centered, and sees nothing beyond his
33 Self. The lower bird longs for this condition but soon forgets it, and
34 again begins to eat the fruits. In a little while, he eats another
35 exceptionally bitter fruit, which makes him feel miserable, and he
36 again looks up, and tries to get nearer to the upper bird. Once more
37 he forgets and after a time he looks up, and so on he goes again
38 and again, until he comes very near to the beautiful bird and sees
39 the reflection of light from his plumage playing around his own
40 body, and he feels a change and seems to melt away; still nearer he
41 comes, and everything about him melts away, and at last he
42 understands this wonderful change. The lower bird was, as it were,
43 only the substantial-looking shadow, the reflection of the higher; he
44 himself was in essence the upper bird all the time. This eating of
45 fruits, sweet and bitter, this lower, little bird, weeping and happy by
46 turns, was a vain chimera, a dream: all along, the real bird was
47 there above, calm and silent, glorious and majestic, beyond grief,
48 beyond sorrow. The upper bird is God, the Lord of this universe;
49 and the lower bird is the human soul, eating the sweet and bitter
50 fruits of this world. Now and then comes a heavy blow to the soul.
51 For a time, he stops the eating and goes towards the unknown God,
52 and a flood of light comes. He thinks that this world is a vain show.

1 Yet again the senses drag him down, and he begins as before to eat
2 the sweet and bitter fruits of the world. Again an exceptionally hard
3 blow comes. His heart becomes open again to divine light; thus
4 gradually he approaches God, and as he gets nearer and nearer, he
5 finds his old self melting away. When he has come near enough, he
6 sees that he is no other than God, and he exclaims, "He whom I
7 have described to you as the Life of this universe, as present in the
8 atom, and in suns and moons--He is the basis of our own life, the
9 Soul of our soul. Nay, thou art That." That is what this Jnana-Yoga
10 teaches. It tells man that he is essentially divine. It shows to
11 mankind the real unity of being, and that each one of us is the Lord
12 God Himself, manifested on earth. All of us, from the lowest worm
13 that crawls under our feet to the highest beings to whom we look
14 up with wonder and awe--all are manifestations of the same Lord.

15 Lastly, it is imperative that all these various Yogas should be
16 carried out in practice; mere theories about them will not do any
17 good. First we have to hear about them, then we have to think
18 about them. We have to reason the thoughts out, impress them on
19 our minds, and we have to meditate on them, realise them, until at
20 last they become our whole life. No longer will religion remain a
21 bundle of ideas or theories, nor an intellectual assent; it will enter
22 into our very self. By means of intellectual assent we may today
23 subscribe to many foolish things and change our minds altogether
24 tomorrow. But true religion never changes. Religion is realisation;
25 not talk, nor doctrine, nor theories, however beautiful they may be.
26 It is being and becoming, not hearing or acknowledging; it is the
27 whole soul becoming changed into what it believes. That is religion.

28

THE OPEN SECRET

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Whichever way we turn in trying to understand things in their reality, if we analyse far enough, we find that at last we come to a peculiar state of things, seemingly a contradiction: something which our reason cannot grasp and yet is a fact. We take up something--we know it is finite; but as soon as we begin to analyse it, it leads us beyond our reason, and we never find an end to all its qualities, its possibilities, its powers, its relations. It has become infinite. Take even a common flower, that is finite enough; but who is there that can say he knows all about the flower? There is no possibility of anyone's getting to the end of the knowledge about that one flower. The flower has become infinite--the flower which was finite to begin with. Take a grain of sand. Analyse it. We start with the assumption that it is finite, and at last we find that it is not, it is infinite; all the same, we have looked upon it as finite. The flower is similarly treated as a finite something.

So with all our thoughts and experiences, physical and mental. We begin, we may think, on a small scale, and grasp them as little things; but very soon they elude our knowledge and plunge into the abyss of the infinite. And the greatest and the first thing perceived is ourselves. We are also in the same dilemma about existence. We exist. We see we are finite beings. We live and die. Our horizon is narrow. We are here, limited, confronted by the universe all around. Nature can crush us out of existence in a moment. Our little bodies are just held together, ready to go to pieces at a moment's notice. We know that. In the region of action how powerless we are! Our will is being thwarted at every turn. So many things we want to do, and how few we can do! There is no limit to our willing. We can will everything, want everything, we can desire to go to the dogstar. But how few of our desires can be accomplished! The body will not allow it. Well, nature is against the accomplishment of our will. We are weak. What is true of the flower, of the grain of sand, of the physical world, and of every thought, is a hundredfold more true of ourselves. We are also in the same dilemma of existence, being finite and infinite at the same time. We are like waves in the ocean; the wave is the ocean and yet not the ocean. There is not any part of the wave of which you cannot say, "It is the ocean." The name "ocean" applies to the wave and equally to every other part of the ocean, and yet it is separate from the ocean. So in this infinite ocean of existence we are like wavelets. At the same time, when we want really to grasp ourselves, we cannot--we have become the infinite.

We seem to be walking in dreams. Dreams are all right in a dream-mind; but as soon as you want to grasp one of them, it is gone. Why? Not that it was false, but because it is beyond the power of reason, the power of the intellect to comprehend it. Everything in this life is so vast that the intellect is nothing in comparison with it. It refuses to be bound by the laws of the intellect! It laughs at the bondage the intellect wants to spread around it. And a thousandfold more so is this the case with the human soul. "We ourselves"--this is the greatest mystery of the

1 universe.

2 How wonderful it all is! Look at the human eye. How easily it
3 can be destroyed, and yet the biggest suns exist only because your
4 eyes see them. The world exists because your eyes certify that it
5 exists. Think of that mystery! These poor little eyes! A strong light,
6 or a pin, can destroy them. Yet the most powerful engines of
7 destruction, the most powerful cataclysms, the most wonderful of
8 existences, million of suns and stars and moons and earth--all
9 depend for their existence upon, and have to be certified by, these
10 two little things! They say, "Nature, you exist", and we believe
11 nature exists. So with all our senses.

12 What is this? Where is weakness? Who is strong? What is
13 great and what is small? What is high and what is low in this
14 marvellous interdependence of existence where the smallest atom
15 is necessary for the existence of the whole? Who is great and who is
16 small? It is past finding out! And why? Because none is great and
17 none is small. All things are interpenetrated by that infinite ocean;
18 their reality is that infinite; and whatever there is on the surface is
19 but that infinite. The tree is infinite; so is everything that you see or
20 feel--every grain of sand, every thought, every soul, everything that
21 exists, is infinite. Infinite is finite and finite infinite. This is our
22 existence.

23 Now, that may be all true, but all this feeling after the Infinite
24 is at present mostly unconscious. It is not that we have forgotten
25 that infinite nature of ours: none can ever do that. Who can ever
26 think that he can be annihilated? Who can think that he will die?
27 None can. All our relation to the Infinite works in us unconsciously.
28 In a manner, therefore, we forget our real being, and hence all this
29 misery comes.

30 In practical daily life we are hurt by small things; we are
31 enslaved by little beings. Misery comes because we think we are
32 finite--we are little beings. And yet, how difficult it is to believe that
33 we are infinite beings! In the midst of all this misery and trouble,
34 when a little thing may throw me off my balance, it must be my care
35 to believe that I am infinite. And the fact is that we are, and that
36 consciously or unconsciously we are all searching after that
37 something which is infinite; we are always seeking for something
38 that is free.

39 There was never a human race which did not have a religion
40 and worship some sort of God or gods. Whether the God or gods
41 existed or not is no question; but what is the analysis of this
42 psychological phenomenon? Why is all the world trying to find, or
43 seeking for, a God? Why? Because in spite of all this bondage, in
44 spite of nature and this tremendous energy of law grinding us
45 down, never allowing us to turn to any side--wherever we go,
46 whatever we want to do, we are thwarted by this law, which is
47 everywhere--in spite of all this, the human soul never forgets its
48 freedom and is ever seeking it. The search for freedom is the
49 search of all religions; whether they know it or not, whether they
50 can formulate it well or ill, the idea is there. Even the lowest man,
51 the most ignorant, seeks for something which has power over

1 nature's laws. He wants to see a demon, a ghost, a god--somebody
2 who can subdue nature, for whom nature is not almighty, for whom
3 there is no law. "Oh, for somebody who can break the law!" That is
4 the cry coming from the human heart. We are always seeking for
5 someone who breaks the law. The rushing engine speeds along the
6 railway track; the little worm crawls out of its way. We at once say,
7 "The engine is dead matter, a machine; and the worm is alive,"
8 because the worm attempted to break the law. The engine, with all
9 its power and might, can never break the law. It is made to go in
10 any direction man wants, and it cannot do otherwise; but the worm,
11 small and little though it was, attempted to break the law and avoid
12 the danger. It tried to assert itself against law, assert its freedom;
13 and there was the sign of the future God in it.

14 Everywhere we see this assertion of freedom, this freedom of
15 the soul. It is reflected in every religion in the shape of God or gods;
16 but it is all external yet--for those who only see the gods outside.
17 Man decided that he was nothing. He was afraid that he could
18 never be free; so he went to seek for someone outside of nature
19 who was free. Then he thought that there were many and many
20 such free beings, and gradually he merged them all into one God of
21 gods and Lord of lords. Even that did not satisfy him. He came a
22 little closer to truth, a little nearer; and then gradually found that
23 whatever he was, he was in some way connected with the God of
24 gods and Lord of lords; that he, though he thought himself bound
25 and low and weak, was somehow connected with that God of gods.
26 Then visions came to him; thought arose and knowledge advanced.
27 And he began to come nearer and nearer to that God, and at last
28 found out that God and all the gods, this whole psychological
29 phenomenon connected with the search for an all-powerful free
30 soul, was but a reflection of his own idea of himself. And then at last
31 he discovered that it was not only true that "God made man after
32 His own image", but that it was also true that man made God after
33 his own image. That brought out the idea of divine freedom. The
34 Divine Being was always within, the nearest of the near. Him we
35 had ever been seeking outside, and at last found that He is in the
36 heart of our hearts. You may know the story of the man who
37 mistook his own heartbeat for somebody knocking at the door, and
38 went to the door and opened it, but found nobody there, so he went
39 back. Again he seemed to hear a knocking at the door, but nobody
40 was there. Then he understood that it was his own heartbeat, and
41 he had misinterpreted it as a knocking at the door. Similarly, man
42 after his search finds out that this infinite freedom that he was
43 placing in imagination all the time in the nature outside is the
44 internal subject, the eternal Soul of souls; this Reality, he himself.

45 Thus at last he comes to recognise this marvellous duality of
46 existence: the subject, infinite and finite in one--the Infinite Being is
47 also the same finite soul. The Infinite is caught, as it were, in the
48 meshes of the intellect and apparently manifests as finite beings,
49 but the reality remains unchanged.

50 This is, therefore, true knowledge; that the Soul of our souls,
51 the Reality that is within us, is That which is unchangeable, eternal,
52 ever-blessed, ever-free. This is the only solid ground for us to stand

1 upon.

2 This, then, is the end of all death, the advent of all
3 immortality, the end of all misery. And he who sees that One among
4 the many, that One unchangeable in the universe of change, he who
5 sees Him as the Soul of his soul, unto him belongs eternal peace--
6 unto none else.

7 And in the midst of the depths of misery and degradation, the
8 Soul sends a ray of light, and man wakes up and finds that what is
9 really his, he can never lose. No, we can never lose what is really
10 ours. Who can lose his being? Who can lose his very existence? If I
11 am good, it is the existence first, and then that becomes coloured
12 with the quality of goodness. If I am evil, it is the existence first,
13 and that becomes coloured with the quality of badness. That
14 existence is first, last and always; it is never lost, but ever present.

15 Therefore, there is hope for all. None can die; none can be
16 degraded for ever. Life is but a playground, however gross the play
17 may be. However we may receive blows, and however knocked
18 about we may be, the Soul is there and is never injured. We are that
19 Infinite.

20 Thus sang a Vedantin, "I never had fear nor doubt. Death
21 never came to me. I never had father or mother: for I was never
22 born. Where are my foes?--for I am All. I am the Existence and
23 Knowledge and Bliss Absolute. I am It. I am It. Anger and lust and
24 jealousy, evil thoughts and all these things, never came to me; for I
25 am the Existence, the Knowledge, the Bliss Absolute. I am It. I am
26 It."

27 That is the remedy for all disease, the nectar that cures
28 death. Here we are in this world, and our nature rebels against it.
29 But let us repeat, "I am It; I am It. I have no fear, nor doubt, nor
30 death. I have no sex, nor creed, nor colour. What creed can I have?
31 What sect is there to which I should belong? What sect can hold
32 me? I am in every sect!"

33 However much the body rebels, however much the mind
34 rebels, in the midst of the uttermost darkness, in the midst of
35 agonising tortures, in the uttermost despair, repeat this, once,
36 twice, thrice, ever more. Light comes gently, slowly, but surely it
37 comes.

38 Many times I have been in the jaws of death, starving,
39 footsore, and weary; for days and days I had had no food, and often
40 could walk no farther; I would sink down under a tree, and life
41 would seem ebbing away. I could not speak, I could scarcely think,
42 but at last the mind reverted to the idea: "I have no fear nor death;
43 I never hunger nor thirst. I am It! I am It! The whole of nature
44 cannot crush me; it is my servant. Assert thy strength, thou Lord of
45 lords and God of gods! Regain thy lost empire! Arise and walk and
46 stop not!" And I would rise up, reinvigorated, and here am I, living,
47 today. Thus, whenever darkness comes, assert the reality and
48 everything adverse must vanish. For, after all, it is but a dream.
49 Mountain-high though the difficulties appear, terrible and gloomy
50 though all things seem, they are but Maya. Fear not--it is banished.

1 Crush it, and it vanishes. Stamp upon it, and it dies. Be not afraid.
2 Think not how many times you fail. Never mind. Time is infinite. Go
3 forward; assert yourself again and again, and light must come. You
4 may pray to everyone that was ever born, but who will come to help
5 you? And what of the way of death from which none knows escape?
6 Help thyself out by thyself. None else can help thee, friend. For
7 thou alone art thy greatest enemy, thou alone art thy greatest
8 friend. Get hold of the Self, then. Stand up. Don't be afraid. In the
9 midst of all miseries and all weakness, let the Self come out, faint
10 and imperceptible though it be at first. You will gain courage, and at
11 last like a lion you will roar out, "I am It! I am It!" "I am neither a
12 man, nor a woman, nor a god, nor a demon; no, nor any of the
13 animals, plants, or trees. I am neither poor nor rich, neither learned
14 nor ignorant. All these things are very little compared with what I
15 am: for I am It! I am It! Behold the sun and the moon and the stars:
16 I am the light that is shining in them! I am the beauty of the fire! I
17 am the power in the universe! For, I am It! I am It!"

18 "Whoever thinks that I am little makes a mistake, for the Self
19 is all that exists. The sun exists because I declare it does, the world
20 exists because I declare it does. Without me they cannot remain, for
21 I am Existence, Knowledge, and Bliss Absolute--ever happy, ever
22 pure, ever beautiful. Behold, the sun is the cause of our vision, but
23 is not itself ever affected by any defect in the eyes of any one; even
24 so I am. I am working through all organs, working through
25 everything, but never does the good and evil of work attach to me.
26 For me there is no law, nor Karma. I own the laws of Karma. I ever
27 was and ever am."

28 "My real pleasure was never in earthly things--in husband,
29 wife, children, and other things. For I am like the infinite blue sky:
30 clouds of many colours pass over it and play for a second; they
31 move off, and there is the same unchangeable blue. Happiness and
32 misery, good and evil, may envelop me for a moment, veiling the
33 Self; but I am still there. They pass away because they are
34 changeable. I shine, because I am unchangeable. If misery comes, I
35 know it is finite, therefore it must die. If evil comes, I know it is
36 finite, it must go. I alone am infinite and untouched by anything. For
37 I am the Infinite, that Eternal, Changeless Self."--So sings one of
38 our poets.

39 Let us drink of this cup, this cup that leads to everything that
40 is immortal, everything that is unchangeable.

41 Fear not. Believe not that we are evil, that we are finite, that
42 we can ever die. It is not true.

43 "This is to be heard of, then to be thought upon, and then to
44 be meditated upon." When the hands work, the mind should repeat,
45 "I am It. I am It." Think of it, dream of it, until it becomes bone of
46 your bones and flesh of your flesh, until all the hideous dreams of
47 littleness, of weakness, of misery, and of evil, have entirely
48 vanished, and no more then can the Truth be hidden from you even
49 for a moment.

1 I shall tell you a story from the Vedas tonight. The Vedas are
2 the sacred scriptures of the Hindus and are a vast collection of
3 literature, of which the last part is called the Vedanta, meaning the
4 end of the Vedas. It deals with the theories contained in them, and
5 more especially the philosophy with which we are concerned. It is
6 written in archaic Sanskrit, and you must remember it was written
7 thousands of years ago. There was a certain man who wanted to
8 make a big sacrifice. In the religion of the Hindus, sacrifice plays a
9 great part. There are various sorts of sacrifices. They make altars
10 and pour oblations into the fire, and repeat various hymns and so
11 forth; and at the end of the sacrifice they make a gift to the
12 Brahmins and the poor. Each sacrifice has its peculiar gift. There
13 was one sacrifice, where everything a man possessed had to be
14 given up. Now this man, though rich, was miserly, and at the same
15 time wanted to get a great name for having done this most difficult
16 sacrifice. And when he did this sacrifice, instead of giving up
17 everything he had, he gave away only his blind, lame, and old cows
18 that would never more give milk. But he had a son called
19 Nachiketas, a bright young boy, who, observing the poor gifts made
20 by his father, and pondering on the demerit that was sure to accrue
21 to him thereby, resolved to make amends for them by making a gift
22 of himself. So he went to his father and said, "And to whom will you
23 give me?" The father did not answer the boy, and the boy asked a
24 second and a third time, when the father got vexed and said, "Thee
25 I give unto Yama, thee I give unto Death." And the boy went straight
26 to the kingdom of Yama. Yama was not at home, so he waited there.
27 After three days Yama came and said to him, "O Brahmin, thou art
28 my guest, and thou hast been here for three days without any food.
29 I salute thee, and in order to repay thee for this trouble, I will grant
30 thee three boons." Then the boy asked the first boon, "May my
31 father's anger against me get calmed down," and the second boon
32 was that he wanted to know about a certain sacrifice. And then
33 came the third boon. "When a man dies, the question arises: What
34 becomes of him? Some people say he ceases to exist. Others say
35 that he exists. Please tell me what the answer is. This is the third
36 boon that I want." Then Death answered, "The gods in ancient times
37 tried to unravel the mystery; this mystery is so fine that it is hard to
38 know. Ask for some other boon: do not ask this one. Ask for a long
39 life of a hundred years. Ask for cattle and horses, ask for great
40 kingdoms. Do not press me to answer this. Whatever man desires
41 for his enjoyment, ask all that and I will fulfil it, but do not want to
42 know this secret." "No, sir," said the boy, "man is not to be satisfied
43 with wealth; if wealth were wanted, we should get it, if we have
44 only seen you. We shall also live so long as you rule. What decaying
45 mortal, living in the world below and possessed of knowledge,
46 having gained the company of the undecaying and the immortal,
47 will delight in long life, knowing the nature of the pleasure
48 produced by song and sport? Therefore, tell me this secret about
49 the great hereafter, I do not want anything else; that is what
50 Nachiketas wants, the mystery of death." Then the God of death
51 was pleased. We have been saying in the last two or three lectures
52 that this Jnana prepares the mind. So you see here that the first
53 preparation is that a man must desire nothing else but the truth,

1 and truth for truth's sake. See how this boy rejected all these gifts
2 which Death offered him; possessions, property, wealth, long life,
3 and everything he was ready to sacrifice for this one idea,
4 knowledge only, the truth. Thus alone can truth come. The God of
5 death became pleased. "Here are two ways," he said, "one of
6 enjoyment, the other of blessedness. These two in various ways
7 draw mankind. He becomes a sage who, of these two, takes up that
8 which leads to blessedness, and he degenerates who takes up the
9 road to enjoyment. I praise you, Nachiketas; you have not asked for
10 desire. In various ways I tempted you towards the path of
11 enjoyment; you resisted them all, you have known that knowledge is
12 much higher than a life of enjoyment.

1 "You have understood that the man who lives in ignorance
2 and enjoys, is not different from the brute beast. Yet there are many
3 who, though steeped in ignorance, in the pride of their hearts, think
4 that they are great sages and go round and round in many crooked
5 ways, like the blind led by the blind. This truth, Nachiketas, never
6 shines in the heart of those who are like ignorant children, deluded
7 by a few lumps of earth. They do not understand this world, nor the
8 other world. They deny this and the other one, and thus again and
9 again come under my control. Many have not even the opportunity
10 to hear about it; and many, though hearing, cannot know it, because
11 the teacher must be wonderful; so must he be wonderful too unto
12 whom the knowledge is carried. If the speaker is a man who is not
13 highly advanced, then even a hundred times heard, and a hundred
14 times taught, the truth never illumines the soul. Do not disturb your
15 mind by vain arguments, Nachiketas; this truth only becomes
16 effulgent in the heart which has been made pure. He who cannot be
17 seen without the greatest difficulty, He who is hidden, He who has
18 entered the cave of the heart of hearts--the Ancient One--cannot be
19 seen with the external eyes; seeing Him with the eyes of the soul,
20 one gives up both pleasure and pain. He who knows this secret
21 gives up all his vain desires, and attains this superfine perception,
22 and thus becomes ever blessed. Nachiketas, that is the way to
23 blessedness. He is beyond all virtue, beyond all vice, beyond all
24 duties, beyond all non-duties, beyond all existence, beyond all that
25 is to be; he who know this, alone knows. He whom all the Vedas
26 seek, to see whom men undergo all sorts of asceticism, I will tell
27 you His name: It is Om. This eternal Om is the Brahman, this is the
28 immortal One; he who knows the secret of this--whatever he desires
29 is his. This Self of man, Nachiketas, about which you seek to know,
30 is never born, and never dies. Without beginning, ever existing, this
31 ancient One is not destroyed, when the body is destroyed. If the
32 slayer thinks that he can slay, and if the slain man thinks he is slain,
33 both are mistaken, for neither can the Self kill, nor can It be killed.
34 Infinitely smaller than the smallest particle, infinitely greater than
35 the greatest existence, the Lord of all lives in the cave of the heart
36 of very being. He who has become sinless sees Him in all His glory,
37 through the mercy of the same Lord. (We find that the mercy of God
38 is one of the causes of God-realisation.) Sitting He goes far, lying
39 He goes everywhere; who else but men of purified and subtle
40 understanding are qualified to know the God in whom all conflicting
41 attributes meet? Without body, yet living in the body, untouched, yet
42 seemingly in contact, omnipresent--knowing the Atman to be such,
43 the sage gives up all misery. This Atman is not be attained by the
44 study of the Vedas, nor by the highest intellect, nor by much
45 learning. Whom the Atman seeks, he gets the Atman; unto him He
46 discloses His glory. He who is continuously doing evil deeds, he
47 whose mind is not calm, he who cannot meditate, he who is always
48 disturbed and fickle--he cannot understand and realise this Atman
49 who has entered the cave of the heart. This body, O Nachiketas, is
50 the chariot, the organs of the senses are the horses, the mind is the
51 reins, the intellect is the charioteer, and the soul is the rider in the
52 chariot. When the soul joins himself with the charioteer, Buddhi or
53 intellect, and then through it with the mind, the reins, and through

1 it again with the organs, the horses, he is said to be the enjoyer; he
2 perceives, he works, he acts. He whose mind is not under control,
3 and who has no discrimination, his senses are not controllable like
4 vicious horses in the hands of a driver. But he who has
5 discrimination, whose mind is controlled, his organs are always
6 controllable like good horses in the hands of a driver. He who has
7 discrimination, whose mind is always in the way to understand
8 truth, who is always pure--he receives that truth, attaining which
9 there is no rebirth. This, O Nachiketas, is very difficult, the way is
10 long, and it is hard to attain. It is only those who have attained the
11 finest perception that can see it, that can understand it. Yet do not
12 be frightened. Awake, be up and doing. Do not stop till you have
13 reached the goal. For the sages say that the task is very difficult,
14 like walking on the edge of a razor. He who is beyond the senses,
15 beyond all touch, beyond all form, beyond all taste, the
16 Unchangeable, the Infinite, beyond even intelligence, the
17 Indestructible--knowing Him alone, we are safe from the jaws of
18 death."

19 So far, we see that Yama describes the goal that is to be
20 attained. The first idea that we get is that birth, death, misery, and
21 the various tossings about to which we are subject in the world can
22 only be overcome by knowing that which is real. What is real? That
23 which never changes, the Self of man, the Self behind the universe.
24 Then, again, it is said that it is very difficult to know Him. Knowing
25 does not mean simply intellectual assent, it means realisation.
26 Again and again we have read that this Self is to be seen, to be
27 perceived. We cannot see it with the eyes; the perception for it has
28 to become superfine. It is a gross perception by which the walls and
29 books are perceived, but the perception to discern the truth has to
30 be made very fine, and that is the whole secret of this knowledge.
31 Then Yama says that one must be very pure. That is the way to
32 making the perception superfine; and then he goes on to tell us
33 other ways. That self-existent One is far removed from the organs.
34 The organs or instruments see outwards, but the self-existing One,
35 the Self, is seen inwards. You must remember the qualification that
36 is required: the desire to know this Self by turning the eyes
37 inwards. All these beautiful things that we see in nature are very
38 good, but that is not the way to see God. We must learn how to turn
39 the eyes inwards. The eagerness of the eyes to see outwards should
40 be restricted. When you walk in a busy street, it is difficult to hear
41 the man speak with whom you are walking, because of the noise of
42 the passing carriages. He cannot hear you because there is so much
43 noise. The mind is going outwards, and you cannot hear the man
44 who is next to you. In the same way, this world around us is making
45 such a noise that it draws the mind outwards. How can we see the
46 Self? This going outwards must be stopped. That is what is meant
47 by turning the eyes inwards, and then alone the glory of the Lord
48 within will be seen.

49 What is this Self? We have seen that It is even beyond the
50 intellect. We learn from the same Upanishad that this Self is eternal
51 and omnipresent, that you and I and all of us are omnipresent
52 beings, and that the Self is changeless. Now this omnipresent Being

1 can be only one. There cannot be two beings who are equally
2 omnipresent--how could that be? There cannot be two beings who
3 are infinite, and the result is, there is really only one Self, and you,
4 I, and the whole universe are but one, appearing as many. "As the
5 one fire entering into the world manifests itself in various ways,
6 even so that one Self, the Self of all, manifest Itself in every form."
7 But the question is: If this Self is perfect and pure, and the One
8 Being of the universe, what becomes of It when It goes into the
9 impure body, the wicked body, the good body, and so on? How can It
10 remain perfect? "This one sun is the cause of vision in every eye,
11 yet it is not touched by the defects in the eyes of any." If a man has
12 jaundice he sees everything as yellow; the cause of his vision is the
13 sun, but his seeing everything as yellow does not touch the sun.
14 Even so this One Being, though the Self of every one, is not touched
15 by the purities or impurities outside. "In this world where
16 everything is evanescent, he who knows Him who never changes, in
17 this world of insentientcy, he who knows the one sentient Being, in
18 this world of many, he who know this One and sees Him in his own
19 soul, unto him belongs eternal bliss, to none else, to none else.
20 There the sun shines not, nor the stars, nor the lightning flashes,
21 what to speak of fire? He shining, everything shines; through His
22 light everything becomes effulgent. When all the desires that
23 trouble the heart cease, then the mortal becomes immortal, and
24 here one attains Brahman. When all the crookedness of the heart
25 disappears, when all its knots are cut asunder, then alone the
26 mortal becomes immortal. This is the way. May this study bless us;
27 may it maintain us; may it give us strength, may it become energy
28 in us; may we not hate each other; peace unto all!"

29 This is the line of thought that you will find in the Vedanta
30 philosophy. We see first that here is a thought entirely different
31 from what you see anywhere else in the world. In the oldest parts of
32 the Vedas the search was the same as in other books, the search
33 was outside. In some of the old, old books, the question was raised,
34 "What was in the beginning? When there was neither aught nor
35 naught, when darkness was covering darkness, who created all
36 this?" So the search began. And they began to talk about the
37 angels, the Devas, and all sorts of things, and later on we find that
38 they gave it up as hopeless.

1 In their day the search was outside and they could find
2 nothing; but in later days, as we read in the Vedas, they had to look
3 inside for the self-existent One. This is the one fundamental idea in
4 the Vedas, that our search in the stars, the nebulae, the Milky Way,
5 in the whole of this external universe leads to nothing, never solves
6 the problem of life and death. The wonderful mechanism inside had
7 to be analysed, and it revealed to them the secret of the universe;
8 nor star or sun could do it. Man had to anatomise; not the body,
9 but the soul of man. In that soul they found the answer. What was
10 the answer they found? That behind the body, behind even the
11 mind, there is the self-existent One. He dies not, nor is He born.
12 The self-existent One is omnipresent, because He has no form. That
13 which has no form or shape, that which is not limited by space or
14 time, cannot live in a certain place. How can it? It is everywhere,
15 omnipresent, equally present through all of us.

16 What is the soul of man? There was one party who held that
17 there is a Being, God, and an infinite number of souls besides, who
18 are eternally separate from God in essence, and form, and
19 everything. This is dualism. This is the old, old crude idea. The
20 answer given by another party was that the soul was a part of the
21 infinite Divine Existence. Just as this body is a little world by itself,
22 and behind it is the mind or thought, and behind that is the
23 individual soul, similarly, the whole world is a body, and behind that
24 is the universal mind, and behind that is the universal Soul. Just as
25 this body is a portion of the universal body, so this mind is a portion
26 of the universal mind, and the soul of man a portion of the universal
27 Soul. This is what is called the Vishishtadvaita, qualified monism.
28 Now, we know that the universal Soul is infinite. How can infinity
29 have parts? How can it be broken up, divided? It may be very poetic
30 to say that I am a spark of the Infinite, but it is absurd to the
31 thinking mind. What is meant by dividing Infinity? Is it something
32 material that you can part or separate it into pieces? Infinite can
33 never be divided. If that were possible, it would be no more Infinite.
34 What is the conclusion then? The answer is, that Soul which is the
35 universal is you; you are not a part but the whole of It. You are the
36 whole of God. Then what are all these varieties? We find so many
37 millions of individual souls. What are they? If the sun reflects upon
38 millions of globules of water, in each globule is the form, the perfect
39 image of the sun; but they are only images, and the real sun is only
40 one. So this apparent soul that is in every one of us is only the
41 image of God, nothing beyond that. The real Being who is behind, is
42 that one God. We are all one there. As Self, there is only one in the
43 universe. It is in me and you, and is only one; and that one Self has
44 been reflected in all these various bodies as various different
45 selves. But we do not know this; we think we are separate from
46 each other and separate from Him. And so long as we think this,
47 misery will be in the world. This is hallucination.

48 Then the other great source of misery is fear. Why does one
49 man injure another? Because he fears he will not have enough
50 enjoyment. One man fears that, perhaps, he will not have enough
51 money, and that fear cause him to injure others and rob them. How
52 can there be fear if there is only one existence? If a thunderbolt

1 falls on my head, it was I who was the thunderbolt, because I am
2 the only existence. If a plague comes, it is I; if a tiger comes, it is I.
3 If death comes, it is I. I am both death and life. We see that fear
4 comes with the idea that there are two in the universe. We have
5 always heard it preached, "Love one another". What for? That
6 doctrine was preached, but the explanation is here. Why should I
7 love every one? Because they and I are one. Why should I love my
8 brother? Because he and I are one. There is this oneness; this
9 solidarity of the whole universe. From the lowest worm that crawls
10 under our feet to the highest beings that ever lived--all have various
11 bodies, but are the one Soul. Through all mouths, you eat; through
12 all hands, you work; through all eyes, you see. You enjoy health in
13 millions of bodies, you are suffering from disease in millions of
14 bodies. When this idea comes, and we realise it, see it, feel it, then
15 will misery cease, and fear with it. How can I die? There is nothing
16 beyond me. Fear ceases, and then alone comes perfect happiness
17 and perfect love. That universal sympathy, universal love, universal
18 bliss, that never changes, raises man above everything. It has no
19 reactions and no misery can touch it; but this little eating and
20 drinking of the world always brings a reaction. The whole cause of
21 it is this dualism, the idea that I am separate from the universe,
22 separate from God. But as soon as we have realised that "I am He, I
23 am the Self of the universe, I am eternally blessed, eternally free"--
24 then will come real love, fear will vanish, and all misery cease.

1
2

YAJNAVALKYA AND MAITREYI

1 We say, "That day is indeed a bad day on which you do not
2 hear the name of the Lord, but a cloudy day is not a bad day at all."
3 Yajnavalkya was a great sage. You know, the Shastras in India
4 enjoin that every man should give up the world when he becomes
5 old. So Yajnavalkya said to his wife, "My beloved, here is all my
6 money, and my possessions, and I am going away." She replied, "Sir,
7 if I had this whole earth full of wealth, would that give me
8 immortality?" Yajnavalkya said, "No, it will not. You will be rich, and
9 that will be all, but wealth cannot give us immortality." She replied,
10 "What shall I do to gain that through which I shall become
11 immortal? If you know, tell me." Yajnavalkya replied, "You have been
12 always my beloved; you are more beloved now by this question.
13 Come, take your seat, and I will tell you; and when you have heard,
14 meditate upon it." He said, "It is not for the sake of the husband
15 that the wife loves the husband, but for the sake of the Atman that
16 she loves the husband, because she loves the Self. None loves the
17 wife for the sake of the wife; but it is because one loves the Self
18 that one loves the wife. None loves the children for the children;
19 but because one loves the Self, therefore one loves the children.
20 None loves wealth on account of the wealth; but because one loves
21 the Self, therefore one loves wealth. None loves the Brahmin for the
22 sake of the Brahmin; but because one loves the Self, one loves the
23 Brahmin. So, none loves the Kshatriya for the sake of the Kshatriya,
24 but because one loves the Self. Neither does any one love the world
25 on account of the world, but because one loves the Self. None,
26 similarly, loves the gods on account of the gods, but because one
27 loves the Self. None loves a thing for that thing's sake; but it is for
28 the Self that one loves it. This Self, therefore, is to be heard,
29 reasoned about, and meditated upon. O my Maitreyi, when that Self
30 has been heard, when that Self has been seen, when that Self has
31 been realised, then, all this becomes known." What do we get then?
32 Before us we find a curious philosophy. The statement has been
33 made that every love is selfishness in the lowest sense of the word:
34 because I love myself, therefore I love another; it cannot be. There
35 have been philosophers in modern times who have said that self is
36 the only motive power in the world. That is true, and yet it is wrong.
37 But this self is but the shadow of that real Self which is behind. It
38 appears wrong and evil because it is small. That infinite love for the
39 Self, which is the universe, appears to be evil, appears to be small,
40 because it appears through a small part. Even when the wife loves
41 the husband, whether she knows it or not, she loves the husband
42 for that Self. It is selfishness as it is manifested in the world, but
43 that selfishness is really but a small part of that Self-ness.
44 Whenever one loves, one has to love in and through the Self. This
45 Self has to be known. What is the difference? Those that love the
46 Self without knowing what It is, their love is selfishness. Those that
47 love, knowing what that Self is, their love is free; they are sages.
48 "Him the Brahmin gives up who sees the Brahmin anywhere else
49 but in the Self. Him the Kshatriya gives up who sees the Kshatriya
50 anywhere else but in the Self. The world gives him up who sees this
51 world anywhere but in that Atman. The gods give him up who loves
52 the gods knowing them to be anywhere else but in the Atman.
53 Everything goes away from him who knows everything as

1 something else except the Atman. These Brahmins, these
2 Kshatriyas, this world, these gods, whatever exists, everything is
3 that Atman." Thus he explains what he means by love.

4 Every time we particularise an object, we differentiate it from
5 the Self. I am trying to love a woman; as soon as that woman is
6 particularised, she is separated from the Atman, and my love for
7 her will not be eternal, but will end in grief. But as soon as I see
8 that woman as the Atman, that love becomes perfect, and will never
9 suffer. So with everything; as soon as you are attached to anything
10 in the universe, detaching it from the universe as a whole, from the
11 Atman, there comes a reaction. With everything that we love
12 outside the Self, grief and misery will be the result. If we enjoy
13 everything in the Self, and as the Self, no misery or reaction will
14 come. This is perfect bliss. How to come to this ideal? Yajnavalkya
15 goes on to tell us the process by which to reach that state. The
16 universe is infinite: how can we take every particular thing and look
17 at it as the Atman, without knowing the Atman? "As with a drum
18 when we are at a distance we cannot catch the sound, we cannot
19 conquer the sound; but as soon as we come to the drum and put our
20 hand on it, the sound is conquered. When the conch-shell is being
21 blown, we cannot catch or conquer the sound, until we come near
22 and get hold of the shell, and then it is conquered. When the Vina is
23 being played, when we have come to the Vina, we get to the centre
24 whence the sound is proceeding. As when some one is burning
25 damp fuel, smoke and sparks of various kinds come, even so, from
26 this great One has been breathed out knowledge; everything has
27 come out of Him. He breathed out, as it were, all knowledge. As to
28 all water, the one goal is the ocean; as to all touch, the skin is the
29 one centre; as of all smell, the nose is the one centre; as to all taste,
30 the tongue is the one goal; as of all form, the eyes are the one goal;
31 as of all sounds, the ears are the one goal; as of all thought, the
32 mind is the one goal; as of all knowledge, the heart is the one goal;
33 as of all work, the hands are the one goal; as a morsel of salt put
34 into the sea-water melts away, and we cannot take it back, even so,
35 Maitreyi, is this Universal Being eternally infinite; all knowledge is
36 in Him. The whole universe rises from Him, and again goes down
37 into Him. No more is there any knowledge, dying or death." We get
38 the idea that we have all come just like sparks from Him, and when
39 you know Him, then you go back and become one with Him again.
40 We are the Universal.

41 Maitreyi became frightened, just as everywhere people
42 become frightened. Said she, "Sir, here is exactly where you have
43 thrown a delusion over me. You have frightened me by saying there
44 will be no more gods; all individuality will be lost. There will be no
45 one to recognise, no one to love, no one to hate. What will become
46 of us?" "Maitreyi, I do not mean to puzzle you, or rather let it rest
47 here. You may be frightened. Where there are two, one sees
48 another, one hears another, one welcomes another, one thinks of
49 another, one knows another. But when the whole has become that
50 Atman, who is seen by whom, who is to be heard by whom, who is
51 to be welcomed by whom, who is to be known by whom?" That one
52 idea was taken up by Schopenhauer and echoed in his philosophy.

1 Through whom we know this universe, through what to know Him?
2 How to know the knower? By what means can we know the
3 knower? How can that be? Because in and through that we know
4 everything. By what means can we know Him? By no means, for He
5 is that means.

6 So far the idea is that it is all One Infinite Being. That is the
7 real individuality, when there is no more division, and no more
8 parts; these little ideas are very low, illusive. But yet in and through
9 every spark of the individuality is shining that Infinite. Everything is
10 a manifestation of the Atman. How to reach that? First you make
11 the statement, just as Yajnavalkya himself tells us: "This Atman is
12 first to be heard of." So he stated the case; then he argued it out,
13 and the last demonstration was how to know That, through which
14 all knowledge is possible. Then, last, it is to be meditated upon. He
15 takes the contrast, the microcosm and the macrocosm, and shows
16 how they are rolling on in particular lines, and how it is all
17 beautiful. "This earth is so blissful, so helpful to every being; and all
18 beings are so helpful to this earth: all these are manifestations of
19 that Self-effulgent One, the Atman." All that is bliss, even in the
20 lowest sense, is but the reflection of Him. All that is good is His
21 reflection, and when that reflection is a shadow it is called evil.
22 There are no two Gods. When He is less manifested, it is called
23 darkness, evil; and when He is more manifested, it is called light.
24 That is all. Good and evil are only a question of degree: more
25 manifested or less manifested. Just take the example of our own
26 lives. How many things we see in our childhood which we think to
27 be good, but which really are evil, and how many things seem to be
28 evil which are good! How the ideas change! How an idea goes up
29 and up! What we thought very good at one time we do not think so
30 good now. So good and evil are but superstitions, and do not exist.
31 The difference is only in degree. It is all a manifestation of that
32 Atman; He is being manifested in everything; only, when the
33 manifestation is very thick we call it evil; and when it is very thin,
34 we call it good. It is the best, when all covering goes away. So
35 everything that is in the universe is to be meditated upon in that
36 sense alone, that we can see it as all good, because it is the best.
37 There is evil and there is good; and the apex, the centre, is the
38 Reality. He is neither evil nor good; He is the best. The best can be
39 only one, the good can be many and the evil many. There will be
40 degrees of variation between the good and the evil, but the best is
41 only one, and that best, when seen through thin coverings, we call
42 different sorts of good, and when through thick covers, we call evil.
43 Good and evil are different forms of superstition. They have gone
44 through all sorts of dualistic delusion and all sorts of ideas, and the
45 words have sunk into the hearts of human beings, terrorising men
46 and women and living there as terrible tyrants. They make us
47 become tigers. All the hatred with which we hate others is caused
48 by these foolish ideas which we have imbibed since our childhood--
49 good and evil. Our judgment of humanity becomes entirely false; we
50 make this beautiful earth a hell; but as soon as we can give up good
51 and evil, it becomes a heaven.

52 "This earth is blissful ('sweet' is the literal translation) to all

1 beings and all beings are sweet to this earth; they all help each
2 other. And all the sweetness is the Atman, that effulgent, immortal
3 One who is inside this earth." Whose is this sweetness? How can
4 there be any sweetness but He? That one sweetness is manifesting
5 itself in various ways. Wherever there is any love, any sweetness in
6 any human being, either in a saint or a sinner, either in an angel or
7 a murderer, either in the body, mind, or the senses, it is He.
8 Physical enjoyments are but He, mental enjoyments are but He,
9 spiritual enjoyments are but He. How can there be anything but
10 He? How can there be twenty thousand gods and devils fighting
11 with each other? Childish dreams! Whatever is the lowest physical
12 enjoyment is He, and the highest spiritual enjoyment is He. There is
13 no sweetness but He. Thus says Yajnavalkya. When you come to
14 that state and look upon all things with the same eye, when you see
15 even in the drunkard's pleasure in drink only that sweetness, then
16 you have got the truth, and then alone you will know what
17 happiness means, what peace means, what love means; and so long
18 as you make these vain distinctions, silly, childish, foolish
19 superstitions, all sorts of misery will come. But that immortal One,
20 the effulgent One, He is inside the earth, it is all His sweetness, and
21 the same sweetness is in the body. This body is the earth, as it
22 were, and inside all the powers of the body, all the enjoyments of
23 the body, is He; the eyes see, the skin touches; what are all these
24 enjoyments? That Self-effulgent One who is in the body, He is the
25 Atman. This world, so sweet to all beings, and every being so sweet
26 to it, is but the Self-effulgent; the Immortal is the bliss in that world.
27 In us also, He is that bliss. He is the Brahman. "This air is so sweet
28 to all beings, and all beings are so sweet to it. But He who is that
29 Self-effulgent Immortal Being in the air--is also in this body. He is
30 expressing Himself as the life of all beings. This sun is so sweet to
31 all beings. All beings are so sweet to this sun. He who is the Self-
32 effulgent Being in the sun, we reflect Him as the smaller light. What
33 can be there but His reflection? He is in the body, and it is His
34 reflection which makes us see the light. This moon is so sweet to
35 all, and every one is so sweet to the moon, but that Self-effulgent
36 and Immortal One who is the soul of that moon, He is in us
37 expressing Himself as mind. This lightning is so beautiful, every one
38 is so sweet to the lightning, but the Self-effulgent and Immortal One
39 is the soul of this lightning, and is also in us, because all is that
40 Brahman. The Atman, the Self, is the king of all beings." These
41 ideas are very helpful to men; they are for meditation. For instance,
42 meditate on the earth; think of the earth and at the same time know
43 that we have *That* which is in the earth, that both are the same.
44 Identify the body with the earth, and identify the soul with the Soul
45 behind. Identify the air with the soul that is in the air and that is in
46 me. They are all one, manifested in different forms. To realise this
47 unity is the end and aim of all meditation, and this is what
48 Yajnavalkya was trying to explain to Maitreyi.

1
2

SOUL, NATURE, AND GOD

1 According to the Vedanta philosophy, man consists of three
2 substances, so to say. The outermost is the body, the gross form of
3 man, in which are the instruments of sensation, such as the eyes,
4 nose, ears, and so forth. This eye is not the organ of vision; it is only
5 the instrument. Behind that is the organ. So, the ears are not the
6 organs of hearing; they are the instruments, and behind them is the
7 organ, or what, in modern physiology, is called the centre. The
8 organs are called Indriyas in Sanskrit. If the centre which governs
9 the eyes be destroyed, the eyes will not see; so with all our senses.
10 The organs, again, cannot sense anything by themselves, until there
11 be something else attached to them. That something is the mind.
12 Many times you have observed that you were deeply engaged in a
13 certain thought, and the clock struck and you did not hear it. Why?
14 The ear was there; vibrations entered it and were carried into the
15 brain, yet you did not hear, because the mind was not joined to the
16 organ. The impressions of external objects are carried to the
17 organs, and when the mind is attached to them, it takes the
18 impressions and gives them, as it were, a colouring, which is called
19 egoism, "I". Take the case of a mosquito biting me on the finger
20 when I am engaged in some work. I do not feel it, because my mind
21 is joined to something else. Later, when my mind is joined to the
22 impression conveyed to the Indriyas, a reaction comes. With this
23 reaction I become conscious of the mosquito. So even the mind
24 joined itself to the organs is not sufficient; there must come the
25 reaction in the form of will. This faculty from which the reaction
26 comes, the faculty of knowledge or intellect, is called "Buddhi".
27 First, there must be the external instrument, next the organ, next
28 the mind must join itself to the organ, then must come the reaction
29 of the intellect, and when all these things are complete, there
30 immediately flashes the idea, "I and the external object" and there
31 is a perception, a concept, knowledge. The external organ, which is
32 only the instrument, is in the body, and behind that is the internal
33 organ which is finer; then there is the mind, then the intellectual
34 faculty, then egoism, which says, "I"--I see, I hear, and so forth. The
35 whole process is carried on by certain forces; you may call them
36 vital forces; in Sanskrit they are called Prana. This gross part of
37 man, this body, in which are the external instruments, is called in
38 Sanskrit, Sthula Sharira, the gross body; behind it comes the series,
39 beginning with the organs, the mind, the intellect, the egoism.
40 These and the vital forces form a compound which is called the fine
41 body, the Sukshma Sharira. These forces are composed of very fine
42 elements, so fine that no amount of injury to this body can destroy
43 them; they survive all the shocks given to this body. The gross body
44 we see is composed of gross material, and as such it is always being
45 renewed and changing continuously. But the internal organs, the
46 mind, the intellect, and the egoism are composed of the finest
47 material, so fine that they will endure for aeons and aeons. They are
48 so fine that they cannot be resisted by anything; they can get
49 through any obstruction. The gross body is non-intelligent, so is the
50 fine, being composed of fine matter. Although one part is called
51 mind, another the intellect, and the third egoism, yet we see at a
52 glance that no one of them can be the "Knower". None of them can
53 be the perceiver, the witness, the one for whom action is made, and

1 who is the seer of the action. All these movements in the mind, or
2 the faculty of intellection, or egoism, must be for some one else.
3 These being composed of fine matter cannot be self-effulgent. Their
4 luminosity cannot be in themselves. This manifestation of the table,
5 for instance, cannot be due to any material thing. Therefore there
6 must be some one behind them all, who is the real manifestor, the
7 real seer, the real enjoyer and He in Sanskrit is called the Atman,
8 the Soul of man, the real Self of man. He it is who really sees
9 things. The external instruments and the organs catch the
10 impressions and convey them to the mind, and the mind to the
11 intellect, and the intellect reflects them as on a mirror, and back of
12 it is the Soul that looks on them and gives His orders and His
13 directions. He is the ruler of all these instruments, the master in
14 the house, the enthroned king in the body. The faculty of egoism,
15 the faculty of intellection, the faculty of cognition, the organs, the
16 instruments, the body, all of them obey His commands. It is He who
17 is manifesting all of these. This is the Atman of man. Similarly, we
18 can see that what is in a small part of the universe must also be in
19 the whole universe. If conformity is the law of the universe, every
20 part of the universe must have been built on the same plan as the
21 whole. So we naturally think that behind the gross material form
22 which we call this universe of ours, there must be universe of finer
23 matter, which we call thought, and behind that there must be a
24 Soul, which makes all this thought possible, which commands,
25 which is the enthroned king of this universe. That soul which is
26 behind each mind and each body is called Pratyagatman, the
27 individual Atman, and that Soul which is behind the universe as its
28 guide, ruler, and governor, is God.

1 The next thing to consider is whence all these things come.
2 The answer is: What is meant by coming? If it means that
3 something can be produced out of nothing, it is impossible. All this
4 creation, manifestation, cannot be produced out of zero. Nothing
5 can be produced without a cause, and the effect is but the cause
6 reproduced. Here is a glass. Suppose we break it to pieces and
7 pulverise it, and by means of chemicals almost annihilate it. Will it
8 go back to zero? Certainly not. The form will break, but the
9 particles of which it is made will be there; they will go beyond our
10 senses, but they remain, and it is quite possible that out of these
11 materials another glass may be made. If this is true in one case, it
12 will be so in every case. Something cannot be made out of nothing.
13 Nor can something be made to go back to nothing. It may become
14 finer and finer, and then again grosser and grosser. The raindrop is
15 drawn from the ocean in the form of vapour, and drifts away
16 through the air to the mountains; there it changes again into water
17 and flows back through hundreds of miles down to the mother
18 ocean. The seed produces the tree. The tree dies, leaving only the
19 seed. Again it comes up as another tree, which again ends in the
20 seed, and so on. Look at a bird, how from the egg it springs,
21 becomes a beautiful bird, lives its life and then dies, leaving only
22 other eggs, containing germs of future birds. So with the animals;
23 so with men. Everything begins, as it were, from certain seeds,
24 certain rudiments, certain fine forms, and becomes grosser and
25 grosser as it develops; and then again it goes back to that fine form
26 and subsides. The whole universe is going on in this way. There
27 comes a time when this whole universe melts down and becomes
28 finer and at last disappears entirely, as it were, but remains as
29 superfine matter. We know through modern science and astronomy
30 that this earth is cooling down, and in course of time it will become
31 very cold, and then it will break to pieces and become finer and
32 finer until it becomes ether once more. Yet the particles will all
33 remain to form the material out of which another earth will be
34 projected. Again that will disappear, and another will come out. So
35 this universe will go back to its causes, and again its materials will
36 come together and take form, like the wave that goes down, rises
37 again, and takes shape. The acts of going back to causes and
38 coming out again, taking form, are called in Sanskrit Sankocha and
39 Vikasha, which mean shrinking and expanding. The whole universe,
40 as it were, shrinks, and then it expands again. To use the more
41 accepted words of modern science, they are involved and evolved.
42 You hear about evolution, how all forms grow from lower ones,
43 slowly growing up and up. This is very true, but each evolution
44 presupposes an involution. We know that the sum total of energy
45 that is displayed in the universe is the same at all times, and that
46 matter is indestructible. By no means can you take away one
47 particle of matter. You cannot take away a foot-pound of energy or
48 add one. The sum total is the same always. Only the manifestation
49 varies, being involved and evolved. So this cycle is the evolution out
50 of the involution of the previous cycle, and this cycle will again be
51 involved, getting finer and finer, and out of that will come the next
52 cycle. The whole universe is going on in this fashion. Thus we find
53 that there is no creation in the sense that something is created out

1 of nothing. To use a better word, there is manifestation, and God is
2 the manifester of the universe. The universe, as it were, is being
3 breathed out of Him, and again it shrinks into Him, and again He
4 throws it out. A most beautiful simile is given in the Vedas--"That
5 eternal One breathes out this universe and breathes it in." Just as
6 we can breathe out a little particle of dust and breathe it in again.
7 That is all very good, but the question may be asked: How was it at
8 the first cycle? The answer is: What is the meaning of a first cycle?
9 There was none. If you can give a beginning to time, the whole
10 concept of time will be destroyed. Try to think of a limit where time
11 began, you have to think of time beyond that limit. Try to think
12 where space begins, you will have to think of space beyond that.
13 Time and space are infinite, and therefore have neither beginning
14 nor end. This is a better idea than that God created the universe in
15 five minutes and then went to sleep, and since then has been
16 sleeping.

17 On the other hand, this idea will give us God as the Eternal
18 Creator. Here is a series of waves rising and falling, and God is
19 directing this eternal process. As the universe is without beginning
20 and without end, so is God. We see that it must necessarily be so,
21 because if we say there was a time when there was no creation,
22 either in a gross or a fine form, then there was no God, because
23 God is known to us as Sakshi, the Witness of the universe. When
24 the universe did not exist, neither did He. One concept follows the
25 other. The idea of the cause we get from the idea of the effect, and
26 if there is no effect, there will be no cause. It naturally follows that
27 as the universe is eternal, God is eternal.

28 The soul must also be eternal. Why? In the first place we see
29 that the soul is not matter. It is neither a gross body, nor a fine body,
30 which we call mind or thought. It is neither a physical body, nor
31 what in Christianity is called a spiritual body. It is the gross body
32 and the spiritual body that are liable to change. The gross body is
33 liable to change almost every minute and dies, but the spiritual
34 body endures through long periods, until one becomes free, when it
35 also falls away. When a man becomes free, the spiritual body
36 disperses. The gross body disintegrates every time a man dies. The
37 soul not being made of any particles must be indestructible. What
38 do we mean by destruction? Destruction is disintegration of the
39 materials out of which anything is composed. If this glass is broken
40 into pieces, the materials will disintegrate, and that will be the
41 destruction of the glass. Disintegration of particles is what we mean
42 by destruction. It naturally follows that nothing that is not
43 composed of particles can be destroyed, can ever be disintegrated.
44 The soul is not composed of any materials. It is unity indivisible.
45 Therefore it must be indestructible. For the same reasons it must
46 also be without any beginning. So the soul is without any beginning
47 and end.

48 We have three entities. Here is nature which is infinite, but
49 changeful. The whole of nature is without beginning and end, but
50 within it are multifarious changes. It is like a river that runs down
51 to the sea for thousands of years. It is the same river always, but it
52 is changing every minute, the particles of water are changing their

1 position constantly. Then there is God, unchangeable, the ruler; and
2 there is the soul unchangeable as God, eternal but under the ruler.
3 One is the master, the other the servant, and the third one is
4 nature.

5 God being the cause of the projection, the continuance, and
6 the dissolution of the universe, the cause must be present to
7 produce the effect. Not only so, the cause becomes the effect. Glass
8 is produced out of certain materials and certain forces used by the
9 manufacturer. In the glass there are those forces plus the materials.
10 The forces used have become the force of adhesion, and if that
11 force goes, the glass will fall to pieces; the materials also are
12 undoubtedly in the glass. Only their form is changed. The cause has
13 become the effect. Wherever you see an effect you can always
14 analyse it into a cause, the cause manifests itself as the effect. It
15 follows, if God is the cause of the universe, and the universe is the
16 effect, that God has become the universe. If souls are the effect,
17 and God the cause, God has become the souls. Each soul, therefore,
18 is a part of God. "As from a mass of fire an infinite number of sparks
19 fly, even so from the Eternal One all this universe of souls has come
20 out."

21 We have seen that there is the eternal God, and there is
22 eternal nature. And there is also an infinite number of eternal souls.
23 This is the first stage in religion, it is called dualism, the stage when
24 man sees himself and God eternally separate, when God is a
25 separate entity by Himself and man is a separate entity by himself
26 and nature is a separate entity by itself. This is dualism, which
27 holds that the subject and the object are opposed to each other in
28 everything. When man looks at nature, he is the subject and nature
29 the object. He sees the dualism between subject and object. When
30 he looks at God, he sees God as the object and himself as the
31 subject. They are entirely separate. This is the dualism between
32 man and God. This is generally the first view of religion.

33 Then comes another view which I have just shown to you.
34 Man begins to find out that if God is the cause of the universe and
35 the universe the effect, God Himself must have become the
36 universe and the souls, and he is but a particle of which God is the
37 whole. We are but little beings, sparks of that mass of fire, and the
38 whole universe is a manifestation of God Himself. This is the next
39 step. In Sanskrit, it is called Vishishtadvaita. Just as I have this body
40 and this body covers the soul, and the soul is in and through this
41 body, so this whole universe of infinite souls and nature forms, as it
42 were, the body of God. When the period of involution comes, the
43 universe becomes finer and finer, yet remains the body of God.
44 When the gross manifestation comes, then also the universe
45 remains the body of God. Just as the human soul is the soul of the
46 human body and mind, so God is the Soul of our souls. All of you
47 have heard this expression in every religion, "Soul of our souls".
48 That is what is meant by it. He, as it were, resides in them, guides
49 them, is the ruler of them all. In the first view, that of dualism, each
50 one of us is an individual, eternally separate from God and nature.
51 In the second view, we are individuals, but not separate from God.
52 We are like little particles floating in one mass, and that mass is

1 God. We are individuals but one in God. We are all in Him. We are
2 all parts of Him, and therefore we are One. And yet between man
3 and man, man and God, there is a strict individuality, separate and
4 yet not separate.

5 Then comes a still finer question. The question is: Can infinity
6 have parts? What is meant by parts of infinity? If you reason it out,
7 you will find that it is impossible. Infinity cannot be divided, it
8 always remains infinite. If it could be divided, each part would be
9 infinite. And there cannot be two infinities. Suppose there were, one
10 would limit the other, and both would be finite. Infinity can only be
11 one, undivided. Thus the conclusion will be reached that the infinite
12 is one and not many, and that one Infinite Soul is reflecting itself
13 through thousands and thousands of mirrors, appearing as so many
14 different souls. It is the same Infinite Soul, which is the background
15 of the universe, that we call God. The same Infinite Soul also is the
16 background of the human mind which we call the human soul.

COSMOLOGY

There are two worlds, the microcosm, and the macrocosm, the internal and the external. We get truth from both of these by means of experience. The truth gathered from internal experience is psychology, metaphysics, and religion; from external experience, the physical sciences. Now a perfect truth should be in harmony with experiences in both these worlds. The microcosm must bear testimony to the macrocosm, and the macrocosm to the microcosm; physical truth must have its counterpart in the internal world, and the internal world must have its verification outside. Yet, as a rule, we find that many of these truths are in conflict. At one period of the world's history, the internals become supreme, and they begin to fight the externals. At the present time the externals, the physicists, have become supreme, and they have put down many claims of psychologists and metaphysicians. So far as my knowledge goes, I find that the real, essential parts of psychology are in perfect accord with the essential parts of modern physical knowledge. It is not given to one individual to be great in every respect; it is not given to one race or nation to be equally strong in the research of all fields of knowledge. The modern European nations are very strong in their research of external physical knowledge, but they are not so strong in their study of the inner nature of man. On the other hand, the Orientals have not been very strong in their researches of the external physical world, but very strong in their researches of the internal. Therefore we find that Oriental physics and other sciences are not in accordance with Occidental Science; nor is Occidental psychology in harmony with Oriental psychology. The Oriental physicists have been routed by Occidental scientists. At the same time, each claims to rest on truth; and as we stated before, real truth in any field of knowledge will not contradict itself; the truths internal are in harmony with the truths external.

We all know the theories of the cosmos according to the modern astronomers and physicists; and at the same time we all know how woefully they undermine the theology of Europe, how these scientific discoveries that are made act as a bomb thrown at its stronghold; and we know how theologians have in all times attempted to put down these researches.

1 I want here to go over the psychological ideas of the Orientals
2 about cosmology and all that pertains to it, and you will find how
3 wonderfully they are in accordance with the latest discoveries of
4 modern science; and where there is disharmony, you will find that it
5 is modern science which lacks and not they. We all use the word
6 nature. The old Sankhya philosophers called it by two different
7 names, Prakriti, which is very much the same as the word nature,
8 and the more scientific name, Avyakta, undifferentiated, from which
9 everything proceeds, such as atoms, molecules, and forces, mind,
10 thought, intelligence. It is startling to find that the philosophers and
11 metaphysicians of India stated ages ago that mind is material. What
12 are our present materialists trying to do, but to show that mind is
13 as much a product of nature as the body? And so is thought, and,
14 we shall find by and by, intelligence also: all issue from that nature
15 which is called Avyakta, the undifferentiated. The Sankhyas define
16 it as the *equilibrium* of three forces, one of which is called Sattva,
17 another Rajas, and the third Tamas. Tamas, the lowest force, is that
18 of attraction; a little higher is Rajas, that of repulsion; and the
19 highest is the balance of these two, Sattva; so that when these two
20 forces, attraction and repulsion, are held in perfect control by the
21 Sattva there is no creation, no movement in the world. As soon as
22 this equilibrium is lost, the balance is disturbed, and one of these
23 forces gets stronger than the other, motion sets in, and creation
24 begins. This state of things goes on cyclically, periodically. That is to
25 say, there is a period of disturbance of the balance, when forces
26 begin to combine and recombine, and things project outwards. At
27 the same time, everything has a tendency to go back to the primal
28 state of equilibrium, and the time comes when that total
29 annihilation of all manifestation is reached. Again, after a period,
30 the whole thing is disturbed, projected outwards, and again it
31 slowly goes down--like waves. All motion, everything in this
32 universe, can be likened to waves undergoing successive rise and
33 fall. Some of these philosophers hold that the whole universe quiets
34 down for a period. Others hold that this quieting down applies only
35 to systems; that is to say, that while our system here, this solar
36 system, will quiet down and go back into the undifferentiated state,
37 millions of other systems will go the other way, and will project
38 outwards. I should favor the second opinion, that this quieting down
39 is not simultaneous over the whole of the universe, and that in
40 different parts different things go on. But the principle remains the
41 same, that all we see--that is, nature herself--is progressing in
42 successive rises and falls. The one stage, falling down, going back
43 to balance, the perfect equilibrium, is called Pralaya, the end of a
44 cycle. The projection and the Pralaya of the universe have been
45 compared by theistical writers in India to the outbreathing and
46 inbreathing of God; God, as it were, breathes out the universe, and
47 it comes into Him again. When it quiets down, what becomes of the
48 universe? It exists, only in finer forms, in the form of cause, as it is
49 called in the Sankhya philosophy. It does not get rid of causation,
50 time, and space; they are there, only it comes to very fine and
51 minute forms. Supposing that this whole universe begins to shrink,
52 till every one of us becomes just a little molecule, we should not feel
53 the change at all, because everything relating to us would be

1 shrinking at the same time. The whole thing goes down, and again
2 projects out, the cause brings out the effect, and so it goes on.

3 What we call matter in modern times was called by the
4 ancient psychologists Bhutas, the external elements. There is one
5 element which, according to them, is eternal; every other element
6 is produced out of this one. It is called Akasha. It is somewhat
7 similar to the idea of ether of the moderns, though not exactly
8 similar. Along with this element, there is the primal energy called
9 Prana. Prana and Akasha combine and recombine and form the
10 elements out of them. Then at the end of the Kalpa everything
11 subsides, and goes back to Akasha and Prana. There is in the Rig-
12 Veda, the oldest human writing in existence, a beautiful passage
13 describing creation, and it is most poetical--"When there was
14 neither aught nor naught, when darkness was rolling over
15 darkness, what existed?" and the answer is given, "It then existed
16 without vibration". This Prana existed then, but there was no
17 motion in it; Anidavatam means "existed without vibration".
18 Vibration had stopped. Then when the Kalpa begins, after an
19 immense interval, the Anidavatam (unvibrating atom) commences
20 to vibrate, and blow after blow is given by Prana to Akasha. The
21 atoms become condensed, and as they are condensed different
22 elements are formed. We generally find these things very curiously
23 translated; people do not go to the philosophers or the
24 commentators for their translation, and have not the brains to
25 understand them themselves. A silly man reads three letters of
26 Sanskrit and translates a whole book. They translate the elements
27 as air, fire, and so on; if they would go to the commentators, they
28 would find they do not mean air or anything of that sort.

1 The Akasha, acted upon by the repeated blows of Prana,
2 produces Vayu or vibrations. This Vayu vibrates, and the vibrations
3 growing more and more rapid result in friction giving rise to heat,
4 Tejas. Then this heat ends in liquefaction, Apah. Then that liquid
5 becomes solid. We had ether, and motion, then came heat, then it
6 became liquefied, and then it condensed into gross matter; and it
7 goes back in exactly the reverse way. The solid will be liquefied and
8 will then be converted into a mass of heat, and that will slowly get
9 back into motion; that motion will stop, and this Kalpa will be
10 destroyed. Then, again it will come back and again dissolve into
11 ether. Prana cannot work alone without the help of Akasha. All that
12 we know in the form of motion, vibration, or thought is a
13 modification of the Prana, and everything that we know in the
14 shape of matter, either as form or as resistance, is a modification of
15 the Akasha. The Prana cannot live alone, or act without a medium;
16 when it is pure Prana, it has the Akasha itself to live in, and when it
17 changes into forces of nature, say gravitation, or centrifugal force,
18 it must have matter. You have never seen force without matter or
19 matter without force; what we call force and matter are simply the
20 gross manifestations of these same things, which, when superfine,
21 are called Prana and Akasha. Prana you can call in English life, the
22 vital force; but you must not restrict it to the life of man; at the
23 same time you must not identify it with Spirit, Atman. So this goes
24 on. Creation cannot have either a beginning or an end; it is an
25 eternal on-going.

26 We shall state another position of these old psychologists,
27 which is that all gross things are the results of fine ones. Everything
28 that is gross is composed of fine things, which they call the
29 Tanmatras, the fine particles. I smell a flower. To smell, something
30 must come in contact with my nose; the flower is there, but I do not
31 see it move towards me. That which comes from the flower and in
32 contact with my nose is called the Tanmatra, fine molecules of that
33 flower. So with heat, light and everything. These Tanmatras can
34 again be subdivided into atoms. Different philosophers have
35 different theories, and we know these are only theories. It is
36 sufficient for our purpose to know that everything gross is
37 composed of things that are very, very fine. We first get the gross
38 elements which we feel externally, and then come the fine elements
39 with which the nose, eyes, and ears come in contact. Ether waves
40 touch my eyes; I cannot see them, yet I know they must come in
41 contact with my eyes before I can see light.

42 Here are the eyes, but the eyes do not see. Take away the
43 brain centre; the eyes will still be there, as also the picture of the
44 outside world complete on the retinae; yet the eyes will not see. So
45 the eyes are only a secondary instrument, not the organ of vision.
46 The organ of vision is the nerve-centre in the brain. Likewise the
47 nose is an instrument, and there is an organ behind it. The senses
48 are simply the external instruments. It may be said that these
49 different organs, Indriyas, as they are called in Sanskrit, are the
50 real seats of perception.

51 It is necessary for the mind to be joined to an organ to
52 perceive. It is a common experience that we do not hear the clock

1 strike when we happen to be buried in study. Why? The ear was
2 there, the sound was carried through it to the brain; yet it was not
3 heard, because the mind did not attach itself to the organ of
4 hearing.

5 There is a different organ for each different instrument. For, if
6 one served for all, we should find that when the mind joined itself to
7 it, all the senses would be equally active. But it is not so, as we have
8 seen from the instance of the clock. If there was only one organ for
9 all the instruments, the mind would see and hear at the same time,
10 would see and hear and smell at the same time, and it would be
11 impossible for it not to do all these at one and the same time.
12 Therefore it is necessary that there should be a separate organ for
13 each sense. This has been borne out by modern physiology. It is
14 certainly possible for us to hear and see at the same time, but that
15 is because the mind attaches itself partially to the two centres.

16 What are the organs made of? We see that the instruments--
17 eyes, nose, and ears--are made of gross materials. The organs are
18 also made of matter. Just as the body is composed of gross
19 materials, and manufactures Prana into different gross forces, so
20 the organs are composed of the fine elements, Akasha, Vayu, Tejas,
21 etc., and manufacture Prana into the finer forces of perception. The
22 organs, the Prana functions, the mind and the Buddhi combined,
23 are called the finer body of man--the Linga or Sukshma Sharira. The
24 Linga Sharira has a real form because everything material must
25 have a form.

26 The mind is called the Manas, the Chitta in Vritti or vibrating,
27 the unsettled state. If you throw a stone in a lake, first there will be
28 vibration, and then resistance. For a moment the water will vibrate
29 and then it will react on the stone. So when any impression comes
30 on the Chitta, it first vibrates a little. That is called the Manas. The
31 mind carries the impression farther in, and presents it to the
32 determinative faculty, Buddhi, which reacts. Behind Buddhi is
33 Ahamkara, egoism, the self-consciousness which says, "I am".
34 Behind Ahamkara is Mahat, intelligence, the highest form of
35 nature's existence. Each one is the effect of the succeeding one. In
36 the case of the lake, every blow that comes to it is from the external
37 world, while in the case of the mind, the blow may come either from
38 the external or the internal world. Behind the intelligence is the
39 Self of man, the Purusha, the Atman, the pure, the perfect, who
40 alone is the seer, and for whom is all this change.

41 Man looks on all these changes; he himself is never impure;
42 but through what the Vedantists call Adhyasa, by reflection, by
43 implication, he seems to be impure. It is like the appearance of a
44 crystal when a red or a blue flower is brought before it: the colour
45 is reflected on it, but the crystal itself is pure. We shall take it for
46 granted that there are many selves, and each self is pure and
47 perfect; various kinds of gross and fine matter superimpose
48 themselves on the self and make it multicoloured. Why does nature
49 do all this? Nature is undergoing all these changes for the
50 development of the soul; all this creation is for the benefit of the
51 soul, so that it may be free. This immense book which we call the
52 universe is stretched out before man so that he may read: and he

1 discovers eventually that he is an omniscient and omnipotent being.
2 I must here tell you that some of our best psychologists do not
3 believe in God in the sense in which you believe in Him. The father
4 of our psychology, Kapila, denies the existence of God. His idea is
5 that a Personal God is quite unnecessary; nature itself is sufficient
6 to work out the whole of creation. What is called the Design Theory,
7 he knocked on the head, and said that a more childish theory was
8 never advanced. But he admits a peculiar kind of God. He says we
9 are all struggling to get free; and when we become free, we can, as
10 it were, melt away into nature, only to come out at the beginning of
11 the next cycle and be its ruler. We come out omniscient and
12 omnipotent beings. In that sense we can be called Gods: you and I
13 and the humblest beings can be Gods in different cycles. He says
14 such a God will be temporal; but an eternal God, eternally
15 omnipotent and ruler of the universe, cannot be. If there was such a
16 God, there would be this difficulty: He must be either a bound spirit
17 or a free one. A God who is perfectly free would not create; there is
18 no necessity for it. If He were bound, He would not create, because
19 He could not: He would be powerless. In either case, there cannot
20 be any omniscient or omnipotent eternal ruler. In our scriptures,
21 wherever the word God is mentioned, he says, it means those
22 human beings who have become free.

23 Kapila does not believe in the unity of all souls. His analysis,
24 so far as it goes, is simply marvellous. He is the father of Indian
25 thinkers; Buddhism and other systems are the outcome of his
26 thought.

27 According to his psychology, all souls can regain their
28 freedom and their natural rights, which are omnipotence and
29 omniscience. But the question arises: Where is this bondage?
30 Kapila says it is without beginning. But if it is without beginning, it
31 must be without end, and we shall never be free. He says that
32 though bondage is without beginning, it is not of that constant
33 uniform character as the soul is. In other words, nature (the cause
34 of bondage) is without beginning and end, but not in the same
35 sense as soul, because nature has no individuality; it is like a river
36 which gets a fresh body of water every moment; the sum total of
37 these bodies of water is the river, but the river is not a constant
38 quantity. Everything in nature is constantly changing, but the soul
39 never changes; so, as nature is always changing, it is possible for
40 the soul to come out of its bondage.

41 The whole of the universe is built upon the same plan as a
42 part of it. So, just as I have a mind, there is a cosmic mind. As in the
43 individual, so in the universal. There is the universal gross body;
44 behind that, a universal fine body; behind that, a universal mind;
45 behind that, a universal egoism, or consciousness; and behind that,
46 a universal intelligence. And all this is in nature, the manifestation
47 of nature, not outside of it.

48 We have gross bodies from our parents, as also our
49 consciousness. Strict heredity says my body is a part of my parents'
50 bodies, the material of my consciousness and egoism is a part of my
51 parents'. We can add to the little portion inherited from our parents
52 by drawing upon the universal consciousness. There is an infinite

1 store-house of intelligence out of which we draw what we require;
2 there is an infinite storehouse of mental force in the universe out of
3 which we are drawing eternally; but the seed must come from the
4 parents. Our theory is heredity coupled with reincarnation. By the
5 law of heredity, the reincarnating soul receives from parents the
6 material out of which to manufacture a man.

7 Some of the European philosophers have asserted that this
8 world exists because I exist; and if I do not exist, the world will not
9 exist. Sometimes it is stated thus: If all people in the world were to
10 die, and there were no more human beings, and no animals with
11 powers of perception and intelligence, all these manifestations
12 would disappear. But these European philosophers do not know the
13 psychology of it, although they know the principle; modern
14 philosophy has got only a glimpse of it. This becomes easy of
15 understanding when looked at from the Sankhya point of view.
16 According to Sankhya, it is impossible for anything to be, which has
17 not as its material some portion of my mind. I do not know this table
18 as it is. An impression from it comes to the eyes, then to the
19 Indriya, and then to the mind; and the mind reacts, and that
20 reaction is what I call the table. It is just the same as throwing a
21 stone in a lake; the lake throws a wave towards the stone; this wave
22 is what we know. What is external nobody knows; when I try to
23 know it, it has to become that material which I furnish. I, with my
24 own mind, have furnished the material for my eyes. There is
25 something which is outside, which is only the occasion, the
26 suggestion, and upon that suggestion I project my mind; and it
27 takes the form that I see. How do we all see the same things?
28 Because we all have similar parts of the cosmic mind. Those who
29 have like minds will see like things, and those who have not will not
30 see alike.

A STUDY OF THE SANKHYA PHILOSOPHY

Prakriti is called by the Sankhya philosophers indiscrete, and defined as the perfect balance of the materials in it; and it naturally follows that in perfect balance there cannot be any motion. In the primal state before any manifestation, when there was no motion but perfect balance, this Prakriti was indestructible, because decomposition or death comes from instability or change. Again, according to the Sankhya, atoms are not the primal state. This universe does not come out of atoms: they may be the secondary or the tertiary state. The primordial material may form into atoms and become grosser and bigger things; and as far as modern investigations go, they rather point towards the same conclusion. For instance, in the modern theory of ether, if you say ether is atomic, it will not solve anything. To make it clearer, say that air is composed of atoms, and we know that ether is everywhere, interpenetrating, omnipresent, and that these air atoms are floating, as it were, in ether. If ether again be composed of atoms, there will still be spaces between every two atoms of ether. What fills up these? If you suppose that there is another ether still finer which does this, there will again be other spaces between the atoms of that finer ether which require filling up, and so it will be *regressus ad infinitum*, what the Sankhya philosophers call the "cause leading to nothing". So the atomic theory cannot be final. According to Sankhya, nature is omnipresent, one omnipresent mass of nature, in which are the causes of everything that exists. What is meant by cause? Cause is the fine state of the manifested state; the unmanifested state of that which becomes manifested. What do you mean by destruction? It is reverting to the cause. If you have a piece of pottery and give it a blow, it is destroyed. What is meant by that is that the effects go back to their own nature, the materials out of which the pottery was created go back into their original state. Beyond this idea of destruction, any idea such as annihilation is on the face of it absurd. According to modern physical science, it can be demonstrated that all destruction means that which Kapila said ages ago--simply reverting to the cause. Going back to the finer form is all that is meant by destruction. You know how it can be demonstrated in a laboratory that matter is indestructible. At this present stage of our knowledge, if any man stands up and says that matter or this soul becomes annihilated, he is only making himself ridiculous; it is only uneducated, silly people who would advance such a proposition; and it is curious that modern knowledge coincides with what those old philosophers taught. It must be so, and that is the proof of truth. They proceeded in their inquiry taking up mind as the basis; they analysed the mental part of this universe and came to certain conclusions, which we, analysing the physical part, must come to, for they both must lead to the same centre.

You must remember that the first manifestation of this Prakriti in the cosmos is what the Sankhya calls "Mahat". We may

1 call it intelligence--the great principle, its literal meaning. The first
2 change in Prakriti is this intelligence; I would not translate it by
3 self-consciousness, because that would be wrong. Consciousness is
4 only a part of this intelligence. Mahat is universal. It covers all the
5 grounds of sub-consciousness, consciousness, and super-
6 consciousness; so any one state of consciousness, as applied to this
7 Mahat, would not be sufficient. In nature, for instance, you note
8 certain changes going on before your eyes which you see and
9 understand, but there are other changes, so much finer, that no
10 human perception can catch them.

1 They are from the same cause, the same Mahat is making
2 these changes. Out of Mahat comes universal egoism. These are all
3 substance. There is no difference between matter and mind, except
4 in degree. The substance is the same in finer or grosser form; one
5 changes into the other, and this exactly coincides with the
6 conclusions of modern physiological research. By believing in the
7 teaching that the mind is not separate from the brain, you will be
8 saved from much fighting and struggling. Egoism again changes
9 into two varieties. In one variety it changes into the organs. Organs
10 are of two kinds, organs of sensation and organs of reaction. They
11 are not the eyes or the ears, but back of those are what you call
12 brain-centres, and nerve-centres, and so on. This egoism, this
13 matter or substance, becomes changed, and out of this material are
14 manufactured these centres. Of the same substance is
15 manufactured the other variety, the Tanmantras, fine particles of
16 matter, which strike our organs of perception and bring about
17 sensations. You cannot perceive them but only know they are there.
18 Out of the Tanmatras is manufactured the gross matter-earth,
19 water, and all the things that we see and feel. I want to impress this
20 on your mind. It is very hard to grasp it, because in Western
21 countries the ideas are so queer about mind and matter. It is hard
22 to get those impressions out of our brains. I myself had a
23 tremendous difficulty, being educated in Western philosophy in my
24 boyhood. These are all cosmic things. Think of this universal
25 extension of matter, unbroken, one substance, undifferentiated,
26 which is the first state of everything, and which begins to change in
27 the same way as milk becomes curd. This first change is called
28 Mahat. The substance Mahat changes into the grosser matter
29 called egoism. The third change is manifested as universal sense-
30 organs, and universal fine particles, and these last again combine
31 and become this gross universe which with eyes, nose, and ears, we
32 see, smell and hear. This is the cosmic plan according to the
33 Sankhya, and what is in the cosmos must also be micro-cosmic.
34 Take an individual man. He has first a part of undifferentiated
35 nature in him, and that material nature in him becomes changed
36 into this Mahat, a small particle of this universal intelligence, and
37 this particle of universal intelligence in him becomes changed into
38 egoism, and then into sense-organs and the fine particles of matter
39 which combine and manufacture his body. I want this to be clear,
40 because it is the stepping-stone to Sankhya, and it is absolutely
41 necessary for you to understand it, because this is the basis of the
42 philosophy of the whole world. There is no philosophy in the world
43 that is not indebted to Kapila. Pythagoras came to India and studied
44 this philosophy, and that was the beginning of the philosophy of the
45 Greeks. Later, it formed the Alexandrian school, and still later, the
46 Gnostic. It became divided into two; one part went to Europe and
47 Alexandria, and the other remained in India; and out of this, the
48 system of Vyasa was developed. The Sankhya philosophy of Kapila
49 was the first rational system that the world ever saw. Every
50 metaphysician in the world must pay homage to him. I want to
51 impress on your mind that we are bound to listen to him as the
52 great father of philosophy. This wonderful man, the most ancient of
53 philosophers, is mentioned even in the Shruti: "O Lord, Thou who

1 produced the sage Kapila in the beginning." How wonderful his
2 perceptions were, and if there is any proof required of the
3 extraordinary power of the perception of Yogis, such men are the
4 proof. They had no microscopes or telescopes. Yet how fine their
5 perception was, how perfect and wonderful their analysis of things!

6 I will here point out the difference between Schopenhauer
7 and the Indian philosophy. Schopenhauer says that desire, or will, is
8 the cause of everything. It is the will to exist that makes us
9 manifest, but we deny this.

10 The will is identical with the motor nerves. When I see an
11 object there is no will; when its sensations are carried to the brain,
12 there comes the reaction, which says "Do this", or "Do not do this",
13 and this state of the ego-substance is what is called will. There
14 cannot be a single particle of will which is not a reaction. So many
15 things precede will. It is only a manufactured something out of the
16 ego, and the ego is a manufacture of something still higher--the
17 intelligence--and that again is a modification of the indiscrete
18 nature. That was the Buddhistic idea, that whatever we see is the
19 will. It is psychologically entirely wrong, because will can only be
20 identified with the motor nerves. If you take out the motor nerves, a
21 man has no will whatever. This fact, as is perhaps well known to
22 you, has been found out after a long series of experiments made
23 with the lower animals.

24 We will take up this question. It is very important to
25 understand this question of Mahat in man, the great principle, the
26 intelligence. This intelligence itself is modified into what we call
27 egoism, and this intelligence is the cause of all the powers in the
28 body. It covers the whole ground, sub-consciousness,
29 consciousness, and super-consciousness. What are these three
30 states? The sub-conscious state we find in animals, which we call
31 instinct. This is almost infallible, but very limited. Instinct rarely
32 fails. An animal almost instinctively knows a poisonous herb from
33 an edible one, but its instinct is very limited. As soon as something
34 new comes, it is blind. It works like a machine. Then comes a higher
35 state of knowledge which is fallible and makes mistakes often, but
36 has a larger scope, although it is slow, and this you call reason. It is
37 much larger than instinct, but instinct is surer than reason. There
38 are more chances of mistakes in reasoning than in instinct. There is
39 a still higher state of the mind, the super-conscious, which belongs
40 only to Yogis, to men who have cultivated it. This is infallible and
41 much more unlimited in its scope than reason. This is the highest
42 state. So we must remember, this Mahat is the real cause of all that
43 is here, that which manifests itself in various ways, covers the
44 whole ground of sub-conscious, conscious, and super-conscious, the
45 three states in which knowledge exists.

46 Now comes a delicate question which is being always asked.
47 If a perfect God created the universe, why is there imperfection in
48 it? What we call the universe is what we see, and that is only this
49 little plane of consciousness and reason; beyond that we do not see
50 at all. Now the very question is an impossible one. If I take only a
51 small portion out of a mass of something and look at it, it seems to
52 be inharmonious. Naturally. The universe is inharmonious because

1 we make it so. How? What is reason? What is knowledge?
2 Knowledge is finding the association about things. You go into the
3 street and see a man and say, I know this is a man; because you
4 remember the impressions on your mind, the marks on the Chitta.
5 You have seen many men, and each one has made an impression on
6 your mind; and as you see this man, you refer this to your store and
7 see many similar pictures there; and when you see them, you are
8 satisfied, and you put this new one with the rest. When a new
9 impression comes and it has associations in your mind, you are
10 satisfied; and this state of association is called knowledge.
11 Knowledge is, therefore, pigeon-holing one experience with the
12 already existing fund of experience, and this is one of the great
13 proofs of the fact that you cannot have any knowledge until you
14 have already a fund in existence. If you are without experience, as
15 some European philosophers think, and that your mind is a *tabula*
16 *rasa* to begin with, you cannot get any knowledge, because the
17 very fact of knowledge is the recognition of the new by means of
18 associations already existing in the mind. There must be a store at
19 hand to which to refer a new impression. Suppose a child is born
20 into this world without such a fund, it would be impossible for him
21 ever to get any knowledge. Therefore, the child must have been
22 previously in a state in which he had a fund, and so knowledge is
23 eternally increasing. Show me a way of getting round this
24 argument. It is a mathematical fact. Some Western schools of
25 philosophy also hold that there cannot be knowledge without a fund
26 of past knowledge. They have framed the idea that the child is born
27 with knowledge. These Western philosophers say that the
28 impressions with which the child comes into the world are not due
29 to the child's past, but to the experiences of his forefathers: it is
30 only hereditary transmission. Soon they will find out that this idea is
31 all wrong; some German philosophers are now giving hard blows to
32 these heredity ideas. Heredity is very good, but incomplete, it only
33 explains the physical side. How do you explain the environments
34 influencing us? Many causes produce one effect. Environment is
35 one of the modifying effects. We make our own environment; as our
36 past is, so we find the present environment. A drunken man
37 naturally gravitates to the lowest slums of the city.

38 You understand what is meant by knowledge. Knowledge is
39 pigeon-holing a new impression with old ones, recognising a new
40 impression. What is meant by recognition? Finding associations
41 with similar impressions that one already has. Nothing further is
42 meant by knowledge. If that is the case, if knowledge means finding
43 the associations, then it must be that to know anything we have to
44 see the whole series of its similars. Is it not so? Suppose you take a
45 pebble; to find the association, you have to see the whole series of
46 pebbles similar to it. But with our perception of the universe as a
47 whole we cannot do that, because in the pigeon-hole of our mind
48 there is only one single record of the perception, we have no other
49 perception of the same nature or class, we cannot compare it with
50 any other. We cannot refer it to its associations. This bit of the
51 universe, cut off by our consciousness, is a startling new thing,
52 because we have not been able to find its associations. Therefore,
53 we are struggling with it, and thinking it horrible, wicked, and bad;

1 we may sometimes think it is good, but we always think it is
2 imperfect. It is only when we find its associations that the universe
3 can be known. We shall recognise it when we go beyond the
4 universe and consciousness, and then the universe will stand
5 explained. Until we can do that, all the knocking of our heads
6 against a wall will never explain the universe, because knowledge is
7 the finding of similars, and this conscious plane only gives us one
8 single perception of it. So with our idea of God. All that we see of
9 God is only a part, just as we see only one portion of the universe,
10 and all the rest is beyond human cognition. "I, the universal; so
11 great am I that even this universe is but a part of Me." That is why
12 we see God as imperfect, and do not understand Him. The only way
13 to understand Him and the universe is to go beyond reason, beyond
14 consciousness. "When thou goest beyond the heard and the
15 hearing, the thought and the thinking, then alone wilt thou come to
16 Truth." "Go thou beyond the scriptures, because they teach only up
17 to nature, up to the three qualities." When we go beyond them, we
18 find the harmony, and not before.

19 The microcosm and the macrocosm are built on exactly the
20 same plan, and in the microcosm we know only one part, the middle
21 part. We know neither the sub-conscious, nor the super-conscious.
22 We know the conscious only. If a man stands up and says, "I am a
23 sinner", he makes an untrue statement because he does not know
24 himself. He is the most ignorant of men; of himself he knows only
25 one part, because his knowledge covers only a part of the ground
26 he is on. So with this universe, it is possible to know only a part of it
27 with the reason, not the whole of it; for the sub-conscious, the
28 conscious and the super-conscious, the individual Mahat and the
29 universal Mahat, and all the subsequent modifications, constitute
30 the universe.

31 What makes nature (Prakriti) change? We see so far that
32 everything, all Prakriti, is Jada, insentient. It is all compound and
33 insentient. Wherever there is law, it is proof that the region of its
34 play is insentient. Mind, intelligence, will, and everything else is
35 insentient. But they are all reflecting the sentiency, the "Chit" of
36 some being who is beyond all this, whom the Sankhya philosophers
37 call "Purusha". The Purusha is the unwitting cause of all the
38 changes in the universe. That is to say, this Purusha, taking Him in
39 the universal sense, is the God of the universe. It is said that the
40 will of the Lord created the universe. It is very good as a common
41 expression, but we see it cannot be true. How could it be will? Will
42 is the third or fourth manifestation in nature. Many things exist
43 before it, and *what created them* ? Will is a compound, and
44 everything that is a compound is a product of nature. Will,
45 therefore, could not create nature. So, to say that the will of the
46 Lord created the universe is meaningless. Our will only covers a
47 little portion of self-consciousness and moves our brain. It is not will
48 that is working your body or that is working the universe. This body
49 is being moved by a power of which will is only a manifestation in
50 one part. Likewise in the universe there is will, but that is only one
51 part of the universe. The whole of the universe is not guided by will;
52 that is why we cannot explain it by the will theory. Suppose I take it

1 for granted that it is will moving the body, then, when I find I cannot
2 work it at will, I begin to fret and fume. It is my fault, because I had
3 no right to take the will theory for granted. In the same way, if I
4 take the universe and think it is will that moves it and find things
5 which do not coincide, it is my fault. So the Purusha is not will;
6 neither can it be intelligence, because intelligence itself is a
7 compound. There cannot be any intelligence without some sort of
8 matter corresponding to the brain. Wherever there is intelligence,
9 there must be something akin to that matter which we call brain
10 which becomes lumped together into a particular form and serves
11 the purpose of the brain. Wherever there is intelligence, there must
12 be that matter in some form or other. But intelligence itself is a
13 compound. What then is this Purusha? It is neither intelligence nor
14 will, but it is the cause of all these. It is its presence that sets them
15 all going and combining. It does not mix with nature; it is not
16 intelligence, or Mahat; but the Self, the pure, is Purusha. "I am the
17 witness, and through my witnessing, nature is producing all that is
18 sentient and all that is insentient."

19 What is this sentiency in nature? We find intelligence is this
20 sentiency which is called Chit. The basis of sentiency is in the
21 Purusha, it is the nature of Purusha. It is that which cannot be
22 explained but which is the cause of all that we call knowledge.
23 Purusha is not consciousness, because consciousness is a
24 compound; but whatever is light and good in consciousness belongs
25 to Purusha. Purusha is not conscious, but whatever is light in
26 intelligence belongs to Purusha. Sentiency is in the Purusha, but
27 the Purusha is not intelligent, not knowing. The Chit in the Purusha
28 plus Prakriti is what we see around us. Whatever is pleasure and
29 happiness and light in the universe belongs to Purusha; but it is a
30 compound, because it is Purusha plus Prakriti. "Wherever there is
31 any happiness, wherever there is any bliss, there is a spark of that
32 immortality which is God." "Purusha is the great attraction of the
33 universe, yet it attracts the whole universe." You see a man going
34 after gold, because behind it is a spark of the Purusha though
35 mixed up with a good deal of dirt. When a man loves his children or
36 a woman her husband, what is the attracting power? A spark of
37 Purusha behind them. It is there, only mixed up with "dirt". Nothing
38 else can attract. "In this world of insentiency the Purusha alone is
39 sentient." This is the Purusha of the Sankhya. As such, it
40 necessarily follows that the Purusha must be omnipresent. That
41 which is not omnipresent must be limited. All limitations are
42 caused; that which is caused must have a beginning and end. If the
43 Purusha is limited, it will die, will not be free, will not be final, but
44 must have some cause. Therefore it is omnipresent. According to
45 Kapila, there are many Purushas; not one, but an infinite number of
46 them. You and I have each of us one, and so has everyone else; an
47 infinite number of circles, each one infinite, running through this
48 universe. The Purusha is neither mind nor matter, the reflex from it
49 is all that we know. We are sure if it is omnipresent it has neither
50 death nor birth. Nature is casting her shadow upon it, the shadow
51 of birth and death, but it is by its nature pure. So far we have found
52 the philosophy of the Sankhya wonderful.

1 Next we shall take up the proofs against it. So far the analysis
2 is perfect, the psychology incontrovertible. We find by the division
3 of the senses into organs and instruments that they are not simple,
4 but compound; by dividing egoism into sense and matter, we find
5 that this is also material and that Mahat is also a state of matter,
6 and finally we find the Purusha. So far there is no objection. But if
7 we ask the Sankhya the question, "Who created nature?"--the
8 Sankhya says that the Purusha and the Prakriti are uncreate and
9 omnipresent, and that of this Purusha there is an infinite number.
10 We shall have to controvert these propositions, and find a better
11 solution, and by so doing we shall come to Advaitism. Our first
12 objection is, how can there be these *two* infinities? Then our
13 argument will be that the Sankhya is not a perfect generalisation,
14 and that we have not found in it a perfect solution. And then we
15 shall see how the Vedantists grope out of all these difficulties and
16 reach a perfect solution, and yet all the glory really belongs to the
17 Sankhya. It is very easy to give a finishing touch to a building when
18 it is constructed.

SANKHYA AND VEDANTA

I shall give you a resume of the Sankhya philosophy, through which we have been going. We, in this lecture, want to find where its defects are, and where Vedanta comes in and supplements it. You must remember that according to Sankhya philosophy, nature is the cause of all these manifestations which we call thought, intellect, reason, love, hatred, touch, taste, and matter. Everything is from nature. This nature consists of three sorts of elements, called Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas. These are not qualities, but elements, the materials out of which the whole universe is evolved. In the beginning of a cycle these remain in equilibrium; and when creation comes, they begin to combine and recombine and manifest as the universe. The first manifestation is what the Sankhya calls the Mahat or Intelligence, and out of that comes consciousness. According to Sankhya, this is an element (Tattva). And out of consciousness are evolved Manas or mind, the organs of the senses, and the Tanmatras (particles of sound, touch, etc.). All the fine particles are evolved from consciousness, and out of these fine particles come the gross elements which we call matter. The Tanmatras cannot be perceived; but when they become gross particles, we can feel and sense them.

1 The Chitta, in its threefold function of intelligence,
2 consciousness, and mind, works and manufactures the forces called
3 Prana. You must at once get rid of the idea that Prana is breath.
4 Breath is one effect of Prana. By Prana are meant the nervous
5 forces governing and moving the whole body, which also manifest
6 themselves as thought. The foremost and most obvious
7 manifestation of Prana is the breathing motion. Prana acts upon air,
8 and not air upon it. Controlling the breathing motion is pranayama.
9 Pranayama is practised to get mastery over this motion; the end is
10 not merely to control the breath or to make the lungs strong. That
11 is Delsarte, not Pranayama. These Pranas are the vital forces which
12 manipulate the whole body, while they in their turn are manipulated
13 by other organs in the body, which are called mind or internal
14 organs. So far so good. The psychology is very clear and most
15 precise; and yet it is the oldest rational thought in the world!
16 Wherever there is any philosophy or rational thought, it owes
17 something or other to Kapila. Pythagoras learnt it in India, and
18 taught it in Greece. Later on Plato got an inkling of it; and still later
19 the Gnostics carried the thought to Alexandria, and from there it
20 came to Europe. So wherever there is any attempt at psychology or
21 philosophy, the great father of it is this man, Kapila. So far we see
22 that his philosophy is wonderful; but we shall have to differ with
23 him on some points, as we go on. We find that the basic principle on
24 which Kapila works, is evolution. He makes one thing evolve out of
25 another, because his very definition of causation is "the cause
26 reproduced in another form," and because the whole universe, so
27 far as we see it, is progressive and evolving. We see clay; in another
28 form, we call it a pitcher. Clay was the cause and the pitcher the
29 effect. Beyond this we cannot have any idea of causation. Thus this
30 whole universe is evolved out of a material, out of Prakriti or
31 nature. Therefore, the universe cannot be essentially different from
32 its cause. According to Kapila, from undifferentiated nature to
33 thought or intellect, not one of them is what he calls the "Enjoyer"
34 or "Enlightener". Just as is a lump of clay, so is a lump of mind. By
35 itself the mind has no light; but we see it reasons. Therefore there
36 must be some one behind it, whose light is percolating through
37 Mahat and consciousness, and subsequent modifications, and this is
38 what Kapila calls the Purusha, the Self of the Vedantin. According
39 to Kapila, the Purusha is a simple entity, not a compound; he is
40 immaterial, the only one who is immaterial, and all these various
41 manifestations are material. I see a black-board. First, the external
42 instruments will bring that sensation to the nerve centre, to the
43 Indriya according to Kapila; from the centre it will go to the mind
44 and make an impression; the mind will present it to the Buddhi, but
45 Buddhi cannot act; the action comes, as it were, from the Purusha
46 behind. These, so to speak, are all his servants, bringing the
47 sensations to him, and he, as it were, gives the orders, reacts, is the
48 enjoyer, the perceiver, the real One, the King on his throne, the Self
49 of man, who is immaterial. Because he is immaterial, it necessarily
50 follows that he must be infinite, he cannot have any limitation
51 whatever. Each one of the Purushas is omnipresent; each one of us
52 is omnipresent, but we can act only through the Linga Sharira, the
53 fine body. The mind, the self-consciousness, the organs, the vital

1 forces compose the fine body or sheath, what in Christian
2 philosophy is called the spiritual body of man. It is this body that
3 gets salvation, or punishment, or heaven, that incarnates and
4 reincarnates, because we see from the very beginning that the
5 going and the coming of the Purusha or soul are impossible. Motion
6 means going or coming, and what goes or comes from one place to
7 another cannot be omnipresent. Thus far we see from Kapila's
8 psychology that the soul is infinite, and that the soul is the only
9 thing which is not composed of nature. He is the only one that is
10 outside of nature, but he has got bound by nature, apparently.
11 Nature is around him, and he has identified himself with it. He
12 thinks, "I am the Linga Sharira", "I am the gross matter, the gross
13 body", and as such he enjoys pleasure and pain, but they do not
14 really belong to him, they belong to the Linga Sharira or the fine
15 body.

16 The meditative state is called always the highest state by the
17 Yogi, when it is neither a passive nor an active state; in it you
18 approach nearest to the Purusha. The soul has neither pleasure nor
19 pain; it is the witness of everything, the eternal witness of all work,
20 but it takes no fruits from any work. As the sun is the cause of sight
21 of every eye, but is not itself affected by any defects in the eye or as
22 when a crystal has red or blue flowers placed before it, the crystal
23 looks red or blue, and yet it is neither; so, the soul is neither passive
24 nor active, it is beyond both. The nearest way of expressing this
25 state of the soul is that it is meditation. This is Sankhya philosophy.

26 Next, Sankhya says, that the manifestation of nature is for the
27 soul; all combinations are for some third person. The combinations
28 which you call nature, these constant changes are going on for the
29 enjoyment of the soul, for its liberation, that it may gain all this
30 experience from the lowest to the highest. When it has gained it,
31 the soul finds it was never in nature, that it was entirely separate,
32 that it is indestructible, that it cannot go and come; that going to
33 heaven and being born again were in nature, and not in the soul.
34 Thus the soul becomes free. All nature is working for the enjoyment
35 and experience of the soul. It is getting this experience in order to
36 reach the goal, and that goal is freedom. But the souls are many
37 according to the Sankhya philosophy. There is an infinite number of
38 souls. The other conclusion of Kapila is that there is no God as the
39 Creator of the universe. Nature is quite sufficient by itself to
40 account for everything. God is not necessary, says the Sankhya.

41 The Vedanta says that the Soul is in its nature Existence
42 absolute, Knowledge absolute, Bliss absolute. But these are not
43 qualities of the Soul; they are one, not three, the essence of the
44 Soul; and it agrees with the Sankhya in thinking that intelligence
45 belongs to nature, inasmuch as it comes through nature. The
46 Vedanta also shows that what is called intelligence is a compound.

47 For instance, let us examine our perceptions. I see a black-
48 board. How does the knowledge come? What the German
49 philosophers call "the thing-in-itself" of the black-board is unknown,
50 I can never know it. Let us call it x. The black-board x acts on my
51 mind, and the mind reacts. The mind is like a lake. Throw a stone in
52 a lake and a reactionary wave comes towards the stone; this wave

1 is not like the stone at all, it is a wave. The black-board x is like a
2 stone which strikes the mind and the mind throws up a wave
3 towards it, and this wave is what we call the black-board. I see you.
4 You as reality are unknown and unknowable. You are x and you act
5 upon my mind, and the mind throws a wave in the direction from
6 which the impact comes, and that wave is what I call Mr. or Mrs.
7 So-and-so. There are two elements in the perception, one coming
8 from outside and the other from inside, and the combination of
9 these two, x + mind, is our external universe. All knowledge is by
10 reaction. In the case of a whale it has been determined by
11 calculation how long after its tail is struck, its mind reacts and the
12 whale feels the pain. Similar is the case with internal perception.
13 The real self within me is also unknown and unknowable. Let us call
14 it y. When I know myself as so-and-so, it is y + the mind. That y
15 strikes a blow on the mind. So our whole world is x + mind
16 (external), and y + mind (internal), x and y standing for the thing-in-
17 itself behind the external and the internal worlds respectively.

18 According to Vedanta, the three fundamental factors of
19 consciousness are, I exist, I know, and I am blessed. The idea that I
20 have no want, that I am restful, peaceful, that nothing can disturb
21 me, which comes from time to time, is the central fact of our being,
22 the basic principle of our life; and when it becomes limited, and
23 becomes a compound, it manifests itself as existence phenomenal,
24 knowledge phenomenal, and love. Every man exists, and every man
25 must know, and every man is mad for love. He cannot help loving.
26 Through all existence, from the lowest to the highest, all must love.
27 The y, the internal thing-in-itself, which, combining with mind,
28 manufactures existence, knowledge, and love, is called by the
29 Vedantists, Existence absolute, Knowledge absolute, Bliss absolute.
30 That real existence is limitless, unmixed, uncombined, knows no
31 change, is the free soul; when it gets mixed up, muddled up, as it
32 were, with the mind, it becomes what we call individual existence.
33 It is plant life, animal life, human life, just as universal space is cut
34 off in a room, in a jar, and so on. And that real knowledge is not
35 what we know, not intuition, nor reason, nor instinct. When that
36 degenerates and is confused, we call it intuition; when it
37 degenerates more, we call it reason; and when it degenerates still
38 more, we call it instinct. That knowledge itself is Vijnana, neither
39 intuition, nor reason nor instinct. The nearest expression for it is
40 all-knowingness. There is no limit to it, no combination in it. That
41 bliss, when it gets clouded over, we call love, attraction for gross
42 bodies or fine bodies, or for ideas. This is only a distorted
43 manifestation of that blessedness. Absolute Existence, absolute
44 Knowledge, and absolute Blessedness are not qualities of the soul,
45 but the essence; there is no difference between them and the soul.
46 And the three are one; we see the one thing in three different
47 aspects. They are beyond all relative knowledge. That eternal
48 knowledge of the Self percolating through the brain of man
49 becomes his intuition, reason, and so on. Its manifestation varies
50 according to the medium through which it shines. As soul, there is
51 no difference between man and the lowest animal, only the latter's
52 brain is less developed and the manifestation through it which we
53 call instinct is very dull. In a man the brain is much finer, so the

1 manifestation is much clearer, and in the highest man it becomes
2 entirely clear. So with existence; the existence which we know, the
3 limited sphere of existence, is simply a reflection of that real
4 existence which is the nature of the soul. So with bliss; that which
5 we call love or attraction is but the reflection of the external
6 blessedness of the Self. With manifestation comes limitation, but
7 the unmanifested, the essential nature of the soul, is unlimited; to
8 that blessedness there is no limit. But in love there is limitation. I
9 love you one day, I hate you the next. My love increases one day and
10 decreases the next, because it is only a manifestation.

11 The first point we will contend with Kapila is his idea of God.
12 Just as the series of modifications of Prakriti, beginning with the
13 individual intellect and ending with the individual body, require a
14 Purusha behind, as the ruler and governor, so, in the Cosmos, the
15 universal intellect, the universal egoism, the universal mind, all
16 universal fine and gross materials, must have a ruler and governor.
17 How will the cosmic series become complete without the universal
18 Purusha behind them all as the ruler and governor? If you deny a
19 universal Purusha behind the cosmic series, we deny your Purusha
20 behind the individual series. If it be true that behind the series of
21 graded, evolved individual manifestations, there stands One that is
22 beyond them all, the Purusha who is not composed of matter, the
23 very same logic will apply to the case of universal manifestations.
24 This Universal Self which is beyond the universal modifications of
25 Prakriti is what is called Ishwara, the Supreme Ruler, God.

26 Now comes the more important point of difference. Can there
27 be more than one Purusha? The Purusha, we have seen, is
28 omnipresent and infinite. The omnipresent, the infinite, cannot be
29 two. If there are two infinities A and B, the infinity A would limit the
30 infinity B, because the infinity B is not the infinity A, and the infinity
31 A is not the infinity B. Difference in identity means exclusion, and
32 exclusion means limitation. Therefore, A and B, limiting each other,
33 cease to be infinities. Hence, there can be but one infinity, that is,
34 one Purusha.

35 Now we will take up our x and y and show they are one. We
36 have shown how what we call the external world is x + mind, and
37 the internal world y + mind; x and y are both quantities unknown
38 and unknowable. All difference is due to time, space, and causation.
39 These are the constituent elements of the mind. No mentality is
40 possible without them. You can never think without time, you can
41 never imagine anything without space, and you can never have
42 anything without causation. These are the forms of the mind. Take
43 them away, and the mind itself does not exist. All difference is,
44 therefore, due to the mind. According to Vedanta, it is the mind, its
45 forms, that have limited x and y apparently and made them appear
46 as external and internal worlds. But x and y, being both beyond the
47 mind, are without difference and hence one. We cannot attribute
48 any quality to them, because qualities are born of the mind. That
49 which is qualityless must be one; x is without qualities, it only takes
50 qualities of the mind; so does y; therefore these x and y are one.
51 The whole universe is one. There is only one Self in the universe,
52 only One Existence, and that One Existence, when it passes through

1 the forms of time, space, and causation, is called by different
2 names, Buddhi, fine matter, gross matter, all mental and physical
3 forms. Everything in the universe is that One, appearing in various
4 forms. When a little part of it comes, as it were, into this network of
5 time, space, and causation, it takes forms; take off the network, and
6 it is all one. Therefore in Advaita philosophy, the whole universe is
7 all one in the Self which is called Brahman. That Self when it
8 appears behind the universe is called God. The same Self when it
9 appears behind this little universe, the body, is the soul. This very
10 soul, therefore, is the Self in man. There is only one Purusha, the
11 Brahman of the Vedanta ; God and man, analysed, are one in It. The
12 universe is you yourself, the unbroken you; you are throughout the
13 universe. "In all hands you work, through all mouths you eat,
14 through all nostrils you breathe, through all minds you think." The
15 whole universe is you; the universe is your body; you are the
16 universe both formed and unformed. You are the soul of the
17 universe and its body also. You are God, you are the angels, you are
18 man, you are animals, you are the plants, you are the minerals, you
19 are everything; the manifestation of everything is you. Whatever
20 exists is you. You are the Infinite. The Infinite cannot be divided. It
21 can have no parts, for each part would be infinite, and then the part
22 would be identical with the whole, which is absurd. Therefore the
23 idea that you are Mr. So-and-so can never be true; it is a day-dream.
24 Know this and be free. This is the Advaita conclusion. "I am neither
25 the body, nor the organs, nor am I the mind; I am Existence,
26 Knowledge, and Bliss absolute; I am He." This is true knowledge;
27 all reason and intellect, and everything else is ignorance. Where is
28 knowledge for me, for I am knowledge itself! Where is life for me,
29 for I am life itself! I am sure I live, for I am life, the One Being, and
30 nothing exists except through me, and in me, and as me. I am
31 manifested through the elements, but I am the free One. Who seeks
32 freedom? Nobody. If you think that you are bound, you remain
33 bound; you make your own bondage. If you know that you are free,
34 you are free this moment. This is knowledge, knowledge of
35 freedom. Freedom is the goal of all nature.

THE GOAL

(Delivered in San Francisco, March 27, 1900)

We find that man, as it were, is always surrounded by something greater than himself, and he is trying to grasp the meaning of this. Man will ever [seek] the highest ideal. He knows that it exists and that religion is the search after the highest ideal. At first all his searches were in the external plane--placed in heaven, in different places--just according to [his grasp] of the total nature of man.

[Later,] man began to look at himself a little closer and began to find out that the real "me" was not the "me" that he stands for ordinarily. As he appears to the senses is not the same as he really is. He began to [search] inside himself, and found out that...the same ideal he [had placed] outside of himself is all the time within; what he was worshipping outside was his own real inner nature. The difference between dualism and monism is that when the ideal is put outside [of oneself], it is dualism. When God is [sought] within, it is monism.

First, the old question of why and wherefore....How is it that man became limited? How did the Infinite become finite, the pure become impure? In the first place, you must never forget that this question can never be answered [by] any dualistic hypothesis.

Why did God create the impure universe? Why is man so miserable, made by a perfect, infinite, merciful Father? Why this heaven and earth, looking at which we get our conception of law? Nobody can imagine anything that he has not seen.

All the tortures we feel in this life, we put in another place and that is our hell....

Why did the infinite God make this world? [The dualist says:] Just as the potter makes pots. God the potter; we the pots....In more philosophical language the question is: How is it taken for granted that the real nature of man is pure, perfect, and infinite? This is the one difficulty found in any system of monism. Everything else is clean and clear. This question cannot be answered. The monists say the question itself is a contradiction.

Take the system of dualism--the question is asked why God created the world. This is contradictory. Why? Because--what is the idea of God? He is a being who cannot be acted upon by anything outside.

You and I are not free. I am thirsty. There is something called thirst, over which I have no control, [which] forces me to drink water. Every action of my body and even every thought of my mind is forced out of me. I have got to do it. That is why I am bound....I am forced to *do* this, to *have* this, and so on....And what is meant by why and wherefore? [Being subject to external forces.] Why do you drink water? Because thirst forces you. You are a slave. You never do anything of your own will because you are *forced* to do everything. Your only motive for action is some force....

1 The earth, by itself, would never move unless something
2 forced it. Why does the light burn? It does not burn unless
3 somebody comes and strikes a match. Throughout nature,
4 everything is bound. Slavery, slavery! To be in harmony with nature
5 is [slavery]. What is there in being the slave of nature and living in
6 a golden cage? The greatest law and order is in the [knowledge that
7 man is essentially free and divine]. Now we see that the question
8 why and wherefore can only be asked [in ignorance]. I can only be
9 forced to do something through something else.

10 [You say] God is free. Again you ask the question why God
11 creates the world. You contradict yourself. The meaning of God is
12 entirely free will. The question put in logical language is this: What
13 forced Him, who can never be forced by anybody, to create the
14 world? You say in the same question, What forced Him? The
15 question is nonsense. He is infinite by His very nature; He is free.
16 We shall answer questions when you can ask them in logical
17 language. Reason will tell you that there is only one Reality, nothing
18 else. Wherever dualism has risen, monism came to a head and
19 drove it out.

20 There is only one difficulty in understanding this. Religion is a
21 common-sense, everyday thing. The man in the street knows it if
22 you put it in his language and not [if it is put] in a philosopher's
23 language. It is a common thing in human nature to [project itself].
24 Think of your feeling with the child. [You identify yourself with it.
25 Then] you have two bodies. [Similarly] you can feel through your
26 husband's mind. Where can you stop? You can feel in infinite bodies.

27 Nature is conquered by man every day. As a race, man is
28 manifesting his power. Try in imagination to put a limit to this
29 power in man. You admit that man as a race has infinite power, has
30 [an] infinite body. The only question is what you are. Are you the
31 race or one [individual]? The moment you isolate yourself,
32 everything hurts you. The moment you expand and feel for others,
33 you gain help. The selfish man is the most miserable in the world.
34 The happiest is the man who is not at all selfish. He has become the
35 whole creation, the whole race, and God [is] within him.... So in
36 dualism--Christian, Hindu, and all religions--the code of ethics ...is:
37 Do not be selfish....Be unselfish. Do things for others! Expand!...

38 The ignorant can be made to understand [this] very easily,
39 and the learned can be made to understand still more easily. But
40 the man who has just got a speck of learning, him God himself
41 cannot make understand.[The truth is,] you are not separate [from
42 this universe]; [just as your Spirit] is [not] separate from the rest of
43 you. If [not] so, you could not see anything, could not feel anything.
44 Our bodies are simply little whirlpools in the ocean of matter. Life is
45 taking a turn and passing on, in another form....The sun, the moon,
46 the stars, you and I are mere whirlpools. Why did I select [a
47 particular mind as mine? It is] simply a mental whirlpool in the
48 ocean of mind.

49 How else is it possible that my vibration reaches you just
50 now? If you throw a stone in the lake, it raises a vibration and [that
51 stirs] the water into vibration. I throw my mind into the state of

1 bliss and the tendency is to raise the same bliss in your mind. How
2 often in your mind or heart [you have thought something] and
3 without [verbal] communication, [others have got your thought]?
4 Everywhere we are one...That is what we never understand. The
5 whole [universe] is composed of time, space, and causation. And
6 God [appears as this universe]...When did nature begin? When you
7 [forgot your true nature and] became [bound by time, space, and
8 causation].

9 This is the [rotating] circle of your bodies and yet that is your
10 infinite nature....That is certainly nature --time, space, and
11 causation. That is all that is meant by nature. Time began when you
12 began to think. Space began when you got the body; otherwise
13 there cannot be any space. Causation began when you became
14 limited. We have to have some sort of answer. There is the answer.
15 [Our limitation] is play. Just for the fun of it. Nothing binds you;
16 nothing forces [you. You were] never bound. We are all acting our
17 parts in this [play] of our own invention.

18 But let us bring another question about individuality. Some
19 people are so afraid of losing their individuality. Wouldn't it be
20 better for the pig to lose his pig-individuality if he can become God?
21 Yes. But the poor pig does not think so at the time. Which state is
22 my individuality? When I was a baby sprawling on the floor trying to
23 swallow my thumb? Was that the individuality I should be sorry to
24 lose? Fifty years hence I shall look upon this present state and
25 laugh, just as I [now] look upon the baby state. Which of these
26 individualities shall I keep?...

27 We are to understand what is meant by this individuality....
28 [There are two opposite tendencies:] one is the protection of the
29 individuality, the other is the intense desire to sacrifice the
30 individuality...The mother sacrifices all her own will for the needy
31 baby...When she carries the baby in her arms, the call of
32 individuality, or self-preservation is no more heard. She will eat the
33 worse food, but her children will have the best. So for all the people
34 we love we are ready to die.

35 [On the one hand] we are struggling hard to keep up this
36 individuality; on the other hand, trying to kill it. With what result?
37 Tom Brown may struggle hard. He is [fighting] for his individuality.
38 Tom dies and there is not a ripple anywhere upon the surface of the
39 earth. There was a Jew born nineteen hundred years ago, and he
40 never moved a finger to keep his individuality...Think of that! That
41 Jew never struggled to protect his individuality. That is why he
42 became the greatest in the world. This is what the world does not
43 know.

44 In time we are to be individuals. But in what sense? What is
45 the individuality of man? Not Tom Brown, but God in man. That is
46 the [true] individuality. The more man has approached that, the
47 more he has given up his false individuality. The more he tries to
48 collect and gain everything [for himself], the less he is an
49 individual. the less he has thought of [himself], the more he has
50 sacrificed all individuality during his lifetime,...the more he is an
51 individual. This is one secret the world does not understand....

1 We must first understand what is meant by individuality. It is
2 attaining the ideal. You are man now, [or] you are woman. You will
3 change all the time. Can you stop? Do you want to keep your minds
4 as they are now--the angers, hatreds, jealousies, quarrels, all the
5 thousand and one things in the mind? Do you mean to say that you
6 will keep them?...You cannot stop anywhere ...until perfect conquest
7 has been achieved, until you are pure and you are perfect.

8 You have no more anger when you are all love, bliss, infinite
9 existence....Which of your bodies will you keep? You cannot stop
10 anywhere until you come to life that never ends. Infinite life! You
11 stop there. You have a little knowledge now and are always trying
12 to get more. Where will you stop? Nowhere, until you become one
13 with life itself...

14 Many want pleasure [as] the goal. For that pleasure they seek
15 only the senses. On the higher planes much pleasure is to be
16 sought. Then on spiritual planes. Then in himself--God within him.
17 The man whose pleasure is outside of [himself] becomes unhappy
18 when that outside thing goes. You cannot depend for this pleasure
19 upon anything in this universe. If all my pleasures are in myself, I
20 must have pleasure there all the time because I can never lose my
21 Self...Mother, father, child, wife, body, wealth--everything I can lose
22 except my self...bliss in the Self. All desire is contained in the
23 Self....This is individuality which never changes, and this is
24 perfect. ...And how to get it? They find what the great souls of this
25 world--all great men and women--found [through sustained
26 discrimination]....What of these dualistic theories of twenty gods,
27 thirty gods? It does not matter. They all had the one truth, that this
28 false individuality must go....So this ego--the less there is of it, the
29 nearer I am to that which I really am: the universal body. The less I
30 think of my own individual mind, the nearer I am to that universal
31 mind. The less I think of my own soul, the nearer I am to the
32 universal soul.

33 We live in one body. We have some pain, some pleasure. Just
34 for this little pleasure we have by living in this body, we are ready
35 to kill everything in the universe to preserve ourselves. If we had
36 two bodies, would not that be much better? So on and on to bliss. I
37 am in everybody. Through all hands I work; through all feet I walk. I
38 speak through every mouth; I live in every body. Infinite my bodies,
39 infinite my minds. I lived in Jesus of Nazareth, in Buddha, in
40 Mohammed--in all the great and good of the past, of the present. I
41 am going to live in all that [may] come afterwards. Is that theory?
42 [No, it is the truth.]

43 If you can realise this, how infinitely more pleasurable that
44 will be. What an ecstasy of joy! Which one body is so great that we
45 need here anything [of] the body?...After living in all the bodies of
46 others, enjoying all the bodies there are in this world, what
47 becomes of us? [We become one with the Infinite. And] that is the
48 goal. That is the only way. One [man] says, "If I know the truth, I
49 shall be melted away like butter." I wish people would be, but they
50 are too tough to be melted so quickly!

51 What are we to do to be free? Free you are already....How

1 could the free ever be bound? It is a lie. [You were] never bound.
2 How could the unlimited ever be limited by anything? Infinite
3 divided by infinite, added to infinite, multiplied by infinite [remains]
4 infinite. You are infinite; God is infinite. You are all infinite. There
5 cannot be two existences, only one. The Infinite can never be made
6 finite. You are never bound. That is all....You are free already. You
7 have reached the goal--all there is to reach. Never allow the mind to
8 think that you have not reached the goal....

9 Whatever we [think] that we become. If you think you are
10 poor sinners you hypnotise yourselves: "I am a miserable, crawling
11 worm." Those who believe in hell are in hell when they die; those
12 who say that they will go to heaven [go to heaven].

13 It is all play...[You may say,] "We have to do something; let us
14 do good." [But] who cares for good and evil? Play! God Almighty
15 plays. That is all....You are the almighty God playing. If you want to
16 play on the side and take the part of a beggar, you are not [to blame
17 someone else for making that choice]. You enjoy being the beggar.
18 You know your real nature [to be divine]. You are the king and play
19 you are a beggar....It is all fun. Know it and play. That is all there is
20 to it. Then practise it. The whole universe is a vast play. All is good
21 because all is fun. This star comes and crashes with our earth, and
22 we are all dead. [That too is fun.] You only think fun the little things
23 that delight your senses!...

24 [We are told that there is] one good god here, and one bad
25 god there always on the watch to grab me the moment I make a
26 mistake....When I was a child I was told by someone that God
27 watches everything. I went to bed and looked up and expected the
28 ceiling of the room to open. [Nothing happened.] Nobody is
29 watching us except ourselves. No Lord except our [own Self]; no
30 nature but what we feel. Habit is second nature; it is first nature
31 also. It is all there is of nature.

32 I repeat [something] two or three times; it becomes my
33 nature. Do not be miserable! Do not repent! What is done is done. If
34 you burn yourself, [take the consequences].

35 ...Be sensible. We make mistakes; what of that? That is all in
36 fun. They go so crazy over their past sins, moaning and weeping
37 and all that. Do not repent! After having done work, do not think of
38 it. Go on! Stop not! Don't look back! What will you gain by looking
39 back? You lose nothing, gain nothing. You are not going to be
40 melted like butter. Heavens and hells and incarnations--all
41 nonsense!

42 Who is born and who dies? You are having fun, playing with
43 worlds and all that. You keep this body as long as you like. If you do
44 not like it, do not have it. The Infinite is the real; the finite is the
45 play. You are the infinite body and the finite body in one. Know it!
46 But knowledge will not make any difference; the play will go
47 on....Two words--soul and body--have been joined. [Partial]
48 knowledge is the cause. Know that you are always free. The fire of
49 knowledge burns down all the [impurities and limitations]. I am that
50 Infinite....

1 You are as free as you were in the beginning, are now, and
2 always will be. He who knows that he is free is free; he who knows
3 that he is bound is bound.

4 What becomes of God and worship and all that? They have
5 their place. I have divided myself into God and me; I become the
6 worshipped and I worship myself. Why not? God is I. Why not
7 worship my Self? The universal God--He is also my Self. It is all fun.
8 There is no other purpose.

9 What is the end and aim of life? None, because I [know that I
10 am the Infinite]. If you are beggars, you can have aims. I have no
11 aims, no want, no purpose. I come to your country, and lecture --just
12 for fun. No other meaning. What meaning can be there? Only slaves
13 do actions for somebody else. You do actions for nobody else. When
14 it suits you, you worship. You can join the Christians, the
15 Mohammedans, the Chinese, the Japanese. You can worship all the
16 gods that ever were and are ever going to be....

17 I am in the sun, the moon, and the stars. I am with God and I
18 am in all the gods. I worship my Self.

19 There is another side to it. I have kept it in reserve. I am the
20 man that is going to be hanged. I am all the wicked. I am getting
21 punished in hells. That [also] is fun. This is the goal of philosophy
22 [to know that I am the Infinite]. Aims, motives, purposes, and duties
23 live in the background....

24 This truth is first to be listened to, then to be thought about.
25 Reason, argue it out by all manner of means. The enlightened know
26 no more than that. Know it for certain that you are in everything.
27 That is why you should not hurt anybody, because in hurting them
28 you hurt yourself....[Lastly,] this is to be meditated upon. Think upon
29 it. Can you realise there will come a time when everything will
30 crumble in the dust and you will stand alone? That moment of
31 ecstatic joy will never leave you. You will actually find that you are
32 without bodies. You never had bodies.

33 I am One, alone, through all eternity. Whom shall I fear? It is
34 all my Self. This is continuously to be meditated upon. Through that
35 comes realisation. It is through realisation that you become a
36 [blessings] to others....

37 "Thy face shines like [that of] one who has known God." That
38 is the goal. This is not to be preached as I am doing. "Under a tree I
39 saw a teacher, a boy of sixteen; the disciple was an old man of
40 eighty. The teacher was teaching in silence, and the doubts of the
41 disciple vanished." And who speaks? Who lights a candle to see the
42 sun? When the truth [dawns], no witness is necessary. You know
43 it....That is what you are going to do:...realise it. First think of it.
44 Reason it out. Satisfy your curiosity. Then [think] of nothing else. I
45 wish we never read anything. Lord help us all! Just see what [a
46 learned] man becomes.

47 "This is said, and that is said...."

48 "What do *you* say, my friend?"

49 "I say nothing." [He quotes] everybody else's thought; but he

1 thinks nothing. If this is education, what is lunacy? Look at all the
2 men who wrote!...These modern writers, not two sentences their
3 own! All quotations....

4 There is not much value in books, and in [second-hand]
5 religion there is no value whatsoever. It is like eating. Your religion
6 would not satisfy me. Jesus saw God and Buddha saw God. If you
7 have not seen God, you are no better than the atheist. Only he is
8 quiet, and you talk much and disturb the world with your talk.
9 Books and bibles and scriptures are of no use. I met an old man
10 when I was a boy; [he did not study any scripture, but he
11 transmitted the truth of God by a touch].

12 Silence ye teachers of the world. Silence ye books. Lord, Thou
13 alone speak and Thy servant listeneth....If truth is not there, what is
14 the use of this life? We all think we will catch it, but we do not. Most
15 of us catch only dust. God is not there. If no God, what is the use of
16 life? Is there any resting-place in the universe? [It is up to us to find
17 it]; only we do not [search for it intensely. We are] like a little piece
18 of straw carried on in the current.

19 If there is this truth, if there is God, it must be within us....[I
20 must be able to say,] " I have seen Him with my eyes," Otherwise I
21 have no religion. Beliefs, doctrines, sermons do not make religion.
22 It is realisation, perception of God [which alone is religion]. What is
23 the glory of all these men whom the world worships? God was no
24 more a doctrine [for them. Did they believe] because their
25 grandfather believed it? No. It was the realisation of the Infinite,
26 higher than their own bodies, minds, and everything. This world is
27 real inasmuch as it contains a little bit [of] the reflection of that
28 God. We love the good man because in his face shines the reflection
29 a little more. We must catch it ourselves. There is no other way.

30 That is the goal. Struggle for it! Have your own Bible. Have
31 your own Christ. Otherwise you are not religious. Do not talk
32 religion. Men talk and talk. "Some of them, steeped in darkness, in
33 the pride of their hearts think that they have the light. And not only
34 [that], they offer to take others upon their shoulders and both fall
35 into the pit."...

36 No church ever saved by itself. It is good to be born in a
37 temple, but woe unto the person who dies in a temple or church.
38 Out of it!...It was a good beginning, but leave it! It was the
39 childhood place..but let it be!...Go to God directly. No theories, no
40 doctrines. Then alone will all doubts vanish. Then alone will all
41 crookedness be made straight....

42 In the midst of the manifold, he who sees that One; in the
43 midst of this infinite death, he who sees that one life; in the midst of
44 the manifold, he who sees that which never changes in his own
45 soul--unto him belongs eternal peace.

1 REPORTS IN AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS

2 (These reports from American newspapers have been given
3 exactly as they were in the original. The wrong spellings of proper
4 names, faulty punctuation and grammar have been left
5 uncorrected.--*Publisher.*)

6
7 DIVINITY OF MAN

8 (*Ada Record*, February 28, 1894)

9 The lecture on the Divinity of Man by Swami Vive Kananda,
10 the Hindu monk, drew a packed house at the Opera last Friday
11 evening [February 22].

12 He stated that the fundamental basis of all religions was
13 belief in the soul which is the real man, and something beyond both
14 mind and matter, and proceeded to demonstrate the proposition.
15 The existence of things material are dependent on something else.
16 The mind is mortal because changeable. Death is simply a change.

17 The soul uses the mind as an instrument and through it
18 affects the body. The soul should be made conscious of its powers.
19 The nature of man is pure and holy but it becomes clouded. In our
20 religion every soul is trying to regain its own nature. The mass of
21 our people believe in the individuality of the soul. We are forbidden
22 to preach that ours is the only true religion. Continuing the speaker
23 said: "I am a spirit and not matter. The religion of the West hopes to
24 again live with their body. Ours teaches there can not be such a
25 state. We say freedom of the soul instead of salvation." The lecture
26 proper lasted but 30 minutes but the president of the lecture
27 committee had announced that at the close of the lecture the
28 speaker would answer any questions propounded him. He gave that
29 opportunity and liberal use was made of the privilege. They came
30 from preachers and professors, physicians and philosophers, from
31 citizens and students, from saints and sinners, some were written
32 but dozens arose in their seats and propounded their questions
33 directly. The speaker responded to all--mark the word, please--in an
34 affable manner and in several instances turned the laugh on the
35 inquirer. They kept up the fusillade for nearly an hour; when the
36 speaker begged to be excused from further labor there yet
37 remained a large pile of unanswered questions. He was an artful
38 dodger on many of the questions. From his answers we glean the
39 following additional statements in regard to the Hindu belief and
40 teachings: They believe in the incarnation of man. One of their
41 teachings is to the effect that their God Krishna was born of a virgin
42 about 5000 years ago in the North of India. The story is very similar
43 to the Biblical history of Christ, only their God was accidentally
44 killed. They believe in evolution and the transmigration of souls: i.e.
45 our souls once inhabited some other living thing, a bird, fish or
46 animal, and on our death will go into some other organism. In reply
47 to the inquiry where these souls were before they came into this
48 world he said they were in other worlds. The soul is the permanent
49 basis of all existence. There was no time when there was no God,
50 therefore no time when there was no creation. Buddhists [sic] do

1 not believe in a personal god; I am no Buddhist. Mohammed is not
2 worshipped in the same sense as Christ. Mohammed believes in
3 Christ but denies he is God. The earth was peopled by evolution and
4 not special selection [creation]. God is the creator and nature the
5 created. We do not have prayer save for the children and then only
6 to improve the mind. Punishment for sin is comparatively
7 immediate. Our actions are not of the soul and can therefore be
8 impure. It is our spirit that becomes perfect and holy. There is no
9 resting place for the soul. It has no material qualities. Man assumes
10 the perfect state when he realizes he is a spirit. Religion is the
11 manifestation of the soul nature. The deeper they see is what
12 makes one holier than another. Worship is feeling the holiness of
13 God. Our religion does not believe in missions and teaches that man
14 should love God for love's sake and his neighbor in spite of himself.
15 The people of the West struggle too hard; repose is a factor of
16 civilization. We do not lay our infirmities to God. There is a tendency
17 toward a union of religions.

18 19 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON INDIA

20 (*Bay City Daily Tribune*, March 21, 1894)

21 Bay City had a distinguished visitor yesterday in the person of
22 Swami Vive Kananda, the much talked of Hindoo monk. He arrived
23 at noon from Detroit where he has been the guest of Senator
24 Palmer and proceeded immediately to the Fraser house. There he
25 was seen by a reporter for *The Tribune*.

26 Kananda spoke entertainingly of his country and his
27 impressions of this country. He came to America via the Pacific and
28 will return via the Atlantic. "This is a great land," he said, "but I
29 wouldn't like to live here. Americans think too much of money. They
30 give it preference over everything else. Your people have much to
31 learn. When your nation is as old as ours you will be wiser. I like
32 Chicago very much and Detroit is a nice place."

33 Asked how long he intended remaining in America, he
34 replied: "I do not know. I am trying to see most of your country. I go
35 east next and will spend some time at Boston and New York. I have
36 visited Boston but not to stay. When I have seen America I shall go
37 to Europe. I am very anxious to visit Europe. I have never been
38 there."

39 Concerning himself the easterner said he was 30 years old.
40 He was born at Calcutta and educated at a college in that city. His
41 profession calls him to all parts of the country, and he is at all times
42 the guest of the nation. "India has a population of 285,000,000," he
43 said. "Of these about 65,000,000 are Mohammedans and most of
44 the others Hindoos. There are only about 600,000 Christians in the
45 country, and of these at least 250,000 are Catholics. Our people do
46 not, as a rule, embrace Christianity; they are satisfied with their
47 own religion. Some go into Christianity for mercenary motives.
48 They are free to do as they wish. We say let everybody have his own
49 faith. We are a cunning nation. We do not believe in bloodshed.
50 There are wicked men in our country and they are in the majority,

1 same as in your country. It is unreasonable to expect people to be
2 angels."

3 Vive Kananda will lecture in Saginaw to-night.

4 5 LECTURE LAST NIGHT 6

7 The lower floor of the opera house was comfortably filled
8 when the lecture began last evening. Promptly at 8:15 o'clock
9 Swami Vive Kananda made his appearance on the stage, dressed in
10 his beautiful oriental costume. He was introduced in a few words by
11 Dr. C. T. Newkirk.

12 The first part of the discourse consisted of an explanation of
13 the different religions of India and of the theory of transmigration
14 of souls. In connection with the latter, the speaker said it was on the
15 same basis as the theory of conservation was to the scientist. This
16 latter theory, he said, was first produced by a philosopher of his
17 country. They did not believe in a creation. A creation implied
18 making something out of nothing. That was impossible. There was
19 no beginning of creation, just as there was no beginning of time.
20 God and creation are as two lines--without end, without beginning,
21 without [?] parallel. Their theory of creation is, "It is, was, and is to
22 be." They think all punishment is but re-action. If we put our hand
23 in the fire it is burned. That is the re-action of the action. The future
24 condition of life is determined by the present condition. They do not
25 believe God punishes. "You, in this land," said the speaker, "praise
26 the man who does not get angry and denounce the man who does
27 become angry. And yet thousands of people throughout this country
28 are every day accusing God of being angry. Everybody denounces
29 Nero, who sat and played on his instrument while Rome was
30 burning, and yet thousands of your people are accusing God of
31 doing the same today."

32 The Hindoos have no theory of redemption in their religion.
33 Christ is only to show the way. Every man and woman is a divine
34 being, but covered as though by a screen, which their religion is
35 trying to remove. The removal of that Christians call salvation, they,
36 freedom. God is the creator, preserver, and destroyer of the
37 universe.

38 The speaker then sought to vindicate the religions of his
39 country. He said it had been proven that the entire system of the
40 Roman Catholic Church had been taken from the books of
41 Buddhism. The people of the west should learn one thing from
42 India--toleration.

43 Among other subjects which he held up and overhauled were:
44 The Christian missionaries, the zeal of the Presbyterian church and
45 its non-toleration, the dollar-worshipping in this country, and the
46 priests. The latter he said were in the business for the dollars there
47 were in it, and wanted to know how long they would stay in the
48 church if they had to depend on getting their pay from God. After
49 speaking briefly on the Caste system in India, our civilization in the

1 south, our general knowledge of the mind, and various other topics
2 the speaker concluded his remarks.

3 4 RELIGIOUS HARMONY

5 (*Saginaw Evening News*, March 22, 1894)

6
7 Swami Vive Kananda, the much talked of Hindoo monk, spoke
8 to a small but deeply interested audience last evening at the
9 academy of music on "The Harmony of Religions". He was dressed
10 in oriental costume and received an extremely cordial reception.
11 Hon. Rowland Connor gracefully introduced the speaker, who
12 devoted the first portion of his lecture to an explanation of the
13 different religions of India and of the theory of transmigration of
14 souls. The first invaders of India, the Aryans, did not try to
15 exterminate the population of India as the Christians have done
16 when they went into a new land, but the endeavour was made to
17 elevate persons of brutish habits. The Hindoo is disgusted with
18 those people of his own country who do not bathe and who eat dead
19 animals. The Northern people of India have not tried to force their
20 customs on the southern, but the latter gradually adopted many
21 ways of the former class. In southernmost portions of India there
22 are a few persons who are Christians and who have been so for
23 thousands [?] of years. The Spaniards came to Ceylon with
24 Christianity. The Spaniards thought that their God commanded
25 them to kill and murder and to tear down heathen temples.

26 If there were not different religions no one religion would
27 survive. The Christian needs his selfish religion. The Hindoo needs
28 his own creed. Those which were founded on a book still stand.
29 Why could not the Christian convert the Jew? Why could they not
30 make the Persians Christians? Why not so with the Mohammedans?
31 Why cannot any impression be made upon China or Japan? The
32 Buddhists, the first missionary religion, have double the number of
33 converts of any other religion and they did not use the sword. The
34 Mohammedans used the most force, and they number the least of
35 the three great missionary religions. The Mohammedans have had
36 their day. Every day you read of Christian nations acquiring land by
37 bloodshed. What missionaries preach against this? Why should the
38 most bloodthirsty nations exalt an alleged religion which is not the
39 religion of Christ? The Jews and the Arabs were the fathers of
40 Christianity, and how have they been persecuted by the Christians!
41 The Christians have been weighed in the balance in India and found
42 wanting.

43 The speaker did not wish to be unkind, but he wanted to show
44 Christians how they looked in other eyes. The Missionaries who
45 preach the burning pit are regarded with horror. The
46 Mohammedans rolled wave after wave over India, waving the
47 sword, and today where are they? The farthest that all religions can
48 see is the existence of a spiritual entity. So no religion can teach
49 beyond this point. In every religion there is the essential truth and
50 non-essential casket in which this jewel lies. The believing in the

1 Jewish book or the Hindoo book is non-essential. Circumstances
2 change, the receptacle is different; but the central truth remains.
3 The essentials being the same, the educated people of every
4 community retain the essentials. The shell of the oyster is not
5 attractive, but the pearls are within. Before a small fraction of the
6 world is converted Christianity will be divided into many creeds.
7 That is the law of nature. Why take a single instrument from the
8 great religious orchestras of the earth? Let the grand symphony go
9 on. Be pure, urged the speaker, give up superstition and see the
10 wonderful harmony of nature. Superstition gets the better of
11 religion. All the religions are good since the essentials are the
12 same. Each man should have the perfect exercise of his
13 individuality but these individualities form a perfect whole. This
14 marvellous condition is already in existence. Each creed has had
15 something to add to the wonderful structure.

16 The speaker sought throughout to vindicate the religions of
17 his country and said that it had been proven that the entire system
18 of the Roman Catholic Church had been taken from the books of
19 Buddhism. He dilated at some length on the high code of morality
20 and purity of life that the ethics of Buddha taught but allowed that
21 as far as the belief in the personality of God was concerned,
22 agnosticism prevailed, the main thing being to follow out Buddha's
23 precepts which were, "Be good, be moral, be perfect."

24
25 FROM FAR OFF INDIA

26 (*Saginaw Courier-Herald*, March 22, 1894)

27
28 Seated in the lobby of the Hotel Vincent yesterday evening
29 was a strong and regular featured man of fine presence, whose
30 swarthy skin made more pronounced the pearly whiteness of his
31 even teeth. Under a broad and high forehead his eyes betoken
32 intelligence. This gentleman was Swami Vive Kananda, the Hindoo
33 preacher. Mr. Kananda's conversation is in pure and grammatically
34 constructed English sentences, to which his slightly foreign accent
35 lends piquancy. Readers of the Detroit papers are aware that Mr.
36 Kananda has lectured in that city a number of times and aroused
37 the animosity of some on account of his strictures upon Christians.
38 *The Courier-Herald* representative had a few moments'
39 conversation with the learned Buddhist [?] just before he left for
40 the Academy, where he was to lecture. Mr. Kananda said in
41 conversation that he was surprised at the lapses from the paths of
42 rectitude which were so common among Christians, but that there
43 was good and bad to be found among members of all religious
44 bodies. One statement he made was decidedly un-American. Upon
45 being asked if he had been investigating our institutions, he replied:
46 "No, I am a preacher only." This displayed both a want of curiosity
47 and narrowness, which seemed foreign to one who appeared to be
48 so well versed upon religious topics as did the Buddhist [?]
49 preacher.

50 From the hotel to the Academy was but a step and at 8

1 o'clock Rowland Connor introduced to a small audience the
2 lecturer, who was dressed in a long orange colored robe, fastened
3 by a red sash, and who wore a turban of windings of what appeared
4 to be a narrow shawl.

5 The lecturer stated at the opening that he had not come as a
6 missionary, and that it was not the part of a Buddhist to convert
7 others from their faiths and beliefs. He said that the subject of his
8 address would be, "The Harmony of Religions". Mr. Kananda said
9 that many ancient religions had been founded, and were dead and
10 gone.

11 He said that the Buddhists [Hindus] comprise two-thirds of
12 the race, and that the other third comprised those of all other
13 believers. He said that the Buddhists have no place of future
14 torment for men. In that they differ from the Christians, who will
15 forgive a man for five minutes in this world and condemn him to
16 everlasting punishment in the next. Buddha was the first to teach
17 the universal brotherhood of man. It is a cardinal principle of the
18 Buddhist faith today. The Christian preaches it, but does not
19 practice its own teachings.

20 He instanced the condition of the Negro in the South, who is
21 not allowed in hotels nor to ride in the same cars with white men,
22 and is a being to whom no decent man will speak. He said that he
23 had been in the South, and spoke from his knowledge and
24 observation.

25 AN EVENING WITH OUR HINDU COUSINS

26 (*Northampton Daily Herald*, April 16, 1894)

27
28
29 For Swami Vive Kananda proved conclusively that all our
30 neighbors across the water, even the remotest, are our close
31 cousins differing only a trifle in color, language, customs and
32 religion, the silver-tongued Hindu monk prefacing his address in
33 city hall Saturday evening [April 14] by an historic sketch of the
34 origin of his own and all other leading nations of the earth which
35 demonstrated the truth that race-kinship is more of a simple fact
36 than many know or always care to admit.

37 The informal address that followed regarding some of the
38 customs of the Hindu people was more of the nature of a pleasant
39 parlor talk, expressed with the easy freedom of the conversational
40 adept, and to those of his hearers possessing a natural and
41 cultivated interest in the subject both the man and his thought were
42 intensely interesting for more reasons than can be given here. But
43 to others the speaker was disappointing in not covering a larger
44 scope in his word-pictures, the address, although extremely lengthy
45 for the American lecture-platform, referring to very few of the
46 "customs and manners" of the peculiar people considered, and of
47 whose personal, civil, home, social and religious life much more
48 would have been gladly heard from this one of the finest
49 representatives of this oldest of races, which the average student of

1 human nature should find pre-eminently interesting but really
2 knows the least about.

3 The allusions to the life of the Hindu began with a picture of
4 the birth of the Hindu boy, his introduction to educational training,
5 his marriage, slight reference to the home life but not what was
6 expected, the speaker diverging frequently to make comparative
7 comments on the customs and ideas of his own and English-
8 speaking races, socially, morally and religiously, the inference in all
9 cases being clearly in favor of his own, although most courteously,
10 kindly and gracefully expressed. Some of his auditors who are
11 tolerably well posted as to social and family conditions among the
12 Hindoos of all classes would have liked to have asked the speaker a
13 challenging question or two on a good many of the points he
14 touched upon. For instance, when he so eloquently and beautifully
15 portrayed the Hindu idea of womanhood as the divine motherhood
16 ideal, to be forever revered, even worshipped with a devotion of
17 loyalty such as the most woman-respecting unselfish and truest of
18 American sons, husbands and fathers cannot even conceive of, one
19 would have liked to know what the reply would have been to the
20 query as to how far this beautiful theory is exemplified in practice
21 in the majority of Hindu homes, which hold wives, mothers,
22 daughters and sisters.

23 The rebuke to the greed for gain, the national vice of luxury-
24 seeking, self-seeking, the "dollar-caste" sentiment which taints the
25 dominant white European and American races to their mortal
26 danger, morally and civilly, was only too just and superbly well-put,
27 the slow, soft, quiet, unimpassioned musical voice embodying its
28 thought with all the power and fire of the most vehement physical
29 utterance, and went straight to the mark like the "Thou art the
30 man" of the prophet. But when this learned Hindu nobleman by
31 birth, nature and culture attempts to prove--as he repeatedly did in
32 his frequent and apparently half-unconscious digressions from the
33 special point under consideration--that the distinctively self-centred,
34 self-cultivating, pre-eminently self-soulsaving, negative and passive,
35 not to say selfishly indolent religion of his race has proven itself
36 superior in its usefulness to the world to the vitally aggressive, self-
37 forgetful, do-good unto-others-first-last-and-always, go-ye-into-all-
38 the-world and *work* religion which we call Christianity, in whose
39 name nine tenths of all the really practical moral, spiritual and
40 philanthropic work of the world has been and is being done,
41 whatever sad and gross mistakes have been made by its unwise
42 zealots, he attempts a large contract.

43 But to see and hear Swami Vive Kananda is an opportunity
44 which no intelligent fair-minded American ought to miss if one
45 cares to see a shining light of the very finest product of the mental,
46 moral and spiritual culture of a race which reckons its age by
47 thousands where we count ours by hundreds and is richly worth the
48 study of every mind.

49 Sunday afternoon [April 15] the distinguished Hindu spoke to
50 the students of Smith college at the vesper service, the Fatherhood
51 of God and the Brotherhood of man being, virtually, his theme, and
52 that the address made a deep impression is evinced by the report of

1 every auditor, the broadest liberality of true religious sentiment and
2 precept characterizing the whole trend of thought.

3 4 THE MANNERS AND CUSTOMS OF INDIA

5 (*Boston Herald*, May 15, 1894)

6
7 Association Hall was crowded with ladies yesterday, to hear
8 Swami Vivekananda, the Brahmin Monk talk about "The Religion of
9 India" [actually "The Manners and Customs of India"], for the
10 benefit of the ward 16 day nursery [actually, Tyler-street Day
11 Nursery]. The Brahmin monk has become a fad in Boston, as he
12 was in Chicago last year, and his earnest, honest, cultured manner
13 has won many friends for him.

14 The Hindoo nation is not given to marriage, he said, not
15 because we are women haters, but because our religion teaches us
16 to worship women. The Hindoo is taught to see in every woman his
17 mother, and no man wants to marry his mother. God is mother to us.
18 We don't care anything about God in heaven; it is mother to us. We
19 consider marriage a low vulgar state, and if a man does marry, it is
20 because he needs a helpmate for religion.

21 You say we ill-treat our women. What nation in the world has
22 not ill-treated its women? In Europe or America a man can marry a
23 woman for money, and, after capturing her dollars, can kick her out.
24 In India, on the contrary, when a woman marries for money, her
25 children are considered slaves, according to our teaching, and
26 when a rich man marries, his money passes into the hands of his
27 wife, so that he would be scarcely likely to turn the keeper of his
28 money out of doors.

29 You say we are heathens, we are uneducated, uncultivated,
30 but we laugh in our sleeves at your want of refinement in telling us
31 such things. With us, quality and birth make caste, not money. No
32 amount of money can do anything for you in India. In caste the
33 poorest is as good as the richest, and that is one of the most
34 beautiful things about it.

35 Money has made warfare in the world, and caused Christians
36 to trample on each other's necks. Jealousy, hatred and
37 avariciousness are born of money-getters. Here it is all work, hustle
38 and bustle. Caste saves a man from all this. It makes it possible for
39 a man to live with less money, and it brings work to all. The man of
40 caste has time to think of his soul, and that is what we want in the
41 society of India.

42 The Brahmin is born to worship God, and the higher his caste,
43 the greater his social restrictions are. Caste has kept us alive as a
44 nation, and while it has many defects, it has many more
45 advantages.

46 Mr. Vivekananda described the universities and colleges of
47 India, both ancient and modern, notably the one at Benares, that
48 has 20,000 students and professors.

1 When you judge my religion, he continued, you take it that
2 yours is perfect and mine wrong; and when you criticise the society
3 of India you suppose it to be uncultured just so far as it does not
4 conform to your standard. That is nonsense.

5 In reference to the matter of education, the speaker said that
6 the educated men of India become professors, while the less
7 educated become priests.

8 9 THE RELIGIONS OF INDIA

10 (*Boston Herald*, May 17, 1894)

11
12 The Brahmin monk, Swami Vivekananda, lectured yesterday
13 afternoon in Association Hall on "The Religions of India", in aid of
14 the Ward 16 Day Nursery. There was a large attendance.

15 The speaker first gave an account of the Mahommedans, who
16 formed, he said, one-fifth of the population. They believed in both
17 Old and New Testaments, but Jesus Christ they regarded only as a
18 prophet. They had no church organization, though there was
19 reading of the Koran.

20 The Parsees, another race, called their sacred book the Zend-
21 Avesta, and believed in two warring deities, Armuzd the good and
22 Ahriman the evil. They believed that finally the good would triumph
23 over the evil. Their moral code was summed up in the words: "Good
24 thought, good words, good deeds."

25 The Hindus proper looked up to the Vedas as their religious
26 scripture. They held each individual to the customs of caste, but
27 gave him full liberty to think for himself in religious matters. A part
28 of their method was to seek out some holy man or prophet in order
29 to take advantage of the spiritual current that flowed through him.

30 The Hindus had three different schools of religion--the
31 dualistic, the qualified monistic and the monistic--and these three
32 were regarded as stages through which each individual naturally
33 passed in the course of his religious development.

34 All three believed in God, but the dualistic school believed
35 that God and man were separate entities, while the monistic
36 declared that there was only one existence in the universe, this
37 unitary existence being neither God nor soul, but something
38 beyond.

39 The lecturer quoted from the Vedas to show the character of
40 the Hindu religion, and declared that, to find God, one must search
41 one's own heart.

42 Religion did not consist of pamphlets or books; it consisted of
43 looking into the human heart, and finding there the truths of God
44 and immortality. "Whomsoever I like," said the Vedas, "him I create
45 a prophet," and to be a prophet was all there was of religion.

46 The speaker brought his lecture to a close by giving an
47 account of the Jains, who show remarkable kindness to dumb

1 animals, and whose moral law is summed up in the words: "Not to
2 injure others is the highest good."

3 4 SECTS AND DOCTRINES IN INDIA

5 (*Harvard Crimson*, May 17, 1894)

6
7 Swami Vivekananda, the Hindoo monk, gave an address last
8 evening in Sever Hall under the auspices of the Harvard Religious
9 Union. The address was very interesting, the clear and eloquent
10 voice of the speaker, and his low, earnest delivery making his words
11 singularly impressive.

12 There are various sects and doctrines in India, said
13 Vivekananda, some of which accept the theory of a personal God,
14 and others which believe that God and the universe are one; but
15 whatever sect the Hindoo belongs to he does not say that his is the
16 only right belief, and that all others must be wrong. He believes
17 that there are many ways of coming to God; that a man who is truly
18 religious rises above the petty quarrels of sects or creed. In India if
19 a man believes that he is a spirit, a soul, and not a body, then he is
20 said to have religion and not till then.

21 To become a monk in India it is necessary to lose all thought
22 of the body; to look upon other human beings as souls. So monks
23 can never marry. Two vows are taken when a man becomes a monk,
24 poverty and chastity. He is not allowed to receive or possess any
25 money whatever. The first ceremony to be performed on joining the
26 order is to be burnt in effigy, which supposed to destroy once for all
27 the old body, name and caste. The man then receives a new name,
28 and is allowed to go forth and preach or travel, but must take no
29 money for what he does.

30 31 LESS DOCTRINE AND MORE BREAD

32 (*Baltimore American*, October 15, 1894)

33
34 The Lyceum Theater was crowded last night at the first of a
35 series of meetings by the Vrooman Brothers. The subject discussed
36 was "Dynamic Religion".

37 Swami Vivekananda, the high priest [?] from India, was the
38 last speaker. He spoke briefly, and was listened to with marked
39 attention. His English and his mode of delivery were excellent.
40 There is a foreign accent to his syllables, but not enough to prevent
41 him from being plainly understood. He was dressed in the costume
42 of his native country, which was decidedly picturesque. He said he
43 could speak but briefly after the oratory that had preceded him, but
44 he could add his endorsement to all that had been said. He had
45 travelled a great deal, and preached to all kinds of people. He had
46 found that the particular kind of doctrine preached made little
47 difference. What is wanted is practical sort of work. If such ideas
48 could not be carried out, he would lose his faith in humanity. The

1 cry all over the world is "less doctrine and more bread". He thought
2 the sending of missionaries to India all right; he had no objections
3 to offer, but he thought it would be better to send fewer men and
4 more money. So far as India was concerned, she had religious
5 doctrine to spare. Living up to the doctrines was needed more than
6 more doctrines. The people of India, as well as the people all over
7 the world, had been taught to pray, but prayer with the lips was not
8 enough; people should pray with their hearts. "A few people in the
9 world," he said, "really try to do good. Others look on and applaud,
10 and think that they themselves have done great good. Life is love,
11 and when a man ceases to do good to others, he is dead spiritually."

12 On Sunday evening next Swami Vivekananda will make the
13 address of the evening at the Lyceum.

14
15 (*Sun, October 15, 1894*)
16

17 Vivekananda sat on the stage last night with imperturbable
18 stolidity until it came his turn to speak. Then his manner changed
19 and he spoke with force and feeling. He followed the Vrooman
20 brothers and said there was little to add to what had been said save
21 his testimony as a "man from the Antipodes".

22 "We have doctrines enough," he continued. "What we want
23 now is practical work as presented in these speeches. When asked
24 about the missionaries sent to India I reply all right. But we want
25 money more and men less. India has bushels full of doctrines and to
26 spare. What is wanted is the means to carry them out.

27 "Prayer may be done in different ways. Prayer with the hands
28 is yet higher than prayer with the lips and is more saving.

29 "All religions teach us to do good for our brothers. Doing
30 good is nothing extraordinary--it is the only way to live. Everything
31 in nature tends to expansion for life and contraction for death. It is
32 the same in religion. Do good by helping others without ulterior
33 motives. The moment this ceases contraction and death follow."

34 35 THE RELIGION OF BUDDHA

36 (*Morning Herald, October 22, 1894*)
37

38 An audience which filled the Lyceum Theatre [Baltimore]
39 from pit to dome assembled last night at the second of the series of
40 meetings held by the Vrooman Brothers in the interest of "Dynamic
41 Religion". Fully 3,000 persons were present. Addresses were made
42 by the Rev. Hiram Vrooman, Rev. Walter Vrooman and Rev. Swarri
43 Vivekananda, the Brahmin High Priest now visiting this city. The
44 speakers of the evening were seated on the stage, the Rev.
45 Vivekananda being an object of particular interest to all. He wore a
46 yellow turban and a red robe tied in at the waste [sic] with a sash of
47 the same color, which added to the Oriental cast of his features and
48 invested him with a peculiar interest. His personality seemed to be

1 the feature of the evening. His address was delivered in an easy,
2 unembarrassed manner, his diction being perfect and his accent
3 similar to that of a cultured member of the Latin race familiar with
4 the English language. He said in part:

5
6 THE HIGH PRIEST SPEAKS
7

8 "Buddha began to found the religion of India 600 years before
9 the birth of Christ. He found the religion of India at that time
10 mainly engaged in eternal discussions upon the nature of the
11 human soul. There was no remedy according to the ideas then
12 prevailing for the cure of religious ills but sacrifices of animals,
13 sacrificial altars and similar methods.

14 "In the midst of this system a priest [?] was born who was a
15 member of one of the leading families who was the founder of
16 Buddhism. His was, in the first place, not the founding of a new
17 religion, but a movement of reformation. He believed in the good of
18 all. His religion, as formulated by him, consisted of the discovery of
19 three things: First, 'There is an evil'; second, 'What is the cause of
20 this evil?' This he ascribed to the desires of men to be superior to
21 others, an evil that could be cured by unselfishness. Third, 'This evil
22 is curable by becoming unselfish'. Force, he concluded, could not
23 cure it; dirt cannot wash dirt; hate cannot cure hate.

24 "This was the basis of his religion. So long as society tries to
25 cure human selfishness by laws and institutions whose aim is to
26 force others to do good to their neighbors, nothing can be done.
27 The remedy is not to place trick against trick and force against
28 force. The only remedy is in making unselfish men and women. You
29 may enact laws to cure present evils, but they will be of no avail.

30 "Buddha found in India too much talking about God and His
31 essence and too little work. He always insisted upon this
32 fundamental truth, that we are to be pure and holy, and that we are
33 to help others to be holy also. He believed that man must go to
34 work and help others; find his soul in others; find his life in others.
35 He believed that in the conjunction of doing good to others is the
36 only good we do ourselves. [sic] He believed that there was always
37 in the world too much theory and too little practice. A dozen
38 Buddhas in India at the present time would do good, and one
39 Buddha in this country would also be beneficial.

40 "When there is too much doctrine, too much belief in my
41 father's religion, too much rational superstition, a change is
42 needed. Such doctrine produces evil, and a reformation is
43 necessary."

44 At the conclusion of Mr. Vivekananda's address there was a
45 hearty burst of applause.

46
47 (*Baltimore American*, October 22, 1894)
48

1 The Lyceum Theater was crowded to the doors last night at
2 the second meeting of the series conducted by the Vrooman
3 brothers on "Dynamic Religion". Swami Vivekananda, of India,
4 made the principal address. He spoke on the Buddhist religion, and
5 told of the evils which existed among the people of India, at the
6 time of the birth of Buddha. The social inequalities in India, he said,
7 were at that period a thousand times greater than anywhere else in
8 the world. "Six hundred years before Christ," he continued, "the
9 priesthood of India exercised great influence over the minds of the
10 people, and between the upper and nether millstone of
11 intellectuality and learning the people were ground. Buddhism,
12 which is the religion of more than two-thirds of the human family,
13 was not founded as an entirely new religion, but rather as a
14 reformation which carried off the corruption of the times. Buddha
15 seems to have been the only prophet who did everything for others
16 and absolutely nothing for himself. He gave up his home and all the
17 enjoyments of life to spend his days in search of the medicine for
18 the terrible disease of human misery. In an age when men and
19 priests were discussing the essence of the deity, he discovered what
20 people had overlooked, that misery existed. The cause of evil is our
21 desire to be superior to others and our selfishness. The moment
22 that the world becomes unselfish all evil will vanish. So long as
23 society tries to cure evil by laws and institutions, evil will not be
24 cured. The world has tried this method ineffectually for thousands
25 of years. Force against force never cures, and the only cure for evil
26 is unselfishness. We need to teach people to obey the laws rather
27 than to make more laws.

28 Buddhism was the first missionary religion of the world but it
29 was one of the teachings of Buddhism not to antagonize any other
30 religion. Sects weaken their power for good by making war on each
31 other."

32 33 ALL RELIGIONS ARE GOOD

34 (*Washington Post*, October 29, 1894)

35
36 Mr. Kananda spoke yesterday at the People's Church on the
37 invitation of Dr. Kent, pastor of the church. His talk in the morning
38 was a regular sermon, dealing entirely with the spiritual side of
39 religion, and presenting the, to orthodox sects, rather original
40 proposition that there is good in the foundation of every religion,
41 that all religions, like languages, are descended from a common
42 stock, and that each is good in its corporal and spiritual aspects so
43 long as it is kept free from dogma and fossilism. The address in the
44 afternoon was more in the form of a lecture on the Aryan race, and
45 traced the descent of the various allied nationalities by their
46 language, religion and customs from the common Sanskrit stock.

47 After the meeting, to a *Post* reporter Mr. Kananda said: "I
48 claim no affiliation with any religious sect, but occupy the position
49 of an observer, and so far as I may, of a teacher to mankind. All
50 religion to me is good. About the higher mysteries of life and

1 existence I can do no more than speculate, as others do.
2 Reincarnation seems to me to be the nearest to a logical
3 explanation for many things with which we are confronted in the
4 realm of religion. But I do not advance it as a doctrine. It is no more
5 than a theory at best, and is not susceptible of proof except by
6 personal experience, and that proof is good only for the man who
7 has it. Your experience is nothing to me, nor mine to you. I am not a
8 believer in miracles--they are repugnant to me in matters of
9 religion. You might bring the world tumbling down about my ears,
10 but that would be no proof to me that there was a God, or that you
11 worked by his agency, if there was one.

12 13 HE BELIEVES IT BLINDLY

14
15 "I must, however, believe in a past and a hereafter as
16 necessary to the existence of the present. And if we go on from
17 here, we must go in other forms, and so comes my belief in
18 reincarnation. But I can prove nothing, and any one is welcome to
19 deprive me of the theory of reincarnation provided they will show
20 me something better to replace it. Only up to the present I have
21 found nothing that offers so satisfactory an explanation to me."

22 Mr. Kananda is a native of Calcutta, and a graduate of the
23 government university there. He speaks English like a native,
24 having received his university training in that tongue. He has had
25 good opportunity to observe the contact between the native and the
26 English, and it would disappoint a foreign missionary worker to
27 hear him speak in very unconcerned style of the attempts to convert
28 the natives. In this connection he was asked what effect the
29 Western teaching was having on the thought of the Orient.

30 "Of course," he said, "no thought of any sort can come into a
31 country without having its effect, but the effect of Christian
32 teaching on Oriental thought is, if it exists, so small as to be
33 imperceptible. The Western doctrines have made about as much
34 impression there as have the Eastern doctrines here, perhaps not
35 so much. That is, among the higher thinkers of the country. The
36 effect of the missionary work among the masses is imperceptible.
37 When converts are made they of course drop at once out of the
38 native sects, but the mass of the population is so great that the
39 converts of the missionaries have very little effect that can be
40 seen."

41 42 THE YOGIS ARE JUGGLERS

43
44 When asked whether he knew anything of the alleged
45 miraculous performances of the yogis and adepts Mr. Kananda
46 replied that he was not interested in miracles, and that while there
47 were of course a great many clever jugglers in the country, their
48 performances were tricks. Mr. Kananda said that he had seen the
49 mango trick but once, and then by a fakir on a small scale. He held

1 the same view about the alleged attainments of the lamas. "There is
2 a great lack of trained, scientific, and unprejudiced observers in all
3 accounts of these phenomena," said he, "so that it is hard to select
4 the false from the true."

6 THE HINDU VIEW OF LIFE

7 (*Brooklyn Times*, December 31, 1894)

8
9 The Brooklyn Ethical Association, at the Pouch Gallery last
10 night, tendered a reception to Swami Vivekananda.... Previous to
11 the reception the distinguished visitor delivered a remarkably
12 interesting lecture on "The Religions of India". Among other things
13 he said:

14 "The Hindoo's view of life is that we are here to learn; the
15 whole happiness of life is to learn; the human soul is here to love
16 learning and get experience. I am able to read my Bible better by
17 your Bible, and you will learn to read your Bible the better by my
18 Bible. If there is but one religion to be true, all the rest must be
19 true. The same truth has manifested itself in different forms, and
20 the forms are according to the different circumstances of the
21 physical or mental nature of the different nations.

22 "If matter and its transformation answer for all that we have,
23 there is no necessity for supposing the existence of a soul. But it
24 can [not] be proven that thought has been evolved out of matter. We
25 can not deny that bodies inherit certain tendencies, but those
26 tendencies only mean the physical configuration through which a
27 peculiar mind alone can act in a peculiar way. These peculiar
28 tendencies in that soul have been caused by past actions. A soul
29 with a certain tendency will take birth in a body which is the fittest
30 instrument for the display of that tendency, by the laws of affinity.
31 And this is in perfect accord with science, for science wants to
32 explain everything by habit, and habit is got through repetitions. So
33 these repetitions are also necessary to explain the natural habits of
34 a new-born soul. They were not got in this present life; therefore,
35 they must have come down from past lives.

36 "All religions are so many stages. Each one of them
37 represents the stage through which the human soul passes to
38 realize God. Therefore, not one of them should be neglected. None
39 of the stages are dangerous or bad. They are good. Just as a child
40 becomes a young man, and a young man becomes an old man, so
41 they are travelling from truth to truth; they become dangerous only
42 when they become rigid, and will not move further--when he ceases
43 to grow. If the child refuses to become an old man, then he is
44 diseased, but if they steadily grow, each step will lead them onward
45 until they reach the whole truth. Therefore, we believe in both a
46 personal and impersonal God, and at the same time we believe in
47 all the religions that were, all the religions that are, and all the
48 religions that will be in the world. We also believe we ought not
49 only tolerate these religions, but to accept them.

1 "In the material physical world, expansion is life, and
2 contraction is death. Whatever ceases to expand ceases to live.
3 Translating this in the moral world we have: If one would expand,
4 he must love, and when he ceases to love he dies. It is your nature;
5 you must, because that is the only law of life. Therefore, we must
6 love God for love's sake, so we must do our duty for duty's sake; we
7 must work for work's sake without looking for any reward--know
8 that you are purer and more perfect, know that this is the real
9 temple of God."

10
11 (*Brooklyn Daily Eagle*, December 31, 1894)
12

1 After referring to the views of the Mohammedans, the
2 Buddhists and other religious schools of India, the speaker said that
3 the Hindoos received their religion through the revelations of the
4 Vedas, who teach that creation is without beginning or end. They
5 teach that man is a spirit living in a body. The body will die, but the
6 man will not. The spirit will go on living. The soul was not created
7 from nothing for creation means a combination and that means a
8 certain future dissolution. If then the soul was created it must die.
9 Therefore, it was not created. He might be asked how it is that we
10 do not remember anything of our past lives. This could be easily
11 explained. Consciousness is the name only of the surface of the
12 mental ocean, and within its depths are stored up all our
13 experiences. The desire was to find out something that was stable.
14 The mind, the body, all nature, in fact, is changing. This question of
15 finding something that was infinite had long been discussed. One
16 school of which the modern Buddhists are the representatives,
17 teach that everything that could not be solved by the five senses
18 was nonexistent. That every object is dependent upon all others,
19 that it is a delusion that man is an independent entity. The idealists,
20 on the other hand, claim that each individual is an independent
21 body. The true solution of this problem is that nature is a mixture of
22 dependence and independence, of reality and idealism. There is a
23 dependence which is proved by the fact that the movements of our
24 bodies are controlled by our minds, and our minds are controlled by
25 the spirit within us, which Christians call the soul. Death is but a
26 change. Those who have passed beyond and are occupying high
27 positions there are but the same as those who remain here, and
28 those who are occupying lower positions there are the same as
29 others here. Every human being is a perfect being. If we sit down in
30 the dark and lament that it is so dark it will profit us nothing, but if
31 we procure matches and strike a light, the darkness goes out
32 immediately. So, if we sit down and lament that our bodies are
33 imperfect, that our souls are imperfect, we are not profited. When
34 we call in the light of reason, then this darkness of doubt will
35 disappear. The object of life is to learn. Christians can learn from
36 the Hindus, and the Hindus from Christians. He could read his
37 Bible better after reading ours. "Tell your children," he said, "that
38 religion is a positive something, and not a negative something. It is
39 not the teachings of men, but a growth, a development of
40 something higher within our nature that seeks outlet. Every child
41 born into the world is born with a certain accumulated experience.
42 The idea of independence which possesses us shows there is
43 something in us besides mind and body. The body and mind are
44 dependent. The soul that animates us is an independent factor that
45 creates this wish for freedom. If we are not free how can we hope
46 to make the world good or perfect? We hold that we are makers of
47 ourselves, that what we have we make ourselves. We have made it
48 and we can unmake it. We believe in God, the Father of us all, the
49 Creator and Preserver of His children, omnipresent and
50 omnipotent. We believe in a personal God, as you do, but we go
51 further. We believe that we are He. We believe in all the religions
52 that have gone before, in all that now exist and in all that are to
53 come. The Hindu bows down to the all religion [sic] for in this world

1 the idea is addition, not subtraction. We would make up a bouquet
2 of all beautiful colors for God, the Creator, who is a personal God.
3 We must love God for love's sake, we must do our duty to Him for
4 duty's sake, and must work for Him for work's sake and must
5 worship Him for worship's sake.

6 "Books are good but they are only maps. Reading a book by
7 direction of a man I read that so many inches of rain fell during the
8 year. Then he told me to take the book and squeeze it between my
9 hands. I did so and not a drop of water came from it. It was the idea
10 only that the book conveyed. So we can get good from books, from
11 the temple, from the church, from anything, so long as it leads us
12 onward and upward. Sacrifices, genuflections, rumblings and
13 mutterings are not religion. They are all good if they help us to
14 come to a perception of the perfection which we shall realize when
15 we come face to face with Christ. These are words or instructions
16 to us by which we may profit. Columbus, when he discovered this
17 continent, went back and told his countrymen that he had found the
18 new world. They would not believe him, or some would not, and he
19 told them to go and search for themselves. So with us, we read
20 these truths and come in and find the truths for ourselves and then
21 we have a belief which no one can take from us."

22 After the lecture an opportunity was given those present to
23 question the speaker on any point on which they wished to have his
24 views. Many of them availed themselves of this offer.

25 IDEALS OF WOMANHOOD

26 (*Brooklyn Standard Union*, January 21, 1895)

27
28
29 Swami Vivekananda, after being presented to the audience by
30 Dr. Janes, president of the Ethical Association, said in part:

31 "The product of the slums of any nation cannot be the
32 criterion of our judgment of that nation. One may collect the rotten,
33 worm-eaten apples under every apple tree in the world, and write a
34 book about each of them, and still know nothing of the beauty and
35 possibilities of the apple tree. Only in the highest and best can we
36 judge a nation--the fallen are a race by themselves. Thus it is not
37 only proper, but just and right, to judge a custom by its best, by its
38 ideal.

39 "The ideal of womanhood centres in the Arian race of India,
40 the most ancient in the world's history. In that race, men and
41 women were priests, 'sabatinini [saha-dharmini],' or co-religionists,
42 as the Vedas call them. There every family had its hearth or altar,
43 on which, at the time of the wedding, the marriage fire was kindled,
44 which was kept alive, until either spouse died, when the funeral pile
45 was lighted from its spark. There man and wife together offered
46 their sacrifices, and this idea was carried so far that a man could
47 not even pray alone, because it was held that he was only half a
48 being, for that reason no unmarried man could become a priest.
49 The same held true in ancient Rome and Greece.

1 "But with the advent of a distinct and separate priest-class,
2 the co-priesthood of the woman in all these nations steps back.
3 First it was the Assyrian race, coming of Semitic blood, which
4 proclaimed the doctrine that girls have no voice, and no right, even
5 when married. The Persians drank deep of this Babylonian idea,
6 and by them it was carried to Rome and to Greece, and everywhere
7 woman degenerated.

8 "Another cause was instrumental in bringing this about--the
9 change in the system of marriage. The earliest system was a
10 matriarchal one; that is, one in which the mother was the centre,
11 and in which the girls acceded to her station. This led to the curious
12 system of the Polianders [polyandrous], where five or six brothers
13 often married one wife. Even the Vedas contain a trace of it in the
14 provision, that when a man died without leaving any children, his
15 widow was permitted to live with another man, until she became a
16 mother; but the children she bore did not belong to their father, but
17 to her dead husband. In later years the widow was allowed to marry
18 again, which the modern idea forbids her to do.

19 "But side by side with these excrescences a very intense idea
20 of personal purity sprang up in the nation. On every page the Vedas
21 preach personal purity. The laws in this respect were extremely
22 strict. Every boy and girl was sent to the university, where they
23 studied until their twentieth or thirtieth year; there the least
24 impurity was punished almost cruelly. This idea of personal purity
25 has imprinted itself deeply into the very heart of the race,
26 amounting almost to a mania. The most conspicuous example of it is
27 to be found in the capture of Chito [Chitor] by the Mohammedans.
28 The men defended the town against tremendous odds; and when
29 the women saw that defeat was inevitable they lit a monstrous fire
30 on the market place, and when the enemy broke down the gates
31 74,500 women jumped on the huge funeral pile and perished in the
32 flames. This noble example has been handed down in India to the
33 present time, when every letter bears the words '74,500,' which
34 means that any one who unlawfully reads the letter, thereby
35 becomes guilty of a crime similar to the one which drove those
36 noble women of Chito to their death.

37 "The next period is that of the monks; it came with the advent
38 of Buddhism, which taught that only the monks could reach the
39 'nirvana', something similar to the Christian heaven. The result was
40 that all India became one huge monastery; there was but one
41 object, one battle--to remain pure. All the blame was cast onto
42 women, and even the proverbs warned against them. 'What is the
43 gate to hell?' was one of them, to which the answer was: 'Woman'.
44 Another read: 'What is the chain which binds us all to dust?
45 Woman'. Another one: 'Who is the blindest of the blind? He who is
46 deceived by woman.'

47 "The same idea is to be found in the cloisters of the West. The
48 development of all monasticism always meant the degeneration of
49 women.

50 "But eventually another idea of womanhood arose. In the
51 West it found its ideal in the wife, in India in the mother. But do not

1 think that the priests were altogether responsible for this change. I
2 know they always lay claim to everything in the world and I say this,
3 although I am myself a priest. I'll bend my knees to every prophet in
4 every religion and clime, but candor compels me to say, that here in
5 the West the development of women was brought about by men like
6 John Stuart Mill and the revolutionary French philosophers.
7 Religion has done something, no doubt, but not all. Why, in Asia
8 Minor, Christian bishops to this day keep a harem!

9 "The Christian ideal is that which is found in the Anglo-Saxon
10 race. The Mohammedan woman differs vastly from her western
11 sisters in so far as her social and intellectual development is not so
12 pronounced. But do not, on that account, think that the
13 Mohammedan woman is unhappy, because it is not so. In India
14 woman has enjoyed property rights since thousands of years. Here
15 a man may disinherit his wife, in India the whole estate of the
16 deceased husband must go to the wife, personal property
17 absolutely, real property for life.

18 "In India the mother is the centre of the family and our
19 highest ideal. She is to us the representative of God, as God is the
20 mother of the Universe. It was a female sage who first found the
21 unity of God, and laid down this doctrine in one of the first hymns of
22 the Vedas. Our God is both personal and absolute, the absolute is
23 male, the personal, female. And thus it comes that we now say: 'The
24 first manifestation of God is the hand that rocks the cradle.' He is of
25 the 'arian' race, who is born through prayer, and he is a nonarian,
26 who is born through sensuality.

27 "The doctrine of prenatal influence is now slowly being
28 recognized, and science as well as religion calls out: 'Keep yourself
29 holy, and pure.' So deeply has this been recognized in India, that
30 there we even speak of adultery in marriage, except when marriage
31 is consummated in prayer. And I and every good Hindoo believe,
32 that my mother was pure and holy, and hence I owe her everything
33 that I am. That is the secret of the race--chastity."

34 35 TRUE BUDDHISM

36 (*Brooklyn Standard Union*, February 4, 1895)

37
38 Swami Vivekananda, being presented by Dr. Janes, the
39 president of the Ethical Association, under whose auspices these
40 lectures are given, said in part: "The Hindoo occupies a unique
41 position towards Buddhism. Like Christ, who antagonized the Jews,
42 Buddha antagonized the prevailing religion of India; but while
43 Christ was rejected by his countrymen, Buddha was accepted as
44 God Incarnate. He denounced the priestcraft at the very doors of
45 their temples, yet to-day he is worshipped by them.

1 "Not, however, the creed which bears his name. What Buddha
2 taught, the Hindoo believes, but what the Buddhists teach, we do
3 not accept. For the teachings of the Great Master, spread out
4 broadcast over the land, came back in tradition, colored by the
5 channels through which they passed.

6 "In order to understand Buddhism fully we must go back to
7 the mother religion from which it came. The books of Veda have two
8 parts; the first, Cura makanda [Karma Kanda], contains the
9 sacrificial portion, while the second part, the Vedanta, denounces
10 sacrifices, teaching charity and love, but not death. Each sect took
11 up what portion it liked. The charvaka, or materialist, basing his
12 doctrine on the first part, believed that all was matter and that
13 there is neither a heaven nor a hell, neither a soul nor a God. The
14 second sect, the Gains [Jains], were very moral atheists, who, while
15 rejecting the idea of a God, believed that there is a soul, striving for
16 more perfect development. These two sects were called the
17 heretics. A third sect was called orthodox, because it accepted the
18 Vedas, although it denied the existence of a personal God, believing
19 that everything sprang from the atom or nature.

20 "Thus the intellectual world was divided before Buddha came.
21 But for a correct understanding of his religion, it is also necessary
22 to speak of the caste then existing. The Vedas teach that he who
23 knows God is a Brahma [Brahmin]; he who protects his fellows is a
24 Chocta [Kshatriya], while he who gains his livelihood in trade is a
25 Visha [Vaishya]. These different social diversions [divisions]
26 developed or degenerated into iron-bound casts [castes], and an
27 organized and crystallized priestcraft stood upon the neck of the
28 nation. At this time Buddha was born, and his religion is therefore
29 the culmination of an attempt at a religious and a social
30 reformation.

31 "The air was full of the din of discussion; 20,000 blind priests
32 were trying to lead 20,000,000 [?] blind men, fighting amongst
33 themselves. What was more needed at that time than for a Buddha
34 to preach? 'Stop quarreling, throw your books aside, be perfect!'
35 Buddha never fought true castes, for they are nothing but the
36 congregation of those of a particular natural tendency, and they are
37 always valuable. But Buddha fought the degenerated castes with
38 their hereditary privileges, and spoke to the Brahmins: 'True
39 Brahmins are not greedy, nor criminal nor angry--are you such? If
40 not, do not mimic the genuine, real men. Caste is a state, not an
41 iron-bound class, and every one who knows and loves God is a true
42 Brahmin.' And with regard to the sacrifices, he said: 'Where do the
43 Vedas say that sacrifices make us pure? They may please, perhaps,
44 the angels, but they make us no better. Hence, let off these
45 mummeries--love God and strive to be perfect.'

46 "In later years these doctrines of Buddha were forgotten.
47 Going to lands yet unprepared for the reception of these noble
48 truths, they came back tainted with the foibles of these nations.
49 Thus the Nihilists arose--a sect whose doctrine it was that the
50 whole universe, God and soul, had no basis, but that everything is
51 continually changing. They believed in nothing but the enjoyment of
52 the moment, which eventually resulted in the most revolting orgies.

1 That, however, is not the doctrine of Buddha, but a horrible
2 degeneration of it, and honor to the Hindoo nation, who stood up
3 and drove it out.

4 "Every one of Buddha's teachings is founded in the Vedantas.
5 He was one of those monks who wanted to bring out the truths,
6 hidden in those books and in the forest monasteries. I do not
7 believe that the world is ready for them even now; it still wants
8 those lower religions, which teach of a personal God. Because of
9 this, the original Buddhism could not hold the popular mind, until it
10 took up the modifications, which were reflected back from Thibet
11 and the Tartars. Original Buddhism was not at all nihilistic. It was
12 but an attempt to combat caste and priestcraft; it was the first in
13 the world to stand as champion of the dumb animals, the first to
14 break down the caste, standing between man and man."

15 Swami Vivekananda concluded his lecture with the
16 presentation of a few pictures from the life of Buddha, the "great
17 one, who never thought a thought and never performed a deed
18 except for the good of others; who had the greatest intellect and
19 heart, taking in all mankind and all the animals, all embracing,
20 ready to give up his life for the highest angels as well as for the
21 lowest worm." He first showed how Buddha, for the purpose of
22 saving a herd of sheep, intended for a king's sacrifice, had thrown
23 himself upon the altar, and thus accomplished his purpose. He next
24 pictured how the great prophet had parted from his wife and baby
25 at the cry of suffering mankind, and how, lastly, after his teachings
26 had been universally accepted in India, he accepted the invitation
27 of a despised Pariah, who dined him on swine's flesh, from the
28 effects of which he died.

30 INDIA'S GIFT TO THE WORLD

31 (*Brooklyn Standard Union*, February 27, 1895)

33 Swami Vivekananda, the Hindoo monk, delivered a lecture
34 Monday night under the auspices of the Brooklyn Ethical
35 Association before a fairly large audience at the hall of the Long
36 Island Historical Society, corner Pierrepont and Clinton streets. His
37 subject was "India's Gift to the World".

38 He spoke of the wondrous beauties of his native land, "where
39 stood the earliest cradle of ethics, arts, sciences, and literature, and
40 the integrity of whose sons and the virtue of whose daughters have
41 been sung by all travelers." Then the lecturer showed in rapid
42 details, what India has given to the world.

1 "In religion," he said, "she has exerted a great influence on
2 Christianity, as the very teachings of Christ would [could] be traced
3 back to those of Buddha." He showed by quotations from the works
4 of European and American scientists the many points of similarity
5 between Buddha and Christ. The latter's birth, his seclusion from
6 the world, the number of his apostles, and the very ethics of his
7 teachings are the same as those of Buddha, living many hundred
8 years before him.

9 "Is it mere chance," the lecturer asked, "or was Buddha's
10 religion but the foreshadowing of that of Christ? The majority of
11 your thinkers seem to be satisfied in the latter explanation, but
12 there are some bold enough to say that Christianity is the direct
13 offspring of Buddhism just as the earliest heresy in the Christian
14 religion--the Monecian [Manichaeian] heresy--is now universally
15 regarded as the teaching of a sect of Buddhists. But there is more
16 evidence that Christianity is founded in Buddhism. We find it in
17 recently discovered inscriptions from the reign of Emperor Oshoka
18 [Asoka] of India, about 300 B.C., who made treaties with all the
19 Grecian kings, and whose missionaries discriminated
20 [disseminated?] in those very parts, where, centuries after,
21 Christianity flourished, the principles of the Buddhistic religion.
22 Thus it is explained, why you have our doctrine of trinity, of
23 incarnation of God, and of our ethics, and why the service in our
24 temples is so much alike to that in your present Catholic churches,
25 from the mass to the chant and benediction. Buddhism had all these
26 long before you. Now use your own judgment on these premises--
27 we Hindoos stand ready to be convinced that yours is the earlier
28 religion, although we had ours some three hundred years before
29 yours was even thought of.

30 "The same holds good with respect to sciences. India has
31 given to antiquity the earliest scientific physicians, and, according
32 to Sir William Hunter, she has even contributed to modern medical
33 science by the discovery of various chemicals and by teaching you
34 how to reform misshapen ears and noses. Even more it has done in
35 mathematics, for algebra, geometry, astronomy, and the triumph of
36 modern science--mixed mathematics--were all invented in India, just
37 so much as the ten numerals, the very cornerstone of all present
38 civilization, were discovered in India, and are in reality, Sanskrit
39 words.

40 "In philosophy we are even now head and shoulders above
41 any other nation, as Schopenhauer, the great German philosopher,
42 has confessed. In music India gave to the world her system of
43 notation, with the seven cardinal notes and the diatonic scale, all of
44 which we enjoyed as early as 350 B.C., while it came to Europe only
45 in the eleventh century. In philology, our Sanskrit language is now
46 universally acknowledged to be the foundation of all European
47 languages, which, in fact, are nothing but jargonized Sanskrit.

48 "In literature, our epics and poems and dramas rank as high
49 as those of any language; our 'Shaguntala' [*Shakuntala*] was
50 summarized by Germany's greatest poet, as 'heaven and earth
51 united'. India has given to the world the fables of Aesop, which
52 were copied by Aesop from an old Sanskrit book; it has given the

1 Arabian Nights, yes, even the story of Cinderella and the Bean
2 Stalks. In manufacture, India was the first to make cotton and
3 purple [dye], it was proficient in all works of jewelry, and the very
4 word 'sugar', as well as the article itself, is the product of India.
5 Lastly she has invented the game of chess and the cards and the
6 dice. So great, in fact, was the superiority of India in every respect,
7 that it drew to her borders the hungry cohorts of Europe, and
8 thereby indirectly brought about the discovery of America.

9 "And now, what has the world given to India in return for all
10 that? Nothing but nullification [vilification] and curse and contempt.
11 The world waded in her children's life-blood, it reduced India to
12 poverty and her sons and daughters to slavery, and now it adds
13 insult to injury by preaching to her a religion which can only thrive
14 on the destruction of every other religion. But India is not afraid. It
15 does not beg for mercy at the hands of any nation. Our only fault is
16 that we cannot fight to conquer; but we trust in the eternity of
17 truth. India's message to the world is first of all, her blessing; she is
18 returning good for the evil which is done her, and thus she puts into
19 execution this noble idea, which had its origin in India. Lastly,
20 India's message is, that calm goodness, patience and gentleness
21 will ultimately triumph. For where are the Greeks, the one-time
22 masters of the earth? They are gone. Where are the Romans, at the
23 tramp of whose cohorts the world trembled? Passed away. Where
24 are the Arabs, who in fifty years had carried their banners from the
25 Atlantic to the Pacific? and where are the Spaniards, the cruel
26 murderers of millions of men? Both races are nearly extinct; but
27 thanks to the morality of her children, the kinder race will never
28 perish, and she will yet see the hour of her triumph."

29 At the close of the lecture, which was warmly applauded,
30 Swami Vivekananda answered a number of questions in regard to
31 the customs of India. He denied positively the truth of the
32 statement published in yesterday's [February 25] *Standard Union*,
33 to the effect that widows are ill-treated in India. The law guarantees
34 her not only her own property, before marriage, but also all she
35 received from her husband, at whose death, if there be no direct
36 heirs, the property goes to her. Widows seldom marry in India,
37 because of the scarcity of men. He also stated that the self-
38 sacrifices of wives at the death of their husbands as well as the
39 fanatical self-destruction under the wheels of the Juggernaut, have
40 wholly stopped, and referred his hearers for proof to Sir William
41 Hunter's "History of the Indian Empire".

42 43 CHILD WIDOWS OF INDIA

44 (*Daily Eagle*, February 27, 1895)

45
46 Swami Vivekananda, the Hindu monk, lectured in Historical
47 hall Monday night under the auspices of the Brooklyn Ethical
48 association, on "India's Gift to the World". There were about two
49 hundred and fifty people in the hall when the Swami stepped on the
50 platform. Much interest was manifested on account of the denial by

1 Mrs. James McKeen, president of the Brooklyn Ramabai circle,
2 which is interested in Christian work in India, of the statement
3 attributed to the lecture that the child widows of India were not
4 protected [ill-treated]. In no part of his lecture was reference made
5 to this denial, but after he had concluded, one of the audience
6 asked the lecturer what explanation he had to make to the
7 statement. Swami Vivekananda said that it was untrue that child
8 widows were abused or ill treated in any way. He added:

9 "It is a fact that some Hindus marry very young. Others marry
10 when they have attained a fair age and some do not marry at all.
11 My grandfather was married when quite a child. My father when he
12 was 14 years old and I am 30 years old and am not yet married.
13 When a husband dies all his possessions go to his widow. If a widow
14 is poor she is the same as poor widows in any other country. Old
15 men sometimes marry children, but if the husband was wealthy it
16 was all the better for the widow the sooner he died. I have traveled
17 all over India, but failed to see a case of the ill treatment
18 mentioned. At one time there were religious fanatics, widows, who
19 threw themselves into a fire and were consumed by the flames at
20 the death of their husbands. The Hindus did not believe in this, but
21 did not prevent it, and it was not until the British obtained control
22 of India that it was finally prohibited. These women were
23 considered saints and in many instances monuments were erected
24 to their memory."

25 26 27 SOME CUSTOMS OF THE HINDUS

28 (*Brooklyn Standard Union*, April 8, 1895)
29

30 A special meeting of the Brooklyn Ethical Association, with an
31 address by Swami Vivekananda, the Hindu monk, as the main
32 feature, was held at the Pouch Gallery, on Clinton avenue, last
33 night. "Some customs of the Hindus; what they mean, and how they
34 are misinterpreted," was the subject treated. A large throng of
35 people filled the spacious gallery.

36 Dressed in his Oriental costume, his eyes bright, and a flush
37 mantling his face, Swami Vivekananda started to tell of his people,
38 of his country, and its customs. He desired only that justice be
39 shown to him and to his. In the beginning of his discourse he said
40 he would give a general idea of India. He said it was not a country
41 but a continent; that erroneous ideas had been promulgated by
42 travellers who had never seen the country. He said that there were
43 nine separate languages spoken and over 100 different dialects. He
44 spoke severely of those who wrote about his country, and said their
45 brains were addled by superstition, and that they had an idea that
46 everyone outside of the pale of their own religion was a horrible
47 blackguard. One of the customs that had often been misinterpreted
48 was the brushing of the teeth by the Hindus. They never put hair or
49 skin in their mouths, but use a plant. "Hence a man wrote," said the
50 speaker, "that the Hindus get up early in the morning and swallow a

1 plant." He said the [custom of widows throwing themselves under
2 the] car of juggernaut did not exist, never had, and that no one
3 knew how such a story started.

4 Swami Vivekananda's talk on caste was most comprehensive
5 and interesting. He said it was not a granted [graded] system of
6 classes, but that each caste thought itself to be superior to all the
7 others. He said it was a trade guild and not a religious institution.
8 He said that it had been in existence from time immemorial, and
9 explained how at first only certain rights were hereditary, but how
10 afterward the ties were bound closer, and intermarriage and eating
11 and drinking were restricted to each caste.

12 The speaker told of the effect that the mere presence of a
13 Christian or Mohammedan would have on a Hindu household. He
14 said that it was veritable pollution for a white man to step into a
15 Hindu's presence, and that after receiving one outside of his
16 religion, the Hindu always took a bath.

17 The Hindu monk abused [?] the order of the Pariahs roundly,
18 saying they did all the menial work, ate carrion and were the
19 scavengers. He also said that the people who wrote books on India
20 came only into contact with these people, and not with genuine
21 Hindus. He described the trial of one who broke the rules of caste,
22 and said that the only punishment inflicted was the refusal of the
23 particular caste to intermarry or drink or eat with him or his
24 children. All other ideas were erroneous.

25 In explaining the defects of caste, the speaker said that in
26 preventing competition it produced stagnation, and completely
27 blocked the progress of the people. He said that in taking away
28 brutality it stopped social improvements. In checking competition it
29 increased population. In its favor, he said, were the facts that it was
30 the only ideal of equality and fraternity. That money had nothing to
31 do with social standing in the caste. All were equal. He said that the
32 fault of all the great reformers was that they thought caste was due
33 only to religious representation, instead of ascribing it to the right
34 source, namely, the curious social conditions. He spoke very bitterly
35 of the attempts of the English and Mohammedans to civilize the
36 country by the bayonet and fire and sword. He said that to abolish
37 caste one must change the social conditions completely and destroy
38 the entire economic system of the country. Better, he said, that the
39 waves of the [Bay of] Bengal flow and drown all rather than this.
40 English civilization was composed of the three "B's"--Bible, bayonet,
41 and brandy. "That is civilization, and it has been carried to such an
42 extent that the average income of a Hindu is 50 cents a month.
43 Russia is outside, saying, 'Let's civilize a little,' and England goes on
44 and on."

45 The monk grew excited as he walked up and down, talking
46 rapidly about the way the Hindus had been treated. He scored the
47 foreign educated Hindus, and described their return to their native
48 land, "full of champagne and new ideas". He said that child-
49 marriage was bad, because the West said so, and that the mother-
50 in-law could torture her daughter-in-law with impunity, as the son
51 could not interfere. He said that the foreigners took every

1 opportunity to abuse the heathen, because they had so many evils
2 of their own that they wanted to cover them up. He said that each
3 nation must work out its own salvation, and that no one else could
4 solve its problems.

5 In speaking of India's benefactors he asked whether America
6 had ever heard of David Herr [Hare], who established the first
7 college for women, and who had devoted so much of his life to
8 education.

9 The speaker gave a number of Indian proverbs that were not
10 at all complimentary to the English. In closing he made an earnest
11 appeal for his land. He said:

12 "It matters not as long as India is true to herself and to her
13 religion. But a blow has been struck at her heart by this awful
14 godless West when she sends hypocrisy and atheism into her midst.
15 Instead of sending bushels of abuses, carloads of vituperation and
16 shiploads of condemnations, let an endless stream of love go forth.
17 Let us all be men!"

UNITY, THE GOAL OF RELIGION

(Delivered in New York, 1896)

This universe of ours, the universe of the senses, the rational, the intellectual, is bounded on both sides by the illimitable, the unknowable, the ever unknown. Herein is the search, herein are the inquiries, here are the facts; from this comes the light which is known to the world as religion. Essentially, however, religion belongs to the supersensuous and not to the sense plane. It is beyond all reasoning and is not on the plane of intellect. It is a vision, an inspiration, a plunge into the unknown and unknowable, making the unknowable more than the known, for it can never be "known". This search has been in human mind, as I believe, from the very beginning of humanity. There cannot have been human reasoning and intellect in any period of the world's history without this struggle, this search beyond. In our little universe, this human mind, we see a thought arise. Whence it arises we do not know; and when it disappears, where it goes, we know not either. The macrocosm and the microcosm are, as it were, in the same groove, passing through the same stages, vibrating in the same key.

I shall try to bring before you the Hindu theory that religions do not come from without, but from within. It is my belief that religious thought is in man's very constitution, so much so that it is impossible for him to give up religion until he can give up his mind and body, until he can give up thought and life. As long as a man thinks, this struggle must go on, and so long man must have some form of religion. Thus we see various forms of religion in the world. It is a bewildering study; but it is not, as many of us think, a vain speculation. Amidst this chaos there is harmony, throughout these discordant sounds there is a note of concord; and he who is prepared to listen to it will catch the tone.

The great question of all questions at the present time is this: Taking for granted that the known and the knowable are bounded on both sides by the unknowable and the infinitely unknown, why struggle for that infinite unknown? Why shall we not be content with the known? Why shall we not rest satisfied with eating, drinking, and doing a little good to society? This idea is in the air. From the most learned professor to the prattling baby, we are told that to do good to the world is all of religion, and that it is useless to trouble ourselves about questions of the beyond. So much is this case that it has become a truism.

But fortunately we *must* inquire into the beyond. This present, this expressed, is only one part of that unexpressed. The sense universe is, as it were, only one portion, one bit of that infinite spiritual universe projected into the plane of sense consciousness. How can this little bit of projection be explained, be understood, without knowing that which is beyond? It is said of Socrates that one day while lecturing at Athens, he met a Brahmin who had travelled into Greece, and Socrates told the Brahmin that

1 the greatest study for mankind is man. The Brahmin sharply
2 retorted: "How can you know man until you know God?" This God,
3 this eternally Unknowable, or Absolute, or Infinite, or without
4 name--you may call Him by what name you like--is the rationale, the
5 only explanation, the *raison d'être* of that which is known and
6 knowable, this present life. Take anything before you, the most
7 material thing--take one of the most material sciences, as chemistry
8 or physics, astronomy or biology--study it, push the study forward
9 and forward, and the gross forms will begin to melt and become
10 finer and finer, until they come to a point where you are bound to
11 make a tremendous leap from these material things into the
12 immaterial. The gross melts into the fine, physics into metaphysics,
13 in every department of knowledge.

14 Thus man finds himself driven to a study of the beyond. Life
15 will be a desert, human life will be vain, if we cannot know the
16 beyond. It is very well to say: Be contented with the things of the
17 present. The cows and the dogs are, and so are all animals; and that
18 is what makes them animals. So if man rests content with the
19 present and gives up all search into the beyond, mankind will have
20 to go back to the animal plane again. It is religion, the inquiry into
21 the beyond, that makes the difference between man and animal.
22 Well has it been said that man is the only animal that naturally looks
23 upwards; every other animal naturally looks down. That looking
24 upward and going upward and seeking perfection are what is called
25 salvation; and the sooner a man begins to go higher, the sooner he
26 raises himself towards this idea of truth as salvation. It does not
27 consist in the amount of money in your pocket, or the dress you
28 wear, or the house you live in, but in the wealth of spiritual thought
29 in your brain. That is what makes for human progress, that is the
30 source of all material and intellectual progress, the motive power
31 behind, the enthusiasm that pushes mankind forward.

32 Religion does not live on bread, does not dwell in a house.
33 Again and again you hear this objection advanced: "What good can
34 religion do? Can it take away the poverty of the poor?" Supposing it
35 cannot, would that prove the untruth of religion? Suppose a baby
36 stands up among you when you are trying to demonstrate an
37 astronomical theorem, and says, "Does it bring gingerbread?" "No,
38 it does not", you answer. "Then", says the baby, "it is useless."
39 Babies judge the whole universe from their own standpoint, that of
40 producing gingerbread, and so do the babies of the world. We must
41 not judge of higher things from a low standpoint. Everything must
42 be judged by its own standard and the infinite must be judged by
43 the standard of infinity. Religion permeates the whole of man's life,
44 not only the present, but the past, present, and future. It is,
45 therefore, the eternal relation between the eternal soul and the
46 eternal God. Is it logical to measure its value by its action upon five
47 minutes of human life? Certainly not. These are all negative
48 arguments.

49 Now comes the question: Can religion really accomplish
50 anything? It can. It brings to man eternal life. It has made man
51 what he is, and will make of this human animal a god. That is what
52 religion can do. Take religion from human society and what will

1 remain? Nothing but a forest of brutes. Sense-happiness is not the
2 goal of humanity. Wisdom (Jnana) is the goal of all life. We find that
3 man enjoys his intellect more than an animal enjoys its senses; and
4 we see that man enjoys his spiritual nature even more than this
5 rational nature. So the highest wisdom must be this spiritual
6 knowledge. With this knowledge will come bliss. All these things of
7 this world are but the shadows, the manifestations in the third or
8 fourth degree of the real Knowledge and Bliss.

9 One question more: What is the goal? Nowadays it is asserted
10 that man is infinitely progressing, forward and forward, and there is
11 no goal of perfection to attain to. Ever approaching, never attaining,
12 whatever that may mean and however wonderful it may be, it is
13 absurd on the face of it. Is there any motion in a straight line? A
14 straight line infinitely projected becomes a circle, it returns to the
15 starting point. You must end where you begin; and you began in
16 God, you must go back to God. What remains? Detail work. Through
17 eternity you have to do the detail work.

18 Yet another question: Are we to discover new truths of
19 religion as we go on? Yea and nay. In the first place, we cannot
20 know anything more of religion, it has all been known. In all
21 religions of the world you will find it claimed that there is a unity
22 within us. Being one with divinity, there cannot be any further
23 progress in that sense. Knowledge means finding this unity. I see
24 you as men and women, and this is variety. It becomes scientific
25 knowledge when I group you together and call you human beings.
26 Take the science of chemistry, for instance. Chemists are seeking to
27 resolve all known substances into their original elements, and if
28 possible, to find the one element from which all these are derived.
29 The time may come when they will find one element that is the
30 source of all other elements. Reaching that, they can go further; the
31 science of chemistry will have become perfect. So it is with the
32 science of religion. If we can discover this perfect unity, there
33 cannot be any further progress.

34 The next question is: Can such a unity be found? In India the
35 attempt has been made from the earliest times to reach a science of
36 religion and philosophy, for the Hindus do not separate these as is
37 customary in Western countries. We regard religion and philosophy
38 as but two aspects of one thing which must equally be grounded in
39 reason and scientific truth.

40 The system of the Sankhya philosophy is one of the most
41 ancient in India, or in fact in the world. Its great exponent Kapila is
42 the father of all Hindu psychology; and the ancient system that he
43 taught is still the foundation of all accepted systems of philosophy
44 in India today which are known as the Darshanas. They all adopt his
45 psychology, however widely they differ in other respects.

46 The Vedanta, as the logical outcome of the Sankhya,
47 pushes its conclusion yet further. While its cosmology agrees with
48 that taught by Kapila, the Vedanta is not satisfied to end in dualism,
49 but continues its search for the final unity which is alike the goal of
50 science and religion.

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THE FREE SOUL

(Delivered in New York, 1896)

The analysis of the Sankhyas stops with the duality of existence--Nature and souls. There are an infinite number of souls, which, being simple, cannot die, and must therefore be separate from Nature. Nature in itself changes and manifests all these phenomena; and the soul, according to the Sankhyas, is inactive. It is a simple by itself, and Nature works out all these phenomena for the liberation of the soul; and liberation consists in the soul discriminating that it is not Nature. At the same time we have seen that the Sankhyas were bound to admit that every soul was omnipresent. Being a simple, the soul cannot be limited, because all limitation comes either through time, space, or causation. The soul being entirely beyond these cannot have any limitation. To have limitation one must be in space, which means the body; and that which is body must be in Nature. If the soul had form, it would be identified with Nature; therefore the soul is formless, and that which is formless cannot be said to exist here, there, or anywhere. It must be omnipresent. Beyond this the Sankhya philosophy does not go.

1 The first argument of the Vedantists against this is that this
2 analysis is not a perfect one. If their Nature be absolute and the
3 soul be also absolute, there will be two absolutes, and all the
4 arguments that apply in the case of the soul to show that it is
5 omnipresent will apply in the case of Nature, and Nature too will be
6 beyond all time, space, and causation, and as the result there will
7 be no change or manifestation. Then will come the difficulty of
8 having two absolutes, which is impossible. What is the solution of
9 the Vedantist? His solution is that, just as the Sankhyas say, it
10 requires some sentient Being as the motive behind, which makes
11 the mind think and Nature work, because Nature in all its
12 modifications, from gross matter up to Mahat (Intelligence), is
13 simply insentient. Now, says the Vedantist, this sentient Being
14 which is behind the whole universe is what we call *God*, and
15 consequently this universe is not different from Him. It is He
16 Himself who has become this universe. He not only is the
17 instrumental cause of this universe, but also the material cause.
18 Cause is never different from effect, the effect is but the cause
19 reproduced in another form. We see that every day. So this Being is
20 the cause of Nature. All the forms and phases of Vedanta, either
21 dualistic, or qualified-monistic, or monistic, first take this position
22 that God is not only the instrumental, but also the material cause of
23 this universe, that everything which exists is He. The second step in
24 Vedanta is that these souls are also part of God, one spark of that
25 Infinite Fire. "As from a mass of fire millions of small particles fly,
26 even so from this Ancient One have come all these souls." So far so
27 good, but it does not yet satisfy. What is meant by a part of the
28 Infinite? The Infinite is indivisible; there cannot be parts of the
29 Infinite. The Absolute cannot be divided. What is meant, therefore,
30 by saying that all these sparks are from Him? The Advaitist, the
31 non-dualistic Vedantist, solves the problem by maintaining that
32 there is really no part; that each soul is really not a part of the
33 Infinite, but actually *is* the Infinite Brahman. There how can there
34 be so many? The sun reflected from millions of globules of water
35 appears to be millions of suns, and in each globule is a miniature
36 picture of the sun-form; so all these souls are but reflections and
37 not real. They are not the real "I" which is the God of this universe,
38 the one undivided Being of the universe. And all these little
39 different beings, men and animal etc. are but reflections, and not
40 real. They are simply illusory reflections upon Nature. There is but
41 one Infinite Being in the universe, and that Being appears as you
42 and I; but this appearance of divisions is after all a delusion. He has
43 not been divided, but only appears to be divided. This apparent
44 division is caused by looking at Him through the network of time,
45 space, and causation. When I look at God through the network of
46 time, space, and causation, I see Him as the material world. When I
47 look at Him from a little higher plane, yet through the same
48 network, I see Him as an animal, a little higher as a man, a little
49 higher as a god, but yet He is the One Infinite Being of the
50 universe, and that Being we are. I am That, and you are That. Not
51 parts of It, but the whole of It. "It is the Eternal Knower standing
52 behind the whole phenomena; He himself is the phenomena." He is
53 both the subject and the object, He is the "I" and the "You". How is

1 this? How to know the Knower? The Knower cannot know Himself; I
2 see everything but cannot see myself. The Self, the Knower, the
3 Lord of all, the real Being, is the cause of all the vision that is in the
4 universe, but it is impossible for Him to see Himself or know
5 Himself, excepting through reflection. You cannot see your own face
6 except in a mirror, and so the Self cannot see Its own nature until It
7 is reflected, and this whole universe therefore is the Self trying to
8 realise Itself. This reflection is thrown back first from the
9 protoplasm, then from plants and animals, and so on and on from
10 better and better reflectors, until the best reflector, the perfect
11 man, is reached--just as a man who, wanting to see his face, looks
12 first in a little pool of muddy water, and sees just an outline; then he
13 comes to clear water, and sees a better image; then to a piece of
14 shining metal, and sees a still better image; and at last to a looking-
15 glass, and sees himself reflected as he is. Therefore the perfect
16 man is the highest reflection on that Being who is both subject and
17 object. You now find why man instinctively worships everything, and
18 how perfect men are instinctively worshipped as God in every
19 country. You may talk as you like, but it is they who are bound to be
20 worshipped. That is why men worship Incarnations, such as Christ
21 or Buddha. They are the most perfect manifestations of the eternal
22 Self. They are much higher than all the conceptions of God that you
23 or I can make. A perfect man is much higher than such conceptions.
24 In him the circle becomes complete; the subject and the object
25 become one. In him all delusions go away and in their place comes
26 the realisation that he has always been that perfect Being. How
27 came this bondage then? How was it possible for this perfect Being
28 to degenerate into the imperfect? How was it possible that the free
29 became bound? The Advaitist says, he was never bound, but was
30 always free. Various clouds of various colours come before the sky.
31 They remain there a minute and then pass away. It is the same
32 eternal blue sky stretching there forever. The sky never changes; it
33 is the cloud that is changing. So you are always perfect, eternally
34 perfect. Nothing ever changes your nature, or ever will. All these
35 ideas that I am imperfect, I am a man, or a woman, or a sinner, or I
36 am the mind, I have thought, I will think--all are hallucinations; you
37 never think, you never had a body; you never were imperfect. You
38 are the blessed Lord of this universe, the one Almighty ruler of
39 everything that is and ever will be, the one mighty ruler of these
40 suns and stars and moons and earths and planets and all the little
41 bits of our universe. It is through you that the sun shines and the
42 stars shed their lustre, and the earth becomes beautiful. It is
43 through your blessedness that they all love and are attracted to
44 each other. You are in all, and you are all. Whom to avoid, and
45 whom to take? You are the all in all. When this knowledge comes,
46 delusion immediately vanishes.

1 I was once travelling in the desert in India. I travelled for
2 over a month and always found the most beautiful landscapes
3 before me, beautiful lakes and all that. One day I was very thirsty
4 and I wanted to have a drink at one of these lakes; but when I
5 approached that lake it vanished. Immediately with a blow came
6 into my brain that idea that this was a mirage about which I read all
7 my life; and then I remembered and smiled at my folly, that for the
8 last month all the beautiful landscapes and lakes I had been seeing
9 were this mirage, but I could not distinguish them then. The next
10 morning I again began my march; there was the lake and the
11 landscape, but with it immediately came the idea, "This is a
12 mirage." Once known it has lost its power of illusion. So this illusion
13 of the universe will break one day. The whole of this will vanish,
14 melt away. This is realisation. Philosophy is no joke or talk. It has to
15 be realised; this body will vanish, this earth and everything will
16 vanish, this idea that I am the body or mind will for some time
17 vanish, or if the Karma is ended it will disappear, never to come
18 back; but if one part of the Karma remains, then as a potter's
19 wheel, after the potter has finished the pot, will sometimes go on
20 from the past momentum, so this body, when the delusion has
21 vanished altogether, will go on for some time. Again this world will
22 come, men and women and animals will come, just as the mirage
23 came the next day, but not with the same force; along with it will
24 come the idea that I know its nature now, and it will cause no
25 bondage, no more pain, nor grief, nor misery. Whenever anything
26 miserable will come, the mind will be able to say, "I know you as
27 hallucination." When a man has reached that state, he is called
28 Jivanmukta, "living-free", free even while living. The aim and end in
29 this life for the Jnana-Yogi is to become this Jivanmukta, "living-
30 free." He is Jivanmukta who can live in this world without being
31 attached. He is like the lotus leaves in water, which are never
32 wetted by the water. He is the highest of human beings, nay, the
33 highest of all beings, for he has realised his identity with the
34 Absolute, he has realised that he is one with God. So long as you
35 think you have the least difference from God, fear will seize you,
36 but when you have known that you are He, that there is no
37 difference, entirely no difference, that you are He, all of Him, and
38 the whole of Him, all fear ceases. "There, who sees whom? Who
39 worships whom? Who talks to whom? Who hears whom? Where one
40 sees another, where one talks to another, where one hears another,
41 that is little. Where none sees none, where none speaks to none,
42 that is the highest, that is the great, that is the Brahman." Being
43 That, you are always That. What will become of the world then?
44 What good shall we do to the world? Such questions do not arise.
45 "What becomes of my gingerbread if I become old?" says the baby!
46 "What becomes of my marbles if I grow? So I will not grow," says
47 the boy! "What will become of my dolls if I grow old?" says the little
48 child! It is the same question in connection with this world; it has
49 no existence in the past, present, or future. If we have known the
50 Atman as It is, if we have known that there is nothing else but this
51 Atman, that everything else is but a dream, with no existence in
52 reality, then this world with its poverties, its miseries, its
53 wickedness, and its goodness will cease to disturb us. If they do not

1 exist, for whom and for what shall we take trouble? This is what the
2 Jnana-Yogis teach. Therefore, dare to be free, dare to go as far as
3 your thought leads, and dare to carry that out in your life. It is very
4 hard to come to Jnana. It is for the bravest and most daring, who
5 dare to smash all idols, not only intellectual, but in the senses. This
6 body is not I; it must go. All sorts of curious things may come out of
7 this. A man stands up and says, "I am not the body, therefore my
8 headache must be cured"; but where is the headache if not in his
9 body? Let a thousand headaches and a thousand bodies come and
10 go. What is that to me? I have neither birth nor death; father or
11 mother I never had; friends and foes I have none, because they are
12 all I. I am my own friend, and I am my own enemy. I am Existence-
13 Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. I am He, I am He. If in a thousand
14 bodies I am suffering from fever and other ills, in millions of bodies
15 I am healthy. If in a thousand bodies I am starving, in other
16 thousand bodies I am feasting. If in thousands of bodies I am
17 suffering misery, in thousands of bodies I am happy. Who shall
18 blame whom, who praise whom? Whom to seek, whom to avoid? I
19 seek none, nor avoid any, for I am all the universe. I praise myself, I
20 blame myself, I suffer for myself, I am happy at my own will, I am
21 free. This is the Jnani, the brave and daring. Let the whole universe
22 tumble down; he smiles and says it never existed, it was all a
23 hallucination. He sees the universe tumble down. Where was it!
24 Where has it gone!

25 Before going into the practical part, we will take up one more
26 intellectual question. So far the logic is tremendously rigorous. If
27 man reasons, there is no place for him to stand until he comes to
28 this, that there is but One Existence, that everything else is
29 nothing. There is no other way left for rational mankind but to take
30 this view. But how is it that what is infinite, ever perfect, ever
31 blessed, Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute, has come under these
32 delusions? It is the same questions that has been asked all the
33 world over. In the vulgar form the question becomes, "How did sin
34 come into this world?" This is the most vulgar and sensuous form of
35 the question, and the other is the most philosophic form, but the
36 answer is the same. The same question has been asked in various
37 grades and fashions, but in its lower forms it finds no solution,
38 because the stories of apples and serpents and women do not give
39 the explanation. In that state, the question is childish and so is the
40 answer. But the question has assumed very high proportions now:
41 "How did this illusion come?" And the answer is as fine. The answer
42 is that we cannot expect any answer to an impossible question. The
43 very question is impossible in terms. You have no right to ask that
44 question. Why? What is perfection? That which is beyond time,
45 space and causation--that is perfect. Then you ask how the perfect
46 became imperfect. In logical language the question may be put in
47 this form: "How did that which is beyond causation become
48 caused?" You contradict yourself. You first admit it is beyond
49 causation, and then ask what causes it. This question can only be
50 asked within the limits of causation. As far as time and space and
51 causation extend, so far can this question be asked. But beyond that
52 it will be nonsense to ask it, because the question is illogical. Within
53 time, space and causation, it can never be answered, and what

1 answer may lie beyond these limits can only be known when we
2 have transcended them; therefore the wise will let this question
3 rest. When a man is ill, he devotes himself to curing his disease
4 without insisting that he must first learn how he came to have it.

5 There is another form of this question, a little lower, but more
6 practical and illustrative: what produced this delusion? Can any
7 reality produce delusion? Certainly not. We see that one delusion
8 produces another, and so on. It is delusion always that produces
9 delusion. It is disease that produces disease and not health that
10 produces disease. The wave is the same thing as the water, the
11 effect is the cause in another form. The effect is delusion, and
12 therefore the cause must be delusion. What produced this delusion?
13 Another delusion. And so on without beginning. The only question
14 that remains for you to ask is: Does not this break your monism,
15 because you get two existences in the universe, one yourself and
16 the other the delusion? The answer is: Delusion cannot be called an
17 existence. Thousands of dreams come into your life, but do not form
18 any part of your life. Dreams come and go; they have no existence.
19 To call delusion existence would be sophistry. Therefore there is
20 only one individual existence in the universe, ever free, and ever
21 blessed; and that is what you are. This is the last conclusion
22 reached by the Advaitists.

23 It may then be asked: What becomes of all these various
24 forms of worship? They will remain; they are simply groping in the
25 dark for light, and through this groping light will come. We have
26 just seen that the Self cannot see Itself. Our knowledge is within
27 the network of Maya (unreality), and beyond that is freedom. Within
28 the network, there is slavery, it is all under law; beyond that there
29 is no law. So far as the universe is concerned, existence is ruled by
30 law, and beyond that is freedom. As long as you are in the network
31 of time, space , and causation, to say you are free is nonsense,
32 because in that network all is under rigorous law, sequence and
33 consequence. Every thought that you think is caused, every feeling
34 has been caused; to say that the will is free is sheer nonsense. It is
35 only when the infinite existence comes, as it were, into this network
36 of Maya that it takes the form of will. Will is a portion of that being,
37 caught in the network of Maya, and therefore "free will" is a
38 misnomer. It means nothing--sheer nonsense. So is all this talk
39 about freedom. There is no freedom in Maya.

40 Every one is as much bound in thought, word, deed, and
41 mind, as a piece of stone or this table. That I talk to you now is as
42 rigorous in causation as that you listen to me. There is no freedom
43 until you go beyond Maya. That is the real freedom of the soul.
44 Men, however sharp and intellectual, however clearly they see the
45 force of the logic that nothing here can be free, are all compelled to
46 think they are free; they cannot help it. No work can go on until we
47 begin to say we are free. It means that the freedom we talk about is
48 the glimpse of the blue sky through the clouds and that the real
49 freedom--the blue sky itself--is behind. True freedom cannot exist in
50 the midst of this delusion, this hallucination, this nonsense of the
51 world, this universe of the senses, body, and mind. All these
52 dreams, without beginning or end, uncontrolled and uncontrollable,

1 ill-adjusted, broken , inharmonious, form our idea of this universe.
2 In a dream, when you see a giant with twenty heads chasing you,
3 and you are flying from him, you do not think it is inharmonious;
4 you think it is proper and right. So is this law. All that you call law is
5 simply chance without meaning. In this dream state, you call it law.
6 Within Maya, so far as this law of time, space, and causation exists,
7 there is no freedom; and all these various forms of worship are
8 within this Maya. The idea of God and the ideas of brute and of man
9 are within this Maya, and as such are equally hallucinations; all of
10 them are dreams. But you must take care not to argue like some
11 extraordinary men of whom we hear at the present time. They say
12 the idea of God is a delusion, but the idea of this world is true. Both
13 ideas stand or fall by the same logic. He alone has the right to be an
14 atheist who denies this world, as well as the other. The same
15 argument is for both. The same mass of delusion extends from God
16 to the lowest animal, from a blade of grass to the Creator. They
17 stand or fall by the same logic. The same person who sees falsity in
18 the idea of God ought also to see it in the idea of his own body or
19 his own mind. When God vanishes, then also vanish the body and
20 mind; and when both vanish, that which is the Real Existence
21 remains for ever. "There the eyes cannot go, nor the speech, nor the
22 mind. We cannot see, neither know it." And we now understand that
23 so far as speech and thought and knowledge and intellect go, it is
24 all within the Maya, within bondage. Beyond that is Reality. There
25 neither thought, nor mind, nor speech, can reach.

26 So far it is intellectually all right, but then comes the practice.
27 The real work is in the practice. Are any practices necessary to
28 realise this Oneness? Most decidedly. It is not that you become this
29 Brahman. You are already that. It is not that you are going to
30 become God or perfect; you are already perfect; and whenever you
31 think you are not, it is a delusion. This delusion which says that you
32 are Mr. So-and-so or Mrs. So-and-so can be gotten rid of by another
33 delusion, and that is practice. Fire will eat fire, and you can use one
34 delusion to conquer another delusion. One cloud will come and
35 brush away another cloud, and then both will go away. What are
36 these practices then? We must always bear in mind that we are not
37 going to be free, but are free already. Every idea that we are bound
38 is a delusion. Every idea that we are happy or unhappy is a
39 tremendous delusion; and another delusion will come--that we have
40 got to work and worship and struggle to be free--and this will chase
41 out the first delusion, and then both will stop.

42 The fox is considered very unholy by the Mohammedans and
43 by the Hindus. Also, if a dog touches any bit of food, it has to be
44 thrown out, it cannot be eaten by any man. In a certain
45 Mohammedan house a fox entered and took a little bit of the food
46 from the table, ate it up, and fled. The man was a poor man, and
47 had prepared a very nice feast for himself, and that feast was made
48 unholy and he could not eat it. So he went to the Mulla, a priest,
49 and said, "This has happened to me; a fox came and took a mouthful
50 out of my meal. What can be done? I had prepared a feast and
51 wanted so much to eat it, and now comes this fox and destroys the
52 whole affair." The Mulla thought for a minute and then found only

1 one solution and said, "The only way for you is to get a dog and
2 make him eat a bit out of the same plate, because dogs and foxes
3 are eternally quarrelling. The food that was left by the fox will go
4 into your stomach and that left by the dog will go there too, and
5 both will be purified." We are very much in the same predicament.
6 This is a hallucination that we are imperfect; and we take up
7 another, that we have to practice to become perfect. Then one will
8 chase the other, as we can use one thorn to extract another and
9 then throw both away. There are people for whom it is sufficient
10 knowledge to hear, "Thou art That." With a flash this universe goes
11 away and the real nature shines, but others have to struggle hard to
12 get rid of this idea of bondage.

13 The first question is: Who are fit to become Jnana-Yogis?
14 Those who are equipped with these requisites: First, renunciation
15 of all fruits of work and of all enjoyments in this life or another life.
16 If you are the creator of this universe, whatever you desire you will
17 have, because you will create it yourself. It is only a question of
18 time. Some get it immediately; with others the past Samskaras
19 (impressions) stand in the way of getting their desires. We give the
20 first place to desires of enjoyment, either in this or another life.
21 Deny that there is any life at all, because life is only another name
22 for death. Deny that you are a living being. Who cares for life? Life
23 is one of these hallucinations, and death is its counterpart. Joy is
24 one part of these hallucinations, and misery the other part, and so
25 on. What have you to do with life and death? These are all creations
26 of the mind. This is called giving up desires of enjoyment either in
27 this life or another.

28 Then comes controlling the mind, calming it so that it will not
29 break into waves and have all sorts of desires, holding the mind
30 steady, not allowing it to get into waves from external or internal
31 causes, controlling the mind perfectly, just by the power of will. The
32 Jnana-Yogi does not take any one of these physical helps or mental
33 helps: simply philosophic reasoning, knowledge, and his own will,
34 these are the instrumentalities he believes in. Next comes Titiksha,
35 forbearance, bearing all miseries without murmuring, without
36 complaining. When an injury comes, do not mind it. If a tiger comes,
37 stand there. Who flies? There are men who practice Titiksha, and
38 succeed in it. There are men who sleep on the banks of the Ganga
39 in the mid-summer sun of India, and in winter float in the waters of
40 the Ganga for a whole day; they do not care. Men sit in the snow of
41 the Himalayas, and do not care to wear any garment. What is heat?
42 What is cold? Let things come and go, what is that to me, I am not
43 the body. It is hard to believe this in these Western countries, but it
44 is better to know that it is done. Just as your people are brave to
45 jump at the mouth of a cannon, or into the midst of the battle field,
46 so our people are brave to think and act out their philosophy. They
47 give up their lives for it. "I am Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute;
48 I am He, I am He." Just as the Western ideal is to keep up luxury in
49 practical life, so ours is to keep up the highest form of spirituality,
50 to demonstrate that religion is not merely frothy words, but can be
51 carried out, every bit of it, in this life. This is Titiksha, to bear
52 everything, not to complain of anything. I myself have seen men

1 who say, "I am the soul; what is the universe to me? Neither
2 pleasure nor pain, nor virtue nor vice, nor heat nor cold is anything
3 to me." That is Titiksha, not running after the enjoyments of the
4 body. What is religion? To pray, "Give me this and that"? Foolish
5 ideas of religion! Those who believe them have no true idea of God
6 and soul. My Master used to say, "The vulture rises higher and
7 higher until he becomes a speck, but his eye is always on the piece
8 of rotten carrion on the earth." After all, what is the result of your
9 ideas of religion? To cleanse the streets and have more bread and
10 clothes? Who cares for bread and clothes? Millions come and go
11 every minute. Who cares? Why cares for the joys and vicissitudes of
12 this little world? Go beyond that if you dare; go beyond law, let the
13 whole universe vanish, and stand alone. "I am Existence-Absolute,
14 Knowledge-Absolute, Bliss-Absolute; I am He, I am He."

ONE EXISTENCE APPEARING AS MANY

(Delivered in New York, 1896)

Vairagya or renunciation is the turning point in all the various Yogas. The Karmi (worker) renounces the fruits of his work. The Bhakta (devotee) renounces all little loves for the almighty and omnipresent love. The Yogi renounces his experiences, because his philosophy is that the whole Nature, although it is for experience of the soul, at last brings him to know that he is not in Nature, but eternally separate from Nature. The Jnani (philosopher) renounces everything, because his philosophy is that Nature never existed, neither in the past, nor present, nor will It in the future. The question of utility cannot be asked in these higher themes. It is very absurd to ask it; and even if it be asked, after a proper analysis, what do we find in this question of utility? The ideal of happiness, that which brings man more happiness, is of greater utility to him than these higher things which do not improve his material conditions or bring him such great happiness. All the sciences are for this one end, to bring happiness to humanity; and that which brings the larger amount of happiness, man takes and gives up that which brings a lesser amount of happiness. We have seen how happiness is either in the body, or in the mind, or in the Atman. With animals, and in the lowest human beings who are very much like animals, happiness is all in the body. No man can eat with the same pleasure as a famished dog or a wolf; so in the dog and the wolf the happiness is entirely in the body. In men we find a higher plane of happiness, that of thought; and in the Jnani there is the highest plane of happiness in the Self, the Atman. So to the philosopher this knowledge of the Self is of the highest utility, because it gives him the highest happiness possible. Sense-gratifications or physical things cannot be of the highest utility to him, because he does not find in them the same pleasure that he finds in knowledge itself; and after all, knowledge is the one goal and is really the highest happiness that we know. All who work in ignorance are, as it were, the draught animals of the Devas. The word Deva is here used in the sense of a wise man. All the people that work and toil and labour like machines do not really enjoy life, but it is the wise man who enjoys. A rich man buys a picture at a cost of a hundred thousand dollars perhaps, but it is the man who understand art that enjoys it; and if the rich man is without knowledge of art, it is useless to him, he is only the owner. All over the world, it is the wise man who enjoys the happiness of the world. The ignorant man never enjoys; he has to work for others unconsciously.

1 Thus far we have seen the theories of these Advaitist
2 philosophers, how there is but one Atman; there cannot be two. We
3 have seen how in the whole of this universe there is but One
4 Existence; and that One Existence when seen through the senses is
5 called the world, the world of matter. When It is seen through the
6 mind, It is called the world of thoughts and ideas; and when It is
7 seen as it is, then It is the One Infinite Being. You must bear this in
8 mind; it is not that there is a soul in man, although I had to take
9 that for granted in order to explain it at first, but that there is only
10 One Existence, and that one the Atman, the Self; and when this is
11 perceived through the senses, through sense-imageries, It is called
12 the body. When It is perceived through thought, it is called the
13 mind. When It is perceived in Its own nature, It is the Atman, the
14 One Only Existence. So it is not that there are three things in one,
15 the body and the mind and the Self, although that was a convenient
16 way of putting it in the course of explanation; but all is that Atman,
17 and that one Being is sometimes called the body, sometimes the
18 mind, and sometimes the Self, according to different vision. There is
19 but one Being which the ignorant call the world. When a man goes
20 higher in knowledge, he calls the very same Being the world of
21 thought. Again, when knowledge itself comes, all illusions vanish,
22 and man finds it is all nothing but Atman. I am that One Existence.
23 This is the last conclusion. There are neither three nor two in the
24 universe; it is all One. That One, under the illusion of Maya, is seen
25 as many, just as a rope is seen as a snake. It is the very rope that is
26 seen as a snake. There are not two things there, a rope separate
27 and a snake separate. No man sees these two things there at the
28 same time. Dualism and non-dualism are very good philosophic
29 terms, but in perfect perception we never perceive the real and the
30 false at the same time. We are all born monists, we cannot help it.
31 We always perceive the one. When we perceive the rope, we do not
32 perceive the snake at all; and when we see the snake, we do not see
33 the rope at all--it has vanished. When you see illusion, you do not
34 see reality. Suppose you see one of your friends coming at a
35 distance in the street; you know him very well but through the haze
36 and mist that is before you, you think it is another man. When you
37 see your friend as another man, you do not see your friend at all, he
38 has vanished. You are perceiving only one. Suppose your friend is
39 Mr. A.; but when you perceive Mr. A as Mr. B, you do not see Mr. A
40 at all. In each case you perceive only one. When you see yourself as
41 a body, you are body and nothing else; and that is the perception of
42 the vast majority of mankind. They may talk of soul and mind, and
43 all these things, but what they perceive is the physical form, the
44 touch, taste, vision, and so on. Again, with certain men in certain
45 states of consciousness, they perceive themselves as thought. You
46 know, of course, the story told of Sir Humphrey Davy, who was
47 making experiments before his class with laughing-gas, and
48 suddenly one of the tubes broke, and the gas escaping, he breathed
49 it in. For some moments he remained like a statue. Afterwards he
50 told his class that when he was in that state, he actually perceived
51 that the whole world is made up of ideas. The gas, for a time, made
52 him forget the consciousness of the body, and that very thing which
53 he was seeing as the body, he began to perceive as ideas. When the

1 consciousness rises still higher, when this little puny consciousness
2 is gone for ever, that which is the Reality behind shines, and we see
3 it as the One Existence-Knowledge-Bliss, the one Atman, the
4 Universal. "One that is only Knowledge itself, One that is Bliss itself,
5 beyond all compare, beyond all limit, ever free, never bound,
6 infinite as the sky, unchangeable as the sky. Such a One will
7 manifest Himself in your heart in meditation."

1 How does the Advaitist theory explain these various phases of
2 heaven and hells and these various ideas we find in all religions?
3 When a man dies, it is said that he goes to heaven or hell, goes here
4 or there, or that when a man dies he is born again in another body
5 either in heaven or in another world or somewhere. These are all
6 hallucinations. Really speaking nobody is ever born or dies. There is
7 neither heaven nor hell nor this world; all three never really
8 existed. Tell a child a lot of ghost stories, and let him go into the
9 street in the evening. There is a little stump of a tree. What does
10 the child see? A ghost, with hands stretched out, ready to grab him.
11 Suppose a man comes from the corner of the street, wanting to
12 meet his sweetheart; he sees that stump of the tree as the girl. A
13 policeman coming from the street corner sees the stump as a thief.
14 The thief sees it as a policeman. It is the same stump of a tree that
15 was seen in various ways. The stump is the reality, and the visions
16 of the stump are the projections of the various minds. There is one
17 Being, this Self; It neither comes nor goes. When a man is ignorant,
18 he wants to go to heaven or some place, and all his life he has been
19 thinking and thinking of this; and when this earth-dream vanishes,
20 he sees this world as a heaven with Devas and angels flying about,
21 and all such things. If a man all his life desires to meet his
22 forefathers, he gets them all from Adam downwards, because he
23 creates them. If a man is still more ignorant and has always been
24 frightened by fanatics with ideas of hell, with all sorts of
25 punishments, when he dies, he will see this very world as hell. All
26 that is meant by dying or being born is simply changes in the plane
27 of vision. Neither do you move, nor does that move upon which you
28 project your vision. you are the permanent, the unchangeable. How
29 can you come and go? It is impossible; you are omnipresent. The
30 sky never moves, but the clouds move over the surface of the sky,
31 and we may think that the sky itself moves, just as when you are in
32 a railway train, you think the land is moving. It is not so, but it is the
33 train which is moving. You are where you are; these dreams, these
34 various clouds move. One dream follows another without
35 connection. There is no such thing as law or connection in this
36 world, but we are thinking that there is a great deal of connection.
37 All of you have probably read *Alice in Wonderland*. It is the most
38 wonderful book for children that has been written in this century.
39 When I read it, I was delighted; it was always in my head to write
40 that sort of book for children. What pleased me most in it was what
41 you think most incongruous, that there is no connection there. One
42 idea comes and jumps into another, without any connection. When
43 you were children, you thought that the most wonderful connection.
44 So this man brought back his thoughts of childhood, which were
45 perfectly connected to him as a child, and composed this book for
46 children. And all these books which men write, trying to make
47 children swallow their own ideas as men, are nonsense. We too are
48 grown-up children, that is all. The world is the same unconnected
49 thing--*Alice in Wonderland*--with no connection whatever. When we
50 see things happen a number of times in a certain sequence, we call
51 it cause and effect, and say that the thing will happen again. When
52 this dream changes, another dream will seem quite as connected as
53 this. When we dream, the things we see all seem to be connected;

1 during the dream we never think they are incongruous; it is only
2 when we wake that we see the want of connection. When we wake
3 from this dream of the world and compare it with the Reality, it will
4 be found all incongruous nonsense, a mass of incongruity passing
5 before us, we do not know whence or whither, but we know it will
6 end; and this is called Maya, and is like masses of fleeting fleecy
7 clouds. They represent all this changing existence, and the sun
8 itself, the unchanging , is you. When you look at that unchanging
9 Existence from the outside, you call it God; and when you look at it
10 from the inside, you call it yourself. It is but one. There is no God
11 separate from you, no God higher than you, the real "you". All the
12 gods are little beings to you, all the ideas of God and Father in
13 heaven are but your own reflection. God Himself is your image.
14 "God created man after His own image." That is wrong. Man
15 creates God after his own image. That is right. Throughout the
16 universe we are creating gods after our own image. We create the
17 god and fall down at his feet and worship him; and when this dream
18 comes, we love it!

1 This is a good point to understand--that the sum and
2 substance of this lecture is that there is but One Existence, and that
3 One-Existence seen through different constitutions appears either
4 as the earth, or heaven, or hell, or gods, or ghosts, or men, or
5 demons, or world, or all these things. But among these many, "He
6 who sees that One in this ocean of death, he who sees that One Life
7 in this floating universe, who realises that One who never changes,
8 unto him belongs eternal peace; unto none else, unto none else."
9 This One Existence has to be realised. How, is the next question.
10 How is it to be realised? How is this dream to be broken, how shall
11 we wake up from this dream that we are little men and women, and
12 all such things? We are the Infinite Being of the universe and have
13 become materialised into these little beings, men and women,
14 depending upon the sweet word of one man, or the angry word of
15 another, and so forth. What a terrible dependence, what a terrible
16 slavery! I who am beyond all pleasure and pain, whose reflection is
17 the whole universe, little bits of whose life are the suns and moons
18 and stars--I am held down as a terrible slave! If you pinch my body,
19 I feel pain. If one says a kind word, I begin to rejoice. See my
20 condition--slave of the body, slave of the mind, slave of the world,
21 slave of a good word, slave of a bad word, slave of passion, slave of
22 happiness, slave of life, slave of death, slave of everything! This
23 slavery has to be broken. How? "This Atman has first to be heard,
24 then reasoned upon, and then meditated upon." This is the method
25 of the Advaita Jnani. The truth has to be heard, then reflected upon
26 and then to be constantly asserted. Think always, "I am Brahman."
27 Every other thought must be cast aside as weakening. Cast aside
28 every thought that says that you are men or women. Let body go,
29 and mind go, and gods go, and ghosts go. Let everything go but that
30 One Existence. "Where one hears another, where one sees another,
31 that is small; where one does not hear another, where one does not
32 see another, that is Infinite." That is the highest when the subject
33 and the object become one. When I am the listener and I am the
34 speaker, when I am the teacher and I am the taught, when I am the
35 creator, and I am the created--then alone fear ceases; there is not
36 another to make us afraid. There is nothing but myself, what can
37 frighten me? This is to be heard day after day. Get rid of all other
38 thoughts. Everything else must be thrown aside, and this is to be
39 repeated continually, poured through the ears until it reaches the
40 heart, until every nerve and muscle, every drop of blood tingles
41 with the idea that I am He, I am He. Even at the gate of death say,
42 "I am He." There was a man in India, a Sannyasin, who used to
43 repeat "Shivoham"--"I am Bliss Eternal"; and a tiger jumped on him,
44 one day and dragged him away and killed him; but so long as he
45 was living, the sound came, "Shivoham, Shivoham". Even at the
46 gate of death, in the greatest danger, in the thick of the battle field,
47 at the bottom of the ocean, on the tops of the highest mountains, in
48 the thickest of the forest, tell yourself, "I am He, I am He." Day and
49 night say, "I am He." It is the greatest strength; it is religion. "The
50 weak will never reach the Atman." Never say, "O Lord, I am a
51 miserable sinner." Who will help you? You are the help of the
52 universe. What in this universe can help you? Where is the man, or
53 the god, or the demon to help you? What can prevail over you? You

1 are the God of the universe; where can you seek for help? Never
2 help came from anywhere but from yourself. In your ignorance,
3 every prayer that you made and that was answered, you thought
4 was answered by some Being, but you answered the prayer
5 unknowingly. The help came from yourself, and you fondly imagined
6 that some one was sending help to you. There is no help for you
7 outside of yourself; you are the creator of the universe. Like the
8 silkworm you have built a cocoon around yourself. Who will save
9 you? Burst your own cocoon and come out as the beautiful butterfly,
10 as the free soul. Then alone you will see Truth. Ever tell yourself, "I
11 am He." These are the words that will burn up the dross that is in
12 the mind, words that will bring out the tremendous energy which is
13 within you already, the infinite power which is sleeping in your
14 heart. This is to be brought out by constantly hearing the truth and
15 nothing else. Wherever there is thought of weakness, approach not
16 the place. Avoid all weakness if you want to be a Jnani.

17 Before you begin to practice, clear your mind of all doubts.
18 Fight and reason and argue; and when you have established it in
19 your mind that this and this alone can be the truth and nothing else,
20 do not argue any more; close your mouth. Hear not argumentation,
21 neither argue yourself. What is the use of any more arguments? You
22 have satisfied yourself, you have decided the question. What
23 remains? The truth has now to be realised, therefore why waste
24 valuable time in vain arguments? The truth has now to be
25 meditated upon, and every idea that strengthens you must be taken
26 up and every thought that weakens you must be rejected. The
27 Bhakta meditates upon forms and images and all such things and
28 upon God. This is the natural process, but a slower one. The Yogi
29 meditates upon various centres in his body and manipulates powers
30 in his mind. The Jnani says, the mind does not exist, neither does
31 the body. This idea of the body and of the mind must go, must be
32 driven off; therefore it is foolish to think of them. It would be like
33 trying to cure one ailment by bringing in another. His meditation
34 therefore is the most difficult one, the negative; he denies
35 everything, and what is left is the Self. This is the most analytical
36 way. The Jnani wants to tear away the universe from the Self by the
37 sheer force of analysis. It is very easy to say, "I am a Jnani", but
38 very hard to be really one. "The way is long", it is, as it were,
39 walking on the sharp edge of a razor; yet despair not. Awake, arise,
40 and stop not until the goal is reached", says the Vedas.

41 So what is the meditation of the Jnani? He wants to rise above
42 every idea of body or mind, to drive away the idea that he is the
43 body. For instance, when I say, "I Swami", immediately the idea of
44 the body comes. What must I do then? I must give the mind a hard
45 blow and say, "No, I am not the body, I am the Self." Who cares if
46 disease comes or death in the most horrible form? I am not the
47 body. Why make the body nice? To enjoy the illusion once more? To
48 continue slavery? Let it go, I am not the body. That is the way of the
49 Jnani. The Bhakta says, "The Lord has given me this body that I
50 may safely cross the ocean of life, and I must cherish it until the
51 journey is accomplished." The Yogi says, "I must be careful of the
52 body, so that I may go steadily and finally attain liberation." The

1 Jnani feels that he cannot wait, he must reach the goal this very
2 moment. He says, "I am free through eternity, I am never bound; I
3 am the God of the universe through all eternity. Who shall make me
4 perfect? I am perfect already." When a man is perfect, he sees
5 perfection in others. When he sees imperfection, it is his own mind
6 projecting itself. How can he see imperfection if he has not got it in
7 himself? So the Jnani does not care for perfection or imperfection.
8 None exists for him. As soon as he is free, he does not see good or
9 evil. Who sees evil and good? He who has it in himself. Who sees
10 the body? He who thinks he is the body. The moment you get rid of
11 the idea that you are the body, you do not see the world at all; it
12 vanishes forever. The Jnani seeks to tear himself away from this
13 bondage of matter by the force of intellectual conviction. This is the
14 negative way--the "Neti, Neti"--"Not this, not this."

BHAKTI-YOGA

PRAYER

{Sanskrit}

"He is the Soul of the Universe; He is Immortal; His is the Rulership; He is the All-knowing, the All-pervading, the Protector of the Universe, the Eternal Ruler. None else is there efficient to govern the world eternally. He who at the beginning of creation projected Brahma (i.e. the universal consciousness), and who delivered the Vedas unto him--seeking liberation I go for refuge unto that Effulgent One, whose light turns the understanding towards the Atman."

Shvetashvatara-Upanishad, VI. 17-18.

DEFINITION OF BHAKTI

Bhakti-Yoga is a real, genuine search after the Lord, a search beginning, continuing and ending in love. One single moment of the madness of extreme love to God brings us eternal freedom. "Bhakti", says Narada in his explanation of the Bhakti-aphorisms, "is intense love to God"; "When a man gets it, he loves all, hates none; he becomes satisfied for ever"; "This love cannot be reduced to any earthly benefit", because so long as worldly desires last, that kind of love does not come; "Bhakti is greater than Karma, greater than Yoga, because these are intended for an object in view, while Bhakti is its own fruition, its own means and its own end."

Bhakti has been the one constant theme of our sages. Apart from the special writers on Bhakti, such as Shandilya or Narada, the great commentators on the *Vyasa-Sutras*, evidently advocates of knowledge (Jnana), have also something very suggestive to say about love. Even when the commentator is anxious to explain many, if not all, of the texts so as to make them import a sort of dry knowledge, the *Sutras*, in the chapter on worship especially, do not lend themselves to be easily manipulated in that fashion.

There is not really so much difference between knowledge (Jnana) and love (Bhakti) as people sometimes imagine. We shall see, as we go on, that in the end they converge and meet and end at the same point. So also is it with Raja-Yoga, which when pursued as a means to attain liberation, and not (as unfortunately it frequently becomes in the hands of charlatans and mystery-mongers) as an instrument to hoodwink the unwary, leads us also to the same goal.

The one great advantage of Bhakti is that it is the easiest and

1 most natural way to reach the great divine end in view; its great
2 disadvantage is that in its lower forms it oftentimes degenerates
3 into hideous fanaticism. The fanatical crew in Hinduism, or
4 Mohammedanism, or Christianity have always been almost
5 exclusively recruited from these worshippers on the lower planes of
6 Bhakti. That singleness of attachment (Nishtha) to a loved object,
7 without which no genuine love can grow, is very often also the
8 cause of the denunciation of everything else. All the weak and
9 undeveloped minds in every religion or country have only one way
10 of loving their own ideal, i.e. by hating every other ideal. Herein is
11 the explanation of why the same man who is so lovingly attached to
12 his own ideal of God, so devoted to his own ideal of religion,
13 becomes a howling fanatic as soon as he sees or hears anything of
14 any other ideal. This kind of love is somewhat like the canine
15 instinct of guarding the master's property from intrusion; only, the
16 instinct of the dog is better than the reason of man, for the dog
17 never mistakes its master for an enemy in whatever dress he may
18 come before it. Again, the fanatic loses all power of judgment.
19 Personal considerations are in his case of such absorbing interest
20 that to him it is no question at all what a man says--whether it is
21 right or wrong; but the one thing he is always particularly careful to
22 know is who says it. The same man who is kind, good, honest, and
23 loving to people of his own opinion, will not hesitate to do the vilest
24 deeds when they are directed against persons beyond the pale of
25 this own religious brotherhood.

26 But this danger exists only in that stage of Bhakti which is
27 called the *preparatory* (Gauni). When Bhakti has become ripe and
28 has passed into that form which is called the *supreme* (Para), no
29 more is there any fear of these hideous manifestations of
30 fanaticism; that soul which is overpowered by this higher form of
31 Bhakti is too near the God of Love to become an instrument for the
32 diffusion of hatred.

33 It is not given to all of us to be harmonious in the building up
34 of our characters in this life; yet we know that the character is of
35 the noblest type in which all these three--knowledge and love and
36 Yoga--are harmoniously fused. Three things are necessary for a bird
37 to fly--the two wings and the tail as a rudder for steering. Jnana
38 (knowledge) is the one wing, Bhakti (Love) is the other, and Yoga is
39 the tail that keeps up the balance. For those who cannot pursue all
40 these three forms of worship together in harmony and take up,
41 therefore, Bhakti alone as their way, it is necessary always to
42 remember that forms and ceremonials, though absolutely necessary
43 for the progressive soul, have no other value than taking us on to
44 that state in which we feel the most intense love to God.

45 There is a little difference in opinion between the teachers of
46 knowledge and those of love, though both admit the power of
47 Bhakti. The Jnanis hold Bhakti to be an instrument of liberation, the
48 Bhaktas look upon it both as the instrument and the thing to be
49 attained. To my mind this is a distinction without much difference.
50 In fact, Bhakti, when used as an instrument, really means a lower
51 form of worship, and the higher form becomes inseparable from the
52 lower form of realisation at a later stage. Each seems to lay a great

1 stress upon his own peculiar method of worship, forgetting that
2 with perfect love true knowledge is bound to come even unsought,
3 and that from perfect knowledge true love is inseparable.

4 Bearing this in mind let us try to understand what the great
5 Vedantic commentators have to say on the subject. In explaining the
6 Sutra *Avrittirasakridupadeshat*, Bhagavan Shankara says, "Thus
7 people say, 'He is devoted to the king, he is devoted to the Guru';
8 they say this of him who follows his Guru, and does so, having that
9 following as the one in view. Similarly they say, 'The loving wife
10 meditates on her loving husband; here also a kind of eager and
11 continuous remembrance is meant." This is devotion according to
12 Shankara.

13 "Meditation again is a constant remembrance (of the thing
14 meditated upon) flowing like an unbroken stream of oil poured out
15 from one vessel to another. When this kind of remembering has
16 been attained (in relation to God) all bondages break. Thus it is
17 spoken of in the scriptures regarding constant remembering as a
18 means to liberation. This remembering again is of the same form as
19 seeing, because it is of the same meaning as in the passage, 'When
20 He who is far and near is seen, the bonds of the heart are broken,
21 all doubts vanish, and all effects of work disappear.' He who is near
22 can be seen, but he who is far can only be remembered.
23 Nevertheless the scripture says that we have to see Him who is
24 near as well as Him who is far, thereby indicating to us that the
25 above kind of *remembering* is as good as *seeing*. This
26 remembrance when exalted assumes the same form as seeing. . . .
27 Worship is constant remembering as may be seen from the
28 essential texts of scriptures. Knowing, which is the same as
29 repeated worship, has been described as constant
30 remembering. . . . Thus the memory, which has attained to the
31 height of what is as good as direct perception, is spoken of in the
32 Shruti as a means of liberation. 'This Atman is not to be reached
33 through various sciences, nor by intellect, nor by much study of the
34 Vedas. Whomsoever this Atman desires, by him is the Atman
35 attained, unto him this Atman discovers Himself.' Here, after saying
36 that mere hearing, thinking and meditating are not the means of
37 attaining this Atman, it is said, 'Whom this Atman desires, by him
38 the Atman is attained.' The extremely beloved is desired; by
39 whomsoever this Atman is extremely beloved, he becomes the most
40 beloved of the Atman. So that this beloved may attain the Atman,
41 the Lord Himself helps. For it has been said by the Lord: 'Those
42 who are constantly attached to Me and worship Me with love--I give
43 that direction to their will by which they come to Me.' Therefore it
44 is said that, to whomsoever this remembering, which is of the same
45 form as direct perception, is very dear, because it is dear to the
46 Object of such memory perception, he is desired by the Supreme
47 Atman, by him the Supreme Atman is attained. This constant
48 remembrance is denoted by the word Bhakti." So says Bhagavan
49 Ramanuja in his commentary on the Sutra *Athato Brahma-jijnasa*.

50 In commenting on the Sutra of Patanjali, *Ishvara*
51 *pranidhanadva*, i.e. "Or by the worship of the Supreme Lord"--Bhoja
52 says, "*Pranidhana* is that sort of Bhakti in which, without seeking

1 results, such as sense-enjoyments etc., all works are dedicated to
2 that Teacher of teachers." Bhagavan Vyasa also, when commenting
3 on the same, defines *Pranidhana* as "the form of Bhakti by which
4 the mercy of the Supreme Lord comes to the Yogi, and blesses him
5 by granting him his desires". According to Shandilya, "Bhakti is
6 intense love to God." The best definition is, however, that given by
7 the king of Bhaktas, Prahlada: {Sanskrit} "That deathless love
8 which the ignorant have for the fleeting objects of the senses--as I
9 keep meditating on Thee--may not that love slip away from the
10 heart!" *Love !* For whom? For the Supreme Lord Ishvara. Love for
11 any other being, however great cannot be Bhakti; for, as Ramanuja
12 says in his *Shri Bhashya*, quoting an ancient Acharya, i.e. a great
13 teacher: {Sanskrit} "From Brahma to a clump of grass, all things
14 that live in the world are slaves of birth and death caused by
15 Karma; therefore they cannot be helpful as objects of meditation,
16 because they are all in ignorance and subject to change." In
17 commenting on the word Anurakti used by Shandilya, the
18 commentator Svapneshvara says that it means Anu, after, and
19 Rakti, attachment; i.e. the attachment which comes after the
20 knowledge of the nature and glory of God; else a blind attachment
21 to any one, e.g. to wife or children, would be Bhakti. We plainly see,
22 therefore, that Bhakti is a series or succession of mental efforts at
23 religious realisation beginning with ordinary worship and ending in
24 a supreme intensity of love for Ishvara.

25 26 27 **THE PHILOSOPHY OF ISHVARA**

28
29 Who is Ishvara? *Janmadyasya yatah*--"From whom is the birth,
30 continuation, and dissolution of the universe,"--He is Ishvara--"the
31 Eternal, the Pure, the Ever-Free, the Almighty, the All-knowing, the
32 All-Merciful, the Teacher of all teachers"; and above all, Sa Ishvarah
33 anirvachaniya-premasvarupah--"He the Lord is, of His own nature,
34 inexpressible Love." These certainly are the definitions of a
35 Personal God. Are there then two Gods--the "Not this, not this," the
36 Sat-chit-ananda, the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss of the philosopher,
37 and this God of Love of the Bhakta? No, it is the same Sat-chit-
38 ananda who is also the God of Love, the impersonal and personal in
39 one. It has always to be understood that the Personal God
40 worshipped by the Bhakta is not separate or different from the
41 Brahman. All is Brahman, the One without a second; only the
42 Brahman, as unity or absolute, is too much of an abstraction to be
43 loved and worshipped; so the Bhakta chooses the relative aspect of
44 Brahman, that is, Ishvara, the supreme Ruler. To use a simile:
45 Brahman is as the clay or substance out of which an infinite variety
46 of articles are fashioned. As clay, they are all one; but form or
47 manifestation differentiates them. Before every one of them was
48 made, they all existed potentially in the clay, and, of course, they
49 are identical substantially; but when formed, and so long as the
50 form remains, they are separate and different; the clay-mouse can
51 never become a clay-elephant, because, as manifestations, form

1 alone makes them what they are, though as unformed clay they are
2 all one. Ishvara is the highest manifestation of the Absolute Reality,
3 or in other words, the highest possible reading of the Absolute by
4 the human mind. Creation is eternal, and so also is Ishvara.

5 In the fourth Pada of the fourth chapter of his *Sutras*, after
6 stating the almost infinite power and knowledge which will come to
7 the liberated soul after the attainment of Moksha, Vsaya makes the
8 remark, in an aphorism, that none, however, will get the power of
9 creating, ruling, and dissolving the universe, because that belongs
10 to God alone. In explaining the Sutra it is easy for the dualistic
11 commentators to show how it is ever impossible for a subordinate
12 soul, Jiva, to have the infinite power and total independence of God.
13 The thorough dualistic commentator Madhvacharya deals with this
14 passage in his usual summary method by quoting a verse from the
15 *Varaha Purana*.

16 In explaining this aphorism the commentator Ramanuja says,
17 "This doubt being raised, whether among the powers of the
18 liberated souls is included that unique power of the Supreme One,
19 that is, of creation etc. of the universe and even the Lordship of all,
20 or whether, without that, the glory of the liberated consists only in
21 the direct perception of the Supreme One, we get as an argument
22 the following: It is reasonable that the liberated get the Lordship of
23 the universe, because the scriptures say, 'He attains to extreme
24 sameness with the Supreme One and all his desires are realised.'
25 Now extreme sameness and realisation of all desires cannot be
26 attained without the unique power of the Supreme Lord, namely,
27 that of governing the universe. Therefore, to attain the realisation
28 of all desires and the extreme sameness with the Supreme, we must
29 all admit that the liberated get the power of ruling the whole
30 universe. To this we reply, that the liberated get all the powers
31 except that of ruling the universe. Ruling the universe is guiding
32 the form and the life and the desires of all the sentient and the non-
33 sentient beings. The liberated ones from whom all that veils His
34 true nature has been removed, only enjoy the unobstructed
35 perception of the Brahman, but do not possess the power of ruling
36 the universe. This is proved from the scriptural text, 'From whom
37 all these things are born, by which all that are born live, unto whom
38 they, departing, return ask about it. That is Brahman.' If this quality
39 of ruling the universe be a quality common even to the liberated,
40 then this text would not apply as a definition of Brahman, defining
41 Him though His rulership of the universe. The uncommon attributes
42 alone define a thing; therefore in texts like--'My beloved boy, alone,
43 in the beginning there existed the One without a second. That saw
44 and felt, "I will give birth to many." That projected heat.'--'Brahman
45 indeed alone existed in the beginning. That One evolved. That
46 projected a blessed form, the Kshatra. All these gods are Kshatras:
47 Varuna, Soma, Rudra, Parjanya, Yama, Mrityu, Ishana.' --'Atman
48 indeed existed alone in the beginning; nothing else vibrated; He
49 thought of projecting the world; He projected the world
50 after.'--'Alone Narayana existed; neither Brahma, nor Ishana, nor
51 the Dyava-Prithivi, nor the stars, nor water, nor fire, nor Soma, nor
52 the sun. He did not take pleasure alone. He after His meditation

1 had one daughter, the ten organs, etc.'--and in others as, 'Who living
2 in the earth is separate from the earth, who living in the Atman,
3 etc.'--the Shrutis speak of the Supreme One as the subject of the
4 work of ruling the universe. . . . Nor in these descriptions of the
5 ruling of the universe is there any position for the liberated soul, by
6 which such a soul may have the ruling of the universe ascribed to
7 it."

8 In explaining the next Sutra, Ramanuja says, "If you say it is
9 not so, because there are direct texts in the Vedas in evidence to
10 the contrary, these texts refer to the glory of the liberated in the
11 spheres of the subordinate deities." This also is an easy solution of
12 the difficulty. Although the system of Ramanuja admits the unity of
13 the total, within that totality of existence there are, according to
14 him, eternal differences. Therefore, for all practical purposes, this
15 system also being dualistic, it was easy for Ramanuja to keep the
16 distinction between the personal soul and the Personal God very
17 clear.

18 We shall now try to understand what the great representative
19 of the Advaita School has to say on the point. We shall see how the
20 Advaita system maintains all the hopes and aspirations of the
21 dualist intact, and at the same time propounds its own solution of
22 the problem in consonance with the high destiny of divine humanity.
23 Those who aspire to retain their individual mind even after
24 liberation and to remain distinct will have ample opportunity of
25 realising their aspirations and enjoying the blessing of the qualified
26 Brahman. These are they who have been spoken of in the
27 *Bhagavata Purana* thus: "O king, such are the glorious qualities of
28 the Lord that the sages whose only pleasure is in the Self, and from
29 whom all fetters have fallen off, even they love the Omnipresent
30 with the love that is for love's sake." These are they who are spoken
31 of by the Sankhyas as getting merged in nature in this cycle, so
32 that, after attaining perfection, they may come out in the next as
33 lords of world-systems. But none of these ever becomes equal to
34 God (Ishvara). Those who attain to that state where there is neither
35 creation, nor created, nor creator, where there is neither knower,
36 nor knowable, nor knowledge, where there is neither *I*, nor *thou*,
37 nor *he*, where there is neither subject, nor object, nor relation,
38 "there, who is seen by whom?"--such persons have gone beyond
39 everything to "where words cannot go nor mind", gone to that
40 which the Shrutis declare as "Not this, not this"; but for those who
41 cannot, or will not reach this state, there will inevitably remain the
42 triune vision of the one undifferentiated Brahman as nature, soul,
43 and the interpenetrating sustainer of both--Ishvara. So, when
44 Prahlada forgot himself, he found neither the universe nor its
45 cause; all was to him one Infinite, undifferentiated by name and
46 form; but as soon as he remembered that he was Prahlada, there
47 was the universe before him and with it the Lord of the
48 universe--"the Repository of an infinite number of blessed
49 qualities".

50 So it was with the blessed Gopis. So long as they had lost
51 sense of their own personal identity and individuality, they were all
52 Krishnas, and when they began again to think of Him as the One to

1 be worshipped, then they were Gopis again, and immediately
2 {Sanskrit} (*Bhagavata*)--"Unto them appeared Krishna with a smile
3 on His lotus face, clad in yellow robes and having garlands on, the
4 embodied conqueror (in beauty) of the god of love."

5 Now to go back to our Acharya Shankara: "Those", he says,
6 "who by worshipping the qualified Brahman attain conjunction with
7 the Supreme Ruler, preserving their own mind--is their glory limited
8 or unlimited? This doubt arising, we get as an argument: Their
9 glory should be unlimited because of the scriptural texts. 'They
10 attain their own kingdom', 'To him all the gods offer worship', 'Their
11 desires are fulfilled in all the worlds'. As an answer to this, Vyasa
12 writes, 'Without the power of ruling the universe.' Barring the
13 power of creation etc. of the universe, the other powers such as
14 Anima etc. are acquired by the liberated. As to ruling the universe,
15 that belongs to the eternally perfect Ishvara. Why? Because He is
16 the subject of all the scriptural texts as regards creation etc., and
17 the liberated souls are not mentioned therein in any connection
18 whatsoever. The Supreme Lord indeed is alone engaged in ruling
19 the universe. The texts as to creation etc. all point to Him. Besides,
20 there is given the adjective 'ever-perfect'. Also the scriptures say
21 that the powers Anima etc. of the others are from the search after
22 and the worship of God. Therefore they have no place in the ruling
23 of the universe. Again, on account of their possessing their own
24 minds, it is possible that their wills may differ, and that, whilst one
25 desires creation, another may desire destruction. The only way of
26 avoiding this conflict is to make all wills subordinate to some one
27 will. Therefore the conclusion is that the wills of the liberated are
28 dependent on the will of the Supreme Ruler."

29 Bhakti, then, can be directed towards Brahman, only in His
30 personal aspect. {Sanskrit}--"The way is more difficult for those
31 whose mind is attached to the Absolute!" Bhakti has to float on
32 smoothly with the current of our nature. True it is that we cannot
33 have any idea of the Brahman which is not anthropomorphic, but is
34 it not equally true of everything we know? The greatest
35 psychologist the world has ever known, Bhagavan Kapila,
36 demonstrated ages ago that human consciousness is one of the
37 elements in the make-up of all objects of our perception and
38 conception, internal as well as eternal. Beginning with our bodies
39 and going up to Ishvara, we may see that every object of our
40 perception is this consciousness plus something else, whatever that
41 may be; and this unavoidable mixture is what we ordinarily think of
42 as reality. Indeed it is, and ever will be, all of the reality that is
43 possible for the human mind to know. Therefore to say that Ishvara
44 is unreal, because He is anthropomorphic, is sheer nonsense. It
45 sounds very much like the occidental squabble on idealism and
46 realism, which fearful-looking quarrel has for its foundation a mere
47 play on the word "real". The idea of Ishvara covers all the ground
48 ever denoted and connected by the word real, and Ishvara is as real
49 as anything else in the universe; and after all, the word real means
50 nothing more than what has now been pointed out. Such is our
51 philosophical conception of Ishvara.

1 SPIRITUAL REALISATION, THE AIM OF **2 BHAKTI-YOGA**

3
4 To the Bhakta these dry details are necessary only to
5 strengthen his will; beyond that they are of no use to him. For he is
6 treading on a path which is fitted very soon to lead him beyond the
7 hazy and turbulent regions of reason, to lead him to the realm of
8 realisation. He, soon, through the mercy of the Lord, reaches a
9 plane where pedantic and powerless reason is left far behind, and
10 the mere intellectual groping through the dark gives place to the
11 daylight of direct perception. He no more reasons and believes, he
12 almost perceives. He no more argues, he senses. And is not this
13 seeing God, and feeling God, and enjoying God higher than
14 everything else? Nay, Bhaktas have not been wanting who have
15 maintained that it is higher than even Moksha--liberation. And is it
16 not also the highest utility? There are people--and a good many of
17 them too--in the world who are convinced that only that is of use
18 and utility which brings to man creature-comforts. Even religion,
19 God, eternity, soul, none of these is of any use to them, as they do
20 not bring them money or physical comfort. To such, all those things
21 which do not go to gratify the senses and appease the appetites are
22 of no utility. In every mind, utility, however, is conditioned by its
23 own peculiar wants. To men, therefore, who never rise higher than
24 eating, drinking, begetting progeny, and dying, the only gain is in
25 sense-enjoyments; and they must wait and go through many more
26 births and reincarnations to learn to feel even the faintest necessity
27 for anything higher. But those to whom the eternal interests of the
28 soul are of much higher value than the fleeting interests of this
29 mundane life, to whom the gratification of the senses is but like the
30 thoughtless play of the baby, to them God and the love of God form
31 the highest and the only utility of human existence. Thank God
32 there are some such still living in this world of too much
33 worldliness.

1 Bhakti-Yoga, as we have said, is divided into the Gauni or the
2 preparatory and the Para or the supreme forms. We shall find, as
3 we go on, how in the preparatory stage we unavoidably stand in
4 need of many concrete helps to enable us to get on; and indeed the
5 mythological and symbological parts of the religions are natural
6 growths which early environ the aspiring soul and help it Godward.
7 It is also a significant fact that spiritual giants have been produced
8 only in those systems of religion where there is an exuberant
9 growth of rich mythology and ritualism. The dry fanatical forms of
10 religion which attempt to eradicate all that is poetical, all that is
11 beautiful and sublime, all that gives a firm grasp to the infant mind
12 tottering in its Godward way--the forms which attempt to break
13 down the ridge-poles of the spiritual roof, and in their ignorant and
14 superstitious conceptions of truth try to drive away all that is life-
15 giving, all that furnishes the formative material to the spiritual
16 plant growing in the human soul--such forms of religion too soon
17 find that all that is left to them is but an empty shell, a contentless
18 frame of words and sophistry with perhaps a little flavour of a kind
19 of social scavengering or the so-called spirit of reform.

20 The vast mass of those whose religion is like this, are
21 conscious or unconscious materialists--the end and aim of their
22 lives here and hereafter being enjoyment, which indeed is to them
23 the alpha and the omega of human life, and which is their
24 *Ishtapurta*; work like street-cleaning and scavengering, intended
25 for the material comfort of man is, according to them, the be-all and
26 end-all of human existence; and the sooner the followers of this
27 curious mixture of ignorance and fanaticism come out in their true
28 colours and join, as they well deserve to do, the ranks of the
29 atheists and materialists, the better will it be for the world. One
30 ounce of the practice of righteousness and of spiritual Self-
31 realisation outweighs tons and tons of frothy talk and nonsensical
32 sentiments. Show us one, but one gigantic spiritual genius growing
33 out of all this dry dust of ignorance and fanaticism; and if you
34 cannot, close your mouths, open the windows of your hearts to the
35 clear light of truth, and sit like children at the feet of those who
36 know what they are talking about--the sages of India. Let us then
37 listen attentively to what they say.

40 THE NEED OF GURU

41
42 Every soul is destined to be perfect, and every being, in the
43 end, will attain the state of perfection. Whatever we are now is the
44 result of our acts and thoughts in the past; and whatever we shall
45 be in the future will be the result of what we think and do now. But
46 this, the shaping of our own destinies, does not preclude our
47 receiving help from outside; nay, in the vast majority of cases such
48 help is absolutely necessary. When it comes, the higher powers and
49 possibilities of the soul are quickened, spiritual life is awakened,
50 growth is animated, and man becomes holy and perfect in the end.

1 This quickening impulse cannot be derived from books. The
2 soul can only receive impulses from another soul, and from nothing
3 else. We may study books all our lives, we may become very
4 intellectual, but in the end we find that we have not developed at all
5 spiritually. It is not true that a high order of intellectual
6 development always goes hand in hand with a proportionate
7 development of the spiritual side in Man. In studying books we are
8 sometimes deluded into thinking that thereby we are being
9 spiritually helped; but if we analyse the effect of the study of books
10 on ourselves, we shall find that at the utmost it is only our intellect
11 that derives profit from such studies, and not our inner spirit. This
12 inadequacy of books to quicken spiritual growth is the reason why,
13 although almost every one of us can *speak* most wonderfully on
14 spiritual matters, when it comes to action and the living of a truly
15 spiritual life, we find ourselves so awfully deficient. To quicken the
16 spirit, the impulse must come from another soul.

17 The person from whose soul such impulse comes is called the
18 Guru--the teacher; and the person to whose soul the impulse is
19 conveyed is called the *Shishya*--the student. To convey such an
20 impulse to any soul, in the first place, the soul from which it
21 proceeds must possess the power of transmitting it, as it were to
22 another; and in the second place, the soul to which it is transmitted
23 must be fit to receive it. The seed must be a living seed, and the
24 field must be ready ploughed; and when both these conditions are
25 fulfilled, a wonderful growth of genuine religion takes place. "The
26 true preacher of religion has to be of wonderful capabilities, and
27 clever shall his hearer be"--{Sanskrit}; and when both of these are
28 really wonderful and extraordinary, then will a splendid spiritual
29 awakening result, and not otherwise. Such alone are the real
30 teachers, and such alone are also the real students, the real
31 aspirants. All others are only playing with spirituality. They have
32 just a little curiosity awakened, just a little intellectual aspiration
33 kindled in them, but are merely standing on the outward fringe of
34 the horizon of religion. There is no doubt some value even in that,
35 as it may in course of time result in the awakening of a real thirst
36 for religion; and it is a mysterious law of nature that as soon as the
37 field is ready, the seed *must* and does come; as soon as the soul
38 earnestly desires to have religion, the transmitter of the religious
39 force *must* and does appear to help that soul. When the power that
40 attracts the light of religion in the receiving soul is full and strong,
41 the power which answers to that attraction and sends in light does
42 come as a matter of course.

43 There are, however, certain great dangers in the way. There
44 is, for instance, the danger to the receiving soul of its mistaking
45 momentary emotions for real religious yearning. We may study that
46 in ourselves. Many a time in our lives, somebody dies whom we
47 loved; we receive a blow; we feel that the world is slipping between
48 our fingers; that we want something surer and higher, and that we
49 must become religious. In a few days that wave of feeling has
50 passed away, and we are left stranded just where we were before.
51 We are all of us often mistaking such impulses for real thirst after
52 religion; but as long as these momentary emotions are thus

1 mistaken, that continuous, real craving of the soul for religion will
2 not come, and we shall not find the true transmitter of spirituality
3 into our nature. So whenever we are tempted to complain of our
4 search after the truth that we desire so much, proving vain, instead
5 of so complaining, our first duty ought to be to look into our own
6 souls and find whether the craving in the heart is real. Then in the
7 vast majority of cases it would be discovered that we were not fit
8 for receiving the truth, that there was no real thirst for spirituality.

9 There are still greater dangers in regard to the *transmitter*,
10 the Guru. There are many who, though immersed in ignorance, yet,
11 in the pride of their hearts, fancy they know everything, and not
12 only do not stop there, but offer to take others on their shoulders;
13 and thus the blind leading the blind, both fall into the ditch.
14 {Sanskrit}--"Fools dwelling in darkness, wise in their own conceit,
15 and puffed up with vain knowledge, go round and round staggering
16 to and fro, like blind men led by the blind."--(Katha Up., I.ii. 5). The
17 world is full of these. Every one wants to be a teacher, every beggar
18 wants to make a gift of a million dollars! Just as these beggars are
19 ridiculous, so are these teachers.

22 **QUALIFICATIONS OF THE ASPIRANT AND THE** 23 **TEACHER**

24
25 How are we to know a teacher, then? The sun requires no
26 torch to make him visible, we need not light a candle in order to see
27 him. When the sun rises, we instinctively become aware of the fact,
28 and when a teacher of men comes to help us, the soul will
29 instinctively know that truth has already begun to shine upon it.
30 Truth stands on its own evidence, it does not require any other
31 testimony to prove it true, it is self-effulgent. It penetrates into the
32 innermost corners of our nature, and in its presence the whole
33 universe stands up and says, "This is truth." The teachers whose
34 wisdom and truth shine like the light of the sun are the very
35 greatest the world has known, and they are worshipped as God by
36 the major portion of mankind. But we may get help from
37 comparatively lesser ones also; only we ourselves do not possess
38 intuition enough to judge properly of the man from whom we
39 receive teaching and guidance; so there ought to be certain tests,
40 certain conditions, for the teacher to satisfy, as there are also for
41 the taught.

42 The conditions necessary for the taught are purity, a real
43 thirst after knowledge and perseverance. No impure soul can be
44 really religious. Purity in thought, speech, and act is absolutely
45 necessary for any one to be religious. As to the thirst after
46 knowledge, it is an old law that we all get whatever we want. None
47 of us can get anything other than what we fix our hearts upon. To
48 pant for religion truly is a very difficult thing, not at all so easy as
49 we generally imagine. Hearing religious talks or reading religious

1 books is no proof yet of a real want felt in the heart; there must a
2 continuous struggle, a constant fight, an unremitting grappling with
3 our lower nature, till the higher want is actually felt and the victory
4 is achieved. It is not a question of one or two days, of years, or of
5 lives; the struggle may have to go on for hundreds of life-times. The
6 success sometimes may come immediately, but we must be ready to
7 wait patiently even for what may look like an infinite length of time.
8 The student who sets out with such a spirit of perseverance will
9 surely find success and realisation at last.

10 In regard to the teacher, we must see that he knows the spirit
11 of the scriptures. The whole world reads Bibles, Vedas, and Korans;
12 but they are all only words, syntax, etymology, philology, the dry
13 bones of religion. The teacher who deals too much in words and
14 allows the mind to be carried away by the force of words lose the
15 spirit. It is the knowledge of the *spirit* of the scriptures alone that
16 constitutes the true religious teacher. The network of the words of
17 the scriptures is like a huge forest in which the human mind loses
18 itself and finds no way out. {Sanskrit}--"The network of words is a
19 big forest; it is the cause of a curious wandering of the mind." "The
20 various methods of joining words, the various methods of speaking
21 in beautiful language, the various methods of explaining the diction
22 of the scriptures are only for the disputations and enjoyment of the
23 learned, they do not conduce to the development of spiritual
24 perception"--{Sanskrit}. Those who employ such methods to impart
25 religion to others are only desirous to show off their learning, so
26 that the world may praise them as great scholars. You will find that
27 no one of the great teachers of the world ever went into into these
28 various explanations of the text; there is with them no attempt at
29 "text-torturing", no eternal playing upon the meaning of words and
30 their roots. Yet they nobly taught, while others who have nothing to
31 teach have taken up a word sometimes and written a three-volume
32 book on its origin, on the man who used it first, and on what the
33 man was accustomed to eat, and how long he slept, and so on.

1 Bhagavan Ramakrishna used to tell a story of some men who
2 went into a mango orchard and busied themselves in counting the
3 leaves, the twigs, and the branches, examining their colour,
4 comparing their size and noting down everything most carefully,
5 and then got up a learned discussion on each of these topics, which
6 were undoubtedly highly interesting to them. But one of them, more
7 sensible than the others, did not care for all these things, and
8 instead thereof, began to eat the mango fruit. And was he not wise?
9 So leave this counting of leaves and twigs and note-taking to others.
10 This kind of work has its proper place, but not here in the spiritual
11 domain. You never see a strong spiritual man among these "leaf-
12 counters". Religion, the highest aim, the highest glory of man, does
13 not require so much labour. If you want to be a Bhakta, it is not at
14 all necessary for you to know whether Krishna was born in Mathura
15 or in Vraja, what he was doing, or just the exact date on which he
16 pronounced the teachings of the Gita. You only require to *feel* the
17 craving for the beautiful lessons of duty and love in the Gita. All the
18 other particulars about it and its author are for the enjoyment of
19 the learned. Let them have what they desire. Say "*Shantih, Shantih*"
20 to their learned controversies, and let *us* "eat the mangoes."

21 The second condition necessary in the teacher is--sinlessness.
22 The question is often asked, "Why should we look into the character
23 and personality of a teacher? We have only to judge of what he
24 says, and take that up." This is not right. If a man wants to teach me
25 something of dynamics, or chemistry, or any other physical science,
26 he may be anything he likes, because what the physical sciences
27 require is merely an intellectual equipment; but in the spiritual
28 sciences it is impossible from first to last that there can be any
29 spiritual light in the soul that is impure. What religion can an
30 impure man teach? The *sine qua non* of acquiring spiritual truth for
31 one's self or for imparting it to others is the purity of heart and
32 soul. A vision of God or a glimpse of the beyond never comes until
33 the soul is pure. Hence with the teacher of religion we must see
34 first what he *is*, and then what he says. He must be perfectly pure,
35 and then alone comes the value of his words, because he is only
36 then the true "transmitter". What can he transmit if he has not
37 spiritual power in himself? There must be the worthy vibration of
38 spirituality in the mind of the teacher, so that it may be
39 sympathetically conveyed to the mind of the taught. The function of
40 the teacher is indeed an affair of the transference of something,
41 and not one of mere stimulation of the existing intellectual or other
42 faculties in the taught. Something real and appreciable as an
43 influence comes from the teacher and goes to the taught. Therefore
44 the teacher must be pure.

45 The third condition is in regard to the motive. The teacher
46 must not teach with any ulterior selfish motive--for money, name, or
47 fame; his work must be simply out of love, out of pure love for
48 mankind at large. The only medium through which spiritual force
49 can be transmitted is love. Any selfish motive, such as the desire for
50 gain or for name, will immediately destroy this conveying medium.
51 God is love, and only he who has known God as love can be a
52 teacher of godliness and God to man.

1 When you see that in your teacher these conditions are all
2 fulfilled, you are safe; if they are not, it is unsafe to allow yourself to
3 be taught by him, for there is the great danger that, if he cannot
4 convey goodness to your heart, he may convey wickedness. This
5 danger must by all means be guarded against. {Sanskrit}--"He who
6 is learned in the scriptures, sinless, unpolluted by lust, and is the
7 greatest knower of the Brahman" is the real teacher.

8 From what has been said, it naturally follows that we cannot
9 be taught to love, appreciate, and assimilate religion everywhere
10 and by everybody. The "books in the running brooks, sermons in
11 stones, and good in every thing" is all very true as a poetical figure;
12 but nothing can impart to a man a single grain of truth unless he
13 has the undeveloped germs of it in himself. To whom do the stones
14 and brooks preach sermons? To the human soul, the lotus of whose
15 inner holy shrine is already quick with life. And the light which
16 causes the beautiful opening out of this lotus comes always from
17 the good and wise teacher. When the heart has thus been opened, it
18 becomes fit to receive teaching from the stones or the brooks, the
19 stars, or the sun, or the moon, or from any thing which has its
20 existence in our divine universe; but the unopened heart will see in
21 them nothing but mere stones or mere brooks. A blind man may go
22 to a museum, but he will not profit by it in any way; his eyes must
23 be opened first, and then alone he will be able to learn what the
24 things in the museum can teach.

25 This eye-opener of the aspirant after religion is the teacher.
26 With the teacher, therefore, our relationship is the same as that
27 between an ancestor and his descendant. Without faith, humility,
28 submission, and veneration in our hearts towards our religious
29 teacher, there cannot be any growth of religion in us; and it is a
30 significant fact that, where this kind of relation between the teacher
31 and the taught prevails, there alone gigantic spiritual men are
32 growing; while in those countries which have neglected to keep up
33 this kind of relation, the religious teacher has become a mere
34 lecturer, the teacher expecting his five dollars and the person
35 taught expecting his brain to be filled with the teacher's words, and
36 each going his own way after this much has been done. Under such
37 circumstances spirituality becomes almost an unknown quantity.
38 There is none to transmit it and none to have it transmitted to.
39 Religion with such people becomes business; they think they can
40 obtain it with their dollars. Would to God that religion could be
41 obtained so easily! But unfortunately it cannot be.

42 Religion, which is the highest knowledge and the highest
43 wisdom, cannot be bought, nor can it be acquired from books. You
44 may thrust your head into all corners of the world, you may explore
45 the Himalayas, the Alps, and the Caucasus, you may sound the
46 bottom of the sea and pry into every nook of Tibet and the desert of
47 Gobi, you will not find it anywhere until your heart is ready for
48 receiving it and your teacher has come. And when that divinely
49 appointed teacher comes, serve him with child-like confidence and
50 simplicity, freely open your heart to his influence, and see in him
51 God manifested. Those who come to seek the truth with such a
52 spirit of love and veneration, to them the Lord of Truth reveals the

1 most wonderful things regarding truth, goodness, and beauty.

4 INCARNATE TEACHERS AND INCARNATION

6 Wherever His name is spoken, that very place is holy. How
7 much more so is the man who speaks His name, and with what
8 veneration ought we approach that man out of whom comes to us
9 spiritual truth! Such great teachers of spiritual truth are indeed
10 very few in number in this world, but the world is never altogether
11 without them. They are always the fairest flowers of human life--
12 {Sanskrit}--"the ocean of mercy without any motive."
13 {Sanskrit}--"Know the Guru to be Me," says Shri Krishna in the
14 *Bhagavata*. The moment the world is absolutely bereft of these, it
15 becomes a hideous hell and hastens on to its destruction.

16 Higher and nobler than all ordinary ones are another set of
17 teachers, the Avatars of Ishvara, in the world. They can transmit
18 spirituality with a touch, even with a mere wish. The lowest and
19 most degraded characters become in one second saints at their
20 command. They are the Teachers of all teachers, the highest
21 manifestations of God through man. We cannot see God except
22 through them. We cannot help worshipping them; and indeed they
23 are the only ones whom we are bound to worship.

24 No man can really see God except through these human
25 manifestations. If we try to see God otherwise, we make for
26 ourselves a hideous caricature of Him and believe the caricature to
27 be no worse than the original. There is a story of an ignorant man
28 who was asked to make an image of the God Shiva, and who, after
29 days of hard struggle, manufactured only the image of a monkey. So
30 whenever we try to think of God as He is in His absolute perfection,
31 we invariably meet with the most miserable failure, because as long
32 as we are men, we cannot conceive Him as anything higher than
33 man. The time will come when we shall transcend our human
34 nature and know Him as He is; but as long as we are men, we must
35 worship Him in man and as man. Talk as you may, try as you may,
36 you cannot think of God except as a man. You may deliver great
37 intellectual discourses on God and on all things under the sun,
38 become great rationalists and prove to your satisfaction that all
39 these accounts of the Avatars of God as man are nonsense. But let
40 us come for a moment to practical common sense. What is there
41 behind this kind of remarkable intellect? Zero, nothing, simply so
42 much froth. When next you hear a man delivering a great
43 intellectual lecture against this worship of the Avatars of God, get
44 hold of him and ask what *his* idea of God is, what *he* understands
45 by "omnipresence", or "omnipotence", and all similar terms, beyond
46 the spelling of the words. He really means nothing by them; he
47 cannot formulate as their meaning any idea unaffected by his own
48 human nature; he is no better off in this matter than the man in the
49 street who has not read a single book. That man in the street,
50 however, is quiet and does not disturb the peace of the world, while

1 this big talker creates disturbance and misery among mankind.
2 Religion is, after all, realisation, and we must make the sharpest
3 distinction between talk and intuitive experience. What we
4 experience in the depths of our souls is realisation. Nothing indeed
5 is so uncommon as common sense in regard to this matter.

6 By our present constitution we are limited and bound to see
7 God as man. If, for instance, the buffaloes want to worship God,
8 they will, in keeping with their own nature, see Him as a huge
9 buffalo; if a fish wants to worship God, it will have to form an idea
10 of Him as a big fish; and man has to think of Him as man. And these
11 various conceptions are not due to morbidly active imagination.
12 Man, the buffalo, and the fish all may be supposed to represent so
13 many different vessels, so to say. All these vessels go to the sea of
14 God to get filled with water, each according to its own shape and
15 capacity; in the man the water takes the shape of man, in the
16 buffalo, the shape of a buffalo, and in the fish, the shape of a fish. In
17 each of these vessels there is the same water of the sea of God.
18 When men see Him, they see Him as man, and the animals, if they
19 have any conception of God at all, must see Him as animal, each
20 according to its own ideal. So we cannot help seeing God as man,
21 and therefore, we are bound to worship Him as man. There is no
22 other way.

23 Two kinds of men do not worship God as man--the human
24 brute who has no religion, and the Paramahansa who has risen
25 beyond all the weaknesses of humanity and has transcended the
26 limits of his own human nature. To him all nature has become his
27 own Self. He alone can worship God as He is. Here, too, as in all
28 other cases, the two extremes meet. The extreme of ignorance and
29 the other extreme of knowledge--neither of these go through acts of
30 worship. The human brute does not worship because of his
31 ignorance, and the Jivanmuktas (free souls) do not worship because
32 they have realised God in themselves. Being between these two
33 poles of existence, if any one tells you that he is not going to
34 worship God as man, take kindly care of that man; he is, not to use
35 any harsher term, an irresponsible talker; his religion is for
36 unsound and empty brains.

37 God understands human failings and becomes man to do good
38 to humanity: {Sanskrit}

39 {Sanskrit}--"Whenever virtue subsides and wickedness
40 prevails, I manifest Myself. To establish virtue, to destroy evil, to
41 save the good I come from Yuga (age) to Yuga." {Sanskrit}--"Fools
42 deride Me who have assumed the human form, without knowing My
43 real nature as the Lord of the universe." Such is Shri Krishna's
44 declaration in the Gita on Incarnation. "When a huge tidal wave
45 comes," says Bhagavan Shri Ramakrishna, "all the little brooks and
46 ditches become full to the brim without any effort or consciousness
47 on their own part; so when an Incarnation comes, a tidal wave of
48 spirituality breaks upon the world, and people feel spirituality
49 almost full in the air."

THE MANTRA: OM: WORD AND WISDOM

But we are now considering not these Maha-purushas, the great Incarnations, but only the Siddha-Gurus (teachers who have attained the goal); they, as a rule, have to convey the germs of spiritual wisdom to the disciple by means of words (Mantras) to be meditated upon. What are these Mantras? The whole of this universe has, according to Indian philosophy, both name and form (Nama-Rupa) as its conditions of manifestation. In the human microcosm, there cannot be a single wave in the mind-stuff (Chitta-vritti) unconditioned by name and form. If it be true that nature is built throughout on the same plan, this kind of conditioning by name and form must also be the plan of the building of the whole of the cosmos. {Sanskrit}--"As one lump of clay being known, all things of clay are known", so the knowledge of the microcosm must lead to the knowledge of the macrocosm. Now form is the outer crust, of which the name or the idea is the inner essence or kernel. The body is the form, and the mind or the Antahkarana is the name, and sound-symbols are universally associated with Nama (name) in all beings having the power of speech. In the individual man the thought-waves rising in the limited Mahat or Chitta (mind-stuff), must manifest themselves, first as *words*, and then as the more concrete *forms*.

In the universe, Brahma or Hiranyagarbha or the cosmic Mahat first manifested himself as name, and then as form, i.e. as this universe. All this expressed sensible universe is the form, behind which stands the eternal inexpressible Sphota, the manifest as *Logos* or Word. This eternal Sphota, the essential eternal material of all ideas or names, is the power through which the Lord creates the universe; nay, the Lord first becomes conditioned as the Sphota, and then evolves Himself out as the yet more concrete sensible universe. This Sphota has one word as its only possible symbol, and this is the (Om). And as by no possible means of analysis can we separate the word from the idea, this Om and the eternal Sphota are inseparable; and, therefore, it is out of this holiest of all holy words, the mother of all names and forms, the eternal Om, that the whole universe may be supposed to have been created. But it may be said that, although thought and word are inseparable, yet as there may be various word-symbols for the same thought, it is not necessary that this particular word Om should be the word representative of the thought, out of which the universe has become manifested. To this objection we reply that this Om is the only possible symbol which covers the whole ground, and there is none other like it. The Sphota is the material of all the words, yet it is not any definite word in its fully formed state. That is to say, if all the peculiarities which distinguish one word from another be removed, then what remains will be the Sphota; therefore this Sphota is called the Nada-Brahma, the *Sound-Brahman*.

Now, as every word-symbol, intended to express the inexpressible Sphota, will so particularise it that it will no longer be the Sphota, that symbol which particularises it the least and at the

1 same time most approximately expresses its nature, will be the
2 truest symbol thereof; and this is the Om, and the Om only; because
3 the three letters (A.U.M.), pronounced in combination as Om, may
4 well be the generalised symbol of all possible sounds. The letter A
5 is the least differentiated of all sounds, therefore Krishna says in
6 the Gita {Sanskrit}--"I am A among the letters". Again , all
7 articulate sounds are produced in the space within the mouth
8 beginning with the root of the tongue and ending in the lips--the
9 throat sound is A, and M is the last lip sound, and the U exactly
10 represents the rolling forward of the impulse which begins at the
11 root of the tongue till it ends in the lips. If properly pronounced,
12 this Om will represent the whole phenomenon of sound-production,
13 and no other word can do this; and this, therefore, is the fittest
14 symbol of the Sphota, which is the real meaning of the Om. And as
15 the symbol can never be separated from the thing signified, the Om
16 and the Sphota are one. And as the Sphota, being the finer side of
17 the manifested universe, is nearer to God, and is indeed that first
18 manifestation of divine wisdom, this Om is truly symbolic of God.
19 Again, just as the "One only" Brahman, the Akhanda-
20 Sachchidananda, the undivided Existence-Knowledge-Bliss, can be
21 conceived by imperfect human souls only from particular
22 standpoints and associated with particular qualities, so this
23 universe, His body, has also to be thought of along the line of the
24 thinker's mind.

25 This direction of the worshipper's mind is guided by its
26 prevailing elements or Tattvas. The result is that the same God will
27 be seen in various manifestations as the possessor of various
28 predominant qualities, and the same universe will appear as full of
29 manifold forms. Even as in the case of the least differentiated and
30 the most universal symbol Om, thought and sound-symbol are seen
31 to be inseparably associated with each other, so also this law of
32 their inseparable association applies to the many differentiated
33 views of God and the universe: each of them therefore must have a
34 particular word-symbol to express it. These word-symbols, evolved
35 out of the deepest spiritual perception of sages, symbolise and
36 express, as nearly as possible, the particular view of God and the
37 universe they stand for. And as the Om represents the Akhanda, the
38 undifferentiated Brahman, the others represent the Khanda or the
39 differentiated views of the same Beings; and they are all helpful to
40 divine meditation and the acquisition of true knowledge.

43 WORSHIP OF SUBSTITUTES AND IMAGES

45 The next points to be considered are the worship of Pratikas
46 or of things more or less satisfactory as substitutes for God, and the
47 worship of Pratimas or images. What is the worship of God through
48 a Pratika? It is {Sanskrit}--"Joining the mind with devotion to that
49 which is not Brahman, taking it to be Brahman"--says Bhagavan
50 Ramanuja. "Worship the mind as Brahman, this is internal; and the
51 Akasha as Brahman, this is with regard to the Devas", says

1 Shankara. The mind is an internal Pratika, the Akasha is an external
2 one; and both have to be worshipped as substitutes of God. He
3 continues, "Similarly--'the Sun is Brahman, this is the command',
4 'He who worships Name as Brahman'--in all such passages the
5 doubt arises as to the worship of Pratikas." The word Pratika means
6 going towards; and the worshipping a Pratika is worshipping
7 something as a substitute which is, in some one or more respects,
8 like Brahman more and more, but is not Brahman. Along with the
9 Pratikas mentioned in the Shrutis there are various others to be
10 found in the Puranas and the Tantras. In this kind of Pratika-
11 worship may be included all the various forms of Pitri-worship and
12 Deva-worship.

13 Now worshipping Ishvara and Him alone is Bhakti; the
14 worship of anything else--Deva, or Pitri, or any other being--cannot
15 be Bhakti. The various kinds of worship of the various Devas are all
16 to be included in ritualistic Karma, which gives to the worshipper
17 only a particular result in the form of some celestial enjoyment, but
18 can neither give rise to Bhakti nor lead to Mukti. One thing,
19 therefore, has to be carefully borne in mind. If, as it may happen in
20 some cases, the highly philosophical ideal, the supreme Brahman, is
21 dragged down by Pratika-worship to the level of the Pratika and the
22 Pratika itself is taken to be the Atman of the worshipper or his
23 Antaryamin (Inner Ruler), the worshipper gets entirely misled, as
24 no Pratika can really be the Atman of the worshipper.

25 But where Brahman Himself is the object of worship, and the
26 Pratika stands only as a substitute or a suggestion thereof, that is to
27 say, where, through the Pratika the omnipresent Brahman is
28 worshipped--the Pratika itself being idealised into the cause of all,
29 Brahman--the worship is positively beneficial; nay, it is absolutely
30 necessary for all mankind until they have all got beyond the primary
31 or preparatory state of the mind in regard to worship. When,
32 therefore, any gods or other beings are being worshipped in and for
33 themselves, such worship is only a ritualistic Karma; and as a Vidya
34 (science) it gives us only the fruit belonging to that particular
35 Vidya; but when the Devas or any other beings are looked upon as
36 Brahman and worshipped, the result obtained is the same as by the
37 worshipping of Ishvara. This explains how, in many cases, both in
38 the Shrutis and the Smritis, a god, or a sage, or some other
39 extraordinary being is taken up and lifted, as it were, out of his own
40 nature and idealised into Brahman, and is then worshipped. Says
41 the Advaitin, "Is not everything Brahman when the name and the
42 form have been removed from it?" "Is not He, the Lord, the
43 innermost Self of every one?" says the Vishishtadvaitin.
44 {Sanskrit}--"The fruition of even the worship of Adityas etc.
45 Brahman Himself bestows, because He is the Ruler of all." Says
46 Shankara in his *Brahma-Sutra-Bhasya*--{Sanskrit} "Here in this way
47 does Brahman become the object of worship, because He, as
48 Brahman, is superimposed on the Pratikas, just as Vishnu etc. are
49 superimposed upon images etc."

50 The same ideas apply to the worship of the Pratimas as to
51 that of the Pratikas; that is to say, if the image stands for a god or a
52 saint, the worship is not the result of Bhakti, and does not lead to

1 liberation; but if it stands for the one God, the worship thereof will
2 bring both Bhakti and Mukti. Of the principal religions of the world
3 we see Vedantism, Buddhism, and certain forms of Christianity
4 freely using images; only two religions, Mohammedanism and
5 Protestantism, refuse such help. Yet the Mohammedans use the
6 graves of their saints and martyrs almost in the place of images;
7 and the Protestants, in rejecting all concrete helps to religion, are
8 drifting away every year farther and farther from spirituality till at
9 present there is scarcely any difference between the advanced
10 Protestants and the followers of August Comte, or agnostics who
11 preach ethics alone. Again, in Christianity and Mohammedanism
12 whatever exists of image worship is made to fall under that
13 category in which the Pratika or the Pratima is worshipped in itself,
14 but not as a "help to the vision" (Drishtisaukaryam) of God;
15 therefore it is at best only of the nature of ritualistic Karmas and
16 cannot produce either Bhakti or Mukti. In this form of image-
17 worship, the allegiance of the soul is given to other things than
18 Ishvara, and, therefore, such use of images, or graves, or temples,
19 or tombs, is real idolatry; it is in itself neither sinful nor wicked--it is
20 a rite--a Karma, and worshippers must and will get the fruit thereof.

23 THE CHOSEN IDEAL

The next thing to be considered is what we know as Ishta-Nishtha. One who aspires to be a Bhakta must know that "so many opinions are so many ways". He must know that all the various sects of the various religions are the various manifestations of the glory of the same Lord. "They call You by so many names; they divide You, as it were, by different names, yet in each one of these is to be found Your omnipotence. . . . You reach the worshipper through all of these, neither is there any special time so long as the soul has intense love for You. You are so easy of approach; it is my misfortune that I cannot love You." Not only this, the Bhakta must take care not to hate, nor even to criticise those radiant sons of light who are the founders of various sects; he must not even hear them spoken ill of. Very few indeed are those who are at once the possessors of an extensive sympathy and power of appreciation, as well as an intensity of love. We find, as a rule, that liberal and sympathetic sects lose the intensity of religious feeling, and in their hands, religion is apt to degenerate into a kind of politico-social club life. On the other hand, intensely narrow sectaries, whilst displaying a very commendable love of their own ideals, are seen to have acquired every particle of that love by hating every one who is not of exactly the same opinions as themselves. Would to God that this world was full of men who were as intense in their love as worldwide in their sympathies! But such are only few and far between. Yet we know that it is practicable to educate large numbers of human beings into the ideal of a wonderful blending of both the width and the intensity of love; and the way to do that is by this path of the Ishta-Nishtha or "steadfast devotion to the chosen ideal." Every sect of every religion presents only one ideal of its own to mankind, but the eternal Vedantic religion opens to mankind an infinite number of doors for ingress into the inner shrine of divinity, and places before humanity an almost inexhaustible array of ideals, there being in each of them a manifestation of the Eternal One. With the kindest solicitude, the Vedanta points out to aspiring men and women the numerous roads, hewn out of the solid rock of the realities of human life, by the glorious sons, or human manifestations, of God, in the past and in the present, and stands with outstretched arms to welcome all--to welcome even those that are yet to be--to that Home of Truth and that Ocean of Bliss, wherein the human soul, liberated from the net of Maya, may transport
itself

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10 e any spiritual growth. In all our Yogas this renunciation is
11 necessary. This is the stepping-stone and the real centre and the
12 real heart of all spiritual culture--renunciation. This is religion--
13 renunciation.

14 When the human soul draws back from the things of the
15 world and tries to go into deeper things; when man, the spirit which
16 has here somehow become concretised and materialised,
17 understands that he is thereby going to be destroyed and to be
18 reduced almost into mere matter, and turns his face away from
19 matter--then begins renunciation, then begins real spiritual growth.
20 The Karma-Yogi's renunciation is in the shape of giving up all the
21 fruits of his action; he is not attached to the results of his labour; he
22 does not care for any reward here or hereafter. The Raja-Yogi
23 knows that the whole of nature is intended for the soul to acquire
24 experience, and that the result of all the experiences of the soul is
25 for it to become aware of its eternal separateness from nature. The
26 human soul has to understand and realise that it has been spirit, and
27 not matter, through eternity, and that this conjunction of it with
28 matter is and can be only for a time. The Raja-Yogi learns the lesson
29 of renunciation through his own experience of nature. The Jnana-
30 Yogi has the harshest of all renunciations to go through, as he has
31 to realise from the very first that the whole of this solid-looking
32 nature is all an illusion. He has to understand that all that is any
33 kind of manifestation of power in nature belongs to the soul, and
34 not to nature. He has to know from the very start that all knowledge
35 and all experience are in the soul and not in nature; so he has at
36 once and by the sheer force of rational conviction to tear himself
37 away from all bondage to nature. He lets nature and all that
38 belongs to her go, he lets them vanish and tries to stand alone!

39 Of all renunciations, the most natural, so to say, is that of the
40 Bhakti-Yogi. Here there is no violence, nothing to give up, nothing
41 to tear off, as it were, from ourselves, nothing from which we have
42 violently to separate ourselves. The Bhakta's renunciation is easy,
43 smooth flowing, and as natural as the things around us. We see the
44 manifestation of this sort of renunciation, although more or less in
45 the form of caricatures, every day around us. A man begins to love
46 a woman; after a while he loves another, and the first woman he lets
47 go. She drops out of his mind smoothly, gently, without his feeling
48 the want of her at all. A woman loves a man; she then begins to love
49 another man, and the first one drops off from her mind quite
50 naturally. A man loves his own city, then he begins to love his
51 country, and the intense love for his little city drops off smoothly,
52 naturally. Again, a man learns to love the whole world; his love for

1 his country, his intense, fanatical patriotism drops off without
2 hurting him, without any manifestation of violence. An uncultured
3 man loves the pleasures of the sense intensely; as he becomes
4 cultured, he begins to love intellectual pleasures, and his sense-
5 enjoyments become less and less. No man can enjoy a meal with
6 the same gusto or pleasure as a dog or a wolf, but those pleasures
7 which a man gets from intellectual experiences and achievements,
8 the dog can never enjoy. At first, pleasure is in association with the
9 lowest senses; but as soon as an animal reaches a higher plane of
10 existence, the lower kind of pleasures becomes less intense. In
11 human society, the nearer the man is to the animal, the stronger is
12 his pleasure in the senses; and the higher and the more cultured
13 the man is, the greater is his pleasure in intellectual and such other
14 finer pursuits. So when a man gets even higher than the plane of
15 the intellect, higher than that of mere thought, when he gets to the
16 plane of spirituality and of divine inspiration, he finds there a state
17 of bliss, compared with which all the pleasures of the senses, or
18 even of the intellect, are as nothing. When the moon shines brightly,
19 all the stars become dim; and when the sun shines, the moon
20 herself becomes dim. The renunciation necessary for the
21 attainment of Bhakti is not obtained by killing anything, but just
22 comes in as naturally as in the presence of an increasingly stronger
23 light, the less intense ones become dimmer and dimmer until they
24 vanish away completely. So this love of the pleasures of the senses
25 and of the intellect is all made dim and thrown aside and cast into
26 the shade by the love of God Himself.

27 That love of God grows and assumes a form which is called
28 Para-Bhakti or supreme devotion. Forms vanish, rituals fly away,
29 books are superseded; images, temples, churches, religions and
30 sects, countries and nationalities--all these little limitations and
31 bondages fall off by their own nature from him who knows this love
32 of God. Nothing remains to bind him or fetter his freedom. A ship,
33 all of a sudden, comes near a magnetic rock, and its iron bolts and
34 bars are all attracted and drawn out, and the planks get loosened
35 and freely float on the water. Divine grace thus loosens the binding
36 bolts and bars of the soul, and it becomes free. So in this
37 renunciation auxiliary to devotion, there is no harshness, no
38 dryness, no struggle, nor repression nor suppression. The Bhakta
39 has not to suppress any single one of his emotions, he only strives
40 to intensify them and direct them to God.

41 42 43 THE BHAKTA'S RENUNCIATION RESULTS FROM 44 LOVE 45

46 We see love everywhere in nature. Whatever in society is
47 good and great and sublime is the working out of that love;
48 whatever in society is very bad, nay diabolical, is also the ill-
49 directed working out of the same emotion of love. It is this same
50 emotion that gives us the pure and holy conjugal love between

1 husband and wife as well as the sort of love which goes to satisfy
2 the lowest forms of animal passion. The emotion is the same, but its
3 manifestation is different in different cases. It is the same feeling of
4 love, well or ill directed, that impels one man to do good and to give
5 all he has to the poor, while it makes another man cut the throats of
6 his brethren and take away all their possessions. The former loves
7 others as much as the latter loves himself. The direction of the love
8 is bad in the case of the latter, but it is right and proper in the other
9 case. The same fire that cooks a meal for us may burn a child, and it
10 is no fault of the fire if it does so; the difference lies in the way in
11 which it is used. Therefore love, the intense longing for association,
12 the strong desire on the part of two to become one--and it may be,
13 after all, of all to become merged in one--is being manifested
14 everywhere in higher or lower forms as the case may be.

15 Bhakti-Yoga is the science of higher love. It shows us how to
16 direct it; it shows us how to control it, how to manage it, how to use
17 it, how to give it a new aim, as it were, and from it obtain the
18 highest and most glorious results, that is, how to make it lead us to
19 spiritual blessedness. Bhakti-Yoga does not say, "Give up"; it only
20 says, "Love; love the Highest!"--and everything low naturally falls
21 off from him, the object of whose love is the Highest.

22 "I cannot tell anything about Thee except that Thou art my
23 love. Thou art beautiful, Oh, Thou art beautiful! Thou art beauty
24 itself." What is after all really required of us in this Yoga is that our
25 thirst after the beautiful should be directed to God. What is the
26 beauty in the human face, in the sky, in the stars, and in the moon?
27 It is only the partial apprehension of the real all-embracing Divine
28 Beauty. "He shining, everything shines. It is through His light that
29 all things shine." Take this high position of Bhakti which makes you
30 forget at once all you little personalities. Take yourself away from
31 all the world's little selfish clings. Do not look upon humanity as
32 the centre of all your human and higher interests. Stand as a
33 witness, as a student, and observe the phenomena of nature. Have
34 the feeling of personal non-attachment with regard to man, and see
35 how this mighty feeling of love is working itself out in the world.
36 Sometimes a little friction is produced, but that is only in the course
37 of the struggle to attain the higher real love. Sometimes there is a
38 little fight or a little fall; but it is all only by the way. Stand aside,
39 and freely let these frictions come. You feel the frictions only when
40 you are in the current of the world, but when you are outside of it
41 simply as a witness and as a student, you will be able to see that
42 there are millions and millions of channels in which God is
43 manifesting Himself as Love.

44 "Wherever there is any bliss, even though in the most sensual
45 of things, there is a spark of that Eternal Bliss which is the Lord
46 Himself." Even in the lowest kinds of attraction there is the germ of
47 divine love. One of the names of the Lord in Sanskrit is Hari, and
48 this means that He attracts all things to Himself. His is in fact the
49 only attraction worthy of human hearts. Who can attract a soul
50 really? Only He! Do you think dead matter can truly attract the
51 soul? It never did, and never will. When you see a man going after a
52 beautiful face, do you think that it is the handful of arranged

1 material molecules which really attract the man? Not at all. Behind
2 those material particles there must be and is the play of divine
3 influence and divine love. The ignorant man does not know it, but
4 yet, consciously or unconsciously, he is attracted by it and it alone.
5 So even the lowest forms of attraction derive their power from God
6 Himself. "None, O beloved, ever loved the husband for the
7 husband's sake; it is the Atman, the Lord who is within, for whose
8 sake the husband is loved." Loving wives may know this or they may
9 not; it is true all the same. "None, O beloved, ever loved the wife for
10 the wife's sake, but it is the Self in the wife that is loved." Similarly,
11 no one loves a child or anything else in the world except on account
12 of Him who is within. The Lord is the great magnet, and we are all
13 like iron filings; we are being constantly attracted by Him, and all of
14 us are struggling to reach Him. All this struggling of ours in this
15 world is surely not intended for selfish ends. Fools do not know
16 what they are doing: the work of their life is, after all, to approach
17 the great magnet. All the tremendous struggling and fighting in life
18 is intended to make us go to Him ultimately and be one with Him.

19 The Bhakti-Yogi, however, knows the meaning of life's
20 struggles; he understands it. He has passed through a long series of
21 these struggles and knows what they mean and earnestly desires to
22 be free from the friction thereof; he wants to avoid the clash and go
23 direct to the centre of all attraction, the great Hari. This is the
24 renunciation of the Bhakta. This mighty attraction in the direction
25 of God makes all other attractions vanish for him. This mighty
26 infinite love of God which enters his heart leaves no place for any
27 other love to live there. How can it be otherwise? Bhakti fills his
28 heart with the divine waters of the ocean of love, which is God
29 Himself; there is no place there for little loves. That is to say, the
30 Bhakta's renunciation is that Vairagya or non-attachment for all
31 things that are not God which results from Anuraga or great
32 attachment to God.

1 This is the ideal preparation for the attainment of the
2 supreme Bhakti. When this renunciation comes, the gate opens for
3 the soul to pass through and reach the lofty regions of supreme
4 devotion or Para-Bhakti. Then it is that we begin to understand
5 what Para-Bhakti is; and the man who has entered into the inner
6 shrine of the Para-Bhakti alone has the right to say that all forms
7 and symbols are useless to him as aids to religious realisation. He
8 alone has attained that supreme state of love commonly called the
9 brotherhood of man; the rest only talk. He sees no distinctions; the
10 mighty ocean of love has entered into him, and he sees not man in
11 man, but beholds his Beloved everywhere. Through every face
12 shines to him his Hari. The light in the sun or the moon is all His
13 manifestation. Wherever there is beauty or sublimity, to him it is all
14 His. Such Bhaktas are still living; the world is never without them.
15 Such, though bitten by a serpent, only say that a messenger came
16 to them from their Beloved. Such men alone have the right to talk of
17 universal brotherhood. They feel no resentment; their minds never
18 react in the form of hatred or jealousy. The external, the sensuous,
19 has vanished from them for ever. How can they be angry, when,
20 through their love, they are always able to see the Reality behind
21 the scenes?

22 23 24 THE NATURALNESS OF BHAKTI-YOGA 25 AND ITS CENTRAL SECRET 26

27 "Those who with constant attention always worship You, and
28 those who worship the Undifferentiated, the Absolute, of these who
29 are the greatest Yogis?"--Arjuna asked of Shri Krishna. The answer
30 was: "Those who concentrating their minds on Me worship Me with
31 eternal constancy and are endowed with the highest faith, they are
32 My best worshippers, they are the greatest Yogis. Those that
33 worship the Absolute, the Indescribable, the Undifferentiated, the
34 Omnipresent, the Unthinkable, the All-comprehending, the
35 Immovable, and the Eternal, by controlling the play of their organs
36 and having the conviction of sameness in regard to all things, they
37 also, being engaged in doing good to all beings, come to Me alone.
38 But to those whose minds have been devoted to the unmanifested
39 Absolute, the difficulty of the struggle along the way is much
40 greater, for it is indeed with great difficulty that the path of the
41 unmanifested Absolute is trodden by any embodied being. Those
42 who, having offered up all their work unto Me, with entire reliance
43 on Me, meditate on Me and worship Me without any attachment to
44 anything else--them, I soon lift up from the ocean of ever-recurring
45 births and deaths, as their mind is wholly attached to Me" (Gita,
46 XII).

47 Jnana-Yoga and Bhakti-Yoga are both referred to here. Both
48 may be said to have been defined in the above passage. Jnana-Yoga
49 is grand; it is high philosophy; and almost every human being
50 thinks, curiously enough, that he can surely do everything required

1 of him by philosophy; but it is really very difficult to live truly the
2 life of philosophy. We are often apt to run into great dangers in
3 trying to guide our life by philosophy. This world may be said to be
4 divided between persons of demoniacal nature who think the care-
5 taking of the body to be the be-all and the end-all of existence, and
6 persons of godly nature who realise that the body is simply a means
7 to an end, an instrument intended for the culture of the soul. The
8 devil can and indeed does cite the scriptures for his own purpose;
9 and thus the way of knowledge appears to offer justification to what
10 the bad man does, as much as it offers inducements to what the
11 good man does. This is the great danger in Jnana-Yoga. But Bhakti-
12 Yoga is natural, sweet, and gentle; the Bhakta does not take such
13 high flights as the Jnana-Yogi, and, therefore, he is not apt to have
14 such big falls. Until the bondages of the soul pass away, it cannot of
15 course be free, whatever may be the nature of the path that the
16 religious man takes.

17 There is a passage showing how, in the case of one of the
18 blessed Gopis, the soul-binding chains of both merit and demerit
19 were broken. "The intense pleasure in meditating on God took away
20 the binding effects of her good deeds. Then her intense misery of
21 soul in not attaining unto Him washed off all her sinful propensities;
22 and then she became free." --{Sanskrit} (*Vishnu-Purana*). In
23 Bhakti-Yoga the central secret is, therefore, to know that the
24 various passions and feelings and emotions in the human heart are
25 not wrong in themselves; only they have to be carefully controlled
26 and given a higher and higher direction, until they attain the very
27 highest condition of excellence. The highest direction is that which
28 takes us to God; every other direction is lower. We find that
29 pleasures and pains are very common and oft-recurring feelings in
30 our lives. When a man feels pain because he has not wealth or some
31 such worldly thing, he is giving a wrong direction to the feeling.
32 Still pain has its uses. Let a man feel pain that he has not reached
33 the Highest, that he has not reached God, and that pain will be to
34 his salvation. When you become glad that you have a handful of
35 coins, it is a wrong direction given to the faculty of joy; it should be
36 given a higher direction, it must be made to serve the Highest
37 Ideal. Pleasure in that kind of ideal must surely be our highest joy.
38 This same thing is true of all our other feelings. The Bhakta says
39 that not one of them is wrong, he gets hold of them all and points
40 them unfailingly towards God.

41 42 43 THE FORMS OF LOVE-MANIFESTATION 44

45 Here are some of the forms in which love manifests itself.
46 First there is reverence. Why do people show reverence to temples
47 and holy places? Because He is worshipped there, and His presence
48 is associated with all such places. Why do people in every country
49 pay reverence to teachers of religion? It is natural for the human
50 heart to do so, because all such teachers preach the Lord. At
51 bottom, reverence is a growth out of love; we can none of us revere

1 him whom we do not love. Then comes Priti--pleasure in God. What
2 an immense pleasure men take in the objects of the senses! They go
3 anywhere, run through any danger, to get the thing which they love,
4 the thing which their senses like. What is wanted of the Bhakta is
5 this very kind of intense love which has, however, to be directed to
6 God. Then there is the sweetest of pains, Viraha, the intense misery
7 due to the absence of the beloved. When a man feels intense misery
8 because he has not attained to God, has not known that which is the
9 only thing worthy to be known, and becomes in consequence very
10 dissatisfied and almost mad--then there is Viraha; and this state of
11 the mind makes him feel disturbed in the presence of anything
12 other than the beloved (Ekarativichikitsa). In earthly love we see
13 how often this Viraha comes. Again, when men are really and
14 intensely in love with women or women with men, they feel a kind
15 of natural annoyance in the presence of all those whom they do not
16 love. Exactly the same state of impatience in regard to things that
17 are not loved comes to the mind when Para-Bhakti holds sway over
18 it; even to talk about things other than God becomes distasteful
19 then. "Think of Him, think of Him alone, and give up all other vain
20 words"--{Sanskrit} Those who talk of Him alone, the Bhakta finds
21 to be friendly to him; while those who talk of anything else appear
22 to him to be unfriendly. A still higher stage of love is reached when
23 life itself is maintained for the sake of the one Ideal of Love, when
24 life itself is considered beautiful and worth living only on account of
25 that Love {Sanskrit}. Without it, such a life would not remain even
26 for a moment. Life is sweet, because it thinks of the Beloved.
27 Tadiyata (*His-ness*) comes when a man become perfect according
28 to Bhakti--when he has become blessed, when he has attained God,
29 when he has touched the feet of God, as it were. Then his whole
30 nature is purified and completely changed. All his purpose in life
31 then becomes fulfilled. Yet many such Bhaktas live on just to
32 worship Him. That is the bliss, the only pleasure in life which they
33 will not give up. "O king, such is the blessed quality of Hari that
34 even those who have become satisfied with everything, all the knots
35 of whose hearts have been cut asunder, even they love the Lord for
36 love's sake"--the Lord "Whom all the gods worship--all the lovers of
37 liberation, and all the knowers of the Brahman"--{Sanskrit} (*Nri.*
38 *Tap. Up.*). Such is the power of love. When a man has forgotten
39 himself altogether, and does not feel that anything belongs to him,
40 then he acquires the state of Tadiyata; everything is sacred to him,
41 because it belongs to the Beloved. Even in regard to earthly love,
42 the lover thinks that everything belonging to his beloved is sacred
43 and so dear to him. He loves even a piece of cloth belonging to the
44 darling of his heart. In the same way, when a person loves the Lord,
45 the whole universe becomes dear to him, because it is all His.

48 UNIVERSAL LOVE AND HOW IT LEADS TO 49 SELF-SURRENDER 50

1 How can we love the Vyashti, the particular, without first
2 loving the Samashti, the universal? God is the Samashti, the
3 generalised and the abstract universal whole; and the universe that
4 we see is the Vyashti, the particularised thing. To love the whole
5 universe is possible only by way of loving the Samashti--the
6 universal--which is, as it were, the one unity in which are to be
7 found millions and millions of smaller unities. The philosophers of
8 India do not stop at the particulars; they cast a hurried glance at
9 the particulars and immediately start to find the generalised forms
10 which will include all the particulars. The search after the universal
11 is the one search of Indian philosophy and religion. The Jnani aims
12 at the wholeness of things, at that one absolute and generalised
13 Being, knowing which he knows everything. The Bhakta wishes to
14 realise that one generalised abstract Person, in loving whom he
15 loves the whole universe. The Yogi wishes to have possession of
16 that one generalised form of power, by controlling which he
17 controls this whole universe. The Indian mind, throughout its
18 history, has been directed to this kind of singular search after the
19 universal in everything--in science, in psychology, in love, in
20 philosophy. So the conclusion to which the Bhakta comes is that, if
21 you go on merely loving one person after another, you may go on
22 loving them so for an infinite length of time, without being in the
23 least able to love the world as a whole. When, at last, the central
24 idea is, however, arrived at that the sum total of all love is God, that
25 the sum total of the aspirations of all the souls in the universe,
26 whether they be free, or bound, or struggling towards liberation, is
27 God, then alone it becomes possible for any one to put forth
28 universal love. God is the Samashti, and this visible universe is God
29 differentiated and made manifest. If we love this sum total, we love
30 everything. Loving the world and doing it good will all come easily
31 then; we have to obtain this power only by loving God first;
32 otherwise it is no joke to do good to the world. "Everything is His
33 and He is my Lover; I love Him," says the Bhakta. In this way
34 everything becomes sacred to the Bhakta, because all things are
35 His. All are His children, His body, His manifestation. How then
36 may we hurt any one? How then may we not love any one? With the
37 love of God will come, as a sure effect, the love of every one in the
38 universe. The nearer we approach God, the more do we begin to
39 see that all things are in Him. When the soul succeeds in
40 appropriating the bliss of this supreme love, it also begins to see
41 Him in everything. Our heart will thus become an eternal fountain
42 of love. And when we reach even higher states of this love, all the
43 little differences between the things of the world are entirely lost;
44 man is seen no more as man, but only as God; the animal is seen no
45 more as animal, but as God; even the tiger is no more a tiger, but a
46 manifestation of God. Thus in this intense state of Bhakti, worship
47 is offered to every one, to every life, and to every being.
48 {Sanskrit}--"Knowing that Hari, the Lord, is in every being, the
49 wise have thus to manifest unswerving love towards all beings."

50 As a result of this kind of intense all-absorbing love, comes
51 the feeling of perfect self-surrender, the conviction that nothing that
52 happens is against us, Apratikulya. Then the loving soul is able to
53 say, if pain comes, "Welcome pain." If misery comes, it will say,

1 "Welcome misery, you are also from the Beloved." If a serpent
2 comes, it will say, "Welcome serpent". If death comes, such a
3 Bhakta will welcome it with a smile. "Blessed am I that they all
4 come to me; they are all welcome." The Bhakta in this state of
5 perfect resignation, arising out of intense love to God and to all that
6 are His, ceases to distinguish between pleasure and pain in so far
7 as they affect him. He does not know what it is to complain of pain
8 or misery; and this kind of uncomplaining resignation to the will of
9 God, who is all love, is indeed a worthier acquisition than all the
10 glory of grand and heroic performances.

11 To the vast majority of mankind, the body is everything; the
12 body is all the universe to them; bodily enjoyment is their all in all.
13 This demon of the worship of the body and of the things of the body
14 has entered into us all. We may indulge in tall talk and take very
15 high flights, but we are like vultures all the same; our mind is
16 directed to the piece of carrion down below. Why should our body
17 be saved, say, from the tiger? Why may we not give it over to the
18 tiger? The tiger will thereby be pleased, and that is not altogether
19 so very far from self-sacrifice and worship. Can you reach the
20 realisation of such an idea in which all sense of self is completely
21 lost? It is a very dizzy height on the pinnacle of the religion of love,
22 and few in this world have ever climbed up to it; but until a man
23 reaches that highest point of ever-ready and ever-willing self-
24 sacrifice, he cannot become a perfect Bhakta. We may all manage
25 to maintain our bodies more or less satisfactorily and for longer or
26 shorter intervals of time. Nevertheless, our bodies have to go; there
27 is no permanence about them. Blessed are they whose bodies get
28 destroyed in the service of others. "Wealth, and even life itself, the
29 sage always holds ready for the service of others. In this world,
30 there being one thing certain, viz. death, it is far better that this
31 body dies in a good cause than in a bad one." We may drag our life
32 on for fifty years or a hundred years; but after that, what is it that
33 happens? Everything that is the result of combination must get
34 dissolved and die. There must and will come a time for it to be
35 decomposed. Jesus and Buddha and Mohammed are all dead; all
36 the great Prophets and Teachers of the world are dead.

37 "In this evanescent world, where everything is falling to
38 pieces, we have to make the highest use of what time we have,"
39 says the Bhakta; and really the highest use of life is to hold it at the
40 service of all beings. It is the horrible body-idea that breeds all the
41 selfishness in the world, just this one delusion that we are wholly
42 the body we own, and that we must by all possible means try our
43 very best to preserve and to please it. If you know that you are
44 positively other than your body, you have then none to fight with or
45 struggle against; you are dead to all ideas of selfishness. So the
46 Bhakta declares that we have to hold ourselves as if we are
47 altogether dead to all the things of the world; and that is indeed
48 self-surrender. Let things come as they may. This is the meaning of
49 "Thy will be done"--not going about fighting and struggling and
50 thinking all the while that God wills all our own weaknesses and
51 worldly ambitions. It may be that good comes even out of our selfish
52 struggles; that is, however, God's look-out. The perfected Bhakta's

1 idea must be never to will and work for himself. "Lord, they build
2 high temples in Your name; they make large gifts in Your name; I
3 am poor; I have nothing; so I take this body of mine and place it at
4 Your feet. Do not give me up, O Lord." Such is the prayer
5 proceeding out of the depths of the Bhakta's heart. To him who has
6 experienced it, this eternal sacrifice of the self unto the Beloved
7 Lord is higher by far than all wealth and power, than even all
8 soaring thoughts of renown and enjoyment. The peace of the
9 Bhakta's calm resignation is a peace that passeth all understanding
10 and is of incomparable value. His Apratikulya is a state of the mind
11 in which it has no interests and naturally knows nothing that is
12 opposed to it. In this state of sublime resignation everything in the
13 shape of attachment goes away completely, except that one all-
14 absorbing love to Him in whom all things live and move and have
15 their being. This attachment of love to God is indeed one that does
16 not bind the soul but effectively breaks all its bondages.

17 18 19 THE HIGHER KNOWLEDGE AND 20 THE HIGHER LOVE ARE ONE TO THE TRUE LOVER

21
22 The Upanishads distinguish between a higher knowledge and
23 a lower knowledge; and to the Bhakta there is really no difference
24 between this higher knowledge and his higher love (Para-Bhakti).
25 The Mundaka Upanishad says: {Sanskrit}--"The knowers of the
26 Brahman declare that there are two kinds of knowledge worthy to
27 be known, namely, the Higher (Para) and the lower (Apara). Of
28 these the lower (knowledge) consists of the Rig-Veda, the Yajur-
29 Veda, the Sama-Veda, the Atharva-Veda, the Shiksha (or the science
30 dealing with pronunciation and accent), the Kalpa (or the sacrificial
31 liturgy), grammar, the Nirukta (or the science dealing with
32 etymology and the meaning of words), prosody, and astronomy; and
33 the higher (knowledge) is that by which that Unchangeable is
34 known."

35 The higher knowledge is thus clearly shown to be the
36 knowledge of the Brahman; and the *Devi-Bhagavata* gives us the
37 following definition of the higher love (Para-Bhakti): "As oil poured
38 from one vessel to another falls in an unbroken line, so, when the
39 mind in an unbroken stream thinks of the Lord, we have what is
40 called Para-Bhakti or supreme love." This kind of undisturbed and
41 ever-steady direction of the mind and the heart to the Lord with an
42 inseparable attachment is indeed the highest manifestation of
43 man's love to God. All other forms of Bhakti are only preparatory to
44 the attainment of this highest form thereof, viz. the Para-Bhakti
45 which is also known as the love that comes after attachment
46 (Raganuga). When this supreme love once comes into the heart of
47 man, his mind will continuously think of God and remember nothing
48 else. He will give no room in himself to thoughts other than those of
49 God, and his soul will be unconquerably pure and will alone break
50 all the bonds of mind and matter and become serenely free. He

1 alone can worship the Lord in his own heart; to him forms, symbols,
2 books, and doctrines are all unnecessary and are incapable of
3 proving serviceable in any way. It is not easy to love the Lord thus.
4 Ordinarily human love is seen to flourish only in places where it is
5 returned; where love is not returned for love, cold indifference is
6 the natural result. There are, however, rare instances in which we
7 may notice love exhibiting itself even where there is no return of
8 love. We may compare this kind of love, for purposes of illustration,
9 to the love of the moth for the fire; the insect loves the fire, falls
10 into it, and dies. It is indeed in the nature of this insect to love so.
11 To love because it is the nature of love to love is undeniably the
12 highest and the most unselfish manifestation of love that may be
13 seen in the world. Such love, working itself out on the plane of
14 spirituality, necessarily leads to the attainment of Para-Bhakti.

17 THE TRIANGLE OF LOVE

19 We may represent love as a triangle, each of the angles of
20 which corresponds to one of its inseparable characteristics. There
21 can be no triangle without all its three angles; and there can be no
22 true love without its three following characteristics. The first angle
23 of our triangle of love is that love knows no bargaining. Wherever
24 there is any seeking for something in return, there can be no real
25 love; it becomes a mere matter of shopkeeping. As long as there is
26 in us any idea of deriving this or that favour from God in return for
27 our respect and allegiance to Him, so long there can be no true love
28 growing in our hearts. Those who worship God because they wish
29 Him to bestow favours on them are sure not to worship Him if those
30 favours are not forthcoming. The Bhakta loves the Lord because He
31 is lovable; there is no other motive originating or directing this
32 divine emotion of the true devotee.

33 We have heard it said that a great king once went into a
34 forest and there met a sage. He talked with the sage a little and
35 was very much pleased with his purity and wisdom. The king then
36 wanted the sage to oblige him by receiving a present from him. The
37 sage refused to do so, saying, "The fruits of the forest are enough
38 food for me; the pure streams of water flowing down from the
39 mountains give enough drink for me; the barks of the trees supply
40 me with enough covering; and the caves of the mountains form my
41 home. Why should I take any present from you or from anybody?"
42 The king said, "Just to benefit me, sir, please take something from
43 my hands and please come with me to the city and to my palace."
44 After much persuasion, the sage at last consented to do as the king
45 desired and went with him to his palace. Before offering the gift to
46 the sage, the king repeated his prayers, saying, "Lord, give me
47 more children; Lord, give me more wealth; Lord, give me more
48 territory; Lord, keep my body in better health", and so on. Before
49 the king finished saying his prayer, the sage had got up and walked
50 away from the room quietly. At this the king became perplexed and
51 began to follow him, crying aloud, "Sir, you are going away, you

1 have not received my gifts." The sage turned round to him and said,
2 "I do not beg of beggars. You are yourself nothing but a beggar, and
3 how can you give me anything? I am no fool to think of taking
4 anything from a beggar like you. Go away, do not follow me."

5 There is well brought out the distinction between mere
6 beggars and the real lovers of God. Begging is not the language of
7 love. To worship God even for the sake of salvation or any other
8 rewards equally degenerate. Love knows no reward. Love is always
9 for love's sake. The Bhakta loves because he cannot help loving.
10 When you see a beautiful scenery and fall in love with it, you do not
11 demand anything in the way of favour from the scenery, nor does
12 the scenery demand anything from you. Yet the vision thereof
13 brings you to a blissful state of the mind; it tones down all the
14 friction in your soul, it makes you calm, almost raises you, for the
15 time being, beyond your mortal nature and places you in a condition
16 of quite divine ecstasy. This nature of real love is the first angle of
17 our triangle. Ask not anything in return for your love; let your
18 position be always that of the giver; give your love unto God, but do
19 not ask anything in return even from Him.

20 The second angle of the triangle of love is that love knows no
21 fear. Those that love God through fear are the lowest of human
22 beings, quite undeveloped as men. They worship God from fear of
23 punishment. He is a great Being to them, with a whip in one hand
24 and the sceptre in the other; if they do not obey Him, they are
25 afraid they will be whipped. It is a degradation to worship God
26 through fear of punishment; such worship is, if worship at all, the
27 crudest form of the worship of love. So long as there is any fear in
28 the heart, how can there be love also? Love conquers naturally all
29 fear. Think of a young mother in the street and a dog barking at
30 her; she is frightened and flies into nearest house. But suppose the
31 next day she is in the street with her child, and a lion springs upon
32 the child. Where will be her position now? Of course, in the very
33 mouth of the lion, protecting her child. Love conquers all fear. Fear
34 comes from the selfish idea of cutting one's self off from the
35 universe. The smaller and the more selfish I make myself, the more
36 is my fear. If a man thinks he is a little nothing, fear will surely
37 come upon him. And the less you think of yourself as an
38 insignificant person, the less fear there will be for you. So long as
39 there is the least spark of fear in you there can be no love there.
40 Love and fear are incompatible; God is never to be feared by those
41 who love Him. The commandment, "Do not take the name of the
42 Lord thy God in vain", the true lover of God laughs at. How can
43 there be any blasphemy in the religion of love? The more you take
44 the name of the Lord, the better for you, in whatever way you may
45 do it. You are only repeating His name because you love Him.

46 The third angle of the love-triangle is that love knows no rival,
47 for in it is always embodied the lover's highest ideal. True love
48 never comes until the object of our love becomes to us our highest
49 ideal. It may be that in many cases human love is misdirected and
50 misplaced, but to the person who loves, the thing he loves is always
51 his own highest idea. One may see his ideal in the vilest of beings,
52 and another in the highest of beings; nevertheless, in every case it

1 is the ideal alone that can be truly and intensely loved. The highest
2 ideal of every man is called God. Ignorant or wise, saint or sinner,
3 man or woman, educated or uneducated, cultivated or uncultivated,
4 to every human being the highest ideal is God. The synthesis of all
5 the highest ideals of beauty, of sublimity, and of power gives us the
6 completest conception of the loving and lovable God.

7 These ideals exist in some shape or other in every mind
8 naturally; they form a part and parcel of all our minds. All the active
9 manifestations of human nature are struggles of those ideals to
10 become realised in practical life. All the various movements that we
11 see around us in society are caused by the various ideals in various
12 souls trying to come out and become concretised; what is inside
13 presses on to come outside. This perennially dominant influence of
14 the ideal is the one force, the one motive power, that may be seen
15 to be constantly working in the midst of mankind. It may be after
16 hundreds of births, after struggling through thousands of years,
17 that man finds that it is vain to try to make the inner ideal mould
18 completely the external conditions and square well with them; after
19 realising this he no more tries to project his own ideal on the
20 outside world, but worships the ideal itself as ideal from the highest
21 standpoint of love. This ideally perfect ideal embraces all lower
22 ideals. Every one admits the truth of the saying that a lover sees
23 Helen's beauty on an Ethiop's brow. The man who is standing aside
24 as a looker-on sees that love is here misplaced, but the lover sees
25 his Helen all the same and does not see the Ethiop at all. Helen or
26 Ethiop, the objects of our love are really the centres round which
27 our ideals become crystallised. What is it that the world commonly
28 worships? Not certainly this all-embracing, ideally perfect ideal of
29 the supreme devotee and lover. That ideal which men and women
30 commonly worship is what is in themselves; every person projects
31 his or her own ideal on the outside world and kneels before it. That
32 is why we find that men who are cruel and blood-thirsty conceive of
33 a blood-thirsty God, because they can only love their own highest
34 ideal. That is why good men have a very high ideal of God, and their
35 ideal is indeed so very different from that of others.

36 37 38 **THE GOD OF LOVE IS HIS OWN PROOF** 39

40 What is the ideal of the lover who has quite passed beyond
41 the idea of selfishness, of bartering and bargaining, and who knows
42 no fear? Even to the great God such a man will say, "I will give You
43 my all, and I do not want anything from You; indeed there is nothing
44 that I can call my own." When a man has acquired this conviction,
45 his ideal becomes one of perfect love, one of perfect fearlessness of
46 love. The highest ideal of such a person has no narrowness of
47 particularity about it; it is love universal, love without limits and
48 bonds, love itself, absolute love. This grand ideal of the religion of
49 love is worshipped and loved absolutely as such without the aid of
50 any symbols or suggestions. This is the highest form of Para-

1 Bhakti--the worship of such an all-comprehending ideal as the ideal;
2 all the other forms of Bhakti are only stages on the way to reach it.

3 All our failures and all our successes in following the religion
4 of love are on the road to the realisation of that one ideal. Object
5 after object is taken up, and the inner ideal is successively
6 projected on them all; and all such external objects are found
7 inadequate as exponents of the ever-expanding inner ideal and are
8 naturally rejected one after another. At last the aspirant begins to
9 think that it is vain to try to realise the ideal in external objects,
10 that all external objects are as nothing when compared with the
11 ideal itself; and, in course of time, he acquires the power of
12 realising the highest and the most generalised abstract ideal
13 entirely as an abstraction that is to him quite alive and real. When
14 the devotee has reached this point, he is no more impelled to ask
15 whether God can be demonstrated or not, whether He is
16 omnipotent and omniscient or not. To him He is only the God of
17 Love; He is the highest ideal of love, and that is sufficient for all his
18 purposes. He, as love, is self-evident. It requires no proofs to
19 demonstrate the existence of the beloved to the lover. The
20 magistrate-Gods of other forms of religion may require a good deal
21 of proof to prove Them, but the Bhakta does not and cannot think of
22 such Gods at all. To him God exists entirely as love. "None, O
23 beloved, loves the husband for the husband's sake, but it is for the
24 sake of the Self who is in the husband that the husband is loved;
25 none, O beloved, loves the wife for the wife's sake, but it is for the
26 sake of the Self who is in the wife that the wife is loved."

27 It is said by some that selfishness is the only motive power in
28 regard to all human activities. That also is love lowered by being
29 particularised. When I think of myself as comprehending the
30 Universal, there can surely be no selfishness in me; but when I, by
31 mistake, think that I am a little something, my love becomes
32 particularised and narrowed. The mistake consists in making the
33 sphere of love narrow and contracted. All things in the universe are
34 of divine origin and deserve to be loved; it has, however, to be
35 borne in mind that the love of the whole includes the love of the
36 parts. This whole is the God of the Bhaktas, and all the other Gods,
37 Fathers in Heaven, or Rulers, or Creators, and all theories and
38 doctrines and books have no purpose and no meaning for them,
39 seeing that they have through their supreme love and devotion
40 risen above those things altogether. When the heart is purified and
41 cleansed and filled to the brim with the divine nectar of love, all
42 other ideas of God become simply puerile and are rejected as being
43 inadequate or unworthy. Such is indeed the power of Para-Bhakti or
44 Supreme Love; and the perfected Bhakta no more goes to see God
45 in temples and churches; he knows no place where he will not find
46 Him. He finds Him in the temple as well as out of the temple, he
47 finds Him in the saint's saintliness as well as in the wicked man's
48 wickedness, because he has Him already seated in glory in his own
49 heart as the one Almighty inextinguishable Light of Love which is
50 ever shining and eternally present.

HUMAN REPRESENTATIONS OF THE DIVINE IDEAL OF LOVE

It is impossible to express the nature of this supreme and absolute ideal of love in human language. Even the highest flight of human imagination is incapable of comprehending it in all its infinite perfection and beauty. Nevertheless, the followers of the religion of love, in its higher as well as its lower forms, in all countries, have all along had to use the inadequate human language to comprehend and to define their own ideal of love. Nay more, human love itself, in all its varied forms, has been made to typify this inexpressible divine love. Man can think of divine things only in his own human way; to us the Absolute can be expressed only in our relative language. The whole universe is to us a writing of the Infinite in the language of the finite. Therefore Bhaktas make use of all the common terms associated with the common love of humanity in relation to God and His worship through love.

Some of the great writers on Para-Bhakti have tried to understand and experience this divine love in so many different ways. The lowest form in which this love is apprehended is what they call the peaceful--the Shanta. When a man worships God without the fire of love in him, without its madness in his brain, when his love is just the calm commonplace love, a little higher than mere forms and ceremonies and symbols, but not at all characterised by the madness of intensely active love, it is said to be Shanta. We see some people in the world who like to move on slowly, and others who come and go like the whirlwind. The Shanta-Bhakta is calm, peaceful, gentle.

The next higher type is that of Dasya, i.e. servanthship; it comes when a man thinks he is the servant of the Lord. The attachment of the faithful servant unto the master is his ideal.

The next type of love is Sakhya, friendship--"Thou art our beloved friend." Just as a man opens his heart to his friend and knows that the friend will never chide him or his faults but will always try to help him, just as there is the idea of equality between him and his friend, so equal love flows in and out between the worshipper and his friendly God. Thus God becomes our friend, the friend who is near, the friend to whom we may freely tell all the tales of our lives. The innermost secrets of our hearts we may place before Him with the great assurance of safety and support. He is the friend whom the devotee accepts as an equal. God is viewed here as our playmate. We may well say that we are all playing in this universe. Just as children play their games, just as the most glorious kings and emperors play their own games, so is the Beloved Lord Himself in sport with this universe. He is perfect; He does not want anything. Why should He create? Activity is always with us for the fulfilment of a certain want, and want always presupposes imperfection. God is perfect; He has no wants. Why should He go on with this work of an ever-active creation? What purpose has He in view? The stories about God creating this world for some end or other that we imagine are good as stories, but not

1 otherwise. It is all really in sport; the universe is His play going on.
2 The whole universe must after all be a big piece of pleasing fun to
3 Him. If you are poor, enjoy that as fun; if you are rich, enjoy the fun
4 of being rich; if dangers come, it is also good fun; if happiness
5 comes, there is more good fun. The world is just a playground, and
6 we are here having good fun, having a game; and God is with us
7 playing all the while, and we are with Him playing. God is our
8 eternal playmate. How beautifully He is playing! The play is
9 finished when the cycle comes to an end. There is rest for a shorter
10 or longer time; again all come out and play. It is only when you
11 forget that it is all play and that you are also helping in the play, it is
12 only then that misery and sorrows come. Then the heart becomes
13 heavy, then the world weighs upon you with tremendous power. But
14 as soon as you give up the serious idea of reality as the
15 characteristic of the changing incidents of the three minutes of life
16 and know it to be but a stage on which we are playing, helping Him
17 to play, at once misery ceases for you. He plays in every atom; He is
18 playing when He is building up earths, and suns, and moons; He is
19 playing with the human heart, with animals, with plants. We are His
20 chessmen; He puts the chessmen on the board and shakes them up.
21 He arranges us first in one way and then in another, and we are
22 consciously or unconsciously helping in His play. And, oh, bliss! we
23 are His playmates!

24 The next is what is known as Vatsalya, loving God not as our
25 Father but as our Child. This may look peculiar, but it is a discipline
26 to enable us to detach all ideas of power from the concept of God.
27 The idea of power brings with it awe. There should be no awe in
28 love. The ideas of reverence and obedience are necessary for the
29 formation of character; but when character is formed, when the
30 lover has tasted the calm, peaceful love and tasted also a little of its
31 intense madness, then he need talk no more of ethics and
32 discipline. To conceive God as mighty, majestic, and glorious, as the
33 Lord of the universe, or as the God of gods, the lover says he does
34 not care. It is to avoid this association with God of the fear-creating
35 sense of power that he worships God as his own child. The mother
36 and the father are not moved by awe in relation to the child; they
37 cannot have any reverence for the child. They cannot think of
38 asking any favour from the child. The child's position is always that
39 of the receiver, and out of love for the child the parents will give up
40 their bodies a hundred times over. A thousand lives they will
41 sacrifice for that one child of theirs, and, therefore, God is loved as
42 a child. This idea of loving God as a child comes into existence and
43 grows naturally among those religious sects which believe in the
44 incarnation of God. For the Mohammedans it is impossible to have
45 this idea of God as a child; they will shrink from it with a kind of
46 horror. But the Christian and the Hindu can realise it easily,
47 because they have the baby Jesus and the baby Krishna. The
48 women in India often look upon themselves as Krishna's mother;
49 Christian mothers also may take up the idea that they are Christ's
50 mothers, and it will bring to the West the knowledge of God's Divine
51 Motherhood which they so much need. The superstitions of awe and
52 reverence in relation to God are deeply rooted in the heart of our
53 hearts, and it takes long years to sink entirely in love our ideas of

1 reverence and veneration, of awe and majesty and glory with
2 regard to God.

3 There is one more human representation of the divine ideal of
4 love. It is known as Madhura, sweet, and is the highest of all such
5 representations. It is indeed based on the highest manifestation of
6 love in this world, and this love is also the strongest known to man.
7 What love shakes the whole nature of man, what love runs through
8 every atom of his being--makes him mad, makes him forget his own
9 nature, transforms him, makes him either a God or a demon--as the
10 love between man and woman? In this sweet representation of
11 divine love God is our husband. We are all women; there are no
12 men in this world; there is but One man, and this is He, our
13 Beloved. All that love which man gives to woman, or woman to man,
14 has here to be given up to the Lord.

15 All the different kinds of love which we see in the world, and
16 with which we are more or less playing merely, have God as the one
17 goal; but unfortunately, man does not know the infinite ocean into
18 which this mighty river of love is constantly flowing, and so,
19 foolishly, he often tries to direct it to little dolls of human beings.
20 The tremendous love for the child that is in human nature is not for
21 the little doll of a child; if you bestow it blindly and exclusively on
22 the child, you will suffer in consequence. But through such suffering
23 will come the awakening by which you are sure to find out that the
24 love which is in you, if it is given to any human being, will sooner or
25 later bring pain and sorrow as the result. Our love must, therefore,
26 be given to the Highest One who never dies and never changes, to
27 Him in the ocean of whose love there is neither ebb nor flow. Love
28 must get to its right destination, it must go unto Him who is really
29 the infinite ocean of love. All rivers flow into the ocean. Even the
30 drop of water coming down from the mountain side cannot stop its
31 course after reaching a brook or a river, however big it may be; at
32 last even that drop somehow does find its way to the ocean. God is
33 the one goal of all our passions and emotions. If you want to be
34 angry, be angry with Him. Chide your Beloved, chide your Friend.
35 Whom else can you safely chide? Mortal man will not patiently put
36 up with your anger; there will be a reaction. If you are angry with
37 me I am sure quickly to react, because I cannot patiently put up
38 with your anger. Say unto the Beloved, "Why do You not come to
39 me; why do You leave me thus alone?" Where is there any
40 enjoyment but in Him? What enjoyment can there be in little clods
41 of earth? It is the crystallised essence of infinite enjoyment that we
42 have to seek, and that is in God. Let all our passions and emotions
43 go up unto Him. They are meant for Him, for if they miss their mark
44 and go lower, they become vile; and when they go straight to the
45 mark, to the Lord, even the lowest of them becomes transfigured.
46 All of the energies of the human body and mind, howsoever they
47 may express themselves, have the Lord as their one goal, as their
48 Ekayana. All loves and all passions of the human heart must go to
49 God. He is the Beloved. Whom else can this heart love? He is the
50 most beautiful, the most sublime, He is beauty itself, sublimity
51 itself. Who in this universe is more beautiful than He? Who in this
52 universe is more fit to become the husband than He? Who in this

1 universe is fitter to be loved than He? So let Him be the husband,
2 let Him be the Beloved.

3 Often it so happens that divine lovers who sing of this divine
4 love accept the language of human love in all its aspects as
5 adequate to describe it. Fools do not understand this; they never
6 will. They look at it only with the physical eye. They do not
7 understand the mad throes of this spiritual love. How can they?
8 "For one kiss of Thy lips, O Beloved! One who has been kissed by
9 Thee, has his thirst for Thee increasing for ever, all his sorrows
10 vanish, and he forgets all things except Thee alone." Aspire after
11 that kiss of the Beloved, that touch of His lips which makes the
12 Bhakta mad, which makes a man a god. To him, who has been
13 blessed with such a kiss, the whole of nature changes, worlds
14 vanish, suns and moons die out, and the universe itself melts away
15 into that one infinite ocean of love. That is the perfection of the
16 madness of love.

17 Ay, the true spiritual lover does not rest even there; even the
18 love of husband and wife is not mad enough for him. The Bhaktas
19 take up also the idea of illegitimate love, because it is so strong; the
20 impropriety of it is not at all the thing they have in view. The nature
21 of this love is such that the more obstructions there are for its free
22 play, the more passionate it becomes. The love between husband
23 and wife is smooth, there are no obstructions there. So the Bhaktas
24 take up the idea of a girl who is in love with her own beloved, and
25 her mother or father or husband objects to such love; and the more
26 anybody obstructs the course of her love, so much the more is her
27 love tending to grow in strength. Human language cannot describe
28 how Krishna in the groves of Vrinda was madly loved, how at the
29 sound of his voice the ever-blessed Gopis rushed out to meet him,
30 forgetting everything, forgetting this world and its ties, its duties,
31 its joys, and its sorrows. Man, O man, you speak of divine love and
32 at the same time are able to attend to all the vanities of this world--
33 are you sincere? "Where Rama is, there is no room for any desire--
34 where desire is, there is no room for Rama; these never coexist--
35 like light and darkness they are never together."

36 37 38 CONCLUSION

39
40 When this highest ideal of love is reached, philosophy is
41 thrown away; who will then care for it? Freedom, Salvation,
42 Nirvana--all are thrown away; who cares to become free while in
43 the enjoyment of divine love? "Lord, I do not want wealth, nor
44 friends, nor beauty, nor learning, nor even freedom; let me be born
45 again and again, and be Thou ever my Love. Be Thou ever and ever
46 my Love." "Who cares to become sugar?" says the Bhakta, "I want
47 to taste sugar." Who will then desire to become free and one with
48 God? "I may know that I am He; yet will I take myself away from
49 Him and become different, so that I may enjoy the Beloved." That is
50 what the Bhakta says. Love for love's sake is his highest enjoyment.

1 Who will not be bound hand and foot a thousand times over to enjoy
2 the Beloved? No Bhakta cares for anything except love, except to
3 love and to be loved. His unworldly love is like the tide rushing up
4 the river; this lover goes up the river against the current. The world
5 calls him mad. I know one whom the world used to call mad, and
6 this was his answer: "My friends, the whole world is a lunatic
7 asylum. Some are mad after worldly love, some after name, some
8 after fame, some after money, some after salvation and going to
9 heaven. In this big lunatic asylum I am also mad, I am mad after
10 God. If you are mad after money, I am mad after God. You are mad;
11 so am I. I think my madness is after all the best." The true Bhakta's
12 love is this burning madness before which everything else vanishes
13 for him. The whole universe is to him full of love and love alone;
14 that is how it seems to the lover. So when a man has this love in
15 him, he becomes eternally blessed, eternally happy. This blessed
16 madness of divine love alone can cure for ever the disease of the
17 world that is in us. With desire, selfishness has vanished. He has
18 drawn near to God, he has thrown off all those vain desires of which
19 he was full before.

20 We all have to begin as dualists in the religion of love. God is
21 to us a separate Being, and we feel ourselves to be separate beings
22 also. Love then comes in the middle, and man begins to approach
23 God, and God also comes nearer and nearer to man. Man takes up
24 all the various relationships of life, as father, as mother, as son, as
25 friend, as master, as lover, and projects them on his ideal of love, on
26 his God. To him God exists as all these, and the last point of his
27 progress is reached when he feels that he has become absolutely
28 merged in the object of his worship. We all begin with love for
29 ourselves, and the unfair claims of the little self make even love
30 selfish. At last, however, comes the full blaze of light, in which this
31 little self is seen to have become one with the Infinite. Man himself
32 is transfigured in the presence of this Light of Love, and he realises
33 at last the beautiful and inspiring truth that Love, the Lover, and the
34 Beloved are One.

LECTURES FROM COLOMBO TO ALMORA

FIRST PUBLIC LECTURE IN THE EAST

(Delivered in Colombo)

After his memorable work in the West, Swami Vivekananda landed at Colombo on the afternoon of January 15, 1897, and was given a right royal reception by the Hindu community there. The following address of welcome was then presented to him:

{Addresses of Welcome}

The Swami gave a brief reply, expressing his appreciation of the kind welcome he had received. He took advantage of the opportunity to point out that the demonstration had not been made in honour of a great politician, or a great soldier, or a millionaire, but of a begging Sannyâsin, showing the tendency of the Hindu mind towards religion. He urged the necessity of keeping religion as the backbone of the national life if the nation were to live, and disclaimed any personal character for the welcome he had received, but insisted upon its being the recognition of a principle.

On the evening of the 16th the Swami gave the following public lecture in the Floral Hall:

What little work has been done by me has not been from any inherent power that resides in me, but from the cheers, the goodwill, the blessings that have followed my path in the West from this our very beloved, most sacred, dear Motherland. Some good has been done, no doubt, in the West, but specially to myself; for what before was the result of an emotional nature, perhaps, has gained the certainty of conviction and attained the power and strength of demonstration. Formerly I thought as every Hindu thinks, and as the Hon. President has just pointed out to you, that this is the Punya Bhumi, the land of Karma. Today I stand here and say, with the conviction of truth, that it is so. If there is any land on this earth that can lay claim to be the blessed Punya Bhumi, to be the land to which all souls on this earth must come to account for Karma, the land to which every soul that is wending its way Godward must come to attain its last home, the land where humanity has attained its highest towards gentleness, towards generosity, towards purity, towards calmness, above all, the land of introspection and of spirituality--it is India. Hence have started the founders of religions from the most ancient times, deluging the earth again and again with the pure and perennial waters of spiritual truth. Hence have proceeded the tidal waves of philosophy that have covered the earth, East or West, North or South, and hence again must start the wave which is going to spiritualise the material civilisation of the world. Here is the life-giving water with which must be quenched the burning fire of materialism which is burning the core of the hearts of millions in other lands. Believe me, my friends, this is going to be.

1 So much I have seen, and so far those of you who are
2 students of the history of races are already aware of this fact. The
3 debt which the world owes to our Motherland is immense. Taking
4 country with country, there is not one race on this earth to which
5 the world owes so much as to the patient Hindu, the mild Hindu.
6 "The mild Hindu" sometimes is used as an expression of reproach;
7 but if ever a reproach concealed a wonderful truth, it is in the term,
8 "the mild Hindu", who has always been the blessed child of God.
9 Civilisations have arisen in other parts of the world. In ancient
10 times and in modern times, great ideas have emanated from strong
11 and great races. In ancient and in modern times, wonderful ideas
12 have been carried forward from one race to another. In ancient and
13 in modern times, seeds of great truth and power have been cast
14 abroad by the advancing tides of national life; but mark you, my
15 friends, it has been always with the blast of war trumpets and with
16 the march of embattled cohorts. Each idea had to be soaked in a
17 deluge of blood. Each idea had to wade through the blood of
18 millions of our fellow-beings. Each word of power had to be
19 followed by the groans of millions, by the wails of orphans, by the
20 tears of widows. This, in the main, other nations have taught; but
21 India has for thousands of years peacefully existed. Here activity
22 prevailed when even Greece did not exist, when Rome was not
23 thought of, when the very fathers of the modern Europeans lived in
24 the forests and painted themselves blue. Even earlier, when history
25 has no record, and tradition dares not peer into the gloom of that
26 intense past, even from then until now, ideas after ideas have
27 marched out from her, but every word has been spoken with a
28 blessing behind it and peace before it. We, of all nations of the
29 world, have never been a conquering race, and that blessing is on
30 our head, and therefore we live.

31 There was a time when at the sound of the march of big
32 Greek battalions the earth trembled. Vanished from off the face of
33 the earth, with not even a tale left behind to tell, gone is that
34 ancient land of the Greeks. There was a time when the Roman
35 Eagle floated over everything worth having in this world;
36 everywhere Rome's power was felt and pressed on the head of
37 humanity; the earth trembled at the name of Rome. But the
38 Capitoline Hill is a mass of ruins, the spider weaves its web where
39 the Caesars ruled. There have been other nations equally glorious
40 that have come and gone, living a few hours of exultant and
41 exuberant dominance and of a wicked national life, and then
42 vanishing like ripples on the face of the waters. Thus have these
43 nations made their mark on the face of humanity. But we live, and if
44 Manu came back today he would not be bewildered, and would not
45 find himself in a foreign land. The same laws are here, the laws
46 adjusted and thought out through thousands and thousands of
47 years; customs, the outcome of the acumen of ages and the
48 experience of centuries, that seem to be eternal; and as the days go
49 by, as blow after blow of misfortune has been delivered upon them,
50 such blows seem to have served one purpose only, that of making
51 them stronger and more constant. And to find the centre of all this,
52 the heart form which the blood flows, the mainspring of the national
53 life, believe me when I say after my experience of the world, that it

1 is here.

2 To the other nations of the world, religion is one among the
3 many occupations of life. There is politics, there are the enjoyments
4 of social life, there is all that wealth can buy or power can bring,
5 there is all that the sense can enjoy; and among all these various
6 occupations of life and all this searching after something which can
7 give yet a little more whetting to the cloyed senses--among all
8 these, there is perhaps a little bit of religion. But here, in India,
9 religion is the one and the only occupation of life. How many of you
10 know that there has been a Sino-Japanese War? Very few of you, if
11 any. That there are tremendous political movements and socialistic
12 movements trying to transform Western society, how many of you
13 know? Very few indeed, if any. But that there was a Parliament of
14 Religions in America, and that there was a Hindu Sannyâsin sent
15 over there, I am astonished to find that even the coolie knows of it.
16 That shows the way the wind blows, where the national life is. I
17 used to read books written by globe-trotting travellers, especially
18 foreigners, who deplored the ignorance of the Eastern masses, but I
19 found out that it was partly true and at the same time partly untrue.
20 If you ask a ploughman in England, or America, or France, or
21 Germany to what party he belongs, he can tell you whether he
22 belongs to the Radicals or the Conservatives, and for whom he is
23 going to vote. In America he will say whether he is Republican or
24 Democrat, and he even knows something about the silver question.
25 But if you ask him about his religion, he will tell you that he goes to
26 church and belongs to a certain denomination. This is all he knows,
27 and he thinks it is sufficient.

28 Now, when we come to India, if you ask one of our
29 ploughmen, "Do you know anything about politics?" He will reply,
30 "What is that?" He does not understand the socialistic movements,
31 the relation between capital and labour, and all that; he has never
32 heard of such things in his life, he works hard and earns his bread.
33 But you ask, "What is your religion?" He replies, "Look here, my
34 friend, I have marked it on my forehead." He can give you a good
35 hint or two on questions of religion. That has been my experience.
36 That is our nation's life.

37 Individuals have each their own peculiarities, and each man
38 has his own method of growth, his own life marked out for him by
39 the infinite past life, by all his past Karma as we Hindus say. Into
40 this world he comes with all the past on him, the infinite past
41 ushers the present, and the way in which we use the present is
42 going to make the future. Thus everyone born into this world has a
43 bent, a direction towards which he must go, through which he must
44 live, and what is true of the individual is equally true of the race.
45 Each race, similarly, has a peculiar bent, each race has a peculiar
46 *raison d'être*, each race has a peculiar mission to fulfil in the life of
47 the world. Each race has to make its own result, to fulfil its own
48 mission. Political greatness or military power is never the mission
49 of our race; it never was, and , mark my words, it never will be. But
50 there has been the other mission given to us, which is to conserve,
51 to preserve, to accumulate, as it were, into a dynamo, all the
52 spiritual energy of the race, and that concentrated energy is to pour

1 forth in a deluge on the world whenever circumstances are
2 propitious. Let the Persian or the Greek, the Roman, the Arab, or
3 the Englishman march his battalions, conquer the world, and link
4 the different nations together, and the philosophy and spirituality of
5 India is ever ready to flow along the new-made channels into the
6 veins of the nations of the world. The Hindu's calm brain must pour
7 out its own quota to give to the sum total of human progress. India's
8 gift to the world is the light spiritual.

9 Thus, in the past, we read in history that whenever there
10 arose a great conquering nation uniting the different races of the
11 world, binding India with the other races, taking her out, as it were,
12 from her loneliness and from her aloofness from the rest of the
13 world into which she again and again cast herself, that whenever
14 such a state has been brought about, the result has been the
15 flooding of the world with Indian spiritual ideas. At the beginning of
16 this century, Schopenhauer, the great German philosopher,
17 studying from a not very clear translation of the Vedas made from
18 an old translation into Persian and thence by a young Frenchman
19 into Latin, says, "In the whole world there is no study so beneficial
20 and so elevating as that of the Upanishads. It has been the solace of
21 my life, it will be the solace of my death." This great German sage
22 foretold that "The world is about to see a revolution in thought
23 more extensive and more powerful than that which was witnessed
24 by the Renaissance of Greek Literature", and today his predictions
25 are coming to pass. Those who keep their eyes open, those who
26 understand the workings in the minds of different nations of the
27 West, those who are thinkers and study the different nations, will
28 find the immense change that has been produced in the tone, the
29 procedure, in the methods, and in the literature of the world by this
30 slow, never-ceasing permeation of Indian thought.

31 But there is another peculiarity, as I have already hinted to
32 you. We never preached our thoughts with fire and sword. If there
33 is one word in the English language to represent the gift of India to
34 the world, if there is one word in the English language to express
35 the effect which the literature of India produces upon mankind, it is
36 this one word, "fascination". It is the opposite of anything that takes
37 you suddenly; it throws on you, as it were, a charm imperceptibly.
38 To many, Indian thought, Indian manners, Indian customs, Indian
39 philosophy, Indian literature are repulsive at the first sight; but let
40 them persevere, let them read, let them become familiar with the
41 great principles underlying these ideas, and it is ninety-nine to one
42 that the charm will come over them, and fascination will be the
43 result. Slow and silent, as the gentle dew that falls in the morning,
44 unseen and unheard yet producing a most tremendous result, has
45 been the work of the calm, patient, all-suffering spiritual race upon
46 the world of thought.

47 Once more history is going to repeat itself. For today, under
48 the blasting light of modern science, when old and apparently
49 strong and invulnerable beliefs have been shattered to their very
50 foundations, when special claims laid to the allegiance of mankind
51 by different sects have been all blown into atoms and have vanished
52 into air, when the sledge-hammer blows of modern antiquarian

1 researches are pulverising like masses of porcelain all sorts of
2 antiquated orthodoxies, when religion in the West is only in the
3 hands of the ignorant and the knowing ones look down with scorn
4 upon anything belonging to religion, here comes to the fore the
5 philosophy of India, which displays the highest religious aspirations
6 of the Indian mind, where the grandest philosophical facts have
7 been the practical spirituality of the people. This naturally is
8 coming to the rescue, the idea of the oneness of all, the Infinite, the
9 idea of the Impersonal, the wonderful idea of the eternal soul of
10 man, of the unbroken continuity in the march of beings, and the
11 infinity of the universe. The old sects looked upon the world as a
12 little mud-puddle and thought that time began but the other day. It
13 was there in our old books, and only there that the grand idea of
14 the infinite range of time, space, and causation, and above all, the
15 infinite glory of the spirit of man governed all the search for
16 religion. When the modern tremendous theories of evolution and
17 conservation of energy and so forth are dealing death blows to all
18 sorts of crude theologies, what can hold any more the allegiance of
19 cultured humanity but the most wonderful, convincing, broadening,
20 and ennobling ideas that can be found only in that most marvellous
21 product of the soul of man, the wonderful voice of God, the
22 Vedanta?

23 At the same time, I must remark that what I mean by our
24 religion working upon the nations outside of India comprises only
25 the principles, the background, the foundation upon which that
26 religion is built. The detailed workings, the minute points which
27 have been worked out through centuries of social necessity, little
28 ratiocinations about manners and customs and social well-being, do
29 not rightly find a place in the category of religion. We know that in
30 our books a clear distinction is made between two sets of truths.
31 The one set is that which abides for ever, being built upon the
32 nature of man, the nature of the soul, the soul's relation to God, the
33 nature of God, perfection, and so on; there are also the principles of
34 cosmology, of the infinitude of creation, or more correctly
35 speaking--projection, the wonderful law of cyclical procession, and
36 so on--these are the eternal principles founded upon the universal
37 laws in nature. The other set comprises the minor laws which
38 guided the working of our everyday life. They belong more properly
39 to the Purânas, to the Smritis, and not to the Shrutis. These have
40 nothing to do with the other principles. Even in our own nation
41 these minor laws have been changing all the time. Customs of one
42 age, of one Yuga, have not been the customs of another, and as
43 Yuga comes after Yuga, they will still have to change. Great Rishis
44 will appear and lead us to customs and manners that are suited to
45 new environments.

46 The great principles underlying all this wonderful, infinite,
47 ennobling, expansive view of man and God and the world have been
48 produced in India. In India alone man has not stood up to fight for a
49 little tribal God, saying "My God is true and yours is not true; let us
50 have a good fight over it." It was only here that such ideas did not
51 occur as fighting for little gods. These great underlying principles,
52 being based upon the eternal nature of man, are as potent today for

1 working for the good of the human race as they were thousands of
2 years ago, and they will remain so, so long as this earth remains, so
3 long as the law of Karma remains, so long as we are born as
4 individuals and have to work out our own destiny by our individual
5 power.

6 And above all, what India has to give to the world is this. If
7 we watch the growth and development of religions in different
8 races, we shall always find this that each tribe at the beginning has
9 a god of its own. If the tribes are allied to each other, these gods
10 will have a generic name, as for example, all the Babylonian gods
11 had. When the Babylonians were divided into many races, they had
12 the generic name of Baal, just as the Jewish races had different
13 gods with the common name of Moloch; and at the same time you
14 will find that one of these tribes becomes superior to the rest, and
15 lays claim to its own king as the king over all. Therefrom it naturally
16 follows that it also wants to preserve its own god as the god of all
17 the races. Baal-Merodach, said the Babylonians, was the greatest
18 god; all the others were inferior. Moloch-Yahveh was the superior
19 over all other Molochs. And these questions had to be decided by
20 the fortunes of battle. The same struggle was here also. In India the
21 same competing gods had been struggling with each other for
22 supremacy, but the great good fortune of this country and of the
23 world was that there came out in the midst of the din and confusion
24 a voice which declared {Sanskrit}--"That which exists is One; sages
25 call It by various names." It is not that Shiva is superior to Vishnu,
26 not that Vishnu is everything and Shiva is nothing, but it is the same
27 one whom you call either Shiva, or Vishnu, or by a hundred other
28 names. The names are different, but it is the same one. The whole
29 history of India you may read in these few words. The whole history
30 has been a repetition in massive language, with tremendous power,
31 of that one central doctrine. It was repeated in the land till it had
32 entered into the blood of the nation, till it began to tingle with every
33 drop of blood that flowed in its veins, till it became one with the life,
34 part and parcel of the material of which it was composed; and thus
35 the land was transmuted into the most wonderful land of toleration,
36 giving the right to welcome the various religions as well as all sects
37 into the old mother-country.

1 And herein is the explanation of the most remarkable
2 phenomenon that is only witnessed here--all the various sects,
3 apparently hopelessly contradictory, yet living in such harmony. You
4 may be a dualist, and I may be a monist. You may believe that you
5 are the eternal servant of God, and I may declare that I am one with
6 God Himself; yet both of us are good Hindus. How is that possible?
7 Read then {Sanskrit}--"That which exists is One; sages call It by
8 various names." Above all others, my countrymen, this is the one
9 grand truth that we have to teach to the world. Even the most
10 educated people of other countries turn up their noses at an angle
11 of forty-five degrees and call our religion idolatry. I have seen that;
12 and they never stopped to think what a mass of superstition there
13 was in their own heads. It is still so everywhere, this tremendous
14 sectarianism, the low narrowness of the mind. The thing which a
15 man has is the only thing worth having; the only life worth living is
16 his little life of dollar-worship and mammon-worship; the only little
17 possession worth having is his own property, and nothing else. If he
18 can manufacture a little clay nonsense or invent a machine, that is
19 to be admired beyond the greatest possessions. That is the case
20 over the whole world in spite of education and learning. But
21 education has yet to be in the world, and civilisation--civilisation has
22 begun nowhere yet. Ninety-nine decimal nine per cent of the human
23 race are more or less savages even now. We may read of these
24 things in books, and we hear of toleration in religion and all that,
25 but very little of it is there yet in the world; take my experience for
26 that. Ninety-nine per cent do not even think of it. There is
27 tremendous religious persecution yet in every country in which I
28 have been, and the same old objections are raised against learning
29 anything new. The little toleration that is in the world, the little
30 sympathy that is yet in the world for religious thought, is practically
31 here in the land of the Aryas, and nowhere else. It is here that
32 Indians build temples for Mohammedans and Christians; nowhere
33 else. If you go to other countries and ask Mohammedans or people
34 of other religions to build a temple for you, see how they will help.
35 They will instead try to break down your temple and you too if they
36 can. The one great lesson, therefore, that the world wants most,
37 that the world has yet to learn from India, is the idea not only of
38 toleration, but of sympathy. Well has it been said in the *Mahimnah-*
39 *stotra*: "As the different rivers, taking their start from different
40 mountains, running straight or crooked, at last come unto the
41 ocean, so, O Shiva, the different paths which men take through
42 different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or
43 straight, all lead unto Thee." Though they may take various roads,
44 all are on the way. Some may run a little crooked, others may run
45 straight, but at last they will all come unto the Lord, the One. Then
46 and then alone, is your Bhakti of Shiva complete when you not only
47 see Him in the Linga, but you see Him everywhere. He is the sage,
48 he is the lover of Hari who sees Hari in everything and in everyone.
49 If you are a real lover of Shiva, you must see Him in everything and
50 in everyone. You must see that every worship is given unto Him
51 whatever may be the name or the form; that all knees bending
52 towards the Caaba, or kneeling in a Christian church, or in the
53 Buddhist temple are kneeling to Him whether they know it or not,

1 whether they are conscious of it or not; that in whatever name or
2 form they are offered, all these flowers are laid at His feet; for He is
3 the one Lord of all, the one Soul of all souls. He knows infinitely
4 better what this world wants than you or I. It is impossible that all
5 difference can cease; it must exist; without variation life must
6 cease. It is this clash, the differentiation of thought that makes for
7 light, for motion, for everything. Differentiation, infinitely
8 contradictory, must remain, but it is not necessary that we should
9 hate each other therefore; it is not necessary therefore that we
10 should fight each other.

11 Therefore we have again to learn the one central truth that
12 was preached only here in our Motherland, and that has to be
13 preached once more from India. Why? Because not only is it in our
14 books, but it runs through every phase of our national literature
15 and is in the national life. Here and here alone is it practised every
16 day, and any man whose eyes are open can see that it is practised
17 here and here alone. Thus we have to teach religion. There are
18 other and higher lessons that India can teach, but they are only for
19 the learned. The lessons of mildness, gentleness, forbearance,
20 toleration, sympathy, and brotherhood, everyone may learn,
21 whether man, woman, or child, learned or unlearned, without
22 respect of race, caste, or creed. "They call Thee by various names;
23 Thou art One."

VEDANTISM

The following address of welcome from the Hindus of Jaffna was presented to Swami Vivekananda:

{Address of Welcome}

An eloquent reply was given, and on the following evening the Swami lectured on *Vedantism*, a report of which is here appended:

The subject is very large and the time is short; a full analysis of the religion of the Hindus is impossible in one lecture. I will, therefore, present before you the salient points of our religion in as simple language as I can. The word Hindu, by which it is the fashion nowadays to style ourselves, has lost all its meaning, for this word merely meant those who lived on the other side of the river Indus (in Sanskrit, Sindhu). This name was murdered into Hindu by the ancient Persians, and all people living on the other side of the river Sindhu were called by them Hindus. Thus this word has come down to us; and during the Mohammedan rule we took up the word ourselves. There may not be any harm in using the word of course; but, as I have said, it has lost its significance, for you may mark that all the people who live on this side of the Indus in modern times do not follow the same religion as they did in ancient times. The word, therefore, covers not only Hindus proper, but Mohammedans, Christians, Jains, and other people who live in India. I therefore, would not use the word Hindu. What word should we use then? The other words which alone we can use either the Vaidikas, followers of the Vedas, or better still, the Vedantists, followers of the Vedanta. Most of the great religions of the world owe allegiance to certain books which they believe are the words of God or some other supernatural beings, and which are the basis of their religion. Now of all these books, according to the modern savants of the West, the oldest are the Vedas of the Hindus. A little understanding, therefore, is necessary about the Vedas.

This mass of writing called the Vedas is not the utterance of persons. Its date has never been fixed, can never be fixed, and, according to us, the Vedas are eternal. There is one salient point which I want you to remember, that all the other religions of the world claim their authority as being delivered by a Personal God or a number of personal beings, angels, or special messengers of God, unto certain persons; while the claim of the Hindus is that the Vedas do not owe their authority to anybody, they are themselves the authority, being eternal--the knowledge of God. They were never written, never created, they have existed throughout time; just as creation is infinite and eternal, without beginning and without end, so is the knowledge of God without beginning and without end. And this knowledge is what is meant by the Vedas (*Vid* to know). The mass of knowledge called the Vedanta was discovered by personages called Rishis, and the Rishi is defined as a Mantra-drashta, a seer of thought; not that the thought was his own. Whenever you hear that a certain passage of the Vedas came

1 from a certain Rishi, never think that he wrote it or created it out of
2 his mind; he was the seer of the thought which already existed; it
3 existed in the universe eternally. This sage was the discoverer; the
4 Rishis were spiritual discoverers.

5 This mass of writing, the Vedas, is divided principally into two
6 parts, the Karma Kânda and the Jnâna Kânda--the work portion and
7 the knowledge portion, the ceremonial and the spiritual. The work
8 portion consists of various sacrifices; most of them of late have
9 been given up as not practicable under present circumstances, but
10 others remain to the present day in some shape or other. The main
11 ideas of the Karma Kanda, which consists of the duties of man, the
12 duties of the student, of the householder, of the recluse, and the
13 various duties of the different stations of life, are followed more or
14 less down to the present day. But the spiritual portion of our
15 religion is in the second part, the Jnana Kanda, the Vedanta, the
16 end of the Vedas, the gist, the goal of the Vedas. The essence of the
17 knowledge of the Vedas was called by the name of Vedanta, which
18 comprises the Upanishads; and all the sects of India--Dualists,
19 Qualified-Monists, Monists, or the Shaivites, Vaishnavites, Shaktas,
20 Sauras, Ganapatyas, each one that dares to come within the fold of
21 Hinduism--must acknowledge the Upanishads of the Vedas. They
22 can have their own interpretations and can interpret them in their
23 own way, but they must obey the authority. That is why we want to
24 use the word Vedantist instead of Hindu. All the philosophers of
25 India who are orthodox have to acknowledge the authority of the
26 Vedanta; and all our present-day religions, however crude some of
27 them may appear to be, however inexplicable some of their
28 purposes may seem, one who understands them and studies them
29 can trace them back to the ideas of the Upanishads. So deeply have
30 these Upanishads sunk into our race that those of you who study
31 the symbology of the crudest religion of the Hindus will be
32 astonished to find sometimes figurative expressions of the
33 Upanishads--the Upanishads become symbolised after a time into
34 figures and so forth. Great spiritual and philosophical ideas in the
35 Upanishads are today with us, converted into household worship in
36 the form of symbols. Thus the various symbols now used by us, all
37 come from the Vedanta, because in the Vedanta they are used as
38 figures, and these ideas spread among the nation and permeated it
39 throughout until they became part of their everyday life as symbols.

40 Next to the Vedanta come the Smritis. These also are books
41 written by sages, but the authority of the Smritis is subordinate to
42 that of the Vedanta, because they stand in the same relation with us
43 as the scriptures of the other religions stand with regard to them.
44 We admit that the Smritis have been written by particular sages; in
45 that sense they are the same as the scriptures of other religions,
46 but these Smritis are not final authority. If there is anything in a
47 Smriti which contradicts the Vedanta, the Smriti is to be rejected--
48 its authority is gone. These Smritis, we see again, have varied from
49 time to time. We read that such and such Smriti should have
50 authority in the Satya Yuga, such and such in the Treta Yuga, some
51 in the Dwapara Yuga, and some in the Kali Yuga, and so on. As
52 essential conditions changed, as various circumstances came to

1 have their influence on the race, manners and customs had to be
2 changed, and these Smritis, as mainly regulating the manners and
3 customs of the nation, had also to be changed from time to time.
4 This is a point I specially ask you to remember. The principles of
5 religion that are in the Vedanta are unchangeable. Why? Because
6 they are all built upon the eternal principles that are in man and
7 nature; they can never change. Ideas about the soul, going to
8 heaven, and so on can never change; they were the same thousands
9 of years ago, they are the same today, they will be the same millions
10 of years hence. But those religious practices which are based
11 entirely upon our social position and correlation must change with
12 the changes in society. Such an order, therefore, would be good and
13 true at a certain period and not at another. We find accordingly that
14 a certain food is allowed at one time and not another, because the
15 food was suitable for that time; but climate and other things
16 changed, various other circumstances required to be met, so the
17 Smriti changed the food and other things. Thus it naturally follows
18 that if in modern times our society requires changes to be made,
19 they must be met, and sages will come and show us the way how to
20 meet them; but not one jot of the principles of our religion will be
21 changed; they will remain intact.

22 Then there are the Purânas. {Sanskrit}--which means, the
23 Puranas are of five characteristics--that which treats of history, of
24 cosmology, with various symbological illustration of philosophical
25 principles, and so forth. These were written to popularise the
26 religion of the Vedas. The language in which the Vedas are written
27 is very ancient, and even among scholars very few can trace the
28 date of these books. The Puranas were written in the language of
29 the people of that time, what we call modern Sanskrit. They were
30 then meant not for scholars, but for the ordinary people; and
31 ordinary people cannot understand philosophy. Such things were
32 given unto them in concrete form, by means of the lives of saints
33 and kings and great men and historical events that happened to the
34 race etc. The sages made use of these things to illustrate the
35 eternal principles of religion.

36 There are still other books, the Tantras. These are very much
37 like Puranas in some respects, and in some of them there is an
38 attempt to revive the old sacrificial ideas of the Karma Kanda.

39 All these books constitute the scriptures of the Hindus. When
40 there is such a mass of sacred books in a nation and a race which
41 has devoted the greatest part of its energies to the thought of
42 philosophy and spirituality (nobody knows for how many thousands
43 of years), it is quite natural that there should be so many sects;
44 indeed it is a wonder that there are not thousands more. These
45 sects differ very much from each other in certain points. We shall
46 not have time to understand the differences between these sects
47 and all the spiritual details about them; therefore I shall take up the
48 common grounds, the essential principles of all these sects which
49 every Hindu must believe.

50 The first is the question of creation, that this nature, Prakriti,
51 Maya is infinite, without beginning. It is not that this world was
52 created the other day, not that a God came and created the world

1 and since that time has been sleeping; for that cannot be. The
2 creative energy is still going on. God is eternally creating-is never
3 at rest. Remember the passage in the Gita where Krishna says, "If I
4 remain at rest for one moment, this universe will be destroyed." If
5 that creative energy which is working all around us, day and night,
6 stops for a second, the whole thing falls to the ground. There never
7 was a time when that energy did not work throughout the universe,
8 but there is the law of cycles, Pralaya. Our Sanskrit word for
9 creation, properly translated, should be *projection* and *not*
10 *creation*. For the word creation in the English language has
11 unhappily got that fearful, that most crude idea of something
12 coming out of nothing, creation out of non-entity, non-existence
13 becoming existence, which, of course, I would not insult you by
14 asking you to believe. Our word, therefore, is projection. The whole
15 of this nature exists, it becomes finer, subsides; and then after a
16 period of rest, as it were, the whole thing is again projected
17 forward, and the same combination, the same evolution, the same
18 manifestations appear and remain playing, as it were, for a certain
19 time, only again to break into pieces, to become finer and finer, until
20 the whole thing subsides, and again comes out. Thus it goes on
21 backwards and forwards with a wave-like motion throughout
22 eternity. Time, space, and causation are all within this nature. To
23 say, therefore, that it had a beginning is utter nonsense. No
24 question can occur as to its beginning or its end. Therefore
25 wherever in our scriptures the words beginning and end are used,
26 you must remember that it means the beginning and the end of one
27 particular cycle; no more than that.

28 What makes this creation? God. What do I mean by the use of
29 the English word God? Certainly not the word as ordinarily used in
30 English--a good deal of difference. There is no other suitable word
31 in English. I would rather confine myself to the Sanskrit word
32 Brahman. He is the general cause of all these manifestations. What
33 is this Brahman? He is eternal, eternally pure, eternally awake, the
34 almighty, the all-knowing, the all-merciful, the omnipresent, the
35 formless, the partless. He creates this universe. If he is always
36 creating and holding up this universe, two difficulties arise. We see
37 that there is partiality in the universe. One person is born happy,
38 and another unhappy; one is rich, and another is poor; this shows
39 partiality. Then there is cruelty also, for here the very condition of
40 life is death. One animal tears another to pieces, and every man
41 tries to get the better of his own brother. This competition, cruelty,
42 horror, and sighs rending hearts day and night is the state of things
43 in this world of ours. If this be the creation of a God, that God is
44 worse than cruel, worse than any devil that man ever imagined. Ay!
45 says the Vedanta, it is not the fault of God that this partiality exists,
46 that this competition exists. Who makes it? We ourselves. There is a
47 cloud shedding its rain on all fields alike. But it is only the field that
48 is well cultivated, which gets the advantage of the shower; another
49 field, which has not been tilled or taken care of cannot get that
50 advantage. It is not the fault of the cloud. The mercy of God is
51 eternal and unchangeable; it is we that make the differentiation.
52 But how can this difference of some being born happy and some
53 unhappy be explained? They do nothing to make out that difference!

1 Not in this life, but they did in their last birth and the difference is
2 explained by this action in the previous life.

3 We now come to the second principle on which we all agree,
4 not only all Hindus, but all Buddhists and all Jains. We all agree that
5 life is eternal. It is not that it has sprung out of nothing, for that
6 cannot be. Such a life would not be worth having. Everything that
7 has a beginning in time must end in time. If life began but
8 yesterday, it must end tomorrow, and annihilation is the result. Life
9 must have been existing. It does not now require much acumen to
10 see that, for all the sciences of modern times have been coming
11 round to our help, illustrating from the material world the
12 principles embodied in our scriptures. You know it already that
13 each one of us is the effect of the infinite past; the child is ushered
14 into the world not as something flashing from the hands of nature,
15 as poets delight so much to depict, but he has the burden of an
16 infinite past; for good or evil he comes to work out his own past
17 deeds. That makes the differentiation. This is the law of Karma.
18 Each one of us is the maker of his own fate. This law knocks on the
19 head at once all doctrines of predestination and fate and gives us
20 the only means of reconciliation between God and man. We, we,
21 and none else, are responsible for what we suffer. We are the
22 effects, and we are the causes. We are free therefore. If I am
23 unhappy, it has been of my own making, and that very thing shows
24 that I can be happy if I will. If I am impure, that is also of my own
25 making, and that very thing shows that I can be pure if I will. The
26 human will stands beyond all circumstance. Before it--the strong,
27 gigantic, infinite will and freedom in man--all the powers, even of
28 nature, must bow down, succumb, and become its servants. This is
29 the result of the law of Karma.

30 The next question, of course, naturally would be: What is the
31 soul? We cannot understand God in our scriptures without knowing
32 the soul. There have been attempts in India, and outside of India
33 too, to catch a glimpse of the beyond by studying external nature;
34 and we all know what an awful failure has been the result. Instead
35 of giving us a glimpse of the beyond, the more we study the
36 material world, the more we tend to become materialised. The more
37 we handle the material world, even the little spirituality which we
38 possessed before vanishes. Therefore that is not the way to
39 spirituality, to knowledge of the Highest; but it must come through
40 the heart, the human soul. The external workings do not teach us
41 anything about the beyond, about the Infinite, it is only the internal
42 that can do so. Through soul, therefore, the analysis of the human
43 soul alone, can we understand God. There are differences of
44 opinion as to the nature of the human soul among the various sects
45 in India, but there are certain points of agreement. We all agree
46 that souls are without beginning and without end, and immortal by
47 their very nature; also that all powers, blessing, purity,
48 omnipresence, omniscience are buried in each soul. That is a grand
49 idea we ought to remember. In every man and in every animal,
50 however weak or wicked, great or small, resides the same
51 omnipresent, omniscient soul. The difference is not in the soul, but
52 in the manifestation. Between me and the smallest animal, the

1 difference is only in manifestation, but as a principle he is the same
2 as I am, he is my brother, he has the same soul as I have. This is the
3 greatest principle that India has preached. The talk of the
4 brotherhood of man becomes in India the brotherhood of universal
5 life, of animals, and of all life down to the little ants--all these are
6 our bodies. Even as our scripture says, "Thus the sage, knowing
7 that the same Lord inhabits all bodies, will worship every body as
8 such." That is why in India there have been such merciful ideas
9 about the poor, about animals, about everybody, and everything
10 else. This is one of the common grounds about our ideas of the soul.

11 Naturally, we come to the idea of God. One thing more about
12 the soul. Those who study the English language are often deluded
13 by the words, soul and mind. Our Atman and soul are entirely
14 different things. What we call Manas, the mind, the Western people
15 call soul. The West never had the idea of soul until they got it
16 through Sanskrit philosophy, some twenty years ago. The body is
17 here, beyond that is the mind, yet the mind is not the Atman; it is
18 the fine body, the Sukshma Sharira, made of fine particles, which
19 goes from birth to death, and so on; but behind the mind is the
20 Atman, the soul, the Self of man. It cannot be translated by the
21 word soul or mind, so we have to use the word Atman, or, as
22 Western philosophers have designated it, by the word Self.
23 Whatever word you use, you must keep it clear in your mind that
24 the Atman is separate from the mind, as well as from the body, and
25 that this Atman goes through birth and death, accompanied by the
26 mind, the Sukshma Sharira. And when the time comes that it has
27 attained to all knowledge and manifested itself to perfection, then
28 this going from birth to death ceases for it. Then it is at liberty
29 either to keep that mind, the Sukshma Sharira, or to let it go for
30 ever, and remain independent and free throughout all eternity. The
31 goal of the soul is freedom. That is one peculiarity of our religion.
32 We also have heavens and hells too; but these are not infinite, for in
33 the very nature of things they cannot be. If there were any heavens,
34 they would be only repetitions of this world of ours on a bigger
35 scale, with a little more happiness and a little more enjoyment, but
36 that is all the worse for the soul. There are many of these heavens.
37 Persons who do good works here with the thought of rewards, when
38 they die, are born again as gods in one of these heavens, as Indra
39 and others. These gods are the names of certain states. They also
40 had been men, and by good work they have become gods; and those
41 different names that you read of, such as Indra and so on, are not
42 the names of the same person. There will be thousands of Indras.
43 Nahusha was a great king, and when he died, he became Indra. It is
44 a position; one soul becomes high and takes the Indra position and
45 remains in it only a certain time; he then dies and is born again as
46 man. But the human body is the highest of all. Some of the gods
47 may try to go higher and give up all ideas of enjoyment in heavens;
48 but, as in this world, wealth and position and enjoyment delude the
49 vast majority, so do most of the gods become deluded also, and
50 after working out their good Karma, they fall down and become
51 human beings again. This earth, therefore, is the Karma Bhumi; it is
52 this earth from which we attain to liberation. So even these heavens
53 are not worth attaining to.

1 What is then worth having? Mukti, freedom. Even in the
2 highest of heavens, says our scripture, you are a slave; what
3 matters it if you are a king for twenty thousand years? So long as
4 you have a body, so long as you are a slave to happiness, so long as
5 time works on you, space works on you, you are a slave. The idea,
6 therefore, is to be free of external and internal nature. Nature must
7 fall at your feet, and you must trample on it and be free and
8 glorious by going beyond. No more is there life; therefore no more
9 is there death. No more enjoyment; therefore no more misery. It is
10 bliss unspeakable, indestructible, beyond everything. What we call
11 happiness and good here are but particles of that eternal Bliss. And
12 this eternal Bliss is our goal.

13 The soul is also sexless; we cannot say of the Atman that it is
14 a man or a woman. Sex belongs to the body alone. All such ideas,
15 therefore, as man or woman, are a delusion when spoken with
16 regard to the Self, and are only proper when spoken of the body. So
17 are the ideas of age. It never ages; the ancient One is always the
18 same. How did It come down to earth? There is but one answer to
19 that in our scriptures. Ignorance is the cause of all this bondage. It
20 is through ignorance that we have become bound; knowledge will
21 cure it by taking us to the other side. How will that knowledge
22 come? Through love, Bhakti; by the worship of God, by loving all
23 beings as the temples of God. He resides within them. Thus, with
24 that intense love will come knowledge, and ignorance will
25 disappear, the bonds will break, and the soul will be free.

26 There are two ideas of God in our scriptures--the one, the
27 personal; and the other, the impersonal. The idea of the Personal
28 God is that He is the omnipresent creator, preserver, and destroyer
29 of everything, the eternal Father and Mother of the universe, but
30 One who is eternally separate from us and from all souls; and
31 liberation consists in coming near to Him and living in Him. Then
32 there is the other idea of the Impersonal, where all those adjectives
33 are taken away as superfluous, as illogical and there remains an
34 impersonal, omnipresent Being who cannot be called a knowing
35 being, because knowledge only belongs to the human mind. He
36 cannot be called a thinking being, because that is a process of the
37 weak only. He cannot be called a reasoning being, because
38 reasoning is a sign of weakness. He cannot be called a creating
39 being, because none creates except in bondage. What bondage has
40 He? None works except for the fulfilment of desires; what desires
41 has He? None works except it be to supply some wants; what wants
42 has He? In the Vedas it is not the word "He" that is used, but "It",
43 for "He" would make an invidious distinction, as if God were a man.
44 "It", the impersonal, is used, and this impersonal "It" is preached.
45 This system is called the Advaita.

46 And what are our relations with this Impersonal Being?--that
47 we are He. We and He are one. Every one is but a manifestation of
48 that Impersonal, the basis of all being, and misery consists in
49 thinking of ourselves as different from this Infinite, Impersonal
50 Being; and liberation consists in knowing our unity with this
51 wonderful Impersonality. These, in short, are the two ideas of God
52 that we find in our scriptures.

1 Some remarks ought to be made here. It is only through the
2 idea of the Impersonal God that you can have any system of ethics.
3 In every nation the truth has been preached from the most ancient
4 times--love your fellow-beings as yourselves--I mean, love human
5 beings as yourselves. In India it has been preached, "love all beings
6 as yourselves"; we make no distinction between men and animals.
7 But no reason was forthcoming, no one knew why it would be good
8 to love other beings as ourselves. And the reason, why, is there in
9 the idea of the Impersonal God; you understand it when you learn
10 that the whole world is one--the oneness of the universe--the
11 solidarity of all life--that in hurting any one I am hurting myself, in
12 loving any one I am loving myself. Hence we understand why it is
13 that we ought not to hurt others. The reason for ethics, therefore,
14 can only be had from this ideal of the Impersonal God. Then there is
15 the question of the position of the Personal God in it. I understand
16 the wonderful flow of love that comes from the idea of a Personal
17 God, I thoroughly appreciate the power and potency of Bhakti on
18 men to suit the needs of different times. What we now want in our
19 country, however, is not so much of weeping, but a little strength.
20 What a mine of strength is in this Impersonal God, when all
21 superstitions have been thrown overboard, and man stands on his
22 feet with the knowledge--I am the Impersonal Being of the world!
23 What can make me afraid? I care not even for nature's laws. Death
24 is a joke to me. Man stands on the glory of his own soul, the infinite,
25 the eternal, the deathless--that soul which no instruments can
26 pierce, which no air can dry, nor fire burn, no water melt, the
27 infinite, the birthless, the deathless, without beginning and without
28 end, before whose magnitude the suns and moons and all their
29 systems appear like drops in the ocean, before whose glory space
30 melts away into nothingness and time vanishes into non-existence.
31 This glorious soul we must believe in. Out of that will come power.
32 Whatever you think, that you will be. If you think yourselves weak,
33 weak you will be; if you think yourselves strong, strong you will be;
34 if you think yourselves impure, impure you will be; if you think
35 yourselves pure, pure you will be. This teaches us not to think
36 ourselves as weak, but as strong, omnipotent, omniscient. No
37 matter that I have not expressed it yet, it is in me. All knowledge is
38 in me, all power, all purity, and all freedom. Why cannot I express
39 this knowledge? Because I do not believe in it. Let me believe in it,
40 and it must and will come out. This is what the idea of the
41 Impersonal teaches. Make your children strong from their very
42 childhood; teach them not weakness, nor forms, but make them
43 strong; let them stand on their feet--bold, all-conquering, all-
44 suffering; and first of all, let them learn of the glory of the soul.
45 That you get alone in the Vedanta--and there alone. It has ideas of
46 love and worship and other things which we have in other religions,
47 and more besides; but this idea of the soul is the life-giving thought,
48 the most wonderful. There and there alone is the great thought that
49 is going to revolutionise the world and reconcile the knowledge of
50 the material world with religion.

51 Thus I have tried to bring before you the salient points of our
52 religion--the principles. I have only to say a few words about the
53 practice and the application. As we have seen, under the

1 circumstances existing in India, naturally many sects must appear.
2 As a fact, we find that there are so many sects in India, and at the
3 same time we know this mysterious fact that these sects do not
4 quarrel with each other. The Shaivite does not say that every
5 Vaishnavite is going to be damned, nor the Vaishnavite that every
6 Shaivite will be damned. The Shaivite says, this is my path, and you
7 have yours; at the end we must come together. They all know that
8 in India. This is the theory of Ishta. It has been recognised in the
9 most ancient times that there are various forms of worshipping
10 God. It is also recognised that different natures require different
11 methods. Your method of coming to God may not be my method,
12 possibly it might hurt me. Such an idea as that there is but one way
13 for everybody is injurious, meaningless, and entirely to be avoided.
14 Woe unto the world when everyone is of the same religious opinion
15 and takes to the same path. Then all religions and all thought will
16 be destroyed. Variety is the very soul of life. When it dies out
17 entirely, creation will die. When this variation in thought is kept up,
18 we must exist; and we need not quarrel because of that variety.
19 Your way is very good for you, but not for me. My way is good for
20 me, but not for you. My way is called in Sanskrit, my "Ishta". Mind
21 you, we have no quarrel with any religion in the world. We have
22 each our Ishta. But when we see men coming and saying, "This is
23 the only way", and trying to force it on us in India, we have a word
24 to say; we laugh at them. For such people who want to destroy their
25 brothers because they seem to follow a different path towards God--
26 for them to talk of love is absurd. Their love does not count for
27 much. How can they preach of love who cannot bear another man
28 to follow a different path from their own? If that is love, what is
29 hatred? We have no quarrel with any religion in the world, whether
30 it teaches men to worship Christ, Buddha, or Mohammed, or any
31 other prophet. "Welcome, my brother," the Hindu says, "I am going
32 to help you; but you must allow me to follow my way too. That is my
33 Ishta. Your way is very good, no doubt; but it may be dangerous for
34 me. My own experience tells me what food is good for me, and no
35 army of doctors can tell me that. So I know from my own
36 experience what path is the best for me." That is the goal, the Ishta,
37 and, therefore, we say that if a temple, or a symbol, or an image
38 helps you to realise the Divinity within, you are welcome to it. Have
39 two hundred images if you like. If certain forms and formularies
40 help you to realise the Divine, God speed you; have, by all means,
41 whatever forms, and whatever temples, and whatever ceremonies
42 you want to bring you nearer to God. But do not quarrel about
43 them; the moment you quarrel, you are not going Godward, you are
44 going backward, towards the brutes.

45 These are a few ideas in our religion. It is one of inclusion of
46 every one, exclusion of none. Though our castes and our institutions
47 are apparently linked with our religion, they are not so. These
48 institutions have been necessary to protect us as a nation, and
49 when this necessity for self-preservation will no more exist, they
50 will die a natural death. But the older I grow, the better I seem to
51 think of these time-honoured institutions of India. There was a time
52 when I used to think that many of them were useless and worthless;
53 but the older I grow, the more I seem to feel a diffidence in cursing

1 any one of them, for each of them is the embodiment of the
2 experience of centuries. A child of but yesterday, destined to die the
3 day after tomorrow, comes to me and asks me to change all my
4 plans; and if I hear the advice of that baby and change all my
5 surroundings according to his ideas, I myself should be a fool, and
6 no one else. Much of the advice that is coming to us from different
7 countries is similar to this. Tell these wiseacres: "I will hear you
8 when you have made a stable society yourselves. You cannot hold
9 on to one idea for two days, you quarrel and fail; you are born like
10 moths in the spring and die like them in five minutes. You come up
11 like bubbles and burst like bubbles too. First form a stable society
12 like ours. First make laws and institutions that remain undiminished
13 in their power through scores of centuries. Then will be the time to
14 talk on the subject with you, but till then, my friend, you are only a
15 giddy child."

16 I have finished what I had to say about our religion. I will end
17 by reminding you of the one pressing necessity of the day. Praise be
18 to Vyâsa, the great author of the Mahabharata, that in this Kali
19 Yuga there is one great work. The Tapas and the other hard Yogas
20 that were practised in other Yugas do not work now. What is needed
21 in this Yuga is giving, helping others. What is meant by Dâna? The
22 highest of gifts is the giving of spiritual knowledge, the next is the
23 giving of secular knowledge, and the next is the saving of life, the
24 last is giving food and drink. He who gives spiritual knowledge,
25 saves the soul from many and many a birth. He who gives secular
26 knowledge opens the eyes of human beings towards spiritual
27 knowledge, and far below these rank all other gifts, even the saving
28 of life. Therefore it is necessary that you learn this and note that all
29 other kinds of work are of much less value than that of imparting
30 spiritual knowledge. The highest and greatest help is that given in
31 the dissemination of spiritual knowledge. There is an eternal
32 fountain of spirituality in our scriptures, and nowhere on earth,
33 except in this land of renunciation, do we find such noble examples
34 of practical spirituality. I have had a little experience of the world.
35 Believe me, there is much talking in other lands; but the practical
36 man of religion, who has carried it into his life, is here and here
37 alone. Talking is not religion; parrots may talk, machines may talk
38 nowadays. But show me the life of renunciation, of spirituality, of
39 all-suffering, of love infinite. This kind of life indicates a spiritual
40 man. With such ideas and such noble practical examples in our
41 country, it would be a great pity if the treasures in the brains and
42 hearts of all these great Yogis were not brought out to become the
43 common property of every one, rich and poor, high and low; not
44 only in India, but they must be thrown broadcast all over the world.
45 This is one of our greatest duties, and you will find that the more
46 you work to help others, the more you help yourselves. The one
47 vital duty incumbent on you, if you really love your religion, if you
48 really love your country, is that you must struggle hard to be up and
49 doing, with this one great idea of bringing out the treasures from
50 your closed books and delivering them over to their rightful heirs.

51 And above all, one thing is necessary. Ay, for ages we have
52 been saturated with awful jealousy; we are always getting jealous

1 of each other. Why has this man a little precedence, and not I? Even
2 in the worship of God we want precedence, to such a state of
3 slavery have we come. This is to be avoided. If there is any crying
4 sin in India at this time it is this slavery. Every one wants to
5 command, and no one wants to obey; and this is owing to the
6 absence of that wonderful Brahmacharya system of yore. First,
7 learn to obey. The command will come by itself. Always first learn to
8 be a servant and then you will be fit to be a master. Avoid this
9 jealousy, and you will do great works that have yet to be done. Our
10 ancestors did most wonderful works, and we look back upon their
11 work with veneration and pride. But we also are going to do great
12 deeds, and let others look back with blessings and pride upon us as
13 their ancestors. With the blessings of the Lord every one here will
14 yet do such deeds that will eclipse those of our ancestors, great and
15 glorious as they may have been.

1
2 REPLY TO THE ADDRESS OF WELCOME
3 AT PAMBAN

4
5 {Address of Welcome}

6
7 The Raja added to this a brief personal welcome, which was
8 remarkable for its depth of feeling, and then the Swami replied to
9 the following effect:

10
11 Our sacred motherland is a land of religion and philosophy--
12 the birthplace of spiritual giants--the land of renunciation, where
13 and where alone, from the most ancient to the most modern times,
14 there has been the highest ideal of life open to man.

15 I have been in the countries of the West--have travelled
16 through many lands of many races; and each race and each nation
17 appears to me to have a particular ideal--a prominent ideal running
18 through its whole life; and this ideal is the backbone of the national
19 life. Not politics nor military power, nor commercial supremacy nor
20 mechanical genius furnishes India with that backbone, but religion;
21 and religion alone is all that we have and mean to have. Spirituality
22 has been always in India.

23 Great indeed are the manifestations of muscular power, and
24 marvellous the manifestations of intellect expressing themselves
25 through machines by the appliances of science; yet none of these is
26 more potent than the influence which spirit exerts upon the world.

27 The history of our race shows that India has always been
28 most active. Today we are taught by men who ought to know better
29 that the Hindu is mild and passive; and this has become a sort of
30 proverb with the people of other lands. I discard the idea that India
31 was ever passive. Nowhere has activity been more pronounced than
32 in this blessed land of ours, and the great proof of this activity is
33 that our most ancient and magnanimous race still lives, and at
34 every decade in its glorious career seems to take on fresh youth--
35 undying and imperishable. This activity manifests here in religion.
36 But it is a peculiar fact in human nature that it judges others
37 according to its own standard of activity. Take, for instance, a
38 shoemaker. He understands only shoemaking and thinks there is
39 nothing in this life except the manufacturing of shoes. A bricklayer
40 understands nothing but bricklaying and proves this alone in his life
41 from day to day. And there is another reason which explains this.
42 When the vibrations of light are very intense, we do not see them,
43 because we are so constituted that we cannot go beyond our own
44 plane of vision. But the Yogi with his spiritual introspection is able
45 to see through the materialistic veil of the vulgar crowds.

46 The eyes of the whole world are now turned towards this land
47 of India for spiritual food; and India has to provide it for all the
48 races. Here alone is the best ideal for mankind; and Western

1 scholars are now striving to understand this ideal which is
2 enshrined in our Sanskrit literature and philosophy, and which has
3 been the characteristic of India all through the ages.

4 Since the dawn of history, no missionary went out of India to
5 propagate the Hindu doctrines and dogmas; but now a wonderful
6 change is coming over us. Shri Bhagavan Krishna says, "Whenever
7 virtue subsides and immorality prevails, then I come again and
8 again to help the world." Religious researches disclose to us the
9 fact that there is not a country possessing a good ethical code but
10 has borrowed something of it from us, and there is not one religion
11 possessing good ideas of the immortality of the soul but has derived
12 it directly or indirectly from us.

13 There never was a time in the world's history when there was
14 so much robbery, and high-handedness, and tyranny of the strong
15 over the weak, as at this latter end of the nineteenth century.
16 Everybody should know that there is no salvation except through
17 the conquering of desires, and that no man is free who is subject to
18 the bondage of matter. This great truth all nations are slowly
19 coming to understand and appreciate. As soon as the disciple is in a
20 position to grasp this truth, the words of the Guru come to his help.
21 The Lord sends help to His own children in His infinite mercy which
22 never ceaseth and is ever flowing in all creeds. Our Lord is the Lord
23 of all religions. This idea belongs to India alone; and I challenge any
24 one of you to find it in any other scripture of the world.

25 We Hindus have now been placed, under God's providence, in
26 a very critical and responsible position. The nations of the West are
27 coming to us for spiritual help. A great moral obligation rests on the
28 sons of India to fully equip themselves for the work of enlightening
29 the world on the problems of human existence. One thing we may
30 note, that whereas you will find the good and great men of other
31 countries take pride in tracing back their descent to some robber-
32 baron who lived in a mountain fortress and emerged from time to
33 time to plunder passing wayfarers, we Hindus, on the other hand,
34 take pride in being the descendants of Rishis and sages who lived
35 on roots and fruits in mountains and caves, meditating on the
36 Supreme. We may be degraded and degenerated now; but however
37 degraded and degenerated we may be, we can become great if only
38 we begin to work in right earnest on behalf of our religion.

39 Accept my hearty thanks for the kind and cordial reception
40 you have given me. It is impossible for me to express my gratitude
41 to H.H. the Raja of Ramnad for his love towards me. If any good
42 work has been done by me and through me, India owes much to this
43 good man, for it was he who conceived the idea of my going to
44 Chicago, and it was he who put that idea into my head and
45 persistently urged me on to accomplish it. Standing beside me, he
46 with all his old enthusiasm is still expecting me to do more and
47 more work. I wish there were half a dozen more such Rajas to take
48 interest in our dear motherland and work for her amelioration in
49 the spiritual line.

ADDRESS AT THE RAMESWARAM TEMPLE ON REAL WORSHIP

A visit was subsequently paid to the Rameswaram Temple, where the Swami was asked to address a few words to the people who had assembled there. This he did in the following terms:

It is in love that religion exists and not in ceremony, in the pure and sincere love in the heart. Unless a man is pure in body and mind, his coming into a temple and worshipping Shiva is useless. The prayers of those that are pure in mind and body will be answered by Shiva, and those that are impure and yet try to teach religion to others will fail in the end. External worship is only a symbol of internal worship; but internal worship and purity are the real things. Without them, external worship would be of no avail. Therefore you must all try to remember this.

People have become so degraded in this Kali Yuga that they think they can do anything, and then they can go to a holy place, and their sins will be forgiven. If a man goes with an impure mind into a temple, he adds to the sins that he had already, and goes home a worse man than when he left it. Tirtha (place of pilgrimage) is a place which is full of holy things and holy men. But if holy people live in a certain place, and if there is no temple there, even that is a Tirtha. If unholy people live in a place where there may be a hundred temples, the Tirtha has vanished from that place. And it is most difficult to live in a Tirtha; for if sin is committed in any ordinary place it can easily be removed, but sin committed in a Tirtha cannot be removed. This is the gist of all worship--to be pure and to do good to others.

He who sees Shiva in the poor, in the weak, and in the diseased, really worships Shiva; and if he sees Shiva only in the image, his worship is but preliminary. He who has served and helped one poor man seeing Shiva in him, without thinking of his caste, or creed, or race, or anything, with him Shiva is more pleased than with the man who sees Him only in temples.

A rich man had a garden and two gardeners. One of these gardeners was very lazy and did not work; but when the owner came to the garden, the lazy man would get up and fold his arms and say, "How beautiful is the face of my master", and dance before him. The other gardener would not talk much, but would work hard, and produce all sorts of fruits and vegetables which he would carry on his head to his master who lived a long way off. Of these two gardeners, which would be the more beloved of his master? Shiva is that master, and this world is His garden, and there are two sorts of gardeners here; the one who is lazy, hypocritical, and does nothing, only talking about Shiva's beautiful eyes and nose and other features; and the other, who is taking care of Shiva's children, all those that are poor and weak, all animals, and all His creation. Which of these would be the more beloved of Shiva? Certainly he

1 that serves His children. He who wants to serve the father must
2 serve the children first. He who wants to serve Shiva must serve
3 His children--must serve all creatures in this world first. It is said in
4 the Shastra that those who serve the servants of God are His
5 greatest servants. So you will bear this in mind.

6 Let me tell you again that you must be pure and help any one
7 who comes to you, as much as lies in your power. And this is good
8 Karma. By the power of this, the heart becomes pure (Chitta-
9 shuddhi), and then Shiva who is residing in every one will become
10 manifest. He is always in the heart of every one. If there is dirt and
11 dust on a mirror, we cannot see our image. So ignorance and
12 wickedness are the dirt and dust that are on the mirror of our
13 hearts. Selfishness is the chief sin, thinking of ourselves first. He
14 who thinks, "I will eat first, I will have more money than others, and
15 I will possess everything", he who thinks, "I will get to heaven
16 before others, I will get Mukti before others" is the selfish man. The
17 unselfish man says, "I will be last, I do not care to go to heaven, I
18 will even go to hell if by doing so I can help my brothers." This
19 unselfishness is the test of religion. He who has more of this
20 unselfishness is more spiritual and nearer to Shiva. Whether he is
21 learned or ignorant, he is nearer to Shiva than anybody else,
22 whether he knows it or not. And if a man is selfish, even though he
23 has visited all the temples, seen all the places of pilgrimage, and
24 painted himself like a leopard, he is still further off from Shiva.

1
2 **REPLY TO THE ADDRESS OF WELCOME**
3 **AT RAMNAD**

4
5 At Ramnad the following address was presented to Swami
6 Vivekananda by the Raja:

7 {Address of Welcome}

8 The Swami's reply follows *in extenso*:

9
10 The longest night seems to be passing away, the sorest
11 trouble seems to be coming to an end at last, the seeming corpse
12 appears to be awaking and a voice is coming to us--away back
13 where history and even tradition fails to peep into the gloom of the
14 past, coming down from there, reflected as it were from peak to
15 peak of the infinite Himalaya of knowledge, and of love, and of
16 work, India, this motherland of ours--a voice is coming unto us,
17 gentle, firm, and yet unmistakable in its utterances, and is gaining
18 volume as days pass by, and behold, the sleeper is awakening! Like
19 a breeze from the Himalayas, it is bringing life into the almost dead
20 bones and muscles, the lethargy is passing away, and only the blind
21 cannot see, or the perverted will not see, that she is awakening,
22 this motherland of ours, from her deep long sleep. None can resist
23 her any more; never is she going to sleep any more; no outward
24 powers can hold her back any more; for the infinite giant is rising to
25 her feet.

26 Your Highness and gentlemen of Ramnad, accept my heartfelt
27 thanks for the cordiality and kindness with which you have received
28 me. I feel that you are cordial and kind, for heart speaks unto heart
29 better than any language of the mouth; spirit speaks unto spirit in
30 silence, and yet in most unmistakable language, and I feel it in my
31 heart of hearts. Your Highness of Ramnad, if there has been any
32 work done by my humble self in the cause of our religion and our
33 motherland in the Western countries, if any little work has been
34 done in rousing the sympathies of our own people by drawing their
35 attention to the inestimable jewels that, they know not, are lying
36 deep buried about their own home--if, instead of dying of thirst and
37 drinking dirty ditch water elsewhere out of the blindness of
38 ignorance, they are being called to go and drink from the eternal
39 fountain which is flowing perennially by their own home--if anything
40 has been done to rouse our people towards action, to make them
41 understand that in everything, religion and religion alone is the life
42 of India, and when that goes India will die, in spite of politics, in
43 spite of social reforms, in spite of Kubera's wealth poured upon the
44 head of every one of her children--if anything has been done
45 towards this end, India and every country where any work has been
46 done owe much of it to you, Raja of Ramnad. For it was you who
47 gave me the idea first, and it was you who persistently urged me on
48 towards the work. You, as it were, intuitively understood what was
49 going to be, and took me by the hand, helped me all along, and have

1 never ceased to encourage me. Well is it, therefore, that you should
2 be the first to rejoice at my success, and meet it is that I should first
3 land in your territory on my return to India.

4 Great works are to be done, wonderful powers have to be
5 worked out, we have to teach other nations many things, as has
6 been said already by your Highness. This is the motherland of
7 philosophy, of spirituality, and of ethics, of sweetness, gentleness,
8 and love. These still exist, and my experience of the world leads me
9 to stand on firm ground and make the bold statement that India is
10 still the first and foremost of all the nations of the world in these
11 respects. Look at this little phenomenon. There have been immense
12 political changes within the last four or five years. Gigantic
13 organisations undertaking to subvert the whole of existing
14 institutions in different countries and meeting with a certain
15 amount of success have been working all over the Western world.
16 Ask our people if they have heard anything about them. They have
17 heard not a word about them. But that there was a Parliament of
18 Religions in Chicago, and that there was a Sannyasin sent over
19 from India to that Parliament, and that he was very well received
20 and since that time has been working in the West, the poorest
21 beggar has known. I have heard it said that our masses are dense,
22 that they do not want any education, and that they do not care for
23 any information. I had at one time a foolish leaning towards that
24 opinion myself, but I find experience is a far more glorious teacher
25 than any amount of speculation, or any amount of books written by
26 globe-trotters and hasty observers. This experience teaches me that
27 they are not dense, that they are not slow, that they are as eager
28 and thirsty for information as any race under the sun; but then each
29 nation has its own part to play, and naturally, each nation has its
30 own peculiarity and individuality with which it is born. Each
31 represents, as it were, one peculiar note in this harmony of nations,
32 and this is its very life, its vitality. In it is the backbone, the
33 foundation, and the bed-rock of the national life, and here in this
34 blessed land, the foundation, the backbone, the life-centre is
35 religion and religion alone. Let others talk of politics, of the glory of
36 acquisition of immense wealth poured in by trade, of the power and
37 spread of commercialism, of the glorious fountain of physical
38 liberty; but these the Hindu mind does not understand and does not
39 want to understand. Touch him on spirituality, on religion, on God,
40 on the soul, on the Infinite, on spiritual freedom, and I assure you,
41 the lowest peasant in India is better informed on these subjects
42 than many a so-called philosopher in other lands. I have said,
43 gentlemen, that we have yet something to teach to the world. This
44 is the very reason, the *raison d'être*, that this nation has lived on, in
45 spite of hundreds of years of persecution, in spite of nearly a
46 thousand years of foreign rule and foreign oppression. This nation
47 still lives; the *raison d'être* is it still holds to God, to the treasure-
48 house of religion and spirituality.

49 In this land are, still, religion and spirituality, the fountains
50 which will have to overflow and flood the world to bring in new life
51 and new vitality to the Western and other nations, which are now
52 almost borne down, half-killed, and degraded by political ambitions

1 and social scheming. From out of many voices, consonant and
2 dissentient, from out of the medley of sounds filling the Indian
3 atmosphere, rises up supreme, striking, and full, one note, and that
4 is renunciation. Give up! That is the watchword of the Indian
5 religions. This world is a delusion of two days. The present life is of
6 five minutes. Beyond is the Infinite, beyond this world of delusion;
7 let us seek that. This continent is illumined with brave and gigantic
8 minds and intelligences which even think of this so-called infinite
9 universe as only a mud-puddle; beyond and still beyond they go.
10 Time, even infinite time, is to them but non-existence. Beyond and
11 beyond time they go. Space is nothing to them; beyond that they
12 want to go, and this going beyond the phenomenal is the very soul
13 of religion. The characteristic of my nation is this
14 transcendentalism, this struggle to go beyond, this daring to tear
15 the veil off the face of nature and have at any risk, at any price, a
16 glimpse of the beyond. That is our ideal, but of course all the people
17 in a country cannot give up entirely. Do you want to enthuse them,
18 then here is the way to do so. Your talks of politics, of social
19 regeneration, your talks of money-making and commercialism--all
20 these will roll off like water from a duck's back. This spirituality,
21 then, is what you have to teach the world. Have we to learn
22 anything else, have we to learn anything from the world? We have,
23 perhaps, to gain a little in material knowledge, in the power of
24 organisation, in the ability to handle powers, organising powers, in
25 bringing the best results out of the smallest of causes. This perhaps
26 to a certain extent we may learn from the West. But if any one
27 preaches in India the ideal of eating and drinking and making
28 merry, if any one wants to apotheosise the material world into a
29 God, that man is a liar; he has no place in this holy land, the Indian
30 mind does not want to listen to him. Ay, in spite of the sparkle and
31 glitter of Western civilisation, in spite of all its polish and its
32 marvellous manifestation of power, standing upon this platform, I
33 tell them to their face that it is all vain. It is vanity of vanities. God
34 alone lives. The soul alone lives. Spirituality alone lives. Hold onto
35 that.

36 Yet, perhaps, some sort of materialism, toned down to our
37 own requirements, would be a blessing to many of our brothers who
38 are not yet ripe for the highest truths. This is the mistake made in
39 every country and in every society, and it is a greatly regrettable
40 thing that in India, where it was always understood, the same
41 mistake of forcing the highest truths on people who are not ready
42 for them has been made of late. My method need not be yours. The
43 Sannyasin, as you all know, is the ideal of the Hindu's life, and
44 every one by our Shastras is compelled to give up. Every Hindu who
45 has tasted the fruits of this world must give up in the latter part of
46 his life, and he who does not is not a Hindu and has no more right
47 to call himself a Hindu. We know that this is the ideal--to give up
48 after seeing and experiencing the vanity of things. Having found out
49 that the heart of the material world is a mere hollow, containing
50 only ashes, give it up and go back. The mind is circling forward, as
51 it were, towards the senses, and that mind has to circle backwards;
52 the Pravritti has to stop and the Nivritti has to begin. That is the
53 ideal. But that ideal can only be realised after a certain amount of

1 experience. We cannot teach the child the truth of renunciation; the
2 child is a born optimist; his whole life is in his senses; his whole life
3 is one mass of sense-enjoyment. So there are childlike men in every
4 society who require a certain amount of experience, of enjoyment,
5 to see through the vanity of it, and then renunciation will come to
6 them. There has been ample provision made for them in our Books;
7 but unfortunately, in later times, there has been a tendency to bind
8 every one down by the same laws as those by which the Sannyasin
9 is bound, and that is a great mistake. But for that a good deal of the
10 poverty and the misery that you see in India need not have been. A
11 poor man's life is hemmed in and bound down by tremendous
12 spiritual and ethical laws for which he has no use. Hands off! Let
13 the poor fellow enjoy himself a little, and then he will raise himself
14 up, and renunciation will come to him of itself. Perhaps in this line,
15 we can be taught something by the Western people; but we must be
16 very cautious in learning these things. I am sorry to say that most of
17 the examples one meets nowadays of men who have imbibed the
18 Western ideas are more or less failures.

1 There are two great obstacles on our path in India, the Scylla
2 of old orthodoxy and the Charybdis of modern European civilisation.
3 Of these two, I vote for the old orthodoxy, and not for the
4 Europeanised system; for the old orthodox man may be ignorant, he
5 may be crude, but he is a man, he has a faith, he has strength, he
6 stands on his own feet; while the Europeanised man has no
7 backbone, he is a mass of heterogeneous ideas picked up at random
8 from every source--and these ideas are unassimilated, undigested,
9 unharmonised. He does not stand on his own feet, and his head is
10 turning round and round. Where is the motive power of his work?--
11 in a few patronising pats from the English people. His schemes of
12 reforms, his vehement vituperations against the evils of certain
13 social customs, have, as the mainspring, some European patronage.
14 Why are some of our customs called evils? Because the Europeans
15 say so. That is about the reason he gives. I would not submit to that.
16 Stand and die in your own strength; if there is any sin in the world,
17 it is weakness; avoid all weakness, for weakness is sin, weakness is
18 death. These unbalanced creatures are not yet formed into distinct
19 personalities; what are we to call them--men, women, or animals?
20 While those old orthodox people were staunch and were men. There
21 are still some excellent examples, and the one I want to present
22 before you now is your Raja of Ramnad. Here you have a man than
23 whom there is no more zealous a Hindu throughout the length and
24 breadth of this land; here you have a prince than whom there is no
25 prince in this land better informed in all affairs, both oriental and
26 occidental, who takes from every nation whatever he can that is
27 good. "Learn good knowledge with all devotion from the lowest
28 caste. Learn the way to freedom, even if it comes from a Pariah, by
29 serving him. If a woman is a jewel, take her in marriage even if she
30 comes from a low family of the lowest caste." Such is the law laid
31 down by our great and peerless legislator, the divine Manu. This is
32 true. Stand on your own feet, and assimilate what you can; learn
33 from every nation, take what is of use to you. But remember that as
34 Hindus everything else must be subordinated to our own national
35 ideals. Each man has a mission in life, which is the result of all his
36 infinite past Karma. Each of you was born with a splendid heritage,
37 which is the whole of the infinite past life of your glorious nation.
38 Millions of your ancestors are watching, as it were, every action of
39 yours, so be alert. And what is the mission with which every Hindu
40 child is born? Have you not read the proud declaration of Manu
41 regarding the Brahmin where he says that the birth of the Brahmin
42 is "for the protection of the treasury of religion"? I should say that
43 *that* is the mission not only of the Brahmin, but of every child,
44 whether boy or girl, who is born in this blessed land "for the
45 protection of the treasury of religion". And every other problem in
46 life must be subordinated to that one principal theme. There is also
47 the law of harmony in music. There may be a nation whose theme of
48 life is political supremacy; religion and everything else must
49 become subordinate to that one great theme of its life. But here is
50 another nation whose great theme of life is spirituality and
51 renunciation, whose one watchword is that this world is all vanity
52 and a delusion of three days, and everything else, whether science
53 or knowledge, enjoyment or powers, wealth, name, or fame, must

1 be subordinated to that one theme. The secret of a true Hindu's
2 character lies in the subordination of his knowledge of European
3 sciences and learning, of his wealth, position, and name, to that one
4 principal theme which is inborn in every Hindu child--the
5 spirituality and purity of the race.

6 Therefore between these two, the case of the orthodox man
7 who has the whole of that life-spring of the race, spirituality, and
8 the other man whose hands are full of Western imitation-jewels but
9 has no hold on the life-giving principle, spirituality--of these, I do
10 not doubt that every one here will agree that we should choose the
11 first, the orthodox, because there is some hope in him--he has the
12 national theme, something to hold to; so he will live, but the other
13 will die. Just as in the case of individuals, if the principle of life is
14 undisturbed, if the principal function of that individual life is
15 present, all injuries received as regards other functions are not
16 serious, do not kill the individual, so, as long as this principal
17 function of our life is not disturbed, nothing can destroy our nation.
18 But mark you, if you give up that spirituality, leaving it aside to go
19 after the materialising civilisation of the West, the result will be
20 that in three generations you will be an extinct race; because the
21 backbone of the nation will be broken, the foundation upon which
22 the national edifice has been built will be undermined, and the
23 result will be annihilation all round.

24 Therefore, my friends, the way out is that first and foremost
25 we must keep a firm hold on spirituality--that inestimable gift
26 handed down to us by our ancient forefathers. Did you ever hear of
27 a country where the greatest kings tried to trace their descent not
28 to kings, not to robber-barons living in old castles who plundered
29 poor travellers, but to semi-naked sages who lived in the forest? Did
30 you ever hear of such a land? This is the land. In other countries
31 great priests try to trace their descent to some king, but here the
32 greatest kings would trace their descent to some ancient priest.
33 Therefore, whether you believe in spirituality or not, for the sake of
34 the national life, you have to get a hold on spirituality and keep to
35 it. Then stretch the other hand out and gain all you can from other
36 races, but everything must be subordinated to that one ideal of life;
37 and out of that a wonderful, glorious, future India will come--I am
38 sure it is coming--a greater India than ever was. Sages will spring
39 up greater than all the ancient sages; and your ancestors will not
40 only be satisfied, but I am sure, they will be proud from their
41 positions in other worlds to look down upon their descendants, so
42 glorious, and so great.

43 Let us all work hard, my brethren; this is no time for sleep.
44 On our work depends the coming of the India of the future. She is
45 there ready waiting. She is only sleeping. Arise and awake and see
46 her seated here on her eternal throne, rejuvenated, more glorious
47 than she ever was--this motherland of ours. The idea of God was
48 nowhere else ever so fully developed as in this motherland of ours,
49 for the same idea of God never existed anywhere else. Perhaps you
50 are astonished at my assertion; but show me any idea of God from
51 any other scripture equal to ours; they have only clan-Gods, the God
52 of the Jews, the God of the Arabs, and of such and such a race, and

1 their God is fighting the Gods of the other races. But the idea of
2 that beneficent, most merciful God, our father, our mother, our
3 friend, the friend of our friends, the soul of our souls, is here and
4 here alone. And may He who is the Shiva of the Shaivites, the
5 Vishnu of the Vaishnavites, the Karma of the Karmis, the Buddha of
6 the Buddhists, the Jina of the Jains, the Jehovah of the Christians
7 and the Jews, the Allah of the Mohammedans, the Lord of every
8 sect, the Brahman of the Vedantists, He the all-pervading, whose
9 glory has been known only in this land--may He bless us, may He
10 help us, may He give strength unto us, energy unto us, to carry this
11 idea into practice. May that which we have listened to and studied
12 become food to us, may it become strength in us, may it become
13 energy in us to help each other; may we, the teacher and the
14 taught, not be jealous of each other! Peace, peace, peace, in the
15 name of Hari!

REPLY TO THE ADDRESS OF WELCOME

AT PARAMAKUDI

{Address of Welcome}

In the course of his reply the Swami said:

It is almost impossible to express my thanks for the kindness and cordiality with which you have received me. But if I may be permitted to say so, I will add that my love for my country, and especially for my countrymen, will be the same whether they receive me with the utmost cordiality or spurn me from the country. For in the Gita Shri Krishna says--men should work for work's sake only, and love for love's sake. The work that has been done by me in the Western world has been very little; there is no one present here who could not have done a hundred times more work in the West than has been done by me. And I am anxiously waiting for the day when mighty minds will arise, gigantic spiritual minds, who will be ready to go forth from India to the ends of the world to teach spirituality and renunciation--those ideas which have come from the forests of India and belong to the Indian soil alone.

There comes periods in the history of the human race when, as it were, whole nations are seized with a sort of world-weariness, when they find that all their plans are slipping between their fingers, that old institutions and systems are crumbling into dust, that their hopes are all blighted and everything seems to be out of joint. Two attempts have been made in the world to found social life: the one was upon religion, and the other was upon social necessity. The one was founded upon spirituality, the other upon materialism; the one upon transcendentalism, the other upon realism. The one looks beyond the horizon of this little material world and is bold enough to begin life there, even apart from the other. The other, the second, is content to take its stand on the things of the world and expects to find a firm footing there. Curiously enough, it seems that at times the spiritual side prevails, and then the materialistic side--in wave-like motions following each other. In the same country there will be different tides. At one time the full flood of materialistic ideas prevails, and everything in this life--prosperity, the education which procures more pleasures, more food--will become glorious at first and then that will degrade and degenerate. Along with the prosperity will rise to white heat all the inborn jealousies and hatreds of the human race. Competitions and merciless cruelty will be the watchword of the day. To quote a very commonplace and not very elegant English proverb, "Everyone for himself, and the devil take the hindmost", becomes the motto of the day. Then people think that the whole scheme of life is a failure. And the world would be destroyed had not spirituality come to the rescue and lent a helping hand to the sinking world. Then the world gets new hope and finds a new basis for a new building, and another wave of spirituality comes, which in time again declines. As a rule, spirituality brings a class of men who lay exclusive claim to the special powers of the world. The immediate effect of this is a reaction towards materialism, which opens the door to scores of exclusive claims, until the time comes when not only all the spiritual

1 powers of the race, but all its material powers and privileges are
2 centred in the hands of a very few; and these few, standing on the
3 necks of the masses of the people, want to rule them. Then society
4 has to help itself, and materialism comes to the rescue.

5 If you look at India, our motherland, you will see that the
6 same thing is going on now. That you are here today to welcome
7 one who went to Europe to preach Vedanta would have been
8 impossible had not the materialism of Europe opened the way for it.
9 Materialism has come to the rescue of India in a certain sense by
10 throwing open the doors of life to everyone, by destroying the
11 exclusive privileges of caste, by opening up to discussion the
12 inestimable treasures which were hidden away in the hands of a
13 very few who have even lost the use of them.

14 Half has been stolen and lost; and the other half which
15 remains is in the hands of men who, like dogs in the manger, do not
16 eat themselves and will not allow others to do so. On the other
17 hand, the political systems that we are struggling for in India have
18 been in Europe for ages, have been tried for centuries, and have
19 been found wanting. One after another, the institutions, systems,
20 and everything connected with political government has been
21 condemned as useless; and Europe is restless, does not know where
22 to turn. The material tyranny is tremendous. The wealth and power
23 of a country are in the hands of a few men who do not work but
24 manipulate the work of millions of human beings. By this power
25 they can deluge the whole earth with blood. Religion and all things
26 are under their feet; they rule and stand supreme. The Western
27 world is governed by a handful of Shylocks. All those things that
28 you hear about--constitutional government, freedom, liberty, and
29 parliaments--are but jokes.

30 The West is groaning under the tyranny of the Shylocks, and
31 the East is groaning under the tyranny of the priests; each must
32 keep the other in check. Do not think that one alone is to help the
33 world. In this creation of the impartial Lord, He has made equal
34 every particle in the universe. The worse, most demoniacal man has
35 some virtues which the greatest saint has not; and the lowest worm
36 may have certain things which the highest man has not. The poor
37 labourer, who you think has so little enjoyment in life, has not your
38 intellect, cannot understand the Vedanta Philosophy and so forth;
39 but compare your body with his, and you will see, his body is not so
40 sensitive to pain as yours. If he gets severe cuts on his body, they
41 heal up more quickly than yours would. His life is in the senses, and
42 he enjoys there. His life also is one of equilibrium and balance.
43 Whether on the ground of materialism, or of intellect, or of
44 spirituality, the compensation that is given by the Lord to every one
45 impartially is exactly the same. Therefore we must not think that we
46 are the saviours of the world. We can teach the world, a good many
47 things, and we can learn a good many things from it too. We can
48 teach the world only what it is waiting for. The whole of Western
49 civilisation will crumble to pieces in the next fifty years if there is
50 no spiritual foundation. It is hopeless and perfectly useless to
51 attempt to govern mankind with the sword. You will find that the
52 very centres from which such ideas as government by force sprang

1 up are the very first centres to degrade and degenerate and
2 crumble to pieces. Europe, the centre of the manifestation of
3 material energy, will crumble into dust within fifty years if she is not
4 mindful to change her position, to shift her ground and make
5 spirituality the basis of her life. And what will save Europe is the
6 religion of the Upanishads.

7 Apart from the different sects, philosophies, and scriptures,
8 there is one underlying doctrine--the belief in the soul of man, the
9 Atman--common to all our sects; and that can change the whole
10 tendency of the world. With Hindus, Jains, and Buddhists, in fact
11 everywhere in India, there is the idea of a spiritual soul which is the
12 receptacle of all power. And you know full well that there is not one
13 system of philosophy in India which teaches you that you can get
14 power or purity or perfection from outside; but they all tell you that
15 these are your birthright, your nature. Impurity is a mere
16 superimposition under which your real nature has become hidden.
17 But the real *you* is already perfect, already strong. You do not
18 require any assistance to govern yourself; you are already self-
19 restrained. The only difference is in knowing it or not knowing it.
20 Therefore the one difficulty has been summed up in the word,
21 Avidya. What makes the difference between God and man, between
22 the saint and the sinner? Only ignorance.

23 What is the difference between the highest man and the
24 lowest worm that crawls under your feet? Ignorance. That makes
25 all the difference. For inside that little crawling worm is lodged
26 infinite power, and knowledge, and purity--the infinite divinity of
27 God Himself. It is unmanifested; it will have to be manifested.

1 This is the one great truth India has to teach to the world,
2 because it is nowhere else. This is spirituality, the science of the
3 soul. What makes a man stand up and work? Strength. Strength is
4 goodness, weakness is sin. If there is one word that you find coming
5 out like a bomb from the Upanishads, bursting like a bomb-shell
6 upon masses of ignorance, it is the word fearlessness. And the only
7 religion that ought to be taught is the religion of *fearlessness*.
8 Either in this world or in the world of religion, it is true that fear is
9 the sure cause of degradation and sin. It is fear that brings misery,
10 fear that brings death, fear that breeds evil. And what causes fear?
11 Ignorance of our own nature. Each of us is heir-apparent to the
12 Emperor of emperors; we are of the substance of God Himself. Nay,
13 according to the Advaita, we are God Himself though we have
14 forgotten our own nature in thinking of ourselves as little men. We
15 have fallen from that nature and thus made differences--I am a little
16 better than you, or you than I, and so on. This idea of oneness is the
17 great lesson India has to give, and mark you, when this is
18 understood, it changes the whole aspect of things, because you look
19 at the world through other eyes than you have been doing before.
20 And this world is no more a battlefield where each soul is born to
21 struggle with every other soul and the strongest gets the victory
22 and the weakest goes to death. It becomes a playground where the
23 Lord is playing like a child, and we are His playmates, His fellow-
24 workers. This is only a play, however terrible, hideous, and
25 dangerous it may appear. We have mistaken its aspect. When we
26 have known the nature of the soul, hope comes to the weakest, to
27 the most degraded, to the most miserable sinner. Only, declares
28 your Shashtra, despair not. For you are the same whatever you do,
29 and you cannot change your nature. Nature itself cannot destroy
30 nature. Your nature is pure. It may be hidden for millions of aeons,
31 but at last it will conquer and come out. Therefore the Advaita
32 brings hope to every one and not despair. Its teaching is not
33 through fear; it teaches, not of devils who are always on the watch
34 to snatch you if you miss your footing--it has nothing to do with
35 devils--but says that you have taken your fate in your own hands.
36 Your own Karma has manufactured for you this body, and no body
37 did it for you. The Omnipresent Lord has been hidden through
38 ignorance, and the responsibility is on yourself. You have not to
39 think that you were brought into the world without your choice and
40 left in this most horrible place, but to know that you have yourself
41 manufactured your body bit by bit just as you are doing it this very
42 moment. You yourself eat; nobody eats for you. You assimilate what
43 you eat; no one does it for you. You make blood, and muscles, and
44 body out of the food; nobody does it for you. So you have done all
45 the time. One link in a chain explains the infinite chain. If it is true
46 for one moment that you manufacture your body, it is true for every
47 moment that has been or will come. And all the responsibility of
48 good and evil is on you. This is the great hope. What I have done,
49 that I can undo. And at the same time our religion does not take
50 away from mankind the mercy of the Lord. That is always there. On
51 the other hand, He stands beside this tremendous current of good
52 and evil. He the bondless, the ever-merciful, is always ready to help
53 us to the other shore, for His mercy is great, and it always comes to

1 the pure in heart.

2 Your spirituality, in a certain sense, will have to form the basis
3 of the new order of society. If I had more time, I could show you
4 how the West has yet more to learn from some of the conclusions of
5 the Advaita, for in these days of materialistic science the ideal of
6 the Personal God does not count for much. But yet, even if a man
7 has a very crude form of religion and wants temples and forms, he
8 can have as many as he likes; if he wants a Personal God to love, he
9 can find here the noblest ideas of a Personal God such as were
10 never attained anywhere else in the world. If a man wants to be a
11 rationalist and satisfy his reason, it is also here that he can find the
12 most rational ideas of the Impersonal.

REPLY TO THE ADDRESS OF WELCOME AT SHIVAGANGA AND MANAMADURA

{Address of Welcome}

The Swami's reply was to the following effect:

I cannot express the deep debt of gratitude which you have laid upon me by the kind and warm welcome which has just been accorded to me by you. Unfortunately I am not just now in a condition to make a very big speech, however much I may wish it. In spite of the beautiful adjectives which our Sanskrit friend has been so kind to apply to me, I have a body after all, foolish though it may be; and the body always follows the promptings, conditions, and laws of matter. As such, there is such a thing as fatigue and weariness as regards the material body.

It is a great thing to see the wonderful amount of joy and appreciation expressed in every part of the country for the little work that has been done by me in the West. I look at it only in this way: I want to apply it to those great souls who are coming in the future. If the little bit of work that has been done by me receives such approbation from the nation, what must be the approbation that the spiritual giants, the world-movers coming after us, will get from this nation? India is the land of religion; the Hindu understands religion and religion alone. Centuries of education have always been in that line; and the result is that it is the one concern in life; and you all know well that it is so. It is not necessary that every one should be a shopkeeper; it is not necessary even that every one should be a school-master; it is not necessary that every one should be a fighter; but in this world there will be different nations producing the harmony of result.

Well, perhaps we are fated by Divine Providence to play the spiritual note in this harmony of nations, and it rejoices me to see that we have not yet lost the grand traditions which have been handed down to us by the most glorious forefathers of whom any nation can be proud. It gives me hope, it gives me adamant faith in the destiny of the race. It cheers me, not for the personal attention paid to me, but to know that the heart of the nation is there, and is still sound. India is still living; who says she is dead? But the West wants to see us active. If they want to see us active on the field of battle, they will be disappointed--that is not our field--just as we would be disappointed if we hoped to see a military nation active on the field of spirituality. But let them come here and see that we are equally active, and how the nation is living and is as alive as ever. We should dispel the idea that we have degenerated at all. So far so good.

But now I have to say a few harsh words, which I hope you will not take unkindly. For the complaint has just been made that European materialism has well nigh swamped us. It is not all the fault of the Europeans, but a good deal our own. We, as Vedantists,

1 must always look at things from an introspective viewpoint, from its
2 subjective relations. We, as Vedantists, know for certain that there
3 is no power in the universe to injure us unless we first injure
4 ourselves. One-fifth of the population of India have become
5 Mohammedans. Just as before that, going further back, two-thirds
6 of the population in ancient times had become Buddhists, one-fifth
7 are now Mohammedans, Christians are already more than a million.

8 Whose fault is it? One of our historians says in ever-
9 memorable language: Why should these poor wretches starve and
10 die of thirst when the perennial fountain of life is flowing by? The
11 question is: What did we do for these people who forsook their own
12 religion? Why should they have become Mohammedans? I heard of
13 an honest girl in England who was going to become a streetwalker.
14 When a lady asked her not to do so, her reply was, "That is the only
15 way I can get sympathy. I can find none to help me now; but let me
16 be a fallen, downtrodden woman, and then perhaps merciful ladies
17 will come and take me to a home and do everything they can for
18 me." We are weeping for these renegades now, but what did we do
19 for them before? Let every one of us ask ourselves, what have we
20 learnt; have we taken hold of the torch of truth, and if so, how far
21 did we carry it? We did not help them then. This is the question we
22 should ask ourselves. That we did not do so was our own fault, our
23 own Karma. Let us blame none, let us blame our own Karma.

24 Materialism, or Mohammedanism, or Christianity, or any
25 other *ism* in the world could never have succeeded but that you
26 allowed them. No bacilli can attack the human frame until it is
27 degraded and degenerated by vice, bad food, privation, and
28 exposure; the healthy man passes scatheless through masses of
29 poisonous bacilli. But yet there is time to change our ways. Give up
30 all those old discussions, old fights about things which are
31 meaningless, which are nonsensical in their very nature. Think of
32 the last six hundred or seven hundred years of degradation when
33 grown-up men by hundreds have been discussing for years whether
34 we should drink a glass of water with the right hand or the left,
35 whether the hand should be washed three times or four times,
36 whether we should gargle five or six times. What can you expect
37 from men who pass their lives in discussing such momentous
38 questions as these and writing most learned philosophies on them!
39 There is a danger of our religion getting into the kitchen. We are
40 neither Vedantists, most of us now, nor Pauranics, nor Tantrics. We
41 are just "Don't touchists". Our religion is in the kitchen. Our God is
42 in the cooking-pot, and our religion is, "Don't touch me, I am holy".
43 If this goes on for another century, every one of us will be in a
44 lunatic asylum. It is a sure sign of softening of the brain when the
45 mind cannot grasp the higher problems of life; all originality is lost,
46 the mind has lost all its strength, its activity, and its power of
47 thought, and just tries to go round and round the smallest curve it
48 can find. This state of things has first to be thrown overboard, and
49 then we must stand up, be active and strong; and then we shall
50 recognise our heritage to that infinite treasure, the treasure our
51 forefathers have left for us, a treasure that the whole world
52 requires today. The world will die if this treasure is not distributed.

1 Bring it out, distribute it broadcast. Says Vyasa: Giving alone is the
2 one work in this Kali Yuga; and of all the gifts, giving spiritual life is
3 the highest gift possible; the next gift is secular knowledge; the
4 next, saving the life of man; and the last, giving food to the needy.
5 Of food we have given enough; no nation is more charitable than
6 we. So long as there is a piece of bread in the home of a beggar, he
7 will give half of it. Such a phenomenon can be observed only in
8 India. We have enough of that, let us go for the other two, the gifts
9 of spiritual and secular knowledge. And if we were all brave and
10 had stout hearts, and with absolute sincerity put our shoulders to
11 the wheel, in twenty-five years the whole problem would be solved,
12 and there would be nothing left here to fight about; the whole
13 Indian world would be once more Aryan.

14 This is all I have to tell you now. I am not given much to
15 talking about plans; I rather prefer to do and show, and then talk
16 about my plans. I have my plans, and mean to work them out if the
17 Lord wills it, if life is given to me. I do not know whether I shall
18 succeed or not, but it is a great thing to take up a grand ideal in life
19 and then give up one's whole life to it. For what otherwise is the
20 value of life, this vegetating, little, low life of man? Subordinating it
21 to one high ideal is the only value that life has. This is the great
22 work to be done in India. I welcome the present religious revival;
23 and I should be foolish if I lost the opportunity of striking the iron
24 while it is hot.

1
2 REPLY TO THE ADDRESS OF WELCOME AT
3 MADURA
4

5 {Address of Welcome}

6 The Swami replied in the following terms:

7 I wish I could live in your midst for several days and fulfil the
8 conditions that have just been pointed out by your most worthy
9 Chairman of relating to you my experiences in the West and the
10 result of all my labours there for the last four years. But,
11 unfortunately, even Swamis have bodies; and the continuous
12 travelling and speaking that I have had to undergo for the last three
13 weeks make it impossible for me to deliver a very long speech this
14 evening. I will, therefore, satisfy myself with thanking you very
15 cordially for the kindness that has been shown to me, and reserve
16 other things for some day in the future when under better
17 conditions of health we shall have time to talk over more various
18 subjects than we can do in so short a time this evening. Being in
19 Madura, as the guest of one of your well-known citizens and
20 noblemen, the Raja of Ramnad, one fact comes prominently to my
21 mind. Perhaps most of you are aware that it was the Raja who first
22 put the idea into my mind of going to Chicago, and it was he who all
23 the time supported it with all his heart and influence. A good deal,
24 therefore, of the praise that has been bestowed upon me in this
25 address, ought to go to this noble man of Southern India. I only
26 wish that instead of becoming a Raja he had become a Sannyasin,
27 for that is what he is really fit for.

28 Wherever there is a thing really needed in one part of the
29 world, the complement will find its way there and supply it with
30 new life. This is true in the physical world as well as in the spiritual.
31 If there is a want of spirituality in one part of the world, and at the
32 same time that spirituality exists elsewhere, whether we
33 consciously struggle for it or not, that spirituality will find its way to
34 the part where it is needed and balance the inequality. In the
35 history of the human race, not once or twice, but again and again, it
36 has been the destiny of India in the past to supply spirituality to the
37 world. We find that whenever either by mighty conquest or by
38 commercial supremacy different parts of the world have been
39 kneaded into one whole race and bequests have been made from
40 one corner to the other, each nation, as it were, poured forth its
41 own quota, either political, social, or spiritual. India's contribution
42 to the sum total of human knowledge has been spirituality,
43 philosophy. These she contributed even long before the rising of the
44 Persian Empire; the second time was during the Persian Empire; for
45 the third time during the ascendancy of the Greeks; and now for the
46 fourth time during the ascendancy of the English, she is going to
47 fulfil the same destiny once more. As the Western ideas of
48 organisation and external civilisation are penetrating and pouring
49 into our country, whether we will have them or not, so Indian
50 spirituality and philosophy are deluging the lands of the West. None

1 can resist it, and no more can we resist some sort of material
2 civilisation from the West. A little of it, perhaps, is good for us, and
3 a little spiritualization is good for the West; thus the balance will be
4 preserved. It is not that we ought to learn everything from the
5 West, or that they have to learn everything from us, but each will
6 have to supply and hand down to future generations what it has for
7 the future accomplishment of that dream of ages--the harmony of
8 nations, an ideal world. Whether that ideal world will ever come I
9 do not know, whether that social perfection will ever be reached I
10 have my own doubts; but whether it comes or not, each one of us
11 will have to work for the idea as if it will come tomorrow, and as if it
12 only depends on his work, and his alone. Each one of us will have to
13 believe that every one else in the world has done his work, and the
14 only work remaining to be done to make the world perfect has to be
15 done by himself. This is the responsibility we have to take upon
16 ourselves.

17 In the meanwhile, in India there is a tremendous revival of
18 religion. There is danger ahead as well as glory; for revival
19 sometimes breeds fanaticism, sometimes goes to the extreme, so
20 that often it is not even in the power of those who start the revival
21 to control it when it has gone beyond a certain length. It is better,
22 therefore, to be forewarned. We have to find our way between the
23 Scylla of the old superstitious orthodoxy and the Charybdis of
24 materialism--of Europeanism, of soulessness, of the so-called
25 reform--which has penetrated to the foundation of Western
26 progress. These two have to be taken care of. In the first place, we
27 cannot become Western; therefore imitating the Westerns is
28 useless. Suppose you can imitate the Westerns, that moment you
29 will die, you will have no more life in you. In the second place, it is
30 impossible. A stream is taking its rise, away beyond where time
31 began, flowing through millions of ages of human history; do you
32 mean to get hold of that stream and push it back to its source, to a
33 Himalayan glacier? Even if that were practicable, it would not be
34 possible for you to be Europeanised. If you find it is impossible for
35 the European to throw off the few centuries of culture which there
36 is in the West, do you think it is possible for you to throw off the
37 culture of shining scores of centuries? It cannot be. We must also
38 remember that in every little village-god and every little
39 superstitious custom is that we are accustomed to call our religious
40 faith. But local customs are infinite and contradictory. Which are we
41 to obey, and which not to obey? The Brahmin of Southern India, for
42 instance, would shrink in horror at the sight of another Brahmin
43 eating meat; a Brahmin in the North thinks it a most glorious and
44 holy thing to do--he kills goats by the hundred in sacrifice. If you put
45 forward your custom, they are equally ready with theirs. Various
46 are the customs all over India, but they are local. The greatest
47 mistake made is that ignorant people always think that this local
48 custom is the essence of our religion.

49 But beyond this there is a still greater difficulty. There are
50 two sorts of truth we find in our Shastras, one that is based upon
51 the eternal nature of man--the one that deals with the eternal
52 relation of God, soul, and nature; the other, with local

1 circumstances, environments of the time, social institutions of the
2 period, and so forth. The first class of truths is chiefly embodied in
3 our Vedas, our scriptures; the second in the Smritis, the Puranas,
4 etc. We must remember that for all periods the Vedas are the final
5 goal and authority, and if the Puranas differ in any respect from the
6 Vedas, that part of the Puranas is to be rejected without mercy. We
7 find, then, that in all these Smritis the teachings are different. One
8 Smriti says, this is the custom, and this should be the practice of
9 this age. Another one says, this is the practice of this age, and so
10 forth. This is the Achara which should be the custom of the Satya
11 Yuga, and this is the Achara which should be the custom of the Kali
12 Yuga, and so forth. Now this is one of the most glorious doctrines
13 that you have, that eternal truths, being based upon the nature of
14 man, will never change so long as man lives; they are for all times,
15 omnipresent, universal virtues. But the Smritis speak generally of
16 local circumstances, of duties arising from different environments,
17 and they change in the course of time. This you have always to
18 remember that because a little social custom is going to be changed
19 you are not going to lose your religion, not at all. Remember these
20 customs have already been changed. There was a time in this very
21 India when, without eating beef, no Brahmin could remain a
22 Brahmin; you read in the Vedas how, when a Sannyasin, a king, or a
23 great man came into a house, the best bullock was killed; how in
24 time it was found that as we were an agricultural race, killing the
25 best bulls meant annihilation of the race. Therefore the practice
26 was stopped, and a voice was raised against the killing of cows.
27 Sometimes we find existing then what we now consider the most
28 horrible customs. In course of time other laws had to be made.
29 These in turn will have to go, and other Smritis will come. This is
30 one fact we have to learn that the Vedas being eternal will be one
31 and the same throughout all ages, but the Smritis will have an end.
32 As time rolls on, more and more of the Smritis will go, sages will
33 come, and they will change and direct society into better channels,
34 into duties and into paths which accord with the necessity of the
35 age, and without which it is impossible that society can live. Thus
36 we have to guide our course, avoiding these two dangers; and I
37 hope that every one of us here will have breadth enough, and at the
38 same time faith enough, to understand what that means, which I
39 suppose is the inclusion of everything, and not the exclusion. I want
40 the intensity of the fanatic plus the extensity of the materialist.
41 Deep as the ocean, broad as the infinite skies, that is the sort of
42 heart we want. Let us be as progressive as any nation that ever
43 existed, and at the same time as faithful and conservative towards
44 our traditions as Hindus alone know how to be.

45 In plain words, we have first to learn the distinction between
46 the essentials and the non-essentials in everything. The essentials
47 are eternal, and non-essentials have value only for a certain time;
48 and if after a time they are not replaced by something essential,
49 they are positively dangerous. I do not mean that you should stand
50 up and revile all your old customs and institutions. Certainly not;
51 you must not revile even the most evil one of them. Revile none.
52 Even those customs that are now appearing to be positive evils,
53 have been positively life-giving in times past; and if we have to

1 remove these, we must not do so with curses, but with blessings
2 and gratitude for the glorious work these customs have done for the
3 preservation of our race. And we must also remember that the
4 leaders of our societies have never been either generals or kings,
5 but Rishis. And who are the Rishis? The Rishi as he is called in the
6 Upanishads is not an ordinary man, but a Mantra-drashta. He is a
7 man who sees religion, to whom religion is not merely book-
8 learning, not argumentation, nor speculation, nor much talking, but
9 actual realisation, a coming face to face with truths which
10 transcend the senses. This is Rishihood, and that Rishihood does
11 not belong to any age, or time, or even to sects or caste. Vatsyayana
12 says, truth must be realised; and we have to remember that you,
13 and I, and every one of us will be called upon to become Rishis; and
14 we must have faith in ourselves; we must become world-movers, for
15 everything is in us. We must see Religion face to face, experience it,
16 and thus solve our doubts about it; and then standing up in the
17 glorious light of Rishihood each one of us will be a giant; and every
18 word falling from our lips will carry behind it that infinite sanction
19 of security; and before us evil will vanish by itself without the
20 necessity of cursing any one, without the necessity of abusing any
21 one, without the necessity of fighting any one in the world. May the
22 Lord help us, each one of us here, to realise the Rishihood for our
23 own salvation and for that of others!

THE MISSION OF THE VEDANTA

{Address of Welcome}

The Swami then delivered the following address on the Mission of the Vedanta:

A very small amount of religious work performed brings a large amount of result. If this statement of the Gita wanted an illustration, I am finding every day the truth of that great saying in my humble life. My work has been very insignificant indeed, but the kindness and the cordiality of welcome that have met me at every step of my journey from Colombo to this city are simply beyond all expectation. Yet, at the same time, it is worthy of our traditions as Hindus, it is worthy of our race; for here we are, the Hindu race, whose vitality, whose life-principle, whose very soul, as it were, is in religion. I have seen a little of the world, travelling among the races of the East and the West; and everywhere I find among nations one great ideal which forms the backbone, so to speak, of that race. With some it is politics, with others it is social culture; others again may have intellectual culture and so on for their national background. But this, our motherland, has religion and religion alone for its basis, for its backbone, for the bed-rock upon which the whole building of its life has been based. Some of you may remember that in my reply to the kind address which the people of Madras sent over to me in America, I pointed out the fact that a peasant in India has, in many respects, a better religious education than many a gentleman in the West, and today, beyond all doubt, I myself am verifying my own words. There was a time when I did feel rather discontented at the want of information among the masses of India and the lack of thirst among them for information, but now I understand it. Where their interest lies, there they are more eager for information than the masses of any other race that I have seen or have travelled among. Ask our peasants about the momentous political changes in Europe, the upheavals that are going on in European society--they do not know anything of them, nor do they care to know; but the peasants, even in Ceylon, detached from India in many ways, cut off from a living interest in India--I found the very peasants working in the fields there were already acquainted with the fact that there had been a Parliament of Religions in America, that an Indian Sannyasin had gone over there, and that he had had some success.

Where, therefore, their interest is, there they are as eager for information as any other race; and religion is the one and sole interest of the people of India. I am not just now discussing whether it is good to have the vitality of the race in religious ideals or in political ideals, but so far it is clear to us that, for good or for evil, our vitality is concentrated in our religion. You cannot change it. You cannot destroy it and put in its place another. You cannot transplant a large growing tree from one soil to another and make

1 it immediately take root there. For good or for evil, the religious
2 ideal has been flowing into India for thousands of years; for good or
3 for evil, the Indian atmosphere has been filled with ideals of
4 religion for shining scores of centuries; for good or for evil, we have
5 been born and brought up in the very midst of these ideas of
6 religion, till it has entered into our very blood and tingled with
7 every drop in our veins, and has become one with our constitution,
8 become the very vitality of our lives. Can you give such religion up
9 without the rousing of the same energy in reaction, without filling
10 the channel which that mighty river has cut out for itself in the
11 course of thousands of years? Do you want that the Ganga should
12 go back to its icy bed and begin a new course? Even if that were
13 possible, it would be impossible for this country to give up her
14 characteristic course of religious life and take up for herself a new
15 career of politics or something else. You can work only under the
16 law of least resistance, and this religious line is the line of least
17 resistance in India. This is the line of life, this is the line of growth,
18 and this is the line of well-being in India--to follow the track of
19 religion.

20 Ay, in other countries religion is only one of the many
21 necessities in life. To use a common illustration which I am in the
22 habit of using, my lady has many things in her parlour, and it is the
23 fashion nowadays to have a Japanese vase, and she must procure it;
24 it does not look well to be without it. So my lady, or my gentleman,
25 has many other occupations in life, and also a little bit of religion
26 must come in to complete it. Consequently he or she has a little
27 religion. Politics, social improvement, in one word, this world, is the
28 goal of mankind in the West, and God and religion come in quietly
29 as helpers to attain that goal. Their God is, so to speak, the Being
30 who helps to cleanse and to furnish this world for them; this is
31 apparently all the value of God for them. Do you not know how for
32 the last hundred or two hundred years you have been hearing again
33 and again out of the lips of men who ought to have known better,
34 from the mouths of those who pretend at least to know better, that
35 all the arguments they produce against the Indian religion is this--
36 that our religion does not conduce to well-being in this world, that it
37 does not bring gold to us, that it does not make us robbers of
38 nations, that it does not make the strong stand upon the bodies of
39 the weak and feed themselves with the life-blood of the weak.
40 Certainly our religion does not do that. It cannot send cohorts,
41 under whose feet the earth trembles, for the purpose of destruction
42 and pillage and the ruination of races. Therefore they say--what is
43 there in this religion? It does not bring any grist to the grinding
44 mill, any strength to the muscles; what is there is such a religion?

45 They little dream that that is the very argument with which
46 we prove our religion, because it does not make for this world. Ours
47 is the only true religion because, according to it, this little sense-
48 world of three days' duration is not to be made the end and aim of
49 all, is not to be our great goal. This little earthly horizon of a few
50 feet is not that which bounds the view of our religion. Ours is away
51 beyond, and still beyond; beyond the senses, beyond space, and
52 beyond time, away, away beyond, till nothing of this world is left

1 and the universe itself becomes like a drop in the transcendent
2 ocean of the glory of the soul. Ours is the true religion because it
3 teaches that God alone is true, that this world is false and fleeting,
4 that all your gold is but as dust, that all your power is finite, and
5 that life itself is oftentimes an evil; therefore it is, that ours is the
6 true religion. Ours is the true religion because, above all, it teaches
7 renunciation and stands up with the wisdom of ages to tell and to
8 declare to the nations who are mere children of yesterday in
9 comparison with us Hindus--who own the hoary antiquity of the
10 wisdom, discovered by our ancestors here in India--to tell them in
11 plain words: "Children, you are slaves of the senses; there is only
12 finiteness in the senses, there is only ruination in the senses; the
13 three short days of luxury here bring only ruin at last. Give it all up,
14 renounce the love of the senses and of the world; that is the way of
15 religion." Through renunciation is the way to the goal and not
16 through enjoyment. Therefore ours is the only true religion.

17 Ay, it is a curious fact that while nations after nations have
18 come upon the stage of the world, played their parts vigorously for
19 a few moments, and died almost without leaving a mark or a ripple
20 on the ocean of time, here we are living, as it were, an eternal life.
21 They talk a great deal of the new theories about the survival of the
22 fittest, and they think that it is the strength of the muscles which is
23 the fittest to survive. If that were true, any one of the aggressively
24 known old world nations would have lived in glory today, and we,
25 the weak Hindus, who never conquered even one other race or
26 nation, ought to have died out; yet we live here three hundred
27 million strong! (A young English lady once told me: What have the
28 Hindus done? They never even conquered a single race!) And it is
29 not at all true that all its energies are spent, that atrophy has
30 overtaken its body: that is not true. There is vitality enough, and it
31 comes out in torrents and deluges the world when the time is ripe
32 and requires it.

33 We have, as it were, thrown a challenge to the whole world
34 from the most ancient times. In the West, they are trying to solve
35 the problem how much a man can possess, and we are trying here
36 to solve the problem on how little a man can live. This struggle and
37 this difference will still go on for some centuries. But if history has
38 any truth in it and if prognostications ever prove true, it must be
39 that those who train themselves to live on the least and control
40 themselves well will in the end gain the battle, and that those who
41 run after enjoyment and luxury, however vigorous they may seem
42 for the moment, will have to die and become annihilated. There are
43 times in the history of a man's life, nay, in the history of the lives of
44 nations, when a sort of world-weariness becomes painfully
45 predominant. It seems that such a tide of world-weariness has come
46 upon the Western world. There, too, they have their thinkers, great
47 men; and they are already finding out that this race after gold and
48 power is all vanity of vanities; many, nay, most of the cultured men
49 and women there, are already weary of this competition, this
50 struggle, this brutality of their commercial civilisation, and they are
51 looking forward towards something better. There is a class which
52 still clings on to political and social changes as the only panacea for

1 the evils in Europe, but among the great thinkers there, other
2 ideals are growing. They have found out that no amount of political
3 or social manipulation of human conditions can cure the evils of life.
4 It is a change of the soul itself for the better that alone will cure the
5 evils of life. No amount of force, or government, or legislative
6 cruelty will change the conditions of a race, but it is spiritual
7 culture and ethical culture alone that can change wrong racial
8 tendencies for the better. Thus these races of the West are eager
9 for some new thought, for some new philosophy; the religion they
10 have had, Christianity, although good and glorious in many
11 respects, has been imperfectly understood, and is, as understood
12 hitherto, found to be insufficient. The thoughtful men of the West
13 find in our ancient philosophy, especially in the Vedanta, the new
14 impulse of thought they are seeking, the very spiritual food and
15 drink for which they are hungering and thirsting. And it is no
16 wonder that this is so.

17 I have become used to hearing all sorts of wonderful claims
18 put forward in favour of every religion under the sun. You have also
19 heard, quite within recent times, the claims put forward by Dr.
20 Barrows, a great friend of mine, that Christianity is the only
21 universal religion. Let me consider this question awhile and lay
22 before you my reasons why I think that it is Vedanta, and Vedanta
23 alone that can become the universal religion of man, and that no
24 other is fitted for the role. Excepting our own almost all the other
25 great religions in the world are inevitably connected with the life or
26 lives of one or more of their founders. All their theories, their
27 teachings, their doctrines, and their ethics are built round the life of
28 a personal founder, from whom they get their sanction, their
29 authority, and their power; and strangely enough, upon the
30 historicity of the founder's life is built, as it were, all the fabric of
31 such religions. If there is one blow dealt to the historicity of that
32 life, as has been the case in modern times with the lives of almost
33 all the so-called founders of religion--we know that half of the
34 details of such lives is not now seriously believed in, and that the
35 other half is seriously doubted--if this becomes the case, if that rock
36 of historicity, as they pretend to call it, is shaken and shattered, the
37 whole building tumbles down, broken absolutely, never to regain its
38 lost status.

39 Every one of the great religions in the world excepting our
40 own, is built upon such historical characters; but ours rests upon
41 principles. There is no man or woman who can claim to have
42 created the Vedas. They are the embodiment of eternal principles;
43 sages discovered them; and now and then the names of these sages
44 are mentioned--just their names; we do not even know who or what
45 they were. In many cases we do not know who their fathers were,
46 and almost in every case we do not know when and where they
47 were born. But what cared they, these sages, for their names? They
48 were the preachers of principles, and they themselves, so far as
49 they went, tried to become illustrations of the principles they
50 preached. At the same time, just as our God is an Impersonal and
51 yet a Personal God, so is our religion a most intensely impersonal
52 one--a religion based upon principles--and yet with an infinite scope

1 for the play of persons; for what religion gives you more
2 Incarnations, more prophets and seers, and still waits for infinitely
3 more? The *Bhagavata* says that Incarnations are infinite, leaving
4 ample scope for as many as you like to come. Therefore if anyone or
5 more of these persons in India's religious history, any one or more
6 of these Incarnations, and any one or more of our prophets are
7 proved not to have been historical, it does not injure our religion at
8 all; even then it remains firm as ever, because it is based upon
9 principles, and not upon persons. It is in vain we try to gather all
10 the peoples of the world around a single personality. It is difficult to
11 make them gather together even round eternal and universal
12 principles. If it ever becomes possible to bring the largest portion of
13 humanity to one way of thinking in regard to religion, mark you, it
14 must be always through principles and not through persons. Yet as I
15 have said, our religion has ample scope for the authority and
16 influence of persons. There is that most wonderful theory of Ishta
17 which gives you the fullest and freest choice possible among these
18 great religious personalities. You may take up any one of the
19 prophets or teachers as your guide and the object of your special
20 adoration; you are even allowed to think that he whom you have
21 chosen is the greatest of the prophets, greatest of all the Avatars;
22 there is no harm in that, but you must keep to a firm background of
23 eternally true principles. The strange fact here is that the power of
24 our Incarnations has been holding good with us only so far as they
25 are illustrations of the principles in the Vedas. The glory of Shri
26 Krishna is that he has been the best preacher of our eternal religion
27 of principles and the best commentator on the Vedanta that ever
28 lived in India.

29 The second claim of the Vedanta upon the attention of the
30 world is that, of all the scriptures in the world, it is the one
31 scripture the teaching of which is in entire harmony with the results
32 that have been attained by the modern scientific investigations of
33 external nature. Two minds in the dim past of history, cognate to
34 each other in form and kinship and sympathy, started, being placed
35 in different routes. The one was the ancient Hindu mind, and the
36 other was the ancient Greek mind. The former started by analysing
37 the internal world. The latter started in search of that goal beyond
38 by analysing the external world. And even through the various
39 vicissitudes of their history, it is easy to make out these two
40 vibrations of thought as tending to produce similar echoes of the
41 goal beyond. It seems clear that the conclusions of modern
42 materialistic science can be acceptable, harmoniously with their
43 religion, only to the Vedantins or Hindus as they are called. It
44 seems clear that modern materialism can hold its own and at the
45 same time approach spirituality by taking up the conclusions of the
46 Vedanta. It seems to us, and to all who care to know, that the
47 conclusions of modern science are the very conclusions of the
48 Vedanta reached ages ago; only, in modern science they are written
49 in the language of matter. This then is another claim of the Vedanta
50 upon modern Western minds, its rationality, the wonderful
51 rationalism of the Vedanta. I have myself been told by some of the
52 best Western scientific minds of the day, how wonderfully rational
53 the conclusions of the Vedanta are. I know one of them personally

1 who scarcely has time to eat his meal or go out of his laboratory,
2 but who yet would stand by the hour to attend my lectures on the
3 Vedanta; for, as he expresses it, they are so scientific, they so
4 exactly harmonise with the aspirations of the age and with the
5 conclusions to which modern science is coming at the present time.

6 Two such scientific conclusions drawn from comparative
7 religion, I would specially like to draw your attention to: the one
8 bears upon the idea of the universality of religions, and the other on
9 the idea of the oneness of things. We observe in the histories of
10 Babylon and among the Jews an interesting religious phenomenon
11 happening. We find that each of these Babylonian and Jewish
12 peoples was divided into so many tribes, each tribe having a god of
13 its own, and that these little tribal gods had often a generic name.
14 The gods among the Babylonians were all called Baals, and among
15 them Baal Merodach was the chief. In course of time one of these
16 many tribes would conquer and assimilate the other racially allied
17 tribes, and the natural result would be that the god of the
18 conquering tribe would be placed at the head of all the gods of the
19 other tribes. Thus the so-called boasted monotheism of the Semites
20 was created. Among the Jews the gods went by the name of
21 Molochs. Of these there was one Moloch who belonged to the tribe
22 called Israel, and he was called the Moloch-Yahveh or Moloch-Yava.
23 In time, this tribe of Israel slowly conquered some of the other
24 tribes of the same race, destroyed their Molochs, and declared its
25 own Moloch to be the Supreme Moloch of all the Molochs. And I am
26 sure, most of you know the amount of bloodshed, of tyranny, and of
27 brutal savagery that this religious conquest entailed. Later on, the
28 Babylonians tried to destroy this supremacy of Moloch-Yahveh, but
29 could not succeed in doing so.

30 It seems to me, that such an attempt at tribal self-assertion in
31 religious matters might have taken place on the frontiers and India
32 also. Here, too, all the various tribes of the Aryans might have come
33 into conflict with one another for declaring the supremacy of their
34 several tribal gods; but India's history was to be otherwise, was to
35 be different from that of the Jews. India alone was to be, of all
36 lands, the land of toleration and of spirituality; and therefore the
37 fight between tribes and their gods did not long take place here.
38 For one of the greatest sages that was ever born found out here in
39 India even at that distant time, which history cannot reach, and into
40 whose gloom even tradition itself dares not peep--in that distant
41 time the sage arose and declared, {Sanskrit}--"He who exists is
42 one; the sages call Him variously." This is one of the most
43 memorable sentences that was ever uttered, one of the grandest
44 truths that was ever discovered. And for us Hindus this truth has
45 been the very backbone of our national existence. For throughout
46 the vistas of the centuries of our national life, this one idea--
47 {Sanskrit}--comes down, gaining in volume and in fullness till it has
48 permeated the whole of our national existence, till it has mingled in
49 our blood, and has become one with us. We live that grand truth in
50 every vein, and our country has become the glorious land of
51 religious toleration. It is here and here alone that they build
52 temples and churches for the religions which have come with the

1 object of condemning our own religion. This is one very great
2 principle that the world is waiting to learn from us. Ay, you little
3 know how much of intolerance is yet abroad. It struck me more
4 than once that I should have to leave my bones on foreign shores
5 owing to the prevalence of religious intolerance. Killing a man is
6 nothing for religion's sake; tomorrow they may do it in the very
7 heart of the boasted civilisation of the West, if today they are not
8 really doing so. Outcasting in its most horrible forms would often
9 come down upon the head of a man in the West if he dared to say a
10 word against his country's accepted religion. They talk glibly and
11 smoothly here in criticism of our caste laws. If you go to the West
12 and live there as I have done, you will know that even some of the
13 biggest professors you hear of are arrant cowards and dare not say,
14 for fear of public opinion, a hundredth part of what they hold to be
15 really true in religious matters.

16 Therefore the world is waiting for this grand idea of universal
17 toleration. It will be a great acquisition to civilisation. Nay, no
18 civilisation can long exist unless this idea enters into it. No
19 civilisation can grow unless fanaticism, bloodshed, and brutality
20 stop. No civilisation can begin to lift up its head until we look
21 charitably upon one another; and the first step towards that much-
22 needed charity is to look charitably and kindly upon the religious
23 convictions of others. Nay more, to understand that not only should
24 we be charitable, but positively helpful to each other, however
25 different our religious ideas and convictions may be. And that is
26 exactly what we do in India as I have just related to you. It is here
27 in India that Hindus have built and are still building churches for
28 Christians and mosques for Mohammedans. That is the thing to do.
29 In spite of their hatred, in spite of their brutality, in spite of their
30 cruelty, in spite of their tyranny, and in spite of the vile language
31 they are given to uttering, we will and must go on building
32 churches for the Christians and mosques for the Mohammedans
33 until we conquer through love, until we have demonstrated to the
34 world that love alone is the fittest thing to survive and not hatred,
35 that it is gentleness that has the strength to live on and to fructify,
36 and not mere brutality and physical force.

37 The other great idea that the world wants from us today, the
38 thinking part of Europe, nay, the whole world--more, perhaps, the
39 lower classes than the higher, more the masses than the cultured,
40 more the ignorant than the educated, more the weak than the
41 strong--is that eternal grand idea of the spiritual oneness of the
42 whole universe. I need not tell you today, men from Madras
43 University, how the modern researches of the West have
44 demonstrated through physical means the oneness and the
45 solidarity of the whole universe; how, physically speaking, you and
46 I, the sun, moon, and stars are but little waves or wavelets in the
47 midst of an infinite ocean of matter; how Indian psychology
48 demonstrated ages ago that, similarly, both body and mind are but
49 mere names or little wavelets in the ocean of matter, the Samashti;
50 and how, going one step further, it is also shown in the Vedanta that
51 behind that idea of the unity of the whole show, the real Soul is one.
52 There is but one Soul throughout the universe, all is but One

1 Existence. This great idea of the real and basic solidarity of the
2 whole universe has frightened many, even in this country. It even
3 now finds sometimes more opponents than adherents. I tell you,
4 nevertheless, that it is the one great life-giving idea which the
5 world wants from us today, and which the mute masses of India
6 want for their uplifting, for none can regenerate this land of ours
7 without the practical application and effective operation of this
8 ideal of the oneness of things.

9 The rational West is earnestly bent upon seeking out the
10 rationality, the *raison d'être* of all its philosophy and its ethics; and
11 you all know well that ethics cannot be derived from the mere
12 sanction of any personage, however great and divine he may have
13 been. Such an explanation of the authority of ethics appeals no
14 more to the highest of the world's thinkers; they want something
15 more than human sanction for ethical and moral codes to be
16 binding, they want some eternal principle of truth as the sanction of
17 ethics. And where is that eternal sanction to be found except in the
18 only Infinite Reality that exists in you and in me and in all, in the
19 Self, in the Soul? The infinite oneness of the Soul is the eternal
20 sanction of all morality, that you and I are not only brothers--every
21 literature voicing man's struggle towards freedom has preached
22 that for you--but that you and I are really one. This is the dictate of
23 Indian philosophy. This oneness is the rationale of all ethics and all
24 spirituality. Europe wants it today just as much as our downtrodden
25 masses do, and this great principle is even now unconsciously
26 forming the basis of all the latest political and social aspirations
27 that are coming up in England, in Germany, in France, and in
28 America. And mark it, my friends, that in and through all the
29 literature voicing man's struggle towards freedom, towards
30 universal freedom, again and again you find the Indian Vedantic
31 ideals coming out prominently. In some cases the writers do not
32 know the source of their inspiration, in some cases they try to
33 appear very original, and a few there are, bold and grateful enough
34 to mention the source and acknowledge their indebtedness to it.

35 When I was in America, I heard once the complaint made that
36 I was preaching too much of Advaita, and too little of dualism. Ay, I
37 know what grandeur, what oceans of love, what infinite, ecstatic
38 blessings and joy there are in the dualistic love-theories of worship
39 and religion. I know it all. But this is not the time with us to weep
40 even in joy; we have had weeping enough; no more is this the time
41 for us to become soft. This softness has been with us till we have
42 become like masses of cotton and are dead. What our country now
43 wants are muscles of iron and nerves of steel, gigantic wills which
44 nothing can resist, which can penetrate into the mysteries and the
45 secrets of the universe, and will accomplish their purpose in any
46 fashion even if it meant going down to the bottom of the ocean and
47 meeting death face to face. That is what we want, and that can only
48 be created, established, and strengthened by understanding and
49 realising the ideal of the Advaita, that ideal of the oneness of all.
50 Faith, faith, faith in ourselves, faith, faith in God--this is the secret
51 of greatness. If you have faith in all the three hundred and thirty
52 millions of your mythological gods, and in all the gods which

1 foreigners have now and again introduced into your midst, and still
2 have no faith in yourselves, there is no salvation for you. Have faith
3 in yourselves, and stand up on that faith and be strong; that is what
4 we need. Why is it that we three hundred and thirty millions of
5 people have been ruled for the last one thousand years by any and
6 every handful of foreigners who chose to walk over our prostrate
7 bodies? Because they had faith in themselves and we had not. What
8 did I learn in the West, and what did I see behind those frothy
9 sayings of the Christian sects repeating that man was a fallen and
10 hopelessly fallen sinner? There I saw that inside the national hearts
11 of both Europe and America reside the tremendous power of the
12 men's faith in themselves. An English boy will tell you, "I am an
13 Englishman, and I can do anything." The American boy will tell you
14 the same thing, and so will any European boy. Can our boys say the
15 same thing here? No, nor even the boys' fathers. We have lost faith
16 in ourselves. Therefore to preach the Advaita aspect of the Vedanta
17 is necessary to rouse up the hearts of men, to show them the glory
18 of their souls. It is, therefore, that I preach this Advaita; and I do so
19 not as a sectarian, but upon universal and widely acceptable
20 grounds.

21 It is easy to find out the way of reconciliation that will not
22 hurt the dualist or the qualified monist. There is not one system in
23 India which does not hold the doctrine that God is within, that
24 Divinity resides within all things. Every one of our Vedantic systems
25 admits that all purity and perfection and strength are in the soul
26 already. According to some, this perfection sometimes becomes, as
27 it were, contracted, and at other times it becomes expanded again.
28 Yet it is there. According to the Advaita, it neither contracts nor
29 expands, but becomes hidden and uncovered now and again. Pretty
30 much the same thing in effect. The one may be a more logical
31 statement than the other, but as to the result, the practical
32 conclusions, both are about the same; and this is the one central
33 idea which the world stands in need of, and nowhere is the want
34 more felt than in this, our own motherland.

35 Ay, my friends, I must tell you a few harsh truths. I read in the
36 newspaper how, when one of our fellows is murdered or ill-treated
37 by an Englishman, howls go up all over the country; I read and I
38 weep, and the next moment comes to my mind the question: Who is
39 responsible for it all? As a Vedantist I cannot but put that question
40 to myself. The Hindu is a man of introspection; he wants to see
41 things in and through himself, through the subjective vision. I,
42 therefore, ask myself: Who is responsible? And the answer comes
43 every time: Not the English; no, they are not responsible; it is we
44 who are responsible for all our misery and all our degradation, and
45 we alone are responsible. Our aristocratic ancestors went on
46 treading the common masses of our country underfoot, till they
47 become helpless, till under this torment the poor, poor people
48 nearly forgot that they were human beings. They have been
49 compelled to be merely hewers of wood and drawers of water for
50 centuries, so much so, that they are made to believe that they are
51 born as slaves, born as hewers of wood and drawers of water. With
52 all our boasted education of modern times, if anybody says a kind

1 word for them, I often find our men shrink at once from the duty of
2 lifting them up, these poor downtrodden people. Not only so, but I
3 also find that all sorts of most demoniacal and brutal arguments,
4 culled from the crude ideas of hereditary transmission and other
5 such gibberish from the Western world, are brought forward in
6 order to brutalise and tyrannise over the poor all the more. At the
7 Parliament of Religions in America, there came among others a
8 young man, a born Negro, a real African Negro, and he made a
9 beautiful speech. I became interested in the young man and now
10 and then talked to him, but could learn nothing about him. But one
11 day in England, I met some Americans; and this is what they told
12 me. This boy was the son of a Negro chief who lived in the heart of
13 Africa, and that one day another chief became angry with the father
14 of the boy and murdered him and murdered the mother also, and
15 they were cooked and eaten; he ordered the child to be killed also
16 and cooked and eaten; but the boy fled, and after passing through
17 great hardships and having travelled a distance of several hundreds
18 of miles, he reached the seashore, and there he was taken into an
19 American vessel and brought over to America. And this boy made
20 that speech! After that, what was I to think of your doctrine of
21 heredity!

22 Ay, Brahmins, if the Brahmin has more aptitude for learning
23 on the ground of heredity than the Pariah, spend no more money on
24 the Brahmin's education, but spend all on the Pariah. Give to the
25 weak, for there all the gift is needed. If the Brahmin is born clever,
26 he can educate himself without help. If the others are not born
27 clever, let them have all the teaching and teachers they want. This
28 is justice and reason as I understand it. Our poor people, these
29 downtrodden masses of India, therefore, require to hear and to
30 know what they really are. Ay, let every man and woman and child,
31 without respect of caste or birth, weakness or strength, hear and
32 learn that behind the strong and the weak, behind the high and the
33 low, behind every one, there is that Infinite Soul, assuring the
34 infinite possibility and the infinite capacity of all to become great
35 and good. Let us proclaim to every soul: {Sanskrit}--Arise, awake,
36 and stop not till the goal is reached. Arise, awake! Awake from this
37 hypnotism of weakness. *None* is really weak; the soul is infinite,
38 omnipotent, and omniscient. Stand up, assert yourself, proclaim the
39 God within you, do not deny Him! Too much of inactivity, too much
40 of weakness, too much of hypnotism has been and is upon our race.
41 O ye modern Hindus, de-hypnotise yourselves. The way to do that is
42 found in your own sacred books. Teach yourselves, teach every one
43 his real nature, call upon the sleeping soul and see how it awakes.
44 Power will come, glory will come, goodness will come, purity will
45 come, and everything that is excellent will come when this sleeping
46 soul is roused to self-conscious activity. Ay, if there is anything in
47 the Gita that I like, it is these two verses, coming out strong as the
48 very gist, the very essence, of Krishna's teaching--"He who sees the
49 Supreme Lord dwelling alike in all beings, the Imperishable in
50 things that perish, he sees indeed. For seeing the Lord as the same,
51 everywhere present, he does not destroy the Self by the Self, and
52 thus he goes to the highest goal."

1 Thus there is a great opening for the Vedanta to do beneficent
2 work both here and elsewhere. This wonderful idea of the sameness
3 and omnipresence of the Supreme Soul has to be preached for the
4 amelioration and elevation of the human race here as elsewhere.
5 Wherever there is evil and wherever there is ignorance and want of
6 knowledge, I have found out by experience that all evil comes, as
7 our scriptures say, relying upon differences, and that all good
8 comes from faith in equality, in the underlying sameness and
9 oneness of things. This is the great Vedantic ideal. To have the ideal
10 is one thing, and to apply it practically to the details of daily life is
11 quite another thing. It is very good to point out an ideal, but where
12 is the practical way to reach it?

13 Here naturally comes the difficult and the vexed question of
14 caste and of social reformation, which has been uppermost for
15 centuries in the minds of our people. I must frankly tell you that I
16 am neither a caste-breaker nor a mere social reformer. I have
17 nothing to do directly with your castes or with your social
18 reformation. Live in any caste you like, but that is no reason why
19 you should hate another man or another caste. It is love and love
20 alone that I preach, and I base my teaching on the great Vedantic
21 truth of the sameness and omnipresence of the Soul of the
22 Universe. For nearly the past one hundred years, our country has
23 been flooded with social reformers and various social reform
24 proposals. Personally, I have no fault to find with these reformers.
25 Most of them are good, well-meaning men, and their aims too are
26 very laudable on certain points; but it is quite a patent fact that this
27 one hundred years of social reform has produced no permanent and
28 valuable result appreciable throughout the country. Platform
29 speeches have been made by the thousand, denunciations in
30 volumes after volumes have been hurled upon the devoted head of
31 the Hindu race and its civilisation, and yet no good practical result
32 has been achieved; and where is the reason for that? The reason is
33 not hard to find. It is in the denunciation itself. As I told you before,
34 in the first place, we must try to keep our historically acquired
35 character as a people. I grant that we have to take a great many
36 things from other nations, that we have to learn many lessons from
37 outside; but I am sorry to say that most of our modern reform
38 movements have been inconsiderate imitations of Western means
39 and methods of work; and that surely will not do for India;
40 therefore, it is that all our recent reform movements have had no
41 result.

42 In the second place, denunciation is not at all the way to do
43 good. That there are evils in our society even a child can see; and in
44 what society are there no evils? And let me take this opportunity,
45 my countrymen, of telling you that in comparing the different races
46 and nations of the world I have been among, I have come to the
47 conclusion that our people are on the whole the most moral and the
48 most godly, and our institutions are, in their plan and purpose, best
49 suited to make mankind happy. I do not, therefore, want any
50 reformation. My ideal is growth, expansion, development on
51 national lines. As I look back upon the history of my country, I do
52 not find in the whole world another country which has done quite so

1 much for the improvement of the human mind. Therefore I have no
2 words of condemnation for my nation. I tell them, "You have done
3 well; only try to do better." Great things have been done in the past
4 in this land, and there is both time and room for greater things to
5 be done yet. I am sure you know that we cannot stand still. If we
6 stand still, we die. We have either to go forward or to go backward.
7 We have either to progress or to degenerate. Our ancestors did
8 great things in the past, but we have to grow into a fuller life and
9 march beyond even their great achievements. How can we now go
10 back and degenerate ourselves? That cannot be; that must not be;
11 going back will lead to national decay and death. Therefore let us
12 go forward and do yet greater things; that is what I have to tell you.

13 I am no preacher of any momentary social reform. I am not
14 trying to remedy evils, I only ask you to go forward and to complete
15 the practical realisation of the scheme of human progress that has
16 been laid out in the most perfect order by our ancestors. I only ask
17 you to work to realise more and more the Vedantic ideal of the
18 solidarity of man and his inborn divine nature. Had I the time, I
19 would gladly show you how everything we have now to do was laid
20 out years ago by our ancient law-givers, and how they actually
21 anticipated all the different changes that have taken place and are
22 still to take place in our national institutions. They also were
23 breakers of caste, but they were not like our modern men. They did
24 not mean by the breaking of caste that all the people in the city
25 should sit down together to a dinner of beef-steak and champagne,
26 nor that all fools and lunatics in the country should marry when,
27 where, and whom they chose and reduce the country to a lunatic
28 asylum, nor did they believe that the prosperity of a nation is to be
29 gauged by the number of husbands its widows get. I have yet to see
30 such a prosperous nation.

31 The ideal man of our ancestors was the Brahmin. In all our
32 books stands out prominently this ideal of the Brahmin. In Europe
33 there is my Lord the Cardinal, who is struggling hard and spending
34 thousands of pounds to prove the nobility of his ancestors, and he
35 will not be satisfied until he has traced his ancestry to some
36 dreadful tyrant who lived on a hill and watched the people passing
37 by, and whenever he had the opportunity, sprang out on them and
38 robbed them. That was the business of these nobility-bestowing
39 ancestors, and my Lord Cardinal is not satisfied until he can trace
40 his ancestry to one of these. In India, on the other hand, the
41 greatest princes seek to trace their descent to some ancient sage
42 who dressed in a bit of loin-cloth, lived in a forest, eating roots and
43 studying the Vedas. It is there that the Indian prince goes to trace
44 his ancestry. You are of the high caste when you can trace your
45 ancestry to a Rishi, and not otherwise.

46 Our ideal of high birth, therefore, is different from that of
47 others. Our ideal is the Brahmin of spiritual culture and
48 renunciation. By the Brahmin ideal what do I mean? I mean the
49 ideal Brahmin-ness in which worldliness is altogether absent and
50 true wisdom is abundantly present. That is the ideal of the Hindu
51 race. Have you not heard how it is declared that he, the Brahmin, is
52 not amenable to law, that he has no law, that he is not governed by

1 kings, and that his body cannot be hurt? That is perfectly true. Do
2 not understand it in the light thrown upon it by interested and
3 ignorant fools, but understand it in the light of the true and original
4 Vedantic conception. If the Brahmin is he who has killed all
5 selfishness and who lives and works to acquire and propagate
6 wisdom and the power of love--if a country is altogether inhabited
7 by such Brahmins, by men and women who are spiritual and moral
8 and good, is it strange to think of that country as being above and
9 beyond all law? What police, what military are necessary to govern
10 them? Why should any one govern them at all? Why should they live
11 under a government? They are good and noble, and they are the
12 men of God; these are our ideal Brahmins, and we read that in the
13 Satya Yuga there was only one caste, and that was the Brahmin. We
14 read in the Mahabharata that the whole world was in the beginning
15 peopled with Brahmins, and that as they began to degenerate, they
16 became divided into different castes, and that when the cycle turns
17 round, they will all go back to that Brahminical origin. This cycle is
18 turning round now, and I draw your attention to this fact. Therefore
19 our solution of the caste question is not degrading those who are
20 already high up, is not running amuck through food and drink, is
21 not jumping out of our own limits in order to have more enjoyment,
22 but it comes by every one of us, fulfilling the dictates of our
23 Vedantic religion, by our attaining spirituality, and by our becoming
24 the ideal Brahmin. There is a law laid on each one of you in this
25 land by your ancestors, whether you are Aryans or non-Aryans,
26 Rishis or Brahmins, or the very lowest outcasts. The command is
27 the same to you all, that you must make progress without stopping,
28 and that from the highest man to the lowest Pariah, every one in
29 this country has to try and become the ideal Brahmin. This Vedantic
30 ideal is applicable not only here but over the whole world. Such is
31 our ideal of caste as meant for raising all humanity slowly and
32 gently towards the realisation of that great ideal of the spiritual
33 man who is non-resisting, calm, steady, worshipful, pure, and
34 meditative. In that ideal there is God.

35 How are these things to be brought about? I must again draw
36 your attention to the fact that cursing and vilifying and abusing do
37 not and cannot produce anything good. They have been tried for
38 years and years, and no valuable result has been obtained. Good
39 results can be produced only through love, through sympathy. It is a
40 great subject, and it requires several lectures to elucidate all the
41 plans that I have in view, and all the ideas that are, in this
42 connection, coming to my mind day after day. I must, therefore,
43 conclude, only reminding you of this fact that this ship of our
44 nation, O Hindus, has been usefully plying here for ages. Today,
45 perhaps, it has sprung a leak; today, perhaps, it has become a little
46 worn out. And if such is the case, it behoves you and me to try our
47 best to stop the leak and holes. Let us tell our countrymen of the
48 danger, let them awake and help us. I will cry at the top of my voice
49 from one part of this country to the other, to awaken the people to
50 the situation and their duty. Suppose they do not hear me, still I
51 shall not have one word of abuse for them, not one word of cursing.
52 Great has been our nation's work in the past; and if we cannot do
53 greater things in the future, let us have this consolation that we can

1 sink and die together in peace. Be patriots, love the race which has
2 done such great things for us in the past. Ay, the more I compare
3 notes, the more I love you, my fellow-countrymen; you are good and
4 pure and gentle. You have been always tyrannised over, and such is
5 the irony of this material word of Maya. Never mind that; the Spirit
6 will triumph in the long run. In the meanwhile let us work and let us
7 not abuse our country, let us not curse and abuse the weather-
8 beaten and work-worn institutions of our thrice-holy motherland.
9 Have no word of condemnation even for the most superstitious and
10 the most irrational of its institutions, for they also must have served
11 some good in the past. Remember always that there is not in the
12 world any other country whose institutions are really better in their
13 aims and objects than the institutions of this land. I have seen
14 castes in almost every country of the world, but nowhere is their
15 plan and purpose so glorious as here. If caste is thus unavoidable, I
16 would rather have a caste of purity and culture and self-sacrifice,
17 than a caste of dollars. Therefore utter no words of condemnation.
18 Close your lips and let your hearts open. Work out the salvation of
19 this land and of the whole world, each of you thinking that the
20 entire burden is on your shoulders. Carry the light and the life of
21 the Vedanta to every door, and rouse up the divinity that is hidden
22 within every soul. Then, whatever may be the measure of your
23 success, you will have this satisfaction that you have lived, worked,
24 and died for a great cause. In the success of this cause, howsoever
25 brought about, is centred the salvation of humanity here and
26 hereafter.

REPLY TO THE ADDRESS OF WELCOME AT MADRAS

{Address of Welcome}

When the addresses had been read, the Swami left the hall and mounted to the box seat of a carriage in waiting. Owing to the intense enthusiasm of the large crowd assembled to welcome him, the Swami was only able to make the following short reply, postponing his reply proper to a future occasion:

Man proposes and God disposes. It was proposed that the addresses and the replies should be carried in the English fashion. But here God disposes--I am speaking to a scattered audience from a chariot in the Gita fashion. Thankful we are, therefore, that it should have happened so. It gives a zest to the speech, and strength to what I am going to tell you. I do not know whether my voice will reach all of you, but I will try my best. I never before had an opportunity of addressing a large open-air meeting.

The wonderful kindness, the fervent and enthusiastic joy with which I have been received from Colombo to Madras, and seem likely to be received all over India, have passed even my most sanguine expectations; but that only makes me glad, for it proves the assertion which I have made again and again in the past that as each nation has one ideal as its vitality, as each nation has one particular groove which is to become its own, so religion is the peculiarity of the growth of the Indian mind. In other parts of the world, religion is one of the many considerations, in fact it is a minor occupation. In England, for instance, religion is part of the national policy. The English Church belongs to the ruling class, and as such, whether they believe in it or not, they all support it, thinking that it is their Church. Every gentleman and every lady is expected to belong to that Church. It is a sign of gentility. So with other countries, there is a great national power; either it is represented by politics or it is represented by some intellectual pursuits; either it is represented by militarism or by commercialism. There the heart of the nation beats, and religion is one of the many secondary ornamental things which that nation possesses.

Here in India, it is religion that forms the very core of the national heart. It is the backbone, the bed-rock, the foundation upon which the national edifice has been built. Politics, power, and even intellect form a secondary consideration here. Religion, therefore, is the one consideration in India. I have been told a hundred times of the want of information there is among the masses of the Indian people; and that is true. Landing in Colombo I found not one of them had heard of the political upheavals going on in Europe--the changes, the downfall of ministries, and so forth. Not one of them had heard of what is meant by socialism, and anarchism, and of this and that change in the political atmosphere

1 of Europe. But that there was a Sannyasin from India sent over to
2 the Parliament of Religions, and that he had achieved some sort of
3 success had become known to every man, woman, and child in
4 Ceylon. It proves that there is no lack of information, nor lack of
5 desire for information where it is of the character that suits them,
6 when it falls in line with the necessities of their life. Politics and all
7 these things never formed a necessity of Indian life, but religion
8 and spirituality have been the one condition upon which it lived and
9 thrived and has got to live in the future.

10 Two great problems are being decided by the nations of the
11 world. India has taken up one side, and the rest of the world has
12 taken the other side. And the problem is this: who is to survive?
13 What makes one nation survive and the others die? Should love
14 survive or hatred, should enjoyment survive or renunciation, should
15 matter survive or the spirit, in the struggle of life? We think as our
16 ancestors did, away back in pre-historic ages. Where even tradition
17 cannot pierce the gloom of that past, there our glorious ancestors
18 have taken up their side of the problem and have thrown the
19 challenge to the world. Our solution is renunciation, giving up,
20 fearlessness, and love; these are the fittest to survive. Giving up the
21 senses makes a nation survive. As a proof of this, here is history
22 today telling us of mushroom nations rising and falling almost every
23 century--starting up from nothingness, making vicious play for a
24 few days, and then melting. This big, gigantic race which had to
25 grapple with some of the greatest problems of misfortunes,
26 dangers, and vicissitudes such as never fell upon the head of any
27 other nation of the world, survives because it has taken the side of
28 renunciation; for without renunciation how can there be religion?
29 Europe is trying to solve the other side of the problem as to how
30 much a man can have, how much more power a man can possess by
31 hook or by crook, by some means or other. Competition--cruel, cold,
32 and heartless--is the law of Europe. Our law is caste--the breaking
33 of competition, checking its forces, mitigating its cruelties,
34 smoothing the passage of the human soul through this mystery of
35 life.

36 At this stage the crowd became so unmanageable that the
37 Swami could not make himself heard to advantage. He therefore
38 ended his address with these words:

39 Friends, I am very much pleased with your enthusiasm. It is
40 marvellous. Do not think that I am displeased with you at all; I am,
41 on the other hand, intensely pleased at the show of enthusiasm.
42 That is what is required--tremendous enthusiasm. Only make it
43 permanent; keep it up. Let not the fire die out. We want to work out
44 great things in India. For that I require your help; such enthusiasm
45 is necessary. It is impossible to hold this meeting any longer. I thank
46 you very much for your kindness and enthusiastic welcome. In calm
47 moments we shall have better thoughts and ideas to exchange; now
48 for the time, my friends, good-bye.

49 It is impossible to address you on all sides, therefore you
50 must content yourselves this evening with merely seeing me. I will
51 reserve my speech for some other occasion. I thank you very much
52 for your enthusiastic welcome.

MY PLAN OF CAMPAIGN

(Delivered at the Victoria Hall, Madras)

As the other day we could not proceed, owing to the crowd, I shall take this opportunity of thanking the people of Madras for the uniform kindness that I have received at their hands. I do not know how better to express my gratitude for the beautiful words that have been expressed in the addresses than by praying to the Lord to make me worthy of the kind and generous expressions and by working all my life for the cause of our religion and to serve our motherland; and may the Lord make me worthy of them.

With all my faults, I think I have a little bit of boldness. I had a message from India to the West, and boldly I gave it to the American and the English peoples. I want, before going into the subject of the day, to speak a few bold words to you all. There have been certain circumstances growing around me, tending to thwart me, oppose my progress, and crush me out of existence if they could. Thank God they have failed, as such attempts will always fail. But there has been, for the last three years, a certain amount of misunderstanding, and so long as I was in foreign lands, I held my peace and did not even speak one word; but now, standing upon the soil of my motherland, I want to give a few words of explanation. Not that I care what the result will be of these words--not that I care what feeling I shall evoke from you by these words. I care very little, for I am the same Sannyasin that entered your city about four years ago with this staff and Kamandalu; the same broad world is before me. Without further preface let me begin.

First of all, I have to say a few words about the Theosophical Society. It goes without saying that a certain amount of good work has been done to India by the Society; as such every Hindu is grateful to it, and especially to Mrs. Besant; for though I know very little of her, yet what little I know has impressed me with the idea that she is a sincere well-wisher of this motherland of ours, and that she is doing the best in her power to raise our country. For that, the eternal gratitude of every true-born Indian is hers, and all blessings be on her and hers for ever. But that is one thing--and joining the Society of the Theosophists is another. Regard and estimation and love are one thing, and swallowing everything any one has to say, without reasoning, without criticising, without analysing, is quite another. There is a report going round that the Theosophists helped the little achievements of mine in America and England. I have to tell you plainly that every word of it is wrong, every word of it is untrue. We hear so much tall talk in this world, of liberal ideas and sympathy with differences of opinion. That is very good, but as a fact, we find that one sympathises with another only so long as the other believes in everything he has to say, but as soon as he dares to differ, that sympathy is gone, that love vanishes. There are others, again, who have their own axes to grind, and if anything arises in a country which prevents the grinding of them, their hearts burn, any amount of hatred comes out, and they do not know

1 what to do. What harm does it do to the Christian missionary that
2 the Hindus are trying to cleanse their own houses? What injury will
3 it do to the Brahmo Samaj and other reform bodies that the Hindus
4 are trying their best to reform themselves? Why should they stand
5 in opposition? Why should they be the greatest enemies of these
6 movements? Why?--I ask. It seems to me that their hatred and
7 jealousy are so bitter that no why or how can be asked there.

8 Four years ago, when I, a poor, unknown, friendless
9 Sannyasin was going to America, going beyond the waters to
10 America without any introductions or friends there, I called on the
11 leader of the Theosophical Society. Naturally I thought he, being an
12 American and a lover of India, perhaps would give me a letter of
13 introduction to somebody there. He asked me, "Will you join my
14 Society?" "No," I replied, "how can I? For I do not believe in most of
15 your doctrines." "Then, I am sorry, I cannot do anything for you," he
16 answered. That was not paving the way for me. I reached America,
17 as you know, through the help of a few friends in Madras. Most of
18 them are present here. Only one is absent, Mr. Justice Subramania
19 Iyer, to whom my deepest gratitude is due. He has the insight of a
20 genius and is one of the staunchest friends I have in this life, a true
21 friend indeed, a true child of India. I arrived in America several
22 months before the Parliament of Religions began. The money I had
23 with me was little, and it was soon spent. Winter approached, and I
24 had only thin summer clothes. I did not know what to do in that
25 cold, dreary climate, for if I went to beg in the streets, the result
26 would have been that I would have been sent to jail. There I was
27 with the last few dollars in my pocket. I sent a wire to my friends in
28 Madras. This came to be known to the Theosophists, and one of
29 them wrote, "Now the devil is going to die; God bless us all." Was
30 that paving the way for me? I would not have mentioned this now;
31 but, as my countrymen wanted to know, it must come out. For three
32 years I have not opened my lips about these things; silence has
33 been my motto; but today the thing has come out. That was not all. I
34 saw some Theosophists in the Parliament of Religions, and I wanted
35 to talk and mix with them. I remember the looks of scorn which
36 were on their faces, as much as to say, "What business has the
37 worm to be here in the midst of the gods?" After I had got name and
38 fame at the Parliament of Religions, then came tremendous work
39 for me; but at every turn the Theosophists tried to cry me down.
40 Theosophists were advised not to come and hear my lectures, for
41 thereby they would lose all sympathy of the Society, because the
42 laws of the esoteric section declare that any man who joins that
43 esoteric section should receive instruction from Kuthumi and Moria,
44 of course through their visible representatives--Mr. Judge and Mrs.
45 Besant--so that, to join the esoteric section means to surrender
46 one's independence. Certainly I could not do any such thing, nor
47 could I call any man a Hindu who did any such thing. I had a great
48 respect for Mr. Judge. He was a worthy man, open, fair, simple, and
49 he was the best representative the Theosophists ever had. I have no
50 right to criticise the dispute between him and Mrs. Besant when
51 each claims that his or her Mahatma is right. And the strange part
52 of it is that the same Mahatma is claimed by both. Lord knows the
53 truth: He is the Judge, and no one has the right to pass judgment

1 when the balance is equal. Thus they prepared the way for me all
2 over America!

3 They joined the other opposition--the Christian missionaries.
4 There is not one black lie imaginable that these latter did not invent
5 against me. They blackened my character from city to city, poor and
6 friendless though I was in a foreign country. They tried to oust me
7 from every house and to make every man who became my friend my
8 enemy. They tried to starve me out; and I am sorry to say that one
9 of my own countrymen took part against me in this. He is the leader
10 of a reform party in India. This gentleman is declaring every day,
11 "Christ has come to India." Is this the way Christ is to come to
12 India? Is this the way to reform India? And this gentleman I knew
13 from my childhood; he was one of my best friends; when I saw him--
14 I had not met for a long time one of my countrymen--I was so glad,
15 and this was the treatment I received from him. The day the
16 Parliament cheered me, the day I became popular in Chicago, from
17 that day his tone changed; and in an underhand way, he tried to do
18 everything he could to injure me. Is that the way that Christ will
19 come to India? Is that the lesson that he had learnt after sitting
20 twenty years at the feet of Christ? Our great reformers declare that
21 Christianity and Christian power are going to uplift the Indian
22 people. Is that the way to do it? Surely, if that gentleman is an
23 illustration, it does not look very hopeful.

24 One word more: I read in the organ of the social reformers
25 that I am called a Shudra and am challenged as to what right a
26 Shudra has to become a Sannyasin. To which I reply: I trace my
27 descent to one at whose feet every Brahmin lays flowers when he
28 utters the words--{Sanskrit}--and whose descendants are the
29 purest of Kshatriyas. If you believe in your mythology or your
30 Pauranika scriptures, let these so-called reformers know that my
31 caste, apart from other services of the past, ruled half of India for
32 centuries. If my caste is left out of consideration, what will there be
33 left of the present-day civilisation of India? In Bengal alone, my
34 blood has furnished them with their greatest philosopher, the
35 greatest poet, the greatest historian, the greatest archaeologist, the
36 greatest religious preacher; my blood has furnished India with the
37 greatest of her modern scientists. These detractors ought to have
38 known a little of our own history, and to have studied our three
39 castes, and learnt that the Brahmin, the Kshatriya, and the Vaishya
40 have equal right to be Sannyasins: the Traivarnikas have equal
41 right to the Vedas. This is only by the way. I just refer to this, but I
42 am not at all hurt if they call me a Shudra. It will be a little
43 reparation for the tyranny of my ancestors over the poor. If I am a
44 Pariah, I will be all the more glad, for I am the disciple of a man,
45 who--the Brahmin of Brahmins--wanted to cleanse the house of a
46 Pariah. Of course the Pariah would not allow him; how could he let
47 this Brahmin Sannyasin come and cleanse his house! And this man
48 woke up in the dead of night, entered surreptitiously the house of
49 this Pariah, cleansed his latrine, and with his long hair wiped the
50 place, and that he did day after day in order that he might make
51 himself the servant of all. I bear the feet of that man on my head; he
52 is my hero; that hero's life I will try to imitate. By being the servant

1 of all, a Hindu seeks to uplift himself. That is how the Hindus should
2 uplift the masses, and not by looking for any foreign influence.
3 Twenty years of occidental civilisation brings to my mind the
4 illustration of the man who wants to starve his own friend in a
5 foreign land, simply because this friend is popular, simply because
6 he thinks that this man stands in the way of his making money. And
7 the other is the illustration of what genuine, orthodox Hinduism
8 itself will do at home. Let any one of our reformers bring out that
9 life, ready to serve even a Pariah, and then I will sit at his feet and
10 learn, and not before that. One ounce of practice is worth twenty
11 thousand tons of big talk.

1 Now I come to the reform societies in Madras. They have
2 been very kind to me. They have given me very kind words, and
3 they have pointed out, and I heartily agree with them, that there is
4 a difference between the reformers of Bengal and those of Madras.
5 Many of you will remember what I have very often told you, that
6 Madras is in a very beautiful state just now. It has not got into the
7 play of action and reaction as Bengal has done. Here there is steady
8 and slow progress all through; here is growth, and not reaction. In
9 many cases, and to a certain extent, there is a revival in Bengal; but
10 in Madras it is not a revival, it is a growth, a natural growth. As
11 such, I entirely agree with what the reformers point out as the
12 difference between the two peoples; but there is one difference
13 which they do not understand. Some of these societies, I am afraid,
14 try to intimidate me to join them. That is a strange thing for them to
15 attempt. A man who has met starvation face to face for fourteen
16 years of his life, who has not known where he will get a meal the
17 next day and where to sleep, cannot be intimidated so easily. A
18 man, almost without clothes, who dared to live where the
19 thermometer registered thirty degrees below zero, without knowing
20 where the next meal was to come from, cannot be so easily
21 intimidated in India. This is the first thing I will tell them--I have a
22 little will of my own. I have my little experience too; and I have a
23 message for the world which I will deliver without fear and without
24 care for the future. To the reformers I will point out that I am a
25 greater reformer than any one of them. They want to reform only
26 little bits. I want root-and-branch reform. Where we differ is in the
27 method. Theirs is the method of destruction, mine is that of
28 construction. I do not believe in reform; I believe in growth. I do not
29 dare to put myself in the position of God and dictate to our society,
30 "This way thou shouldst move and not that." I simply want to be like
31 the squirrel in the building of Rama's bridge, who was quite content
32 to put on the bridge his little quota of sand-dust. That is my
33 position. This wonderful national machine has worked through
34 ages, this wonderful river of national life is flowing before us. Who
35 knows, and who dares to say, whether it is good and how it shall
36 move? Thousands of circumstances are crowding round it, giving it
37 a special impulse, making it dull at one time and quicker at another.
38 Who dares command its motion? Ours is only to work, as the Gita
39 says, without looking for results. Feed the national life with the fuel
40 it wants, but the growth is its own; none can dictate its growth to it.
41 Evils are plentiful in our society, but so are there evils in every
42 other society. Here the earth is soaked sometimes with widows'
43 tears; there in the West, the air is rent with the sighs of the
44 unmarried. Here poverty is the great bane of life; there the life-
45 weariness of luxury is the great bane that is upon the race. Here
46 men want to commit suicide because they have nothing to eat;
47 there they commit suicide because they have so much to eat. Evil is
48 everywhere; it is like chronic rheumatism. Drive it from the foot, it
49 goes to the head; drive it from there, it goes somewhere else. It is a
50 question of chasing it from place to place; that is all. Ay, children, to
51 try to remedy evil is not the true way. Our philosophy teaches that
52 evil and good are eternally conjoined, the obverse and the reverse
53 of the same coin. If you have one, you must have the other; a wave

1 in the ocean must be at the cost of a hollow elsewhere. Nay, all life
2 is evil. No breath can be breathed without killing some one else; not
3 a morsel of food can be eaten without depriving some one of it. This
4 is the law; this is philosophy. Therefore the only thing we can do is
5 to understand that all this work against evil is more subjective than
6 objective. The work against evil is more educational than actual,
7 however big we may talk. This, first of all, is the idea of work
8 against evil; and it ought to make us calmer, it ought to take
9 fanaticism out of our blood. The history of the world teaches us that
10 wherever there have been fanatical reforms, the only result has
11 been that they have defeated their own ends. No greater upheaval
12 for the establishment of right and liberty can be imagined than the
13 war for the abolition of slavery in America. You all know about it.
14 And what has been its results? The slaves are a hundred times
15 worse off today than they were before the abolition. Before the
16 abolition, these poor negroes were the property of somebody, and,
17 as properties, they had to be looked after, so that they might not
18 deteriorate. Today they are the property of nobody. Their lives are
19 of no value; they are burnt alive on mere pretenses. They are shot
20 down without any law for their murderers; for they are niggers,
21 they are not human beings, they are not even animals; and that is
22 the effect of such violent taking away of evil by law or by
23 fanaticism. Such is the testimony of history against every fanatical
24 movement, even for doing good. I have seen that. My own
25 experience has taught me that.

26 Therefore I cannot join any one of these condemning
27 societies. Why condemn? There are evils in every society;
28 everybody knows it. Every child of today knows it; he can stand
29 upon a platform and give us a harangue on the awful evils in Hindu
30 society. Every uneducated foreigner who comes here globe-trotting
31 takes a vanishing railway view of India and lectures most learnedly
32 on the awful evils in India. We admit that there are evils. Everybody
33 can show what evil is, but he is the friend of mankind who finds a
34 way out of the difficulty. Like the drowning boy and the
35 philosopher--when the philosopher was lecturing him, the boy cried,
36 "Take me out of the water first"--so our people cry: "We have had
37 lectures enough, societies enough, papers enough; where is the
38 man who will lend us a hand to drag us out? Where is the man who
39 really loves us? Where is the man who has sympathy for us?" Ay,
40 that man is wanted. That is where I differ entirely from these
41 reform movements. For a hundred years they have been here. What
42 good has been done except the creation of a most vituperative, a
43 most condemnatory literature? Would to God it was not here! They
44 have criticised, condemned, abused the orthodox, until the orthodox
45 have caught their tone and paid them back in their own coin; and
46 the result is the creation of a literature in every vernacular which is
47 the shame of the race, the shame of the country. Is this reform? Is
48 this leading the nation to glory? Whose fault is this?

49 There is, then, another great consideration. Here in India, we
50 have always been governed by kings; kings have made all our laws.
51 Now the kings are gone, and there is no one left to make a move.
52 The government dare not; it has to fashion its ways according to the

1 growth of public opinion. It takes time, quite a long time, to make a
2 healthy, strong, public opinion which will solve its own problems;
3 and in the interim we shall have to wait. The whole problem of
4 social reform, therefore, resolves itself into this: where are those
5 who want reform? Make them first. Where are the people? The
6 tyranny of a minority is the worst tyranny that the world ever sees.
7 A few men who think that certain things are evil will not make a
8 nation move. Why does not the nation move? First educate the
9 nation, create your legislative body, and then the law will be
10 forthcoming. First create the power, the sanction from which the
11 law will spring. The kings are gone; where is the new sanction, the
12 new power of the people? Bring it up. Therefore, even for social
13 reform, the first duty is to educate the people, and you will have to
14 wait till that time comes. Most of the reforms that have been
15 agitated for during the past century have been ornamental. Every
16 one of these reforms only touches the first two castes, and no other.
17 The question of widow marriage would not touch seventy per cent
18 of the Indian women, and all such questions only reach the higher
19 castes of Indian people who are educated, mark you, at the expense
20 of the masses. Every effort has been spent in cleaning their own
21 houses. But that is no reformation. You must go down to the basis of
22 the thing, to the very root of the matter. That is what I call radical
23 reform. Put the fire there and let it burn upwards and make an
24 Indian nation. And the solution of the problem is not so easy, as it is
25 a big and vast one. Be not in a hurry, this problem has been known
26 several hundred years.

27 Today it is the fashion to talk of Buddhism and Buddhistic
28 agnosticism, especially in the South. Little do they dream that this
29 degradation which is with us today has been left by Buddhism. This
30 is the legacy which Buddhism has left to us. You read in books
31 written by men who had never studied the rise and fall of Buddhism
32 that the spread of Buddhism was owing to the wonderful ethics and
33 the wonderful personality of Gautama Buddha. I have every respect
34 and veneration for Lord Buddha, but mark my words, the spread of
35 Buddhism was less owing to the doctrines and the personality of the
36 great preacher, than to the temples that were built, the idols that
37 were erected, and the gorgeous ceremonials that were put before
38 the nation. Thus Buddhism progressed. The little fire-places in the
39 houses in which the people poured their libations were not strong
40 enough to hold their own against these gorgeous temples and
41 ceremonies; but later on the whole thing degenerated. It became a
42 mass of corruption of which I cannot speak before this audience;
43 but those who want to know about it may see a little of it in those
44 big temples, full of sculptures, in Southern India; and this is all the
45 inheritance we have from the Buddhists.

46 Then arose the great reformer Shankaracharya and his
47 followers, and during these hundreds of years, since his time to the
48 present day, there has been the slow bringing back of the Indian
49 masses to the pristine purity of the Vedantic religion. These
50 reformers knew full well the evils which existed, yet they did not
51 condemn. They did not say, "All that you have is wrong, and you
52 must throw it away." It can never be so. Today I read that my friend

1 Dr. Barrows says that in three hundreds years Christianity
2 overthrew the Roman and Greek religious influences. That is not
3 the word of a man who has seen Europe, and Greece, and Rome.
4 The influence of Roman and Greek religion is all there, even in
5 Protestant countries, only with changed names--old gods
6 rechristened in a new fashion. They change their names; the
7 goddesses become Marys and the gods become saints, and the
8 ceremonials become new; even the old title of Pontifex Maximus is
9 there. So sudden changes cannot be and Shankaracharya knew it.
10 So did Ramanuja. The only way left to them was slowly to bring up
11 to the highest ideal the existing religion. If they had sought to apply
12 the other method, they would have been hypocrites, for the very
13 fundamental doctrine of their religion is evolution, the soul going
14 towards the highest goal, through all these various stages and
15 phases, which are, therefore, necessary and helpful. And who dares
16 condemn them?

17 It has become a trite saying that idolatry is wrong, and every
18 man swallows it at the present time without questioning. I once
19 thought so, and to pay the penalty of that I had to learn my lesson
20 sitting at the feet of a man who realised everything through idols; I
21 allude to Ramakrishna Paramahansa. If such Ramakrishna
22 Paramahansas are produced by idol-worship, what will you have--
23 the reformer's creed or any number of idols? I want an answer.
24 Take a thousand idols more if you can produce Ramakrishna
25 Paramahansas through idol-worship, and may God speed you!
26 Produce such noble natures by any means you can. Yet idolatry is
27 condemned! Why? Nobody knows. Because some hundreds of years
28 ago some man of Jewish blood happened to condemn it? That is, he
29 happened to condemn everybody else's idols except his own. If God
30 is represented in any beautiful form or any symbolic form, said the
31 Jew, it is awfully bad; it is sin. But if He is represented in the form
32 of a chest, with two angels sitting on each side, and a cloud hanging
33 over it, it is the holy of holies. If God comes in the form of a dove, it
34 is holy. But if He comes in the form of a cow, it is heathen
35 superstition; condemn it! That is how the world goes. That is why
36 the poet says, "What fools we mortals be!" How difficult it is to look
37 through each other's eyes, and that is the bane of humanity. That is
38 the basis of hatred and jealousy, of quarrel and of fight. Boys,
39 moustached babies, who never went out of Madras, standing up
40 and wanting to dictate laws to three hundred millions of people
41 with thousands of traditions at their back! Are you not ashamed?
42 Stand back from such blasphemy and learn first your lessons!
43 Irreverent boys, simply because you can scrawl a few lines upon
44 paper and get some fool to publish them for you, you think you are
45 the educators of the world, you think you are the public opinion of
46 India! Is it so? This I have to tell to the social reformers of Madras
47 that I have the greatest respect and love for them. I love them for
48 their great hearts and their love for their country, for the poor, for
49 the oppressed. But what I would tell them with a brother's love is
50 that their method is not right; it has been tried a hundred years and
51 failed. Let us try some new method.

52 Did India ever stand in want of reformers? Do you read the

1 history of India? Who was Ramanuja? Who was Shankara? Who was
2 Nanak? Who was Chaitanya? Who was Kabir? Who was Dadu? Who
3 were all these great preachers, one following the other, a galaxy of
4 stars of the first magnitude? Did not Ramanuja feel for the lower
5 classes? Did he not try all his life to admit even the Pariah to his
6 community? Did he not try to admit even Mohammedans to his own
7 fold? Did not Nanak confer with Hindus and Mohammedans, and try
8 to bring about a new state of things? They all tried, and their work
9 is still going on. The difference is this. They had not the fanfaronade
10 of the reformers of today; they had no curses on their lips as
11 modern reformers have; their lips pronounced only blessings. They
12 never condemned. They said to the people that the race must
13 always grow. They looked back and they said, "O Hindus, what you
14 have done is good, but, my brothers, let us do better." They did not
15 say, "You have been wicked, now let us be good." They said, "You
16 have been good, but let us now be better." That makes a whole
17 world of difference. We must grow according to our nature. Vain is
18 it to attempt the lines of action that foreign societies have engrafted
19 upon us; it is impossible. Glory unto God, that it is impossible, that
20 we cannot be twisted and tortured into the shape of other nations. I
21 do not condemn the institutions of other races; they are good for
22 them, but not for us. What is meat for them may be poison for us.
23 This is the first lesson to learn. With other sciences, other
24 institutions, and other traditions behind them, they have got their
25 present system. We, with our traditions, with thousands of years of
26 Karma behind us, naturally can only follow our own bent, run in our
27 own grooves; and that we shall have to do.

28 What is my plan then? My plan is to follow the ideas of the
29 great ancient Masters. I have studied their work, and it has been
30 given unto me to discover the line of action they took. They were
31 the great originators of society. They were the great givers of
32 strength, and of purity, and of life. They did most marvellous work.
33 We have to do most marvellous work also. Circumstances have
34 become a little different, and in consequence the lines of action
35 have to be changed a little, and that is all. I see that each nation,
36 like each individual, has one theme in this life, which is its centre,
37 the principal note round which every other note comes to form the
38 harmony. In one nation political power is its vitality, as in England,
39 artistic life in another, and so on. In India, religious life forms the
40 centre, the keynote of the whole music of national life; and if any
41 nation attempts to throw off its national vitality--the direction which
42 has become its own through the transmission of centuries--that
43 nation dies if it succeeds in the attempt. And, therefore, if you
44 succeed in the attempt to throw off your religion and take up either
45 politics, or society, or any other things as your centre, as the vitality
46 of your national life, the result will be that you will become extinct.
47 To prevent this you must make all and everything work through that
48 vitality of your religion. Let all your nerves vibrate through the
49 backbone of your religion. I have seen that I cannot preach even
50 religion to Americans without showing them its practical effect on
51 social life. I could not preach religion in England without showing
52 the wonderful political changes the Vedanta would bring. So, in
53 India, social reform has to be preached by showing how much more

1 spiritual a life the new system will bring; and politics has to be
2 preached by showing how much it will improve the one thing that
3 the nation wants--its spirituality. Every man has to make his own
4 choice; so has every nation. We made our choice ages ago, and we
5 must abide by it. And, after all, it is not such a bad choice. Is it such
6 a bad choice in this world to think not of matter but of spirit, not of
7 man but of God? That intense faith in another world, that intense
8 hatred for this world, that intense power of renunciation, that
9 intense faith in God, that intense faith in the immortal soul, is in
10 you. I challenge anyone to give it up. You cannot. You may try to
11 impose upon me by becoming materialists, by talking materialism
12 for a few months, but I know what you are; if I take you by the
13 hand, back you come as good theists as ever were born. How can
14 you change your nature?

15 So every improvement in India requires first of all an
16 upheaval in religion. Before flooding India with socialistic or
17 political ideas, first deluge the land with spiritual ideas. The first
18 work that demands our attention is that the most wonderful truths
19 confined in our Upanishads, in our scriptures, in our Puranas must
20 be brought out from the books, brought out from the monasteries,
21 brought out from the forests, brought out from the possession of
22 selected bodies of people, and scattered broadcast all over the land,
23 so that these truths may run like fire all over the country from north
24 to south and east to west, from the Himalayas to Comorin, from
25 Sindh to the Brahmaputra. Everyone must know of them, because it
26 is said, "This has first to be heard, then thought upon, and then
27 meditated upon." Let the people hear first, and whoever helps in
28 making the people hear about the great truths in their own
29 scriptures cannot make for himself a better Karma today. Says our
30 Vyasa, "In the Kali Yuga there is one Karma left. Sacrifices and
31 tremendous Tapasyas are of no avail now. Of Karma one remains,
32 and that is the Karma of giving." And of these gifts, the gift of
33 spirituality and spiritual knowledge is the highest; the next gift is
34 the gift of secular knowledge; the next is the gift of life; and the
35 fourth is the gift of food. Look at this wonderfully charitable race;
36 look at the amount of gifts that are made in this poor, poor country;
37 look at the hospitality where a man can travel from the north to the
38 south, having the best in the land, being treated always by everyone
39 as if he were a friend, and where no beggar starves so long as there
40 is a piece of bread anywhere!

41 In this land of charity, let us take up the energy of the first
42 charity, the diffusion of spiritual knowledge. And that diffusion
43 should not be confined within the bounds of India; it must go out all
44 over the world. This has been the custom. Those that tell you that
45 Indian thought never went outside of India, those that tell you that I
46 am the first Sannyasin who went to foreign lands to preach, do not
47 know the history of their own race. Again and again this
48 phenomenon has happened. Whenever the world has required it,
49 this perennial flood of spirituality has overflowed and deluged the
50 world. Gifts of political knowledge can be made with the blast of
51 trumpets and the march of cohorts. Gifts of secular knowledge and
52 social knowledge can be made with fire and sword. But spiritual

1 knowledge can only be given in silence like the dew that falls
2 unseen and unheard, yet bringing into bloom masses of roses. This
3 has been the gift of India to the world again and again. Whenever
4 there has been a great conquering race, bringing the nations of the
5 world together, making roads and transit possible, immediately
6 India arose and gave her quota of spiritual power to the sum total
7 of the progress to the world. This happened ages before Buddha
8 was born, and remnants of it are still left in China, in Asia Minor,
9 and in the heart of the Malayan Archipelago. This was the case
10 when the great Greek conqueror united the four corners of the then
11 known world; then rushed out Indian spirituality, and the boasted
12 civilisation of the West is but the remnant of that deluge. Now the
13 same opportunity has again come; the power of England has linked
14 the nations of the world together as was never done before. English
15 roads and channels of communication rush from one end of the
16 world to the other. Owing to English genius, the world today has
17 been linked in such a fashion as has never before been done. Today
18 trade centres have been formed such as have never been before in
19 the history of mankind. And immediately, consciously or
20 unconsciously, India rises up and pours forth her gifts of
21 spirituality; and they will rush through these roads till they have
22 reached the very ends of the world. That I went to America was not
23 my doing or your doing; but the God of India who is guiding her
24 destiny sent me, and will send hundreds of such to all the nations of
25 the world. No power on earth can resist it. This also has to be done.
26 You must go out to preach your religion, preach it to every nation
27 under the sun, preach it to every people. This is the first thing to do.
28 And after preaching spiritual knowledge, along with it will come
29 that secular knowledge and every other knowledge that you want;
30 but if you attempt to get the secular knowledge without religion, I
31 tell you plainly, vain is your attempt in India, it will never have a
32 hold on people. Even the great Buddhistic movement was a failure,
33 partially on account of that.

1 Therefore, my friends, my plan is to start institutions in India,
2 to train our young men as preachers of the truths of our scriptures
3 in India and outside India. Men, men, these are wanted: everything
4 else will be ready, but strong, vigorous, believing young men,
5 sincere to the backbone, are wanted. A hundred such and the world
6 becomes revolutionised. The will is stronger than anything else.
7 Everything must go down before the will, for that comes from God
8 and God Himself; a pure and a strong will is omnipotent. Do you not
9 believe in it? Preach, preach unto the world the great truths of your
10 religion; the world waits for them. For centuries people have been
11 taught theories of degradation. They have been told that they are
12 nothing. The masses have been told all over the world that they are
13 not human beings. They have been so frightened for centuries, till
14 they have nearly become animals. Never were they allowed to hear
15 of the Atman. Let them hear of the Atman--that even the lowest of
16 the low have the Atman within, which never dies and never is born--
17 of Him whom the sword cannot pierce, nor the fire burn, nor the air
18 dry--immortal, without beginning or end, the all-pure, omnipotent,
19 and omnipresent Atman! Let them have faith in themselves, for
20 what makes the difference between the Englishman and you? Let
21 them talk their religion and duty and so forth. I have found the
22 difference. The difference is here, that the Englishman believes in
23 himself and you do not. He believes in his being an Englishman, and
24 he can do anything. That brings out the God within him, and he can
25 do anything he likes. You have been told and taught that you can do
26 nothing, and nonentities you are becoming every day. What we want
27 is strength, so believe in yourselves. We have become weak, and
28 that is why occultism and mysticism come to us--these creepy
29 things; there may be great truths in them, but they have nearly
30 destroyed us. Make your nerves strong. What we want is muscles of
31 iron and nerves of steel. We have wept long enough. No more
32 weeping, but stand on your feet and be men. It is a man-making
33 religion that we want. It is man-making theories that we want. It is
34 man-making education all round that we want. And here is the test
35 of truth--anything that makes you weak physically, intellectually,
36 and spiritually, reject as poison; there is no life in it, it cannot be
37 true. Truth is strengthening. Truth is purity, truth is all-knowledge;
38 truth must be strengthening, must be enlightening, must be
39 invigorating. These mysticisms, in spite of some grains of truth in
40 them, are generally weakening. Believe me, I have a lifelong
41 experience of it, and the one conclusion that I draw is that it is
42 weakening. I have travelled all over India, searched almost every
43 cave here, and lived in the Himalayas. I know people who lived
44 there all their lives. I love my nation, I cannot see you degraded,
45 weakened any more than you are now. Therefore I am bound for
46 your sake and for truth's sake to cry, "Hold!" and to raise my voice
47 against this degradation of my race. Give up these weakening
48 mysticisms and be strong. Go back to your Upanishads--the shining,
49 the strengthening, the bright philosophy--and part from all these
50 mysterious things, all these weakening things. Take up this
51 philosophy; the greatest truths are the simplest things in the world,
52 simple as your own existence. The truths of the Upanishads are
53 before you. Take them up, live up to them, and the salvation of India

1 will be at hand.

2 One word more and I have finished. They talk of patriotism. I
3 believe in patriotism, and I also have my own ideal of patriotism.
4 Three things are necessary for great achievements. First, feel from
5 the heart. What is in the intellect or reason? It goes a few steps and
6 there it stops. But through the heart comes inspiration. Love opens
7 the most impossible gates; love is the gate to all the secrets of the
8 universe. Feel, therefore, my would-be reformers, my would-be
9 patriots! Do you feel? Do you feel that millions and millions of the
10 descendants of gods and of sages have become next-door
11 neighbours to brutes? Do you feel that millions are starving today,
12 and millions have been starving for ages? Do you feel that
13 ignorance has come over the land as a dark cloud? Does it make
14 you restless? Does it make you sleepless? Has it gone into your
15 blood, coursing through your veins, becoming consonant with your
16 heartbeats? Has it made you almost mad? Are you seized with that
17 one idea of the misery of ruin, and have you forgotten all about your
18 name, your fame, your wives, your children, your property, even
19 your own bodies? Have you done that? That is the first step to
20 become a patriot, the very first step. I did not go to America, as
21 most of you know, for the Parliament of Religions, but this demon of
22 a feeling was in me and within my soul. I travelled twelve years all
23 over India, finding no way to work for my countrymen, and that is
24 why I went to America. Most of you know that, who knew me then.
25 Who cared about this Parliament of Religions? Here was my own
26 flesh and blood sinking every day, and who cared for them? This
27 was my first step.

28 You may feel, then; but instead of spending your energies in
29 frothy talk, have you found any way out, any practical solution,
30 some help instead of condemnation, some sweet words to soothe
31 their miseries, to bring them out of this living death?

32 Yet that is not all. Have you got the will to surmount
33 mountain-high obstructions? If the whole world stands against you
34 sword in hand, would you still dare to do what you think is right? If
35 your wives and children are against you, if all your money goes,
36 your name dies, your wealth vanishes, would you still stick to it?
37 Would you still pursue it and go on steadily towards your own goal?
38 As the great King Bhartrihari says, "Let the sages blame or let them
39 praise; let the goddess of fortune come or let her go wherever she
40 likes; let death come today, or let it come in hundreds of years; he
41 indeed is the steady man who does not move one inch from the way
42 of truth." Have you got that steadfastness? If you have these three
43 things, each one of you will work miracles. You need not write in
44 the newspapers, you need not go about lecturing; your very face
45 will shine. If you live in a cave, your thoughts will permeate even
46 through the rock walls, will go vibrating all over the world for
47 hundreds of years, maybe, until they will fasten on to some brain
48 and work out there. Such is the power of thought, of sincerity, and
49 of purity of purpose.

50 I am afraid I am delaying you, but one word more. This
51 national ship, my countrymen, my friends, my children--this national
52 ship has been ferrying million and millions of souls across the

1 waters of life. For scores of shining centuries it has been plying
2 across this water, and through its agency, millions of souls have
3 been taken to the other shore, to blessedness. But today, perhaps
4 through your own fault, this boat has become a little damaged, has
5 sprung a leak; and would you therefore curse it? Is it fit that you
6 stand up and pronounce malediction upon it, one that has done
7 more work than any other thing in the world? If there are holes in
8 this national ship, this society of ours, we are its children. Let us go
9 and stop the holes. Let us gladly do it with our hearts' blood; and if
10 we cannot, then let us die. We will make a plug of our brains and
11 put them into the ship, but condemn it never. Say not one harsh
12 word against this society. I love it for its past greatness. I love you
13 all because you are the children of gods, and because you are the
14 children of the glorious forefathers. How then can I curse you!
15 Never. All blessings be upon you! I have come to you, my children,
16 to tell you all my plans. If you hear them I am ready to work with
17 you. But if you will not listen to them, and even kick me out of India,
18 I will come back and tell you that we are all sinking! I am come now
19 to sit in your midst, and if we are to sink, let us all sink together, but
20 never let curses rise to our lips.

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3

VEDANTA IN ITS APPLICATION TO INDIAN LIFE

1 There is a word which has become very common as an
2 appellation of our race and our religion. The word "Hindu" requires
3 a little explanation in connection with what I mean by Vedantism.
4 This word "Hindu" was the name that the ancient Persians used to
5 apply to the river Sindhu. Whenever in Sanskrit there is an "s", in
6 ancient Persian it changes into "h", so that "Sindhu" became
7 "Hindu"; and you are all aware how the Greeks found it hard to
8 pronounce "h" and dropped it altogether, so that we became known
9 as Indians. Now this word "Hindu" as applied to the inhabitants of
10 the other side of the Indus, whatever might have been its meaning
11 in ancient times, has lost all its force in modern times; for all the
12 people that live on this side of the Indus no longer belong to one
13 religion. There are the Hindus proper, the Mohammedans, the
14 Parsees, the Christians, the Buddhists, and Jains. The word "Hindu"
15 in its literal sense ought to include all these; but as signifying the
16 religion, it would not be proper to call all these Hindus. It is very
17 hard, therefore, to find any common name for our religion, seeing
18 that this religion is a collection, so to speak, of various religions, of
19 various ideas, of various ceremonials and forms, all gathered
20 together almost without a name, and without a church, and without
21 an organisation. The only point where, perhaps, all our sects agree
22 is that we all believe in the scriptures--the Vedas. This perhaps is
23 certain that no man can have a right to be called Hindu who does
24 not admit the supreme authority of the Vedas. All these Vedas, as
25 you are aware, are divided into two portions--the Karma Kanda and
26 the Jnana Kanda. The Karma Kanda includes various sacrifices and
27 ceremonials, of which the larger part has fallen into disuse in the
28 present age. The Jnana Kanda, as embodying the spiritual teachings
29 of the Vedas known as the Upanishads and the Vedanta, has always
30 been cited as the highest authority by all our teachers,
31 philosophers, and writers, whether dualist, or qualified monist, or
32 monist. Whatever be his philosophy or sect, every one in India has
33 to find his authority in the Upanishads. If he cannot, his sect would
34 be heterodox. Therefore, perhaps the one name in modern times
35 which would designate every Hindu throughout the land would be
36 "Vedantist" or "Vaidika", as you may put it; and in that sense I
37 always use the words "Vedantism" and "Vedanta". I make to make it
38 a little clearer, for of late, it has become the custom of most people
39 to identify the word Vedanta with the Advaitic system of the
40 Vedanta philosophy. We all know the Advaitism is only one branch of
41 the various philosophic systems that have been founded on the
42 Upanishads. The followers of the Vishishadvaitic system have as
43 much reverence for the Upanishads as the followers of the Advaita,
44 and the Vishishtadvaitists claim as much authority for the Vedanta
45 as the Advaitist. So do the dualists; so does every other sect in
46 India. But the word Vedantist has become somewhat identified in
47 the popular mind with the word Advaitist, and perhaps with some
48 reason, because, although we have the Vedas for our scriptures, we
49 have Smritis and Puranas--subsequent writings--to illustrate the
50 doctrines of the Vedas; these of course have not the same weight as
51 the Vedas. And the law is that wherever these Puranas and Smritis
52 differ from any part of the Shruti, the Shruti must be followed and
53 the Smriti rejected. Now in the expositions of the great Advaitic

1 philosopher Shankara, and the school founded by him, we find most
2 of the authorities cited are from the Upanishads, very rarely is an
3 authority cited from the Smritis, except, perhaps, to elucidate a
4 point which could hardly be found in the Shrutis. On the other
5 hand, other schools take refuge more and more in the Smritis and
6 less and less in the Shrutis; and as we go to the more and more
7 dualistic sects, we find a proportionate quantity of the Smritis
8 quoted, which is out of all proportion to what we should expect
9 from a Vedantist. It is, perhaps, because these gave such
10 predominance to the Pauranika authorities that the Advaitist came
11 to be considered as the Vedantist *par excellence*, if I may say so.

12 However it might have been, the word Vedanta must cover
13 the whole ground of Indian religious life, and being part of the
14 Vedas, by all acceptance it is the most ancient literature that we
15 have; for whatever might be the idea of modern scholars, the
16 Hindus are not ready to admit that parts of the Vedas were written
17 at one time and parts were written at another time. They of course
18 still hold on to their belief that the Vedas as a whole were produced
19 at the same time, rather if I may say so, that they were never
20 produced, but that they always existed in the mind of the Lord. This
21 is what I mean by the word Vedanta, that it covers the ground of
22 dualism, of qualified monism, and Advaitism in India. Perhaps we
23 may even take in parts of Buddhism, and of Jainism too, if they
24 would come in--for our hearts are sufficiently large. But it is they
25 that will not come in, we are ready for upon severe analysis you will
26 always find that the essence of Buddhism was all borrowed from
27 the same Upanishads; even the ethics, the so-called great and
28 wonderful ethics of Buddhism, were there word for word, in some
29 one or other of the Upanishads; and so all the good doctrines of the
30 Jains were there, minus their vagaries. In the Upanishads, also, we
31 find the germs of all the subsequent development of Indian
32 religious thought. Sometimes it has been urged without any ground
33 whatsoever that there is no ideal of Bhakti in the Upanishads.
34 Those that have been students of the Upanishads know that that is
35 not true at all. There is enough of Bhakti in every Upanishad if you
36 will only seek for it; but many of these ideas which are found so
37 fully developed in later times in the Puranas and other Smritis are
38 only in the germ in the Upanishads. The sketch, the skeleton, was
39 there as it were. It was filled in some of the Puranas. But there is
40 not one full-grown Indian ideal that cannot be traced back to the
41 same source--the Upanishads. Certain ludicrous attempts have been
42 made by persons without much Upanishadic scholarship to trace
43 Bhakti to some foreign source; but as you know, these have all been
44 proved to be failures, and all that you want of Bhakti is there, even
45 in the Samhitas, not to speak of the Upanishads--it is there, worship
46 and love and all the rest of it; only the ideals of Bhakti are
47 becoming higher and higher. In the Samhita portions, now and
48 then, you find traces of a religion of fear and tribulation; in the
49 Samhitas now and then you find a worshipper quaking before a
50 Varuna, or some other god. Now and then you will find they are
51 very much tortured by the idea of sin, but the Upanishads have no
52 place for the delineation of these things. There is no religion of fear
53 in the Upanishads; it is one of Love and one of Knowledge.

1 These Upanishads are our scriptures. They have been
2 differently explained, and, as I have told you already, whenever
3 there is a difference between subsequent Pauranika literature and
4 the Vedas, the Puranas must give way. But it is at the same time
5 true that, as a practical result, we find ourselves ninety per cent
6 Pauranika and ten per cent Vaidika--even if so much as that. And we
7 all find the most contradictory usages prevailing in our midst and
8 also religious opinions prevailing in our society which scarcely have
9 any authority in the scriptures of the Hindus; and in many cases we
10 read in books, and see with astonishment, customs of the country
11 that neither have their authority in the Vedas nor in the Smritis or
12 Puranas, but are simply local. And yet each ignorant villager thinks
13 that if that little local custom dies out, he will no more remain a
14 Hindu. In his mind Vedantism and these little local customs have
15 been indissolubly identified. In reading the scriptures it is hard for
16 him to understand that what he is doing has not the sanction of the
17 scriptures, and that the giving up of them will not hurt him at all,
18 but on the other hand will make him a better man. Secondly, there
19 is the other difficulty. These scriptures of ours have been very vast.
20 We read in the *Mahabhashya* of Patanjali, that great philological
21 work, that the Sama-Veda had one thousand branches. Where are
22 they all? Nobody knows. So with each of the Vedas; the major
23 portion of these books have disappeared, and it is only the minor
24 portion that remains to us. They were all taken charge of by
25 particular families; and either these families died out, or were killed
26 under foreign persecution, or somehow became extinct; and with
27 them, that branch of the learning of the Vedas they took charge of
28 became extinct also. This fact we ought to remember, as it always
29 forms the sheet-anchor in the hands of those who want to preach
30 anything new or to defend anything even against the Vedas.
31 Wherever in India there is a discussion between local custom and
32 the Shrutis, and whenever it is pointed out that the local custom is
33 against the scriptures, the argument that is forwarded is that it is
34 not, that the customs existed in the branch of the Shrutis which has
35 become extinct and so has been a recognised one. In the midst of
36 all these varying methods of reading and commenting on our
37 scriptures, it is very difficult indeed to find the thread that runs
38 through all of them; for we become convinced at once that there
39 must be some common ground underlying all these varying
40 divisions and subdivisions. There must be harmony, a common plan,
41 upon which all these little bits of buildings have been constructed,
42 some basis common to this apparently hopeless mass of confusion
43 which we call our religion. Otherwise it could not have stood so
44 long, it could not have endured so long.

45 Coming to our commentators again, we find another difficulty.
46 The Advaitic commentator, whenever an Advaitic text comes,
47 preserves it just as it is; but the same commentator, as soon as a
48 dualistic text presents itself, tortures it if he can, and brings the
49 most queer meaning out of it. Sometimes the "Unborn" becomes a
50 "goat", such are the wonderful changes effected. To suit the
51 commentator, "Aja" the Unborn is explain as "Ajâ" a she-goat. In the
52 same way, if not in a still worse fashion, the texts are handled by
53 the dualistic commentator. Every dualistic text is preserved, and

1 every text that speaks of non-dualistic philosophy is tortured in any
2 fashion he likes. This Sanskrit language is so intricate, the Sanskrit
3 of the Vedas is so ancient, and the Sanskrit philology so perfect,
4 that any amount of discussion can be carried on for ages in regard
5 to the meaning of one word. If Pandit takes it into his head, he can
6 render anybody's prattle into correct Sanskrit by force of argument
7 and quotation of texts and rules. These are the difficulties in our
8 way of understanding the Upanishads. It was given to me to live
9 with a man who was as ardent a dualist, as ardent an Advaitist, as
10 ardent a Bhakta, as a Jnani. And living with this man first put it into
11 my head to understand the Upanishads and the texts of the
12 scriptures from an independent and better basis than by blindly
13 following the commentators; and in my opinion and in my
14 researches, I came to the conclusion that these texts are not at all
15 contradictory. So we need have no fear of text-torturing at all! The
16 texts are beautiful, ay, they are the most wonderful; and they are
17 not contradictory, but wonderfully harmonious, one idea leading up
18 to the other. But the one fact I found is that in all the Upanishads,
19 they begin with dualistic ideas, with worship and all that, and end
20 with a grand flourish of Advaitic ideas.

21 Therefore I now find in the light of this man's life that the
22 dualist and the Advaitist need not fight each other. Each has a
23 place, and a great place in the national life. The dualist must
24 remain, for he is as much part and parcel of the national religious
25 life as the Advaitist. One cannot exist without the other; one is the
26 fulfilment of the other; one is the building, the other is the top; the
27 one the root, the other the fruit, and so on. Therefore any attempt
28 to torture the texts of the Upanishads appears to me very
29 ridiculous. I begin to find out that the language is wonderful. Apart
30 from all its merits as the greatest philosophy, apart from its
31 wonderful merit as theology, as showing the path of salvation to
32 mankind, the Upanishadic literature is the most wonderful painting
33 of sublimity that the world has. Here comes out in full force that
34 individuality of the human mind, that introspective, intuitive Hindu
35 mind. We have paintings of sublimity elsewhere in all nations, but
36 almost without exception you will find that their ideal is to grasp the
37 sublime in the muscles. Take for instance, Milton, Dante, Homer, or
38 any of the Western poets. There are wonderfully sublime passages
39 in them; but there it is always a grasping at infinity through the
40 senses, the muscles, getting the ideal of infinite expansion, the
41 infinite of space. We find the same attempts made in the Samhita
42 portion. You know some of those wonderful Riks where creation is
43 described; the very heights of expression of the sublime in
44 expansion and the infinite in space are attained. But they found out
45 very soon that the Infinite cannot be reached in that way, that even
46 infinite space, and expansion, and infinite external nature could not
47 express the ideas that were struggling to find expression in their
48 minds, and so they fell back upon other explanations. The language
49 became new in the Upanishads; it is almost negative, it is
50 sometimes, chaotic, sometimes taking you beyond the senses,
51 pointing out to you something which you cannot grasp, which you
52 cannot sense, and at the same time you feel certain that it is there.
53 What passage in the world can compare with this?--

1 {Sanskrit}--"There the sun cannot illumine, nor the moon nor the
2 stars, the flash of lightning cannot illumine the place, what to speak
3 of this mortal fire." Again, where can you find a more perfect
4 expression of the whole philosophy of the world, the gist of what
5 the Hindus ever thought, the whole dream of human salvation,
6 painted in language more wonderful, in figure more marvellous
7 than this?

8 {Sanskrit}

9 Upon the same tree there are two birds of beautiful plumage,
10 most friendly to each other, one eating the fruits, the other sitting
11 there calm and silent without eating--the one on the lower branch
12 eating sweet and bitter fruits in turn and becoming happy and
13 unhappy, but the other one on the top, calm and majestic; he eats
14 neither sweet nor bitter fruits, cares neither for happiness nor
15 misery, immersed in his own glory. This is the picture of the human
16 soul. Man is eating the sweet and bitter fruits of this life, pursuing
17 gold, pursuing his senses, pursuing the vanities of life--hopelessly,
18 madly careering he goes. In other places the Upanishads have
19 compared the human soul to the charioteer, and the senses to the
20 mad horses unrestrained. Such is the career of men pursuing the
21 vanities of life--hopelessly, madly careering he goes. In other places
22 the Upanishads have compared the human soul to the charioteer,
23 and the senses to the mad horses unrestrained. Such is the career
24 of men pursuing the vanities of life, children dreaming golden
25 dreams only to find that they are but vain, and old men chewing the
26 cud of their past deeds, and yet not knowing how to get out of this
27 network. This is the world. Yet in the life of every one there come
28 golden moments; in the midst of the deepest sorrows, nay, of the
29 deepest joys, there come moments when a part of the cloud that
30 hides the sunlight moves away as it were, and we catch a glimpse,
31 in spite of ourselves of something beyond--away, away beyond the
32 life of the senses; away, away beyond its vanities, its joys, and its
33 sorrows; away, away beyond nature, or our imaginations of
34 happiness here or hereafter; away beyond all thirst for gold, or for
35 fame, or for name, or for posterity. Man stops for a moment at this
36 glimpse and sees the other bird calm and majestic, eating neither
37 sweet nor bitter fruits, but immersed in his own glory, Self-content,
38 Self-satisfied. As the Gita says, {Sanskrit}--"He whose devotion is to
39 the Atman, he who does not want anything beyond Atman, he who
40 has become satisfied in the Atman, what work is there for him to
41 do?" Why should he drudge? Man catches a glimpse, then again he
42 forgets and goes on eating the sweet and bitter fruits of life;
43 perhaps after a time he catches another glimpse, and the lower bird
44 goes nearer and nearer to the higher bird as blows after blows are
45 received. If he be fortunate to receive hard knocks, then he comes
46 nearer and nearer to his companion, the other bird, his life, his
47 friend; and as he approaches him, he finds that the light from the
48 higher bird is playing round his own plumage; and as he comes
49 nearer and nearer, lo! the transformation is going on. The nearer
50 and nearer he comes, he finds himself melting away, as it were,
51 until he has entirely disappeared. He did not really exist; it was but
52 the reflection of the other bird who was there calm and majestic

1 amidst the moving leaves. It was all his glory, that upper bird's. He
2 then becomes fearless, perfectly satisfied, calmly serene. In this
3 figure, the Upanishads take you from the dualistic to the utmost
4 Advaitic conception.

5 Endless examples can be cited, but we have no time in this
6 lecture to do that or to show the marvellous poetry of the
7 Upanishads, the painting of the sublime, the grand conceptions. But
8 one other idea I must note, that the language and the thought and
9 everything come direct, they fall upon you like a sword-blade,
10 strong as the blows of a hammer they come. There is no mistaking
11 their meanings. Every tone of that music is firm and produces its
12 full effect; no gyrations, no mad words, no intricacies in which the
13 brain is lost. No signs of degradation are there--no attempts at too
14 much allegorising, too much piling of adjectives after adjectives,
15 making it more and more intricate, till the whole of the sense is
16 lost, and the brain becomes giddy, and man does not know his way
17 out from the maze of that literature. There was none of that yet. If it
18 be human literature, it must be the production of a race which had
19 not yet lost any of its national vigour.

20 Strength, strength is what the Upanishads speak to me from
21 every page. This is the one great thing to remember, it has been the
22 one great lesson I have been taught in my life; strength, it says,
23 strength, O man, be not weak. Are there no human weaknesses?--
24 says man. There are, say the Upanishads, but will more weakness
25 heal them, would you try to wash dirt with dirt? Will sin cure sin,
26 weakness cure weakness? Strength, O man, strength, say the
27 Upanishads, stand up and be strong. Ay, it is the only literature in
28 the world where you find the word "Abhih", "fearless", used again
29 and again; in no other scripture in the world is this adjective
30 applied either to God or to man. Abhih, fearless! And in my mind
31 rises from the past the vision of the great Emperor of the West,
32 Alexander the Great, and I see, as it were in a picture, the great
33 monarch standing on the bank of the Indus, talking to one of our
34 Sannyasins in the forest; the old man he was talking to, perhaps
35 naked, stark naked, sitting upon a block of stone, and the Emperor,
36 astonished at his wisdom, tempting him with gold and honour to
37 come over to Greece. And this man smiles at his gold, and smiles at
38 his temptations, and refuses; and then the Emperor standing on his
39 authority as an Emperor, says, "I will kill you if you do not come",
40 and the man burst into a laugh and says, "You never told such a
41 falsehood in your life, as you tell just now. Who can kill me? Me you
42 kill, Emperor of the material world! Never! For I am Spirit unborn
43 and undecaying: never was I born and never do I die; I am the
44 Infinite, the Omnipresent, the Omniscient; and you kill me, child
45 that you are!" That is strength, that is strength! And the more I
46 read the Upanishads, my friends, my countrymen, the more I weep
47 for you, for therein is the great practical application. Strength,
48 strength for us. What we need is strength, but who will give us
49 strength? There are thousands to weaken us, and of stories we have
50 had enough. Every one of our Puranas, if you press it, gives out
51 stories enough to fill three-fourths of the libraries of the world.
52 Everything that can weaken us as a race we have had for the last

1 thousand years. It seems as if during that period the national life
2 had this one end in view, viz how to make us weaker and weaker till
3 we have become real earthworms, crawling at the feet of every one
4 who dares to put his foot on us. Therefore, my friends, as one of
5 your blood, as one that lives and dies with you, let me tell you that
6 we want strength, strength, and every time strength. And the
7 Upanishads are the great mine of strength. Therein lies strength
8 enough to invigorate the whole world; the whole world can be
9 vivified, made strong, energised through them. They will call with
10 trumpet voice upon the weak, the miserable, and the downtrodden
11 of all races, all creeds, and all sects to stand on their feet and be
12 free. Freedom, physical freedom, mental freedom, and spiritual
13 freedom are the watchwords of the Upanishads.

14 Ay, this is the one scripture in the world, of all others, that
15 does not talk of salvation, but of freedom. Be free from the bonds of
16 nature, be free from weakness! And it shows to you that you have
17 this freedom already in you. That is another peculiarity of its
18 teachings. You are a Dvaitist; never mind, you have got to admit
19 that by its very nature the soul is perfect; only by certain actions of
20 the soul has it become contracted. Indeed, Ramanuja's theory of
21 contraction and expansion is exactly what the modern evolutionists
22 call evolution and atavism. The soul goes back, becomes contracted
23 as it were, its powers become potential; and by good deeds and
24 good thoughts it expands again and reveals its natural perfection.
25 With the Advaitist the one difference is that he admits evolution in
26 nature and not in the soul. Suppose there is a screen, and there is a
27 small hole in the screen. I am a man standing behind the screen
28 and looking at this grand assembly. I can see only very few faces
29 here. Suppose the hole increases; as it increases, more and more of
30 this assembly is revealed to me, and in full when the hole has
31 become identified with the screen--there is nothing between you
32 and me in this case. Neither you changed nor I changed; all the
33 change was in the screen. You were the same from first to last; only
34 the screen changed. This is the Advaitist's position with regard to
35 evolution--evolution of nature and manifestation of the Self within.
36 Not that the Self can by any means be made to contract. It is
37 unchangeable, the Infinite One. It was covered, as it were, with a
38 veil, the veil of Maya, and as this Maya veil becomes thinner and
39 thinner, the inborn, natural glory of the soul comes out and
40 becomes more manifest. This is the one great doctrine which the
41 world is waiting to learn from India. Whatever they may talk,
42 however they may try to boast, they will find out day after day that
43 no society can stand without admitting this. Do you not find how
44 everything is being revolutionised? Do you not see how it was the
45 custom to take for granted that everything was wicked until it
46 proved itself good? In education, in punishing criminals, in treating
47 lunatics, in the treatment of common diseases even, that was the
48 old law. What is the modern law? The modern law says, the body
49 itself is healthy; it cures diseases of its own nature. Medicine can at
50 the best but help the storing up of the best in the body. What says it
51 of criminals? It takes for granted that however low a criminal may
52 be, there is still the divinity within, which does not change, and we
53 must treat criminals accordingly. All these things are now changing,

1 and reformatories and penitentiaries are established. So with
2 everything. Consciously or unconsciously that Indian idea of the
3 divinity within every one is expressing itself even in other countries.
4 And in your books is the explanation which other nations have to
5 accept. The treatment of one man to another will be entirely
6 revolutionised, and these old, old ideas of pointing to the weakness
7 of mankind will have to go. They will have received their death-blow
8 within this century. Now people may stand up and criticise us. I
9 have been criticised, from one end of the world to the other, as one
10 who preaches the diabolical idea that there is no sin! Very good.
11 The descendants of these very men will bless me as the preacher of
12 virtue, and not of sin. I am the teacher of virtue, not of sin. I glory in
13 being the preacher of light, and not of darkness.

14 The second great idea which the world is waiting to receive
15 from our Upanishads is the solidarity of the universe. The old lines
16 of demarcation and differentiation are vanishing rapidly. Electricity
17 and steam-power are placing the different parts of the world in
18 intercommunication with each other, and, as a result, we Hindus no
19 longer say that every country beyond our own land is peopled with
20 demons and hobgoblins, nor do the people of Christian countries
21 say that India is only peopled by cannibals and savages. When we
22 go out of our country, we find the same brother-man, with the same
23 strong hand to help, with the same lips to say godspeed; and
24 sometimes they are better than in the country in which we are
25 born. When they come here, they find the same brotherhood, the
26 same cheer, the same godspeed. Our Upanishads say that the cause
27 of all misery is ignorance; and that is perfectly true when applied to
28 every state of life, either social or spiritual. It is ignorance that
29 makes us hate each other, it is through ignorance that we do not
30 know and do not love each other. As soon as we come to know each
31 other, love comes, must come, for are we not one? Thus we find
32 solidarity coming in spite of itself. Even in politics and sociology,
33 problems that were only national twenty years ago can no more be
34 solved on national grounds only. They are assuming huge
35 proportions, gigantic shapes. They can only be solved when looked
36 at in the broader light of international grounds. International
37 organisations, international combinations, international laws are
38 the cry of the day. That shows the solidarity. In science, every day
39 they are coming to a similar broad view of matter. You speak of
40 matter, the whole universe as one mass, one ocean of matter, in
41 which you and I, the sun and the moon, and everything else are but
42 the names of different little whirlpools and nothing more. Mentally
43 speaking, it is one universal ocean of thought in which you and I are
44 similar little whirlpools; and as spirit it moveth not, it changeth not.
45 It is the One Unchangeable, Unbroken, Homogeneous Atman. The
46 cry for morality is coming also, and that is to be found in our books.
47 The explanation of morality, the fountain of ethics, that also the
48 world wants; and that it will get here.

49 What do we want in India? If foreigners want these things, we
50 want them twenty times more. Because, in spite of the greatness of
51 the Upanishads, in spite of our boasted ancestry of sages,
52 compared to many other races, I must tell you that we are weak,

1 very weak. First of all is our physical weakness. That physical
2 weakness is the cause of at least one-third of our miseries. We are
3 lazy, we cannot work; we cannot combine, we do not love each
4 other; we are intensely selfish, not three of us can come together
5 without hating each other, without being jealous of each other. That
6 is the state in which we are--hopelessly disorganised mobs,
7 immensely selfish, fighting each other for centuries as to whether a
8 certain mark is to be put on our forehead this way or that way,
9 writing volumes and volumes upon such momentous questions as to
10 whether the look of a man spoils my food or not! This we have been
11 doing for the past few centuries. We cannot expect anything high
12 from a race whose whole brain energy has been occupied in such
13 wonderfully beautiful problems and researches! And are we not
14 ashamed of ourselves? Ay, sometimes we are; but though we think
15 these things frivolous, we cannot give them up. We speak of many
16 things parrot-like, but never do them; speaking and not doing has
17 become a habit with us. What is the cause of that? Physical
18 weakness. This sort of weak brain is not able to do anything; we
19 must strengthen it. First of all, our young men must be strong.
20 Religion will come afterwards. Be strong, my young friends; that is
21 my advice to you. You will be nearer to Heaven through football
22 than through the study of the Gita. These are bold words; but I have
23 to say them, for I love you. I know where the shoe pinches. I have
24 gained a little experience. You will understand the Gita better with
25 your biceps, your muscles, a little stronger. You will understand the
26 mighty genius and the mighty strength of Krishna better with a
27 little of strong blood in you. You will understand the Upanishads
28 better and the glory of the Atman when your body stands firm upon
29 your feet, and you feel yourselves as men. Thus we have to apply
30 these to our needs.

1 People get disgusted many times at my preaching Advaitism. I
2 do not mean to preach Advaitism, or Dvaitism, or any *ism* in the
3 world. The only *ism* that we require now is this wonderful idea of
4 the soul--its eternal might, its eternal strength, its eternal purity,
5 and its eternal perfection. If I had a child I would from its very birth
6 begin to tell it, "Thou art the Pure One." You have read in one of the
7 Puranas that beautiful story of queen Madalasa, how as soon as she
8 has a child she puts her baby with her own hands in the cradle, and
9 how as the cradle rocks to and fro, she begins to sing, "Thou art the
10 Pure One, the Stainless, the Sinless, the Mighty One, the Great
11 One." Ay, there is much in that. Feel that you are great and you
12 become great. What did I get as my experience all over the world, is
13 the question. They may talk about sinners--and if all Englishmen
14 really believed that they were sinners, Englishmen would be no
15 better than the negroes in Central Africa. God bless them that they
16 do not believe it! On the other hand, the Englishman believes he is
17 born the lord of the world. He believes he is great and can do
18 anything in the world; if he wants to go to the sun or the moon, he
19 believes he can; and that makes him great. If he had believed his
20 priests that he was a poor miserable sinner, going to be barbecued
21 through all eternity, he would not be the same Englishman that he
22 is today. So I find in every nation that, in spite of priests and
23 superstition, the divine within lives and asserts itself. We have lost
24 faith. Would you believe me, we have less faith than the Englishman
25 and woman--a thousand times less faith! These are plain words; but
26 I say these, I cannot help it. Don't you see how Englishmen and
27 women, when they catch our ideals, become mad as it were; and
28 although they are the ruling class, they come to India to preach our
29 own religion notwithstanding the jeers and ridicule of their own
30 countrymen? How many of you could do that? And why cannot you
31 do that? Do you not know it? You know more than they do; you are
32 more wise than is good for you, that is your difficulty! Simply
33 because your blood is only like water, your brain is sloughing, your
34 body is weak! You must change the body. Physical weakness is the
35 cause and nothing else. You have talked of reforms, of ideals, and
36 all these things for the past hundred years; but when it comes to
37 practice, you are not to be found anywhere--till you have disgusted
38 the whole world, and the very name of reform is a thing of ridicule!
39 And what is the cause? Do you not know? You know too well. The
40 only cause is that you are weak, weak, weak; your body is weak,
41 your mind is weak, you have no faith in yourselves! Centuries and
42 centuries, a thousand years of crushing tyranny of castes and kings
43 and foreigners and your own people have taken out all your
44 strength, my brethren. Your backbone is broken, you are like
45 downtrodden worms. Who will give you strength? Let me tell you,
46 strength, strength is what we want. And the first step in getting
47 strength is to uphold the Upanishads, and believe--"I am the Soul",
48 "Me the sword cannot cut; nor weapons pierce; me the fire cannot
49 burn; me the air cannot dry; I am the Omnipotent, I am the
50 Omniscient." So repeat these blessed, saving words. Do not say we
51 are weak; we can do anything and everything. What can we not do?
52 Everything can be done by us; we all have the same glorious soul,
53 let us believe in it. Have faith, as Nachiketa. At the time of his

1 father's sacrifice, faith came unto Nachiketa; ay, I wish that faith
2 would come to each of you; and every one of you would stand up a
3 giant, a world-mover with a gigantic intellect--an infinite God in
4 every respect. That is what I want you to become. This is the
5 strength that you get from the Upanishads, this is the faith that you
6 get from there.

7 Ay, but it was only for the Sannyasin! Rahaysa (esoteric)! The
8 Upanishads were in the hands of the Sannyasin; he went into the
9 forest! Shankara was a little kind and said even Grihasthas
10 (householders) may study the Upanishads, it will do them good; it
11 will not hurt them. But still the idea is that the Upanishads talked
12 only of the forest life of the recluse. As I told you the other day, the
13 only commentary, the authoritative commentary on the Vedas, has
14 been made once and for all by Him who inspired the Vedas--by
15 Krishna in the Gita. It is there for every one in every occupation of
16 life. These conceptions of the Vedanta must come out, must remain
17 not only in the forest, not only in the cave, but they must come out
18 to work at the bar and the bench, in the pulpit, and in the cottage of
19 the poor man, with the fishermen that are catching fish, and with
20 the students that are studying. They call to every man, woman, and
21 child whatever be their occupation, wherever they may be. And
22 what is there to fear! How can the fishermen and all these carry out
23 the ideals of the Upanishads? The way has been shown. It is
24 infinite; religion is infinite, none can go beyond it; and whatever you
25 do sincerely is good for you. Even the least thing well done brings
26 marvellous results; therefore let everyone do what little he can. If
27 the fisherman thinks that he is the Spirit, he will be a better
28 fisherman; if the student thinks he is the Spirit, he will be a better
29 student. If the lawyer thinks that he is the Spirit, he will be a better
30 lawyer, and so on, and the result will be that the castes will remain
31 for ever. It is in the nature of society to form itself into groups; and
32 what will go will be these privileges. Caste is a natural order; I can
33 perform one duty in social life, and you another; you can govern a
34 country, and I can mend a pair of old shoes, but that is no reason
35 why you are greater than I, for can you mend my shoes? Can I
36 govern the country? I am clever in mending shoes, you are clever in
37 reading Vedas, but that is no reason why you should trample on my
38 head. Why if one commits murder should he be praised, and if
39 another steals an apple why should he be hanged? This will have to
40 go. Caste is good. That is the only natural way of solving life. Men
41 must form themselves into groups, and you cannot get rid of that.
42 Wherever you go, there will be caste. But that does not mean that
43 there should be these privileges.

44 They should be knocked on the head. If you teach Vedanta to
45 the fisherman, he will say, I am as good a man as you; I am a
46 fisherman, you are a philosopher, but I have the same God in me as
47 you have in you. And that is what we want, no privilege for any one,
48 equal chances for all; let every one be taught that the divine is
49 within, and every one will work out his own salvation.

50 Liberty is the first condition of growth. It is wrong, a
51 thousand times wrong, if any of you dares to say, "I will work out
52 the salvation of this woman or child." I am asked again and again,

1 what I think of the widow problem and what I think of the woman
2 question. Let me answer once for all--am I a widow that you ask me
3 that nonsense? Am I am a woman that you ask me that question
4 again and again? Who are you to solve women's problems? Are you
5 the Lord God that you should rule over every widow and every
6 woman? Hands off! They will solve their own problems. O tyrants,
7 attempting to think that you can do anything for any one! Hands
8 Off! The Divine will look after all. Who are you to assume that you
9 know everything? How dare you think, O blasphemers, that you
10 have the right over God? For don't you know that every soul is the
11 Soul of God? Mind your own Karma; a load of Karma is there in you
12 to work out. Your nation may put you upon a pedestal, your society
13 may cheer you up to the skies, and fools may praise you: but He
14 sleeps not, and retribution will be sure to follow, here or hereafter.

15 Look upon every man, woman, and every one as God. You
16 cannot help anyone, you can only serve: serve the children of the
17 Lord, serve the Lord Himself, if you have the privilege. If the Lord
18 grants that you can help any one of his children, blessed you are; do
19 not think too much of yourselves. Blessed you are that that privilege
20 was given to you when others had it not. Do it only as a worship. I
21 should see God in the poor, and it is for my salvation that I go and
22 worship them. The poor and the miserable are for our salvation, so
23 that we may serve the Lord, coming in the shape of the diseased,
24 coming in the shape of the lunatic, the leper, and the sinner! Bold
25 are my words; and let me repeat that it is the greatest privilege in
26 our life that we are allowed to serve the Lord in all these shapes.
27 Give up the idea that by ruling over others you can do any good to
28 them. But you can do just as much as you can in the case of the
29 plant; you can supply the growing seed with the materials for the
30 making up of its body, bringing to it the earth, the water, the air,
31 that it wants. It will take all that it wants by its own nature, it will
32 assimilate and grow by its own nature.

33 Bring all light into the world. Light, bring light! Let light
34 come unto every one; the task will not be finished till every one has
35 reached the Lord. Bring light to the poor; and bring more light to
36 the rich, for they require it more than the poor. Bring light to the
37 ignorant, and more light to the educated, for the vanities of the
38 education of our time are tremendous! Thus bring light to all and
39 leave the rest unto the Lord, for in the words of the same Lord, "To
40 work you have the right and not to the fruits thereof." "Let not your
41 work produce results for *you*, and at the same time may you never
42 be without work."

43 May He who taught such grand ideas to our forefathers ages
44 ago help us to get strength to carry into practice His commands!

THE SAGES OF INDIA

In speaking of the sages of India, my mind goes back to those periods of which history has no record, and tradition tries in vain to bring the secrets out of the gloom of the past. The sages of India have been almost innumerable, for what has the Hindu nation been doing for thousands of years except producing sages? I will take, therefore, the lives of a few of the most brilliant ones, the epoch-makers, and present them before you, that is to say, my study of them.

In the first place, we have to understand a little about our scriptures. Two ideals of truth are in our scriptures; the one is, what we call the eternal, and the other is not so authoritative, yet binding under particular circumstances, times, and places. The eternal relations which deal with the nature of the soul, and of God, and the relations between souls and God are embodied in what we call the Shrutis, the Vedas. The next set of truths is what we call the Smritis, as embodied in the words of Manu, Yajnavalkya, and other writers and also in the Puranas, down to the Tantras. The second class of books and teachings is subordinate to the Shrutis, inasmuch as whenever any one of these contradicts anything in the Shrutis, the Shrutis must prevail. This is the law. The idea is that the framework of the destiny and goal of man has been all delineated in the Vedas, the details have been left to be worked out in the Smritis and Puranas. As for general directions, the Shrutis are enough; for spiritual life, nothing more can be said, nothing more can be known. All that is necessary has been known, all the advice that is necessary to lead the soul to perfection has been completed in the Shrutis; the details alone were left out, and these the Smritis have supplied from time to time.

Another peculiarity is that these Shrutis have many sages as the recorders of the truths in them, mostly men, even some women. Very little is known of their personalities, the dates of their birth, and so forth, but their best thoughts, their best discoveries, I should say, are preserved there, embodied in the sacred literature of our country, the Vedas. In the Smritis, on the other hand, personalities are more in evidence. Startling, gigantic, impressive, world-moving persons stand before us, as it were, for the first time, sometimes of more magnitude even than their teachings.

This is a peculiarity which we have to understand--that our religion preaches an Impersonal Personal God. It preaches any amount of impersonal laws *plus* any amount of personality, but the very fountain-head of our religion is in the Shrutis, the Vedas, which are perfectly impersonal; the persons all come in the Smritis and Puranas--the great Avataras, the Incarnations of God, Prophets, and so forth. And this ought also to be observed that except our religion, every other religion in the world depends upon the life or lives of some personal founder or founders. Christianity is built upon the life of Jesus Christ, Mohammedanism upon Mohammed, Buddhism upon Buddha, Jainism upon the Jinas, and so on. It naturally follows

1 that there must be in all these religions a good deal of fight about
2 what they call the historical evidences of these great personalities.
3 If at any time the historical evidences about the existence of these
4 personages in ancient times become weak, the whole building of
5 the religion tumbles down and is broken to pieces. We escaped this
6 fate because our religion is not based upon persons but on
7 principles. That you obey your religion is not because it came
8 through the authority of a sage, no, not even of an Incarnation.
9 Krishna is not the authority of the Vedas, but the Vedas are the
10 authority of Krishna himself. His glory is that he is the greatest
11 preacher of the Vedas that ever existed. So with the other
12 Incarnations; so with all our sages. Our first principle is that all that
13 is necessary for the perfection of man and for attaining unto
14 freedom is there in the Vedas. You cannot find anything new. You
15 cannot go beyond a perfect unity, which is the goal of all
16 knowledge; this has been already reached there, and it is
17 impossible to go beyond the unity. Religious knowledge became
18 complete when Tat Twam Asi (Thou art That) was discovered, and
19 that was in the Vedas. What remained was the guidance of people
20 from time to time according to different times and places, according
21 to different circumstances and environments; people had to be
22 guided along the old, old path, and for this these great teachers
23 came, these great sages. Nothing can bear out more clearly this
24 position than the celebrated saying of Shri Krishna in the Gita:
25 "Whenever virtue subsides and irreligion prevails, I create Myself
26 for the protection of the good; for the destruction of all immorality I
27 am coming from time to time." This is the idea in India.

28 What follows? That on the one hand, there are these eternal
29 principles which stand upon their own foundations without
30 depending on any reasoning even, much less on the authority of
31 sages however great, of Incarnations however brilliant they may
32 have been. We may remark that as this is the unique position in
33 India, our claim is that the Vedanta only can be the universal
34 religion, that it is already the existing universal religion in the
35 world, because it teaches principles and not persons. No religion
36 built upon a person can be taken up as a type by all the races of
37 mankind. In our own country we find that there have been so many
38 grand characters; in even a small city many persons are taken up as
39 types by the different minds in that one city. How is it possible that
40 one person as Mohammed or Buddha or Christ, can be taken up as
41 the one type for the whole world, nay, that the whole of morality,
42 ethics, spirituality, and religion can be true only from the sanction
43 of that one person, and one person alone? Now, the Vedantic
44 religion does not require any such personal authority. Its sanction is
45 the eternal nature of man, its ethics are based upon the eternal
46 spiritual solidarity of man, already existing, already attained and
47 not to be attained. On the other hand, from the very earliest times,
48 our sages have been feeling conscious of this fact that the vast
49 majority of mankind requires a personality. They must have a
50 Personal God in some form or other. The very Buddha who declared
51 against the existence of a Personal God had not died fifty years
52 before his disciples manufactured a Personal God out of him. The
53 Personal God is necessary, and at the same time we know that

1 instead of and better than vain imaginations of a Personal God,
2 which in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred are unworthy of human
3 worship, we have in this world, living and walking in our midst,
4 living Gods, now and then. These are more worthy of worship than
5 any imaginary God, any creation of our imagination, that is to say,
6 any idea of God which we can form. Shri Krishna is much greater
7 than idea of God you or I can have. Buddha is a much higher idea, a
8 more living and idolised idea, than the ideal you or I can conceive of
9 in our minds; and therefore it is that they always command the
10 worship of mankind even to the exclusion of all imaginary deities.

11 This our sages knew, and, therefore, left it open to all Indian
12 people to worship such great personages, such Incarnations. Nay,
13 the greatest of these Incarnations goes further: "Wherever an
14 extraordinary spiritual power is manifested by external man, know
15 that I am there; it is from Me that that manifestation comes." That
16 leaves the door open for the Hindu to worship the Incarnations of
17 all the countries in the world. The Hindu can worship any sage and
18 any saint from any country whatsoever, and as a fact we know that
19 we go and worship many times in the churches of the Christians,
20 and many, many times in the Mohammedan mosques, and that is
21 good. Why not? Ours, as I have said, is the universal religion.

22 It is inclusive enough, it is broad enough to include all the
23 ideals. All the ideals of religion that already exist in the world can
24 be immediately included, and we can patiently wait for all the ideals
25 that are to come in the future to be taken in the same fashion,
26 embraced in the infinite arms of the religion of the Vedanta.

27 This, more or less, is our position with regard to the great
28 sages, the Incarnations of God. There are also secondary
29 characters. We find the word Rishi again and again mentioned in
30 the Vedas, and it has become a common word at the present time.
31 The Rishi is the great authority. We have to understand that idea.
32 The definition is that the Rishi is the Mantra-drashta, the seer of
33 thought. What is the proof of religion?--this was asked in very
34 ancient times. There is no proof in the senses was the declaration.
35 {Sanskrit}--"From whence words reflect back with thought without
36 reaching the goal." {Sanskrit} --"There the eyes cannot reach,
37 neither can speech, nor the mind."--that has been the declaration
38 for ages and ages. Nature outside cannot give us any answer as to
39 the existence of the soul, the existence of God, the eternal life, the
40 goal of man, and all that. This mind is continually changing, always
41 in a state of flux; it is finite, it is broken into pieces. How can nature
42 tell of the Infinite, the Unchangeable, the Unbroken, the Indivisible,
43 the Eternal? It never can. And whenever mankind has striven to get
44 an answer from dull dead matter, history shows how disastrous the
45 results have been. How comes, then, the knowledge which the
46 Vedas declare? It comes through being a Rishi. This knowledge is
47 not in the senses; but are the senses the be-all and the end-all of
48 the human being? Who dare say that the senses are the all-in-all of
49 man? Even in our lives, in the life of every one of us here, there
50 come moments of calmness, perhaps, when we see before us the
51 death of one we loved, when some shock comes to us, or when
52 extreme blessedness comes to us. Many other occasions there are

1 when the mind, as it were, becomes calm, feels for the moment its
2 real nature; and a glimpse of the Infinite beyond, where words
3 cannot reach nor the mind go, is revealed to us. This happens in
4 ordinary life, but it has to be heightened, practised, perfected. Men
5 found out ages ago that the soul is not bound or limited by the
6 senses, no, not even by consciousness. We have to understand that
7 this consciousness is only the name of one link in the infinite chain.
8 Being is not identical with consciousness, but consciousness is only
9 one part of Being. Beyond consciousness is where the bold search
10 lies. Consciousness is bound by the senses. Beyond that, beyond the
11 senses, men must go in order to arrive at truths of the spiritual
12 world, and there are even now persons who succeed in going
13 beyond the bounds of the senses. These are called Rishis, because
14 they come face to face with spiritual truths.

15 The proof, therefore, of the Vedas is just the same as the
16 proof of this table before me, Pratyaksha, direct perception. This I
17 see with the senses, and the truths of spirituality we also see in a
18 superconscious state of the human soul. This Rishi-state is not
19 limited by time or place, by sex or race. Vatsyayana boldly declares
20 that this Rishihood is the common property of the descendants of
21 the sage, of the Aryan, of the non-Aryan, of even the Mlechchha.
22 This is the sageship of the Vedas, and constantly we ought to
23 remember this ideal of religion in India, which I wish other nations
24 of the world would also remember and learn, so that there may be
25 less fight and less quarrel. Religion is not in books, nor in theories,
26 nor in dogmas, nor in talking, not even in reasoning. It is being and
27 becoming. Ay, my friends, until each one of you has become a Rishi
28 and come face to face with spiritual facts, religious life has not
29 begun for you. Until the superconscious opens for you, religion is
30 mere talk, it is nothing but preparation. You are talking
31 secondhand, third-hand, and here applies that beautiful saying of
32 Buddha when he had a discussion with some Brahmins. They came
33 discussing about the nature of Brahman, and the great sage asked,
34 "Have you seen Brahman?" "No", said the Brahmin; "Or your
35 father?" "No, neither has he"; "Or your grandfather?" "I don't think
36 even he saw Him." "My friend, how can you discuss about a person
37 whom your father and grandfather never saw, and try to put each
38 other down?" That is what the whole world is doing. Let us say in
39 the language of the Vedanta, "This Atman is not to be reached by
40 too much talk, no, not even by the highest intellect, no, not even by
41 the study of the Vedas themselves."

42 Let us speak to all the nations of the world in the language of
43 the Vedas: Vain are your fights and your quarrels; have you seen
44 God whom you want to preach? If you have not seen, vain is your
45 preaching; you do not know what you say; and if you have seen God,
46 you will not quarrel, your very face will shine. An ancient sage of
47 the Upanishads sent his son out to learn about Brahman, and the
48 child came back, and the father asked, "What have you learnt?" The
49 child replied he had learnt so many sciences. But the father said,
50 "That is nothing, go back." And the son went back, and when he
51 returned again the father asked the same question, and the same
52 answer came from the child. Once more he had to go back. And the

1 next time he came, his whole face was shining; and his father stood
2 up and declared, "Ay, today, my child, your face shines like a knower
3 of Brahman." When you have known God, your very face will be
4 changed, your voice will be changed, your whole appearance will be
5 changed. You will be a blessing to mankind; none will be able to
6 resist the Rishi. This is the Rishihood, the ideal in our religion. The
7 rest, all these talks and reasonings and philosophies and dualisms
8 and monisms, and even the Vedas themselves are but preparations,
9 secondary things. The other is primary. The Vedas, grammar,
10 astronomy, etc., all these are secondary; that is supreme knowledge
11 which makes us realise the Unchangeable One. Those who realised
12 are the sages whom we find in the Vedas; and we understand how
13 this Rishi is the name of a type, of a class, which every one of us, as
14 true Hindus, is expected to become at some period of our life, and
15 becoming which, to the Hindu, means salvation. Not belief in
16 doctrines, not going to thousands of temples, nor bathing in all the
17 rivers in the world, but becoming the Rishi, the Mantra-drashta--
18 that is freedom, that is salvation.

19 Coming down to later times, there have been great world-
20 moving sages, great Incarnations of whom there have been many;
21 and according to the *Bhagavata*, they also are infinite in number,
22 and those that are worshipped most in India are Rama and Krishna.
23 Rama, the ancient idol of the heroic ages, the embodiment of truth,
24 of morality, the ideal son, the ideal husband, the ideal father, and
25 above all, the ideal king, this Rama has been presented before us
26 by the great sage Valmiki. No language can be purer, none chaster,
27 none more beautiful and at the same time simpler than the
28 language in which the great poet has depicted the life of Rama. And
29 what to speak of Sita? You may exhaust the literature of the world
30 that is past, and I may assure you that you will have to exhaust the
31 literature of the world of the future, before finding another Sita.
32 Sita is unique; that character was depicted once and for all. There
33 may have been several Ramas, perhaps, but never more than one
34 Sita! She is the very type of the true Indian woman, for all the
35 Indian ideals of a perfected woman have grown out of that one life
36 of Sita; and here she stands these thousands of years, commanding
37 the worship of every man, woman, and child throughout the length
38 and breadth of the land of Aryavarta. There she will always be, this
39 glorious Sita, purer than purity itself, all patience, and all suffering.
40 She who suffered that life of suffering without a murmur, she the
41 ever-chaste and ever-pure wife, she the ideal of the people, the
42 ideal of the gods, the great Sita, our national God she must always
43 remain. And every one of us knows her too well to require much
44 delineation. All our mythology may vanish, even our Vedas may
45 depart, and our Sanskrit language may vanish for ever, but so long
46 as there will be five Hindus living here, even if only speaking the
47 most vulgar patois, there will be the story of Sita present. Mark my
48 words: Sita has gone into the very vitals of our race. She is there in
49 the blood of every Hindu man and woman; we are all children of
50 Sita. Any attempt to modernise our women, if it tries to take our
51 women away from that ideal of Sita, is immediately a failure, as we
52 see every day. The women of India must grow and develop in the
53 footprints of Sita, and that is the only way.

1 The next is He who is worshipped in various forms, the
2 favourite ideal of men as well as of women, the ideal of children, as
3 well as of grown-up men. I mean He whom the writer of the
4 *Bhagavata* was not content to call an Incarnation but says, "The
5 other Incarnations were but parts of the Lord. He, Krishna, was the
6 Lord Himself." And it is not strange that such adjectives are applied
7 to him when we marvel at the many-sidedness of his character. He
8 was the most wonderful Sannyasin, and the most wonderful
9 householder in one; he had the most wonderful amount of Rajas,
10 power, and was at the same time living in the midst of the most
11 wonderful renunciation. Krishna can never be understood until you
12 have studied the Gita, for he was the embodiment of his own
13 teaching. Every one of these Incarnations came as a living
14 illustration of what they came to preach. Krishna, the preacher of
15 the Gita, was all his life the embodiment of the Song Celestial; he
16 was the great illustration of non-attachment. He gives up his throne
17 and never cares for it. He, the leader of India, at whose word kings
18 came down from their thrones, never wants to be a king. He is the
19 simple Krishna, ever the same Krishna who played with the Gopis.
20 Ah, that most marvellous passage of his life, the most difficult to
21 understand, and which none ought to attempt to understand until
22 he has become perfectly chaste and pure, that most marvellous
23 expansion of love, allegorised and expressed in that beautiful play
24 at Vrindaban, which none can understand but he who has become
25 mad with love, drunk deep of the cup of love! Who can understand
26 the throes of the love of the Gopis--the very ideal of love, love that
27 wants nothing, love that even does not care for heaven, love that
28 does not care for anything in this world or the world to come? And
29 here, my friends, through this love of the Gopis has been found the
30 only solution of the conflict between the Personal and the
31 Impersonal God. We know how the Personal God is the highest
32 point of human life; we know that it is philosophical to believe in an
33 Impersonal God immanent in the universe, of whom everything is
34 but a manifestation. At the same time our souls hanker after
35 something concrete, something which we want to grasp, at whose
36 feet we can pour out our soul, and so on. The Personal God is
37 therefore the highest conception of human nature. Yet reason
38 stands aghast at such an idea. It is the same old, old question which
39 you find discussed in the *Brahma-Sutras*, which you find Draupadi
40 discussing with Yudhishtira in the forest: If there is a Personal
41 God, all-merciful, all-powerful, why is the hell of an earth here, why
42 did He create this?--He must be a partial God. There was no
43 solution, and the only solution that can be found is what you read
44 about the love of the Gopis. They hated every adjective that was
45 applied to Krishna; they did not care to know that he was the Lord
46 of creation, they did not care to know that he was almighty, they did
47 not care to know that he was omnipotent, and so forth. The only
48 thing they understood was that he was infinite Love, that was all.

49 The Gopis understood Krishna only as the Krishna of
50 Vrindaban. He, the leader of the hosts, the King of kings, to them
51 was the shepherd, and the shepherd for ever. "I do not want wealth,
52 nor many people, nor do I want learning; no, not even do I want to
53 go to heaven. Let me be born again and again, but Lord, grant me

1 this, that I may have love for Thee, and that for love's sake." A great
2 landmark in the history of religion is here, the ideal of love for
3 love's sake, work for work's sake, duty for duty's sake, and it for the
4 first time fell from the lips of the greatest of Incarnations, Krishna,
5 and for the first time in the history of humanity, upon the soil of
6 India. The religions of fear and of temptations were gone for ever,
7 and in spite of the fear of hell and temptation of enjoyment in
8 heaven, came the grandest of ideals, love for love's sake, duty for
9 duty's sake, work for work's sake.

10 And what a love! I have told you just now that it is very
11 difficult to understand the love of the Gopis. There are not wanting
12 fools, even in the midst of us, who cannot understand the
13 marvellous significance of that most marvellous of all episodes.
14 There are, let me repeat, impure fools, even born of our blood, who
15 try to shrink from that as if from something impure. To them I have
16 only to say, first make yourselves pure; and you must remember
17 that he who tells the history of the love of the Gopis is none else but
18 Shuka Deva. The historian who records this marvellous love of the
19 Gopis is one who was born pure, the eternally pure Shuka, the son
20 of Vyasa. So long as there is selfishness in the heart, so long is love
21 of God impossible; it is nothing but shopkeeping: "I give you
22 something; O Lord, you give me something in return"; and says the
23 Lord, "If you do not do this, I will take good care of you when you
24 die. I will roast you all the rest of your lives, perhaps", and so on. So
25 long as such ideas are in the brain, how can one understand the
26 mad throes of the Gopis' love? "O for one, one kiss of those lips!
27 One who has been kissed by Thee, his thirst for Thee increases for
28 ever, all sorrows vanish, and he forgets love for everything else but
29 for Thee and Thee alone." Ay, forget first the love for gold, and
30 name and fame, for this little trumpery world of ours. Then, only
31 then, you will understand the love of the Gopis, too holy to be
32 attempted without giving up everything, too sacred to be
33 understood until the soul has become perfectly pure. People with
34 ideas of sex, and of money, and of fame, bubbling up every minute
35 in the heart, daring to criticise and understand the love of the
36 Gopis! That is the very essence of the Krishna Incarnation. Even the
37 Gita, the great philosophy itself, does not compare with that
38 madness, for in the Gita the disciple is taught slowly how to walk
39 towards the goal, but here is the madness of enjoyment, the
40 drunkenness of love, where disciples and teachers and teachings
41 and books and all these things have become one; even the ideas of
42 fear, and God, and heaven--everything has been thrown away. What
43 remains is the madness of love. It is forgetfulness of everything,
44 and the lover sees nothing in the world except that Krishna and
45 Krishna alone, when the face of every being becomes a Krishna,
46 when his own face looks like Krishna, when his own soul has
47 become tinged with the Krishna colour. That was the great Krishna!

48 Do not waste your time upon little details. Take up the
49 framework, the essence of the life. There may be many historical
50 discrepancies, there may be interpolations in the life of Krishna. All
51 these things may be true; but, at the same time, there must have
52 been a basis, a foundation for this new and tremendous departure.

1 Taking the life of any other sage or prophet, we find that that
2 prophet is only the evolution of what had gone before him, we find
3 that that prophet is only preaching the ideas that had been
4 scattered about his own country even in his own times. Great
5 doubts may exist even as to whether that prophet existed or not.
6 But here, I challenge any one to show whether these things, these
7 ideals--work for work's sake, love for love's sake, duty for duty's
8 sake, were not original ideas with Krishna, and as such, there must
9 have been someone with whom these ideas originated. They could
10 not have been borrowed from anybody else. They were not floating
11 about in the atmosphere when Krishna was born. But the Lord
12 Krishna was the first preacher of this; his disciple Vyasa took it up
13 and preached it unto mankind. This is the highest idea to picture.
14 The highest thing we can get out of him is Gopijanavallabha, the
15 Beloved of the Gopis of Vrindaban. When that madness comes in
16 your brain, when you understand the blessed Gopis, then you will
17 understand what love is. When the whole world will vanish, when
18 all other considerations will have died out, when you will become
19 pure-hearted with no other aim, not even the search after truth,
20 then and then alone will come to you the madness of that love, the
21 strength and the power of that infinite love which the Gopis had,
22 that love for love's sake. That is the goal. When you have got that,
23 you have got everything.

1 To come down to the lower stratum--Krishna, the preacher of
2 the Gita. Ay, there is an attempt in India now which is like putting
3 the cart before the horse. Many of our people think that Krishna as
4 the lover of the Gopis is something rather uncanny, and the
5 Europeans do not like it much. Dr. So-and-so does not like it.
6 Certainly then, the Gopis have to go! Without the sanction of the
7 Europeans how can Krishna live? He cannot! In the Mahabharata
8 there is no mention of the Gopis except in one or two places, and
9 those not very remarkable places. In the prayer of Draupadi, there
10 is mention of a Vrindaban life, and in the speech of Shishupala
11 there is again mention of this Vrindaban. All these are
12 interpolations! What the Europeans do not want must be thrown off.
13 They are interpolations, the mention of the Gopis and of Krishna
14 too! Well, with these men, steeped in commercialism, where even
15 the ideal of religion has become commercial, they are all trying to
16 go to heaven by doing something here; the bania wants compound
17 interest, wants to lay by something here and enjoy it there.
18 Certainly the Gopis have no place in such a system of thought. From
19 that ideal lover we come down to the lower stratum of Krishna, the
20 preacher of the Gita. Than the Gita no better commentary on the
21 Vedas has been written or can be written. The essence of the
22 Shrutis, or of the Upanishads, is hard to be understood, seeing that
23 there are so many commentators, each one trying to interpret in his
24 own way. Then the Lord Himself comes, He who is the inspirer of
25 the Shrutis, to show us the meaning of them, as the preacher of the
26 Gita, and today India wants nothing better, the world wants nothing
27 better than that method of interpretation. It is a wonder that
28 subsequent interpreters of the scriptures, even commenting upon
29 the Gita, many times could not catch the meaning, many times
30 could not catch the drift. For what do you find in the Gita, and what
31 in modern commentators? One non-dualistic commentator takes up
32 an Upanishad; there are so many dualistic passages, and he twists
33 and tortures them into some meaning, and wants to bring them all
34 into a meaning of his own. If a dualistic commentator comes, there
35 are so many non-dualistic texts which he begins to torture, to bring
36 them all round to dualistic meaning. But you find in the Gita there is
37 no attempt at torturing any one of them. They are all right, says the
38 Lord; for slowly and gradually the human soul rises up and up, step
39 after step, from the gross to the fine, from the fine to the finer, until
40 it reaches the Absolute, the goal. That is what is in the Gita. Even
41 the Karma Kanda is taken up, and it is shown that although it
42 cannot give salvation direct, but only indirectly, yet that is also
43 valid; images are valid indirectly; ceremonies, forms, everything is
44 valid only with one condition, purity of the heart. For worship is
45 valid and leads to the goal if the heart is pure and the heart is
46 sincere; and all these various modes of worship are necessary, else
47 why should they be there? Religions and sects are not the work of
48 hypocrites and wicked people who invented all these to get a little
49 money, as some of our modern men want to think. However
50 reasonable that explanation may seem, it is not true, and they were
51 not invented that way at all. They are the outcome of the necessity
52 of the human soul. They are all here to satisfy the hankering and
53 thirst of different classes of human minds, and you need not preach

1 against them. The day when that necessity will cease, they will
2 vanish along with the cessation of that necessity; and so long as
3 that necessity remains, they must be there in spite of your
4 preaching, in spite of your criticism. You may bring the sword or the
5 gun into play, you may deluge the world with human blood, but so
6 long as there is a necessity for idols, they must remain. These
7 forms, and all the various steps in religion will remain, and we
8 understand from the Lord Shri Krishna why they should.

9 A rather sadder chapter of India's history comes now. In the
10 Gita we already hear the distant sound of the conflicts of sects, and
11 the Lord comes in the middle to harmonise them all; He, the great
12 preacher of harmony, the greatest teacher of harmony, Lord Shri
13 Krishna. He says, "In Me they are all strung like pearls upon a
14 thread." We already hear the distant sounds, the murmurs of the
15 conflict, and possibly there was a period of harmony and calmness
16 when it broke out anew, not only on religious grounds, but most
17 possibly on caste grounds--the fight between the two powerful
18 factors in our community, the kings and the priests. And from the
19 topmost crest of the wave that deluged India for nearly a thousand
20 years, we see another glorious figure, and that was our Gautama
21 Shakyamuni. You all know about his teachings and preachings. We
22 worship him as God incarnate, the greatest, the boldest preacher of
23 morality that the world ever saw, the greatest Karma-Yogi; as
24 disciple of himself, as it were, the same Krishna came to show how
25 to make his theories practical. There came once again the same
26 voice that in the Gita preached, "Even the least bit done of this
27 religion saves from great fear". "Women, or Vaishyas, or even
28 Shudras, all reach the highest goal." Breaking the bondages of all,
29 the chains of all, declaring liberty to all to reach the highest goal,
30 come the words of the Gita, rolls like thunder the mighty voice of
31 Krishna: "Even in this life they have conquered relativity, whose
32 minds are firmly fixed upon the sameness, for God is pure and the
33 same to all, therefore such are said to be living in God." "Thus
34 seeing the same Lord equally present everywhere, the sage does
35 not injure the Self by the self, and thus reaches the highest goal."
36 As it were to give a living example of this preaching, as it were to
37 make at least one part of it practical, the preacher himself came in
38 another form, and this was Shakyamuni, the preacher to the poor
39 and the miserable, he who rejected even the language of the gods
40 to speak in the language of the people, so that he might reach the
41 hearts of the people, he who gave up a throne to live with beggars,
42 and the poor, and the downcast, he who pressed the Pariah to his
43 breast like a second Rama.

44 You all know about his great work, his grand character. But
45 the work had one great defect, and for that we are suffering even
46 today. No blame attaches to the Lord. He is pure and glorious, but
47 unfortunately such high ideals could not be well assimilated by the
48 different uncivilised and uncultured races of mankind who flocked
49 within the fold of the Aryans. These races, with varieties of
50 superstition and hideous worship, rushed within the fold of the
51 Aryans and for a time appeared as if they had become civilised, but
52 before a century had passed they brought out their snakes, their

1 ghosts, and all the other things their ancestors used to worship, and
2 thus the whole of India became one degraded mass of superstition.
3 The earlier Buddhists in their rage against the killing of animals
4 had denounced the sacrifices of the Vedas; and these sacrifices
5 used to be held in every house. There was a fire burning, and that
6 was all the paraphernalia of worship. These sacrifices were
7 obliterated, and in their place came gorgeous temples, gorgeous
8 ceremonies, and gorgeous priests, and all that you see in India in
9 modern times. I smile when I read books written by some modern
10 people who ought to have known better, that the Buddha was the
11 destroyer of Brahminical idolatry. Little do they know that
12 Buddhism created Brahminism and idolatry in India.

13 There was a book written a year or two ago by a Russian
14 gentleman, who claimed to have found out a very curious life of
15 Jesus Christ, and in one part of the book he says that Christ went to
16 the temple of Jagannath to study with the Brahmins, but became
17 disgusted with their exclusiveness and their idols, and so he went to
18 the Lamas of Tibet instead, become perfect, and went home. To any
19 man who knows anything about Indian history, that very statement
20 proves that the whole thing was a fraud, because the temple of
21 Jagannath is an old Buddhistic temple. We took this and others over
22 and re-Hinduised them. We shall have to do many things like that
23 yet. That is Jagannath, and there was not one Brahmin there then,
24 and yet we are told that Jesus Christ came to study with the
25 Brahmins there. So says our great Russian archaeologist.

26 Thus, in spite of the preaching of mercy to animals, in spite of
27 the sublime ethical religion, in spite of the hair-splitting discussions
28 about the existence or non-existence of a permanent soul, the whole
29 building of Buddhism tumbled down piecemeal; and the ruin was
30 simply hideous. I have neither the time nor the inclination to
31 describe to you the hideousness that came in the wake of
32 Buddhism. The most hideous ceremonies, the most horrible, the
33 most obscene books that human hands ever wrote or the human
34 brain ever conceived, the most bestial forms that ever

1 passed under the name of religion, have all been the creation
2 of degraded Buddhism.

3 But India has to live, and the spirit of the Lord descended
4 again. He who declared, "I will come whenever virtue subsides",
5 came again, and this time the manifestation was in the South, and
6 up rose that young Brahmin of whom it has been declared that at
7 the age of sixteen he had completed all his writings; the marvellous
8 boy Shankaracharya arose. The writings of this boy of sixteen are
9 the wonders of the modern world, and so was the boy. He wanted to
10 bring back the Indian world to its pristine purity, but think of the
11 amount of the task before him. I have told you a few points about
12 the state of things that existed in India. All these horrors that you
13 are trying to reform are the outcome of that reign of degradation.
14 The Tartars and the Baluchis and all the hideous races of mankind
15 came to India and became Buddhists, and assimilated with us, and
16 brought their national customs, and the whole of our national life
17 became a huge page of the most horrible and the most bestial
18 customs. That was the inheritance which that boy got from the
19 Buddhists, and from that time to this, the whole work in India is a
20 reconquest of this Buddhistic degradation by the Vedanta. It is still
21 going on, it is not yet finished. Shankara came, a great philosopher,
22 and showed that the real essence of Buddhism and that of the
23 Vedanta are not very different, but that the disciples did not
24 understand the Master and have degraded themselves, denied the
25 existence of the soul and of God, and have become atheists. That
26 was what Shankara showed, and all the Buddhists began to come
27 back to the old religion. But then they had become accustomed to
28 all these forms; what could be done?

29 Then came the brilliant Ramanuja. Shankara, with his great
30 intellect, I am afraid, had not as great a heart. Ramanuja's heart
31 was greater. He felt for the downtrodden, he sympathised with
32 them. He took up the ceremonies, the accretions that had gathered,
33 made them pure so far as they could be, and instituted new
34 ceremonies, new methods of worship, for the people who absolutely
35 required them. At the same time he opened the door to the highest
36 spiritual worship from the Brahmin to the Pariah. That was
37 Ramanuja's work. That work rolled on, invaded the North, was
38 taken up by some great leaders there; but that was much later,
39 during the Mohammedan rule; and the brightest of these prophets
40 of comparatively modern times in the North was Chaitanya.

41 You may mark one characteristic since the time of Ramanuja--
42 the opening of the door of spirituality to every one. That has been
43 the watchword of all prophets succeeding Ramanuja, as it had been
44 the watchword of all the prophets before Shankara. I do not know
45 why Shankara should be represented as rather exclusive; I do not
46 find anything in his writings which is exclusive. As in the case of the
47 declarations of the Lord Buddha, this exclusiveness that has been
48 attributed to Shankara's teachings is most possibly not due to his
49 teachings, but to the incapacity of his disciples. This one great
50 Northern sage, Chaitanya, represented the mad love of the Gopis.
51 Himself a Brahmin, born of one of the most rationalistic families of
52 the day, himself a professor of logic fighting and gaining a word-

1 victory--for, this he had learnt from his childhood as the highest
2 ideal of life and yet through the mercy of some sage the whole life
3 of that man became changed; he gave up his fight, his quarrels, his
4 professorship of logic and became one of the greatest teachers of
5 Bhakti the world has ever known--mad Chaitanya. His Bhakti rolled
6 over the whole land of Bengal, bringing solace to every one. His
7 love knew no bounds. The saint or the sinner, the Hindu or the
8 Mohammedan, the pure or the impure, the prostitute, the
9 streetwalker--all had a share in his love, all had a share in his
10 mercy; and even to the present day, although greatly degenerated,
11 as everything does become in time, his sect is the refuge of the
12 poor, of the downtrodden, of the outcast, of the weak, of those who
13 have been rejected by all society. But at the same time I must
14 remark for truth's sake that we find this: In the philosophic sects
15 we find wonderful liberalism. There is not a man who follows
16 Shankara who will say that all the different sects of India are really
17 different. At the same time he was a tremendous upholder of
18 exclusiveness as regards caste. But with every Vaishnavite
19 preacher we find a wonderful liberalism as to the teaching of caste
20 questions, but exclusiveness as regards religious questions.

21 The one had a great head, the other a large heart, and the
22 time was ripe for one to be born, the embodiment of both this head
23 and heart; the time was ripe for one to be born who in one body
24 would have the brilliant intellect of Shankara and the wonderfully
25 expansive, infinite heart of Chaitanya; one who would see in every
26 sect the same spirit working, the same God; one who would see
27 God in every being, one whose heart would weep for the poor, for
28 the weak, for the outcast, for the downtrodden, for every one in this
29 world, inside India or outside India; and at the same time whose
30 grand brilliant intellect would conceive of such noble thoughts as
31 would harmonise all conflicting sects, not only in India but outside
32 of India, and bring a marvellous harmony, the universal religion of
33 head and heart into existence. Such a man was born, and I had the
34 good fortune to sit at his feet for years. The time was ripe, it was
35 necessary that such a man should be born, and he came; and the
36 most wonderful part of it was that his life's work was just near a
37 city which was full of Western thought, a city which had run mad
38 after these occidental ideas, a city which had become more
39 Europeanised than any other city in India. There he lived, without
40 any book-learning whatsoever; this great intellect never learnt even
41 to write his own name,³ but the most brilliant graduates of our
42 university found in him an intellectual giant. He was a strange man,
43 this Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. It is a long, long story, and I
44 have no time to tell anything about him tonight. Let me now only
45 mention the great Shri Ramakrishna, the fulfilment of the Indian
46 sages, the sage for the time, one whose teaching is just now, in the
47 present time, most beneficial. And mark the divine power working
48 behind the man. The son of a poor priest, born in an out-of-the-way
49 village, unknown and unthought of, today is worshipped literally by

1 ³ ?Later research has shown that although Shri Ramakrishna was almost
2 illiterate in the Western sense, he could read and write Bengali.
3

1 thousands in Europe and America, and tomorrow will be
2 worshipped by thousands more. Who knows the plans of the Lord!

3 Now, my brothers, if you do not see the hand, the finger of
4 Providence, it is because you are blind, born blind indeed. If time
5 comes, and another opportunity, I will speak to you more fully about
6 him. Only let me say now that if I have told you one word of truth, it
7 was his and his alone, and if I have told you many things which
8 were not true, which were not correct, which were not beneficial to
9 the human race, they were all mine, and on me is the responsibility.

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THE WORK BEFORE US

(Delivered at the Triplicane Literary Society, Madras)

The problem of life is becoming deeper and broader every day as the world moves on. The watchword and the essence have been preached in the days of yore when the Vedantic truth was first discovered, the solidarity of all life. One atom in this universe cannot move without dragging the whole world along with it. There cannot be any progress without the whole world following in the wake, and it is becoming every day clearer that the solution of any problem can never be attained on racial, or national, or narrow grounds. Every idea has to become broad till it covers the whole of this world, every aspiration must go on increasing till it has engulfed the whole of humanity, nay, the whole of life, within its scope. This will explain why our country for the last few centuries has not been what she was in the past. We find that one of the causes which led to this degeneration was the narrowing of our view, narrowing the scope of our actions.

1 Two curious nations there have been--sprung of the same
2 race, but placed in different circumstances and environments,
3 working out the problems of life each in its own particular way. I
4 mean the ancient Hindu and the ancient Greek. The Indian Aryan--
5 bounded on the north by the snow-caps of the Himalayas, with
6 fresh-water rivers like rolling oceans surrounding him in the plains,
7 with eternal forests which, to him, seemed to be the end of the
8 world--turned his vision inward; and given the natural instinct, the
9 superfine brain of the Aryan, with this sublime scenery surrounding
10 him, the natural result was that he became introspective. The
11 analysis of his own mind was the great theme of the Indo-Aryan.
12 With the Greek, on the other hand, who arrived at a part of the
13 earth which was more beautiful than sublime, the beautiful islands
14 of the Grecian Archipelago, nature all around him generous yet
15 simple--his mind naturally went outside. It wanted to analyse the
16 external world. And as a result we find that from India have sprung
17 all the analytical sciences, and from Greece all the sciences of
18 generalisation. The Hindu mind went on in its own direction and
19 produced the most marvellous results. Even at the present day, the
20 logical capacity of the Hindus, and the tremendous power which the
21 Indian brain still possesses, is beyond compare. We all know that
22 our boys pitched against the boys of any other country triumph
23 always. At the same time when the national vigour went, perhaps
24 one or two centuries before the Mohammedan conquest of India,
25 this national faculty became so much exaggerated that it degraded
26 itself, and we find some of this degradation in everything in India, in
27 art, in music, in sciences, in everything. In art, no more was there a
28 broad conception, no more the symmetry of form and sublimity of
29 conception, but the tremendous attempt at the ornate and florid
30 style had arisen. The originality of the race seemed to have been
31 lost. In music no more were there the soul-stirring ideas of the
32 ancient Sanskrit music, no more did each note stand, as it were, on
33 its own feet, and produce the marvellous harmony, but each note
34 had lost its individuality. The whole of modern music is a jumble of
35 notes, a confused mass of curves. That is a sign of degradation in
36 music. So, if you analyse your idealistic conceptions, you will find
37 the same attempt at ornate figures, and loss of originality. And even
38 in religion, your special field, there came the most horrible
39 degradations. What can you expect of a race which for hundreds of
40 years has been busy in discussing such momentous problems as
41 whether we should drink a glass of water with the right hand or the
42 left? What more degradation can there be than that the greatest
43 minds of a country have been discussing about the kitchen for
44 several hundreds of years, discussing whether I may touch you or
45 you touch me, and what is the penance for this touching! The
46 themes of the Vedanta, the sublimest and the most glorious
47 conceptions of God and soul ever preached on earth, were half-lost,
48 buried in the forests, preserved by a few Sannyasins, while the rest
49 of the nation discussed the momentous questions of touching each
50 other, and dress, and food. The Mohammedan conquest gave us
51 many good things, no doubt; even the lowest man in the world can
52 teach something to the highest; at the same time it could not bring
53 vigour into the race. Then for good or evil, the English conquest of

1 India took place. Of course every conquest is bad, for conquest is
2 an evil, foreign government is an evil, no doubt; but even through
3 evil comes good sometimes, and the great good of the English
4 conquest is this: England, nay the whole of Europe, has to thank
5 Greece for its civilisation. It is Greece that speaks through
6 everything in Europe. Every building, every piece of furniture has
7 the impress of Greece upon it; European science and art are
8 nothing but Grecian. Today the ancient Greek is meeting the
9 ancient Hindu on the soil of India. Thus slowly and silently the
10 leaven has come; the broadening, the life-giving and the revivalist
11 movement that we see all around us has been worked out by these
12 forces together. A broader and more generous conception of life is
13 before us; and although at first we have been deluded a little and
14 wanted to narrow things down, we are finding out today that these
15 generous impulses which are at work, these broader conceptions of
16 life, are the logical interpretation of what is in our ancient books.
17 They are the carrying out, to the rigorously logical effect, of the
18 primary conceptions of our own ancestors. To become broad, to go
19 out, to amalgamate, to universalise, is the end of our aims. And all
20 the time we have been making ourselves smaller and smaller, and
21 dissociating ourselves, contrary to the plans laid down in our
22 scriptures.

23 Several dangers are in the way, and one is that of the extreme
24 conception that we are *the* people in the world. With all my love for
25 India, and with all my patriotism and veneration for the ancients, I
26 cannot but think that we have to learn many things from other
27 nations. We must be always ready to sit at the feet of all, for, mark
28 you, every one can teach us great lessons. Says our great law-giver
29 Manu: "Receive some good knowledge even from the low-born, and
30 even from the man of lowest birth learn by service the road to
31 heaven." We, therefore, as true children of Manu, must obey his
32 commands and be ready to learn the lessons of this life or the life
33 hereafter from any one who can teach us. At the same time we must
34 not forget that we have also to teach a great lesson to the world.
35 We cannot do without the world outside India; it was our
36 foolishness that we thought we could, and we have paid the penalty
37 by about a thousand years of slavery. That we did not go out to
38 compare things with other nations, did not mark the workings that
39 have been all around us, has been the one great cause of this
40 degradation of the Indian mind. We have paid the penalty; let us do
41 it no more. All such foolish ideas that Indians must not go out of
42 India are childish. They must be knocked on the head; the more you
43 go out and travel among the nations of the world, the better for you
44 and for your country. If you had done that for hundreds of years
45 past, you would not be here today at the feet of every nation that
46 wants to rule India. The first manifest effect of life is expansion. You
47 must expand if you want to live. The moment you have ceased to
48 expand, death is upon you, danger is ahead. I went to America and
49 Europe, to which you so kindly allude; I have to, because that is the
50 first sign of the revival of national life, expansion. This reviving
51 national life, expanding inside, threw me off, and thousands will be
52 thrown off in that way. Mark my words, it has got to come if this
53 nation lives at all. This question, therefore, is the greatest of the

1 signs of the revival of national life, and through this expansion our
2 quota of offering to the general mass of human knowledge, our
3 contribution to the general upheaval of the world, is going out to
4 the external world.

5 Again, this is not a new thing. Those of you who think that the
6 Hindus have been always confined within the four walls of their
7 country through all ages, are entirely mistaken; you have not
8 studied the old books, you have not studied the history of the race
9 aright if you think so. Each nation must give in order to live. When
10 you give life, you will have life; when you receive, you must pay for
11 it by giving to all others; and that we have been living for so many
12 thousands of years is a fact that stares us in the face, and the
13 solution that remains is that we have been always giving to the
14 outside world, whatever the ignorant may think. But the gift of
15 India is the gift of religion and philosophy, and wisdom and
16 spirituality. And religion does not want cohorts to march before its
17 path and clear its way. Wisdom and philosophy do not want to be
18 carried on floods of blood. Wisdom and philosophy do not march
19 upon bleeding human bodies, do not march with violence but come
20 on the wings of peace and love, and that has always been so.
21 Therefore we had to give. I was asked by a young lady in London,
22 "What have you Hindus done? You have never even conquered a
23 single nation." That is true from the point of view of the
24 Englishman, the brave, the heroic, the Kshatriya--conquest is the
25 greatest glory that one man can have over another. That is true
26 from his point of view, but from ours it is quite the opposite. If I ask
27 myself what has been the cause of India's greatness, I answer,
28 because we have never conquered. That is our glory. You are
29 hearing every day, and sometimes, I am sorry to say, from men who
30 ought to know better, denunciations of our religion, because it is
31 not at all a conquering religion. To my mind that is the argument
32 why our religion is truer than any other religion, because it never
33 conquered, because it never shed blood, because its mouth always
34 shed on all, words of blessing, of peace, words of love and
35 sympathy. It is here and here alone that the ideals of toleration
36 were first preached. And it is here and here alone that toleration
37 and sympathy have become practical; it is theoretical in every other
38 country; it is here and here alone, that the Hindu builds mosques
39 for the Mohammedans and churches for the Christians.

40 So, you see, our message has gone out to the world many a
41 time, but slowly, silently, unperceived. It is on a par with everything
42 in India. The one characteristic of Indian thought is its silence, its
43 calmness. At the same time the tremendous power that is behind it
44 is never expressed by violence. It is always the silent mesmerism of
45 Indian thought. If a foreigner takes up our literature to study, at
46 first it is disgusting to him; there is not the same stir, perhaps, the
47 same amount of go that rouses him instantly. Compare the
48 tragedies of Europe with our tragedies. The one is full of action,
49 that rouses you for the moment, but when it is over there comes the
50 reaction, and everything is gone, washed off as it were from your
51 brains. Indian tragedies are like the mesmerist's power, quiet,
52 silent, but as you go on studying them they fascinate you; you

1 cannot move; you are bound; and whoever has dared to touch our
2 literature has felt the bondage, and is there bound for ever. Like the
3 gentle dew that falls unseen and unheard, and yet brings into
4 blossom the fairest of roses, has been the contribution of India to
5 the thought of the world. Silent, unperceived, yet omnipotent in its
6 effect, it has revolutionised the thought of the world, yet nobody
7 knows when it did so. It was once remarked to me, "How difficult it
8 is to ascertain the name of any writer in India", to which I replied,
9 "That is the Indian idea." Indian writers are not like modern writers
10 who steal ninety per cent of their ideas from other authors, while
11 only ten per cent is their own, and they take care to write a preface
12 in which they say, "For these ideas I am responsible". Those great
13 master minds producing momentous results in the hearts of
14 mankind were content to write their books without even putting
15 their names, and to die quietly, leaving the books to posterity. Who
16 knows the writers of our philosophy, who knows the writers of our
17 Puranas? They all pass under the generic name of Vyasa, and
18 Kapila, and so on. They have been true children of Shri Krishna.
19 They have been true followers of the Gita; they practically carried
20 out the great mandate, "To work you have the right, but not to the
21 fruits thereof."

22 Thus India is working upon the world, but one condition is
23 necessary. Thoughts like merchandise can only run through
24 channels made by somebody. Roads have to be made before even
25 thought can travel from one place to another, and whenever in the
26 history of the world a great conquering nation has arisen, linking
27 the different parts of the world together, then has poured through
28 these channels the thought of India and thus entered into the veins
29 of every race. Before even the Buddhists were born, there are
30 evidences accumulating every day that Indian thought penetrated
31 the world. Before Buddhism, Vedanta had penetrated into China,
32 into Persia, and the Islands of the Eastern Archipelago. Again when
33 the mighty mind of the Greek had linked the different parts of the
34 Eastern world together there came Indian thought; and Christianity
35 with all its boasted civilisation is but a collection of little bits of
36 Indian thought. Ours is the religion of which Buddhism with all its
37 greatness is a rebel child, and of which Christianity is a very patchy
38 imitation. One of these cycles has again arrived. There is the
39 tremendous power of England which has linked the different parts
40 of the world together. English roads no more are content like
41 Roman roads to run over lands, but they have also ploughed the
42 deep in all directions. From ocean to ocean run the roads of
43 England. Every part of the world has been linked to every other
44 part, and electricity plays a most marvellous part as the new
45 messenger. Under all these circumstances we find again India
46 reviving and ready to give her own quota to the progress and
47 civilisation of the world. And that I have been forced, as it were, by
48 nature, to go over and preach to America and England is the result.
49 Every one of us ought to have seen that the time had arrived.
50 Everything looks propitious, and Indian thought, philosophical and
51 spiritual, must once more go over and conquer the world. The
52 problem before us, therefore, is assuming larger proportions every
53 day. It is not only that we must revive our own country--that is a

1 small matter; I am an imaginative man--and my idea is the conquest
2 of the whole world by the Hindu race.

3 There have been great conquering races in the world. We also
4 have been great conquerors. The story of our conquest has been
5 described by that noble Emperor of India, Ashoka, as the conquest
6 of religion and of spirituality. Once more the world must be
7 conquered by India. This is the dream of my life, and I wish that
8 each one of you who hear me today will have the same dream in
9 your minds, and stop not till you have realised the dream. They will
10 tell you every day that we had better look to our own homes first
11 and then go to work outside. But I will tell you in plain language
12 that you work best when you work for others. The best work that
13 you ever did for yourselves was when you worked for others, trying
14 to disseminate your ideas in foreign languages beyond the seas,
15 and this very meeting is proof how the attempt to enlighten other
16 countries with your thoughts is helping your own country. One-
17 fourth of the effect that has been produced in this country by my
18 going to England and America would not have been brought about,
19 had I confined my ideas only to India. This is the great ideal before
20 us, and every one must be ready for it--the conquest of the whole
21 world by India--nothing less than that, and we must all get ready for
22 it, strain every nerve for it. Let foreigners come and flood the land
23 with their armies, never mind. Up, India, and conquer the world
24 with your spirituality! Ay, as has been declared on this soil first, love
25 must conquer hatred, hatred cannot conquer itself. Materialism and
26 all its miseries can never be conquered by materialism. Armies
27 when they attempt to conquer armies only multiply and make
28 brutes of humanity. Spirituality must conquer the West. Slowly they
29 are finding out that what they want is spirituality to preserve them
30 as nations. They are waiting for it, they are eager for it. Where is
31 the supply to come from? Where are the men ready to go out to
32 every country in the world with the messages of the great sages of
33 India? Where are the men ready to go out to every country in the
34 world with the messages of the great sages of India? Where are the
35 men who are ready to sacrifice everything, so that this message
36 shall reach every corner of the world? Such heroic souls are wanted
37 to help the spread of truth. Such heroic workers are wanted to go
38 abroad and help to disseminate the great truths of Vedanta. The
39 world wants it; without it the world will be destroyed. The whole of
40 the Western world is on a volcano which may burst tomorrow, go to
41 pieces tomorrow. They have searched every corner of the world and
42 have found no respite. They have drunk deep of the cup of pleasure
43 and found it vanity. Now is the time to work so that India's spiritual
44 ideas may penetrate deep into the West. Therefore young men of
45 Madras, I specially ask you to remember this. We must go out, we
46 must conquer the world through our spirituality and philosophy.
47 There is no other alternative, we must do it or die. The only
48 condition of national life, of awakened and vigorous national life, is
49 the conquest of the world by Indian thought.

1 At the same time we must not forget that what I mean by the
2 conquest of the world by spiritual thought is the sending out of life-
3 giving principles, not the hundreds of superstitions that we have
4 been hugging to our breasts for centuries. These have to be weeded
5 out even on this soil, and thrown aside, so that they may die for
6 ever. These are the causes of the degradation of the race and will
7 lead to the softening of the brain. That brain which cannot think
8 high and noble thoughts, which has lost all power of originality,
9 which has lost all vigour, that brain which is always poisoning itself
10 with all sorts of little superstitions passing under the name of
11 religion, we must beware of. In our sight, here in India, there are
12 several dangers. Of these, the two, Scylla and Charybdis, rank
13 materialism and its opposite arrant superstition, must be avoided.
14 There is the man today who after drinking the cup of Western
15 wisdom, thinks that he knows everything. He laughs at the ancient
16 sages. All Hindu thought to him is arrant trash--philosophy mere
17 child's prattle, and religion the superstition of fools. On the other
18 hand, there is the man educated, but a sort of monomaniac, who
19 runs to the other extreme and wants to explain the omen of this and
20 that. He has philosophical and metaphysical, and Lord knows what
21 other puerile explanations for every superstition that belongs to his
22 peculiar race, or his peculiar gods, or his peculiar village. Every
23 little village superstition is to him a mandate of the Vedas, and upon
24 the carrying out of it, according to him, depends the national life.
25 You must beware of this. I would rather see every one of you rank
26 atheists than superstitious fools, for the atheist is alive and you can
27 make something out of him. But if superstition enters, the brain is
28 gone, the brain is softening, degradation has seized upon the life.
29 Avoid these two. Brave, bold men, these are what we want. What
30 we want is vigour in the blood, strength in the nerves, iron muscles
31 and nerves of steel, not softening namby-pamby ideas. Avoid all
32 these. Avoid all mystery. There is no mystery in religion. Is there
33 any mystery in the Vedanta, or in the Vedas, or in the Samhitas, or
34 in the Puranas? What secret societies did the sages of yore
35 establish to preach their religion? What sleight-of-hand tricks are
36 there recorded as used by them to bring their grand truths to
37 humanity? Mystery mongering and superstition are always signs of
38 weakness. These are always signs of degradation and of death.
39 Therefore beware of them; be strong, and stand on your own feet.
40 Great things are there, most marvellous things. We may call them
41 supernatural things so far as our ideas of nature go, but not one of
42 these things is a mystery. It was never preached on this soil that the
43 truths of religion were mysteries or that they were the property of
44 secret societies sitting on the snow-caps of the Himalayas. I have
45 been in the Himalayas. You have not been there; it is several
46 hundred miles from your homes. I am a Sannyasin, and I have been
47 for the last fourteen years on my feet. These mysterious societies
48 do not exist anywhere. Do not run after these superstitions. Better
49 for you and for the race that you become rank atheists, because you
50 would have strength, but these are degradation and death. Shame
51 on humanity that strong men should spend their time on these
52 superstitions, spend all their time in inventing allegories to explain
53 the most rotten superstitions of the world. Be bold; do not try to

1 explain everything that way. The fact is that we have many
2 superstitions, many bad spots and sores on our body--these have to
3 be excised, cut off, and destroyed--but these do not destroy our
4 religion, our national life, our spirituality. Every principle of religion
5 is safe, and the sooner these black spots are purged away, the
6 better the principles will shine, the more gloriously. Stick to them.

7 You hear claims made by every religion as being the universal
8 religion of the world. Let me tell you in the first place that perhaps
9 there never will be such a thing, but if there is a religion which can
10 lay claim to be that, it is only our religion and no other, because
11 every other religion depends on some person or persons. All the
12 other religions have been built round the life of what they think a
13 historical man; and what they think the strength of religion is really
14 the weakness, for disprove the historicity of the man and the whole
15 fabric tumbles to the ground. Half the lives of these great founders
16 of religions have been broken into pieces, and the other half
17 doubted very seriously. As such, every truth that had its sanction
18 only in their words vanishes into air. But the truths of our religion,
19 although we have persons by the score, do not depend upon them.
20 The glory of Krishna is not that he was Krishna, but that he was the
21 great teacher of Vedanta. If he had not been so, his name would
22 have died out of India in the same way as the name of Buddha has
23 done. Thus our allegiance is to the principles always, and not to the
24 persons. Persons are but the embodiments, the illustrations of the
25 principles. If the principles are there, the persons will come by the
26 thousands and millions. If the principle is safe, persons like Buddha
27 will be born by the hundreds and thousands. But if the principle is
28 lost and forgotten and the whole of national life tries to cling round
29 a so-called historical person, woe unto that religion, danger unto
30 that religion! Ours is the only religion that does not depends on a
31 person or persons; it is based upon principles. At the same time
32 there is room for millions of persons. There is ample ground for
33 introducing persons, but each one of them must be an illustration of
34 the principles. We must not forget that. These principles of our
35 religion are all safe, and it should be the life-work of every one of us
36 to keep them safe, and to keep them free from the accumulating
37 dirt and dust of ages. It is strange that in spite of the degradation
38 that seized upon the race again and again, these principles of the
39 Vedanta were never tarnished. No one, however wicked, ever dared
40 to throw dirt upon them. Our scriptures are the best preserved
41 scriptures in the world. Compared to other books there have been
42 no interpolations, no text-torturing, no destroying of the essence of
43 the thought in them. It is there just as it was first, directing the
44 human mind towards the ideal, the goal.

45 You find that these texts have been commented upon by
46 different commentators, preached by great teachers, and sects
47 founded upon them; and you find that in these books of the Vedas
48 there are various apparently contradictory ideas. There are certain
49 texts which are entirely dualistic, others are entirely monistic. The
50 dualistic commentator, knowing no better, wishes to knock the
51 monistic texts on the head. Preachers and priests want to explain
52 them in the dualistic meaning. The monistic commentator serves

1 the dualistic texts in a similar fashion. Now this is not the fault of
2 the Vedas. It is foolish to attempt to prove that the whole of the
3 Vedas is dualistic. It is equally foolish to attempt to prove that the
4 whole of the Vedas is non-dualistic. They are dualistic and non-
5 dualistic both. We understand them better today in the light of
6 newer ideas. These are but different conceptions leading to the
7 final conclusion that both dualistic and monistic conceptions are
8 necessary for the evolution of the mind, and therefore the Vedas
9 preach them. In mercy to the human race the Vedas show the
10 various steps to the higher goal. Not that they are contradictory,
11 vain words used by the Vedas to delude children; they are
12 necessary not only for children, but for many a grown-up man. So
13 long as we have a body and so long as we are deluded by the idea
14 of our identity with the body, so long as we have five senses and see
15 the external world, we must have a Personal God. For if we have all
16 these ideas, we must take, as the great Ramanuja has proved, all
17 the ideas about God and nature and the individualised soul; when
18 you take the one you have to take the whole triangle--we cannot
19 avoid it. Therefore as long as you see the external world, to avoid a
20 Personal God and a personal soul is arrant lunacy. But there may be
21 times in the lives of sages when the human mind transcends as it
22 were its own limitations, when man goes even beyond nature, to the
23 realm of which the Shruti declares, "whence words fall back with
24 the mind without reaching it"; "There the eyes cannot reach nor
25 speech nor mind"; "We cannot say that we know it, we cannot say
26 that we do not know it". There the human soul transcends all
27 limitations, and then and then alone flashes into the human soul the
28 conception of monism: I and the whole universe are one; I and
29 Brahman are one. And this conclusion you will find has not only
30 been reached through knowledge and philosophy, but parts of it
31 through the power of love. You read in the *Bhagavata*, when
32 Krishna disappeared and the Gopis bewailed his disappearance,
33 that at last the thought of Krishna became so prominent in their
34 minds that each one forgot her own body and thought she was
35 Krishna, and began to decorate herself and to play as he did. We
36 understand, therefore, that this identity comes even through love.
37 There was an ancient Persian Sufi poet, and one of his poems said,
38 "I came to the Beloved and beheld the door was closed; I knocked
39 at the door and from inside a voice came, 'Who is there?' I replied,
40 'I am'. The door did not open. A second time I came and knocked at
41 the door and the same voice asked, 'Who is there?' 'I am so-and-
42 so.' The door did not open. A third time I came and the same voice
43 asked, 'Who is there?' 'I am Thyself, my Love', and the door
44 opened."

45 There are, therefore, many stages, and we need not quarrel
46 about them even if there have been quarrels among the ancient
47 commentators, whom all of us ought to revere; for there is no
48 limitation to knowledge, there is no omniscience exclusively the
49 property of any one in ancient or modern times. If there have been
50 sages and Rishis in the past, be sure that there will be many now. If
51 there have been Vyasas and Valmikis and Shankaracharyas in
52 ancient times, why may not each one of you become a
53 Shankaracharya? This is another point of our religion that you must

1 always remember, that in all other scriptures inspiration is quoted
2 as their authority, but this inspiration is limited to a very few
3 persons, and through them the truth came to the masses, and we
4 have all to obey them. Truth came to Jesus of Nazareth, and we
5 must all obey him. But the truth came to the Rishis of India--the
6 Mantra-drashtas, the seers of thought--and will come to all Rishis in
7 the future, not to talkers, not to book-swallowers, not to scholars,
8 not to philologists, but to seers of thought. The Self is not to be
9 reached by too much talking, not even by the highest intellects, not
10 even by the study of the scriptures. The scriptures themselves say
11 so. Do you find in any other scripture such a bold assertion as that--
12 not even by the study of the Vedas will you reach the Atman? You
13 must open your heart. Religion is not going to church, or putting
14 marks on the forehead, or dressing in a peculiar fashion; you may
15 paint yourselves in all the colours of the rainbow, but if the heart
16 has not been opened, if you have not realised God, it is all vain. If
17 one has the colour of the heart, he does not want any external
18 colour. That is the true religious realisation. We must not forget that
19 colours and all these things are good so far as they help; so far they
20 are all welcome. But they are apt to degenerate and instead of
21 helping they retard, and a man identifies religion with externalities.
22 Going to the temple becomes tantamount to spiritual life. Giving
23 something to a priest becomes tantamount to religious life. These
24 are dangerous and pernicious, and should be at once checked. Our
25 scriptures declare again and again that even the knowledge of the
26 external senses is not religion. That is religion which makes us
27 realise the Unchangeable One, and that is the religion for ever one.
28 He who realises transcendental truth, he who realises the Atman in
29 his own nature, he who comes face to face with God, sees God
30 alone in everything, has become a Rishi. And there is no religious
31 life for you until you have become a Rishi. Then alone religion
32 begins for you, now is only the preparation. Then religion dawns
33 upon you, now you are only undergoing intellectual gymnastics and
34 physical tortures.

35 We must, therefore, remember that our religion lays down
36 distinctly and clearly that every one who wants salvation must pass
37 through the stage of Rishihood--must become a Mantra-drashta,
38 must see God. That is salvation; that is the law laid down by our
39 scriptures. Then it becomes easy to look into the scripture with our
40 own eyes, understand the meaning for ourselves, to analyse just
41 what we want, and to understand the truth for ourselves. This is
42 what has to be done. At the same time we must pay all reverence to
43 the ancient sages for their work. They were great, these ancients,
44 but we want to be greater. They did great work in the past, but we
45 must do greater work than they. They had hundreds of Rishis in
46 ancient India. We will have millions--we are going to have, and the
47 sooner every one of you believes in this, the better for India and the
48 better for the world. Whatever you believe, that you will be. If you
49 believe yourselves to be sages, sages you will be tomorrow. There is
50 nothing to obstruct you. For if there is one common doctrine that
51 runs through all our apparently fighting and contradictory sects, it
52 is that all glory, power, and purity are within the soul already; only
53 according to Ramanuja, the soul contracts and expands at times,

1 and according to Shankara, it comes under a delusion. Never mind
2 these differences. All admit the truth that the power is there--
3 potential or manifest it is there--and the sooner you believe that, the
4 better for you. All power is within you; you can do anything and
5 everything. Believe in that, do not believe that you are weak; do not
6 believe that you are half-crazy lunatics, as most of us do nowadays.
7 You can do anything and everything without even the guidance of
8 any one. All power is there. Stand up and express the divinity within
9 you.

THE FUTURE OF INDIA

This is the ancient land where wisdom made its home before it went into any other country, the same India whose influx of spirituality is represented, as it were, on the material plane, by rolling rivers like oceans, where the eternal Himalayas, rising tier above tier with their snowcaps, looks as it were into the very mysteries of heaven. Here is the same India whose soil has been trodden by the feet of the greatest sages that ever lived. Here first sprang up inquiries into the nature of man and into the internal world. Here first arose the doctrines of the immortality of the soul, the existence of a supervising God, an immanent God in nature and in man, and here the highest ideals of religion and philosophy have attained their culminating points. This is the land from whence, like tidal waves, spirituality and philosophy have again and again rushed out and deluged the world, and this is the land from whence once more such tides must proceed in order to bring life and vigour into the decaying races of mankind. It is the same India which has withstood the shocks of centuries, of hundreds of foreign invasions, of hundreds of upheavals of manners and customs. It is the same land which stands firmer than any rock in the world, with its undying vigour, indestructible life. Its life is of the same nature as the soul, without beginning and without end, immortal; and we are the children of such a country.

Children of India, I am here to speak to you today about some practical things, and my object in reminding you about the glories of the past is simply this. Many times have I been told that looking into the past only degenerates and leads to nothing, and that we should look to the future. That is true. But out of the past is built the future. Look back, therefore, as far as you can, drink deep of the eternal fountains that are behind, and after that, look forward, march forward and make India brighter, greater, much higher than she ever was. Our ancestors were great. We must first recall that. We must learn the elements of our being, the blood that courses in our veins; we must have faith in that blood and what it did in the past; and out of that faith and consciousness of past greatness, we must build an India yet greater than what she has been. There have been periods of decay and degradation. I do not attach much importance to them; we all know that. Such periods have been necessary. A mighty tree produces a beautiful ripe fruit. That fruit falls on the ground, it decays and rots, and out of that decay springs the root and the future tree, perhaps mightier than the first one. This period of decay through which we have passed was all the more necessary. Out of this decay is coming the India of the future; it is sprouting, its first leaves are already out; and a mighty, gigantic tree, the Urdhvamula, is here, already beginning to appear; and it is about that that I am going to speak to you.

The problems in India are more complicated, more momentous, than the problems in any other country. Race, religion, language, government--all these together make a nation. The

1 elements which compose the nations of the world are indeed very
2 few, taking race after race, compared to this country. Here have
3 been the Aryan, the Dravidian, the Tartar, the Turk, the Mogul, the
4 European--all the nations of the world, as it were, pouring their
5 blood into this land. Of languages the most wonderful
6 conglomeration is here; of manners and customs there is more
7 difference between two Indian races than between the European
8 and the Eastern races.

9 The one common ground that we have is our sacred tradition,
10 our religion. That is the only common ground, and upon that we
11 shall have to build. In Europe, political ideas form the national
12 unity. In Asia, religious ideals form the national unity. The unity in
13 religion, therefore, is absolutely necessary as the first condition of
14 the future of India. There must be the recognition of one religion
15 throughout the length and breadth of this land. What do I mean by
16 one religion? Not in the sense of one religion as held among the
17 Christians, or the Mohammedans, or the Buddhists. We know that
18 our religion has certain common grounds, common to all our sects,
19 however varying their conclusions may be, however different their
20 claims may be. So there are certain common grounds; and within
21 their limitation this religion of ours admits of a marvellous
22 variation, an infinite amount of liberty to think and live our own
23 lives. We all know that, at least those of us who have thought; and
24 what we want is to bring out these life-giving common principles of
25 our religion, and let every man, woman, and child, throughout the
26 length and breadth of this country, understand them, know them,
27 and try to bring them out in their lives. This is the first step; and,
28 therefore, it has to be taken.

29 We see how in Asia, and especially in India, race difficulties,
30 linguistic difficulties, social difficulties, national difficulties, all melt
31 away before this unifying power of religion. We know that to the
32 Indian mind there is nothing higher than religious ideals, that this is
33 the keynote of Indian life, and we can only work in the line of least
34 resistance. It is not only true that the ideal of religion is the highest
35 ideal; in the case of India it is the only possible means of work;
36 work in any other line, without first strengthening this, would be
37 disastrous. Therefore the first plank in the making of a future India,
38 the first step that is to be hewn out of that rock of ages, is this
39 unification of religion. All of us have to be taught that we Hindus--
40 dualists, qualified monists, or monists, Shaivas, Vaishnavas, or
41 Pashupatas--to whatever denomination we may belong, have certain
42 common ideas behind us, and that the time has come when for the
43 well-being of ourselves, for the well-being of our race, we must give
44 up all our little quarrels and differences. Be sure, these quarrels
45 are entirely wrong; they are condemned by our scriptures,
46 forbidden by our forefathers; and those great men from whom we
47 claim our descent, whose blood is in our veins, look down with
48 contempt on their children quarrelling about minute differences.

49 With the giving up of quarrels all other improvements will
50 come. When the life-blood is strong and pure, no disease germ can
51 live in that body. Our life-blood is spirituality. If it flows clear, if it
52 flows strong and pure and vigorous, everything is right; political,

1 social, any other material defects, even the poverty of the land, will
2 all be cured if that blood is pure. For if the disease germ be thrown
3 out, nothing will be able to enter into the blood. To take a simile
4 from modern medicine, we know that there must be two causes to
5 produce a disease, some poison germ outside, and the state of the
6 body. Until the body is in a state to admit the germs, until the body
7 is degraded to a lower vitality so that the germs may enter and
8 thrive and multiply, there is no power in any germ and in the world
9 to produce a disease in the body. In fact, millions of germs are
10 continually passing through everyone's body; but so long as it is
11 vigorous, it never is conscious of them. It is only when the body is
12 weak that these germs take possession of it and produce disease.
13 Just so with the national life. It is when the national body is weak
14 that all sorts of disease germs, in the political state of the race or in
15 its social state, in its educational or intellectual state, crowd into
16 the system and produce disease. To remedy it, therefore, we must
17 go to the root of this disease and cleanse the blood of all impurities.
18 The one tendency will be to strengthen the man, to make the blood
19 pure, the body vigorous, so that it will be able to resist and throw
20 off all external poisons.

21 We have seen that our vigour, our strength, nay, our national
22 life is in our religion. I am not going to discuss now whether it is
23 right or not, whether it is correct or not, whether it is beneficial or
24 not in the long run, to have this vitality in religion, but for good or
25 evil it is there; you cannot get out of it, you have it now and for ever,
26 and you have to stand by it, even if you have not the same faith that
27 I have in our religion. You are bound by it, and if you give it up, you
28 are smashed to pieces. That is the life of our race and that must be
29 strengthened. You have withstood the shocks of centuries simply
30 because you took great care of it, you sacrificed everything else for
31 it. Your forefathers underwent everything boldly, even death itself,
32 but preserved their religion. Temple after temple was broken down
33 by the foreign conqueror, but no sooner had the wave passed than
34 the spire of the temple rose up again. Some of these old temples of
35 Southern India and those like Somnath of Gujarat will teach you
36 volumes of wisdom, will give you a keener insight into the history of
37 the race than any amount of books. Mark how these temples bear
38 the marks of a hundred attacks and a hundred regenerations,
39 continually destroyed and continually springing up out of the ruins,
40 rejuvenated and strong as ever! That is the national mind, that is
41 the national life-current. Follow it and it leads to glory. Give it up
42 and you die; death will be the only result, annihilation the only
43 effect, the moment you step beyond that life-current. I do not mean
44 to say that other things are not necessary. I do not mean to say that
45 political or social improvements are not necessary, but what I mean
46 is this, and I want you to bear it in mind, that they are secondary
47 here and that religion is primary. The Indian mind is first religious,
48 then anything else. So this is to be strengthened, and how to do it? I
49 will lay before you my ideas. They have been in my mind for a long
50 time, even years before I left the shores of Madras for America, and
51 that I went to America and England was simply for propagating
52 those ideas. I did not care at all for the Parliament of Religions or
53 anything else; it was simply an opportunity; for it was really those

1 ideas of mine that took me all over the world.

1 My idea is first of all to bring out the gems of spirituality that
2 are stored up in our books and in the possession of a few only,
3 hidden, as it were, in monasteries and in forests--to bring them out;
4 to bring the knowledge out of them, not only from the hands where
5 it is hidden, but from the still more inaccessible chest, the language
6 in which it is preserved, the incrustation of centuries of Sanskrit
7 words. In one word, I want to make them popular. I want to bring
8 out these ideas and let them be the common property of all, of
9 every man in India, whether he knows the Sanskrit language or not.
10 The great difficulty in the way is the Sanskrit language--the glorious
11 language of ours; and this difficulty cannot be removed until--if it is
12 possible--the whole of our nation are good Sanskrit scholars. You
13 will understand the difficulty when I tell you that I have been
14 studying this language all my life, and yet every new book is new to
15 me. How much more difficult would it then be for people who never
16 had time to study the language thoroughly! Therefore the ideas
17 must be taught in the language of the people; at the same time,
18 Sanskrit education must go on along with it, because the very
19 sound of Sanskrit words gives a prestige and a power and a
20 strength to the race. The attempts of the great Ramanuja and of
21 Chaitanya and of Kabir to raise the lower classes of India show that
22 marvellous results were attained during the lifetime of those great
23 prophets; yet the later failures have to be explained, and cause
24 shown why the effect of their teachings stopped almost within a
25 century of the passing away of these great Masters. The secret is
26 here. They raised the lower classes; they had all the wish that these
27 should come up, but they did not apply their energies to the
28 spreading of the Sanskrit language among the masses. Even the
29 great Buddha made one false step when he stopped the Sanskrit
30 language from being studied by the masses. He wanted rapid and
31 immediate results, and translated and preached in the language of
32 the day, Pali. That was grand; he spoke in the language of the
33 people, and the people understood him. That was great; it spread
34 the ideas quickly and made them reach far and wide. But along with
35 that, Sanskrit ought to have spread. Knowledge came, but the
36 prestige was not there, culture was not there. It is culture that
37 withstands shocks, not a simple mass of knowledge. You can put a
38 mass of knowledge into the world, but that will not do it much good.
39 There must come culture into the blood. We all know in modern
40 times of nations which have masses of knowledge, but what of
41 them? They are like tigers, they are like savages, because culture is
42 not there. Knowledge is only skin-deep, as civilisation is, and a little
43 scratch brings out the old savage. Such things happen; this is the
44 danger. Teach the masses in the vernaculars, give them ideas; they
45 will get information, but something more is necessary; give them
46 culture. Until you give them that, there can be no permanence in
47 the raised condition of the masses. There will be another caste
48 created, having the advantage of the Sanskrit language, which will
49 quickly get above the rest and rule them all the same. The only
50 safety, I tell you men who belong to the lower castes, the only way
51 to raise your condition is to study Sanskrit, and this fighting and
52 writing and frothing against the higher castes is in vain, it does no
53 good, and it creates fight and quarrel, and this race, unfortunately

1 already divided, is going to be divided more and more. The only way
2 to bring about the levelling of caste is to appropriate the culture,
3 the education which is the strength of the higher castes. That done,
4 you have what you want.

5 In connection with this I want to discuss one question which
6 has a particular bearing with regard to Madras. There is a theory
7 that there was a race of mankind in Southern India called
8 Dravidians, entirely differing from another race in Northern India
9 called the Aryans, and that the Southern Indian Brahmins are the
10 only Aryans that came from the North, the other men of Southern
11 India belong to an entirely different caste and race to those of
12 Southern India Brahmins. Now I beg your pardon, Mr. Philologist.
13 This is entirely unfounded. The only proof of it is that there is a
14 difference of language between the North and the South. I do not
15 see any other difference. We are so many Northern men here, and I
16 ask my European friends to pick out the Northern and Southern
17 men from this assembly. Where is the difference? A little difference
18 of language. But the Brahmins are a race that came here speaking
19 the Sanskrit language! Well then, they took up the Dravidian
20 language and forgot their Sanskrit. Why should not the other castes
21 have done the same? Why should not all the other castes have come
22 one after the other from Northern India, taken up the Dravidian
23 language, and so forgotten their own? That is an argument working
24 both ways. Do not believe in such silly things. There may have been
25 a Dravidian people who vanished from here, and the few who
26 remained lived in forests and other places. It is quite possible that
27 the language may have been taken up, but all these are Aryans who
28 came from the North. The whole of India is Aryan, nothing else.

29 Then there is the other idea that the Shudra caste are surely
30 the aborigines. What are they? They are slaves. They say history
31 repeats itself. The Americans, English, Dutch, and the Portuguese
32 got hold of the poor Africans and made them work hard while they
33 lived, and their children of mixed birth were born in slavery and
34 keep in that condition for a long period. From that wonderful
35 example, the mind jumps back several thousand years and fancies
36 that the same thing happened here, and our archaeologist dreams
37 of India being full of dark-eyed aborigines, and the bright Aryan
38 came from--the Lord knows where. According to some, they came
39 from Central Tibet, others will have it that they came from Central
40 Asia. There are patriotic Englishmen who think that the Aryans
41 were all red-haired. Others, according to their idea, think that they
42 were all black-haired. If the writer happens to be a black-haired
43 man, the Aryans were all black-haired. Of late, there was an
44 attempt made to prove that the Aryans lived on the Swiss lakes. I
45 should not be sorry if they had been all drowned there, theory and
46 all. Some say now that they lived at the North Pole. Lord bless the
47 Aryans and their habitations! As for the truth of these theories,
48 there is not one word in our scriptures, not one, to prove that the
49 Aryan ever came from anywhere outside of India, and in ancient
50 India was included Afghanistan. There it ends. And the theory that
51 the Shudra caste were all non-Aryans and they were a multitude, is
52 equally illogical and equally irrational. It could not have been

1 possible in those days that a few Aryans settled and lived there with
2 a hundred thousands slaves at their command. These slaves would
3 have eaten them up, made "chutney" of them in five minutes. The
4 only explanation is to be found in the Mahabharata, which says that
5 in the beginning of the Satya Yuga there was one caste, the
6 Brahmins, and then by difference of occupations they went on
7 dividing themselves into different castes, and that is the only true
8 and rational explanation that has been given. And in the coming
9 Satya Yuga all the other castes will have to go back to the same
10 condition.

11 The solution of the caste problem in India, therefore, assumes
12 this form, not to degrade the higher castes, not to crush out the
13 Brahmin. The Brahminhood is the ideal of humanity in India, as
14 wonderfully put forward by Shankaracharya at the beginning of his
15 commentary on the Gita, where he speaks about the reason for
16 Krishna's coming as a preacher for the preservation of
17 Brahminhood, of Brahminness. That was the great end. This
18 Brahmin, the man of God, he who has known Brahman, the ideal
19 man, the perfect man, must remain; he must not go. And with all
20 the defects of the caste now, we know that we must all be ready to
21 give to the Brahmins this credit, that from them have come more
22 men with real Brahminness in them than from all the other castes.
23 That is true. That is the credit due to them from all the other castes.
24 We must be bold enough, must be brave enough to speak of their
25 defects, but at the same time we must give the credit that is due to
26 them. Remember the old English proverb, "Give every man his
27 due". Therefore, my friends, it is no use fighting among the castes.
28 What good will it do? It will divide us all the more, weaken us all the
29 more, degrade us all the more. The days of exclusive privileges and
30 exclusive claims are gone, gone for ever from the soil of India, and
31 it is one of the great blessings of the British Rule in India. Even to
32 the Mohammedan Rule we owe that great blessing, the destruction
33 of exclusive privilege. That Rule was, after all, not all bad; nothing
34 is all bad, and nothing is all good. The Mohammedan conquest of
35 India came as a salvation to the downtrodden, to the poor. That is
36 why one-fifth of our people have become Mohammedans. It was not
37 the sword that did it all. It would be the height of madness to think
38 it was all the work of sword and fire. And one-fifth--one-half--of your
39 Madras people will become Christians if you do not take care. Was
40 there ever a sillier thing before in the world than what I saw in the
41 Malabar country? The poor Pariah is not allowed to pass through
42 the same street as the high-caste man, but if he changes his name
43 to a hodge-podge English name, it is all right; or to a Mohammedan
44 name, it is all right. What inference would you draw except that
45 these Malabaris are all lunatics, their homes so many lunatic
46 asylums, and that they are to be treated with derision by every race
47 in India until they mend their manners and know better. Shame
48 upon them that such wicked and diabolical customs are allowed;
49 their own children are allowed to die of starvation, but as soon as
50 they take up some other religion they are well fed. There ought to
51 be no more fight between the castes.

1 The solution is not by bringing down the higher, but by raising
2 the lower up to the level of the higher. And that is the line of work
3 that is found in all our books, in spite of what you may hear from
4 some people whose knowledge of their own scriptures and whose
5 capacity to understand the mighty plans of the ancients are only
6 zero. They do not understand, but those do that have brains, that
7 have the intellect to grasp the whole scope of the work. They
8 stand aside and follow the wonderful procession of national life
9 through the ages. They can trace it step by step through all the
10 books, ancient and modern. What is the plan? The ideal at one end
11 is the Brahmin and the ideal at the other end is the Chandala, and
12 the whole work is to raise the Chandala up to the Brahmin. Slowly
13 and slowly you find more and more privileges granted to them.
14 There are books where you read such fierce words as these: "If the
15 Shudra hears the Vedas, fill his ears with molten lead, and if he
16 remembers a line, cut his tongue out. If he says to the Brahmin,
17 'You Brahmin', cut his tongue out". This is diabolical old barbarism
18 no doubt; that goes without saying; but do not blame the law-givers,
19 who simply record the customs of some section of the community.
20 Such devils sometimes arose among the ancients. There have been
21 devils everywhere more or less in all ages. Accordingly, you will find
22 that later on, this tone is modified a little, as for instance, "Do not
23 disturb the Shudras, but do not teach them higher things". Then
24 gradually we find in other Smritis, especially in those that have full
25 power now, that if the Shudras imitate the manner and customs of
26 the Brahmins they do well, they ought to be encouraged. Thus it is
27 going on. I have no time to place before you all these workings, nor
28 how they can be traced in detail; but coming to plain facts, we find
29 that all the castes are to rise slowly and slowly. There are thousands
30 of castes, and some are even getting admission into Brahminhood,
31 for what prevents any caste from declaring they are Brahmins?
32 Thus caste, with all its rigour, has been created in that manner. Let
33 us suppose that there are castes here with ten thousand people in
34 each. If these put their heads together and say, we will call
35 ourselves Brahmins, nothing can stop them; I have seen it in my
36 own life. Some castes become strong, and as soon as they all agree,
37 who is to say nay? Because whatever it was, each caste was
38 exclusive of the other. It did not meddle with others' affairs; even
39 the several divisions of one caste did not meddle with the other
40 divisions, and those powerful epoch-makers, Shankaracharya and
41 others, were the great caste-makers. I cannot tell you all the
42 wonderful things they fabricated, and some of you may resent what
43 I have to say. But in my travels and experiences I have traced them
44 out, and have arrived at most wonderful results. They would
45 sometimes get hordes of Baluchis and at once make them
46 Kshatriyas, also get hold of hordes of fishermen and make them
47 Brahmins forthwith. They were all Rishis and sages, and we have to
48 bow down to their memory. So, be you all Rishis and sages; that is
49 the secret. More or less we shall all be Rishis. What is meant by a
50 Rishi? The pure one. Be pure first, and you will have power. Simply
51 saying, "I am a Rishi", will not do; but when you are a Rishi you will
52 find that others obey you instinctively. Something mysterious
53 emanates from you, which makes them follow you, makes them

1 hear you, makes them unconsciously, even against their will, carry
2 out your plans. That is Rishihood.

3 Now as to the details, they of course have to be worked out
4 through generations. But this is merely a suggestion in order to
5 show you that these quarrels should cease. Especially do I regret
6 that in modern times there should be so much dissension between
7 the castes. This must stop. It is useless on both sides, especially on
8 the side of the higher caste, the Brahmin, because the day for these
9 privileges and exclusive claims is gone. The duty of every
10 aristocracy is to dig its own grave, and the sooner it does so, the
11 better. The more it delays, the more it will fester and the worse
12 death it will die. It is the duty of the Brahmin, therefore, to work for
13 the salvation of the rest of mankind in India. If he does that, and so
14 long as he does that, he is a Brahmin, but he is no Brahmin when he
15 goes about making money. You on the other hand should give help
16 only to the real Brahmin who deserves it; that leads to heaven. But
17 sometimes a gift to another person who does not deserve it leads to
18 the other place, says our scripture. You must be on your guard
19 about that. He only is the Brahmin who has no secular employment.
20 Secular employment is not for the Brahmin but for the other castes.
21 To the Brahmins I appeal, that they must work hard to raise the
22 Indian people by teaching them what they know, by giving out the
23 culture that they have accumulated for centuries. It is clearly the
24 duty of the Brahmins of India to remember what real Brahminhood
25 is. As Manu says, all these privileges and honours are given to the
26 Brahmin, because "with him is the treasury of virtue". He must
27 open that treasury and distribute its valuables to the world. It is
28 true that he was the earliest preacher to the Indian races, he was
29 the first to renounce everything in order to attain to the higher
30 realisation of life before others could reach to the idea. It was not
31 his fault that he marched ahead of the other castes. Why did not the
32 other castes so understand and do as he did? Why did they sit down
33 and be lazy, and let the Brahmins win the race?

34 But it is one thing to gain an advantage, and another thing to
35 preserve it for evil use. Whenever power is used for evil, it becomes
36 diabolical; it must be used for good only. So this accumulated
37 culture of ages of which the Brahmin has been the trustee, he must
38 now give to the people at large, and it was because he did not give
39 it to the people that the Mohammedan invasion was possible. It was
40 because he did not open this treasury to the people from the
41 beginning, that for a thousand years we have been trodden under
42 the heels of every one who chose to come to India. It was through
43 that we have become degraded, and the first task must be to break
44 open the cells that hide the wonderful treasures which our common
45 ancestors accumulated; bring them out and give them to everybody,
46 and the Brahmin must be the first to do it. There is an old
47 superstition in Bengal that if the cobra that bites, sucks out his own
48 poison from the patient, the man must survive. Well then, the
49 Brahmin must suck out his own poison. To the non-Brahmin castes I
50 say, wait, be not in a hurry. Do not seize every opportunity of
51 fighting the Brahmin, because, as I have shown, you are suffering
52 from your own fault. Who told you to neglect spirituality and

1 Sanskrit learning? What have you been doing all this time? Why
2 have you been indifferent? Why do you now fret and fume because
3 somebody else had more brains, more energy, more pluck and go,
4 than you? Instead of wasting your energies in vain discussions and
5 quarrels in the newspapers, instead of fighting and quarrelling in
6 your own homes--which is sinful--use all your energies in acquiring
7 the culture which the Brahmin has, and the thing is done. Why do
8 you not become Sanskrit scholars? Why do you not spend millions
9 to bring Sanskrit education to all the castes of India? That is the
10 question. The moment you do these things, you are equal to the
11 Brahmin. That is the secret of power in India.

12 Sanskrit and prestige go together in India. As soon as you
13 have that, none dares say anything against you. That is the one
14 secret; take that up. The whole universe, to use the ancient
15 Advaitist's simile, is in a state of self-hypnotism. It is will that is the
16 power. It is the man of strong will that throws, as it were, a halo
17 round him and brings all other people to the same state of vibration
18 as he has in his own mind. Such gigantic men do appear. And what
19 is the idea? When a powerful individual appears, his personality
20 infuses his thoughts into us, and many of us come to have the same
21 thoughts, and thus we become powerful. Why is it that
22 organisations are so powerful? Do not say organisation is material.
23 Why is it, to take a case in point, that forty millions of Englishmen
24 rule three hundred millions of people here? What is the
25 psychological explanation? These forty millions put their wills
26 together and that means infinite power, and you three hundred
27 millions have a will each separate from the other. Therefore to
28 make a great future in India, the whole secret lies in organisation,
29 accumulation of power, co-ordination of wills.

30 Already before my mind rises one of the marvellous verses of
31 the Rig-Veda Samhita which says, "Be thou all of one mind, be thou
32 all of one thought, for in the days of yore, the gods being of one
33 mind were enabled to receive oblations." That the gods can be
34 worshipped by men is because they are of one mind. Being of one
35 mind is the secret of society. And the more you go on fighting and
36 quarrelling about all trivialities such as "Dravidian" and "Aryan",
37 and the question of Brahmins and non-Brahmins and all that, the
38 further you are off from that accumulation of energy and power
39 which is going to make the future India. For mark you, the future
40 India depends entirely upon that. That is the secret--accumulation
41 of will-power, co-ordination, bringing them all, as it were, into one
42 focus. Each Chinaman thinks in his own way, and a handful of
43 Japanese all think in the same way, and you know the result. That is
44 how it goes throughout the history of the world. You find in every
45 case, compact little nations always governing and ruling huge
46 unwieldy nations, and this is natural, because it is easier for the
47 little compact nations to bring their ideas into the same focus, and
48 thus they become developed. And the bigger the nation, the more
49 unwieldy it is. Born, as it were, a disorganised mob, they cannot
50 combine. All these dissensions must stop.

51 There is yet another defect in us. Ladies, excuse me, but
52 through centuries of slavery, we have become like a nation of

1 women. You scarcely can get three women together for five minutes
2 in this country or any other country, but they quarrel. Women make
3 big societies in European countries, and make tremendous
4 declarations of women's power and so on; then they quarrel, and
5 some man comes and rules them all. All over the world they still
6 require some man to rule them. We are like them. Women we are. If
7 a woman comes to lead women, they all begin immediately to
8 criticise her, tear her to pieces, and make her sit down. If a man
9 comes and gives them a little harsh treatment, scolds them now and
10 then, it is all right, they have been used to that sort of mesmerism.
11 The whole world is full of such mesmerists and hypnotists. In the
12 same way, if one of our countrymen stands up and tries to become
13 great, we all try to hold him down, but if a foreigner comes and
14 tries to kick us, it is all right. We have been used to it, have we not?
15 And slaves must become great masters! So give up being a slave.
16 For the next fifty years this alone shall be our keynote--this, our
17 great Mother India. Let all other vain gods disappear for the time
18 from our minds. This is the only god that is awake, our own
19 race--"everywhere his hands, everywhere his feet, everywhere his
20 ears, he covers everything." All other gods are sleeping. What vain
21 gods shall we go after and yet cannot worship the god that we see
22 all round us, the Virat? When we have worshipped this, we shall be
23 able to worship all the other gods. Before we can crawl half a mile,
24 we want to cross the ocean like Hanuman! It cannot be. Everyone
25 going to be a Yogi, everyone going to meditate! It cannot be. The
26 whole day mixing with the world with Karma Kanda, and in the
27 evening sitting down and blowing through your nose! Is it so easy?
28 Should Rishis comes flying through the air, because you have blown
29 three times through the nose? Is it a joke? It is all nonsense. What
30 is needed is Chittashuddhi, purification of the heart. And how does
31 that come? The first of all worship is the worship of the Virat--of
32 those all around us. Worship It. Worship is the exact equivalent of
33 the Sanskrit word, and no other English word will do. These are all
34 our gods--men and animals; and the first gods we have to worship
35 are our countrymen. These we have to worship, instead of being
36 jealous of each other and fighting each other. It is the most terrible
37 Karma for which we are suffering, and yet it does not open our
38 eyes!

39 Well, the subject is so great that I do not know where to stop,
40 and I must bring my lecture to a close by placing before you in a
41 few words the plans I want to carry out in Madras. We must have a
42 hold on the spiritual and secular education of the nation. Do you
43 understand that? You must dream it, you must talk it, you must
44 think it, and you must work it out. Till then there is no salvation for
45 the race. The education that you are getting now has some good
46 points, but it has a tremendous disadvantage which is so great that
47 the good things are all weighed down. In the first place it is not a
48 man-making education, it is merely and entirely a negative
49 education. A negative education or any training that is based on
50 negation, is worse than death. The child is taken to school, and the
51 first thing that he learns is that his father is a fool, the second thing
52 that his grandfather is a lunatic, the third thing that all his teachers
53 are hypocrites, the fourth that all the sacred books are lies! By the

1 time he is sixteen he is a mass of negation, lifeless and boneless.
2 And the result is that fifty years of such education has not produced
3 one original man in the three Presidencies. Every man of originality
4 that has been produced has been educated elsewhere, and not in
5 this country, or they have gone to the old universities once more to
6 cleanse themselves of superstitions. Education is not the amount of
7 information that is put into your brain and runs riot there,
8 undigested, all your life. We must have life-building, man-making,
9 character-making assimilation of ideas. If you have assimilated five
10 ideas and made them your life and character, you have more
11 education than any man who has got by heart a whole library.
12 {Sanskrit}--"The ass carrying its load of sandalwood knows only the
13 weight and not the value of the sandalwood." If education is
14 identical with information, the libraries are the greatest sages in
15 the world, and encyclopaedias are the Rishis. The ideal, therefore,
16 is that we must have the whole education of our country, spiritual
17 and secular, in our own hands, and it must be on national lines,
18 through national methods as far as practical.

19 Of course this is a very big scheme, a very big plan. I do not
20 know whether it will ever work out. But we must begin the work.
21 But how? Take Madras, for instance. We must have a temple, for
22 with Hindus religion must come first. Then, you may say, all sects
23 will quarrel about it. But we will make it a non-sectarian temple,
24 having only "Om" as the symbol, the greatest symbol of any sect. If
25 there is any sect here which believes that "Om" ought not to be the
26 symbol, it has not right to call itself Hindu. All will have the right to
27 interpret Hinduism, each one according to his own sect ideas, but
28 we must have a common temple. You can have your own images
29 and symbols in other places, but do not quarrel here with those who
30 differ from you. Here should be taught the common grounds of our
31 different sects, and at the same time the different sects should have
32 perfect liberty to come and teach their doctrines, with only one
33 restriction, that is, not to quarrel with other sects. Say what you
34 have to say, the world wants it; but the world has no time to hear
35 what you think about other people; you can keep that to yourselves.

36 Secondly, in connection with this temple there should be an
37 institution to train teachers who must go about preaching religion
38 and giving secular education to our people; they must carry both.
39 As we have been already carrying religion from door to door, let us
40 along with it carry secular education also. That can be easily done.
41 Then the work will extend through these bands of teachers and
42 preachers, and gradually we shall have similar temples in other
43 places, until we have covered the whole of India. That is my plan. It
44 may appear gigantic, but it is much needed. You may ask, where is
45 the money. Money is not needed. Money is nothing. For the last
46 twelve years of my life, I did not know where the next meal would
47 come from; but money and everything else I want must come,
48 because they are my slaves, and not I theirs; money and everything
49 else must come. Must--that is the word. Where are the men? That is
50 the question. Young men of Madras, my hope is in you. Will you
51 respond to the call of your nation? Each one of you has a glorious
52 future if you dare believe me. Have a tremendous faith in

1 yourselves, like the faith I had when I was a child, and which I am
2 working out now. Have that faith, each one of you, in yourself-that
3 eternal power is lodged in every soul--and you will revive the whole
4 of India. Ay, we will then go to every country under the sun, and our
5 ideas will before long be a component of the many forces that are
6 working to make up every nation in the world. We must enter into
7 the life of every race in India and abroad; we shall have to *work* to
8 bring this about. Now for that, I want young men. "It is the young,
9 the strong, and healthy, of sharp intellect that will reach the Lord",
10 say the Vedas. This is the time to decide your future--while you
11 possess the energy of youth, not when you are worn out and jaded,
12 but in the freshness and vigour of youth. Work--this is the time; for
13 the freshest, the untouched, and unsmelled flowers alone are to be
14 laid at the feet of the Lord, and such He receives. Rouse yourselves,
15 therefore, for life is short. There are greater works to be done than
16 aspiring to become lawyers and picking quarrels and such things. A
17 far greater work is this sacrifice of yourselves for the benefit of
18 your race, for the welfare of humanity. What is in this life? You are
19 Hindus, and there is the instinctive belief in you that life is eternal.
20 Sometimes I have young men come and talk to me about atheism; I
21 do not believe a Hindu can become an atheist. He may read
22 European books, and persuade himself he is a materialist, but it is
23 only for a time. It is not in your blood. You cannot believe what is
24 not in your constitution; it would be a hopeless task for you. Do not
25 attempt that sort of thing. I once attempted it when I was a boy, but
26 it could not be. Life is short, but the soul is immortal and eternal,
27 and one thing being certain, death, let us therefore take up a great
28 ideal and give up our whole life to it. Let this be our determination,
29 and may He, the Lord, who "comes again and again for the
30 salvation of His own people", to quote from our scriptures--may the
31 great Krishna bless us and lead us all to the fulfilment of our aims!

ON CHARITY

During his stay in Madras the Swami presided at the annual meeting of the Chennapuri Annadana Samajam, an institution of a charitable nature, and in the course of a brief address referred to a remark by a previous speaker deprecating special alms-giving to the Brahmin over and above the other castes. Swamiji pointed out that this had its good as well as its bad side. All the culture, practically, which the nation possessed, was among the Brahmins, and they also had been the thinkers of the nation. Take away the means of living which enabled them to be thinkers, and the nation as a whole would suffer. Speaking of the indiscriminate charity of India as compared with the legal charity of other nations, he said, the outcome of their system of relief was that the vagabond of India was contented to receive readily what he was given readily and lived a peaceful and contented life: while the vagabond in the West, unwilling to go to the poor-house--for man loves liberty more than food--turned a robber, the enemy of society, and necessitated the organisation of a system of magistracy, police, jails, and other establishments. Poverty there must be, so long as the disease known as civilisation existed: and hence the need for relief. So that they had to choose between the indiscriminate charity of India, which, in the case of Sannyasins at any rate, even if they were not sincere men, at least forced them to learn some little of their scriptures before they were able to obtain food; and the discriminate charity of Western nations which necessitated a costly system of poor-law relief, and in the end succeeded only in changing mendicants into criminals.

1
2 *ADDRESS OF WELCOME PRESENTED*
3 **AT CALCUTTA AND REPLY**
4

5 The Swami's reply was as follows:

6 One wants to lose the individual in the universal, one
7 renounces, flies off, and tries to cut himself off from all associations
8 of the body of the past, one works hard to forget even that he is a
9 man; yet, in the heart of his heart, there is a soft sound, one string
10 vibrating, one whisper, which tells him, East or West, home is best.
11 Citizens of the capital of this Empire, before you I stand, not as a
12 Sannyasin, no, not even as a preacher, but I come before you the
13 same Calcutta boy to talk to you as I used to do. Ay, I would like to
14 sit in the dust of the streets of this city, and, with the freedom of
15 childhood, open my mind to you, my brothers. Accept, therefore, my
16 heartfelt thanks for this unique word that you have used, "Brother".
17 Yes, I am your brother, and you are my brothers. I was asked by an
18 English friend on the eve of my departure, "Swami, how do you like
19 now your motherland after four years' experience of the luxurious,
20 glorious, powerful West?" I could only answer, "India I loved before
21 I came away. Now the very dust of India has become holy to me, the
22 very air is now to me holy; it is now the holy land, the place of
23 pilgrimage, the Tirtha." Citizens of Calcutta--my brothers--I cannot
24 express my gratitude to you for the kindness you have shown, or
25 rather I should not thank you at all, for you are my brothers, you
26 have done only a brother's duty, ay, only a Hindu brother's duty; for
27 such family ties, such relationships, such love exist nowhere beyond
28 the bounds of this motherland of ours.

29 The Parliament of Religions was a great affair, no doubt. From
30 various cities of this land, we have thanked the gentlemen who
31 organised the meeting, and they deserved all our thanks for the
32 kindness that has been shown to us; but yet allow me to construe
33 for you the history of the Parliament of Religions. They wanted a
34 horse, and they wanted to ride it. There were people there who
35 wanted to make it a heathen show, but it was ordained otherwise; it
36 could not help being so. Most of them were kind, but we have
37 thanked them enough.

38 On the other hand, my mission in America was not to the
39 Parliament of Religions. That was only something by the way, it was
40 only an opening, an opportunity, and for that we are very thankful
41 to the members of the Parliament; but really, our thanks are due to
42 the great people of the United States, the American nation, the
43 warm-hearted, hospitable, great nation of America, where more
44 than anywhere else the feeling of brotherhood has been developed.
45 An American meets you for five minutes on board a train, and you
46 are his friend, and the next moment he invites you as a guest to his
47 home and opens the secret of his whole living there. That is the
48 character of the American race, and we highly appreciate it. Their
49 kindness to me is past all narration, it would take me years yet to
50 tell you how I have been treated by them most kindly and most

1 wonderfully. So are our thanks due to the other nation on the other
2 side of the Atlantic. No one ever landed on English soil with more
3 hatred in his heart for a race than I did for the English, and on this
4 platform are present English friends who can bear witness to the
5 fact; but the more I lived among them and saw how the machine
6 was working--the English national life--and mixed with them, I
7 found where the heartbeat of the nation was, and the more I loved
8 them. There is none among you here present, my brothers, who
9 loves the English people more than I do now. You have to see what
10 is going on there, and you have to mix with them. As the philosophy,
11 our national philosophy of the Vedanta, has summarised all
12 misfortune, all misery, as coming from that one cause, ignorance,
13 herein also we must understand that the difficulties that arise
14 between us and the English people are mostly due to that
15 ignorance; we do not know them, they do not know us.

16 Unfortunately, to the Western mind, spirituality, nay, even
17 morality, is eternally connected with worldly prosperity; and as soon
18 as an Englishman or any other Western man lands on our soil and
19 finds a land of poverty and of misery, he forthwith concludes that
20 there cannot be any religion here, there cannot be any morality
21 even. His own experience is true. In Europe, owing to the
22 inclemency of the climate and many other circumstances, poverty
23 and sin go together, but not so in India. In India, on the other hand,
24 my experience is that the poorer the man the better he is in point of
25 morality. Now this takes time to understand, and how many foreign
26 people are there who will stop to understand this, the very secret of
27 national existence in India? Few are there who will have the
28 patience to study the nation and understand. Here, and here alone,
29 is the only race where poverty does not mean crime, poverty does
30 not mean sin; and here is the only race where not only poverty does
31 not mean crime, but poverty has been deified, and the beggar's
32 garb is the garb of the highest in the land. On the other hand, we
33 have also similarly, patiently to study the social institutions of the
34 West and not rush into mad judgments about them. Their
35 intermingling of the sexes, their different customs, their manners,
36 have all their meaning, have all their grand sides, if you have the
37 patience to study them. Not that I mean that we are going to
38 borrow their manners and customs, not that they are going to
39 borrow ours, for the manners and customs of each race are the
40 outcome of centuries of patient growth in that race, and each one
41 has a deep meaning behind it; and, therefore, neither are they to
42 ridicule our manners and customs, nor we theirs.

43 Again, I want to make another statement before this
44 assembly. My work in England has been more satisfactory to me
45 than my work in America. The bold, brave, and steady Englishman,
46 if I may use the expression, with his skull a little thicker than those
47 of other people--if he has once an idea put into his brain, it never
48 comes out; and the immense practicality and energy of the race
49 makes it sprout up and immediately bear fruit. It is not so in any
50 other country. That immense practicality, that immense vitality of
51 the race, you do not see anywhere else. There is less of
52 imagination, but more of work, and who knows the well-spring, the

1 mainspring of the English heart? How much of imagination and of
2 feeling is there! They are a nation of heroes, they are the true
3 Kshatriyas; their education is to hide their feelings and never to
4 show them. From their childhood they have been educated up to
5 that. Seldom will you find an Englishman manifesting feeling, nay,
6 even an Englishwoman. I have seen Englishwomen go to work and
7 do deeds which would stagger the bravest of Bengalis to follow. But
8 with all this heroic superstructure, behind this covering of the
9 fighter, there is a deep spring of feeling in the English heart. If you
10 once know how to reach it, if you get there, if you have personal
11 contact and mix with him, he will open his heart, he is your friend
12 for ever, he is your servant. Therefore in my opinion, my work in
13 England has been more satisfactory than anywhere else. I firmly
14 believe that if I should die tomorrow the work in England would not
15 die, but would go on expanding all the time.

16 Brothers, you have touched another chord in my heart, the
17 deepest of all, and that is the mention of my teacher, my master, my
18 hero, my ideal, my God in life--Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. If
19 there has been anything achieved by me, by thoughts, or words, or
20 deeds, if from my lips has ever fallen one word that has helped any
21 one in the world, I lay no claim to it, it was his. But if there have
22 been curses falling from my lips, if there has been hatred coming
23 out of me, it is all mine and not his. All that has been weak has been
24 mine, and all that has been life-giving, strengthening, pure, and
25 holy, has been his inspiration, his words, and he himself. Yes, my
26 friends, the world has yet to know that man. We read in the history
27 of the world about prophets and their lives, and these come down to
28 us through centuries of writings and workings by their disciples.
29 Through thousands of years of chiselling and modelling, the lives of
30 the great prophets of yore come down to us; and yet, in my opinion,
31 not one stands so high in brilliance as that life which I saw with my
32 own eyes, under whose shadow I have lived, at whose feet I have
33 learnt everything--the life of Ramakrishna Paramahansa. Ay,
34 friends, you all know the celebrated saying of the Gita:

35 {Sanskrit}

36 "Whenever, O descendant of Bharata, there is decline of
37 Dharma, and rise of Adharma, then I body Myself forth. For the
38 protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked, and for
39 the establishment of Dharma I come into being in every age."

40 Along with it you have to understand one thing more. Such a
41 thing is before us today. Before one of these tidal waves of
42 spirituality comes, there are whirlpools of lesser manifestation all
43 over society. One of these comes up, at first unknown, unperceived,
44 and unthought of, assuming proportion, swallowing, as it were, and
45 assimilating all the other little whirlpools, becoming immense,
46 becoming a tidal wave, and falling upon society with a power which
47 none can resist. Such is happening before us. If you have eyes, you
48 will see it. If your heart is open, you will receive it. If you are truth-
49 seekers, you will find it. Blind, blind indeed is the man who does not
50 see the signs of the day! Ay, this boy born of poor Brahmin parents
51 in an out-of-the-way village of which very few of you have even
52 heard, is literally being worshipped in lands which have been

1 fulminating against heathen worship for centuries. Whose power is
2 it? Is it mine or yours? It is none else than the power which was
3 manifested here as Ramakrishna Paramahansa. For, you and I, and
4 sages and prophets, nay, even Incarnations, the whole universe, are
5 but manifestations of power more or less individualised, more or
6 less concentrated. Here has been a manifestation of an immense
7 power, just the very beginning of whose workings we are seeing,
8 and before this generation passes away, you will see more
9 wonderful workings of that power. It has come just in time for the
10 regeneration of India, for we forget from time to time the vital
11 power that must always work in India.

12 Each nation has its own peculiar method of work. Some work
13 through politics, some through social reforms, some through other
14 lines. With us, religion is the only ground along which we can move.
15 The Englishman can understand even religion through politics.
16 Perhaps the American can understand even religion through social
17 reforms. But the Hindu can understand even politics when it is
18 given through religion; sociology must come through religion,
19 everything must come through religion. For that is the theme, the
20 rest are the variations in the national life-music. And that was in
21 danger. It seemed that we were going to change this theme in our
22 national life, that we were going to exchange the backbone of our
23 existence, as it were, that we were trying to replace a spiritual by a
24 political backbone. And if we could have succeeded, the result
25 would have been annihilation. But it was not to be. So this power
26 became manifest. I do not care in what light you understand this
27 great sage, it matters not how much respect you pay to him, but I
28 challenge you face to face with the fact that here is a manifestation
29 of the most marvellous power that has been for several centuries in
30 India, and it is your duty, as Hindus, to study this power, to find
31 what has been done for the regeneration, for the good of India, and
32 for the good of the whole human race through it. Ay, long before
33 ideas of universal religion and brotherly feeling between different
34 sects were mooted and discussed in any country in the world, here,
35 in sight of this city, had been living a man whose whole life was a
36 Parliament of Religions as it should be.

37 The highest ideal in our scriptures is the impersonal, and
38 would to God everyone of us here were high enough to realise that
39 impersonal idea; but, as that cannot be, it is absolutely necessary
40 for the vast majority of human beings to have a personal ideal; and
41 no nation can rise, can become great, can work at all, without
42 enthusiastically coming under the banner of one of these great
43 ideals in life. Political ideals, personages representing political
44 ideals, even social ideals, commercial ideals, would have no power
45 in India. We want spiritual ideals before us, we want
46 enthusiastically to gather round grand spiritual names. Our heroes
47 must be spiritual. Such a hero has been given to us in the person of
48 Ramakrishna Paramahansa. If this nation wants to rise, take my
49 word for it, it will have to rally enthusiastically round this name. It
50 does not matter who preaches Ramakrishna Paramahansa,
51 whether I, or you, or anybody else. But him I place before you, and
52 it is for you to judge, and for the good of our race, for the good of

1 our nation, to judge now, what you shall do with this great ideal of
2 life. One thing we are to remember that it was the purest of all lives
3 that you have ever seen, or let me tell you distinctly, that you have
4 ever read of. And before you is the fact that it is the most
5 marvellous manifestation of soul-power that you can read of, much
6 less expect to see. Within ten years of his passing away, this power
7 has encircled the globe; that fact is before you. In duty bound,
8 therefore, for the good of our race, for the good of our religion, I
9 place this great spiritual ideal before you. Judge him not through
10 me. I am only a weak instrument. Let not his character be judged
11 by seeing me. It was so great that if I or any other of his disciples
12 spent hundreds of lives, we could not do justice to a millionth part
13 of what he really was. Judge for yourselves; in the heart of your
14 hearts is the Eternal Witness, and may He, the same Ramakrishna
15 Paramahansa, for the good of our nation, for the welfare of our
16 country, and for the good of humanity, open your hearts, make you
17 true and steady to work for the immense change which must come,
18 whether we exert ourselves or not. For the work of the Lord does
19 not wait for the like of you or me. He can raise His workers from
20 the dust by hundreds and thousands. It is a glory and a privilege
21 that we are allowed to work at all under Him.

22 From this the idea expands. As you have pointed out to me,
23 we have to conquer the world. That we have to! India must conquer
24 the world, and nothing less than that is my ideal. It may be very big,
25 it may astonish many of you, but it is so. We must conquer the world
26 or die. There is no other alternative. The sign of life is expansion;
27 we must go out, expand, show life, or degrade, fester, and die.
28 There is no other alternative. Take either of these, either live or die.
29 Now, we all know about the petty jealousies and quarrels that we
30 have in our country. Take my word, it is the same everywhere. The
31 other nations with their political lives have foreign policies. When
32 they find too much quarrelling at home, they look for somebody
33 abroad to quarrel with, and the quarrel at home stops. We have
34 these quarrels without any foreign policy to stop them. This must be
35 our eternal foreign policy, preaching the truths of our Shastras to
36 the nations of the world. I ask you who are politically minded, do
37 you require any other proof that this will unite us as a race? This
38 very assembly is a sufficient witness.

39 Secondly, apart from these selfish considerations, there are
40 the unselfish, the noble, the living examples behind us. One of the
41 great causes of India's misery and downfall has been that she
42 narrowed herself, went into her shell as the oyster does, and
43 refused to give her jewels and her treasures to the other races of
44 mankind, refused to give the life-giving truths to thirsting nations
45 outside the Aryan fold. That has been the one great cause; that we
46 did not go out, that we did not compare notes with other nations--
47 that has been the one great cause of our downfall, and every one of
48 you knows that little stir, the little life that you see in India, begins
49 from the day when Raja Rammohan Roy broke through the walls of
50 that exclusiveness. Since that day, history in India has taken
51 another turn, and now it is growing with accelerated motion. If we
52 have had little rivulets in the past, deluges are coming, and none

1 can resist them. Therefore we must go out, and the secret of life is
2 to give and take. Are we to take always, to sit at the feet of the
3 Westerners to learn everything, even religion? We can learn
4 mechanism from them. We can learn many other things. But we
5 have to teach them something, and that is our religion, that is our
6 spirituality. For a complete civilisation the world is waiting, waiting
7 for the treasures to come out of India, waiting for the marvellous
8 spiritual inheritance of that race, which, through decades of
9 degradation and misery, the nation has still clutched to her breast.
10 The world is waiting for that treasure; little do you know how much
11 of hunger and of thirst there is outside of India for these wonderful
12 treasures of our forefathers. We talk here, we quarrel with each
13 other, we laugh at and we ridicule everything sacred, till it has
14 become almost a national vice to ridicule everything holy. Little do
15 we understand the heart-pangs of millions waiting outside the
16 walls, stretching forth their hands for a little sip of that nectar
17 which our forefathers have preserved in this land of India.
18 Therefore we must go out, exchange our spirituality for anything
19 they have to give us; for the marvels of the region of spirit we will
20 exchange the marvels of the region of matter. We will not be
21 students always, but teachers also. There cannot be friendship
22 without equality, and there cannot be equality when one party is
23 always the teacher and the other party sits always at his feet. If you
24 want to become equal with the Englishman or the American, you
25 will have to teach as well as to learn, and you have plenty yet to
26 teach to the world for centuries to come. This has to be done. Fire
27 and enthusiasm must be in our blood. We Bengalis have been
28 credited with imagination, and I believe we have it. We have been
29 ridiculed as an imaginative race, as men with a good deal of feeling.
30 Let me tell you, my friends, intellect is great indeed, but it stops
31 within certain bounds. It is through the heart, and the heart alone,
32 that inspiration comes. It is through the feelings that the highest
33 secrets are reached; and therefore it is the Bengali, the man of
34 feeling, that has to do this work.

35 {Sanskrit}--Arise, awake and stop not till the desired end is
36 reached. Young men of Calcutta, arise, awake, for the time is
37 propitious. Already everything is opening out before us. Be bold and
38 fear not. It is only in our scriptures that this adjective is given unto
39 the Lord--Abhiih, Abhiih. We have to become Abhiih, fearless, and our
40 task will be done. Arise, awake, for your country needs this
41 tremendous sacrifice. It is the young men that will do it. "The
42 young, the energetic, the strong, the well-built, the intellectual"--for
43 them is the task. And we have hundreds and thousands of such
44 young men in Calcutta. If, as you say, I have done something,
45 remember that I was that good-for-nothing boy playing in the
46 streets of Calcutta. If I have done so much, how much more will you
47 do! Arise and awake, the world is calling upon you. In other parts of
48 India, there is intellect, there is money, but enthusiasm is only in my
49 motherland. That must come out; therefore arise, young men of
50 Calcutta, with enthusiasm in your blood. Think not that you are
51 poor, that you have no friends. Ay, who ever saw money make the
52 man? It is man that always makes money. The whole world has been
53 made by the energy of man, by the power of enthusiasm, by the

1 power of faith.

2 Those of you who have studied that most beautiful of all the
3 Upanishads, the Katha, will remember how the king was going to
4 make a great sacrifice, and, instead of giving away things that were
5 of any worth, he was giving away cows and horses that were not of
6 any use, and the book says that at that time Shraddha entered into
7 the heart of his son Nachiketa. I would not translate this word
8 Shraddha to you, it would be a mistake; it is a wonderful word to
9 understand, and much depends on it; we will see how it works, for
10 immediately we find Nachiketa telling himself, "I am superior to
11 many, I am inferior to few, but nowhere am I the last, I can also do
12 something." And this boldness increased, and the boy wanted to
13 solve the problem which was in his mind, the problem of death. The
14 solution could only be got by going to the house of Death, and the
15 boy went. There he was, brave Nachiketa, waiting at the house of
16 Death for three days, and you know how he obtained what he
17 desired. What we want is this Shraddha. Unfortunately, it has
18 nearly vanished from India, and this is why we are in our present
19 state. What makes the difference between man and man is the
20 difference in this Shraddha and nothing else. What makes one man
21 great and another weak and low is this Shraddha. My Master used
22 to say, he who thinks himself weak will become weak, and that is
23 true. This Shraddha must enter into you. Whatever of material
24 power you see manifested by the Western races is the outcome of
25 this Shraddha, because they believe in their muscles, and if you
26 believe in your spirit, how much more will it work! Believe in that
27 infinite soul, the infinite power, which, with consensus of opinion,
28 your books and sages preach. That Atman which nothing can
29 destroy, in It is infinite power only waiting to be called out. For here
30 is the great difference between all other philosophies and the
31 Indian philosophy. Whether dualistic, qualified monistic, or
32 monistic, they all firmly believe that everything is in the soul itself;
33 it has only to come out and manifest itself. Therefore, this Shraddha
34 is what I want, and what all of us here want, this faith in ourselves,
35 and before you is the great task to get that faith. Give up the awful
36 disease that is creeping into our national blood, that idea of
37 ridiculing everything, that loss of seriousness. Give that up. Be
38 strong and have this Shraddha, and everything else is bound to
39 follow.

40 I have done nothing as yet; you have to do the task. If I die
41 tomorrow the work will not die. I sincerely believe that there will be
42 thousands coming up from the ranks to take up the work and carry
43 it further and further, beyond all my most hopeful imagination ever
44 painted. I have faith in my country, and especially in the youth of my
45 country. The youth of Bengal have the greatest of all tasks that has
46 ever been placed on the shoulders of young men. I have travelled
47 for the last ten years or so over the whole of India, and my
48 conviction is that from the youth of Bengal will come the power
49 which will raise India once more to her proper spiritual place. Ay,
50 from the youth of Bengal, with this immense amount of feeling and
51 enthusiasm in the blood, will come those heroes who will march
52 from one corner of the earth to the other, preaching and teaching

1 the eternal spiritual truths of our forefathers. And this is the great
2 work before you. Therefore, let me conclude by reminding you once
3 more, "Arise, awake and stop not till the desired end is reached."
4 Be not afraid, for all great power, throughout the history of
5 humanity, has been with the people. From out of their ranks have
6 come all the greatest geniuses of the world, and history can only
7 repeat itself. Be not afraid of anything. You will do marvellous work.
8 The moment you fear, you are nobody. It is fear that is the great
9 cause of misery in the world. It is fear that is the greatest of all
10 superstitions. It is fear that is the cause of our woes, and it is
11 fearlessness that brings heaven even in a moment. Therefore,
12 "Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached."

13 Gentlemen, allow me to thank you once more for all the
14 kindness that I have received at your hands. It is my wish--my
15 intense, sincere wish--to be even of the least service to the world,
16 and above all to my own country and countrymen.

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THE VEDANTA IN ALL ITS PHASES

(Delivered in Calcutta)

Away back, where no recorded history, nay, not even the dim light of tradition, can penetrate, has been steadily shining the light, sometimes dimmed by external circumstances, at others effulgent, but undying and steady, shedding its lustre not only over India, but permeating the whole thought-world with its power, silent, unperceived, gentle, yet omnipotent, like the dew that falls in the morning, unseen and unnoticed, yet bringing into bloom the fairest of roses: this has been the thought of the Upanishads, the philosophy of the Vedanta. Nobody knows when it first came to flourish on the soil of India. Guesswork has been vain. The guesses, especially of Western writers, have been so conflicting that no certain date can be ascribed to them. But we Hindus, from the spiritual standpoint, do not admit that they had any origin. This Vedanta, the philosophy of the Upanishads, I would make bold to state, has been the first as well as the final thought on the spiritual plane that has ever been vouchsafed to man.

1 From this ocean of the Vedanta, waves of light from time to
2 time have been going Westward and Eastward. In the days of yore it
3 travelled Westward and gave its impetus to the mind of the Greeks,
4 either in Athens, or in Alexandria, or in Antioch. The Sankhya
5 system must clearly have made its mark on the minds of the ancient
6 Greeks; and the Sankhya and all other systems in India had that
7 one authority, the Upanishads, the Vedanta. In India, too, in spite of
8 all these jarring sects that we see today and all those that have
9 been in the past, the one authority, the basis of all these systems,
10 has yet been the Upanishads, the Vedanta. Whether you are a
11 dualist, or a qualified monist, an Advaitist, or a Vishishtadvaitist, a
12 Shuddhadvaitist, or any other Advaitist, or Dvaitist, or whatever you
13 may call yourself, there stand behind you as authority, your
14 Shastras, your scriptures, the Upanishads. Whatever system in
15 India does not obey the Upanishads cannot be called orthodox, and
16 even the systems of the Jains and the Buddhists have been rejected
17 from the soil of India only because they did not bear allegiance to
18 the Upanishads. Thus the Vedanta, whether we know it or not, has
19 penetrated all the sects of India, and what we call Hinduism, this
20 mighty banyan with its immense, almost infinite ramifications, has
21 been throughout interpenetrated by the influence of the Vedanta.
22 Whether we are conscious of it or not, we think the Vedanta, we live
23 in the Vedanta, we breathe the Vedanta, and we die in the Vedanta,
24 and every Hindu does that. To preach Vedanta in the land of India,
25 and before an Indian audience, seems, therefore, to be an anomaly.
26 But it is the one thing that has to be preached, and it is the
27 necessity of the age that it must be preached. For, as I have just
28 told you, all the Indian sects must bear allegiance to the
29 Upanishads; but among these sects there are many apparent
30 contradictions. Many times the great sages of yore themselves
31 could not understand the underlying harmony of the Upanishads.
32 Many times, even sages quarrelled, so much so that it became a
33 proverb that there are no sages who do not differ. But the time
34 requires that a better interpretation should be given to this
35 underlying harmony of the Upanishadic texts, whether they are
36 dualistic, or non-dualistic, quasi-dualistic, or so forth. That has to be
37 shown before the world at large, and this work is required as much
38 in India as outside of India; and I, through the grace of God, had the
39 great good fortune to sit at the feet of one whose whole life was
40 such an interpretation, whose life, a thousandfold more than whose
41 teaching, was a living commentary on the texts of the Upanishads,
42 was in fact the spirit of the Upanishads living in a human form.
43 Perhaps I have got a little of that harmony; I do not know whether I
44 shall be able to express it or not. But this is my attempt, my mission
45 in life, to show that the Vedantic schools are not contradictory, that
46 they all necessitate each other, all fulfil each other, and one, as it
47 were, is the stepping-stone to the other, until the goal, the Advaita,
48 the Tat Tvam Asi, is reached. There was a time in India when the
49 Karma Kanda had its sway. There are many grand ideals, no doubt,
50 in that portion of the Vedas. Some of our present daily worship is
51 still according to the precepts of the Karma Kanda. But with all
52 that, the Karma Kanda of the Vedas has almost disappeared from
53 India. Very little of our life today is bound and regulated by the

1 orders of the Karma Kanda of the Vedas. In our ordinary lives we
2 are mostly Pauranikas or Tantrikas, and, even where some Vedic
3 texts are used by the Brahmins of India, the adjustment of the texts
4 is mostly not according to the Vedas, but according to the Tantras
5 or the Puranas. As such, to call ourself Vaidikas in the sense of
6 following the Karma Kanda of the Vedas, I do not think, would be
7 proper. But the other fact stands that we are all of us Vedantists.
8 The people who call themselves Hindus had better be called
9 Vedantists, and, as I have shown you, under that one name
10 Vaidantika come in all our various sects, whether dualists or non-
11 dualists.

12 The sects that are at the present time in India come to be
13 divided in general into the two great classes of dualists and
14 monists. The little differences which some of these sects insist
15 upon, and upon the authority of which want to take new names as
16 pure Advaitists, or qualified Advaitists, and so forth, do not matter
17 much. As a classification, either they are dualists or monists, and of
18 the sects existing at the present time, some of them are very new,
19 and others seem to be reproductions of very ancient sects. The one
20 class I would present by the life and philosophy of Ramanuja, and
21 the other by Shankaracharya.

22 Ramanuja is the leading dualistic philosopher of later India,
23 whom all the other dualist sects have followed, directly or
24 indirectly, both in the substance of their teaching and in the
25 organisation of their sects even down to some of the most minute
26 points of their organisation. You will be astonished if you compare
27 Ramanuja and his work with the other dualistic Vaishnava sects in
28 India, to see how much they resemble each other in organisation,
29 teaching, and method. There is the great Southern preacher
30 Madhva Muni, and following him, our great Chaitanya of Bengal
31 who took up the philosophy of the Madhvas and preached it in
32 Bengal. There are some other sects also in Southern India, as the
33 qualified dualistic Shaivas. The Shaivas in the most parts of India
34 are Advaitists, except in some portions of Southern India and in
35 Ceylon. But they also only substitute Shiva for Vishnu and are
36 Ramanujists in every sense of the term except in the doctrine of the
37 soul. The followers of Ramanuja hold that the soul is Anu, like a
38 particle, very small, and the followers of Shankaracharya hold that
39 it is Vibhu, omnipresent. There have been several non-dualistic
40 sects. It seems that there have been sects in ancient times which
41 Shankara's movement has entirely swallowed up and assimilated.
42 You find sometimes a fling at Shankara himself in some of the
43 commentaries, especially in that of Vijnana Bhikshu who, although
44 an Advaitist, attempts to upset the Mayavada of Shankara. It seems
45 there were schools who did not believe in this Mayavada, and they
46 went so far as to call Shankara a crypto-Buddhist, Prachchhanna
47 Bauddha, and they thought this Mayavada was taken from the
48 Buddhists and brought within the Vedantic fold. However that may
49 be, in modern times the Advaitists have all ranged themselves
50 under Shankaracharya; and Shankaracharya and his disciples have
51 been the great preachers of Advaita both in Southern and in
52 Northern India. The influence of Shankaracharya did not penetrate

1 much into our country of Bengal and in Kashmir and the Punjab,
2 but in Southern India the Smartas are all followers of
3 Shankaracharya, and with Varanasi as the centre, his influence is
4 simply immense even in many parts of Northern India.

5 Now both Shankara and Ramanuja laid aside all claim to
6 originality. Ramanuja expressly tells us he is only following the
7 great commentary of Bodhayana. {Sanskrit} --"Ancient teachers
8 abridged that extensive commentary on the *Brahma-sutras* which
9 was composed by the Bhagavan Bodhayana; in accordance with
10 their opinion, the words of the Sutra are explained." That is what
11 Ramanuja says at the beginning of his commentary, the *Shri-*
12 *Bhashya*. He takes it up and makes of it a Samkshepa, and that is
13 what we have today. I myself never had an opportunity of seeing
14 this commentary of Bodhayana. The late Swami Dayananda
15 Saraswati wanted to reject every other commentary of the *Vyasa-*
16 *Sutras* except that of Bodhayana; and although he never lost an
17 opportunity of having a fling at Ramanuja, he himself could never
18 produce the Bodhayana. I have sought for it all over India, and
19 never yet have been able to see it. But Ramanuja is very plain on
20 the point, and he tells us that he is taking the ideas, and sometimes
21 the very passages out of Bodhayana, and condensing them into the
22 present Ramanuja Bhashya. It seems that Shankaracharya was also
23 doing the same. There are a few places in his Bhashya which
24 mention older commentaries, and when we know that his Guru and
25 his Guru's Guru had been Vedantists of the same school as he,
26 sometimes even more thorough-going, bolder even than Shankara
27 himself on certain points, it seems pretty plain that he also was not
28 preaching anything very original, and that even in his Bhashya he
29 himself had been doing the same work that Ramanuja did with
30 Bodhayana, but from what Bhashya, it cannot be discovered at the
31 present time.

32 All these Darshanas that you have ever seen or heard of are
33 based upon Upanishadic authority. Whenever they want to quote a
34 Shruti, they mean the Upanishads. They are always quoting the
35 Upanishads. Following the Upanishads there come other
36 philosophies of India, but every one of them failed in getting that
37 hold on India which the philosophy of Vyasa got, although the
38 philosophy of Vyasa is a development out of an older one, the
39 Sankhya, and every philosophy and every system in India--I mean
40 throughout the world--owes much to Kapila, perhaps the greatest
41 name in the history of India in psychological and philosophical lines.
42 The influence of Kapila is everywhere seen throughout the world.
43 Wherever there is a recognised system of thought, there you can
44 trace his influence; even if it be thousands of years back, yet he
45 stands there, the shining, glorious, wonderful Kapila. His
46 psychology and a good deal of his philosophy have been accepted
47 by all the sects of India with but very little differences. In our own
48 country, our Naiyayika philosophers could not make much
49 impression on the philosophical world of India. They were too busy
50 with little things like species and genus, and so forth, and that most
51 cumbersome terminology, which it is a life's work to study. As such,
52 they were very busy with logic and left philosophy to the Vedantists,

1 but every one of the Indian philosophical sects in modern times has
2 adopted the logical terminology of the Naiyayikas of Bengal.
3 Jagadisha, Gadadhara, and Shiromani are as well known at Nadia
4 as in some of the cities in Malabar. But the philosophy of Vyasa, the
5 *Vyasa-Sutras*, is firm-seated and has attained the permanence of
6 that which it intended to present to men, the Brahman of the
7 Vedantic side of philosophy. Reason was entirely subordinated to
8 the Shrutis, and as Shankaracharya declares, Vyasa did not care to
9 reason at all. His idea in writing the *Sutras* was just to bring
10 together, and with one thread to make a garland of the flowers of
11 Vedantic texts. His *Sutras* are admitted so far as they are
12 subordinate to the authority of the Upanishads, and no further.

13 And, as I have said, all the sects of India now hold these
14 *Vyasa-Sutras* to be the great authority, and every new sect in India
15 starts with a fresh commentary on the *Vyasa-Sutras* according to
16 its light. The difference between some of these commentators is
17 sometimes very great, sometimes the text-torturing is quite
18 disgusting. The *Vyasa-Sutras* have got the place of authority, and
19 no one can expect to found a sect in India until he can write a fresh
20 commentary on the *Vyasa-Sutras*.

21 Next in authority is the celebrated Gita. The great glory of
22 Shankaracharya was his preaching of the Gita. It is one of the
23 greatest works that this great man did among the many noble
24 works of his noble life--the preaching of the Gita and writing the
25 most beautiful commentary upon it. And he has been followed by all
26 founders of the orthodox sects in India, each of whom has written a
27 commentary on the Gita.

28 The Upanishads are many, and said to be one hundred and
29 eight, but some declare them to be still larger in number. Some of
30 them are evidently of a much later date, as for instance, the
31 Allopanishad in which Allah is praised and Mohammed is called the
32 Rajasulla. I have been told that this was written during the reign of
33 Akbar to bring the Hindus and Mohammedans together, and
34 sometimes they got hold of some word, as Allah, or Illa in the
35 Samhitas, and made an Upanishad on it. So in this Allopanishad,
36 Mohammed is the Rajasulla, whatever that may mean. There are
37 other sectarian Upanishads of the same species, which you find to
38 be entirely modern, and it has been so easy to write them, seeing
39 that this language of the Samhita portion of the Vedas is so archaic
40 that there is no grammar to it. Years ago I had an idea of studying
41 the grammar of the Vedas, and I began with all earnestness to
42 study Panini and the *Mahabhashya*, but to my surprise I found that
43 the best part of the Vedic grammar consists only of exceptions to
44 rules. A rule is made, and after that comes a statement to the
45 effect, "This rule will be an exception". So you see what an amount
46 of liberty there is for anybody to write anything, the only safeguard
47 being the dictionary of Yaska. Still, in this you will find, for the most
48 part, but a large number of synonyms. Given all that, how easy it is
49 to write any number of Upanishads you please. Just have a little
50 knowledge of Sanskrit, enough to make words look like the old
51 archaic words, and you have no fear of grammar. Then you bring in
52 Rajasulla or any other Sula you like. In that way many Upanishads

1 have been manufactured, and I am told that that is being done even
2 now. In some parts of India, I am perfectly certain, they are trying
3 to manufacture such Upanishads among the different sects. But
4 among the Upanishads are those, which, on the face of them, bear
5 the evidence of genuineness, and these have been taken up by the
6 great commentators and commented upon, especially by Shankara,
7 followed by Ramanuja and all the rest.

8 There are one or two more ideas with regard to the
9 Upanishads which I want to bring to your notice, for these are an
10 ocean of knowledge, and to talk about the Upanishads, even for an
11 incompetent person like myself, takes years and not one lecture
12 only. I want, therefore, to bring to your notice one or two points in
13 the study of the Upanishads. In the first place, they are the most
14 wonderful poems in the world. If you read the Samhita portion of
15 the Vedas, you now and then find passages of most marvellous
16 beauty. For instance, the famous Shloka which describes Chaos--
17 {Sanskrit}--"When darkness was hidden in darkness", so on it goes.
18 One reads and feels the wonderful sublimity of the poetry. Do you
19 mark this that outside of India, and inside also, there have been
20 attempts at painting the sublime. But outside, it has always been
21 the infinite in the muscles, the external world, the infinite of matter,
22 or of space. When Milton or Dante, or any other great European
23 poet, either ancient or modern, wants to paint a picture of the
24 infinite, he tries to soar outside, to make you feel the infinite
25 through the muscles. That attempt has been made here also. You
26 find it in the Samhitas, the infinite of extension most marvellously
27 painted and placed before the readers, such as has been done
28 nowhere else. Mark that one sentence {Sanskrit}, and now mark
29 the description of darkness by three poets. Take our own
30 Kalidasa--"Darkness which can be penetrated with the point of a
31 needle"; then Milton--"No light but rather darkness visible"; but
32 come now to the Upanishad, "Darkness was covering darkness",
33 "Darkness was hidden in darkness". We who live in the tropics can
34 understand it, the sudden outburst of the monsoon, when in a
35 moment, the horizon becomes darkened and clouds become
36 covered with more rolling black clouds. So on, the poem goes; but
37 yet, in the Samhita portion, all these attempts are external. As
38 everywhere else, the attempts at finding the solution of the great
39 problems of life have been through the external world. Just as the
40 Greek mind or the modern European mind wants to find the
41 solution of life and of all the sacred problems of Being by searching
42 into the eternal world, so also did our forefathers, and just as the
43 Europeans failed, they failed also. But the Western people never
44 made a move more, they remained there, they failed in the search
45 for the solution of the great problems of life and death in the
46 external world, and there they remained, stranded; our forefathers
47 also found it impossible, but were bolder in declaring the utter
48 helplessness of the senses to find the solution. Nowhere else was
49 the answer better put than in the Upanishad:{Sanskrit}--"From
50 whence words come back reflected, together with the mind";
51 {Sanskrit}--"There the eye cannot go, nor can speech reach". There
52 are various sentences which declare the utter helplessness of the
53 senses, but they did not stop there; they fell back upon the internal

1 nature of man, they went to get the answer from their own soul,
2 they became introspective; they gave up external nature as a
3 failure, as nothing could be done there, as no hope, no answer
4 could be found; they discovered that dull, dead matter would not
5 give them truth, and they fell back upon the shining soul of man,
6 and there the answer was found.

7 {Sanskrit}--"Know this Atman alone," they declared, "give up
8 all other vain words, and hear no other." In the Atman they found
9 the solution--the greatest of all Atmans, the God, the Lord of this
10 universe, His relation to the Atman of man, our duty to Him, and
11 through that our relation to each other. And herein you find the
12 most sublime poetry in the world. No more is the attempt made to
13 paint this Atman in the language of matter. Nay, for it they have
14 given up even all positive language. No more is there any attempt
15 to come to the senses to give them the idea of the infinite, no more
16 is there an external, dull, dead, material, spacious, sensuous
17 infinite, but instead of that comes something which is as fine as
18 even that mentioned in the saying--

19 {Sanskrit}

20 What poetry in the world can be more sublime than this!
21 "There the sun cannot illumine, nor the moon, nor the stars, there
22 this flash of lightning cannot illumine; what to speak of this mortal
23 fire!" Such poetry you find nowhere else. Take that most marvellous
24 Upanishad, the Katha. What a wonderful finish, what a most
25 marvellous art displayed in that poem! How wonderfully it opens
26 with that little boy to whom Shraddha came, who wanted to see
27 Yama, and how that most marvellous of all teachers, Death himself,
28 teaches him the great lessons of life and death! And what was his
29 quest? To know the secret of death.

1 The second point that I want you to remember is the perfectly
2 impersonal character of the Upanishads. Although we find many
3 names, and many speakers, and many teachers in the Upanishads,
4 not one of them stands as an authority of the Upanishads, not one
5 verse is based upon the life of any one of them. These are simply
6 figures like shadows moving in the background, unfelt, unseen,
7 unrealised, but the real force is in the marvellous, the brilliant, the
8 effulgent texts of the Upanishads, perfectly impersonal. If twenty
9 Yajnavalkyas came and lived and died, it does not matter; the texts
10 are there. And yet it is against no personality; it is broad and
11 expansive enough to embrace all the personalities that the world
12 has yet produced, and all that are yet to come. It has nothing to say
13 against the worship of persons, or Avataras, or sages. On the other
14 hand, it is always upholding it. At the same time, it is perfectly
15 impersonal. It is a most marvellous idea, like the God it preaches,
16 the impersonal idea of the Upanishads. For the sage, the thinker,
17 the philosopher, for the rationalist, it is as much impersonal as any
18 modern scientist can wish. And these are our scriptures. You must
19 remember that what the Bible is to the Christians, what the Koran
20 is to the Mohammedans, what the Tripitaka is to the Buddhist, what
21 the Zend Avesta is to the Parsees, these Upanishads are to us.
22 These and nothing but these are our scriptures. The Puranas, the
23 Tantras, and all the other books, even the *Vyasa-Sutras*, are of
24 secondary, tertiary authority, but primary are the Vedas. Manu, and
25 the Puranas, and all the other books are to be taken so far as they
26 agree with the authority of the Upanishads, and when they disagree
27 they are to be rejected without mercy. This we ought to remember
28 always, but unfortunately for India, at the present time we have
29 forgotten it. A petty village custom seems now the real authority
30 and not the teaching of the Upanishads. A petty idea current in a
31 wayside village in Bengal seems to have the authority of the Vedas,
32 and even something better. And that word "orthodox", how
33 wonderful its influence! To the villager, the following of every little
34 bit of the Karma Kanda is the very height of "orthodoxy", and one
35 who does not do it is told, "Go away, you are no more a Hindu." So
36 there are, most unfortunately in my motherland, persons who will
37 take up one of these Tantras and say, that the practice of this Tantra
38 is to be obeyed; he who does not do so is no more orthodox in his
39 views. Therefore it is better for us to remember that in the
40 Upanishads is the primary authority, even the Grihya and Shrauta
41 Sutras are subordinate to the authority of the Vedas. They are the
42 words of the Rishis, our forefathers, and you have to believe them if
43 you want to become a Hindu. You may even believe the most
44 peculiar ideas about the Godhead, but if you deny the authority of
45 the Vedas, you are a Nastika. Therein lies the difference between
46 the scriptures of the Christians or the Buddhists and ours; theirs
47 are all Puranas, and not scriptures, because they describe the
48 history of the deluge, and the history of kings and reigning families,
49 and record the lives of great men, and so on. This is the work of the
50 Puranas, and so far as they agree with the Vedas, they are good. So
51 far as the Bible and the scriptures of other nations agree with the
52 Vedas, they are perfectly good, but when they do not agree, they
53 are no more to be accepted. So with the Koran. There are many

1 moral teachings in these, and so far as they agree with the Vedas
2 they have the authority of the Puranas, but no more. The idea is
3 that the Vedas were never written; the idea is, they never came into
4 existence. I was told once by a Christian missionary that their
5 scriptures have a historical character, and therefore are true, to
6 which I replied, "Mine have no historical character and *therefore*
7 they are true; yours being historical, they were evidently made by
8 some man the other day. Yours are man-made and mine are not;
9 their non-historicity is in their favour." Such is the relation of the
10 Vedas with all the other scriptures at the present day.

11 We now come to the teachings of the Upanishads. Various
12 texts are there. Some are perfectly dualistic, while others are
13 monistic. But there are certain doctrines which are agreed to by all
14 the different sects of India. First, there is the doctrine of Samsara
15 or reincarnation of the soul. Secondly, they all agree in their
16 psychology; first there is the body, behind that, what they call the
17 Sukshma Sharira, the mind, and behind that even, is the Jiva. That
18 is the great difference between Western and Indian psychology; in
19 the Western psychology the mind is the soul, here it is not. The
20 Antahkarana, the internal instrument, as the mind is called, is only
21 an instrument in the hands of that Jiva, through which the Jiva
22 works on the body or on the external world. Here they all agree,
23 and they all also agree that this Jiva or Atman, Jivatman as it is
24 called by various sects, is eternal, without beginning; and that it is
25 going from birth to birth, until it gets a final release. They all agree
26 in this, and they also all agree in one other most vital point, which
27 alone marks characteristically, most prominently, most vitally, the
28 difference between the Indian and the Western mind, and it is this,
29 that everything is in the soul. There is no inspiration, but properly
30 speaking, expiration. All powers and all purity and all greatness--
31 everything is in the soul. The Yogi would tell you that the Siddhis--
32 Anima, Laghima, and so on--that he wants to attain to are not to be
33 attained, in the proper sense of the word, but are already there in
34 the soul; the work is to make them manifest. Patanjali, for instance,
35 would tell you that even in the lowest worm that crawls under your
36 feet, all the eightfold Yogi's powers are already existing. The
37 difference has been made by the body. As soon as it gets a better
38 body, the powers will become manifest, but they are there.
39 {Sanskrit}--"Good and bad deeds are not the direct causes in the
40 transformations of nature, but they act as breakers of obstacles to
41 the evolutions of nature: as a farmer breaks the obstacles to the
42 course of water, which then runs down by its own nature." Here
43 Patanjali gives the celebrated example of the cultivator bringing
44 water into his field from a huge tank somewhere. The tank is
45 already filled and the water would flood his land in a moment, only
46 there is a mud-wall between the tank and his field. As soon as the
47 barrier is broken, in rushes the water out of its own power and
48 force. This mass of power and purity and perfection is in the soul
49 already. The only difference is the Avarana--this veil--that has been
50 cast over it. Once the veil is removed, the soul attains to purity, and
51 its powers become manifest. This, you ought to remember, is the
52 great difference between Eastern and Western thought. Hence you
53 find people teaching such awful doctrines as that we are all born

1 sinners, and because we do not believe in such awful doctrines we
2 are all born wicked. They never stop to think that if we are by our
3 very nature wicked, we can never be good--for how can nature
4 change? If it changes, it contradicts itself; it is not nature. We ought
5 to remember this. Here the dualist, and the Advaitist, and all others
6 in India agree.

7 The next point, which all the sects in India believe in, is God.
8 Of course their ideas of God will be different. The dualists believe in
9 a Personal God, and a personal only. I want you to understand this
10 word personal a little more. This word personal does not mean that
11 God has a body, sits on a throne somewhere, and rules this world,
12 but means Saguna, with qualities. There are many descriptions of
13 the Personal God. This Personal God as the Ruler, the Creator, the
14 Preserver, and the Destroyer of this universe is believed in by all
15 the sects. The Advaitists believe something more. They believe in a
16 still higher phase of this Personal God, which is personal-
17 impersonal. No adjective can illustrate where there is no
18 qualification, and the Advaitist would not give Him any qualities
19 except the three--Sat-Chid-Ananda, Existence, Knowledge, and Bliss
20 Absolute. This is what Shankara did. But in the Upanishads
21 themselves you find they penetrate even further, and say, nothing
22 can be predicated of it except Neti, Neti, "Not this, Not this".

23 Here all the different sects of India agree. But taking the
24 dualistic side, as I have said, I will take Ramanuja as the typical
25 dualist of India, the great modern representative of the dualistic
26 system. It is a pity that our people in Bengal know so very little
27 about the great religious leaders in India, who have been born in
28 other parts of the country; and for the matter of that, during the
29 whole of the Mohammedan period, with the exception of our
30 Chaitanya, all the great religious leaders were born in Southern
31 India, and it is the intellect of Southern India that is really
32 governing India now; for even Chaitanya belonged to one of these
33 sects, a sect of the Madhvas. According to Ramanuja, these three
34 entities are eternal--God, and soul, and nature. The souls are
35 eternal, and they will remain eternally existing, individualised
36 through eternity, and will retain their individuality all through. Your
37 soul will be different from my soul through all eternity, says
38 Ramanuja, and so will this nature--which is an existing fact, as
39 much a fact as the existence of soul or the existence of God--remain
40 always different. And God is interpenetrating, the essence of the
41 soul, He is the Antaryamin. In this sense Ramanuja sometimes
42 thinks that God is one with the soul, the essence of the soul, and
43 these souls--at the time of Pralaya, when the whole of nature
44 becomes what he calls Sankuchita, contracted--become contracted
45 and minute and remain so for a time. And at the beginning of the
46 next cycle they all come out, according to their past Karma, and
47 undergo the effect of that Karma. Every action that makes the
48 natural inborn purity and perfection of the soul get contracted is a
49 bad action, and every action that makes it come out and expand
50 itself is a good action, says Ramanuja. Whatever helps to make the
51 Vikasha of the soul is good, and whatever makes it Sankuchita is
52 bad. And thus the soul is going on, expanding or contracting in its

1 actions, till through the grace of God comes salvation. And that
2 grace comes to all souls, says Ramanuja, that are pure and struggle
3 for that grace.

4 There is a celebrated verse in the Shrutis, {Sanskrit}: "When
5 the food is pure, then the Sattva becomes pure; when the Sattva is
6 pure, then the Smriti"--the memory of the Lord, or the memory of
7 our own perfection--if you are an Advaitist--"becomes truer,
8 steadier, and absolute". Here is a great discussion. First of all, what
9 is this Sattva? We know that according to the Sankhya--and it has
10 been admitted by all our sects of philosophy--the body is composed
11 of three sorts of materials--not qualities. It is the general idea that
12 Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas are qualities. Not at all, not qualities but
13 the materials of this universe, and with Ahara-shuddhi, when the
14 food is pure, the Sattva material becomes pure. The one theme of
15 the Vedanta is to get this Sattva. As I have told you, the soul is
16 already pure and perfect, and it is, according to the Vedanta,
17 covered up by Rajas and Tamas particles. The Sattva particles are
18 the most luminous, and the effulgence of the soul penetrates
19 through them as easily as light through glass. So if the Rajas and
20 Tamas particles go, and leave the Sattva particles, in this state the
21 power and purity of the soul will appear, and leave the soul more
22 manifest.

23 Therefore it is necessary to have this Sattva. And the text
24 says, "When Ahara becomes pure". Ramanuja takes this word Ahara
25 to mean food, and he has made it one of the turning points of his
26 philosophy. Not only so, it has affected the whole of India, and all
27 the different sects. Therefore it is necessary for us to understand
28 what it means, for that, according to Ramanuja, is one of the
29 principal factors in our life, Ahara-shuddhi. What makes food
30 impure? asks Ramanuja. Three sorts of defects make food impure--
31 first, Jati-dosha, the defect in the very nature of the class to which
32 the food belongs, as the smell in onions, garlic, and suchlike. The
33 next is Ashraya-dosha, the defect in the person from whom the food
34 comes; food coming from a wicked person will make you impure. I
35 myself have seen many great sages in India following strictly that
36 advice all their lives. Of course they had the power to know who
37 brought the food, and even who had touched the food, and I have
38 seen it in my own life, not once, but hundreds of times. Then
39 Nimitta-dosha, the defect of impure things or influences coming in
40 contact with food is another. We had better attend to that a little
41 more now. It has become too prevalent in India to take food with
42 dirt and dust and bits of hair in it. If food is taken from which these
43 three defects have been removed, that makes Sattva-shuddhi,
44 purifies the Sattva. Religion seems to be a very easy task then.
45 Then every one can have religion if it comes by eating pure food
46 only. There is none so weak or incompetent in this world, that I
47 know, who cannot save himself from these defects. Then comes
48 Shankaracharya, who says this word Ahara means thought
49 collected in the mind; when that becomes pure, the Sattva becomes
50 pure, and not before that. You may eat what you like. If food alone
51 would purify the Sattva, then feed the monkey with milk and rice all
52 its life; would it become a great Yogi? Then the cows and the deer

1 would be great Yogis. As has been said, "If it is by bathing much
2 that heaven is reached, the fishes will get to heaven first. If by
3 eating vegetables a man gets to heaven, the cows and the deer will
4 get to heaven first."

5 But what is the solution? Both are necessary. Of course the
6 idea that Shankaracharya gives us of Ahara is the primary idea. But
7 pure food, no doubt, helps pure thought; it has an intimate
8 connection; both ought to be there. But the defect is that in modern
9 India we have forgotten the advice of Shankaracharya and taken
10 only the "pure food" meaning. That is why people get mad with me
11 when I say, religion has got into the kitchen; and if you had been in
12 Madras with me, you would have agreed with me. The Bengalis are
13 better than that. In Madras they throw away food if anybody looks
14 at it. And with all this, I do not see that the people are any the
15 better there. If only eating this and that sort of food and saving it
16 from the looks of this person and that person would give them
17 perfection, you would expect them all to be perfect men, which they
18 are not.

19 Thus, although these are to be combined and linked together
20 to make a perfect whole, do not put the cart before the horse. There
21 is a cry nowadays about this and that food and about Varnashrama,
22 and the Bengalis are the most vociferous in these cries. I would ask
23 every one of you, what do you know about this Varnashrama?
24 Where are the four castes today in this country? Answer me; I do
25 not see the four castes. Just as our Bengali proverb has it, "A
26 headache without a head", so you want to make this Varnashrama
27 here. There are not four castes here. I see only the Brahmin and the
28 Shudra. If there are the Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas, where are
29 they and why do not you Brahmins order them to take the
30 Yajnopavita and study the Vedas, as every Hindu ought to do? And if
31 the Vaishyas and the Kshatriyas do not exist, but only the Brahmins
32 and the Shudras, the Shastras say that the Brahmin must not live in
33 a country where there are only Shudras; so depart bag and
34 baggage! Do you know what the Shastras say about people how
35 have been eating Mlechchha food and living under a government of
36 the Mlechchhas, as you have for the past thousand years? Do you
37 know the penance for that? The penance would be burning oneself
38 with one's own hands. Do you want to pass as teachers and walk
39 like hypocrites? If you believe in your Shastras, burn yourselves
40 first like the one great Brahmin did who went with Alexander the
41 Great and burnt himself because he thought he had eaten the food
42 of a Mlechchha. Do like that, and you will see that the whole nation
43 will be at your feet. You do not believe in your own Shastras and yet
44 want to make others believe in them. If you think you are not able
45 to do that in this age, admit your weakness and excuse the
46 weakness of others, take the other castes up, give them a helping
47 hand, let them study the Vedas and become just as good Aryans as
48 any other Aryans in the world, and be you likewise Aryans, you
49 Brahmins of Bengal.

50 Give up this filthy Vamachara that is killing your country. You
51 have not seen the other parts of India. When I see how much the
52 Vamachara has entered our society, I find it a most disgraceful

1 place with all its boast of culture. These Vamachara sects are
2 honeycombing our society in Bengal. Those who come out in the
3 daytime and preach most loudly about Achara, it is they who carry
4 on the horrible debauchery at night and are backed by the most
5 dreadful books. They are ordered by the books to do these things.
6 You who are of Bengal know it. The Bengali Shastras are the
7 Vamachara Tantras. They are published by the cart-load, and you
8 poison the minds of your children with them instead of teaching
9 them your Shrutis. Fathers of Calcutta, do you not feel ashamed
10 that such horrible stuff as these Vamachara Tantras, with
11 translations too, should be put into the hands of your boys and girls,
12 and their minds poisoned, and that they should be brought up with
13 the idea that these are the Shastras of the Hindus? If you are
14 ashamed, take them away from your children, and let them read the
15 true Shastras, the Vedas, the Gita, the Upanishads.

16 According to the dualistic sects of India, the individual souls
17 remain as individuals throughout, and God creates the universe out
18 of pre-existing material only as the efficient cause. According to the
19 Advaitists, on the other hand, God is both the material and the
20 efficient cause of the universe. He is not only the Creator of the
21 universe, but He creates it out of Himself. That is the Advaitist
22 position. There are crude dualistic sects who believe that this world
23 has been created by God out of Himself, and at the same time God
24 is eternally separate from the universe, and everything is eternally
25 subordinate to the Ruler of the universe. There are sects too who
26 also believe that out of Himself God has evolved this universe, and
27 individuals in the long run attain to Nirvana to give up the finite and
28 become the Infinite. But these sects have disappeared. The one sect
29 of Advaitists that you see in modern India is composed of the
30 followers of Shankara. According to Shankara, God is both the
31 material and the efficient cause through Maya, but not in reality.
32 God has not become this universe; but the universe is not, and God
33 is. This is one of the highest points to understand of Advaita
34 Vedanta, this idea of Maya. I am afraid I have no time to discuss
35 this one most difficult point in our philosophy. Those of you who are
36 acquainted with Western philosophy will find something very
37 similar in Kant. But I must warn you, those of you who have studied
38 Professor Max Muller's writings on Kant, that there is one idea
39 most misleading. It was Shankara who first found out the idea of
40 the identity of time, space, and causation with Maya, and I had the
41 good fortune to find one or two passages in Shankara's
42 commentaries and send them to my friend the Professor. So even
43 that idea was here in India. Now this is a peculiar theory--this Maya
44 theory of the Advaita Vedantists. The Brahman is all that exists, but
45 differentiation has been caused by this Maya. Unity, the one
46 Brahman, is the ultimate, the goal, and herein is an eternal
47 dissension again between Indian and Western thought. India has
48 thrown this challenge to the world for thousands of years, and the
49 challenge has been taken up by different nations, and the result is
50 that they all succumbed and you live. This is the challenge that this
51 world is a delusion, that it is all Maya, that whether you eat off the
52 ground with your fingers or dine off golden plates, whether you live
53 in palaces and are one of the mightiest monarchs or are the poorest

1 of beggars, death is the one result; it is all the same, all Maya. That
2 is the old Indian theme, and again and again nations are springing
3 up trying to unsay it, to disprove it; becoming great, with enjoyment
4 as their watchword, power in their hands, they use that power to
5 the utmost, enjoy to the utmost, and the next moment they die. We
6 stand for ever because we see that everything is Maya. The
7 children of Maya live for ever, but the children of enjoyment die.

8 Here again is another great difference. Just as you find the
9 attempts of Hegel and Schopenhauer in German philosophy, so you
10 will find the very same ideas brought forward in ancient India.
11 Fortunately for us, Hegelianism was nipped in the bud and not
12 allowed to sprout and cast its baneful shoots over this motherland
13 of ours. Hegel's one idea is that the one, the absolute, is only chaos,
14 and that the individualised form is the greater. The world is greater
15 than the non-world, Samsara is greater than salvation. That is the
16 one idea, and the more you plunge into this Samsara the more your
17 soul is covered with the workings of life, the better you are. They
18 say, do you not see how we built houses, cleanse the streets, enjoy
19 the senses? Ay, behind that they may hide rancour, misery, horror--
20 behind every bit of that enjoyment.

21 On the other hand, our philosophers have from the very first
22 declared that every manifestation, what you call evolution, is vain, a
23 vain attempt of the unmanifested to manifest itself. Ay, you the
24 mighty cause of this universe, trying to reflect yourself in little mud
25 puddles! But after making the attempt for a time you find out it was
26 all in vain and beat a retreat to the place from whence you came.
27 This is Vairagya, or renunciation, and the very beginning of religion.
28 How can religion or morality begin without renunciation itself? The
29 Alpha and Omega is renunciation. "Give up," says the Veda, "give
30 up." That is the one way, "Give up". {Sanskrit}--"Neither through
31 wealth, nor through progeny, but by giving up alone that
32 immortality is to be reached." That is the dictate of the Indian
33 books. Of course, there have been great givers-up of the world,
34 even sitting on thrones. But even (King) Janaka himself had to
35 renounce; who was a greater renouncer than he? But in modern
36 times we all want to be called Janakas! They are all Janakas (lit.
37 fathers) of children--unclad, ill-fed, miserable children. The word
38 Janaka can be applied to them in that sense only; they have none of
39 the shining, Godlike thoughts as the old Janaka had. These are our
40 modern Janakas! A little less of this Janakism now, and come
41 straight to the mark! If you can give up, you will have religion. If
42 you cannot, you may read all the books that are in the world, from
43 East to West, swallow all the libraries, and become the greatest of
44 Pandits, but if you have Karma Kanda only, you are nothing; there is
45 no spirituality. Through renunciation alone this immortality is to be
46 reached. It is the power, the great power, that cares not even for
47 the universe; then it is that {Sanskrit}

48 "The whole universe becomes like a hollow made by a cow's
49 foot."

50 Renunciation, that is the flag, the banner of India, floating
51 over the world, the one undying thought which India sends again
52 and again as a warning to dying races, as a warning to all tyranny,

1 as a warning to wickedness in the world. Ay, Hindus, let not your
2 hold of that banner go. Hold it aloft. Even if you are weak and
3 cannot renounce, do not lower the ideal. Say, "I am weak and
4 cannot renounce the world", but do not try to be hypocrites,
5 torturing texts, and making specious arguments, and trying to
6 throw dust in the eyes of people who are ignorant. Do not do that,
7 but own you are weak. For the idea is great, that of renunciation.
8 What matters it if millions fail in the attempt, if ten soldiers or even
9 two return victorious! Blessed be the millions dead! Their blood has
10 bought the victory. This renunciation is the one ideal throughout the
11 different Vedic sects except one, and that is the Vallabhacharya sect
12 in Bombay Presidency, and most of you are aware what comes
13 where renunciation does not exist. We want orthodoxy--even the
14 hideously orthodox, even those who smother themselves with ashes,
15 even those who stand with their hands uplifted. Ay, we want them,
16 unnatural though they be, for standing for that idea of giving up,
17 and acting as a warning to the race against succumbing to the
18 effeminate luxuries that are creeping into India, eating into our very
19 vitals, and tending to make the whole race a race of hypocrites. We
20 want to have a little of asceticism. Renunciation conquered India in
21 days of yore, it has still to conquer India. Still it stands as the
22 greatest and highest of Indian ideals--this renunciation. The land of
23 Buddha, the land of Ramanuja, of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, the
24 land of renunciation, the land where, from the days of yore, Karma
25 Kanda was preached against, and even today there are hundreds
26 who have given up everything, and become Jivanmuktas--ay, will
27 that land give up its ideals? Certainly not. There may be people
28 whose brains have become turned by the Western luxurious ideals;
29 there may be thousands and hundreds of thousands who have
30 drunk deep of enjoyment, this curse of the West--the senses--the
31 curse of the world; yet for all that, there will be other thousands in
32 this motherland of mine to whom religion will ever be a reality, and
33 who will be ever ready to give up without counting the cost, if need
34 be.

35 Another ideal very common in all our sects, I want to place
36 before you; it is also a vast subject. This unique idea that religion is
37 to be realised is in India alone. {Sanskrit}--"This Atman is not to be
38 reached by too much talking, nor is it to be reached by the power of
39 the intellect, nor by much study of the scriptures." Nay, ours is the
40 only scripture in the world that declares, not even by the study of
41 the scriptures can the Atman be realised--not talks, not lecturing,
42 none of that, but It is to be realised. It comes from the teacher to
43 the disciple. When this insight comes to the disciple, everything is
44 cleared up and realisation follows.

45 One more idea. There is a peculiar custom in Bengal, which
46 they call Kula-Guru, or hereditary Guruship. "My father was your
47 Guru, now I shall be your Guru. My father was the Guru of your
48 father, so shall I be yours." What is a Guru? Let us go back to the
49 Shrutis--"He who knows the secret of the Vedas", not bookworms,
50 not grammarians, not Pandits in general, but he who knows the
51 meaning. {Sanskrit}--"An ass laden with a load of sandalwood
52 knows only the weight of the wood, but not its precious qualities";

1 so are these Pandits. We do not want such. What can they teach if
2 they have no realisation? When I was a boy here, in this city of
3 Calcutta, I used to go from place to place in search of religion, and
4 everywhere I asked the lecturer after hearing very big lectures,
5 "Have you seen God?"

6 The man was taken aback at the idea of seeing God; and the
7 only man who told me, "I have", was Ramakrishna Paramahansa,
8 and not only so, but he said, "I will put you in the way of seeing Him
9 too". The Guru is not a man who twists and tortures texts.
10 {Sanskrit}--"Different ways of throwing out words, different ways
11 of explaining texts of the scriptures, these are for the enjoyment of
12 the learned, not for freedom." Shrotriya, he who knows the secret
13 of the Shrutis, Avrijina, the sinless, and Akamahata, unpierced by
14 desire--he who does not want to make money by teaching you--he is
15 the Shanta, the Sadhu, who comes as the spring which brings the
16 leaves and blossoms to various plants but does not ask anything
17 from the plant, for its very nature is to do good. It does good and
18 there it is. Such is the Guru, {Sanskrit}--"Who has himself crossed
19 this terrible ocean of life, and without any idea of gain to himself,
20 helps others also to cross the ocean." This is the Guru, and mark
21 that none else can be a Guru, for {Sanskrit}--"Themselves steeped
22 in darkness, but in the pride of their hearts, thinking they know
23 everything, the fools want to help others, and they go round and
24 round in many crooked ways, staggering to and fro, and thus like
25 the blind leading the blind, both fall into the ditch." Thus say the
26 Vedas. Compare that and your present custom. You are Vedantists,
27 you are very orthodox, are you not? You are great Hindus and very
28 orthodox. Ay, what I want to do is to make you more orthodox. The
29 more orthodox you are, the more sensible; and the more you think
30 of modern orthodoxy, the more foolish you are. Go back to your old
31 orthodoxy, for in those days every sound that came from these
32 books, every pulsation, was out of a strong, steady, and sincere
33 heart; every note was true. After that came degradation in art, in
34 science, in religion, in everything, national degradation. We have no
35 time to discuss the causes, but all the books written about that
36 period breathe of the pestilence--the national decay; instead of
37 vigour, only wails and cries. Go back, go back to the old days when
38 there was strength and vitality. Be strong once more, drink deep of
39 this fountain of yore, and that is the only condition of life in India.

40 According to the Advaitist, this individuality which we have
41 today is a delusion. This has been a hard nut to crack all over the
42 world. Forthwith you tell a man he is not an individual, he is so
43 much afraid that his individuality, whatever that may be, will be
44 lost! But the Advaitist says there never has been an individuality,
45 you have been changing every moment of your life. You were a child
46 and thought in one way, now you are a man and think another way,
47 again you will be an old man and think differently. Everybody is
48 changing. If so, where is your individuality? Certainly not in the
49 body, or in the mind, or in thought. And beyond that is your Atman,
50 and, says the Advaitist, this Atman is the Brahman Itself. There
51 cannot be two infinities. There is only one individual and it is
52 infinite. In plain words, we are rational beings, and we want to

1 reason. And what is reason? More or less of classification, until you
2 cannot go on any further. And the finite can only find its ultimate
3 rest when it is classified into the infinite. Take up a finite thing and
4 go on analysing it, but you will find rest nowhere until you reach the
5 ultimate or infinite, and that infinite, says the Advaitist, is what
6 alone exists. Everything else is Maya, nothing else has real
7 existence; whatever is of existence in any material thing is this
8 Brahman; we are this Brahman, and the shape and everything else
9 is Maya. Take away the form and shape, and you and I are all one.
10 But we have to guard against the word, "I". Generally people say, "If
11 I am the Brahman, why cannot I do this and that?" But this is using
12 the word in a different sense.

13 As soon as you think you are bound, no more you are
14 Brahman, the Self, who wants nothing, whose light is inside. All His
15 pleasures and bliss are inside; perfectly satisfied with Himself, He
16 wants nothing, expects nothing, perfectly fearless, perfectly free.
17 That is Brahman. In That we are all one.

18 Now this seems, therefore, to be the great point of difference
19 between the dualist and the Advaitist. You find even great
20 commentators like Shankaracharya making meanings of texts,
21 which, to my mind, sometimes do not seem to be justified.
22 Sometimes you find Ramanuja dealing with texts in a way that is
23 not very clear. The idea has been even among our Pandits that only
24 one of these sects can be true and the rest must be false, although
25 they have the idea in the Shrutis, the most wonderful idea that
26 India has yet to give to the world--{Sanskrit}--"That which exists is
27 One; sages call It by various names." That has been the theme, and
28 the working out of the whole of this life-problem of the nation is the
29 working out of that theme--{Sanskrit}. Yea, except a very few
30 learned men, I mean, barring a very few spiritual men, in India, we
31 always forget this. We forget this great idea, and you will find that
32 there are persons among Pandits--I should think ninety-eight per
33 cent--who are of opinion that either the Advaitist will be true, or the
34 Vishishtadvaitist will be true, or the Dvaitist will be true; and if you
35 go to Varanasi, and sit for five minutes in one of the Ghats there,
36 you will have demonstration of what I say. You will see a regular
37 bull-fight going on about these various sects and things.

38 Thus it remains. Then came one whose life was the
39 explanation, whose life was the working out of the harmony that is
40 the background of all the different sects of India, I mean
41 Ramakrishna Paramahansa. It is his life that explains that both of
42 these are necessary, that they are like the geocentric and the
43 heliocentric theories in astronomy. When a child is taught
44 astronomy, he is taught the geocentric first, and works out similar
45 ideas of astronomy to the geocentric. But when he comes to finer
46 points of astronomy, the heliocentric will be necessary, and he will
47 understand it better. Dualism is the natural idea of the senses; as
48 long as we are bound by the senses we are bound to see a God who
49 is only Personal, and nothing but Personal, we are bound to see the
50 world as it is. Says Ramanuja, "So long as you think you are a body,
51 and you think you are a mind, and you think you are a Jiva, every
52 act of perception will give you the three--Soul, and nature, and

1 something as causing both." But yet, at the same time, even the
2 idea of the body disappears where the mind itself becomes finer
3 and finer, till it has almost disappeared, when all the different
4 things that make us fear, make us weak, and bind us down to this
5 body-life have disappeared. Then and then alone one finds out the
6 truth of that grand old teaching. What is the teaching?

7 {Sanskrit}

8 "Even in this life they have conquered the round of birth and
9 death whose minds are firm-fixed on the sameness of everything,
10 for God is pure and the same to all, and therefore such are said to
11 be living in God."

12 {Sanskrit}

13 "Thus seeing the Lord the same everywhere, he, the sage,
14 does not hurt the Self by the self, and so goes to the highest goal."

ADDRESS OF WELCOME AT ALMORA AND REPLY

{address of welcome}

Two other addresses were presented, to which the Swami made the following brief reply:

This is the land of dreams of our forefathers, in which was born Parvati, the Mother of India. This is the holy land where every ardent soul in India wants to come at the end of its life, and to close the last chapter of its mortal career. On the tops of the mountains of this blessed land, in the depths of its caves, on the banks of its rushing torrents, have been thought out the most wonderful thoughts, a little bit of which has drawn so much admiration even from foreigners, and which have been pronounced by the most competent of judges to be incomparable. This is the land which, since my very childhood, I have been dreaming of passing my life in, and as all of you are aware, I have attempted again and again to live here; and although the time was not ripe, and I had work to do and was whirled outside of this holy place, yet it is the hope of my life to end my days somewhere in this Father of Mountains where the Rishis lived, where philosophy was born. Perhaps, my friends, I shall not be able to do it, in the way that I had planned before--how I wish that silence, that unknownness would be given to me--yet I sincerely pray and hope, and almost believe, that my last days will be spent here, of all places on earth.

Inhabitants of this holy land, accept my gratitude for the kind praise that has fallen from you for my little work in the West. But at the same time, my mind does not want to speak of that, either in the East or in the West. As peak after peak of this Father of Mountains began to appear before my sight, all the propensities to work, that ferment that had been going on in my brain for years, seemed to quiet down, and instead of talking about what had been done and what going to be done, the mind reverted to that one eternal theme which the Himalayas always teach us, that one theme which is reverberating in the very atmosphere of this place, the one theme the murmur of which I hear even now in the rushing whirlpools of its rivers--renunciation! {Sanskrit}--"Everything in this life is fraught with fear. It is renunciation alone that makes one fearless." Yes, this is the land of renunciation.

The time will not permit me, and the circumstances are not fitting, to speak to you fully. I shall have to conclude, therefore, by pointing out to you that the Himalayas stand for that renunciation, and the grand lesson we shall ever teach to humanity will be renunciation. As our forefathers used to be attracted towards it in the latter days of their lives, so strong souls from all quarters of this earth, in time to come, will be attracted to this Father of Mountains, when all this fight between sects and all those differences in dogmas will not be remembered any more, and quarrels between your religion and my religion will have vanished altogether, when mankind will understand that there is but one eternal religion, and

1 that is the perception of the divine within, and the rest is mere
2 froth: such ardent souls will come here knowing that the world is
3 but vanity of vanities, knowing that everything is useless except the
4 worship of the Lord and the Lord alone.

5 Friends, you have been very kind to allude to an idea of mine,
6 which is to start a centre in the Himalayas, and perhaps I have
7 sufficiently explained why it should be so, why, above all others, this
8 is the spot which I want to select as one of the great centres to
9 teach this universal religion. These mountains are associated with
10 the best memories of our race; if these Himalayas are taken away
11 from the history of religious India, there will be very little left
12 behind. Here, therefore, must be one of those centres, not merely
13 of activity, but more of calmness, of meditation, and of peace; and I
14 hope some day to realise it. I hope also to meet you at other times
15 and have better opportunities of talking to you. For the present, let
16 me thank you again for all the kindness that has been shown to me,
17 and let me take it as not only kindness shown to me in person, but
18 as to one who represents our religion. May it never leave our
19 hearts! May we always remain as pure as we are at the present
20 moment, and as enthusiastic for spirituality as we are just now!

1

2

VEDIC TEACHING IN THEORY AND PRACTICE

3

4 When the Swami's visit was drawing to a close, his friends in
5 Almora invited him to give a lecture in Hindi. He consented to make
6 the attempt for the first time. He began slowly, and soon warmed to
7 his theme, and found himself building his phrases and almost his
8 words as he went along. Those best acquainted with the difficulties
9 and limitations of the Hindi language, still undeveloped as a
10 medium for oratory, expressed their opinion that a personal triumph
11 had been achieved by Swamiji and that he had proved by his
12 masterly use of Hindi that the language had in it undreamt-of
13 possibilities of development in the direction of oratory.

14 Another lecture was delivered at the English Club in English,
15 of which a brief summary follows.

16 The subject was "Vedic Teaching in Theory and Practice". A
17 short historical sketch of the rise of the worship of the tribal God
18 and its spread through conquest of other tribes was followed by an
19 account of the Vedas. Their nature, character, and teaching were
20 briefly touched upon. Then the Swami spoke about the soul,
21 comparing the Western method which seeks for the solution of vital
22 and religious mysteries in the outside world, with the Eastern
23 method which finding no answer in nature outside turns its inquiry
24 within. He justly claimed for his nation the glory of being the
25 discoverers of the introspective method peculiar to themselves, and
26 of having given to humanity the priceless treasures of spirituality
27 which are the result of that method alone. Passing from this theme,
28 naturally so dear to the heart of a Hindu, the Swami reached the
29 climax of his power as a spiritual teacher when he described the
30 relation of the soul to God, its aspiration after and real unity with
31 God. For some time it seemed as though the teacher, his words, his
32 audience, and the spirit pervading them all were one. No longer
33 was there any consciousness of "I" and "Thou", of "This" or "That".
34 The different units collected there were for the time being lost and
35 merged in the spiritual radiance which emanated so powerfully
36 from the great teacher and held them all more than spellbound.

37 Those that have frequently heard him will recall similar
38 experiences when he ceased to be Swami Vivekananda lecturing to
39 critical and attentive hearers, when all details and personalities
40 were lost, names and forms disappeared, only the Spirit remaining,
41 uniting the speaker, hearer, and the spoken word.

BHAKTI

(Delivered at Sialkote, Punjab)

The subject of the Swamiji's Hindi lecture was Bhakti, a summary of which, translated into English, is given below:

The various religions that exist in the world, although they differ in the form of worship they take, are really one. In some places the people build temples and worship in them, in some they worship fire, in others they prostrate themselves before idols, while there are many who do not believe at all in God. All are true, for, if you look to the real spirit, the real religion, and the truths in each of them, they are all alike. In some religions God is not worshipped, nay, His existence is not believed in, but good and worthy men are worshipped as if they were Gods. The example worthy of citation in this case is Buddhism. Bhakti is everywhere, whether directed to God or to noble persons. Upasana in the form of Bhakti is everywhere supreme, and Bhakti is more easily attained than Jnana. The latter requires favourable circumstances and strenuous practice. Yoga cannot be properly practised unless a man is physically very healthy and free from all worldly attachments. But Bhakti can be more easily practised by persons in every condition of life. Shandilya Rishi, who wrote about Bhakti, says that extreme love for God is Bhakti. Prahlada speaks to the same effect. If a man does not get food one day, he is troubled; if his son dies, how agonising it is to him! The true Bhakta feels the same pangs in his heart when he yearns after God. The great quality of Bhakti is that it cleanses the mind, and the firmly established Bhakti for the Supreme Lord is alone sufficient to purify the mind. "O God, Thy names are innumerable, but in every name Thy power is manifest, and every name is pregnant with deep and mighty significance." We should think of God always and not consider time and place for doing so.

The different names under which God is worshipped are apparently different. One thinks that his method of worshipping God is the most efficacious, and another thinks that his is the more potent process of attaining salvation. But look at the true basis of all, and it is one. The Shaivas call Shiva the most powerful; the Vaishnavas hold to their all-powerful Vishnu; the worshippers of Devi will not yield to any in their idea that their Devi is the most omnipotent power in the universe. Leave inimical thoughts aside if you want to have permanent Bhakti. Hatred is a thing which greatly impedes the course of Bhakti, and the man who hates none reaches God. Even then the devotion for one's own ideal is necessary. Hanuman says, "Vishnu and Rama, I know, are one and the same, but after all, the lotus-eyed Rama is my best treasure." The peculiar tendencies with which a person is born must remain with him. That is the chief reason why the world cannot be of one religion--and God forbid that there should be one religion only--for the world would then be a chaos and not a cosmos. A man must follow the tendencies peculiar to himself; and if he gets a teacher to help him

1 to advance along his own lines, he will progress. We should let a
2 person go the way he intends to go, but if we try to force him into
3 another path, he will lose what he has already attained and will
4 become worthless. As the face of one person does not resemble that
5 of another, so the nature of one differs from that of another, and
6 why should he not be allowed to act accordingly? A river flows in a
7 certain direction; and if you direct the course into a regular
8 channel, the current becomes more rapid and the force is
9 increased, but try to divert it from its proper course, and you will
10 see the result; the volume as well as the force will be lessened. This
11 life is very important, and it, therefore, ought to be guided in the
12 way one's tendency prompts him. In India there was no enmity, and
13 every religion was left unmolested; so religion has lived. It ought to
14 be remembered that quarrels about religion arise from thinking
15 that one alone has the truth and whoever does not believe as one
16 does is a fool; while another thinks that the other is a hypocrite, for
17 if he were not one, he would follow him.

18 If God wished that people should follow one religion, why
19 have so many religions sprung up? Methods have been vainly tried
20 to force one religion upon everyone. Even when the sword was
21 lifted to make all people follow one religion, history tells us that ten
22 religions sprang up in its place. One religion cannot suit all. Man is
23 the product of two forces, action and reaction, which make him
24 think. If such forces did not exercise a man's mind, he would be
25 incapable of thinking. Man is a creature who thinks; Manushya
26 (man) is a being with Manas (mind); and as soon as his thinking
27 power goes, he becomes no better than an animal. Who would like
28 such a man? God forbid that any such state should come upon the
29 people of India. Variety in unity is necessary to keep man as man.
30 Variety ought to be preserved in everything; for as long as there is
31 variety the world will exist. Of course variety does not merely mean
32 that one is small and the other is great; but if all play their parts
33 equally well in their respective positions in life, the variety is still
34 preserved. In every religion there have been men good and able,
35 thus making the religion to which they belonged worthy of respect;
36 and as there are such people in every religion, there ought to be no
37 hatred for any sect whatsoever.

38 Then the question may be asked, should we respect that
39 religion which advocates vice? The answer will be certainly in the
40 negative, and such a religion ought to be expelled at once, because
41 it is productive of harm. All religion is to be based upon morality,
42 and personal purity is to be counted superior to Dharma. In this
43 connection it ought to be known that Achara means purity inside
44 and outside. External purity can be attained by cleansing the body
45 with water and other things which are recommended in the
46 Shastras. The internal man is to be purified by not speaking
47 falsehood, by not drinking, by not doing immoral acts, and by doing
48 good to others. If you do not commit any sin, if you do not tell lies, if
49 you do not drink, gamble, or commit theft, it is good. But that is
50 only your duty and you cannot be applauded for it. Some service to
51 others is also to be done. As you do good to yourself, so you must do
52 good to others.

1 Here I shall say something about food regulations. All the old
2 customs have faded away, and nothing but a vague notion of not
3 eating with this man and not eating with that man has been left
4 among our countrymen. Purity by touch is the only relic left of the
5 good rules laid down hundreds of years ago. Three kinds of food are
6 forbidden in the Shastras. First, the food that is by its very nature
7 defective, as garlic or onions. If a man eats too much of them it
8 creates passion, and he may be led to commit immoralities, hateful
9 both to God and man. Secondly, food contaminated by external
10 impurities. We ought to select some place quite neat and clean in
11 which to keep our food. Thirdly, we should avoid eating food
12 touched by a wicked man, because contact with such produces bad
13 ideas in us. Even if one be a son of a Brahmin, but is profligate and
14 immoral in his habits, we should not eat food from his hands.

15 But the spirit of these observances is gone. What is left is
16 this, that we cannot eat from the hands of any man who is not of the
17 highest caste, even though he be the most wise and holy person.
18 The disregard of those old rules is ever to be found in the
19 confectioner's shop. If you look there, you will find flies hovering all
20 over the confectionery, and the dust from the road blowing upon the
21 sweetmeats, and the confectioner himself in a dress that is not very
22 clean and neat. Purchasers should declare with one voice that they
23 will not buy sweets unless they are kept in glass-cases in the
24 Halwai's shop. That would have the salutary effect of preventing
25 flies from conveying cholera and other plague germs to the sweets.
26 We ought to improve, but instead of improving we have gone back.
27 Manu says that we should not spit in water, but we throw all sorts
28 of filth into the rivers. Considering all these things we find that the
29 purification of one's outer self is very necessary. The Shastrakaras
30 knew that very well. But now the real spirit of this observance of
31 purity about food is lost and the letter only remains. Thieves,
32 drunkards, and criminals can be our caste-fellows, but if a good and
33 noble man eats food with a person of a lower caste, who is quite as
34 respectable as himself, he will be outcasted and lost for ever. This
35 custom has been the bane of our country. It ought, therefore, to be
36 distinctly understood that sin is incurred by coming in contact with
37 sinners, and nobility in the company of good persons; and keeping
38 aloof from the wicked is the external purification.

39 The internal purification is a task much more severe. It
40 consists in speaking the truth, serving the poor, helping the needy,
41 etc. Do we always speak the truth? What happens is often this.
42 People go to the house of a rich person for some business of their
43 own and flatter him by calling him benefactor of the poor and so
44 forth, even though that man may cut the throat of a poor man
45 coming to his house. What is this? Nothing but falsehood. And it is
46 this that pollutes the mind. It is therefore, truly said that whatever
47 a man says who has purified his inner self for twelve years without
48 entertaining a single vicious idea during that period is sure to come
49 true. This is the power of truth, and one who has cleansed both the
50 inner and the outer self is alone capable of Bhakti. But the beauty is
51 that Bhakti itself cleanses the mind to a great extent. Although the
52 Jews, Mohammedans, and Christians do not set so much

1 importance upon the excessive external purification of the body as
2 the Hindus do, still they have it in some form or other; they find that
3 to a certain extent it is always required. Among the Jews, idol-
4 worship is condemned, but they had a temple in which was kept a
5 chest which they called an ark, in which the Tables of the Law were
6 preserved, and above the chest were two figures of angels with
7 wings outstretched, between which the Divine Presence was
8 supposed to manifest itself as a cloud. That temple has long since
9 been destroyed, but the new temples are made exactly after the old
10 fashion, and in the chest religious books are kept. The Roman
11 Catholics and the Greek Christians have idol-worship in certain
12 forms. The image of Jesus and that of his mother are worshipped.
13 Among Protestants there is no idol-worship, yet they worship God in
14 a personal form, which may be called idol-worship in another form.
15 Among Parsees and Iranians fire-worship is carried on to a great
16 extent. Among Mohammedans the prophets and great and noble
17 persons are worshipped, and they turn their faces towards the
18 Caaba when they pray. These things show that men at the first
19 stage of religious development have to make use of something
20 external, and when the inner self becomes purified they turn to
21 more abstract conceptions. "When the Jiva is sought to be united
22 with Brahman it is best, when meditation is practised it is mediocre,
23 repetition of names is the lowest form, and external worship is the
24 lowest of the low." But it should be distinctly understood that even
25 in practising the last there is no sin. Everybody ought to do what he
26 is able to do; and if he be dissuaded from that, he will do it in some
27 other way in order to attain his end. So we should not speak ill of a
28 man who worships idols. He is in that stage of growth, and,
29 therefore, must have them; wise men should try to help forward
30 such men and get them to do better. But there is no use in
31 quarrelling about these various sorts of worship.

32 Some persons worship God for the sake of obtaining wealth,
33 others because they want to have a son, and they think themselves
34 Bhagavatas (devotees). This is no Bhakti, and they are not true
35 Bhagavatas. When a Sadhu comes who professes that he can make
36 gold, they run to him, and they still consider themselves
37 Bhagavatas. It is not Bhakti if we worship God with the desire for a
38 son; it is not Bhakti if we worship with the desire to be rich; it is not
39 Bhakti even if we have a desire for heaven; it is not Bhakti if a man
40 worships with the desire of being saved from the tortures of hell.
41 Bhakti is not the outcome of fear or greediness. He is the true
42 Bhagavata who says, "O God, I do not want a beautiful wife, I do not
43 want knowledge or salvation. Let me be born and die hundreds of
44 times. What I want is that I should be ever engaged in Thy service."
45 It is at this stage--and when a man sees God in everything, and
46 everything in God--that he attains perfect Bhakti. It is then that he
47 sees Vishnu incarnated in everything from the microbe to Brahma,
48 and it is then that he sees God manifesting Himself in everything, it
49 is then that he feels that there is nothing without God, and it is then
50 and then alone that thinking himself to be the most insignificant of
51 all beings he worships God with the true spirit of a Bhakta. He then
52 leaves Tirthas and external forms of worship far behind him, he
53 sees every man to be the most perfect temple.

1 Bhakti is described in several ways in the Shastras. We say
2 that God is our Father. In the same way we call Him Mother, and so
3 on. These relationships are conceived in order to strengthen Bhakti
4 in us, and they make us feel nearer and dearer to God. Hence these
5 names are justifiable in one way, and that is that the words are
6 simply words of endearment, the outcome of the fond love which a
7 true Bhagavata feels for God. Take the story of Radha and Krishna
8 in Rasalila. The story simply exemplifies the true spirit of a Bhakta,
9 because no love in the world exceeds that existing between a man
10 and a woman. When there is such intense love, there is no fear, no
11 other attachment save that one which binds that pair in an
12 inseparable and all-absorbing bond. But with regard to parents,
13 love is accompanied with fear due to the reverence we have for
14 them. Why should we care whether God created anything or not,
15 what have we to do with the fact that He is our preserver? He is
16 only our Beloved, and we should adore Him devoid of all thoughts
17 of fear. A man loves God only when he has no other desire, when he
18 thinks of nothing else and when he is mad after Him. That love
19 which a man has for his beloved can illustrate the love we ought to
20 have for God. Krishna is the God and Radha loves Him; read those
21 books which describe that story, and then you can imagine the way
22 you should love God. But how many understand this? How can
23 people who are vicious to their very core and have no idea of what
24 morality is understand all this? When people drive all sorts of
25 worldly thoughts from their minds and live in a clear moral and
26 spiritual atmosphere, it is then that they understand the abstrusest
27 of thoughts even if they be uneducated. But how few are there of
28 that nature! There is not a single religion which cannot be
29 perverted by man. For example, he may think that the Atman is
30 quite separate from the body, and so, when committing sins with
31 the body his Atman is unaffected. If religions were truly followed,
32 there would not have been a single man, whether Hindu,
33 Mohammedan, or Christian, who would not have been all purity. But
34 men are guided by their own nature, whether good or bad; there is
35 no gainsaying that. But in the world, there are always some who get
36 intoxicated when they hear of God, and shed tears of joy when they
37 read of God. Such men are true Bhaktas.

38 At the initial stage of religious development a man thinks of
39 God as his Master and himself as His servant. He feels indebted to
40 Him for providing for his daily wants, and so forth. Put such
41 thoughts aside. There is but one attractive power, and that is God;
42 and it is in obedience to that attractive power that the sun and the
43 moon and everything else move. Everything in this world, whether
44 good or bad, belongs to God. Whatever occurs in our life, whether
45 good or bad, is bringing us to Him. One man kills another because
46 of some selfish purpose. But the motive behind is love, whether for
47 himself or for any one else. Whether we do good or evil, the
48 propeller is love. When a tiger kills a buffalo, it is because he or his
49 cubs are hungry.

50 God is love personified. He is apparent in everything.
51 Everybody is being drawn to Him whether he knows it or not. When
52 a woman loves her husband, she does not understand that it is the

1 divine in her husband that is the great attractive power. The God of
2 Love is the one thing to be worshipped. So long as we think of Him
3 only as the Creator and Preserver, we can offer Him external
4 worship, but when we get beyond all that and think Him to be Love
5 Incarnate, seeing Him in all things and all things in Him, it is then
6 that supreme Bhakti is attained.

THE COMMON BASES OF HINDUISM

On his arrival at Lahore the Swamiji was accorded a grand reception by the leaders, both of the Arya Samaj and of the Sanatana Dharma Sabha. During his brief stay in Lahore, Swamiji delivered three lectures. The first of these was on "The Common Bases of Hinduism", the second on "Bhakti", and the third one was the famous lecture on "The Vedanta". On the first occasion he spoke as follows:

This is the land which is held to be the holiest even in holy Aryavarta; this is the Brahmavarta of which our great Manu speaks. This is the land from whence arose that mighty aspiration after the Spirit, ay, which in times to come, as history shows, is to deluge the world. This is the land where, like its mighty rivers, spiritual aspirations have arisen and joined their strength, till they travelled over the length and breadth of the world and declared themselves with a voice of thunder. This is the land which had first to bear the brunt of all inroads and invasions into India; this heroic land had first to bare its bosom to every onslaught of the outer barbarians into Aryavarta. This is the land which, after all its sufferings, has not yet entirely lost its glory and its strength. Here it was that in later times the gentle Nanak preached his marvellous love for the world. Here it was that his broad heart was opened and his arms outstretched to embrace the whole world, not only of Hindus, but of Mohammedans too. Here it was that one of the last and one of the most glorious heroes of our race, Guru Govinda Singh, after shedding his blood and that of his dearest and nearest for the cause of religion, even when deserted by those for whom this blood was shed, retired into the South to die like a wounded lion struck to the heart, without a word against his country, without a single word of murmur.

Here, in this ancient land of ours, children of the land of five rivers, I stand before you, not as a teacher, for I know very little to teach, but as one who has come from the east to exchange words of greeting with the brothers of the west, to compare notes. Here am I, not to find out differences that exist among us, but to find where we agree. Here am I trying to understand on what ground we may always remain brothers, upon what foundations the voice that has spoken from eternity may become stronger and stronger as it grows. Here am I trying to propose to you something of constructive work and not destructive. For criticism the days are past, and we are waiting for constructive work. The world needs, at times, criticisms even fierce ones; but that is only for a time, and the work for eternity is progress and construction, and not criticism and destruction. For the last hundred years or so, there has been a flood of criticism all over this land of ours, where the full play of Western science has been let loose upon all the dark spots, and as a result the corners and the holes have become much more prominent than anything else. Naturally enough there arose mighty intellects all over the land, great and glorious, with the love of truth

1 and justice in their hearts, with the love of their country, and above
2 all, an intense love for their religion and their God; and because
3 these mighty souls felt so deeply, because they loved so deeply, they
4 criticised everything they thought was wrong. Glory unto these
5 mighty spirits of the past! They have done so much good; but the
6 voice of the present day is coming to us, telling, "Enough!" There
7 has been enough of criticism, there has been enough of fault-
8 finding, the time has come for the rebuilding, the reconstructing;
9 the time has come for us to gather all our scattered forces, to
10 concentrate them into one focus, and through that, to lead the
11 nation on its onward march, which for centuries almost has been
12 stopped. The house has been cleansed; let it be inhabited anew. The
13 road has been cleared. March ahead, children of the Aryans!

14 Gentlemen, this is the motive that brings me before you, and
15 at the start I may declare to you that I belong to no party and no
16 sect. They are all great and glorious to me, I love them all, and all
17 my life I have been attempting to find what is good and true in
18 them. Therefore, it is my proposal tonight to bring before you points
19 where we are agreed, to find out, if we can, a ground of agreement;
20 and if through the grace of the Lord such a state of things be
21 possible, let us take it up, and from theory carry it out into practice.
22 We are Hindus. I do not use the word Hindu in any bad sense at all,
23 nor do I agree with those that think there is any bad meaning in it.
24 In old times, it simply meant people who lived on the other side of
25 the Indus; today a good many among those who hate us may have
26 put a bad interpretation upon it, but names are nothing. Upon us
27 depends whether the name Hindu will stand for everything that is
28 glorious, everything that is spiritual, or whether it will remain a
29 name of opprobrium, one designating the downtrodden, the
30 worthless, the heathen. If at present the word Hindu means
31 anything bad, never mind; by our action let us be ready to show
32 that this is the highest word that any language can invent. It has
33 been one of the principles of my life not to be ashamed of my own
34 ancestors. I am one of the proudest men ever born, but let me tell
35 you frankly, it is not for myself, but on account of my ancestry. The
36 more I have studied the past, the more I have looked back, more
37 and more has this pride come to me, and it has give me the
38 strength and courage of conviction, raised me up from the dust of
39 the earth, and set me working out that great plan laid out by those
40 great ancestors of ours. Children of those ancient Aryans, through
41 the grace of the Lord may you have the same pride, may that faith
42 in your ancestors come into your blood, may it become a part and
43 parcel of your lives, may it work towards the salvation of the world!

44 Before trying to find out the precise point where we are all
45 agreed, the common ground of our national life, one thing we must
46 remember. Just as there is an individuality in every man, so there is
47 a national individuality. As one man differs from another in certain
48 particulars, in certain characteristics of his own, so one race differs
49 from another in certain peculiar characteristics; and just as it is the
50 mission of every man to fulfil a certain purpose in the economy of
51 nature, just as there is a particular line set out for him by his own
52 past Karma, so it is with nations--each nation has a destiny to fulfil,

1 each nation has a message to deliver, each nation has a mission to
2 accomplish. Therefore, from the very start, we must have to
3 understand the mission of our own race, the destiny it has to fulfil,
4 the place it has to occupy in the march of nations, and note which it
5 has to contribute to the harmony of races. In our country, when
6 children, we hear stories how some serpents have jewels in their
7 heads, and whatever one may do with the serpent, so long as the
8 jewel is there, the serpent cannot be killed. We hear stories of
9 giants and ogres who had souls living in certain little birds, and so
10 long as the bird was safe, there was no power on earth to kill these
11 giants; you might hack them to pieces, or do what you liked to
12 them, the giants could not die. So with nations, there is a certain
13 point where the life of a nation centres, where lies the nationality of
14 the nation, and until that is touched, the nation cannot die. In the
15 light of this we can understand the most marvellous phenomenon
16 that the history of the world has ever known. Wave after wave of
17 barbarian conquest has rolled over this devoted land of ours. "Allah
18 Ho Akbar!" has rent the skies for hundreds of years, and no Hindu
19 knew what moment would be his last. This is the most suffering and
20 the most subjugated of all the historic lands of the world. Yet we
21 still stand practically the same race, ready to face difficulties again
22 and again if necessary; and not only so, of late there have been
23 signs that we are not only strong, but ready to go out, for the sign
24 of life is expansion.

25 We find today that our ideas and thoughts are no more
26 cooped up within the bounds of India, but whether we will it or not,
27 they are marching outside, filtering into the literature of nations,
28 taking their place among nations, and in some, even getting a
29 commanding dictatorial position. Behind this we find the
30 explanation that the great contribution to the sum total of the
31 world's progress from India is the greatest, the noblest, the
32 sublimest theme that can occupy the mind of man--it is philosophy
33 and spirituality. Our ancestors tried many other things; they, like
34 other nations, first went to bring out the secrets of external nature
35 as we all know, and with their gigantic brains that marvellous race
36 could have done miracles in that line of which the world could have
37 been proud for ever. But they gave it up for something higher;
38 something better rings out from the pages of the Vedas: "That
39 science is the greatest which makes us know Him who never
40 changes!" The science of nature, changeful, evanescent, the world
41 of death, of woe, of misery, may be great, great indeed; but the
42 science of Him who changes not, the Blissful One, where alone is
43 peace, where alone is life eternal, where alone is perfection, where
44 alone all misery ceases--that, according to our ancestors, was the
45 sublimest science of all. After all, sciences that can give us only
46 bread and clothes and power over our fellowmen, sciences that can
47 teach us only how to conquer our fellow-beings, to rule over them,
48 which teach the strong to domineer over the weak--those they could
49 have discovered if they willed. But praise be unto the Lord, they
50 caught at once the other side, which was grander, infinitely higher,
51 infinitely more blissful, till it has become the national characteristic,
52 till it has come down to us, inherited from father to son for
53 thousands of years, till it has become a part and parcel of us, till it

1 tingles in every drop of blood that runs through our veins, till it has
2 become our second nature, till the name of religion and Hindu have
3 become one. This is the national characteristic, and this cannot be
4 touched. Barbarians with sword and fire, barbarians bringing
5 barbarous religions, not one of them could touch the core, not one
6 could touch the "jewel", not one had the power to kill the "bird"
7 which the soul of the race inhabited. This, therefore, is the vitality
8 of the race, and so long as that remains, there is no power under
9 the sun that can kill the race. All the tortures and miseries of the
10 world will pass over without hurting us, and we shall come out of
11 the flames like Prahlada, so long as we hold on to this grandest of
12 all our inheritances, spirituality. If a Hindu is not spiritual I do not
13 call him a Hindu. In other countries a man may be political first,
14 and then he may have a little religion, but here in India the first and
15 the foremost duty of our lives is to be spiritual first, and then, if
16 there is time, let other things come. Bearing this in mind we shall
17 be in a better position to understand why, for our national welfare,
18 we must first seek out at the present day all the spiritual forces of
19 the race, as was done in days of yore and will be done in all times to
20 come. National union in India must be a gathering up of its
21 scattered spiritual forces. A nation in India must be a union of those
22 whose hearts beat to the same spiritual tune.

23 There have been sects enough in this country. There are sects
24 enough, and there will be enough in the future, because this has
25 been the peculiarity of our religion that in abstract principles so
26 much latitude has been given that, although afterwards so much
27 detail has been worked out, all these details are the working out of
28 principles, broad as the skies above our heads, eternal as nature
29 herself. Sects, therefore, as a matter of course, must exist here, but
30 what need not exist is sectarian quarrel. Sects must be, but
31 sectarianism need not. The world would not be the better for
32 sectarianism, but the world cannot move on without having sects.
33 One set of men cannot do everything. The almost infinite mass of
34 energy in the world cannot be managed by a small number of
35 people. Here, at once we see the necessity that forced this division
36 of labour upon us--the division into sects. For the use of spiritual
37 forces let there be sects; but is there any need that we should
38 quarrel when our most ancient books declare that this
39 differentiation is only apparent, that in spite of all these differences
40 there is a thread of harmony, that beautiful unity, running through
41 them all? Our most ancient books have declared: {Sanskrit}--"That
42 which exists is One; sages call Him by various names." Therefore, if
43 there are these sectarian struggles, if there are these fights among
44 the different sects, if there is jealousy and hatred between the
45 different sects in India, the land where all sects have always been
46 honoured, it is a shame on us who dare to call ourselves the
47 descendants of those fathers.

48 There are certain great principles in which, I think, we--
49 whether Vaishnavas, Shaivas, Shaktas, or Ganapatyas, whether
50 belonging to the ancient Vedantists or the modern ones, whether
51 belonging to the old rigid sects or the modern reformed ones--are
52 all one, and whoever calls himself a Hindu, believes in these

1 principles. Of course there is a difference in the interpretation, in
2 the explanation of these principles, and that difference should be
3 there, and it should be allowed, for our standard is not to bind
4 every man down to our position. It would be a sin to force every
5 man to work out our own interpretation of things, and to live by our
6 own methods. Perhaps all who are here will agree on the first point
7 that we believe the Vedas to be the eternal teachings of the secrets
8 of religion. We all believe that this holy literature is without
9 beginning and without end, coeval with nature, which is without
10 beginning and without end; and that all our religious differences, all
11 our religious struggles must end when we stand in the presence of
12 that holy book; we are all agreed that this is the last court of appeal
13 in all our spiritual differences. We may take different points of view
14 as to what the Vedas are. There may be one sect which regards one
15 portion as more sacred than another, but that matters little so long
16 as we say that we are all brothers in the Vedas, that out of these
17 venerable, eternal, marvellous books has come everything that we
18 possess today, good, holy, and pure. Well, therefore, if we believe in
19 all this, let this principle first of all be preached broadcast
20 throughout the length and breadth of the land. If this be true, let
21 the Vedas have that prominence which they always deserve, and
22 which we all believe in. First, then, the Vedas. The second point we
23 all believe in is God, the creating, the preserving power of the
24 whole universe, and unto whom it periodically returns to come out
25 at other periods and manifest this wonderful phenomenon, called
26 the universe. We may differ as to our conception of God. One may
27 believe in a God who is entirely personal, another may believe in a
28 God who is personal and yet not human, and yet another may
29 believe in a God who is entirely impersonal, and all may get their
30 support from the Vedas. Still we are all believers in God; that is to
31 say, that man who does not believe in a most marvellous infinite
32 Power from which everything has come, in which everything lives,
33 and to which everything must in the end return, cannot be called a
34 Hindu. If that be so, let us try to preach that idea all over the land.
35 Preach whatever conception you have to give, there is no
36 difference, we are not going to fight over it, but preach God; that is
37 all we want. One idea may be better than another, but, mind you,
38 not one of them is bad. One is good, another is better, and again
39 another may be the best, but the word bad does not enter the
40 category of our religion. Therefore, may the Lord bless them all
41 who preach the name of God in whatever form they like! The more
42 He is preached, the better for this race. Let our children be brought
43 up in this idea, let this idea enter the homes of the poorest and the
44 lowest, as well as of the richest and the highest--the idea of the
45 name of God.

46 The third idea that I will present before you is that, unlike all
47 other races of the world, we do not believe that this world was
48 created only so many thousand years ago, and is going to be
49 destroyed eternally on a certain day. Nor do we believe that the
50 human soul has been created along with this universe just out of
51 nothing. Here is another point I think we are all able to agree upon.
52 We believe in nature being without beginning and without end; only
53 at psychological periods this gross material of the outer universe

1 goes back to its finer state, thus to remain for a certain period,
2 again to be projected outside to manifest all this infinite panorama
3 we call nature. This wavelike motion was going on even before time
4 began, through eternity, and will remain for an infinite period of
5 time.

6 Next, all Hindus believe that man is not only a gross material
7 body; not only that within this there is the finer body, the mind, but
8 there is something yet greater--for the body changes and so does
9 the mind--something beyond, the Atman--I cannot translate the
10 word to you for any translation will be wrong--that there is
11 something beyond even this fine body, which is the Atman of man,
12 which has neither beginning nor end, which knows not what death
13 is. And then this peculiar idea, different from that of all other races
14 of men, that this Atman inhabits body after body until there is no
15 more interest for it to continue to do so, and it becomes free, not to
16 be born again, I refer to the theory of Samsara and the theory of
17 eternal souls taught by our Shastras. This is another point where
18 we all agree, whatever sect we may belong to. There may be
19 differences as to the relation between the soul and God. According
20 to one sect the soul may be eternally different from God, according
21 to another it may be a spark of that infinite fire, yet again according
22 to others it may be one with that Infinite. It does not matter what
23 our interpretation is, so long as we hold on to the one basic belief
24 that the soul is infinite, that this soul was never created, and
25 therefore will never die, that it had to pass and evolve into various
26 bodies, till it attained perfection in the human one--in that we are
27 all agreed. And then comes the most differentiating, the grandest,
28 and the most wonderful discovery in the realms of spirituality that
29 has ever been made. Some of you, perhaps, who have been
30 studying Western thought, may have observed already that there is
31 another radical difference severing at one stroke all that is Western
32 from all that is Eastern. It is this that we hold, whether we are
33 Shaktas, Sauras, or Vaishnavas, even whether we are Bauddhas or
34 Jainas, we all hold in India that the soul is by its nature pure and
35 perfect, infinite in power and blessed. Only, according to the
36 dualist, this natural blissfulness of the soul has become contracted
37 by past bad work, and through the grace of God it is going to open
38 out and show its perfection; while according to the monist, even
39 this idea of contraction is a partial mistake, it is the veil of Maya
40 that causes us to think the soul has lost its powers, but the powers
41 are there fully manifest. Whatever the difference may be, we come
42 to the central core, and there is at once an irreconcilable difference
43 between all that is Western and Eastern. The Eastern is looking
44 inward for all that is great and good. When we worship, we close
45 our eyes and try to find God within. The Western is looking up
46 outside for his God. To the Western their religious books have been
47 inspired, while with us our books have been expired; breath-like
48 they came, the breath of God, out of the hearts of sages they
49 sprang, the Mantra-drashtas.

50 This is one great point to understand, and, my friends, my
51 brethren, let me tell you, this is the one point we shall have to insist
52 upon in the future. For I am firmly convinced, and I beg you to

1 understand this one fact--no good comes out of the man who day
2 and night thinks he is nobody. If a man, day and night, thinks he is
3 miserable, low, and nothing, nothing he becomes. If you say, yea,
4 yea, "I am, I am", so shall you be; and if you say "I am not", think
5 that you are not, and day and night meditate upon the fact that you
6 are nothing, ay, nothing shall you be. That is the great fact which
7 you ought to remember. We are the children of the Almighty, we are
8 sparks of the infinite, divine fire. How can we be nothings? We are
9 everything, ready to do everything, we can do everything, and man
10 must do everything. This faith in themselves was in the hearts of
11 our ancestors, this faith in themselves was the motive power that
12 pushed them forward and forward in the march of civilisation; and
13 if there has been degeneration, if there has been defect, mark my
14 words, you will find that degradation to have started on the day our
15 people lost this faith in themselves. Losing faith in one's self means
16 losing faith in God. Do you believe in that infinite, good Providence
17 working in and through you? If you believe that this Omnipresent
18 One, the Antaryamin, is present in every atom, is through and
19 through, Ota-prota, as the Sanskrit word goes, penetrating your
20 body, mind and soul, how can you lose heart? I may be a little
21 bubble of water, and you may be a mountain-high wave. Never
22 mind! The infinite ocean is the background of me as well as of you.
23 Mine also is that infinite ocean of life, of power, of spirituality, as
24 well as yours. I am already joined--from my very birth, from the
25 very fact of my life--I am in Yoga with that infinite life and infinite
26 goodness and infinite power, as you are, mountain-high though you
27 may be. Therefore, my brethren, teach this life-saving, great,
28 ennobling, grand doctrine to your children, even from their very
29 birth. You need not teach them Advaitism; teach them Dvaitism, or
30 any "ism" you please, but we have seen that this is the common
31 "ism" all through India; this marvellous doctrine of the soul, the
32 perfection of the soul, is commonly believed in by all sects. As says
33 our great philosopher Kapila, if purity has not been the nature of
34 the soul, it can never attain purity afterwards, for anything that was
35 not perfect by nature, even if it attained to perfection, that
36 perfection would go away again. If impurity is the nature of man,
37 then man will have to remain impure, even though he may be pure
38 for five minutes. The time will come when this purity will wash out,
39 pass away, and the old natural impurity will have its sway once
40 more. Therefore, say all our philosophers, good is our nature,
41 perfection is our nature, not imperfection, not impurity--and we
42 should remember that. Remember the beautiful example of the
43 great sage who, when he was dying, asked his mind to remember
44 all his mighty deeds and all his mighty thoughts. There you do not
45 find that he was teaching his mind to remember all his weaknesses
46 and all his follies. Follies there are, weakness there must be, but
47 remember your real nature always--that is the only way to cure the
48 weakness, that is the only way to cure the follies.

49 It seems that these few points are common among all the
50 various religious sects in India, and perhaps in future upon this
51 common platform, conservative and liberal religionists, old type and
52 new type, may shake hands. Above all, there is another thing to
53 remember, which I am sorry we forget from time to time, that

1 religion, in India, means realisation and nothing short of that.
2 "Believe in the doctrine, and you are safe", can never be taught to
3 us, for we do not believe in that. You are what you make yourselves.
4 You are, by the grace of God and your own exertions, what you are.
5 Mere believing in certain theories and doctrines will not help you
6 much. The mighty word that came out from the sky of spirituality in
7 India was Anubhuti, realisation, and ours are the only books which
8 declare again and again: "The Lord is to be *seen*". Bold, brave
9 words indeed, but true to their very core; every sound, every
10 vibration is true. Religion is to be realised, not only heard; it is not
11 in learning some doctrine like a parrot. Neither is it mere
12 intellectual assent--that is nothing; but it must come into us. Ay, and
13 therefore the greatest proof that we have of the existence of a God
14 is not because our reason says so, but because God has been seen
15 by the ancients as well as by the moderns. We believe in the soul
16 not only because there are good reasons to prove its existence, but,
17 above all, because there have been in the past thousands in India,
18 there are still many who have realised, and there will be thousands
19 in the future who will realise and see their own souls. And there is
20 no salvation for man until he sees God, realises his own soul.
21 Therefore, above all, let us understand this, and the more we
22 understand it the less we shall have of sectarianism in India, for it
23 is only that man who has realised God and seen Him, who is
24 religious. In him the knots have been cut asunder, in him alone the
25 doubts have subsided; he alone has become free from the fruits of
26 action who has seen Him who is nearest of the near and farthest of
27 the far. Ay, we often mistake mere prattle for religious truth, mere
28 intellectual perorations for great spiritual realisation, and then
29 comes sectarianism, then comes fight. If we once understand that
30 this realisation is the only religion, we shall look into our own
31 hearts and find how far we are towards realising the truths of
32 religion. Then we shall understand that we ourselves are groping in
33 darkness, and are leading others to grope in the same darkness,
34 then we shall cease from sectarianism, quarrel, and fight. Ask a
35 man who wants to start a sectarian fight, "Have you seen God?
36 Have you seen the Atman? If you have not, what right have you to
37 preach His name--you walking in darkness trying to lead me into
38 the same darkness--the blind leading the blind, and both falling into
39 the ditch?"

40 Therefore, take more thought before you go and find fault
41 with others. Let them follow their own path to realisation so long as
42 they struggle to see truth in their own hearts; and when the broad,
43 naked truth will be seen, then they will find that wonderful
44 blissfulness which marvellously enough has been testified to by
45 every seer in India, by every one who has realised the truth. Then
46 words of love alone will come out of that heart, for it has already
47 been touched by Him who is the essence of Love Himself. Then and
48 then alone, all sectarian quarrels will cease, and we shall be in a
49 position to understand, to bring to our hearts, to embrace, to
50 intensely love the very word Hindu and every one who bears that
51 name. Mark me, then and then alone you are a Hindu when the
52 very name sends through you a galvanic shock of strength. Then
53 and then alone you are a Hindu when every man who bears the

1 name, from any country, speaking our language or any other
2 language, becomes at once the nearest and the dearest to you.
3 Then and then alone you are a Hindu when the distress of anyone
4 bearing that name comes to your heart and makes you feel as if
5 your own son were in distress. Then and then alone you are a Hindu
6 when you will be ready to bear everything for them, like the great
7 example I have quoted at the beginning of this lecture, of your
8 great Guru Govind Singh. Driven out from this country, fighting
9 against its oppressors, after having shed his own blood for the
10 defence of the Hindu religion, after having seen his children killed
11 on the battlefield--ay, this example of the great Guru, left even by
12 those for whose sake he was shedding his blood and the blood of
13 his own nearest and dearest--he, the wounded lion, retired from the
14 field calmly to die in the South, but not a word of curse escaped his
15 lips against those who had ungratefully forsaken him! Mark me,
16 every one of you will have to be a Govind Singh, if you want to do
17 good to your country. You may see thousands of defects in your
18 countrymen, but mark their Hindu blood. They are the first Gods
19 you will have to worship even if they do everything to hurt you,
20 even if everyone of them send out a curse to you, you send out to
21 them words of love. If they drive you out, retire to die in silence like
22 that mighty lion, Govind Singh. Such a man is worthy of the name of
23 Hindu; such an ideal ought to be before us always. All our hatchets
24 let us bury; send out this grand current of love all round.

25 Let them talk of India's regeneration as they like. Let me tell
26 you as one who has been working--at least trying to work--all his
27 life, that there is no regeneration for India until you be spiritual.
28 Not only so, but upon it depends the welfare of the whole world.
29 For I must tell you frankly that the very foundations of Western
30 civilisation have been shaken to their base. The mightiest buildings,
31 if built upon the loose sand foundations of materialism, must come
32 to grief one day, must totter to their destruction some day. The
33 history of the world is our witness. Nation after nation has arisen
34 and based its greatness upon materialism, declaring man was all
35 matter. Ay, in Western language, a man gives up the ghost, but in
36 our language a man gives up his body. The Western man is a body
37 first, and then he has a soul; with us a man is a soul and spirit, and
38 he has a body. Therein lies a world of difference. All such
39 civilisations, therefore, as have been based upon such sand
40 foundations as material comfort and all that, have disappeared one
41 after another, after short lives, from the face of the world; but the
42 civilisation of India and the other nations that have stood at India's
43 feet to listen and learn, namely Japan and China, live even to the
44 present day, and there are signs even of revival among them. Their
45 lives are like that of the Phoenix, a thousand times destroyed, but
46 ready to spring up again more glorious. But a materialistic
47 civilisation once dashed down, never can come up again; that
48 building once thrown down is broken into pieces once for all.
49 Therefore have patience and wait, the future is in store for us.

50 Do not be in a hurry, do not go out to imitate anybody else.
51 This is another great lesson we have to remember; imitation is not
52 civilisation. I may deck myself out in a Raja's dress, but will that

1 make me a Raja? An ass in a lion's skin never makes a lion.
2 Imitation, cowardly imitation, never makes for progress. It is verily
3 the sign of awful degradation in a man. Ay, when a man has begun
4 to hate himself, then the last blow has come. When a man has
5 begun to be ashamed of his ancestors, the end has come. Here am
6 I, one of the least of the Hindu race, yet proud of my race, proud of
7 my ancestors. I am proud to call myself a Hindu, I am proud that I
8 am one of your unworthy servants. I am proud that I am a
9 countryman of yours, you the descendants of the sages, you the
10 descendants of the most glorious Rishis the world ever saw.
11 Therefore have faith in yourselves, be proud of your ancestors,
12 instead of being ashamed of them. And do not imitate, do not
13 imitate! Whenever you are under the thumb of others, you lose your
14 own independence. If you are working, even in spiritual things, at
15 the dictation of others, slowly you lose all faculty, even of thought.
16 Bring out through your own exertions what you have, but do not
17 imitate, yet take what is good from others. We have to learn from
18 others. You put the seed in the ground, and give it plenty of earth,
19 and air, and water to feed upon; when the seed grows into the plant
20 and into a gigantic tree, does it become the earth, does it become
21 the air, or does it become the water? It becomes the mighty plant,
22 the mighty tree, after its own nature, having absorbed everything
23 that was given to it. Let that be your position. We have indeed many
24 things to learn from others, yea, that man who refuses to learn is
25 already dead. Declares our Manu: {Sanskrit}--"Take the jewel of a
26 woman for your wife, though she be of inferior descent. Learn
27 supreme knowledge with service even from the man of low birth;
28 and even from the Chandala, learn by serving him the way to
29 salvation." Learn everything that is good from others, but bring it
30 in, and in your own way absorb it; do not become others. Do not be
31 dragged away out of this Indian life; do not for a moment think that
32 it would be better for India if all the Indians dressed, ate, and
33 behaved like another race. You know the difficulty of giving up a
34 habit of a few years. The Lord knows how many thousands of years
35 are in your blood; this national specialised life has been flowing in
36 one way, the Lord knows for how many thousands of years; and do
37 you mean to say that that mighty stream, which has nearly reached
38 its ocean, can go back to the snows of its Himalayas again? That is
39 impossible! The struggle to do so would only break it. Therefore,
40 make way for the life-current of the nation. Take away the blocks
41 that bar the way to the progress of this mighty river, cleanse its
42 path, clear the channel, and out it will rush by its own natural
43 impulse, and the nation will go on careering and progressing.

44 These are the lines which I beg to suggest to you for spiritual
45 work in India. There are many other great problems which, for
46 want of time, I cannot bring before you this night. For instance,
47 there is the wonderful question of caste. I have been studying this
48 question, its pros and cons, all my life; I have studied it in nearly
49 every province in India. I have mixed with people of all castes in
50 nearly every part of the country, and I am too bewildered in my own
51 mind to grasp even the very significance of it. The more I try to
52 study it, the more I get bewildered. Still at last I find that a little
53 glimmer of light is before me, I begin to feel its significance just

1 now. Then there is the other great problem about eating and
2 drinking. That is a great problem indeed. It is not so useless a thing
3 as we generally think. I have come to the conclusion that the
4 insistence which we make now about eating and drinking is most
5 curious and is just going against what the Shastras required, that is
6 to say, we come to grief by neglecting the proper purity of the food
7 we eat and drink; we have lost the true spirit of it.

8 There are several other questions which I want to bring
9 before you and show how these problems can be solved, how to
10 work out the ideas; but unfortunately the meeting could not come to
11 order until very late, and I do not wish to detain you any longer
12 now. I will, therefore, keep my ideas about caste and other things
13 for a future occasion.

1 Now, one word more and I will finish about these spiritual
2 ideas. Religion for a long time has come to be static in India. What
3 we want is to make it dynamic. I want it to be brought into the life
4 of everybody. Religion, as it always has been in the past, must enter
5 the palaces of kings as well as the homes of the poorest peasants in
6 the land. Religion, the common inheritance, the universal birthright
7 of the race, must be brought free to the door of everybody. Religion
8 in India must be made as free and as easy of access as is God's air.
9 And this is the kind of work we have to bring about in India, but not
10 by getting up little sects and fighting on points of difference. Let us
11 preach where we all agree and leave the differences to remedy
12 themselves. As I have said to the Indian people again and again, if
13 there is the darkness of centuries in a room and we go into the
14 room and begin to cry, "Oh, it is dark, it is dark!", will the darkness
15 go? Bring in the light and the darkness will vanish at once. This is
16 the secret of reforming men. Suggest to them higher things; believe
17 in man first. Why start with the belief that man is degraded and
18 degenerated? I have never failed in my faith in man in any case,
19 even taking him at his worst. Wherever I had faith in man, though
20 at first the prospect was not always bright, yet it triumphed in the
21 long run. Have faith in man, whether he appears to you to be a very
22 learned one or a most ignorant one. Have faith in man, whether he
23 appears to be an angel or the very devil himself. Have faith in man
24 first, and then having faith in him, believe that if there are defects
25 in him, if he makes mistakes, if he embraces the crudest and the
26 vilest doctrines, believe that it is not from his real nature that they
27 come, but from the want of higher ideals. If a man goes towards
28 what is false, it is because he cannot get what is true. Therefore the
29 only method of correcting what is false is by supplying him with
30 what is true. Do this, and let him compare. You give him the truth,
31 and there your work is done. Let him compare it in his own mind
32 with what he has already in him; and, mark my words, if you have
33 really given him the truth, the false must vanish, light must dispel
34 darkness, and truth will bring the good out. This is the way if you
35 want to reform the country spiritually; this is the way, and not
36 fighting, not even telling people that what they are doing is bad. Put
37 the good before them, see how eagerly they take it, see how the
38 divine that never dies, that is always living in the human, comes up
39 awakened and stretches out its hand for all that is good, and all that
40 is glorious.

41 May He who is the Creator, the Preserver, and the Protector
42 of our race, the God of our forefathers, whether called by the name
43 of Vishnu, or Shiva, or Shakti, or Ganapati, whether He is
44 worshipped as Saguna or Nirguna, whether He is worshipped as
45 personal or as impersonal may He whom our forefathers knew and
46 addressed by the words, {Sanskrit}--"That which exists is One;
47 sages call Him by various names"--may He enter into us with His
48 mighty love, may He shower His blessings on us, may He make us
49 understand each other, may He make us work for each other with
50 real love, with intense love for truth, and may not the least desire
51 for our own personal fame, our own personal prestige, our own
52 personal advantage, enter into this great work of the spiritual
53 regeneration of India!

BHAKTI

(Delivered at Lahore on the 9th November, 1897)

There is a sound which comes to us like a distant echo in the midst of the roaring torrents of the Upanishads, at times rising in proportion and volume, and yet, throughout the literature of the Vedanta, its voice, though clear, is not very strong. The main duty of the Upanishads seems to be to present before us the spirit and the aspect of the sublime, and yet behind this wonderful sublimity there come to us here and there glimpses of poetry as we read; {Sanskrit}--"There the sun shines not, nor the moon, nor the stars, what to speak of this fire?" As we listen to the heart-stirring poetry of these marvellous lines, we are taken, as it were, off from the world of the senses, off even from the world of intellect, and brought to that world which can never be comprehended, and yet which is always with us. There is behind even this sublimity another ideal following as its shadow, one more acceptable to mankind, one more of daily use, one that has to enter into every part of human life, which assumes proportion and volume later on, and is stated in full and determined language in the Puranas, and that is the ideal of Bhakti. The germs of Bhakti are there already; the germs are even in the Samhita; the germs a little more developed are in the Upanishads; but they are worked out in their details in the Puranas.

To understand Bhakti, therefore, we have got to understand these Puranas of ours. There have been great discussions of late as to their authenticity. Many a passage of uncertain meaning has been taken up and criticised. In many places it has been pointed out that the passages cannot stand the light of modern science and so forth. But, apart from all these discussions, apart from the scientific validity of the statements of the Puranas, apart from their valid or invalid geography, apart from their valid or invalid astronomy, and so forth, what we find for a certainty, traced out bit by bit almost in every one of these volumes, is this doctrine of Bhakti, illustrated, reillustrated, stated and restated, in the lives of saints and in the lives of kings. It seems to have been the duty of the Puranas to stand as illustrations for that great ideal of the beautiful, the ideal of Bhakti, and this, as I have stated, is so much nearer to the ordinary man. Very few indeed are there who can understand and appreciate, far less live and move, in the grandeur of the full blaze of the light of Vedanta, because the first step for the pure Vedantist is to be Abhihi, fearless. Weakness has got to go before a man dares to become a Vedantist, and we know how difficult that is. Even those who have given up all connection with the world, and have very few bondages to make them cowards, feel in the heart of their hearts how weak they are at moments, at times how soft they become, how cowed down; much more so is it with men who have so many bondages, and have to remain as slaves to so many hundred and thousand things, inside of themselves and outside of themselves, men every moment of whose life is dragging-down slavery. To them the Puranas come with the most beautiful message of Bhakti.

1 For them the softness and the poetry are spread out, for them
2 are told these wonderful and marvellous stories of a Dhruva and a
3 Prahlada, and of a thousand saints, and these illustrations are to
4 make it practical. Whether you believe in the scientific accuracy of
5 the Puranas or not, there is not one among you whose life has not
6 been influenced by the story of Prahlada, or that of Dhruva, or of
7 any one of these great Pauranika saints. We have not only to
8 acknowledge the power of the Puranas in our own day, but we
9 ought to be grateful to them as they gave us in the past a more
10 comprehensive and a better popular religion than what the
11 degraded later-day Buddhism was leading us to. This easy and
12 smooth idea of Bhakti has been written and worked upon, and we
13 have to embrace it in our everyday practical life, for we shall see as
14 we go on how the idea has been worked out until Bhakti becomes
15 the essence of love. So long as there shall be such a thing as
16 personal and material love, one cannot go behind the teachings of
17 the Puranas. So long as there shall be the human weakness of
18 leaning upon somebody for support, these Puranas, in some form or
19 other, must always exist. You can change their names; you can
20 condemn those that are already existing, but immediately you will
21 be compelled to write another Purana. If there arises amongst us a
22 sage who will not want these old Puranas, we shall find that his
23 disciples, within twenty years of his death, will make of his life
24 another Purana. That will be all the difference.

25 This is a necessity of the nature of man; for them only are
26 there no Puranas who have gone beyond all human weakness and
27 have become what is really wanted of a Paramahansa, brave and
28 bold souls, who have gone beyond the bondages of Maya, the
29 necessities even of nature--the triumphant, the conquerors, the
30 gods of the world. The ordinary man cannot do without a personal
31 God to worship; if he does not worship a God in nature, he has to
32 worship either a God in the shape of a wife, or a child, or a father,
33 or a friend, or a teacher, or somebody else; and the necessity is still
34 more upon women than men. The vibration of light may be
35 everywhere; it may be in dark places, since cats and another
36 animals perceive it, but for us the vibration must be in our plane to
37 become visible. We may talk, therefore, of an Impersonal Being and
38 so forth, but so long as we are ordinary mortals, God can be seen in
39 man alone. Our conception of God and our worship of God are
40 naturally, therefore, human. "This body, indeed, is the greatest
41 temple of God." So we find that men have been worshipped
42 throughout the ages, and although we may condemn or criticise
43 some of the extravagances which naturally follow, we find at once
44 that the heart is sound, that in spite of these extravagances, in spite
45 of this going into extremes, there is an essence, there is a true, firm
46 core, a backbone, to the doctrine that is preached. I am not asking
47 you to swallow without consideration any old stories, or any
48 unscientific jargon. I am not calling upon you to believe in all sorts
49 of Vamachari explanations that, unfortunately, have crept into some
50 of the Puranas, but what I mean is this, that there is an essence
51 which ought not to be lost, a reason for the existence of the
52 Puranas, and that is the teaching of Bhakti to make religion
53 practical, to bring religion from its high philosophical flights into

1 the everyday lives of our common human beings.

1 [The lecturer defended the use of material helps in Bhakti.
2 Would to God man did not stand where he is, but it is useless to
3 fight against existing facts; man is a material being now, however
4 he may talk about spirituality and all that. Therefore the material
5 man has to be taken in hand and slowly raised, until he becomes
6 spiritual. In these days it is hard for 99 per cent of us to understand
7 spirituality, much more so to talk about it. The motive powers that
8 are pushing us forward, and the efforts we are seeking to attain,
9 are all material. We can only work, in the language of Herbert
10 Spencer, in the line of least resistance, and the Puranas have the
11 good and common sense to work in the line of least resistance; and
12 the successes that have been attained by the Puranas have been
13 marvellous and unique. The ideal of Bhakti is of course spiritual,
14 but the way lies through matter and we cannot help it. Everything
15 that is conducive to the attainment of this spirituality in the
16 material world, therefore, is to be taken hold of and brought to the
17 use of man to evolve the spiritual being. Having pointed out that the
18 Shastras start by giving the right to study the Vedas to everybody,
19 without distinction of sex, caste, or creed, he claimed that if making
20 a material temple helps a man more to love God, welcome; if
21 making an image of God helps a man in attaining to this ideal of
22 love, Lord bless him and give him twenty such images if he pleases.
23 If anything helps him to attain to that ideal of spirituality, welcome,
24 so long as it is moral, because anything immoral will not help, but
25 will only retard. He traced the opposition to the use of images in
26 worship in India partly at least to Kabir, but on the other hand
27 showed that India has had great philosophers and founders of
28 religions who did not even believe in the existence of a Personal
29 God and boldly preached that to the people, but yet did not
30 condemn the use of images. At best they only said it was not a very
31 high form of worship, and there was not one of the Puranas in
32 which it was said that it was a very high form. Having referred
33 historically to the use of image-worship by the Jews, in their belief
34 that Jehovah resided in a chest, he condemned the practice of
35 abusing idol-worship merely because others said it was bad.
36 Though an image or any other material form could be used if it
37 helped to make a man spiritual, yet there was no one book in our
38 religion which did not very clearly state that it was the lowest form
39 of worship, because it was worship through matter. The attempt
40 that was made all over India to force this image-worship on
41 everybody, he had no language to condemn; what business had
42 anybody to direct and dictate to anyone what he should worship
43 and through what? How could any other man know through what he
44 would grow, whether his spiritual growth would be by worshipping
45 an image, by worshipping fire, or by worshipping even a pillar? That
46 was to be guided and directed by our own Gurus, and by the
47 relation between the Guru and the Shishya. That explained the rule
48 which Bhakti books laid down for what was called the Ishta, that
49 was to say, that each man had to take up his own peculiar form of
50 worship, his own way of going towards God, and that chosen ideal
51 was his Ishta Devata. He was to regard other forms of worship with
52 sympathy, but at the same time to practise his own form till he
53 reached the goal and came to the centre where no more material

1 helps were necessary for him. In this connection a word of warning
2 was necessary against a system prevalent in some parts of India,
3 what was called the Kula-Guru system, a sort of hereditary
4 Guruism. We read in the books that "He who knows the essence of
5 the Vedas, is sinless, and does not teach another for love of gold or
6 love of anything else, whose mercy is without any cause, who gives
7 as the spring which does not ask anything from the plants and
8 trees, for it is its nature to do good, and brings them out once more
9 into life, and buds, flowers, and leaves come out, who wants
10 nothing, but whose whole life is only to do good"--such a man could
11 be a Guru and none else. There was another danger, for a Guru was
12 not a teacher alone; that was a very small part of it. The Guru, as
13 the Hindus believed, transmitted spirituality to his disciples. To take
14 a common material example, therefore, if a man were not
15 inoculated with a good virus, he ran the risk of being inoculated
16 with what was bad and vile, so that by being taught by a bad Guru
17 there was the risk of learning something evil. Therefore it was
18 absolutely necessary that this idea of Kula-Guru should vanish from
19 India. Guruism must not be a trade; that must stop, it was against
20 the Shastras. No man ought to call himself a Guru and at the same
21 time help the present state of things under the Kula-Guru system.

22 Speaking of the question of food, the Swami pointed out that
23 the present-day insistence upon the strict regulations as to eating
24 was to a great extent superficial, and missed the mark they were
25 originally intended to cover. He particularly instanced the idea that
26 care should be exercised as to who was allowed to touch food, and
27 pointed out that there was a deep psychological significance in this,
28 but that in the everyday life of ordinary men it was a care difficult
29 or impossible to exercise. Here again the mistake was made of
30 insisting upon a general observance of an idea which was only
31 possible to one class, those who have entirely devoted their lives to
32 spirituality, whereas the vast majority of men were still unsatiated
33 with material pleasures, and until they were satiated to some extent
34 it was useless to think of forcing spirituality on them.

1 The highest form of worship that had been laid down by the
2 Bhakta was the worship of man. Really, if there were to be any sort
3 of worship, he would suggest getting a poor man, or six, or twelve,
4 as their circumstances would permit, every day to their homes, and
5 serving them, thinking that they were Narayanas. He had seen
6 charity in many countries and the reason it did not succeed was
7 that it was not done with a good spirit. "Here, take this, and go
8 away"--that was not charity, but the expression of the pride of the
9 heart, to gain the applause of the world, that the world might know
10 they were becoming charitable. Hindus must know that, according
11 to the Smritis, the giver was lower than the receiver, for the
12 receiver was for the time being God Himself. Therefore he would
13 suggest such a form of worship as getting some of these poor
14 Narayanas, or blind Narayanas, and hungry Narayanas into every
15 house every day, and giving them the worship they would give to an
16 image, feeding them and clothing them, and the next day doing the
17 same to others. He did not condemn any form of worship, but what
18 he went to say was that the highest form and the most necessary at
19 present in India was this form of Narayana worship.

20 In conclusion, he likened Bhakti to a triangle. The first angle
21 was that love knew no want, the second that love knew no fear.
22 Love for reward or service of any kind was the beggar's religion,
23 the shopkeeper's religion, with very little of real religion in it. Let
24 them not become beggars, because, in the first place, beggary was
25 the sign of atheism. "Foolish indeed is the man who living on the
26 banks of the Ganga digs a little well to drink water." So is the man
27 who begs of God material objects. The Bhakta should be ready to
28 stand up and say, "I do not want anything from you, Lord, but if you
29 need anything from me I am ready to give." Love knew no fear. Had
30 they not seen a weak, frail, little woman passing through a street,
31 and if a dog barked, she flew off into the next house? The next day
32 she was in the street, perhaps, with her child at her breast. And a
33 lion attacked her. Where was she then? In the mouth of the lion to
34 save her child. Lastly, love was unto love itself. The Bhakta at last
35 comes to this, that love itself is God and nothing else. Where should
36 man go to prove the existence of God? Love was the most visible of
37 all visible things. It was the force that was moving the sun, the
38 moon, and the stars, manifesting itself in men, women, and in
39 animals, everywhere and in everything. It was expressed in
40 material forces as gravitation and so on. It was everywhere, in
41 every atom, manifesting everywhere. It was that infinite love, the
42 only motive power of this universe, visible everywhere, and this was
43 God Himself.⁴

⁴ ?From the report published in *The Tribune*.

THE VEDANTA

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Two worlds there are in which we live, one the external, the other internal. Human progress has been made, from days of yore, almost in parallel lines along both these worlds. The search began in the external, and man at first wanted to get answers for all the deep problems from outside nature. Man wanted to satisfy his thirst for the beautiful and the sublime from all that surrounded him; he wanted to express himself and all that was within him in the language of the concrete; and grand indeed were the answers he got, most marvellous ideas of God and worship, and most rapturous expressions of the beautiful. Sublime ideas came from the external world indeed. But the other, opening out for humanity later, laid out before him a universe yet sublimer, yet more beautiful, and infinitely more expansive. In the Karma Kanda portion of the Vedas, we find the most wonderful ideas of religion inculcated, we find the most wonderful ideas about an overruling Creator, Preserver, and Destroyer of the universe presented before us in language sometimes the most soul-stirring. Most of you perhaps remember the most wonderful Shloka in the Rig-Veda Samhita where you get the description of chaos, perhaps the sublimest that has ever been attempted yet. In spite of all this, we find it is only a painting of the sublime outside, we find that yet it is gross, that something of matter yet clings to it. Yet we find that it is only the expression of the Infinite in the language of matter, in the language of the finite, it is the infinite of the muscles and not of the mind; it is the infinite of space and not of thought. Therefore in the second portion of Jnana Kanda, we find there is altogether a different procedure. The first was a search in external nature for the truths of the universe; it was an attempt to get the solution of the deep problems of life from the material world. {Sanskrit}--"Whose glory these Himalayas declare". This is a grand idea, but yet it was not grand enough for India. The Indian mind had to fall back, and the research took a different direction altogether; from the external the search came to the internal, from matter to mind. There arose the cry, "When a man dies, what becomes of him?" {Sanskrit}--"Some say that he exists, others that he is gone; say, O king of Death, what is the truth?" An entirely different procedure we find here. The Indian mind got all that could be had from the external world, but it did not feel satisfied with that; it wanted to search further, to dive into its own soul, and the final answer came.

The Upanishads, or the Vedanta, or the Aranyakas, or Rahasya is the name of this portion of the Vedas. Here we find at once that religion has got rid of all external formalities. Here we find at once that spiritual things are told not in the language of matter, but in the language of the spirit; the superfine in the language of the superfine. No more any grossness attaches to it, no more is there any compromise with things of worldly concern. Bold, brave, beyond the conception of the present day, stand the giant

1 minds of the sages of the Upanishads, declaring the noblest truths
2 that have ever been preached to humanity, without any
3 compromise, without any fear. This, my countrymen, I want to lay
4 before you. Even the Jnana Kanda of the Vedas is a vast ocean;
5 many lives are necessary to understand even a little of it. Truly has
6 it been said of the Upanishads by Ramanuja that they form the
7 head, the shoulders, the crest of the Vedas, and surely enough the
8 Upanishads have become the Bible of modern India. The Hindus
9 have the greatest respect for the Karma Kanda of the Vedas, but,
10 for all practical purposes, we know that for ages by Shruti has been
11 meant the Upanishads, and the Upanishads alone. We know that all
12 our great philosophers, whether Vyasa, Patanjali, or Gautama, and
13 even the father of all philosophy, the great Kapila himself, whenever
14 they wanted an authority for what they wrote, every one of them
15 found it in the Upanishads, and nowhere else, for therein are the
16 truths that remain for ever.

17 There are truths that are true only in a certain line, in a
18 certain direction, under certain circumstances, and for certain
19 times--those that are founded on the institutions of the times. There
20 are other truths which are based on the nature of man himself, and
21 which must endure so long as man himself endures. These are the
22 truths that alone can be universal, and in spite of all the changes
23 that have come to India, as to our social surroundings, our methods
24 of dress, our manner of eating, our modes of worship--these
25 universal truths of the Shrutis, the marvellous Vedantic ideas, stand
26 out in their own sublimity, immovable, unvanquishable, deathless,
27 and immortal. Yet the germs of all the ideas that were developed in
28 the Upanishads had been taught already in the Karma Kanda. The
29 idea of the cosmos which all sects of Vedantists had to take for
30 granted, the psychology which has formed the common basis of all
31 the Indian schools of thought, had there been worked out already
32 and presented before the world. A few words, therefore, about the
33 Karma Kanda are necessary before we begin the spiritual portion,
34 the Vedanta; and first of all I should like to explain the sense in
35 which I use the word Vedanta.

36 Unfortunately there is the mistaken notion in modern India
37 that the word Vedanta has reference only to the Advaita system; but
38 you must always remember that in modern India the three
39 Prasthanas are considered equally important in the study of all the
40 systems of religion. First of all there are the Revelations, the
41 Shrutis, by which I mean the Upanishads. Secondly, among our
42 philosophies, the Sutras of Vyasa have the greatest prominence on
43 account of their being the consummation of all the preceding
44 systems of philosophy. These systems are not contradictory to one
45 another, but one is based on another, and there is a gradual
46 unfolding of the theme which culminates in the Sutras of Vyasa.
47 Then, between the Upanishads and the Sutras, which are the
48 systematising of the marvellous truths of the Vedanta, comes in the
49 Gita, the divine commentary of the Vedanta.

50 The Upanishads, the *Vyasa-Sutras*, and the Gita, therefore,
51 have been taken up by every sect in India that wants to claim
52 authority for orthodoxy, whether dualist, or Vishishtadvaitist, or

1 Advaitist; the authorities of each of these are the three Prasthanas.
2 We find that a Shankaracharya, or a Ramanuja, or a Madhvacharya,
3 or a Vallabhacharya, or a Chaitanya--any one who wanted to
4 propound a new sect--had to take up these three systems and write
5 only a new commentary on them. Therefore it would be wrong to
6 confine the word Vedanta only to one system which has arisen out
7 of the Upanishads. All these are covered by the word Vedanta. The
8 Vishishtadvaitist has as much right to be called a Vedantist as the
9 Advaitist; in fact I will go a little further and say that what we really
10 mean by the word Hindu is really the same as Vedantist. I want you
11 to note that these three systems have been current in India almost
12 from time immemorial; for you must not believe that Shankara was
13 the inventor of the Advaita system. It existed ages before Shankara
14 was born; he was one of its last representatives. So with the
15 Vishishtadvaita system; it had existed ages before Ramanuja
16 appeared, as we already know from the commentaries he has
17 written; so with the dualistic systems that have existed side by side
18 with the others. And with my little knowledge, I have come to the
19 conclusion that they do not contradict each other.

20 Just as in the case of the six Darshanas, we find they are a
21 gradual unfolding of the grand principles whose music beginning
22 far back in the soft low notes, ends in the triumphant blast of the
23 Advaita, so also in these three systems we find the gradual working
24 up of the human mind towards higher and higher ideals till
25 everything is merged in that wonderful unity which is reached in
26 the Advaita system. Therefore these three are not contradictory. On
27 the other hand I am bound to tell you that this has been a mistake
28 committed by not a few. We find that an Advaitist teacher keeps
29 intact those texts which especially teach Advaitism, and tries to
30 interpret the dualistic or qualified non-dualistic texts into his own
31 meaning. Similarly we find dualistic teachers trying to read their
32 dualistic meaning into Advaitic texts. Our Gurus were great men,
33 yet there is a saying, "Even the faults of a Guru must be told". I am
34 of opinion that in this only they were mistaken. We need not go into
35 text-torturing, we need not go into any sort of religious dishonesty,
36 we need not go into any sort of grammatical twaddle, we need not
37 go about trying to put our own ideas into texts which were never
38 meant for them, but the work is plain and becomes easier, once you
39 understand the marvellous doctrine of Adhikarabheda.

40 It is true that the Upanishads have this one theme before
41 them: {Sanskrit}--"What is that knowing which we know everything
42 else?" In modern language, the theme of the Upanishads is to find
43 an ultimate unity of things. Knowledge is nothing but finding unity
44 in the midst of diversity. Every science is based upon this; all human
45 knowledge is based upon the finding of unity in the midst of
46 diversity; and if it is the task of small fragments of human
47 knowledge, which we call our sciences, to find unity in the midst of
48 a few different phenomena, the task becomes stupendous when the
49 theme before us is to find unity in the midst of this marvellously
50 diversified universe, where prevail unnumbered differences in
51 name and form, in matter and spirit--each thought differing from
52 every other thought, each form differing from every other form. Yet,

1 to harmonise these many planes and unending Lokas, in the midst
2 of this infinite variety to find unity, is the theme of the Upanishads.
3 On the other hand, the old idea of Arundhati Nyaya applies. To
4 show a man the fine star Arundhati, one takes the big and brilliant
5 nearest to it, upon which he is asked to fix his eyes first, and then it
6 becomes quite easy to direct his sight to Arundhati. This is the task
7 before us, and to prove my idea I have simply to show you the
8 Upanishads, and you will see it. Nearly every chapter begins with
9 dualistic teaching, Upasana. God is first taught as some one who is
10 the Creator of this universe, its Preserver, and unto whom
11 everything goes at last. He is one to be worshipped, the Ruler, the
12 Guide of nature, external and internal, yet appearing as if He were
13 outside of nature and external. One step further, and we find the
14 same teacher teaching that this God is not outside of nature, but
15 immanent in nature. And at last both ideas are discarded, and
16 whatever is real is He; there is no difference.
17 {Sanskrit}--"Svetaketu, That thou art." That Immanent One is at
18 last declared to be the same that is in the human soul. Here is no
19 compromise; here is no fear of others' opinions. Truth, bold truth,
20 has been taught in bold language, and we need not fear to preach
21 the truth in the same bold language today, and, by the grace of God,
22 I hope at least to be one who dares to be that bold preacher.

23 To go back to our preliminaries. There are first two things to
24 be understood--one, the psychological aspect common to all the
25 Vedantic schools, and the other, the cosmological aspect. I will first
26 take up the latter. Today we find wonderful discoveries of modern
27 science coming upon us like bolts from the blue, opening our eyes
28 to marvels we never dreamt of. But many of these are only re-
29 discoveries of what had been found ages ago. It was only the other
30 day that modern science found that even in the midst of the variety
31 of forces there is unity. It has just discovered that what it calls heat,
32 magnetism, electricity, and so forth, are all convertible into one unit
33 force, and as such, it expresses all these by one name, whatever
34 you may choose to call it. But this has been done even in the
35 Samhita; old and ancient as it is, in it we meet with this very idea of
36 force I was referring to. All the forces, whether you call them
37 gravitation, or attraction, or repulsion, whether expressing
38 themselves as heat, or electricity, or magnetism, are nothing but
39 the variations of that unit energy. Whether they express themselves
40 as thought, reflected from Antahkarana, the inner organs of man, or
41 as action from an external organ, the unit from which they spring is
42 what is called Prana. Again, what is Prana? Prana is Spandana or
43 vibration. When all this universe shall have resolved back into its
44 primal state, what becomes of this infinite force? Do they think that
45 it becomes extinct? Of course not. If it became extinct, what would
46 be the cause of the next wave, because the motion is going in wave
47 forms, rising, falling, rising again, falling again? Here is the word
48 Srishti, which expresses the universe. Mark that the word does not
49 mean creation. I am helpless in talking English; I have to translate
50 the Sanskrit words as best as I can. It is Srishti, projection. At the
51 end of a cycle, everything becomes finer and finer and is resolved
52 back into the primal state from which it sprang, and there it
53 remains for a time quiescent, ready to spring forth again. That is

1 Srishti, projection. And what becomes of all these forces, the
2 Pranas? They are resolved back into the primal Prana, and this
3 Prana becomes almost motionless--not entirely motionless; and that
4 is what is described in the Vedic Sukta: "It vibrated without
5 vibrations"--Anidavatam. There are many technical phrases in the
6 Upanishads difficult to understand. For instance, take this word
7 Vata; many times it means air and many times motion, and often
8 people confuse one with the other. We must guard against that. And
9 what becomes of what you call matter? The forces permeate all
10 matter; they all dissolve into Akasha, from which they again come
11 out; this Akasha is the primal matter. Whether you translate it as
12 ether or anything else, the idea is that this Akasha is the primal
13 form of matter. This Akasha vibrates under the action of Prana, and
14 when the next Srishti is coming up, as the vibration becomes
15 quicker, the Akasha is lashed into all these wave forms which we
16 call suns, moons, and systems.

17 We read again: {Sanskrit}--"Everything in this universe has
18 been projected, Prana vibrating." You must mark the word Ejati,
19 because it comes from Eja--to vibrate. Nihsritam--projected.
20 Yadidam Kincha--whatever in this universe.

21 This is a part of the cosmological side. There are many details
22 working into it. For instance, how the process takes place, how
23 there is first ether, and how from the ether come other things, how
24 that ether begins to vibrate, and from that Vayu comes. But the one
25 idea is here that it is from the finer that the grosser has come.
26 Gross matter is the last to emerge and the most external, and this
27 gross matter had the finer matter before it. Yet we see that the
28 whole thing has been resolved into two, but there is not yet a final
29 unity. There is the unity of force, Prana; there is the unity of matter,
30 called Akasha. Is there any unity to be found among them again?
31 Can they be melted into one? Our modern science is mute here, it
32 has not yet found its way out; and if it is doing so, just as it has
33 been slowly finding the same old Prana and the same ancient
34 Akasha, it will have to move along the same lines.

35 The next unity is the omnipresent impersonal Being known by
36 its old mythological name as Brahma, the four-headed Brahma, and
37 psychologically called Mahat. This is where the two unite. What is
38 called your mind is only a bit of this Mahat caught in the trap of the
39 brain, and the sum total of all minds caught in the meshes of brains
40 is what you call Samashti, the aggregate, the universal. Analysis
41 had to go further; it was not yet complete. Here we were each one
42 of us, as it were, a microcosm, and the world taken altogether is the
43 macrocosm. But whatever is in the Vyashti, the particular, we may
44 safely conjecture that a similar thing is happening also outside. If
45 we had the power to analyse our own minds, we might safely
46 conjecture that the same thing is happening in the cosmic mind.
47 What is this mind is the question. In modern times, in Western
48 countries, as physical science is making rapid progress, as
49 physiology is step by step conquering stronghold after stronghold of
50 old religions, the Western people do not know where to stand,
51 because to their great despair, modern physiology at every step has
52 identified the mind with the brain. But we in India have known that

1 always. That is the first proposition the Hindu boy learns that the
2 mind is matter, only finer. The body is gross, and behind the body is
3 what we call the Sukshma Sharira, the fine body, or mind. This is
4 also material, only finer; and it is not the Atman.

5 I will not translate this word to you in English, because the
6 idea does not exist in Europe; it is untranslatable. The modern
7 attempt of German philosophers is to translate the word Atman by
8 the word "Self", and until that word is universally accepted, it is
9 impossible to use it. So, call it as Self or anything, it is our Atman.
10 This Atman is the real man behind. It is the Atman that uses the
11 material mind as its instrument, its Antahkarana, as is the
12 psychological term for the mind. And the mind by means of a series
13 of internal organs works the visible organs of the body. What is this
14 mind? It was only the other day that Western philosophers have
15 come to know that the eyes are not the real organs of vision, but
16 that behind these are other organs, the Indriyas, and if these are
17 destroyed, a man may have a thousand eyes, like Indra, but there
18 will be no sight for him. Ay, your philosophy starts with this
19 assumption that by vision is not meant the external vision. The real
20 vision belongs to the internal organs, the brain-centres inside. You
21 may call them what you like, but it is not that the Indriyas are the
22 eyes, or the nose, or the ears. And the sum total of all these
23 Indriyas plus the Manas, Buddhi, Chitta, Ahamkara, etc., is what is
24 called the mind, and if the modern physiologist comes to tell you
25 that the brain is what is called the mind, and that the brain is
26 formed of so many organs, you need not be afraid at all; tell him
27 that your philosophers knew it always; it is one of the very first
28 principles of your religion.

29 Well then, we have to understand now what is meant by this
30 Manas, Buddhi, Chitta, Ahamkara, etc. First of all, let us take
31 Chitta. It is the mind-stuff--a part of the Mahat--it is the generic
32 name for the mind itself, including all its various states. Suppose on
33 a summer evening, there is a lake, smooth and calm, without a
34 ripple on its surface. And suppose some one throws a stone into this
35 lake. What happens? First there is the action, the blow given to the
36 water; next the water rises and sends a reaction towards the stone,
37 and that reaction takes the form of a wave. First the water vibrates
38 a little, and immediately sends back a reaction in the form of a
39 wave. The Chitta let us compare to this lake, and the external
40 objects are like the stones thrown into it. As soon as it comes in
41 contact with any external object by means of these Indriyas--the
42 Indriyas must be there to carry these external objects inside--there
43 is a vibration, what is called Manas, indecisive. Next there is a
44 reaction, the determinative faculty, Buddhi, and along with this
45 Buddhi flashes the idea of Aham and the external object. Suppose
46 there is a mosquito sitting upon my hand. This sensation is carried
47 to my Chitta and it vibrates a little; this is the psychological Manas.
48 Then there is a reaction, and immediately comes the idea that I
49 have a mosquito on my hand and that I shall have to drive it off.
50 Thus these stones are thrown into the lake, but in the case of the
51 lake every blow that comes to it is from the external world, while in
52 the case of the lake of the mind, the blows may either come from

1 the external world or the internal world. This whole series is what
2 is called the Antahkarana.

3 Along with it, you ought to understand one thing more that
4 will help us in understanding the Advaita system later on. It is this.
5 All of you must have seen pearls and most of you know how pearls
6 are formed. A grain of sand enters into the shell of a pearl oyster,
7 and sets up an irritation there, and the oyster's body reacts towards
8 the irritation and covers the little particle with its own juice. That
9 crystallises and forms the pearl. So the whole universe is like that,
10 it is the pearl which is being formed by us. What we get from the
11 external world is simply the blow. Even to be conscious of that blow
12 we have to react, and as soon as we react, we really project a
13 portion of our own mind towards the blow, and when we come to
14 know of it, it is really our own mind as it has been shaped by the
15 blow. Therefore it is clear even to those who want to believe in a
16 hard and fast realism of an external world, which they cannot but
17 admit in these days of physiology--that supposing we represent the
18 external world by "x", what we really know is "x" plus mind, and
19 this mind-element is so great that it has covered the whole of that
20 "x" which has remained unknown and unknowable throughout; and,
21 therefore, if there is an external world, it is always unknown and
22 unknowable. What we know of it is as it is moulded, formed,
23 fashioned by our own mind. So with the internal world. The same
24 applies to our own soul, the Atman. In order to know the Atman we
25 shall have to know It through the mind; and, therefore, what little
26 we know of this Atman is simply the Atman plus the mind. That is to
27 say, the Atman covered over, fashioned, and moulded by the mind,
28 and nothing more. We shall return to this a little later, but we will
29 remember what has been told here.

30 The next thing to understand is this. The question arose that
31 this body is the name of one continuous stream of matter--every
32 moment we are adding material to it, and every moment material is
33 being thrown off by it--like a river continually flowing, vast masses
34 of water always changing places; yet all the same, we take up the
35 whole thing in imagination, and call it the same river. What do we
36 call the river? Every moment the water is changing, the shore is
37 changing, every moment the environment is changing, what is the
38 river then? It is the name of this series of changes. So with the
39 mind. That is the great Kshanika Vijnana Vada doctrine, most
40 difficult to understand, but most rigorously and logically worked out
41 in the Buddhistic philosophy; and this arose in India in opposition to
42 some part of the Vedanta. That had to be answered and we shall
43 see later on how it could only be answered by Advaitism and by
44 nothing else. We will see also how, in spite of people's curious
45 notions about Advaitism, people's fright about Advaitism, it is the
46 salvation of the world, because therein alone is to be found the
47 reason of things. Dualism and other *isms* are very good as means
48 of worship, very satisfying to the mind, and maybe, they have
49 helped the mind onward; but if man wants to be rational and
50 religious at the same time, Advaita is the one system in the world
51 for him. Well, now, we shall regard the mind as a similar river,
52 continually filling itself at one end and emptying itself at the other

1 end. Where is that unity which we call the Atman? The idea is this,
2 that in spite of this continuous change in the body, and in spite of
3 this continuous change in the mind, there is in us something that is
4 unchangeable, which makes our ideas of things appear
5 unchangeable. When rays of light coming from different quarters
6 fall upon a screen, or a wall, or upon something that is not
7 changeable, then and then alone it is possible for them to form a
8 unity, then and then alone it is possible for them to form one
9 complete whole. Where is this unity in the human organs, falling
10 upon which, as it were, the various ideas will come to unity and
11 become one complete whole? This certainly cannot be the mind
12 itself, seeing that it also changes. Therefore there must be
13 something which is neither the body nor the mind, something which
14 changes not, something permanent, upon which all our ideas, our
15 sensations fall to form a unity and a complete whole; and this is the
16 real soul, the Atman of man. And seeing that everything material,
17 whether you call it fine matter, or mind, must be changeful, seeing
18 that what you call gross matter, the external world, must also be
19 changeful in comparison to that--this unchangeable something
20 cannot be of material substance; therefore it is spiritual, that is to
21 say, it is not matter--it is indestructible, unchangeable.

22 Next will come another question: Apart from those old
23 arguments which only rise in the external world, the arguments in
24 support of design--who created this external world, who created
25 matter, etc.? The idea here is to know truth only from the inner
26 nature of man, and the question arises just in the same way as it
27 arose about the soul. Taking for granted that there is a soul,
28 unchangeable, in each man, which is neither the mind nor the body,
29 there is still a unity of idea among the souls, a unity of feeling, of
30 sympathy. How is it possible that my soul can act upon your soul,
31 where is the medium through which it can work, where is the
32 medium through which it can act? How is it I can feel anything
33 about your souls? What is it that is in touch both with your soul and
34 my soul? Therefore there is a metaphysical necessity of admitting
35 another soul, for it must be a soul which acts in contact with all the
36 different souls, and in and through matter--one Soul which covers
37 and interpenetrates all the infinite number of souls in the world, in
38 and through which they live, in and through which they sympathise,
39 and love, and work for one another. And this universal Soul is
40 Paramatman, the Lord God of the universe. Again, it follows that
41 because the soul is not made of matter, since it is spiritual, it cannot
42 obey the laws of matter, it cannot be judged by the laws of matter. It
43 is, therefore, unconquerable, birthless, deathless, and changeless.

44 {Sanskrit}

45 --"This Self, weapons cannot pierce, nor fire can burn, water
46 cannot wet, nor air can dry up. Changeless, all-pervading,
47 unmoving, immovable, eternal is this Self of man." We learn
48 according to the Gita and the Vedanta that this individual Self is
49 also Vibhu, and according to Kapila, is omnipresent. Of course there
50 are sects in India which hold that the Self is Anu, infinitely small;
51 but what they mean is Anu in manifestation; its real nature is Vibhu,
52 all-pervading.

1 There comes another idea, startling perhaps, yet a
2 characteristically Indian idea, and if there is any idea that is
3 common to all our sects, it is this. Therefore I beg you to pay
4 attention to this one idea and to remember it, for this is the very
5 foundation of everything that we have in India. The idea is this. You
6 have heard of the doctrine of physical evolution preached in the
7 Western world by the German and the English savants. It tells us
8 that the bodies of the different animals are really one; the
9 differences that we see are but different expressions of the same
10 series; that from the lowest worm to the highest and the most
11 saintly man it is but one--the one changing into the other, and so on,
12 going up and up, higher and higher, until it attains perfection. We
13 had that idea also. Declares our Yogi Patanjali--{Sanskrit}. One
14 species--the Jati is species--changes into another species--evolution;
15 Parinama means one thing changing into another, just as one
16 species changes into another. Where do we differ from the
17 Europeans? Patanjali says, Prakrityapurat," by the infilling of
18 nature". The European says, it is competition, natural and sexual
19 selection, etc. that forces one body to take the form of another. But
20 here is another idea, a still better analysis, going deeper into the
21 thing and saying, "By the infilling of nature". What is meant by this
22 infilling of nature? We admit that the amoeba goes higher and
23 higher until it becomes a Buddha; we admit that, but we are at the
24 same time as much certain that you cannot get an amount of work
25 out of a machine unless you have put it in some shape or other. The
26 sum total of the energy remains the same, whatever the forms it
27 may take. If you want a mass of energy at one end, you have got to
28 put it in at the other end; it may be in another form, but the amount
29 of energy that should be produced out of it must be the same.
30 Therefore, if a Buddha is the one end of the change, the very
31 amoeba must have been the Buddha also. If the Buddha is the
32 evolved amoeba, the amoeba was the involved Buddha also. If this
33 universe is the manifestation of an almost infinite amount of energy,
34 when this universe was in a state of Pralaya, it must have
35 represented the same amount of involved energy. It cannot have
36 been otherwise. As such, it follows that every soul is infinite. From
37 the lowest worm that crawls under our feet to the noblest and
38 greatest saints, all have this infinite power, infinite purity, and
39 infinite everything. Only the difference is in the degree of
40 manifestation. The worm is only manifesting just a little bit of that
41 energy, you have manifested more, another god-man has
42 manifested still more: that is all the difference. But that infinite
43 power is there all the same. Says Patanjali: {Sanskrit}--"Like the
44 peasant irrigating his field." Through a little corner of his field he
45 brings water from a reservoir somewhere, and perhaps he has got a
46 little lock that prevents the water from rushing into his field. When
47 he wants water, he has simply to open the lock, and in rushes the
48 water of its own power. The power has not to be added, it is already
49 there in the reservoir. So every one of us, every being, has as his
50 own background such a reservoir of strength, infinite power, infinite
51 purity, infinite bliss, and existence infinite--only these locks, these
52 bodies, are hindering us from expressing what we really are to the
53 fullest.

1 And as these bodies become more and more finely organised,
2 as the Tamoguna becomes the Rajoguna, and as the Rajoguna
3 becomes Sattvaguna, more and more of this power and purity
4 becomes manifest, and therefore it is that our people have been so
5 careful about eating and drinking, and the food question. It may be
6 that the original ideas have been lost, just as with our marriage--
7 which, though not belonging to the subject, I may take as an
8 example. If I have another opportunity I will talk to you about these;
9 but let me tell you now that the ideas behind our marriage system
10 are the only ideas through which there can be a real civilisation.
11 There cannot be anything else. If a man or a woman were allowed
12 the freedom to take up any woman or man as wife or husband, if
13 individual pleasure, satisfaction of animal instincts, were to be
14 allowed to run loose in society, the result must be evil, evil children,
15 wicked and demoniacal. Ay, man in every country is, on the one
16 hand, producing these brutal children, and on the other hand
17 multiplying the police force to keep these brutes down. The
18 question is not how to destroy evil that way, but how to prevent the
19 very birth of evil. And so long as you live in society your marriage
20 certainly affects every member of it; and therefore society has the
21 right to dictate whom you shall marry, and whom you shall not. And
22 great ideas of this kind have been behind the system of marriage
23 here, what they call the astrological Jati of the bride and
24 bridegroom. And in passing I may remark that according to Manu a
25 child who is born of lust is not an Aryan. The child whose very
26 conception and whose death is according to the rules of the Vedas,
27 such is an Aryan. Yes, and less of these Aryan children are being
28 produced in every country, and the result is the mass of evil which
29 we call Kali Yuga. But we have lost all these ideals--it is true we
30 cannot carry all these ideas to the fullest length now--it is perfectly
31 true we have made almost a caricature of some of these great
32 ideas. It is lamentably true that the fathers and mothers are not
33 what they were in old times, neither is society so educated as it
34 used to be, neither has society that love for individuals that it used
35 to have. But, however faulty the working out may be, the principle
36 is sound; and if its application has become defective, if one method
37 has failed, take up the principle and work it out better; why kill the
38 principle? The same applies to the food question. The work and
39 details are bad, very bad indeed, but that does not hurt the
40 principle. The principle is eternal and must be there. Work it out
41 afresh and make a re-formed application.

42 This is the one great idea of the Atman which every one of
43 our sects in India has to believe. Only, as we shall find, the dualists
44 preach that this Atman by evil works becomes Sankuchita, i.e. all its
45 powers and its nature become contracted, and by good works again
46 that nature expands. And the Advaitist says that the Atman never
47 expands nor contracts, but seems to do so. It appears to have
48 become contracted. That is all the difference, but all have the one
49 idea that our Atman has all the powers already, not that anything
50 will come to It from outside, not that anything will drop into It from
51 the skies. Mark you, your Vedas are not inspired, but expired, not
52 that they came from anywhere outside, but they are the eternal
53 laws living in every soul. The Vedas are in the soul of the ant, in the

1 soul of the god. The ant has only to evolve and get the body of a
2 sage or a Rishi, and the Vedas will come out, eternal laws
3 expressing themselves. This is the one great idea to understand
4 that our power is already ours, our salvation is already within us.
5 Say either that it has become contracted, or say that it has been
6 covered with the veil of Maya, it matters little; the idea is there
7 already; you must have to believe in that, believe in the possibility
8 of everybody--that even in the lowest man there is the same
9 possibility as in the Buddha. This is the doctrine of the Atman.

10 But now comes a tremendous fight. Here are the Buddhists,
11 who equally analyse the body into a material stream and as equally
12 analyse the mind into another. And as for this Atman, they state that
13 It is unnecessary; so we need not assume the Atman at all. What
14 use of a substance, and qualities adhering to the substance? We say,
15 Gunas, qualities, and qualities alone. It is illogical to assume two
16 causes where one will explain the whole thing. And the fight went
17 on, and all the theories which held the doctrine of substance were
18 thrown to the ground by the Buddhists. There was a break-up all
19 along the line of those who held on to the doctrine of substance and
20 qualities, that you have a soul, and I have a soul, and every one has
21 a soul separate from the mind and body, and that each one is an
22 individual.

23 So far we have seen that the idea of dualism is all right; for
24 there is the body, there is then the fine body--the mind--there is this
25 Atman, and in and through all the Atmans is that Paramatman, God.
26 The difficulty is here that this Atman and Paramatman are both
27 called substance, to which the mind and body and so-called
28 substances adhere like so many qualities. Nobody has ever seen a
29 substance, none can ever conceive; what is the use of thinking of
30 this substance? Why not become a Kshanikavadin and say that
31 whatever exists is this succession of mental currents and nothing
32 more? They do not adhere to each other, they do not form a unit,
33 one is chasing the other, like waves in the ocean, never complete,
34 never forming one unit-whole. Man is a succession of waves, and
35 when one goes away it generates another, and the cessation of
36 these wave-forms is what is called Nirvana. You see that dualism is
37 mute before this; it is impossible that it can bring up any argument,
38 and the dualistic God also cannot be retained here. The idea of a
39 God that is omnipresent, and yet is a person who creates without
40 hands, and moves without feet, and so on, and who has created the
41 universe as a Kumbakara (potter) creates a Ghata (pot), the
42 Buddhist declares, is childish, and that if this is God, he is going to
43 fight this God and not worship it. This universe is full of misery; if it
44 is the work of a God, we are going to fight this God. And secondly,
45 this God is illogical and impossible, as all of you are aware. We need
46 not go into the defects of the "design theory", as all our Kshanikas
47 have shown them full well; and so this Personal God fell to pieces.

48 Truth, and nothing but truth, is the watchword of the
49 Advaitist. {Sanskrit}--"Truth alone triumphs, and not untruth.
50 Through truth alone the way to gods, Devayana, lies." Everybody
51 marches forward under that banner; ay, but it is only to crush the
52 weaker man's position by his own. You come with your dualistic

1 idea of God to pick a quarrel with a poor man who is worshipping
2 an image, and you think you are wonderfully rational, you can
3 confound him; but if he turns round and shatters your own Personal
4 God and calls that an imaginary ideal, where are you? You fall back
5 on faith and so on, or raise the cry of atheism, the old cry of a weak
6 man--whosoever defeats him is an atheist. If you are to be rational,
7 be rational all along the line, and if not, allow others the same
8 privilege which you ask for yourselves. How can you prove the
9 existence of this God? On the other hand, it can be almost
10 disproved. There is not a shadow of a proof as to His existence, and
11 there are very strong arguments to the contrary. How will you
12 prove His existence, with your God, and His Gunas, and an infinite
13 number of souls which are substance, and each soul an individual?
14 In what are you an individual? You are not as a body, for you know
15 today better than even the Buddhists of old knew that what may
16 have been matter in the sun has just now become matter in you,
17 and will go out and become matter in the plants; then where is your
18 individuality, Mr. So-and-so? The same applies to the mind. Where is
19 your individuality? You have one thought tonight and another
20 tomorrow. You do not think the same way as you thought when you
21 were a child; and old men do not think the same way as they did
22 when they were young. Where is your individuality then? Do not say
23 it is in consciousness, this Ahamkara, because this only covers a
24 small part of your existence. While I am talking to you, all my
25 organs are working and I am not conscious of it. If consciousness is
26 the proof of existence they do not exist then, because I am not
27 conscious of them. Where are you then with your Personal God
28 theories? How can you prove such a God?

29 Again, the Buddhists will stand up and declare--not only is it
30 illogical, but immoral, for it teaches man to be a coward and to seek
31 assistance outside, and nobody can give him such help. Here is the
32 universe, man made it; why then depend on an imaginary being
33 outside whom nobody ever saw, or felt, or got help from? Why then
34 do you make cowards of yourselves and teach your children that the
35 highest state of man is to be like a dog, and go crawling before this
36 imaginary being, saying that you are weak and impure, and that you
37 are everything vile in this universe? On the other hand, the
38 Buddhists may urge not only that you tell a lie, but that you bring a
39 tremendous amount of evil upon your children; for, mark you, this
40 world is one of hypnotisation. Whatever you tell yourself, that you
41 become. Almost the first words the great Buddha uttered were:
42 "What you think, that you are; what you will think, that you will be."
43 If this is true, do not teach yourself that you are nothing, ay, that
44 you cannot do anything unless you are helped by somebody who
45 does not live here, but sits above the clouds. The result will be that
46 you will be more and more weakened every day. By constantly
47 repeating, "we are very impure, Lord, make us pure", the result will
48 be that you will hypnotise yourselves into all sorts of vices. Ay, the
49 Buddhists say that ninety per cent of these vices that you see in
50 every society are on account of this idea of a Personal God; this is
51 an awful idea of the human being that the end and aim of this
52 expression of life, this wonderful expression of life, is to become
53 like a dog. Says the Buddhist to the Vaishnava, if your ideal, your

1 aim and goal is to go to the place called Vaikuntha where God lives,
2 and there stand before Him with folded hands all through eternity,
3 it is better to commit suicide than do that. The Buddhists may even
4 urge that, that is why he is going to create annihilation, Nirvana, to
5 escape this. I am putting these ideas before you as a Buddhist just
6 for the time being, because nowadays all these Advaitic ideas are
7 said to make you immoral, and I am trying to tell you how the other
8 side looks. Let us face both sides boldly and bravely.

9 We have seen first of all that this cannot be proved, this idea
10 of a Personal God creating the world; is there any child that can
11 believe this today? Because a Kumbhakara creates a Ghata,
12 therefore a God created the world! If this is so, then your
13 Kumbhakara is God also; and if any one tells you that He acts
14 without head and hands, you may take him to a lunatic asylum. Has
15 ever your Personal God, the Creator of the world to whom you cry
16 all your life, helped you--is the next challenge from modern science.

17 They will prove that any help you have had could have been
18 got by your own exertions, and better still, you need not have spent
19 your energy in that crying, you could have done it better without
20 that weeping and crying. And we have seen that along with this
21 idea of a Personal God comes tyranny and priestcraft. Tyranny and
22 priestcraft have prevailed wherever this idea existed, and until the
23 lie is knocked on the head, say the Buddhists, tyranny will not
24 cease. So long as man thinks he has to cower before a supernatural
25 being, so long there will be priests to claim rights and privileges
26 and to make men cower before them, while these poor men will
27 continue to ask some priest to act as interceder for them. You may
28 do away with the Brahmin, but mark me, those who do so will put
29 themselves in his place and will be worse, because the Brahmin has
30 a certain amount of generosity in him, but these upstarts are always
31 the worst of tyrannisers. If a beggar gets wealth, he thinks the
32 whole world is a bit of straw. So these priests there must be, so long
33 as this Personal God idea persists, and it will be impossible to think
34 of any great morality in society. Priestcraft and tyranny go hand in
35 hand. Why was it invented? Because some strong men in old times
36 got people into their hands and said, you must obey us or we will
37 destroy you. That was the long and short of it. {Sanskrit}--It is the
38 idea of the thunderer who kills every one who does not obey him.

39 Next the Buddhist says, you have been perfectly rational up
40 to this point, that everything is the result of the law of Karma. You
41 believe in an infinity of souls, and that souls are without birth or
42 death, and this infinity of souls and the belief in the law of Karma
43 are perfectly logical no doubt. There cannot be a cause without an
44 effect, the present must have had its cause in the past and will have
45 its effect in the future. The Hindu says the Karma is Jada (inert) and
46 not Chaitanya (Spirit), therefore some Chaitanya is necessary to
47 bring this cause to fruition. Is it so, that Chaitanya is necessary to
48 bring the plant to fruition? If I plant the seed and add water, no
49 Chaitanya is necessary. You may say there was some original
50 Chaitanya there, but the souls themselves were the Chaitanya,
51 nothing else is necessary. If human souls have it too, what necessity
52 is there for a God, as say the Jains, who, unlike the Buddhists,

1 believe in souls and do not believe in God. Where are you logical,
2 where are you moral? And when you criticise Advaitism and fear
3 that it will make for immorality, just read a little of what has been
4 done in India by dualistic sects. If there have been twenty thousand
5 Advaitist blackguards, there have also been twenty thousand
6 Dvaitist blackguards. Generally speaking, there will be more
7 Dvaitist blackguards, because it takes a better type of mind to
8 understand Advaitism, and Advaitists can scarcely be frightened
9 into anything. What remains for you Hindus, then? There is no help
10 for you out of the clutches of the Buddhists. You may quote the
11 Vedas, but he does not believe in them. He will say, "My Tripitakas
12 say otherwise, and they are without beginning or end, not even
13 written by Buddha, for Buddha says he is only reciting them; they
14 are eternal." And he adds, "Yours are wrong, ours are the true
15 Vedas, yours are manufactured by the Brahmin priests, therefore
16 out with them." How do you escape?

17 Here is the way to get out. Take up the first objection, the
18 metaphysical one, that substance and qualities are different. Says
19 the Advaitist, they are not. There is no difference between
20 substance and qualities. You know the old illustration, how the rope
21 is taken for the snake, and when you see the snake you do not see
22 the rope at all, the rope has vanished. Dividing the thing into
23 substance and quality is a metaphysical something in the brains of
24 philosophers, for never can they be in effect outside. You see
25 qualities if you are an ordinary man, and substance if you are a
26 great Yogi, but you never see both at the same time. So, Buddhists,
27 your quarrel about substance and qualities has been but a
28 miscalculation which does not stand on fact. But if substance is
29 unqualified, there can only be one. If you take qualities off from the
30 soul, and show that these qualities are in the mind really,
31 superimposed on the soul, then there can never be two souls for it
32 is qualification that makes the difference between one soul and
33 another. How do you know that one soul is different from the other?
34 Owing to certain differentiating marks, certain qualities. And where
35 qualities do not exist, how can there be differentiation? Therefore
36 there are not two souls, there is but One, and your Paramatman is
37 unnecessary, it is this very soul. That One is called Paramatman,
38 that very One is called Jivatman, and so on; and you dualists, such
39 as the Sankhyas and others, who say that the soul is Vibhu,
40 omnipresent, how can you make two infinities? There can be only
41 one. What else? This One is the one Infinite Atman, everything else
42 is its manifestation. There the Buddhist stops, but there it does not
43 end.

44 The Advaitist position is not merely a weak one of criticism.
45 The Advaitist criticises others when they come too near him, and
46 just throws them away, that is all; but he propounds his own
47 position. He is the only one that criticises, and does not stop with
48 criticism and showing books. Here you are. You say the universe is
49 a thing of continuous motion. In Vyashti (the finite) everything is
50 moving; you are moving, the table is moving, motion everywhere; it
51 is Samsara, continuous motion; it is Jagat. Therefore there cannot
52 be an individuality in this Jagat, because individuality means that

1 which does not change; there cannot be any changeful individuality,
2 it is a contradiction in terms. There is no such thing as individuality
3 in this little world of ours, the Jagat. Thought and feeling, mind and
4 body, men and animals and plants are in a continuous state of flux.
5 But suppose you take the universe as a unit whole; can it change or
6 move? Certainly not.

7 Motion is possible in comparison with something which is a
8 little less in motion or entirely motionless. The universe as a whole,
9 therefore, is motionless, unchangeable. You are therefore, an
10 individual then and then alone when you are the whole of it, when
11 the realisation of "I am the universe" comes. That is why the
12 Vedantist says that so long as there are two, fear does not cease. It
13 is only when one does not see another, does not feel another, when
14 it is all one--then alone fear ceases, then alone death vanishes, then
15 alone Samsara vanishes. Advaita teaches us, therefore, that man is
16 individual in being universal, and not in being particular. You are
17 immortal only when you are the whole. You are fearless and
18 deathless only when you are the universe; and then that which you
19 call the universe is the same as that you call God, the same that you
20 call existence, the same that you call the whole. It is the one
21 undivided Existence which is taken to be the manifold world which
22 we see, as also others who are in the same state of mind as we.
23 People who have done a little better Karma and get a better state of
24 mind, when they die, look upon it as Svarga and see Indras and so
25 forth. People still higher will see it, the very same thing, as Brahma-
26 Loka, and the perfect ones will neither see the earth nor the
27 heavens, nor any Loka at all. The universe will have vanished, and
28 Brahman will be in its stead.

29 Can we know this Brahman? I have told you of the painting of
30 the Infinite in the Samhita. Here we shall find another side shown,
31 the infinite internal. That was the infinite of the muscles. Here we
32 shall have the Infinite of thought. There the Infinite was attempted
33 to be painted in language positive; here that language failed and
34 the attempt has been to paint it in language negative. Here is this
35 universe, and even admitting that it is Brahman, can we know it?
36 No! No! You must understand this one thing again very clearly.
37 Again and again this doubt will come to you: If this is Brahman, how
38 can we know it? {Sanskrit} --"By what can the knower be known?"
39 How can the knower be known? The eyes see everything; can they
40 see themselves? They cannot. The very fact of knowledge is a
41 degradation. Children of the Aryans, you must remember this, for
42 herein lies a big story. All the Western temptations that come to
43 you, have their metaphysical basis on that one thing--there is
44 nothing higher than sense-knowledge. In the East, we say in our
45 Vedas that this knowledge is lower than the thing itself, because it
46 is always a limitation. When you want to know a thing, it
47 immediately becomes limited by your mind. They say, refer back to
48 that instance of the oyster making a pearl and see how knowledge
49 is limitation, gathering a thing, bringing it into consciousness, and
50 not knowing it as a whole. This is true about all knowledge, and can
51 it be less so about the Infinite? Can you thus limit Him who is the
52 substance of all knowledge, Him who is the Sakshi, the witness,

1 without whom you cannot have any knowledge, Him who has no
2 qualities, who is the Witness of the whole universe, the Witness in
3 our own souls? How can you know Him? By what means can you
4 bind Him up? Everything, the whole universe, is such a false
5 attempt. This infinite Atman is, as it were, trying to see His own
6 face, and all, from the lowest animals to the highest of gods, are
7 like so many mirrors to reflect Himself in, and He is taking up still
8 others, finding them insufficient, until in the human body He comes
9 to know that it is the finite of the finite, all is finite, there cannot be
10 any expression of the Infinite in the finite. Then comes the
11 retrograde march, and this is what is called renunciation, Vairagya.
12 Back from the senses, back! Do not go to the senses is the
13 watchword of Vairagya. This is the watchword of all morality, this is
14 the watchword of all well-being; for you must remember that with
15 us the universe begins in Tapasya, in renunciation, and as you go
16 back and back, all the forms are being manifested before you, and
17 they are left aside one after the other until you remain what you
18 really are. This is Moksha or liberation.

19 This idea we have to understand: {Sanskrit}--"How to know
20 the knower?" The knower cannot be known, because if it were
21 known, it will not be the knower. If you look at your eyes in a mirror,
22 the reflection is no more your eyes, but something else, only a
23 reflection. Then if this Soul, this Universal, Infinite Being which you
24 are, is only a witness, what good is it? It cannot live, and move
25 about, and enjoy the world, as we do. People cannot understand
26 how the witness can enjoy. "Oh," they say, "you Hindus have
27 become quiescent, and good for nothing, through this doctrine that
28 you are witnesses!" First of all, it is only the witness that can enjoy.
29 If there is a wrestling match, who enjoys it, those who take part in
30 it, or those who are looking on--the outsiders? The more and more
31 you are the witness of anything in life, the more you enjoy it. And
32 this is Ananda; and, therefore, infinite bliss can only be yours when
33 you have become the witness of this universe; then alone you are a
34 Mukta Purusha. It is the witness alone that can work without any
35 desire, without any idea of going to heaven, without any idea of
36 blame, without any idea of praise. The witness alone enjoys, and
37 none else.

38 Coming to the moral aspect, there is one thing between the
39 metaphysical and the moral aspect of Advaitism; it is the theory of
40 Maya. Everyone of these points in the Advaita system requires
41 years to understand and months to explain. Therefore you will
42 excuse me if I only just touch them *en passant*. This theory of Maya
43 has been the most difficult thing to understand in all ages. Let me
44 tell you in a few words that it is surely no theory, it is the
45 combination of the three ideas Desha-Kala-Nimitta--space, time,
46 and causation--and this time and space and cause have been further
47 reduced into Nama-Rupa. Suppose there is a wave in the ocean.
48 The wave is distinct from the ocean only in its form and name, and
49 this form and this name cannot have any separate existence from
50 the wave; they exist only with the wave. The wave may subside, but
51 the same amount of water remains, even if the name and form that
52 were on the wave vanish for ever. So this Maya is what makes the

1 difference between me and you, between all animals and man,
2 between gods and men. In fact, it is this Maya that causes the
3 Atman to be caught, as it were, in so many millions of beings, and
4 these are distinguishable only through name and form. If you leave
5 it alone, let name and form go, all this variety vanishes for ever, and
6 you are what you really are. This is Maya.

7 It is again no theory, but a statement of facts. When the
8 realist states that this table exists, what he means is, that this table
9 has an independent existence of its own, that it does not depend on
10 the existence of anything else in the universe, and if this whole
11 universe be destroyed and annihilated, this table will remain just as
12 it is now. A little thought will show you that it cannot be so.
13 Everything here in the sense-world is dependent and
14 interdependent, relative and correlative, the existence of one
15 depending on the other. There are three steps, therefore, in our
16 knowledge of things; the first is that each thing is individual and
17 separate from every other; and the next step is to find that there is
18 a relation and correlation between all things; and the third is that
19 there is only one thing which we see as many. The first idea of God
20 with the ignorant is that this God is somewhere outside the
21 universe, that is to say, the conception of God is extremely human;
22 He does just what a man does, only on a bigger and higher scale.
23 And we have seen how that idea of God is proved in a few words to
24 be unreasonable and insufficient. And the next idea is the idea of a
25 power we see manifested everywhere. This is the real Personal God
26 we get in the *Chandi*, but, mark me, not a God that you make the
27 reservoir of all good qualities only. You cannot have two Gods, God
28 and Satan; you must have only one and dare to call Him good and
29 bad. Have only one and take the logical consequences. We read in
30 the *Chandi*: "We salute Thee, O Divine Mother, who lives in every
31 being as peace. We salute Thee, O Divine Mother, who lives in all
32 beings as purity." At the same time we must take the whole
33 consequence of calling Him the All-formed. "All this is bliss, O
34 Gargi; wherever there is bliss there is a portion of the Divine." You
35 may use it how you like. In this light before me, you may give a poor
36 man a hundred rupees, and another man may forge your name, but
37 the light will be the same for both. This is the second stage. And the
38 third is that God is neither outside nature nor inside nature, but
39 God and nature and soul and universe are all convertible terms. You
40 never see two things; it is your metaphysical words that have
41 deluded you. You assume that you are a body and have a soul, and
42 that you are both together. How can that be? Try in your own mind.
43 If there is a Yogi among you, he knows himself as Chaitanya, for
44 him the body has vanished. An ordinary man thinks of himself as a
45 body; the idea of spirit has vanished from him; but because the
46 metaphysical ideas exist that man has a body and a soul and all
47 these things, you think they are all simultaneously there. One thing
48 at a time. Do not talk of God when you see matter; you see the
49 effect and the effect alone, and the cause you cannot see, and the
50 moment you can see the cause, the effect will have vanished. Where
51 is the world then, and who has taken it off?

52 "One that is present always as consciousness, the bliss

1 absolute, beyond all bounds, beyond all compare, beyond all
2 qualities, ever-free, limitless as the sky, without parts, the absolute,
3 the perfect--such a Brahman, O sage, O learned one, shines in the
4 heart of the Jnani in Samadhi. (*Vivekachudamani*, 408)

5 "Where all the changes of nature cease for ever, who is
6 thought beyond all thoughts, who is equal to all yet having no equal,
7 immeasurable, whom the Vedas declare, who is the essence in what
8 we call our existence, the perfect--such a Brahman, O Sage, O
9 learned one, shines in the heart of the Jnani in Samadhi. (Ibid.,409)

10 "Beyond all birth and death, the Infinite One, incomparable,
11 like the whole universe deluged in water in Mahapralaya--water
12 above, water beneath, water on all sides, and on the face of that
13 water not a wave, not a ripple--silent and calm, all visions have died
14 out, all fights and quarrels and the war of fools and saints have
15 ceased for ever--such a Brahman, O sage, O learned one, shines in
16 the heart of the Jnani in Samadhi." (Ibid., 410)

17 That also comes, and when that comes the world has
18 vanished.

19 We have seen then that this Brahman, this Reality is unknown
20 and unknowable, not in the sense of the agnostic, but because to
21 know Him would be a blasphemy, because you are He already. We
22 have also seen that this Brahman is not this table and yet is this
23 table. Take off the name and form, and whatever is reality is He. He
24 is the reality in everything.

25 "Thou art the woman, thou the man, thou art the boy, and the
26 girl as well, thou the old man supporting thyself on a stick, thou art
27 all in all in the universe." That is the theme of Advaitism. A few
28 words more. Herein lies, we find, the explanation of the essence of
29 things. We have seen how here alone we can take a firm stand
30 against all the onrush of logic and scientific knowledge. Here at
31 least reason has a firm foundation, and, at the same time, the
32 Indian Vedantist does not curse the preceding steps; he looks back
33 and he blesses them, and he knows that they were true, only
34 wrongly perceived, and wrongly stated.

35 They were the same truth, only seen through the glass of
36 Maya, distorted it may be--yet truth, and nothing but truth. The
37 same God whom the ignorant man saw outside nature, the same
38 whom the little-knowing man saw as interpenetrating the universe,
39 and the same whom the sage realises as his own Self, as the whole
40 universe itself--all are One and the same Being, the same entity
41 seen from different standpoints, seen through different glasses of
42 Maya, perceived by different minds, and all the difference was
43 caused by that. Not only so, but one view must lead to the other.
44 What is the difference between science and common knowledge?
45 Go out into the streets in the dark, and if something unusual is
46 happening there, ask one of the passers-by what is the cause of it.
47 It is ten to one that he will tell you it is a ghost causing the
48 phenomenon. He is always going after ghosts and spirits outside,
49 because it is the nature of ignorance to seek for causes outside of
50 effects. If a stone falls, it has been thrown by a devil or a ghost,
51 says the ignorant man, but the scientific man says it is the law of

1 nature, the law of gravitation.

2 What is the fight between science and religion everywhere?
3 Religions are encumbered with such a mass of explanations which
4 come from outside--one angel is in charge of the sun, another of the
5 moon, and so on *ad infinitum*. Every change is caused by a spirit,
6 the one common point of agreement being that they are all outside
7 the thing. Science means that the cause of a thing is sought out by
8 the nature of the thing itself. As step by step science is progressing,
9 it has taken the explanation of natural phenomena out of the hands
10 of spirits and angels. Because Advaitism has done likewise in
11 spiritual matters, it is the most scientific religion. This universe has
12 not been created by any extra-cosmic God, nor is it the work of any
13 outside genius. It is self-creating, self-dissolving, self-manifesting,
14 One Infinite Existence, the Brahman. Tattvamasi Shvetaketo--"That
15 thou art, O Shvetaketu!"

16 Thus you see that this, and this alone, and none else, can be
17 the only scientific religion. And with all the prattle about science
18 that is going on daily at the present time in modern half-educated
19 India, with all the talk about rationalism and reason that I hear
20 every day, I expect that whole sects of you will come over and dare
21 to be Advaitists, and dare to preach it to the world in the words of
22 Buddha, {Sanskrit}--"For the good of many, for the happiness of
23 many." If you do not, I take you for cowards. If you cannot get over
24 your cowardice, if your fear is your excuse, allow the same liberty
25 to others, do not try to break up the poor idol-worshipper, do not
26 call him a devil, do not go about preaching to every man that does
27 not agree entirely with you. Know first, that you are cowards
28 yourselves, and if society frightens you, if your own superstitions of
29 the past frighten you so much, how much more will these
30 superstitions frighten and bind down those who are ignorant? That
31 is the Advaita position. Have mercy on others. Would to God that
32 the whole world were Advaitists tomorrow, not only in theory, but in
33 realisation. But if that cannot be, let us do the next best thing; let us
34 take the ignorant by the hand, lead them always step by step just as
35 they can go, and know that every step in all religious growth in
36 India has been progressive. It is not from bad to good, but from
37 good to better.

38 Something more has to be told about the moral relation. Our
39 boys blithely talk nowadays; they learn from somebody--the Lord
40 knows from whom--that Advaita makes people immoral, because if
41 we are all one and all God, what need of morality will there be at
42 all! In the first place, that is the argument of the brute, who can
43 only be kept down by the whip. If you are such brutes, commit
44 suicide rather than pass for human beings who have to be kept down
45 by the whip. If the whip is taken away, you will all be demons! You
46 ought all to be killed if such is the case. There is no help for you;
47 you must always be living under this whip and rod, and there is no
48 salvation, no escape for you.

49 In the second place, Advaita and Advaita alone explains
50 morality. Every religion preaches that the essence of all morality is
51 to do good to others. And why? Be unselfish. And why should I?
52 Some God has said it? He is not for me. Some texts have declared

1 it? Let them; that is nothing to me; let them all tell it. And if they do,
2 what is it to me? Each one for himself, and somebody take the
3 hindermost--that is all the morality in the world, at least with many.
4 What is the reason that I should be moral? You cannot explain it
5 except when you come to know the truth as given in the Gita: "He
6 who sees everyone in himself, and himself in everyone, thus seeing
7 the same God living in all, he, the sage, no more kills the Self by the
8 self." Know through Advaita that whomsoever you hurt, you hurt
9 yourself; they are all you. Whether you know it or not, through all
10 hands you work, through all feet you move, you are the king
11 enjoying in the palace, you are the beggar leading that miserable
12 existence in the street; you are in the ignorant as well as in the
13 learned, you are in the man who is weak, and you are in the strong;
14 know this and be sympathetic. And that is why we must not hurt
15 others. That is why I do not even care whether I have to starve,
16 because there will be millions of mouths eating at the same time,
17 and they are all mine. Therefore I should not care what becomes of
18 me and mine, for the whole universe is mine, I am enjoying all the
19 bliss at the same time; and who can kill me or the universe? Herein
20 is morality. Here, in Advaita alone, is morality explained. The others
21 teach it, but cannot give you its reason. Then, so far about
22 explanation.

23 What is the gain? It is strength. Take off that veil of hypnotism
24 which you have cast upon the world, send not out thoughts and
25 words of weakness unto humanity. Know that all sins and all evils
26 can be summed up in that one word, weakness. It is weakness that
27 is the motive power in all evil doing; it is weakness that is the
28 source of all selfishness; it is weakness that makes men injure
29 others; it is weakness that makes them manifest what they are not
30 in reality. Let them all know what they are; let them repeat day and
31 night what they are. Soham. Let them suck it in with their mothers'
32 milk, this idea of strength--I am He, I am He. This is to be heard
33 first--{Sanskrit} etc. And then let them think of it, and out of that
34 thought, out of that heart will proceed works such as the world has
35 never seen. What has to be done? Ay, this Advaita is said by some to
36 be impracticable; that is to say, it is not yet manifesting itself on the
37 material plane. To a certain extent that is true, for remember the
38 saying of the Vedas:

39 {Sanskrit}

40 "Om, this is the Brahman; Om, this is the greatest reality; he
41 who knows the secret of this Om, whatever he desires that he gets."
42 Ay, therefore first know the secret of this Om, that you are the Om;
43 know the secret of this Tattvamasi, and then and then alone
44 whatever you want shall come to you. If you want to be great
45 materially, believe that you are so. I may be a little bubble, and you
46 may be a wave mountain-high, but know that for both of us the
47 infinite ocean is the background, the infinite Brahman is our
48 magazine of power and strength, and we can draw as much as we
49 like, both of us, I the bubble and you the mountain-high wave.
50 Believe, therefore, in yourselves. The secret of Advaita is: Believe in
51 yourselves first, and then believe in anything else. In the history of
52 the world, you will find that only those nations that have believed in

1 themselves have become great and strong. In the history of each
2 nation, you will always find that only those individuals who have
3 believed in themselves have become great and strong. Here, to
4 India, came an Englishman who was only a clerk, and for want of
5 funds and other reasons he twice tried to blow his brains out; and
6 when he failed, he believed in himself, he believed that he was born
7 to do great things; and that man became Lord Clive, the founder of
8 the Empire. If he had believed the Padres and gone crawling all his
9 life--"O Lord, I am weak, and I am low"--where would he have been?
10 In a lunatic asylum. You also are made lunatics by these evil
11 teachings. I have seen, all the world over, the bad effects of these
12 weak teachings of humility destroying the human race. Our children
13 are brought up in this way, and is it a wonder that they become
14 semi-lunatics?

15 This is teaching on the practical side. Believe, therefore, in
16 yourselves, and if you want material wealth, work it out; it will
17 come to you. If you want to be intellectual, work it out on the
18 intellectual plane, and intellectual giants you shall be. And if you
19 want to attain to freedom, work it out on the spiritual plane, and
20 free you shall be and shall enter into Nirvana, the Eternal Bliss. But
21 one defect which lay in the Advaita was its being worked out so
22 long on the spiritual plane only, and nowhere else; now the time has
23 come when you have to make it practical. It shall no more be a
24 Rahasya, a secret, it shall no more live with monks in cave and
25 forests, and in the Himalayas; it must come down to the daily,
26 everyday life of the people; it shall be worked out in the palace of
27 the king, in the cave of the recluse; it shall be worked out in the
28 cottage of the poor, by the beggar in the street, everywhere;
29 anywhere it can be worked out. Therefore do not fear whether you
30 are a woman or a Shudra, for this religion is so great, says Lord
31 Krishna, that even a little of it brings a great amount of good.

32 Therefore, children of the Aryans, do not sit idle; awake,
33 arise, and stop not till the goal is reached. The time has come when
34 this Advaita is to be worked out practically. Let us bring it down
35 from heaven unto the earth; this is the present dispensation. Ay, the
36 voices of our forefathers of old are telling us to bring it down from
37 heaven to the earth. Let your teachings permeate the world, till
38 they have entered into every pore of society, till they have become
39 the common property of everybody, till they have become part and
40 parcel of our lives, till they have entered into our veins and tingle
41 with every drop of blood there.

42 Ay, you may be astonished to hear that as practical Vedantists
43 the Americans are better than we are. I used to stand on the
44 seashore at New York and look at the immigrants coming from
45 different countries--crushed, downtrodden, hopeless, unable to look
46 a man in the face, with a little bundle of clothes as all their
47 possession, and these all in rags; if they saw a policeman they were
48 afraid and tried to get to the other side of the foot-path. And, mark
49 you, in six months those very men were walking erect, well clothed,
50 looking everybody in the face; and what made this wonderful
51 difference? Say, this man comes from Armenia or somewhere else
52 where he was crushed down beyond all recognition, where

1 everybody told him he was a born slave and born to remain in a low
2 state all his life, and where at the least move on his part he was
3 trodden upon. There everything told him, as it were, "Slave! you are
4 a slave, remain so. Hopeless you were born, hopeless you must
5 remain." Even the very air murmured round him, as it were, "There
6 is no hope for you; hopeless and a slave you must remain", while
7 the strong man crushed the life out of him. And when he landed in
8 the streets of New York, he found a gentleman, well-dressed,
9 shaking him by the hand; it made no difference that the one was in
10 rags and the other well-clad. He went a step further and saw a
11 restaurant, that there were gentlemen dining at a table, and he was
12 asked to take a seat at the corner of the same table. He went about
13 and found a new life, that there was a place where he was a man
14 among men. Perhaps he went to Washington, shook hands with the
15 President of the United States, and perhaps there he saw men
16 coming from distant villages, peasants, and ill-clad, all shaking
17 hands with the President. Then the veil of Maya slipped away from
18 him. He is Brahman, he who has been hypnotised into slavery and
19 weakness is once more awake, and he rises up and finds himself a
20 man in a world of men. Ay, in this country of ours, the very birth-
21 place of the Vedanta, our masses have been hypnotised for ages
22 into that state. To touch them is pollution, to sit with them is
23 pollution! Hopeless they were born, hopeless they must remain!
24 And the result is that they have been sinking, sinking, sinking, and
25 have come to the last stage to which a human being can come. For
26 what country is there in the world where man has to sleep with the
27 cattle? And for this, blame nobody else, do not commit the mistake
28 of the ignorant. The effect is here and the cause is here too. We are
29 to blame. Stand up, be bold, and take the blame on your own
30 shoulders. Do not go about throwing mud at others; for all the
31 faults you suffer from, you are the sole and only cause.

32 Young men of Lahore, understand this, therefore, this great
33 sin, hereditary and national, is on our shoulders. There is no hope
34 for us. You may make thousands of societies, twenty thousand
35 political assemblages, fifty thousand institutions. These will be of no
36 use until there is that sympathy, that love, that heart that thinks for
37 all; until Buddha's heart comes once more into India, until the
38 words of the Lord Krishna are brought to their practical use, there
39 is no hope for us. You go on imitating the Europeans and their
40 societies and their assemblages, but let me tell you a story, a fact
41 that I saw with my own eyes.

42 A company of Burmans was taken over to London by some
43 persons here, who turned out to be Eurasians. They exhibited these
44 people in London, took all the money, and then took these Burmans
45 over to the Continent, and left them there for good or evil. These
46 poor people did not know a word of any European language, but the
47 English Consul in Austria sent them over to London. They were
48 helpless in London, without knowing anyone. But an English lady
49 got to know of them, took these foreigners from Burma into her
50 own house, gave them her own clothes, her bed, and everything,
51 and then sent the news to the papers. And, mark you, the next day
52 the whole nation was, as it were, roused. Money poured in, and

1 these people were helped out and sent back to Burma. On this sort
2 of sympathy are based all their political and other institutions; it is
3 the rock-foundation of love, for themselves at least. They may not
4 love the world; and the Burmans may be their enemies, but in
5 England, it goes without saying, there is this great love for their
6 own people, for truth and justice and charity to the stranger at the
7 door. I should be the most ungrateful man if I did not tell you how
8 wonderfully and how hospitably I was received in every country in
9 the West. Where is the heart here to build upon? No sooner do we
10 start a little joint-stock company than we try to cheat each other,
11 and the whole thing comes down with a crash. You talk of imitating
12 the English and building up as big a nation as they are. But where
13 are the foundations? Ours are only sand, and, therefore, the
14 building comes down with a crash in no time.

15 Therefore, young men of Lahore, raise once more that mighty
16 banner of Advaita, for on no other ground can you have that
17 wonderful love until you see that the same Lord is present
18 everywhere. Unfurl that banner of love! "Arise, awake, and stop not
19 till the goal is reached." Arise, arise once more, for nothing can be
20 done without renunciation. If you want to help others, your little
21 self must go. In the words of the Christians--you cannot serve God
22 and Mammon at the same time. Have Vairagya. Your ancestors gave
23 up the world for doing great things. At the present time there are
24 men who give up the world to help their own salvation. Throw away
25 everything, even your own salvation, and go and help others. Ay,
26 you are always talking bold words, but here is practical Vedanta
27 before you. Give up this little life of yours. What matters it if you die
28 of starvation--you and I and thousands like us--so long as this nation
29 lives? The nation is sinking, the curse of unnumbered millions is on
30 our heads--those to whom we have been giving ditch-water to drink
31 when they have been dying of thirst and while the perennial river of
32 water was flowing past, the unnumbered millions whom we have
33 allowed to starve in sight of plenty, the unnumbered millions to
34 whom we have talked of Advaita and whom we have hated with all
35 our strength, the unnumbered millions for whom we have invented
36 the doctrine of Lokachara (usage), to whom we have talked
37 theoretically that we are all the same and all are one with the same
38 Lord, without even an ounce of practice. "Yet, my friends, it must be
39 only in the mind and never in practice!" Wipe off this blot. "Arise
40 and awake." What matters it if this little life goes? Everyone has to
41 die, the saint or the sinner, the rich or the poor. The body never
42 remains for anyone. Arise and awake and be perfectly sincere. Our
43 insincerity in India is awful; what we want is character, that
44 steadiness and character that make a man cling on to a thing like
45 grim death.

46 "Let the sages blame or let them praise, let Lakshmi come
47 today or let her go away, let death come just now or in a hundred
48 years; he indeed is the sage who does not make one false step from
49 the right path." Arise and awake, for the time is passing and all our
50 energies will be frittered away in vain talking. Arise and awake, let
51 minor things, and quarrels over little details and fights over little
52 doctrines be thrown aside, for here is the greatest of all works,

1 here are the sinking millions. When the Mohammedans first came
2 into India, what a great number of Hindus were here; but mark,
3 how today they have dwindled down! Every day they will become
4 less and less till they wholly disappear. Let them disappear, but with
5 them will disappear the marvellous ideas, of which, with all their
6 defects and all their misrepresentations, they still stand as
7 representatives. And with them will disappear this marvellous
8 Advaita, the crest-jewel of all spiritual thought. Therefore, arise,
9 awake, with your hands stretched out to protect the spirituality of
10 the world. And first of all, work it out for your own country. What
11 we want is not so much spirituality as a little of the bringing down
12 of the Advaita into the material world. First bread and then religion.
13 We stuff them too much with religion, when the poor fellows have
14 been starving. No dogmas will satisfy the cravings of hunger. There
15 are two curses here: first our weakness, secondly, our hatred, our
16 dried-up hearts. You may talk doctrines by the millions, you may
17 have sects by the hundreds of millions; ay, but it is nothing until you
18 have the heart to feel. Feel for them as your Veda teaches you, till
19 you find they are parts of your own bodies, till you realise that you
20 and they, the poor and the rich, the saint and the sinner, are all
21 parts of One Infinite Whole, which you call Brahman.

22 Gentlemen, I have tried to place before you a few of the most
23 brilliant points of the Advaita system, and now the time has come
24 when it should be carried into practice, not only in this country but
25 everywhere. Modern science and its sledge-hammer blows are
26 pulverising the porcelain foundations of all dualistic religions
27 everywhere. Not only here are the dualists torturing texts till they
28 will extend no longer--for texts are not India-rubber--it is not only
29 here that they are trying to get into the nooks and corners to
30 protect themselves; it is still more so in Europe and America. And
31 even there something of this idea will have to go from India. It has
32 already got there. It will have to grow and increase and save their
33 civilisations too. For in the West the old order of things is vanishing,
34 giving way to a new order of things, which is the worship of gold,
35 the worship of Mammon. Thus this old crude system of religion was
36 better than the modern system, namely--competition and gold. No
37 nation, however strong, can stand on such foundations, and the
38 history of the world tells us that all that had such foundations are
39 dead and gone. In the first place we have to stop the incoming of
40 such a wave in India. Therefore preach the Advaita to every one, so
41 that religion may withstand the shock of modern science. Not only
42 so, you will have to help others; your thought will help out Europe
43 and America. But above all, let me once more remind you that here
44 is need of practical work, and the first part of that is that you should
45 go to the sinking millions of India, and take them by the hand,
46 remembering the words of the Lord Krishna:

47 {Sanskrit}

48 "Even in this life they have conquered relative existence
49 whose minds are firm-fixed on the sameness of everything, for God
50 is pure and the same to all; therefore, such are said to be living in
51 God."

VEDANTISM

At Khetri on 20th December 1897, Swami Vivekananda delivered a lecture on Vedantism in the hall of the Maharaja's bungalow in which he lodged with his disciples. The Swami was introduced by the Raja, who was the president of the meeting; and he spoke for more than an hour and a half. The Swami was at his best, and it was a matter of regret that no shorthand writer was present to report this interesting lecture at length. The following is a summary from notes taken down at the time:

Two nations of yore, namely the Greek and the Aryan, placed in different environments and circumstances--the former, surrounded by all that was beautiful, sweet, and tempting in nature, with an invigorating climate, and the latter, surrounded on every side by all that was sublime, and born and nurtured in a climate which did not allow of much physical exercise--developed two peculiar and different ideals of civilisation. The study of the Greeks was the outer infinite, while that of the Aryans was the inner infinite; one studied the macrocosm, and the other the microcosm. Each had its distinct part to play in the civilisation of the world. Not that one was required to borrow from the other, but if they compared notes both would be the gainers. The Aryans were by nature an analytical race. In the sciences of mathematics and grammar wonderful fruits were gained, and by the analysis of mind the full tree was developed. In Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, and the Egyptian neo-Platonists, we can find traces of Indian thought.

The Swami then traced in detail the influence of Indian thought on Europe and showed how at different periods Spain, Germany, and other European countries were greatly influenced by it. The Indian prince, Dara-Shuko, translated the Upanishads into Persian, and a Latin translation of the same was seen by Schopenhauer, whose philosophy was moulded by these. Next to him, the philosophy of Kant also shows traces of the teachings of the Upanishads. In Europe it is the interest in comparative philology that attracts scholars to the study of Sanskrit, though there are men like Deussen who take interest in philosophy for its own sake. The Swami hoped that in future much more interest would be taken in the study of Sanskrit. He then showed that the word "Hindu" in former times was full of meaning, as referring to the people living beyond the Sindhu or the Indus; it is now meaningless, representing neither the nation nor their religion, for on this side of the Indus, various races professing different religions live at the present day.

The Swami then dwelt at length on the Vedas and stated that they were not spoken by any person, but the ideas were evolving slowly and slowly until they were embodied in book form, and then that book became the authority. He said that various religions were embodied in books: the power of books seemed to be infinite. The Hindus have their Vedas, and will have to hold on to them for

1 thousands of years more, but their ideas about them are to be
2 changed and built anew on a solid foundation of rock. The Vedas, he
3 said, were a huge literature. Ninety-nine per cent of them were
4 missing; they were in the keeping of certain families, with whose
5 extinction the books were lost. But still, those that are left now
6 could not be contained even in a large hall like that. They were
7 written in language archaic and simple; their grammar was very
8 crude, so much so that it was said that some part of the Vedas had
9 no meaning.

10 He then dilated on the two portions of the Vedas--the Karma
11 Kanda and the Jnana Kanda. The Karma Kanda, he said, were the
12 Samhitas and the Brahmanas. The Brahmanas dealt with sacrifices.
13 The Samhitas were songs composed in Chhandas known as
14 Anushtup, Trishtup, Jagati, etc. Generally they praised deities such
15 as Varuna or Indra; and the question arose who were these deities;
16 and if any theories were raised about them, they were smashed up
17 by other theories, and so on it went.

18 The Swami then proceeded to explain different ideas of
19 worship. With the ancient Babylonians, the soul was only a double,
20 having no individuality of its own and not able to break its
21 connection with the body. This double was believed to suffer hunger
22 and thirst, feelings and emotions like those of the old body. Another
23 idea was that if the first body was injured the double would be
24 injured also; when the first was annihilated, the double also
25 perished; so the tendency grew to preserve the body, and thus
26 mummies, tombs, and graves came into existence. The Egyptians,
27 the Babylonians, and the Jews never got any farther than this idea
28 of the double; they did not reach to the idea of the Atman beyond.

29 Prof. Max Muller's opinion was that not the least trace of
30 ancestral worship could be found in the Rig-Veda. There we do not
31 meet with the horrid sight of mummies staring stark and blank at
32 us. There the gods were friendly to man; communion between the
33 worshipper and worshipped was healthy. There was no moroseness,
34 no want of simple joy, no lack of smiles or light in the eyes. The
35 Swami said that dwelling on the Vedas he even seemed to hear the
36 laughter of the gods. The Vedic Rishis might not have had finish in
37 their expression, but they were men of culture and heart, and we
38 are brutes in comparison to them. Swamiji then recited several
39 Mantras in confirmation of what he had just said: "Carry him to the
40 place where the Fathers live, where there is no grief or sorrow" etc.
41 Thus the idea arose that the sooner the dead body was cremated
42 the better. By degrees they came to know that there was a finer
43 body that went to a place where there was all joy and no sorrow. In
44 the Semitic type of religion there was tribulation and fear; it was
45 thought that if a man saw God, he would die. But according to the
46 Rig-Veda, when a man saw God face to face then began his real life.

47 Now the questions came to be asked: What were these gods?
48 Sometimes Indra came and helped man; sometimes Indra drank too
49 much Soma. Now and again, adjectives such as all-powerful, all-
50 pervading, were attributed to him; the same was the case with
51 Varuna. In this way it went on, and some of these Mantras depicting
52 the characteristics of these gods were marvellous, and the

1 language was exceedingly grand. The speaker here repeated the
2 famous *Nasadiya Sukta* which describes the Pralaya state and in
3 which occurs the idea of "Darkness covering darkness", and asked
4 if the persons that described these sublime ideas in such poetic
5 thought were uncivilised and uncultured, then what should we call
6 ourselves. It was not for him, Swamiji said, to criticise or pass any
7 judgment on those Rishis and their gods--Indra or Varuna. All this
8 was like a panorama, unfolding one scene after another, and behind
9 them all as a background stood out {Sanskrit}--"That which exists
10 is One; sages call It variously." The whole thing was most mystical,
11 marvellous, and exquisitely beautiful. It seemed even yet quite
12 unapproachable--the veil was so thin that it would rend, as it were,
13 at the least touch and vanish like a mirage.

14 Continuing, he said that one thing seemed to him quite clear
15 and possible that the Aryans too, like the Greeks, went to outside
16 nature for their solution, that nature tempted them outside, led
17 them step by step to the outward world, beautiful and good. But
18 here in India anything which was not sublime counted for nothing.
19 It never occurred to the Greeks to pry into the secrets after death.
20 But here from the beginning was asked again and again, "What am
21 I? What will become of me after death?" There the Greek thought--
22 the man died and went to heaven. What was meant by going to
23 heaven? It meant going outside of everything; there was nothing
24 inside, everything was outside; his search was all directed outside,
25 nay, he himself was, as it were, outside himself. And when he went
26 to a place which was very much like this world minus all its
27 sorrows, he thought he had got everything that was desirable and
28 was satisfied; and there all ideas of religion stopped. But this did
29 not satisfy the Hindu mind. In its analysis, these heavens were all
30 included within the material universe. "Whatever comes by
31 combination", the Hindus said, "dies of annihilation". They asked
32 external nature, "Do you know what is soul?" and nature answered,
33 "No". "Is there any God?" Nature answered, "I do not know". Then
34 they turned away from nature. They understood that external
35 nature, however great and grand, was limited in space and time.
36 Then there arose another voice; new sublime thoughts dawned in
37 their minds. That voice said--"Neti, Neti", "Not this, not this". All the
38 different gods were now reduced into one; the suns, moons, and
39 stars--nay, the whole universe--were one, and upon this new ideal
40 the spiritual basis of religion was built.

41 {Sanskrit}

42 --"There the sun doth not shine, neither the moon, nor stars,
43 nor lightning, what to speak of this fire. He shining, everything doth
44 shine. Through Him everything shineth." No more is there that
45 limited, crude, personal idea; no more is there that little idea of God
46 sitting in judgment; no more is that search outside, but henceforth
47 it is directed inside. Thus the Upanishads became the Bible of
48 India. It was a vast literature, these Upanishads, and all the schools
49 holding different opinions in India came to be established on the
50 foundation of the Upanishads.

51 The Swami passed on to the dualistic, qualified monistic, and
52 Advaitic theories, and reconciled them by saying that each one of

1 these was like a step by which one passed before the other was
2 reached; the final evolution to Advaitism was the natural outcome,
3 and the last step was "Tattvamasi". He pointed out where even the
4 great commentators Shankaracharya, Ramanujacharya, and
5 Madhvacharya had committed mistakes. Each one believed in the
6 Upanishads as the sole authority, but thought that they preached
7 one thing, one path only. Thus Shankaracharya committed the
8 mistake in supposing that the whole of the Upanishads taught one
9 thing, which was Advaitism, and nothing else; and wherever a
10 passage bearing distinctly the Dvaita idea occurred, he twisted and
11 tortured the meaning to make it support his own theory. So with
12 Ramanuja and Madhvacharya when pure Advaitic texts occurred. It
13 was perfectly true that the Upanishads had one thing to teach, but
14 that was taught as a going up from one step to another. Swamiji
15 regretted that in modern India the spirit of religion is gone; only the
16 externals remain. The people are neither Hindus nor Vedantists.
17 They are merely don't-touchists; the kitchen is their temple and
18 Handi Bartans (cooking pots) are their Devata (object of worship).
19 This state of things must go. The sooner it is given up the better for
20 our religion. Let the Upanishads shine in their glory, and at the
21 same time let not quarrels exist amongst different sects.

22 As Swamiji was not keeping good health, he felt exhausted at
23 this stage of his speech; so he took a little rest for half an hour,
24 during which time the whole audience waited patiently to hear the
25 rest of the lecture. He came out and spoke again for half an hour,
26 and explained that knowledge was the finding of unity in diversity,
27 and the highest point in every science was reached when it found
28 the one unity underlying all variety. This was as true in physical
29 science as in the spiritual.

1
2 **THE INFLUENCE OF INDIAN SPIRITUAL THOUGHT IN**
3 **ENGLAND**
4

5 The Swami Vivekananda presided over a meeting at which
6 the Sister Nivedita (Miss M.E. Noble) delivered a lecture on "The
7 Influence of Indian Spiritual Thought in England" on 11th March,
8 1898, at the Star Theatre, Calcutta. Swami Vivekananda on rising
9 to introduce Miss Noble spoke as follows:

10
11 LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

12 When I was travelling through the Eastern parts of Asia, one
13 thing especially struck me--that is the prevalence of Indian spiritual
14 thought in Eastern Asiatic countries. You may imagine the surprise
15 with which I noticed written on the walls of Chinese and Japanese
16 temples some well-known Sanskrit Mantras, and possibly it will
17 please you all the more to know that they were all in old Bengali
18 characters, standing even in the present day as a monument of
19 missionary energy and zeal displayed by our forefathers of Bengal.

1 Apart from these Asiatic countries, the work of India's
2 spiritual thought is so widespread and unmistakable that even in
3 Western countries, going deep below the surface, I found traces of
4 the same influence still present. It has now become a historical fact
5 that the spiritual ideas of the Indian people travelled towards both
6 the East and the West in days gone by. Everybody knows now how
7 much the world owes to India's spirituality, and what a potent factor
8 in the present and past of humanity have been the spiritual powers
9 of India. These are things of the past. I find another most
10 remarkable phenomenon, and that is that the most stupendous
11 powers of civilisation, and progress towards humanity and social
12 progress, have been effected by that wonderful race--I mean the
13 Anglo-Saxon. I may go further and tell you that had it not been for
14 the power of the Anglo-Saxons we should not have met here today
15 to discuss, as we are doing, the influence of our Indian spiritual
16 thought. And coming back to our own country, coming from the
17 West to the East, I see the same Anglo-Saxon powers working here
18 with all their defects, but retaining their peculiarly characteristic
19 good features, and I believe that at last the grand result is
20 achieved. The British idea of expansion and progress is forcing us
21 up, and let us remember that the civilisation of the West has been
22 drawn from the fountain of the Greeks, and that the great idea of
23 Greek civilisation is that of *expression*. In India we *think*--but
24 unfortunately sometimes we think so deeply that there is no power
25 left for expression. Gradually, therefore, it came to pass that our
26 force of expression did not manifest itself before the world, and
27 what is the result of that? The result is this--we worked to hide
28 everything we had. It began first with individuals as a faculty of
29 hiding, and it ended by becoming a national habit of hiding--there is
30 such a lack of expression with us that we are now considered a
31 dead nation. Without expression, how can we live? The backbone of
32 Western civilisation is--expansion and expression. This side of the
33 work of the Anglo-Saxon race in India, to which I draw your
34 attention, is calculated to rouse our nation once more to express
35 itself, and it is inciting it to bring out its hidden treasures before the
36 world by using the means of communication provided by the same
37 mighty race. The Anglo-Saxons have created a future for India, and
38 the space through which our ancestral ideas are now ranging is
39 simply phenomenal. Ay, what great facilities had our forefathers
40 when they delivered their message of truth and salvation? Ay, how
41 did the great Buddha preach the noble doctrine of universal
42 brotherhood? There were even then great facilities here, in our
43 beloved India, for the attainment of real happiness, and we could
44 easily send our ideas from one end of the world to the other. Now
45 we have reached even the Anglo-Saxon race. This is the kind of
46 interaction now going on, and we find that our message is heard,
47 and not only heard but is being responded to. Already England has
48 given us some of her great intellects to help us in our mission.
49 Every one has heard and is perhaps familiar with my friend Miss
50 Muller, who is now here on this platform. This lady, born of a very
51 good family and well educated, has given her whole life to us out of
52 love for India, and has made India her home and her family. Every
53 one of you is familiar with the name of that noble and distinguished

1 Englishwoman who has also given her whole life to work for the
2 good of India and India's regeneration--I mean Mrs. Besant. Today,
3 we meet on this platform two ladies from America who have the
4 same mission in their hearts; and I can assure you that they also
5 are willing to devote their lives to do the least good to our poor
6 country. I take this opportunity of reminding you of the name of one
7 of our countrymen--one who has seen England and America, one in
8 whom I have great confidence, and whom I respect and love, and
9 who would have been present here but for an engagement
10 elsewhere--a man working steadily and silently for the good of our
11 country, a man of great spirituality--I mean Mr. Mohini Mohan
12 Chatterji. And now England has sent us another gift in Miss
13 Margaret Noble, from whom we expect much. Without any more
14 words of mine I introduce to you Miss Noble, who will now address
15 you.

16 After Sister Nivedita had finished her interesting lecture, the
17 Swami rose and said:

18 I have only a few words to say. We have an idea that we
19 Indians can do something, and amongst the Indians we Bengalis
20 may laugh at this idea; but I do not. My mission in life is to rouse a
21 struggle in you. Whether you are an Advaitin, whether you are a
22 qualified monist or dualist, it does not matter much. But let me
23 draw your attention to one thing which unfortunately we always
24 forget: that is--"O man, have faith in yourself." That is the way by
25 which we can have faith in God. Whether you are an Advaitist or a
26 dualist, whether you are a believer in the system of Yoga or a
27 believer in Shankaracharya, whether you are a follower of Vyasa or
28 Vishvamitra, it does not matter much. But the thing is that on this
29 point Indian thought differs from that of all the rest of the world.
30 Let us remember for a moment that, whereas in every other
31 religion and in every other country, the power of the soul is entirely
32 ignored--the soul is thought of as almost powerless, weak, and
33 inert--we in India consider the soul to be eternal and hold that it
34 will remain perfect through all eternity. We should always bear in
35 mind the teachings of the Upanishads.

1 Remember your great mission in life. We Indians, and
2 especially those of Bengal, have been invaded by a vast amount of
3 foreign ideas that are eating into the very vitals of our national
4 religion. Why are we so backward nowadays? Why are ninety-nine
5 per cent of us made up of entirely foreign ideas and elements? This
6 has to be thrown out if we want to rise in the scale of nations. If we
7 want to rise, we must also remember that we have many things to
8 learn from the West. We should learn from the West her arts and
9 her sciences. From the West we have to learn the sciences of
10 physical nature, while on the other hand the West has to come to us
11 to learn and assimilate religion and spiritual knowledge. We Hindus
12 must believe that we are the teachers of the world. We have been
13 clamouring here for getting political rights and many other such
14 things. Very well. Rights and privileges and other things can only
15 come through friendship, and friendship can only be expected
16 between two equals. When one of the parties is a beggar, what
17 friendship can there be? It is all very well to speak so, but I say that
18 without mutual co-operation we can never make ourselves strong
19 men. So, I must call upon you to go out to England and America, not
20 as beggars but as teachers of religion. The law of exchange must be
21 applied to the best of our power. If we have to learn from them the
22 ways and methods of making ourselves happy in this life, why, in
23 return, should we not give them the methods and ways that would
24 make them happy for all eternity? Above all, work for the good of
25 humanity. Give up the so-called boast of your narrow orthodox life.
26 Death is waiting for every one, and mark you this--the most
27 marvellous historical fact--that all the nations of the world have to
28 sit down patiently at the feet of India to learn the eternal truths
29 embodied in her literature. India dies not. China dies not. Japan
30 dies not. Therefore, we must always remember that our backbone is
31 spirituality, and to do that we must have a guide who will show the
32 path to us, that path about which I am talking just now. If any of you
33 do not believe it, if there be a Hindu boy amongst us who is not
34 ready to believe that his religion is pure spirituality, I do not call
35 him a Hindu. I remember in one of the villages of Kashmir, while
36 talking to an old Mohammedan lady, I asked her in a mild voice,
37 "What religion is yours?" She replied in her own language, "Praise
38 the Lord! By the mercy of God, I am a Mussalman." And then I
39 asked a Hindu, "What is your religion?" He plainly replied, "I am a
40 Hindu." I remember that grand word of the Katha Upanishad--
41 Shraddha or marvellous faith. An instance of Shraddha can be
42 found in the life of Nachiketa. To preach the doctrine of Shraddha
43 or genuine faith is the mission of my life. Let me repeat to you that
44 this faith is one of the potent factors of humanity and of all
45 religions. First, have faith in yourselves. Know that though one may
46 be a little bubble and another may be a mountain-high wave, yet
47 behind both the bubble and the wave there is the infinite ocean.
48 Therefore there is hope for every one. There is salvation for every
49 one. Every one must sooner or later get rid of the bonds of Maya.
50 This is the first thing to do. Infinite hope begets infinite aspiration.
51 If that faith comes to us, it will bring back our national life as it was
52 in the days of Vyasa and Arjuna--the days when all our sublime
53 doctrines of humanity were preached. Today we are far behindhand

1 in spiritual insight and spiritual thoughts. India had plenty of
2 spirituality, so much so that her spiritual greatness made India the
3 greatest nation of the then existing races of the world; and if
4 traditions and hopes are to be believed, those days will come back
5 once more to us, and that depends upon you. You, young men of
6 Bengal, do not look up to the rich and great men who have money.
7 The poor did all the great and gigantic work of the world. You, poor
8 men of Bengal, come up, you can do everything, and you must do
9 everything. Many will follow your example, poor though you are. Be
10 steady, and, above all, be pure and sincere to the backbone. Have
11 faith in your destiny. You, young men of Bengal, are to work out the
12 salvation of India. Mark that, whether you believe it or not, do not
13 think that it will be done today or tomorrow. I believe in it as I
14 believe in my own body and my own soul. Therefore my heart goes
15 to you--young men of Bengal. It depends upon you who have no
16 money; because you are poor, therefore you will work. Because you
17 have nothing, therefore you will be sincere. Because you are
18 sincere, you will be ready to renounce all. That is what I am just
19 now telling you. Once more I repeat this to you. This is your mission
20 in life, this is my mission in life. I do not care what philosophy you
21 take up; only I am ready to prove here that throughout the whole of
22 India, there runs a mutual and cordial string of eternal faith in the
23 perfection of humanity, and I believe in it myself. And let that faith
24 be spread over the whole land.

SANNYASA: ITS IDEAL AND PRACTICE

A parting Address was given to Swamiji by the junior Sannyasins of the Math (Belur), on the eve of his leaving for the West for the second time. The following is the substance of Swamiji's reply as entered in the Math Diary on 19th June 1899:

This is not the time for a long lecture. But I shall speak to you in brief about a few things which I should like you to carry into practice. First, we have to understand the ideal, and then the methods by which we can make it practical. Those of you who are Sannyasins must try to do good to others, for Sannyasa means that. There is no time to deliver a long discourse on "Renunciation", but I shall very briefly characterise it as "*the love of death*". Worldly people love life. The Sannyasin is to love death. Are we to commit suicide then? Far from it. For suicides are not lovers of death, as it is often seen that when a man trying to commit suicide fails, he never attempts it for a second time. What is the love of death then? We must die, that is certain; let us die then for a good cause. Let all our actions--eating, drinking, and everything that we do--tend towards the sacrifice of our self. You nourish the body by eating. What good is there in doing that if you do not hold it as a sacrifice to the well-being of others? You nourish your minds by reading books. There is no good in doing that unless you hold it also as a sacrifice to the whole world. For the whole world is one; you are rated a very insignificant part of it, and therefore it is right for you that you should serve your millions of brothers rather than aggrandise this little self.

"With hands and feet everywhere, with eyes, heads, and mouths everywhere, with ears everywhere in the universe, That exists pervading all." (Gita, XIII, 13.)

Thus you must die a gradual death. In such a death is heaven, all good is stored therein--and in its opposite is all that is diabolical and evil.

Then as to the methods of carrying the ideals into practical life. First, we have to understand that we must not have any impossible ideal. An ideal which is too high makes a nation weak and degraded. This happened after the Buddhistic and the Jain reforms. On the other hand, too much practicality is also wrong. If you have not even a little imagination, if you have no ideal to guide you, you are simply a brute. So we must not lower our ideal, neither are we to lose sight of practicality. We must avoid the two extremes. In our country, the old idea is to sit in a cave and meditate and die. To go ahead of others in salvation is wrong. One must learn sooner or later than one cannot get salvation if one does not try to seek the salvation of his brothers. You must try to combine in your life immense idealism with immense practicality. You must be prepared to go into deep meditation now, and the next moment you must be ready to go and cultivate these fields (Swamiji said, pointing to the meadows of the Math). You must be prepared to explain the difficult

1 intricacies of the Shastras now, and the next moment to go and sell
2 the produce of the fields in the market. You must be prepared for all
3 menial services, not only here, but elsewhere also.

4 The next thing to remember is that the aim of this institution
5 is to make men. You must not merely learn what the Rishis taught.
6 Those Rishis are gone, and their opinions are also gone with them.
7 You must be Rishis yourselves. You are also men as much as the
8 greatest men that were ever born--even our Incarnations. What can
9 mere book-learning do? What can meditation do even? What can
10 the Mantras and Tantras do? You must stand on your own feet. You
11 must have this new method--the method of man-making. The true
12 *man* is he who is strong as strength itself and yet possesses a
13 woman's heart. You must feel for the millions of beings around you,
14 and yet you must be strong and inflexible and you must also possess
15 obedience; though it may seem a little paradoxical--you must
16 possess these apparently conflicting virtues. If your superior orders
17 you to throw yourself into a river and catch a crocodile, you must
18 first obey and then reason with him. Even if the order be wrong,
19 first obey and then contradict it. The bane of sects, especially in
20 Bengal, is that if any one happens to have a different opinion, he
21 immediately starts a new sect, he has no patience to wait. So you
22 must have a deep regard for your Sangha. There is no place for
23 disobedience here. Crush it out without mercy. No disobedient
24 members here, you must turn them out. There must not be any
25 traitors in the camp. You must be free as the air, and as obedient as
26 this plant and the dog.

1
2 WHAT HAVE I LEARNT?

3 (*Delivered at Dacca, 30th March, 1901*)
4

5 At Dacca Swamiji delivered two lectures in English. The first
6 was on "What have I learnt?" and the second one was "The Religion
7 we are born in". The following is translated from a report in Bengali
8 by a disciple, and it contains the substance of the first lecture:

9 First of all, I must express my pleasure at the opportunity
10 afforded me of coming to Eastern Bengal to acquire an intimate
11 knowledge of this part of the country, which I hitherto lacked in
12 spite of my wanderings through many civilised countries of the
13 West, as well as my gratification at the sight of the majestic rivers,
14 wide fertile plains, and picturesque villages in this, my own country
15 of Bengal, which I had not the good fortune of seeing for myself
16 before. I did not know that there was everywhere in my country of
17 Bengal--on land and water--so much beauty and charm. But this
18 much has been my gain that after seeing the various countries of
19 the world I can now much more appreciate the beauties of my own
20 land.

21 In the same way also, in search of religion, I had travelled
22 among various sects--sects which had taken up the ideals of foreign
23 nations as their own, and I had begged at the door of others, not
24 knowing then that in the religion of my country, in our national
25 religion, there was so much beauty and grandeur. It is now many
26 years since I found Hinduism to be the most perfectly satisfying
27 religion in the world. Hence I feel sad at heart when I see existing
28 among my own countrymen, professing a peerless faith, such a
29 widespread indifference to our religion--though I am very well
30 aware of the unfavourable materialistic conditions in which they
31 pass their lives owing to the diffusion of European modes of
32 thoughts in this, our great motherland.

1 There are among us at the present day certain reformers who
2 want to reform our religion or rather turn it topsy-turvy with a view
3 to the regeneration of the Hindu nation. There are, no doubt, some
4 thoughtful people among them, but there are also many who follow
5 others blindly and act most foolishly, not knowing what they are
6 about. This class of reformers is very enthusiastic in introducing
7 foreign ideas into our religion. They have taken hold of the word
8 "idolatry", and aver that Hinduism is not true, because it is
9 idolatrous. They never seek to find out what this so-called "idolatry"
10 is, whether it is good or bad; only taking their cue from others, they
11 are bold enough to shout down Hinduism as untrue. There is
12 another class of men among us who is intent upon giving some
13 slippery scientific explanations for any and every Hindu custom,
14 rite, etc., and who are always talking of electricity, magnetism, air
15 vibration, and all that sort of thing. Who knows but they will
16 perhaps some day define God Himself as nothing but a mass of
17 electric vibrations! However, Mother bless them all! She it is who is
18 having Her work done in various ways through multifarious natures
19 and tendencies.

20 In contradistinction to these, there is that ancient class who
21 say, "I do not know, I do not care to know or understand all these
22 your hair-splitting ratiocinations; I want God, I want the Atman, I
23 want to go to that Beyond, where there is no universe, where there
24 is no pleasure or pain, where dwells the Bliss Supreme"; who say, "I
25 believe in salvation by bathing in the holy Ganga with faith", who
26 say, "whomsoever you may worship with singleness of faith and
27 devotion as the one God of the universe, in whatsoever form as
28 Shiva, Rama, Vishnu, etc., you will get Moksha"; to that sturdy
29 ancient class I am proud to belong.

30 Then there is a sect who advises us to follow God and the
31 world together. They are not sincere, they do not express what they
32 feel in their hearts. What is the teaching of the Great
33 Ones?--"Where there is Rama, there is no Kama; where there is
34 Kama, there Rama is not. Night and day can never exist together."
35 The voice of the ancient sages proclaims to us, "If you desire to
36 attain God, you will have to renounce Kama-Kanchana (lust and
37 possession). The Samsara is unreal, hollow, void of substance.
38 Unless you give it up, you can never reach God, try however you
39 may. If you cannot do that, own that you are weak, but by no means
40 lower the Ideal. Do not cover the corrupting corpse with leaves of
41 gold!" So according to them, if you want to gain spirituality, to
42 attain God, the first thing that you have to do is to give up this
43 playing "hide-and-seek with your ideas", this dishonesty, this "theft
44 within the chamber of thought".

45 What have I learnt? What have I learnt from this ancient sect?
46 I have learnt:

47 {Sanskrit}

48 --"Verily, these three are rare to obtain and come only through
49 the grace of God--human birth, desire to obtain Moksha, and the
50 company of the great-souled ones." The first thing needed is
51 Manushyatva, human birth, because it only is favourable to the

1 attainment of Mukti. The next is Mumukshutva. Though our means
2 of realisation vary according to the difference in sects and
3 individuals--though different individuals can lay claim to their
4 special rights and means to gain knowledge, which vary according
5 to their different stations in life--yet it can be said in general
6 without fear of contradiction that without this Mumukshuta,
7 realisation of God is impossible. What is Mumukshutva? It is the
8 strong desire for Moksha--earnest yearning to get out of the sphere
9 of pain and pleasure--utter disgust for the world. When that intense
10 burning desire to see God comes, then you should know that you
11 are entitled to the realisation of the Supreme.

12 Then another thing is necessary, and that is the coming in
13 direct contact with the Mahapurushas, and thus moulding our lives
14 in accordance with those of the great-souled ones who have
15 reached the Goal. Even disgust for the world and a burning desire
16 for God are not sufficient. Initiation by the Guru is necessary. Why?
17 Because it is the bringing of yourself into connection with that
18 great source of power which has been handed down through
19 generations from one Guru to another, in uninterrupted succession.
20 The devotee must seek and accept the Guru or spiritual preceptor
21 as his counsellor, philosopher, friend, and guide. In short, the Guru
22 is the *sine qua non* of progress in the path of spirituality. Whom
23 then shall I accept as my Guru? {Sanskrit}--"He who is versed in
24 the Vedas, without taint, unhurt by desire, he who is the best of the
25 knowers of Brahman." Shrotriya--he who is not only learned in the
26 Shastras, but who knows their subtle secrets, who has realised
27 their true import in his life. "Reading merely the various scriptures,
28 they have become only parrots, and not Pandits. He indeed has
29 become a Pandit who has gained Prema (Divine Love) by reading
30 even one word of the Shastras." Mere book-learned Pandits are of
31 no avail. Nowadays, everyone wants to be a Guru; even a poor
32 beggar wants to make a gift of a lakh of rupees! Then the Guru
33 must be without a touch of taint; and he must be Akamahata--
34 unhurt by any desire--he should have no other motive except that of
35 purely doing good to others, he should be an ocean of mercy--
36 without-reason and not impart religious teaching with a view to
37 gaining name or fame, or anything pertaining to selfish interest.
38 And he must be the intense knower of Brahman, that is, one who
39 has realised Brahman even as tangibly as an Amalaka-fruit in the
40 palm of the hand. Such is the Guru, says the Shruti. When spiritual
41 union is established with such a Guru, then comes realisation of
42 God--then god-vision becomes easy of attainment.

43 After initiation there should be in the aspirant after Truth,
44 Abhyasa or earnest and repeated attempt at practical application of
45 the Truth by prescribed means of constant meditation upon the
46 Chosen Ideal. Even if you have a burning thirst for God, or have
47 gained the Guru, unless you have along with it Abhyasa, unless you
48 practise what you have been taught, you cannot get realisation.
49 When all these are firmly established in you, then you will reach the
50 Goal.

51 Therefore, I say unto you, as Hindus, as descendants of the
52 glorious Aryans, do not forget the great ideal of our religion, that

1 great ideal of the Hindus, which is, to go beyond this Samsara--not
2 only to renounce the world, but to give up heaven too; ay, not only
3 to give up evil, but to give up good too; and thus to go beyond all,
4 beyond this phenomenal existence, and ultimately realise the Sat-
5 Chit-Ananda Brahman--the Absolute Existence-Knowledge-Bliss,
6 which is Brahman.

THE RELIGION WE ARE BORN IN

At an open-air meeting convened at Dacca, on the 31st March, 1901, the Swamiji spoke in English for two hours on the above subject before a vast audience. The following is a translation of the lecture from a Bengali report of a disciple:

In the remote past, our country made gigantic advances in spiritual ideas. Let us, today, bring before our mind's eye that ancient history. But the one great danger in meditating over long-past greatness is that we cease to exert ourselves for new things, and content ourselves with vegetating upon that by-gone ancestral glory and priding ourselves upon it. We should guard against that. In ancient times there were, no doubt, many Rishis and Maharshis who came face to face with Truth. But if this recalling of our ancient greatness is to be of real benefit, we too must become Rishis like them. Ay, not only that, but it is my firm conviction that we shall be even greater Rishis than any that our history presents to us. In the past, signal were our attainments--I glory in them, and I feel proud in thinking of them. I am not even in despair at seeing the present degradation, and I am full of hope in picturing to my mind what is to come in the future. Why? Because I know the seed undergoes a complete transformation, ay, the seed as seed is seemingly destroyed before it develops into a tree. In the same way, in the midst of our present degradation lies, only dormant for a time, the potentiality of the future greatness of our religion, ready to spring up again, perhaps more mighty and glorious than ever before.

Now let us consider what are the common grounds of agreement in the religion we are born in. At first sight we undeniably find various differences among our sects. Some are Advaitists, some are Vishishtadvaitists, and others are Dvaitists. Some believe in Incarnations of God, some in image-worship, while others are upholders of the doctrine of the Formless. Then as to customs also, various differences are known to exist. The Jats are not outcasted even if they marry among the Mohammedans and Christians. They can enter into any Hindu temple without hindrance. In many villages in the Punjab, one who does not eat swine will hardly be considered a Hindu. In Nepal, a Brahmin can marry in the four Varnas; while in Bengal, a Brahmin cannot marry even among the subdivisions of his own caste. So on and so forth. But in the midst of all these differences we note one point of unity among all Hindus, and it is this, that no Hindu eats beef. In the same way, there is a great common ground of unity underlying the various forms and sects of our religion.

First, in discussing the scriptures, one fact stands out prominently--that only those religions which had one or many scriptures of their own as their basis advanced by leaps and bounds and survive to the present day notwithstanding all the persecution and repression hurled against them. The Greek religion, with all its beauty, died out in the absence of any scripture to support it; but

1 the religion of the Jews stands undiminished in its power, being
2 based upon the authority of the Old Testament. The same is the
3 case with the Hindu religion, with its scripture, the Vedas, the
4 oldest in the world. The Vedas are divided into the Karma Kanda
5 and the Jnana Kanda. Whether for good or for evil, the Karma
6 Kanda has fallen into disuse in India, though there are some
7 Brahmins in the Deccan who still perform Yajnas now and then with
8 the sacrifice of goats; and also we find here and there, traces of the
9 Vedic Kriya Kanda in the Mantras used in connection with our
10 marriage and Shraddha ceremonies, etc. But there is no chance of
11 its being rehabilitated on its original footing.

12 Kumarila Bhatta once tried to do so, but he was not
13 successful in his attempt.

14 The Jnana Kanda of the Vedas comprises the Upanishads and
15 is known by the name of Vedanta, the pinnacle of the Shrutis, as it
16 is called. Wherever you find the Acharyas quoting a passage from
17 the Shrutis, it is invariably from the Upanishads. The Vedanta is
18 now the religion of the Hindus. If any sect in India wants to have its
19 ideas established with a firm hold on the people it must base them
20 on the authority of the Vedanta. They all have to do it, whether they
21 are Dvaitists or Advaitists. Even the Vaishnavas have to go to
22 Gopalatapini Upanishad to prove the truth of their own theories. If
23 a new sect does not find anything in the Shrutis in confirmation of
24 its ideas, it will go even to the length of manufacturing a new
25 Upanishad, and making it pass current as one of the old original
26 productions. There have been many such in the past.

27 Now as to the Vedas, the Hindus believe that they are not
28 mere books composed by men in some remote age. They hold them
29 to be an accumulated mass of endless divine wisdom, which is
30 sometimes manifested and at other times remains unmanifested.
31 Commentator Sayanacharya says somewhere in his works
32 {Sanskrit}--"Who created the whole universe out of the knowledge
33 of the Vedas". No one has ever seen the composer of the Vedas, and
34 it is impossible to imagine one. The Rishis were only the
35 discoverers of the Mantras or Eternal Laws; they merely came face
36 to face with the Vedas, the infinite mine of knowledge, which has
37 been there from time without beginning.

38 Who are these Rishis? Vatsyayana says, "He who has attained
39 through proper means the direct realisation of Dharma, he alone
40 can be a Rishi even if he is a Mlechchha by birth." Thus it is that in
41 ancient times, Vasishtha, born of an illegitimate union, Vyasa, the
42 son of a fisherwoman, Narada, the son of a maidservant with
43 uncertain parentage, and many others of like nature attained to
44 Rishihood. Truly speaking, it comes to this then, that no distinction
45 should be made with one who has realised the Truth. If the persons
46 just named all became Rishis, then, O ye Kulin Brahmins of the
47 present day, how much greater Rishis you can become! Strive after
48 that Rishihood, stop not till you have attained the goal, and the
49 whole world will of itself bow at your feet! Be a Rishi--that is the
50 secret of power.

1 This Veda is our only authority, and everyone has the right to
2 it.

3 {Sanskrit}

4 --Thus says the Shukla Yajur Veda (XXVI.2). Can you show any
5 authority from this Veda of ours that everyone has not the right to
6 it? The Puranas, no doubt, say that a certain caste has the right to
7 such and such a recension of the Vedas, or a certain caste has no
8 right to study them, or that this portion of the Vedas is for the Satya
9 Yuga and that portion is for the Kali Yuga. But, mark you, the Veda
10 does not say so; it is only your Puranas that do so. But can the
11 servant dictate to the master? The Smritis, Puranas, Tantras--all
12 these are acceptable only so far as they agree with the Vedas; and
13 wherever they are contradictory, they are to be rejected as
14 unreliable. But nowadays we have put the Puranas on even a higher
15 pedestal than the Vedas! The study of the Vedas has almost
16 disappeared from Bengal. How I wish that day will soon come when
17 in every home the Veda will be worshipped together with
18 Shalagrama, the household Deity, when the young, the old, and the
19 women will inaugurate the worship of the Veda!

20 I have no faith in the theories advanced by Western savants
21 with regard to the Vedas. They are today fixing the antiquity of the
22 Vedas at a certain period, and again tomorrow upsetting it and
23 bringing it one thousand years forward, and so on. However, about
24 the Puranas, I have told you that they are authoritative only in so
25 far as they agree with the Vedas, otherwise not. In the Puranas we
26 find many things which do not agree with the Vedas. As for
27 instance, it is written in the Puranas that some one lived ten
28 thousand years, another twenty thousand years, but in the Vedas
29 we find: {Sanskrit}--"Man lives indeed a hundred years." Which are
30 we to accept in this case? Certainly the Vedas. Notwithstanding
31 statements like these, I do not depreciate the Puranas. They contain
32 many beautiful and illuminating teachings and words of wisdom on
33 Yoga, Bhakti, Jnana, and Karma; those, of course, we should accept.
34 Then there are the Tantras. The real meaning of the word Tantra is
35 Shastra, as for example, Kapila Tantra. But the word Tantra is
36 generally used in a limited sense. Under the sway of kings who took
37 up Buddhism and preached broadcast the doctrine of Ahimsa, the
38 performances of the Vedic Yaga-Yajnas became a thing of the past,
39 and no one could kill any animal in sacrifice for fear of the king. But
40 subsequently amongst the Buddhists themselves--who were
41 converts from Hinduism--the best parts of these Yaga-Yajnas were
42 taken up, and practised in secret. From these sprang up the
43 Tantras. Barring some of the abominable things in the Tantras, such
44 as the Vamachara etc., the Tantras are not so bad as people are
45 inclined to think. There are many high and sublime Vedantic
46 thoughts in them. In fact, the Brahmana portions of the Vedas were
47 modified a little and incorporated into the body of the Tantras. All
48 the forms of our worship and the ceremonials of the present day,
49 comprising the Karma Kanda, are observed in accordance with the
50 Tantras.

51 Now let us discuss the principles of our religion a little.
52 Notwithstanding the differences and controversies existing among

1 our various sects, there are in them, too, several grounds of unity.
2 First, almost all of them admit the existence of three things--three
3 entities--Ishvara, Atman, and the Jagat. Ishvara is He who is
4 eternally creating, preserving and destroying the whole universe.
5 Excepting the Sankhyas, all the others believe in this. Then the
6 doctrine of the Atman and the reincarnation of the soul; it maintains
7 that innumerable individual souls, having taken body after body
8 again and again, go round and round in the wheel of birth and
9 death according to their respective Karmas; this is Samsaravada, or
10 as it is commonly called the doctrine of rebirth. Then there is the
11 Jagat or universe without beginning and without end. Though some
12 hold these three as different phases of one only, and some others as
13 three distinctly different entities, and others again in various other
14 ways, yet they are all unanimous in believing in these three.

15 Here I should ask you to remember that Hindus, from time
16 immemorial, knew the Atman as separate from Manas, mind. But
17 the Occidentals could never soar beyond the mind. The West knows
18 the universe to be full of happiness, and as such, it is to them a
19 place where they can enjoy the most; but the East is born with the
20 conviction that this Samsara, this ever-changing existence, is full of
21 misery, and as such, it is nothing, nothing but unreal, not worth
22 bartering the soul for its ephemeral joys and possessions. For this
23 very reason, the West is ever especially adroit in organised action,
24 and so also the East is ever bold in search of the mysteries of the
25 internal world.

26 Let us, however, turn now to one or two other aspects of
27 Hinduism. There is the doctrine of the Incarnations of God. In the
28 Vedas we find mention of Matsya Avatara, the Fish Incarnation only.
29 Whether all believe in this doctrine or not is not the point; the real
30 meaning, however, of this Avataravada is the worship of Man--to see
31 God in man is the real God-vision. The Hindu does not go through
32 nature to nature's God--he goes to the God of man through Man.

33 Then there is image-worship. Except the five Devatas who are
34 to be worshipped in every auspicious Karma as enjoined in our
35 Shastras, all the other Devatas are merely the names of certain
36 states held by them. But again, these five Devatas are nothing but
37 the different names of the one God only. This external worship of
38 images has, however, been described in all our Shastras as the
39 lowest of all the low forms of worship. But that does not mean that
40 it is a wrong thing to do. Despite the many iniquities that have
41 found entrance into the practices of image-worship as it is in vogue
42 now, I do not condemn it. Ay, where would I have been if I had not
43 been blessed with the dust of the holy feet of that orthodox, image-
44 worshipping Brahmin!

45 Those reformers who preach against image-worship, or what
46 they denounce as idolatry--to them I say, "Brothers, if you are fit to
47 worship God-without-form discarding all external help, do so, but
48 why do you condemn others who cannot do the same? A beautiful,
49 large edifice, the glorious relic of a hoary antiquity has, out of
50 neglect or disuse, fallen into a dilapidated condition; accumulations
51 of dirt and dust may be lying everywhere within it, maybe, some
52 portions are tumbling down to the ground. What will you do to it?

1 Will you take in hand the necessary cleansing and repairs and thus
2 restore the old, or will you pull the whole edifice down to the
3 ground and seek to build another in its place, after a sordid modern
4 plan whose permanence has yet to be established? We have to
5 reform it, which truly means to make ready or perfect by necessary
6 cleansing and repairs, not by demolishing the whole thing. There
7 the function of reform ends. When the work of renovating the old is
8 finished, what further necessity does it serve? Do that if you can, if
9 not, hands off!" The band of reformers in our country wants, on the
10 contrary, to build up a separate sect of their own. They have,
11 however, done good work; may the blessings of God be showered
12 on their heads! But why should you, Hindus, want to separate
13 yourselves from the great common fold? Why should you feel
14 ashamed to take the name of Hindu, which is your greatest and
15 most glorious possession? This national ship of ours, ye children of
16 the Immortals, my countrymen, has been plying for ages, carrying
17 civilisation and enriching the whole world with its inestimable
18 treasures. For scores of shining centuries this national ship of ours
19 has been ferrying across the ocean of life, and has taken millions of
20 souls to the other shore, beyond all misery. But today it may have
21 sprung a leak and got damaged, through your own fault or
22 whatever cause it matters not. What would you, who have placed
23 yourselves in it, do now? Would you go about cursing it and
24 quarrelling among yourselves! Would you not all unite together and
25 put your best efforts to stop the holes? Let us all gladly give our
26 hearts' blood to do this; and if we fail in the attempt, let us all sink
27 and die together, with blessings and not curses on our lips.

28 And to the Brahmins I say, "Vain is your pride of birth and
29 ancestry. Shake it off. Brahminhood, according to your Shastras,
30 you have no more now, because you have for so long lived under
31 Mlechchha kings. If you at all believe in the words of your own
32 ancestors, then go this very moment and make expiation by
33 entering into the slow fire kindled by Tusha (husks), like that old
34 Kumarila Bhatta, who with the purpose of ousting the Buddhists
35 first became a disciple of the Buddhists and then defeating them in
36 argument became the cause of death to many, and subsequently
37 entered the Tushanala to expiate his sins. If you are not bold
38 enough to do that, then admit your weakness and stretch forth a
39 helping hand, and open the gates of knowledge to one and all, and
40 give the downtrodden masses once more their just and legitimate
41 rights and privileges."

REPORTS IN AMERICAN NEWSPAPERS

INDIA: HER RELIGION AND CUSTOMS

(Salem Evening News, August 29, 1893)

In spite of the warm weather of yesterday afternoon, a goodly number of members of the Thought and Work club, with guests, gathered in Wesley chapel to meet Swami Vive Kanonda, a Hindoo monk, now travelling in this country, and to listen to an informal address from that gentleman, principally upon the religion of the Hindoos as taught by their Vedar or sacred books. He also spoke of caste, as simply a social division and in no way dependent upon their religion.

The poverty of the majority of the masses was strongly dwelt upon. India with an area much smaller than the United States, contains twenty three hundred millions [sic] of people, and of these, three hundred millions [sic] earn wages, averaging less than fifty cents per month. In some instances the people in whole districts of the country subsist for months and even years, wholly upon flowers, produced by a certain tree which when boiled are edible.

In other districts the men eat rice only, the women and children must satisfy their hunger with the water in which the rice is cooked. A failure of the rice crop means famine. Half the people live upon one meal a day, the other half know not whence the next meal will come. According to Swami Vive Kyonda, the need of the people of India is not more religion, or a better one, but as he expresses it, "practicality", and it is with the hope of interesting the American people in this great need of the suffering, starving millions that he has come to this country.

He spoke at some length of the condition of his people and their religion. In course of his speech he was frequently and closely questioned by Dr. F. A. Gardner and Rev. S. F. Nobbs of the Central Baptist Church. He said the missionaries had fine theories there and started in with good ideas, but had done nothing for the industrial condition of the people. He said Americans, instead of sending out missionaries to train them in religion, would better send some one out to give them industrial education.

Asked whether it was not a fact that Christians assisted the people of India in times of distress, and whether they did not assist in a practical way by training schools, the speaker replied that they did it sometimes, but really it was not to their credit for the law did not allow them to attempt to influence people at such times.

He explained the bad condition of woman in India on the ground that Hindoo men had such respect for woman that it was thought best not to allow her out. The Hindoo women were held in such high esteem that they were kept in seclusion. He explained the old custom of women being burned on the death of their

1 husbands, on the ground that they loved them so that they could not
2 live without the husband. They were one in marriage and must be
3 one in death.

4 He was asked about the worship of idols and the throwing
5 themselves in front of the juggernaut car, and said one must not
6 blame the Hindoo people for the car business, for it was the act of
7 fanatics and mostly of lepers.

8 The speaker explained his mission in his country to be to
9 organise monks for industrial purposes, that they might give the
10 people the benefit of this industrial education and thus elevate
11 them and improve their condition.

12 This afternoon Vive Kanonda will speak on the children of
13 India to any children or young people who may be pleased to listen
14 to him at 166 North street, Mrs. Woods kindly offering her garden
15 for that purpose. In person he is a fine looking man, dark but
16 comely, dressed in a long robe of a yellowish red colour confined at
17 the waist with a cord, and wearing on his head a yellow turban.
18 Being a monk he has no caste, and may eat and drink with anyone.

19
20 (*Daily Gazette*, August 29, 1893)

21
22 Rajah Swami Vivi Rananda of India was the guest of the
23 Thought and Work Club of Salem yesterday afternoon in the Wesley
24 church.

25 A large number of ladies and gentlemen were present and
26 shook hands, American fashion, with the distinguished monk. He
27 wore an orange colored gown, with red sash, yellow turban, with
28 the end hanging down on one side, which he used for a
29 handkerchief, and congress shoes.

30 He spoke at some length of the condition of his people and
31 their religion. In course of his speech he was frequently and closely
32 questioned by Dr. F. A. Gardner and Rev. S. F. Nobbs of the Central
33 Baptist church. He said the missionaries had fine theories there and
34 started in with good ideas, but had done nothing for the industrial
35 condition of the people. He said Americans, instead of sending out
36 missionaries to train them in religion, would better send someone
37 out to give them industrial education.

38 Speaking at some length of the relations of men and women,
39 he said the husbands of India never lied and never persecuted, and
40 named several other sins they never committed.

41 Asked whether it was not a fact that Christians assisted the
42 people of India in times of distress, and whether they did not assist
43 in a practical way by training schools, the speaker replied that they
44 did it sometimes, but really it was not to their credit, for the law did
45 not allow them to attempt to influence people at such times.

46 He explained the bad condition of women in India on the
47 ground that Hindoo men had such respect for woman that it was
48 thought best not to allow her out. The Hindoo women were held in

1 such high esteem that they were kept in seclusion. He explained
2 the old custom of women being burned on the death of their
3 husbands, on the ground that they loved them so that they could not
4 live without the husband. They were one in marriage and must be
5 one in death.

6 He was asked about the worship of idols and the throwing
7 themselves in front of the juggernaut car, and said one must not
8 blame the Hindoo people for the car business, for it was the act of
9 fanatics and mostly of lepers.

10 As for the worship of idols he said he had asked Christians
11 what they thought of when they prayed, and some said they thought
12 of the church, others of G-O-D. Now his people thought of the
13 images. For the poor people idols were necessary. He said that in
14 ancient times, when their religion first began, women were
15 distinguished for spiritual genius and great strength of mind. In
16 spite of this, as he seemed to acknowledge, the women of the
17 present day had degenerated. They thought of nothing but eating
18 and drinking, gossip and scandal.

19 The speaker explained his mission in his country to be to
20 organise monks for industrial purposes, that they might give the
21 people the benefit of this industrial education and thus to elevate
22 them and improve their condition.

23
24 (*Salem Evening News*, September 1, 1893)

25
26 The learned Monk from India who is spending a few days in
27 this city, will speak in the East Church Sunday evening at 7-30.
28 Swami (Rev.) Viva Kananda preached in the Episcopal church at
29 Annisquam last Sunday evening, by invitation of the pastor and
30 Professor Wright of Harvard, who has shown him great kindness.

31 On Monday night he leaves for Saratoga, where he will
32 address the Social Science association. Later on he will speak
33 before the Congress in Chicago. Like all men who are educated in
34 the higher Universities of India, Viva Kananda speaks English easily
35 and correctly. His simple talk to the children on Tuesday last
36 concerning the games, schools, customs and manners of children in
37 India was valuable and most interesting. His kind heart was
38 touched by the statement of a little miss that her teacher had
39 "licked her so hard that she almost broke her finger." . . . As Viva
40 Kananda, like all monks, must travel over his land preaching the
41 religion of truth, chastity and the brotherhood of man, no great
42 good could pass unnoticed, or terrible wrong escape his eyes. He is
43 extremely generous to all persons of other faiths, and has only kind
44 words for those who differ from him.

45
46 (*Daily Gazette*, September 5, 1893)

47
48 Rajah Swami Vivi Rananda of India spoke at the East church

1 Sunday evening, on the religion of India and the poor of his native
2 land. A good audience assembled, but it was not so large as the
3 importance of the subject or the interesting speaker deserved. The
4 monk was dressed in his native costume, and spoke about forty
5 minutes. The great need of India today, which is not the India of
6 fifty years ago, is, he said, missionaries to educate the people
7 industrially and socially and not religiously. The Hindoos have all
8 the religion they want, and the Hindoo religion is the most ancient
9 in the world. The monk is a very pleasant speaker and held the
10 close attention of his audience.

11
12 (*Daily Saratogian*, September 6, 1893)

13
14 . . . The platform was next occupied by Vive Kananda, a Monk
15 of Madras, Hindoostan, who preached throughout India. He is
16 interested in social science and is an intelligent and interesting
17 speaker. He spoke on Mohammedan rule in India.

18 The program for today embraces some very interesting
19 topics, especially the paper on "Bimetallism", by Col. Jacob Greene
20 of Hartford. Vive Kananda will again speak, this time on the Use of
21 Silver in India.

22 23 HINDUS AT THE FAIR

24 (*Boston Evening Transcript*, September 30, 1893)

25
26 Chicago, Sept. 23:

27 There is a room at the left of the entrance to the Art Palace
28 marked "No. 1--keep out." To this the speakers at the Congress of
29 Religions all repair sooner or later, either to talk with one another
30 or with President Bonney, whose private office is in one corner of
31 the apartment. The folding doors are jealously guarded from the
32 general public, usually standing far enough apart to allow peeping
33 in. Only delegates are supposed to penetrate the sacred precincts,
34 but it is not impossible to obtain an "open sesame", and thus to
35 enjoy a brief opportunity of closer relations with the distinguished
36 guests than the platform in the Hall of Columbus affords.

37 The most striking figure one meets in this anteroom is Swami
38 Vivekananda, the Brahmin monk. He is a large, well-built man, with
39 the superb carriage of the Hindustanis, his face clean shaven,
40 squarely moulded regular features, white teeth, and with well-
41 chiselled lips that are usually parted in a benevolent smile while he
42 is conversing. His finely poised head is crowned with either a lemon
43 colored or a red turban, and his cassock (not the technical name for
44 this garment), belted in at the waist and falling below the knees,
45 alternates in a bright orange and rich crimson. He speaks excellent
46 English and replied readily to any questions asked in sincerity.

47 Along with his simplicity of manner there is a touch of
48 personal reserve when speaking to ladies, which suggests his

1 chosen vocation. When questioned about the laws of his order, he
2 has said, "I can do as I please, I am independent. Sometimes I live
3 in the Himalaya Mountains, and sometimes in the streets of cities. I
4 never know where I will get my next meal, I never keep money with
5 me. I come here by subscription." Then looking round at one or two
6 of his fellow-countrymen who chanced to be standing near he
7 added, "They will take care of me," giving the inference that his
8 board bill in Chicago is attended to by others. When asked if he was
9 wearing his usual monk's costume, he said, "This is a good dress;
10 when I am home I am in rags, and I go barefooted. Do I believe in
11 caste? Caste is a social custom; religion has nothing to do with it;
12 all castes will associate with me."

13 It is quite apparent, however, from the deportment, the
14 general appearance of Mr. Vivekananda that he was born among
15 high castes--years of voluntary poverty and homeless wanderings
16 have not robbed him of his birthright of gentleman; even his family
17 name is unknown; he took that of Vivekananda in embracing a
18 religious career, and "Swami" is merely the title of reverend
19 accorded to him. He cannot be far along in the thirties, and looks as
20 if made for this life and its fruition, as well as for meditation on the
21 life beyond. One cannot help wondering what could have been the
22 turning point with him.

23 "Why should I marry," was his abrupt response to a comment
24 on all he had renounced in becoming a monk, "when I see in every
25 woman only the divine Mother? Why do I make all these sacrifices?
26 To emancipate myself from earthly ties and attachments so that
27 there will be no re-birth for me. When I die I want to become at
28 once absorbed in the divine, one with God. I would be a Buddha."

29 Vivekananda does not mean by this that he is a Buddhist. No
30 name or sect can label him. He is an outcome of the higher
31 Brahminism, a product of the Hindu spirit, which is vast, dreamy,
32 self-extinguishing, a Sanyasi or holy man.

33 He has some pamphlets that he distributes, relating to his
34 master, Paramhansa Ramakrishna, a Hindu devotee, who so
35 impressed his hearers and pupils that many of them became
36 ascetics after his death. Mozoomdar also looked upon this saint as
37 his master, but Mozoomdar works for holiness in the world, in it but
38 not of it, as Jesus taught.

39 Vivekananda's address before the parliament was broad as
40 the heavens above us, embracing the best in all religions, as the
41 ultimate universal religion--charity to all mankind, good works for
42 the love of God, not for fear of punishment or hope of reward. He is
43 a great favourite at the parliament, from the grandeur of his
44 sentiments and his appearance as well. If he merely crosses the
45 platform he is applauded, and this marked approval of thousands he
46 accepts in a childlike spirit of gratification, without a trace of
47 conceit. It must be a strange experience too for this humble young
48 Brahmin monk, this sudden transition from poverty and self-
49 effacement to affluence and aggrandizement. When asked if he
50 knew anything of those brothers in the Himalayas so firmly believed
51 in by the Theosophists, he answered with the simple statement, "I

1 have never met one of them," as much as to imply, "There may be
2 such persons, but though I am at home in the Himalayas, I have yet
3 to come across them."

4 5 AT THE PARLIAMENT OF RELIGIONS

6 (The Dubuque, Iowa, *Times*, September 29, 1893)

7
8 WORLD'S FAIR, Sept. 28.--(Special.)--The Parliament of
9 religions reached a point where sharp acerbities develop. The thin
10 veil of courtesy was maintained, of course, but behind it was ill
11 feeling. Rev. Joseph Cook criticised the Hindoos sharply and was
12 more sharply criticised in turn. He said that to speak of a universe
13 that was not created is almost unpardonable nonsense, and the
14 Asiatics retorted that a universe which had a beginning is a self-
15 evident absurdity. Bishop J. P. Newman, firing at long range from
16 the banks of the Ohio, declared that the Orientals have insulted all
17 the Christians of the United States by their misrepresentations of
18 the missionaries, and the orientals, with their provokingly calm and
19 supercilious smile, replied that this was simply the bishop's
20 ignorance.

21 22 BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY

23
24 In response to the question direct, three learned Buddhists
25 gave us in remarkably plain and beautiful language their bed-rock
26 belief about God, man and matter.

27 [Following this is a summary of Dharmapala's paper on "The
28 World's Debt to Buddha", which he prefaced, as we learn from
29 another source, by singing a Singhalese song of benediction. The
30 article then continues:]

31 His [Dharmapala's] peroration was as pretty a thing as a
32 Chicago audience ever heard. Demosthenes never exceeded it.

33 34 CANTANKEROUS REMARKS

35
36 Swami Vivekananda, the Hindoo monk, was not so fortunate.
37 He was out of humor, or soon became so, apparently. He wore an
38 orange robe and a pale yellow turban and dashed at once into a
39 savage attack on Christian nations in these words: "We who have
40 come from the east have sat here day after day and have been told
41 in a patronising way that we ought to accept Christianity because
42 Christian nations are the most prosperous. We look about us and we
43 see England the most prosperous Christian nation in the world,
44 with her foot on the neck of 250,000,000 Asiatics. We look back into
45 history and see that the prosperity of Christian Europe began with
46 Spain. Spain's prosperity began with the invasion of Mexico.
47 Christianity wins its prosperity by cutting the throats of its fellow

1 men. At such a price the Hindoo will not have prosperity."

2 And so they went on, each succeeding speaker getting more
3 cantankerous, as it were.

4
5 (*Outlook*, October 7, 1893)

6
7 . . . The subject of Christian work in India calls Vivekananda,
8 in his brilliant priestly orange, to his feet. He criticises the work of
9 Christian missions. It is evident that he has not tried to understand
10 Christianity, but neither, as he claims, have its priests made any
11 effort to understand *his* religion, with its ingrained faiths and race-
12 prejudices of thousands of years' standing. They have simply come,
13 in his view, to throw scorn on his most sacred beliefs, and to
14 undermine the morals and spirituality of the people he has been set
15 to teach.

16
17 (*Critic*, October 7, 1893)

18
19 But the most impressive figures of the Parliament were the
20 Buddhist priest, H. Dharmapala of Ceylon, and the Hindoo monk,
21 Suami Vivekananda. "If theology and dogma stand in your way in
22 search of truth," said the former incisively, "put them aside. Learn
23 to think without prejudice, to love all beings for love's sake, to
24 express your convictions fearlessly, to lead a life of purity, and the
25 sunlight of truth will illuminate you." But eloquent as were many of
26 the brief speeches at this meeting, whose triumphant enthusiasm
27 rightly culminated in the superb rendering by the Apollo Club of the
28 Hallelujah chorus, no one expressed so well the spirit of the
29 Parliament, its limitations and its finest influence, as did the Hindoo
30 monk. I copy his address in full, but I can only suggest its effect
31 upon the audience, for he is an orator by divine right, and his
32 strong intelligent face in its picturesque setting of yellow and
33 orange was hardly less interesting than these earnest words and
34 the rich, rhythmical utterance he gave them. . . . [After quoting the
35 greater part of Swamiji's Final Address, the article continues:]

36 Perhaps the most tangible result of the congress was the
37 feeling it aroused in regard to foreign missions. The impertinence
38 of sending half-educated theological students to instruct the wise
39 and erudite Orientals was never brought home to an English-
40 speaking audience more forcibly. It is only in the spirit of tolerance
41 and sympathy that we are at liberty to touch their faith, and the
42 exhorters who possess these qualities are rare. It is necessary to
43 realise that we have quite as much to learn from the Buddhists as
44 they from us, and that only through harmony can the highest
45 influence be exerted.

46 Chicago, 3 Oct., 1893. Lucy Monroe.

47
48 [To a request of the *New York World* of October 1, 1893, for

1 "a sentiment or expression regarding the significance of the great
2 meeting" from each representative, Swamiji replied with a
3 quotation from the Gita and one from Vyasa:]

4 "I am He that am in every religion--like the thread that passes
5 through a string of pearls." "Holy, perfect and pure men are seen in
6 all creeds, therefore they all lead to the same truth--for how can
7 nectar be the outcome of poison?"

8 9 PERSONAL TRAITS

10 (*Critic*, October 7, 1893)

11
12 . . . It was an outgrowth of the Parliament of Religions, which
13 opened our eyes to the fact that the philosophy of the ancient
14 creeds contains much beauty for the moderns. When we had once
15 clearly perceived this, our interest in their exponents quickened,
16 and with characteristic eagerness we set out in pursuit of
17 knowledge. The most available means of obtaining it, after the close
18 of the Parliament, was through the addresses and lectures of Swami
19 Vivekananda, who is still in this city [Chicago]. His original purpose
20 in coming to this country was to interest Americans in the starting
21 of new industries among the Hindoos, but he has abandoned this
22 for the present, because he finds that, as "the Americans are the
23 most charitable people in the world," every man with a purpose
24 comes here for assistance in carrying it out. When asked about the
25 relative condition of the poor here and in India, he replied that our
26 poor would be princes there, and that he had been taken through
27 the worst quarter of the city only to find it, from the standpoint of
28 his knowledge, comfortable and even pleasant.

29 A Brahmin of the Brahmins, Vivekananda gave up his rank to
30 join the brotherhood of monks, where all pride of caste is
31 voluntarily relinquished. And yet he bears the mark of race upon his
32 person. His culture, his eloquence, and his fascinating personality
33 have given us a new idea of Hindoo civilization. He is an interesting
34 figure, his fine, intelligent, mobile face in its setting of yellows, and
35 his deep, musical voice prepossessing one at once in his favor. So it
36 is not strange that he has been taken up by the literary clubs, has
37 preached and lectured in churches, until the life of Buddha and the
38 doctrines of his faith have grown familiar to us. He speaks without
39 notes, presenting his facts and his conclusions with the greatest
40 art, the most convincing sincerity; and rising at times to a rich,
41 inspiring eloquence. As learned and cultivated, apparently, as the
42 most accomplished Jesuit, he has also something Jesuitical in the
43 character of his mind; but though the little sarcasms thrown into his
44 discourses are as keen as a rapier, they are so delicate as to be lost
45 on many of his hearers. Nevertheless his courtesy is unfailing, for
46 these thrusts are never pointed so directly at our customs as to be
47 rude. At present he contents himself with enlightening us in regard
48 to his religion and the words of its philosophers. He looks forward
49 to the time when we shall pass beyond idolatry--now necessary in
50 his opinion to the ignorant classes--beyond worship, even, to a

1 knowledge of the presence of God in nature, of the divinity and
2 responsibility of man. "Work out your own salvation," he says with
3 the dying Buddha; "I cannot help you. No man can help you. Help
4 yourself."

5 Lucy Monroe.

6
7 REINCARNATION

8 (*Evanston Index*, October 7, 1893)

9
10 At the Congregational Church, during the past week, there
11 have been given a course of lectures which in nature much
12 resembled the Religious Parliament which has just been completed.
13 The lecturers were Dr. Carl von Bergen of Sweden, and Suami
14 Vivekananda, the Hindu monk. . . . Suami Vivekananda is a
15 representative from India to the Parliament of Religions. He has
16 attracted a great deal of attention on account of his unique attire in
17 Mandarin colors, by his magnetic presence and by his brilliant
18 oratory and wonderful exposition of Hindu philosophy. His stay in
19 Chicago has been a continual ovation. The course of lectures was
20 arranged to cover three evenings.

21 [The lectures of Saturday and Tuesday evenings are listed
22 without comment; then the article continues:]

23 On Thursday evening Oct. 5, Dr. von Bergen spoke on
24 "Huldine Beamish, the Founder of the King's Daughters of
25 Sweden," and "Reincarnation" was the subject treated by the Hindu
26 monk. The latter was very interesting; the views being those that
27 are not often heard in this part of the world. The doctrine of
28 reincarnation of the soul, while comparatively new and little
29 understood in this country, is well-known in the east, being the
30 foundation of nearly all the religions of those people. Those that do
31 not use it as dogma, do not say anything against it. The main point
32 to be decided in regard to the doctrine is, as to whether we have
33 had a past. We know that we have a present and feel sure of a
34 future. Yet how can there be a present without a past? Modern
35 science has proved that matter exists and continues to exist.
36 Creation is merely a change in appearance. We are not sprung out
37 of nothing. Some regard God as the common cause of everything
38 and judge this a sufficient reason for existence. But in everything
39 we must consider the phenomena; whence and from what matter
40 springs. The same arguments that prove there is a future prove that
41 there is a past. It is necessary that there should be causes other
42 than God's will. Heredity is not able to give sufficient cause. Some
43 say that we are not conscious of a former existence. Many cases
44 have been found where there are distinct reminiscences of a past.
45 And here lies the germ of the theory. Because the Hindu is kind to
46 dumb animals many believe that we believe in the reincarnation of
47 souls in lower orders. They are not able to conceive of kindness to
48 dumb animals being other than the result of superstition. An
49 ancient Hindu priest defines religion as anything that lifts one up.
50 Brutality is driven out, humanity gives way to divinity. The theory of

1 incarnation does not confine man to this small earth. His soul can
2 go to other, higher earths where he will be a loftier being,
3 possessing, instead of five senses, eight, and continuing in this way
4 he will at length approach the acme of perfection, divinity, and will
5 be allowed to drink deep of oblivion in the "Islands of the Blest".

6 7 HINDU CIVILISATION 8

9 [Although the lecture at Streator on October 9 was well
10 attended, the *Streator Daily Free Press* of October 9 ran the
11 following somewhat dreary review:]

12 The lecture of this celebrated Hindoo at the Opera House,
13 Saturday night, was very interesting. By comparative philology, he
14 sought to establish the long admitted relationship between the
15 Aryan races and their descendants in the new world. He mildly
16 defended the caste system of India which keeps three-fourths of the
17 people in utter and humiliating subjection, and boasted that the
18 India of today was the same India that had watched for centuries
19 the meteoric nations of the world flash across the horizon and sink
20 into oblivion. In common with the people, he loves the past. He lives
21 not for self, but for God. In his country a premium is placed on
22 beggary and tramps, though not so distinguished in his lecture.
23 When the meal is prepared, they wait for some man to come along
24 who is first served, then the animals, the servants, the man of the
25 house and lastly the woman of the household. Boys are taken at 10
26 years of age and are kept by professors for a period of ten to twenty
27 years, educated and sent forth to resume their former occupations
28 or to engage in a life of endless wandering, preaching, and praying,
29 taking along only that which is given them to eat and wear, but
30 never touching money. Vivekananda is of the latter class. Men
31 approaching old age withdraw from the world, and after a period of
32 study and prayer, when they feel themselves sanctified, they also go
33 forward spreading the gospel. He observed that leisure was
34 necessary for intellectual development and scored Americans for
35 not educating the Indians whom Columbus found in a state of
36 savagery. In this he exhibited a lack of knowledge of conditions.

37 His talk was lamentably short and much was left unsaid of
38 seeming greater importance than much that was said.⁵

39 40 AN INTERESTING LECTURE

41 (*Wisconsin State Journal*, November 21, 1893)

42
43 The lecture at the Congregational Church [Madison] last
44 night by the celebrated Hindoo monk, Vivekananda, was an

1 ⁵ It is clear from the above report that the American Press, for
2 one reason or another, did not always give Swamiji an enthusiastic
3 reception.
4

1 extremely interesting one, and contained much of sound philosophy
2 and good religion. Pagan though he be, Christianity may well follow
3 many of his teachings. His creed is as wide as the universe, taking
4 in all religions, and accepting truth wherever it may be found.
5 Bigotry and superstition and idle ceremony, he declared, have no
6 place in "the religions of India".

7 8 THE HINDOO RELIGION

9 (*Minneapolis Star*, November 25, 1893)

10
11 "Brahminism" in all its subtle attraction, because of its
12 embodiment of ancient and truthful principles, was the subject
13 which held an audience in closest attention last evening at the First
14 Unitarian Church [Minneapolis], while Swami Vive Kananda
15 expounded the Hindoo faith. It was an audience which included
16 thoughtful women and men, for the lecturer had been invited by the
17 "Peripatetics," and among the friends who shared the privilege with
18 them were ministers of varied denominations, as well as students
19 and scholars. Vive Kananda is a Brahmin priest, and he occupied
20 the platform in his native garb, with caftan on head, orange colored
21 coat confined at the waist with a red sash, and red nether
22 garments.

23 He presented his faith in all sincerity, speaking slowly and
24 clearly, convincing his hearers by quietness of speech rather than
25 by rapid action. His words were carefully weighed, and each
26 carried its meaning direct. He offered the simplest truths of the
27 Hindoo religion, and while he said nothing harsh about Christianity,
28 he touched upon it in such a manner as to place the faith of Brahma
29 before all. The all-pervading thought and leading principle of the
30 Hindoo religion is the inherent divinity of the soul; the soul is
31 perfect, and religion is the manifestation of divinity already existing
32 in man. The present is merely a line of demarkation between the
33 past and future, and of the two tendencies in man, if the good
34 preponderates he will move to a higher sphere, if the evil has
35 power, he degenerates. These two are continually at work within
36 him; what elevates him is virtue, that which degenerates is evil.

37 Kananda will speak at the First Unitarian Church tomorrow
38 morning.

39
40 (*Des Moines News*, November 28, 1893)

41
42 Swami Vivekananda, the talented scholar from the far-off
43 India, spoke at the Central church last night [November 27]. He
44 was a representative of his country and creed at the recent
45 parliament of religions assembled in Chicago during the world's
46 fair. Rev. H. O. Breedon introduced the speaker to the audience. He
47 arose and after bowing to his audience, commenced his lecture, the
48 subject of which was "Hindoo Religion". His lecture was not
49 confined to any line of thought but consisted more of some of his

own philosophical views relative to his religion and others. He holds that one must embrace all the religions to become the perfect Christian. What is not found in one religion is supplied by another. They are all right and necessary for the true Christian. When you send a missionary to our country he becomes a Hindoo Christian and I a Christian Hindoo. I have often been asked in this country if I am going to try to convert the people here. I take this for an insult. I do not believe in this idea of conversion.⁶ To-day we have a sinful man; tomorrow according to your idea he is converted and by and by attains unto holiness. Whence comes this change? How do you explain it? The man has not a new soul for the soul must die. You say he is changed by God. God is perfect, all powerful and is purity itself. Then after this man is converted he is that same God minus the purity he gave that man to become holy. There is in our country two words which have an altogether different meaning than they do in this country. They are "religion" and "sect". We hold that religion embraces all religions. We tolerate everything but intolerance. Then there is that word "sect". Here it embraces those sweet people who wrap themselves up in their mantle of charity and say, "We are right; you are wrong." It reminds me of the story of the two frogs. A frog was born in a well and lived its whole life in that well. One day a frog from the sea fell in that well and they commenced to talk about the sea. The frog whose home was in the well asked the visitor how large the sea was, but was unable to get an intelligent answer. Then the at home frog jumped from one corner of the well to another and asked his visitor if the sea was that large.

He said yes. The frog jumped again and said, "Is the sea that large?" and receiving an affirmative reply, he said to himself, "This frog must be a liar; I will put him out of my well." That is the way with these sects. They seek to eject and trample those who do not believe as they do.

THE HINDOO MONK

(*Appeal-Avalanche*, January 16, 1894)

Swami Vive Kananda, the Hindoo monk, who is to lecture at the Auditorium [Memphis] tonight, is one of the most eloquent men who has ever appeared on the religious or lecture platform in this country. His matchless oratory, deep penetration into things occult, his cleverness in debate, and great earnestness captured the closest attention of the world's thinking men at the World's Fair Parliament of Religion, and the admiration of thousands of people who have since heard him during his lecture tour through many of the states of the Union.

In conversation he is a most pleasant gentleman; his choice of

⁶ Although in spots, as will be seen, the reporter woefully failed to follow Swamiji's argument regarding conversion, he captured enough of it to enable the reader who is familiar with Swamiji's thought to comprehend his meaning.

1 words are the gems of the English language, and his general
2 bearing ranks him with the most cultured people of Western
3 etiquette and custom. As a companion he is a most charming man,
4 and as a conversationalist he is, perhaps, not surpassed in the
5 drawing-rooms of any city in the Western World. He speaks English
6 not only distinctly, but fluently, and his ideas, as new as sparkling,
7 drop from his tongue in a perfectly bewildering overflow of
8 ornamental language.

9 Swami Vive Kananda, by his inherited religion or early
10 teachings, grew up a Brahmin, but becoming converted to the
11 Hindoo religion he sacrificed his rank and became a Hindoo priest,
12 or as known in the country of oriental ideality, a sanyasin. He had
13 always been a close student of the wonderful and mysterious works
14 of nature as drawn from God's high conception, and with years
15 spent as both a student and teacher in the higher colleges of that
16 eastern country, he acquired a knowledge that has given him a
17 worldwide reputation as one of the most thoughtful scholars of the
18 age.

19 His wonderful first address before the members of the
20 World's Fair Parliament stamped him at once as a leader in that
21 great body of religious thinkers. During the session he was
22 frequently heard in defence of his religion, and some of the most
23 beautiful and philosophical gems that grace the English language
24 rolled from his lips there in picturing the higher duties that man
25 owed to man and to his Creator. He is an artist in thought, an
26 idealist in belief and a dramatist on the platform.

27 Since his arrival in Memphis he has been guest of Mr. Hu L.
28 Brinkley, where he has received calls day and evening from many in
29 Memphis who desired to pay their respects to him. He is also an
30 informal guest at the Tennessee Club and was a guest at the
31 reception given by Mrs. S. R. Shepherd, Saturday evening. Col. R.
32 B. Snowden gave a dinner at his home at Annesdale in honor of the
33 distinguished visitor on Sunday, where he met Assistant Bishop
34 Thomas F. Gailor, Rev. Dr. George Patterson and a number of other
35 clergymen.

36 Yesterday afternoon he lectured before a large and
37 fashionable audience composed of the members of the Nineteenth
38 Century Club in the rooms of the club in the Randolph Building.
39 Tonight he will be heard at the Auditorium on "Hindooism".

40 41 PLEA FOR TOLERANCE

42 (*Memphis Commercial*, January 17, 1894)

43
44 An audience of fair proportions gathered last night at the
45 Auditorium to greet the celebrated Hindu monk, Swami Vive
46 Kananda, in his lecture on Hinduism.

47 He was introduced in a brief but informing address by Judge
48 R. J. Morgan, who gave a sketch of the development of the great
49 Aryan race, from which development have come the Europeans and

1 the Hindus alike, so tracing a racial kinship between the people of
2 America and the speaker who was to address them.

3 The eminent Oriental was received with liberal applause, and
4 heard with attentive interest throughout. He is a man of fine
5 physical presence, with regular bronze features and form of fine
6 proportions. He wore a robe of pink silk, fastened at the waist with
7 a black sash, black trousers and about his head was gracefully
8 draped a turban of yellow India silk. His delivery is very good, his
9 use of English being perfect as regards choice of words and
10 correctness of grammar and construction. The only inaccuracy of
11 pronunciation is in the accenting of words at times upon a wrong
12 syllable. Attentive listeners, however, probably lost few words, and
13 their attention was well rewarded by an address full of original
14 thought, information and broad wisdom. The address might fitly be
15 called a plea for universal tolerance, illustrated by remarks
16 concerning the religion of India. This spirit, he contended, the spirit
17 of tolerance and love, is the central inspiration of all religions which
18 are worthy, and this, he thinks, is the end to be secured by any form
19 of faith.

20 His talk concerning Hinduism was not strictly circumstantial.
21 His attempt was rather to give an analysis of its spirit than a story
22 of its legends or a picture of its forms. He dwelt upon only a few of
23 the distinctive creedal or ritual features of his faith, but these he
24 explained most clearly and perspicuously. He gave a vivid account
25 of the mystical features of Hinduism, out of which the so often
26 misinterpreted theory of reincarnation has grown. He explained
27 how his religion ignored the differentiations of time, how, just as all
28 men believe in the present and the future of the soul, so the faith of
29 Brahma believes in its past. He made it clear, too, how his faith
30 does not believe in "original sin," but bases all effort and aspiration
31 on the belief of the perfectibility of humanity. Improvement and
32 purification, he contends, must be based upon hope. The
33 development of man is a return to an original perfection. This
34 perfection must come through the practice of holiness and love.
35 Here he showed how his own people have practiced these qualities,
36 how India has been a land of refuge for the oppressed, citing the
37 instance of the welcome given by the Hindus to the Jews when Titus
38 sacked Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple.

39 In a graphic way he told that the Hindus do not lay much
40 stress upon forms. Sometimes every member of the family will
41 differ in their adherence to sects, but all will worship God by
42 worshipping the spirit of love which is His central attribute. The
43 Hindus, he says, hold that there is good in all religions, that all
44 religions are embodiments of man's inspiration for holiness, and
45 being such, all should be respected. He illustrated this by a citation
46 from the Vedas [?], in which varied religions are symbolised as the
47 differently formed vessels with which different men came to bring
48 water from a spring. The forms of the vessels are many, but the
49 water of truth is what all seek to fill their vessels with. God knows
50 all forms of faith, he thinks, and will recognize his own name no
51 matter what it is called, or what may be the fashion of the homage
52 paid him.

1 The Hindus, he continued, worship the same God as the
2 Christians. The Hindu trinity of Brahma, Vishnu, Siva is merely an
3 embodiment of God the creator, the preserver and the destroyer.
4 That the three are considered three instead of one is simply a
5 corruption due to the fact that general humanity must have its
6 ethics made tangible. So likewise the material images of Hindu
7 gods are simply symbols of divine qualities.

8 He told, in explanation of the Hindu doctrine of incarnation,
9 the story of Krishna, who was born by immaculate conception and
10 the story of whom greatly resembles the story of Jesus. The
11 teaching of Krishna, he claims, is the doctrine of love for its own
12 sake, and he expressed [it] by the words "If the fear of the Lord is
13 the beginning of religion, the love of God is its end."

14 His entire lecture cannot be sketched here, but it was a
15 masterly appeal for brotherly love, and an eloquent defense of a
16 beautiful faith. The conclusion was especially fine, when he
17 acknowledged his readiness to accept Christ but must also bow to
18 Krishna and to Buddha; and when, with a fine picture of the cruelty
19 of civilization, he refused to hold Christ responsible for the crimes
20 of progress.

21 22 MANNERS AND CUSTOMS IN INDIA

23 (*Appeal-Avalanche*, January 21, 1894)

24
25 Swami Vive Kananda, the Hindoo monk, delivered a lecture at
26 La Salette Academy [Memphis] yesterday afternoon. Owing to the
27 pouring rain, a very small audience was present.

28 The subject discussed was "Manners and Customs in India."
29 Vive Kananda is advancing theories of religious thought which find
30 ready lodgement in the minds of some of the most advanced
31 thinkers of this as well as other cities of America.

32 His theory is fatal to the orthodox belief, as taught by the
33 Christian teachers. It has been the supreme effort of Christian
34 America to enlighten the beclouded minds of heathen India, but it
35 seems that the oriental splendor of Kananda's religion has eclipsed
36 the beauty of the old-time Christianity, as taught by our parents,
37 and will find a rich field in which to thrive in the minds of some of
38 the better educated of America.

39 This is a day of "fads," and Kananda seems to be filling a
40 "long felt want." He is, perhaps, one of the most learned men of his
41 country, and possesses a wonderful amount of personal magnetism,
42 and his hearers are charmed by his eloquence. While he is liberal in
43 his views, he sees very little to admire in the orthodox Christianity.
44 Kananda has received more marked attention in Memphis than
45 almost any lecturer or minister that has ever visited the city.

46 If a missionary to India was as cordially received as the
47 Hindoo monk is here the work of spreading the gospel of Christ in
48 heathen lands would be well advanced. His lecture yesterday
49 afternoon was an interesting one from a historic point of view. He is

1 thoroughly familiar with the history and traditions of his native
2 country, from very ancient history up to the present, and can
3 describe the various places and objects of interest there with grace
4 and ease.

5 During his lecture he was frequently interrupted by questions
6 propounded by the ladies in the audience, and he answered all
7 queries without the least hesitancy, except when one of the ladies
8 asked a question with the purpose of drawing him out into a
9 religious discussion. He refused to be led from the original subject
10 of his discourse and informed the interrogator that at another time
11 he would give his views on the "transmigration of the soul," etc.

12 In the course of his remarks he said that his grandfather was
13 married when he was 3 years old and his father married at 18, but
14 he had never married at all. A monk is not forbidden to marry, but if
15 he takes a wife she becomes a monk with the same powers and
16 privileges and occupies the same social position as her husband.⁷

17 In answer to a question, he said there were no divorces in
18 India for any cause, but if, after 14 years of married life, there were
19 no children in the family, the husband was allowed to marry another
20 with the wife's consent, but if she objected he could not marry
21 again. His description of the ancient mausoleums and temples were
22 beautiful beyond comparison, and goes to show that the ancients
23 possessed scientific knowledge far superior to the most expert
24 artisans of the present day.

25 Swami Vivi Kananda will appear at the Y.M.H.A. Hall to-night
26 for the last time in this city. He is under contract with the "Slayton
27 Lyceum Bureau," of Chicago, to fill a three-years' engagement in
28 this country. He will leave tomorrow for Chicago, where he has an
29 engagement for the night of the 25th.

30
31 (*Detroit Tribune*, February 15, 1894)
32

33 Last evening a good sized audience had the privilege of
34 seeing and listening to the famous Hindu Monk of the Brahmo
35 Samaj, Swami Vive Kananda, as he lectured at the Unitarian
36 Church under the auspices of the Unity Club. He appeared in native
37 costume and made with his handsome face and stalwart figure a
38 distinguished appearance. His eloquence held the audience in rapt
39 attention and brought out applause at frequent intervals. He spoke
40 of the "Manners and Customs of India" and presented the subject in
41 the most perfect English. He said they did not call their country
42 India nor themselves Hindus. Hindostan was the name of the
43 country and they were Brahmans. In ancient times they spoke

1 ⁷ It is quite unlikely that Swamiji made this remark attributed to
2 him regarding the marriage of monks. This must have been an
3 aberration on the part of the reporter, for, as is well known, if a
4 Sannyasin takes a wife he is considered by the Hindu society to be a
5 fallen person and beyond the pale.
6

1 Sanscrit. In that language the reason and meaning of a word was
2 explained and made quite evident but now that is all gone. Jupiter
3 in Sanscrit meant "Father in Heaven." All the languages of northern
4 India were now practically the same, but if he should go into the
5 southern part of that country he could not converse with the people.
6 In the words father, mother, sister, brother, etc.; the Sanscrit gave
7 very similar pronunciations. This and other facts lead him to think
8 we all come from the common stock, Aryans. Nearly all branches of
9 this race have lost their identity.

10 There were four castes, the priests, the landlords and military
11 people, the trades people and the artisans, laborers and servants.
12 In the first three castes the boys at the ages of ten, eleven and
13 thirteen respectively are placed in the hands of professors of
14 universities and remain with them until thirty, twenty-five and
15 twenty years old, respectively. . . . In ancient times both boys and
16 girls were instructed, but now only the boys are favored. An effort,
17 however, is being made to rectify the long-existing wrong. A good
18 share of the philosophy and laws of the land is the work of women
19 during the ancient times, before barbarians started to rule the land.
20 In the eyes of the Hindu the woman now has her rights. She holds
21 her own and has the law on her side.

22 When the student returns from college he is allowed to marry
23 and have a household. Husband and wife must bear the work and
24 both have their rights. In the military caste the daughters
25 oftentimes can choose their husbands, but in all other cases all
26 arrangements are made by the parents. There is a constant effort
27 now being made to remedy infant marriage. The marriage
28 ceremony is very beautiful, each touches the heart of the other and
29 they swear before God and the assemblage that they will prove
30 faithful to each other. No man can be a priest until he marries.
31 When a man attends public worship he is always attended by his
32 wife. In his worship the Hindu performs five ceremonies, worship of
33 his God, of his forefathers, of the poor, of the dumb animals, and of
34 learning. As long as a Hindu has anything in the house a guest must
35 never want. When he is satisfied then the children, then father and
36 mother partake. They are the poorest nation in the world, yet
37 except in times of famine no one dies of hunger. Civilization is a
38 great work. But in comparison the statement is made that in
39 England one in every 400 is a drunkard, while in India the
40 proportion is one to every million. A description was given of the
41 ceremony of burning the dead. No publicity is made except in the
42 case of some great nobleman. After a fifteen days' fast gifts are
43 given by the relatives in behalf of the forefathers to the poor or for
44 the formation of some institution. On moral matters they stand head
45 and shoulders above all other nations.

46 HINDOO PHILOSOPHY

47 (Detroit Free Press, February 16, 1894)

48
49
50 The second lecture of the Hindoo monk, Swami Vive

1 Kananda, was given last evening at the Unitarian church to a large
2 and very appreciative audience. The expectation of the audience
3 that the speaker would enlighten them regarding "Hindoo
4 Philosophy," as the lecture was entitled, was gratified to only a
5 limited extent. Allusions were made to the philosophy of Buddha,
6 and the speaker was applauded when he said that Buddhism was
7 the first missionary religion of the world, and that it had secured
8 the largest number of converts without the shedding of a drop of
9 blood; but he did not tell his audience anything about the religion or
10 philosophy of Buddha. He made a number of cute little jabs at the
11 Christian religion, and alluded to the trouble and misery that had
12 been caused by its introduction into heathen countries, but he
13 skilfully avoided any comparison between the social condition of the
14 people in his own land and that of the people to whom he was
15 speaking. In a general way he said the Hindoo philosophers taught
16 from a lower truth to a higher; whereas, a person accepting a
17 newer Christian doctrine is asked and expected to throw his former
18 belief all away and accept the newer in its entirety. "It is an idle
19 dream when all of us will have the same religious views," said he.
20 "No emotion can be produced except by clashing elements acting
21 upon the mind. It is the revulsion of change, the new light, the
22 presentation of the new to the old, that elicits sensation."

23 [As the first lecture had antagonised some people, the *Free*
24 *Press* reporter was very cautious. Fortunately, however, the *Detroit*
25 *Tribune* consistently upheld Swamiji, and thus in its report of
26 February 16 we get some idea of his lecture on "Hindu Philosophy,"
27 although the *Tribune* reporter seems to have taken somewhat
28 sketchy notes:]

29
30 (*Detroit Tribune*, February 16, 1894)

31
32 The Brahman monk, Swami Vive Kananda, again lectured last
33 evening at the Unitarian church, his topic being "Hindu
34 Philosophy." The speaker dealt for a time with general philosophy
35 and metaphysics, but said that he would devote the lecture to that
36 part pertaining to religion. There is a sect that believes in a soul,
37 but are agnostic in relation to God. Buddahism [sic] was a great
38 moral religion, but they could not live long without believing in a
39 god. Another sect known as the giants [Jains] believe in the soul,
40 but not in the moral government of the country. There were several
41 millions of this sect in India. Their priests and monks tie a
42 handkerchief over their faces believing if their hot breath comes in
43 contact with man or beast death will ensue.

44 Among the orthodox, all believe in the revelation. Some think
45 every word in the Bible comes directly from God. The stretching of
46 the meaning of a word would perhaps do in most religions, but in
47 that of the Hindus they have the Sanscrit, which always retains the
48 full meaning and reasons of the world.

49 The distinguished Oriental thought there was a sixth sense
50 far greater than any of the five we know we possess. It was the

1 truth of revelation. A man may read all the books on religion in the
2 world and yet be the greatest blackguard in the country. Revelation
3 means later reports of spiritual discoveries.

4 The second position some take is a creation without
5 beginning or end. Suppose there was a time when the world did not
6 exist; what was God doing then? To the Hindus the creation was
7 only one of forms. One man is born with a healthy body, is of good
8 family and grows up a godly man. Another is born with a maimed
9 and crooked body and develops into a wicked man and pays the
10 penalty. Why must a just and holy god create one with so many
11 advantages and the other with disadvantages? The person has no
12 choice. The evildoer has a consciousness of his guilt. The difference
13 between virtue and vice was expounded. If God willed all things
14 there would be an end to all science. How far can man go down? Is
15 it possible for man to go back to brute again?

16 Kananda was glad he was a Hindu. When Jerusalem was
17 destroyed by the Romans several thousand [Jews] settled in India.
18 When the Persians were driven from their country by the Arabs
19 several thousand found refuge in the same country and none were
20 molested. The Hindus believe all religions are true, but theirs
21 antedates all others. Missionaries are never molested by the
22 Hindus. The first English missionaries were prevented from landing
23 in that country by English and it was a Hindu that interceded for
24 them and gave them the first hand. Religion is that which believes
25 in all. Religion was compared to the blind men and the elephant.
26 Each man felt of a special part and from it drew his conclusions of
27 what an elephant was. Each was right in his way and yet all were
28 needed to form a whole. Hindu philosophers say "truth to truth,
29 lower truth to higher." It is an idle dream of those who think that all
30 will at some time think alike, for that would be the death of religion.
31 Every religion breaks up into little sects, each claiming to be the
32 true one and all the others wrong. Persecution is unknown in
33 Buddahism. They sent out the first missionaries and are the only
34 ones who can say they have converted millions without the
35 shedding of a single drop of blood. Hindus, with all their faults and
36 superstitions, never persecute. The speaker wanted to know how it
37 was the christians allowed such iniquities as are everywhere
38 present in christian countries.

39 40 MIRACLES

41 (*Evening News*, February 17, 1894)

42
43 "I cannot comply with the request of The News to work a
44 miracle in proof of my religion," said Vive Kananda to a
45 representative of this paper, after being shown The News editorial
46 on the subject. "In the first place, I am no miracle worker, and in
47 the second place the pure Hindoo religion I profess is not based on
48 miracles. We do not recognize such a thing as miracles. There are
49 wonders wrought beyond our five senses, but they are operated by
50 some law. Our religion has nothing to do with them. Most of the

1 strange things which are done in India and reported in the foreign
2 papers are sleight-of-hand tricks or hypnotic illusions. They are not
3 the performances of the wise men. These do not go about the
4 country performing their wonders in the market places for pay.
5 They can be seen and known only by those who seek to know the
6 truth, and not moved by childish curiosity."

8 THE DIVINITY OF MAN

9 (*Detroit Free Press*, February 18, 1894)

11 Swami Vive Kananda, Hindoo philosopher and priest,
12 concluded his series of lectures, or rather, sermons, at the
13 Unitarian church last night, speaking on "The Divinity of God" [sic].⁸
14 In spite of the bad weather, the church was crowded almost to the
15 doors half an hour before the eastern brother--as he likes to be
16 called--appeared. All professions and business occupations were
17 represented in the attentive audience--lawyers, judges, ministers of
18 the gospel, merchants, rabbi--not to speak of the many ladies who
19 have by their repeated attendance and rapt attention shown a
20 decided inclination to shower adulation upon the dusky visitor
21 whose drawing-room attraction is as great as his ability in the
22 rostrum.

23 The lecture last night was less descriptive than preceding
24 ones, and for nearly two hours Vive Kananda wove a metaphysical
25 texture on affairs human and divine, so logical that he made
26 science appear like common sense. It was a beautiful logical
27 garment that he wove, replete with as many bright colors and as
28 attractive and pleasing to contemplate as one of the many-hued
29 fabrics made by hand in his native land and scented with the most
30 seductive fragrance of the Orient. This dusky gentleman uses
31 poetical imagery as an artist uses colors, and the hues are laid on
32 just where they belong, the result being somewhat bizarre in effect,
33 and yet having a peculiar fascination. Kaleidoscopic were the
34 swiftly succeeding logical conclusions, and the deft manipulator
35 was rewarded for his efforts from time to time by enthusiastic
36 applause.

37 The lecture was prefaced with the statement that the speaker
38 had been asked many questions. A number of these he preferred to
39 answer privately, but three he had selected, for reasons which
40 would appear, to answer from the pulpit. They were:⁹

41 "Do the people of India throw their children into the jaws of
42 the crocodiles?"

43 "Do they kill themselves beneath the wheels of the
44 juggernaut?"

1 ⁸ ?Actually the subject was "The Divinity of Man".

2
3 ⁹ ?This and the next four paragraphs appear in Vol. IV of the
4 *Complete Works* under the heading, "Is India a Benighted Country?"
5

1 "Do they burn widows with their husbands?"

2 The first question the lecturer treated in the vein that an
3 American abroad would answer inquiries about Indians running
4 around in the streets of New York and similar myths which are even
5 to-day entertained by many persons on the continent. The
6 statement was too ludicrous to give a serious response to it. When
7 asked by certain well-meaning but ignorant people why they gave
8 only female children to the crocodiles, he could only ironically reply
9 that probably it was because they were softer and more tender and
10 could be more easily masticated by the inhabitants of the rivers in
11 the benighted country. Regarding the juggernaut legend the
12 lecturer explained the old practice in the sacred city and remarked
13 that possibly a few in their zeal to grasp the rope and participate in
14 the drawing of the car slipped and fell and were so destroyed. Some
15 such mishaps had been exaggerated into the distorted version from
16 which the good people of other countries shrank with horror. Vive
17 Kananda denied that the people burned widows. It was true,
18 however, that widows had burned themselves. In the few cases
19 where this had happened, they had been urged not to do so by the
20 priests and holy men who were always opposed to suicide. Where
21 the devoted widows insisted, stating that they desired to
22 accompany their husbands in the transformation that had taken
23 place, they were obliged to submit to the fiery test. That is, they
24 thrust their hands within the flames and if they permitted them to
25 be consumed no further opposition was placed in the way of the
26 fulfilment of their desires. But India is not the only country where
27 women who have loved have followed immediately the loved one
28 through the realms of immortality; suicide in such cases have
29 occurred in every land. It is an uncommon bit of fanaticism in any
30 country; as unusual in India as elsewhere. No, the speaker
31 repeated, the people do not burn women in India; nor have they
32 ever burned witches.

33 Proceeding to the lecture proper, Vive Kananda proceeded to
34 analyze the physical, mental and soul attributes of life. The body is
35 but a shell; the mind something that acts but a brief and fantastic
36 part; while the soul has distinct individuality in itself. To realize the
37 infinity of self is to attain "freedom" which is the Hindoo word for
38 "salvation." By a convincing manner of argument the lecturer
39 showed that every soul is something independent, for if it were
40 dependent, it could not acquire immortality. He related a story from
41 the old legends of his country to illustrate the manner in which the
42 realization of this may come to the individual. A lioness leaping
43 towards a sheep in the act gave birth to a cub. The lioness died and
44 the cub was given suck by the sheep and for many years thought
45 itself a sheep and acted like one. But one day another lion appeared
46 and led the first lion to a lake where he looked in and saw his
47 resemblance to the other lion. At that he roared and realized the
48 full majesty of self. Many people are like the lion masquerading as a
49 sheep and get into a corner, call themselves sinners and demean
50 themselves in every imaginable fashion, not yet seeing the
51 perfection and divinity which lies in self. The ego of man and
52 woman is the soul. If the soul is independent, how then can it be

1 isolated from the infinite whole? Just as the great sun shines on a
2 lake and numberless reflections are the result, so the soul is distinct
3 like each reflection, although the great source is recognized and
4 appreciated. The soul is sexless. When it has realized the condition
5 of absolute freedom, what could it have to do with sex which is
6 physical? In this connection the lecturer delved deeply into the
7 water of Swedenborgian philosophy, or religion, and the connection
8 between the conviction of the Hindoo and the spiritual expressions
9 of faith on the part of the more modern holy man was fully
10 apparent. Swedenborg seemed like a European successor of an
11 early Hindoo priest, clothing in modern garb an ancient conviction;
12 a line of thought that the greatest of French philosophers and
13 novelists [Balzac?] saw fit to embody in his elevating tale of the
14 perfect soul. Every individual has in himself perfection. It lies
15 within the dark recesses of his physical being. To say that a man
16 has become good because God gave him a portion of His perfection
17 is to conceive the Divine Being as God minus just so much
18 perfection as he has imparted to a person on this earth. The
19 inexorable law of science proves that the soul is individual and must
20 have perfection within itself, the attainment of which means
21 freedom, not salvation, and the realization of individual infinity.
22 Nature! God! Religion! It is all one.

23 The religions are all good. A bubble of air in a glass of water
24 strives to join with the mass of air without; in oil, vinegar and other
25 materials of differing density its efforts are less or more retarded
26 according to the liquid. So the soul struggles through various
27 mediums for the attainment of its individual infinity. One religion is
28 best adapted to a certain people because of habits of life,
29 association, hereditary traits and climatic influences. Another
30 religion is suited to another people for similar reasons. All that is, is
31 best seemed to be the substance of the lecturer's conclusions. To
32 try abruptly to change a nation's religion would be like a man who
33 sees a river flowing from the Alps. He criticizes the way it has
34 taken. Another man views the mighty stream descending from the
35 Himalayas, a stream that has been running for generations and
36 thousands of years, and says that it has not taken the shortest and
37 best route. The Christian pictures God as a personal being seated
38 somewhere above us. The Christian cannot necessarily be happy in
39 Heaven unless he can stand on the edge of the golden streets and
40 from time to time gaze down into the other place and see the
41 difference. Instead of the golden rule, the Hindoo believes in the
42 doctrine that all non-self is good and all self is bad, and through this
43 belief the attainment of the individual infinity and the freedom of
44 the soul at the proper time will be fulfilled. How excessively vulgar,
45 stated Vive Kananda, was the golden rule! Always self! always self!
46 was the Christian creed. To do unto others as you would be done
47 by! It was a horrible, barbarous, savage creed, but he did not desire
48 to decry the Christian creed, for those who are satisfied with it to
49 them it is well adapted. Let the great stream flow on, and he is a
50 fool who would try to change its course, when nature will work out
51 the solution. Spiritualist (in the true acceptance of the word) and
52 fatalist, Vive Kananda emphasized his opinion that all was well and
53 he had no desire to convert Christians. They were Christians; it was

1 well. He was a Hindoo; that, also, was well. In his country different
2 creeds were formulated for the needs of people of different grades
3 of intelligence, all this marking the progress of spiritual evolution.
4 The Hindoo religion was not one of self; ever egotistical in its
5 aspirations, ever holding up promises of reward or threats of
6 punishment. It shows to the individual he may attain infinity by non-
7 self. This system of bribing men to become Christians, alleged to
8 have come from God, who manifested Himself to certain men on
9 earth, is atrocious. It is horribly demoralizing and the Christian
10 creed, accepted literally, has a shameful effect upon the moral
11 natures of the bigots who accept it, retarding the time when the
12 infinity of self may be attained.

13 [The *Tribune* reporter, perhaps the same who had earlier
14 heard "giants" for "Jains," this time heard "bury" for "burn"; but
15 otherwise, with the exception of Swamiji's statements regarding the
16 golden rule, he seems to have reported more or less accurately:]

17
18 (*Detroit Tribune*, February 18, 1894)

19
20 Swami Vive Kananda at the Unitarian Church last night
21 declared that widows were never buried [burned] alive in India
22 through religion or law, but the act in all cases had been voluntary
23 on the part of the women. The practice had been forbidden by one
24 emperor, but it had gradually grown again until a stop was put to it
25 by the English government. Fanatics existed in all religions, the
26 Christian as well as the Hindu. Fanatics in India had been known to
27 hold their hands over their heads in penance for so long a time that
28 the arm had gradually grown stiff in that position, and so remained
29 ever after. So, too, men had made a vow to stand still in one
30 position. These persons would in time lose all control of the lower
31 limbs and never after be able to walk. All religions were true, and
32 the people practiced morality, not because of any divine command,
33 but because of its own good. Hindus, he said, did not believe in
34 conversion, calling it perversion. Associations, surroundings and
35 educations were responsible for the great number of religions, and
36 how foolish it was for an exponent of one religion to declare that
37 another man's belief was wrong. It was as reasonable as a man
38 from Asia coming to America and after viewing the course of the
39 Mississippi to say to it: "You are running entirely wrong. You will
40 have to go back to the starting place and commence it all over
41 again." It would be just as foolish for a man in America to visit the
42 Alps and after following the course of a river to the German Sea to
43 inform it that its course was too tortuous and that the only remedy
44 would be to flow as directed. The golden rule, he declared, was as
45 old as the earth itself and to it could be traced all rules of morality
46 [sic]. Man is a bundle of selfishness. He thought the hell fire theory
47 was all nonsense. There could not be perfect happiness when it was
48 known that suffering existed. He ridiculed the manner some
49 religious persons have while praying. The Hindu, he said, closed his
50 eyes and communed with the inner spirit, while some Christians he
51 had seen had seemed to stare at some point as if they saw God

1 seated upon his heavenly throne. In the matter of religion there
2 were two extremes, the bigot and the atheist. There was some good
3 in the atheist, but the bigot lived only for his own little self. He
4 thanked some anonymous person who had sent him a picture of the
5 heart of Jesus. This he thought a manifestation of bigotry. Bigots
6 belong to no religion. They are a singular phenomena [sic].

7 8 THE LOVE OF GOD

9 (*Detroit Tribune*, February 21, 1894)

10
11 The First Unitarian Church was crowded last night to hear
12 Vive Kananda. The audience was composed of people who came
13 from Jefferson Avenue and the upper part of Woodward Avenue.
14 Most of it was ladies who seemed deeply interested in the address
15 and applauded several remarks of the Brahman with much
16 enthusiasm.

17 The love that was dwelt upon by the speaker was not the love
18 that goes with passion, but a pure and holy love that one in India
19 feels for his God. As Vive Kananda stated at the commencement of
20 his address the subject was "The Love the Indian Feels for His
21 God." But he did not preach to his text. The major portion of his
22 address was an attack on the Christian religion. The religion of the
23 Indian and the love of his God was the minor portion. The points in
24 his address were illustrated with several applicable anecdotes of
25 famous people in the history. The subjects of the anecdotes were
26 renowned Mogul emperors of his native land and not of the native
27 Hindu kings.

28 The professors of religion were divided into two classes by
29 the lecturer, the followers of knowledge and the followers of
30 devotion. The end in the life of the followers of knowledge was
31 experience. The end in the life of the devotee was love.

32 Love, he said, was a sacrifice. It never takes, but it always
33 gives. The Hindu never asks anything of his God, never prayed for
34 salvation and a happy hereafter, but instead lets his whole soul go
35 out to his God in an entrancing love. That beautiful state of
36 existence could only be gained when a person felt an overwhelming
37 want of God. Then God came in all of His fullness.

38 There were three different ways of looking at God. One was
39 to look upon Him as a mighty personage and fall down and worship
40 His might. Another was to worship Him as a father. In India the
41 father always punished the children and an element of fear was
42 mixed with the regard and love for a father. Still another way to
43 think of God was as a mother. In India a mother was always truly
44 loved and revered. That was the Indian's way of looking at their
45 God.

46 Kananda said that a true lover of God would be so wrapt up in
47 his love that he would have no time to stop and tell members of
48 another sect that they were following the wrong road to secure the
49 God, and strive to bring him to his way of thinking.

1
2 *(Detroit Journal)*
3

4 If Vive Kananda, the Brahmin monk, who is delivering a
5 lecture course in this city could be induced to remain for a week
6 longer, the largest hall in Detroit would not hold the crowds which
7 would be anxious to hear him. He has become a veritable fad, as
8 last evening every seat in the Unitarian church was occupied, and
9 many were compelled to stand throughout the entire lecture.

10 The speaker's subject was, "The Love of God". His definition
11 of love was "something absolutely unselfish; that which has no
12 thought beyond the glorification and adoration of the object upon
13 which our affections are bestowed." Love, he said, is a quality
14 which bows down and worships and asks nothing in return. Love of
15 God, he thought, was different. God is not accepted, he said,
16 because we really need him, except for selfish purposes. His lecture
17 was replete with story and anecdote, all going to show the selfish
18 motive underlying the motive of love for God. The Songs of Solomon
19 were cited by the lecturer as the most beautiful portion of the
20 Christian Bible and yet he had heard with deep regret that there
21 was a possibility of their being removed. "In fact," he declared, as a
22 sort of clinching argument at the close, "the love of God appears to
23 be based upon a theory of 'What can I get out of it?' Christians are
24 so selfish in their love that they are continually asking God to give
25 them something, including all manner of selfish things. Modern
26 religion is, therefore, nothing but a mere hobby and fashion and
27 people flock to church like a lot of sheep."

28
29 THE WOMEN OF INDIA

30 *(Detroit Free Press, March 25, 1894)*
31

32 Kananda lectured last night at the Unitarian church on "The
33 Women of India." The speaker reverted to the women of ancient
34 India, showing in what high regard they are held in the holy books,
35 where women were prophetesses. Their spirituality then was
36 admirable. It is unfair to judge women in the east by the western
37 standard. In the west woman is the wife; in the east she is the
38 mother. The Hindoos worship the idea of mother, and even the
39 monks are required to touch the earth with their foreheads before
40 their mothers. Chastity is much esteemed.

41 The lecture was one of the most interesting Kananda has
42 delivered and he was warmly received.

43 *(Detroit Evening News, March 25, 1894)*
44

45 Swami Vive Kananda lectured at the Unitarian Church last
46 night on "The Women of India, Past, Medieval and the Present." He
47 stated that in India the woman was the visible manifestation of God
48 and that her whole life was given up to the thought that she was a

1 mother, and to be a perfect mother she must be chaste. No mother
2 in India ever abandoned her offspring, he said, and defied any one
3 to prove the contrary. The girls of India would die if they, like
4 American girls, were obliged to expose half their bodies to the
5 vulgar gaze of young men. He desired that India be judged from the
6 standard of that country and not from this.

7
8 (*Tribune*, April 1, 1894)

9
10 While Swami Kananda was in Detroit he had a number of
11 conversations, in which he answered questions regarding the
12 women of India. It was the information he thus imparted that
13 suggested a public lecture from him on this subject. But as he
14 speaks without notes, some of the points he made in private
15 conversation did not appear in his public address. Then his friends
16 were in a measure disappointed. But one of his lady listeners has
17 put on paper some of the things he told in his afternoon talks, and it
18 is now for the first time given to the press:

19 To the great tablelands of the high Himalaya mountains first
20 came the Aryans, and there to this day abides the pure type of
21 Brahman, a people which we westerners can but dream of. Pure in
22 thought, deed and action, so honest that a bag of gold left in a
23 public place would be found unharmed twenty years after; so
24 beautiful that, to use Kananda's own phrase, "to see a girl in the
25 fields is to pause and marvel that God could made anything so
26 exquisite." Their features are regular, their eyes and hair dark, and
27 their skin the color which would be produced by the drops which
28 fell from a pricked finger into a glass of milk. These are the Hindus
29 in their pure type, untainted and untrammelled.

30 As to their property laws, the wife's dowry belongs to her
31 exclusively, never becoming the property of the husband. She can
32 sell or give away without his consent. The gifts from any one to
33 herself, including those of the husband, are hers alone, to do with
34 as she pleases.

35 Woman walks abroad without fear; she is as free as perfect
36 trust in those about her can render her. There is no zenana in the
37 Himalayas, and there is a part of India which the missionaries
38 never reach. These villages are most difficult of access. These
39 people, untouched by Mahometan influence, can but be reached by
40 wearisome and toilsome climbing, and are unknown to Mahometan
41 and Christian alike.

42 43 INDIA'S FIRST INHABITANTS

44 In the forest of India are found races of wild people--very
45 wild, even to cannibalism. These are the original Indians and never
46 were Aryan or Hindu.

47 As the Hindus settled in the country proper and spread over
48 its vast area, corruptions of many kinds found home among them.
49 The sun was scorching and the men exposed to it were dark in

1 color.

2 Five generations are but needed to change the transparent
3 glow of the white complexion of the dwellers of the Himalaya
4 Mountains to the bronzed hue of the Hindu of India.

5 Kananda has one brother very fair and one darker than
6 himself. His father and mother are fair. The women are apt to be,
7 the cruel etiquette of the Zenana established for protection from
8 the Mohammedans keeping them within doors, fairer. Kananda is
9 thirty-one years old.

10

11 A CLIP AT AMERICAN MEN

12 Kananda asserts with an amused twinkle in his eye that
13 American men amuse him. They profess to worship woman, but in
14 his opinion they simply worship youth and beauty. They never fall in
15 love with wrinkles and gray hair. In fact he is under a strong
16 impression that American men once had a trick--inherited, to be
17 sure--of burning of their old women. Modern history calls this the
18 burning of witches. It was men who accused and condemned
19 witches, and it was usually the old age of the victim that led her to
20 the stake. So it is seen that burning women alive is not exclusively a
21 Hindu custom. He thought that if it were remembered that the
22 Christian church burned old women at the stake, there would be
23 less horror expressed regarding the burning of Hindu widows.

24

25 BURNINGS COMPARED

26 The Hindu widow went to her death agony amid feasting and
27 song, arrayed in her costliest garments and believing for the most
28 part that such an act meant the glories of Paradise for herself and
29 family. She was worshipped as a martyr and her name was
30 enshrined among the family records.

31 However horrible the rite appears to us, it is a bright picture
32 compared to the burning of the Christian witch who, considered a
33 guilty thing from the first, was thrown in a stifling dungeon,
34 tortured cruelly to extort confession, subjected to an infamous trial,
35 dragged amid jeering to the stake and consoled amid her sufferings
36 by the bystander's comfort that the burning of her body was but the
37 symbol for hell's everlasting fires, in which her soul would suffer
38 even greater torment.

39

40 MOTHERS ARE SACRED

41 Kananda says the Hindu is taught to worship the principle of
42 motherhood. The mother outranks the wife. The mother is holy. The
43 motherhood of God is more in his mind than the fatherhood.

44 All women, whatever the caste, are exempt from corporal
45 punishment. Should a woman murder, her head is spared. She may
46 be placed astride a donkey facing his tail. Thus riding through the
47 streets a drummer shouts her crime, after which she is free, her
48 humiliation being deemed sufficient punishment to serve as a

1 preventive for further crime.

2 Should she care to repent, there are religious houses open to
3 her, where she can become purified or she can at her own option at
4 once enter the class of monks and so become a holy woman.

5 The question was put to Mr. Kananda whether the freedom
6 thus allowed in the joining the monks without a superior over them
7 did not tend to hypocrisy among the order, as he claims, of the
8 purest of Hindu philosophers. Kananda assented, but explained that
9 there is no one between the people and the monk. The monk has
10 broken down all caste. A Brahmin will not touch the low-caste
11 Hindu but let him or her become a monk and the mightiest will
12 prostrate himself before the low-caste monk.

13 The people are obliged to take care of the monk, but only as
14 long as they believe in his sincerity. Once condemned for hypocrisy
15 he is called a liar and falls to the depths of mendicancy--a mere
16 wandering beggar--inspiring no respect.

17 18 OTHER THOUGHTS

19 A woman has the right of way with even a prince. When the
20 studious Greeks visited Hindustan to learn of the Hindu, all doors
21 were open to them, but when the Mohammedan with his sword and
22 the Englishman with his bullets came their doors were closed. Such
23 guests were not welcomed. As Kananda deliciously words it: "When
24 the tiger comes we close our doors until he has passed by."

25 The United States, says Kananda, has inspired him with
26 hopes for great possibilities in the future, but our destiny, as that of
27 the world, rests not in the lawmakers of today, but in the women.
28 Mr. Kananda's words: "The salvation of your country depends upon
29 its women."

30 31 BUDDHISTIC INDIA

32 *(Delivered at the Shakespeare Club, Pasadena, California, on*
33 *February 2, 1900)*
34

35 Buddhistic India is our subject tonight. Almost all of you,
36 perhaps, have read Edwin Arnold's poem on the life of Buddha, and
37 some of you, perhaps, have gone into the subject with more
38 scholarly interest, as in English, French and German, there is quite
39 a lot of Buddhistic literature. Buddhism itself is the most interesting
40 of subjects, for it is the first historical outburst of a world religion.
41 There have been great religions before Buddhism arose, in India
42 and elsewhere, but, more or less, they are confined within their
43 own races. The ancient Hindus or ancient Jews or ancient Persians,
44 every one of them had a great religion, but these religions were
45 more or less racial. With Buddhism first begins that peculiar
46 phenomenon of religion boldly starting out to conquer the world.
47 Apart from its doctrines and the truths it taught and the message it
48 had to give, we stand face to face with one of the tremendous

1 cataclysms of the world. Within a few centuries of its birth, the
2 barefooted, shaven-headed missionaries of Buddha had spread over
3 all the then known civilised world, and they penetrated even
4 further--from Lapland on the one side to the Philippine Islands on
5 the other. They had spread widely within a few centuries of the
6 Buddha's birth; and in India itself, the religion of Buddha had at one
7 time nearly swallowed up two-thirds of the population.

8 The whole of India was never Buddhistic. It stood outside.
9 Buddhism had the same fate as Christianity had with the Jews; the
10 majority of the Jews stood aloof. So the old Indian religion lived on.
11 But the comparison stops here. Christianity, though it could not get
12 within its fold all the Jewish race, itself took the country. Where the
13 old religion existed--the religion of the Jews--that was conquered by
14 Christianity in a very short time and the old religion was dispersed,
15 and so the religion of the Jews lives a sporadic life in different parts
16 of the world. But in India this gigantic child was absorbed, in the
17 long run, by the mother that gave it birth, and today the very name
18 of Buddha is almost unknown all over India. *You* know more about
19 Buddhism than ninety-nine per cent of the Indians. At best, they of
20 India only know the name--"Oh, he was a great prophet, a great
21 Incarnation of God"--and there it ends. The island of Ceylon remains
22 to Buddha, and in some parts of the Himalayan country, there are
23 some Buddhists yet. Beyond that there are none. But [Buddhism]
24 has spread over all the rest of Asia.

25 Still, it has the largest number of followers of any religion,
26 and it has indirectly modified the teachings of all the other
27 religions. A good deal of Buddhism entered into Asia Minor. It was
28 a constant fight at one time whether the Buddhists would prevail or
29 the later sects of Christians. The [Gnostics] and the other sects of
30 early Christians were more or less Buddhistic in their tendencies,
31 and all these got fused up in that wonderful city of Alexandria, and
32 out of the fusion under Roman law came Christianity. Buddhism in
33 its political and social aspect is even more interesting than its
34 [doctrines] and dogmas; and as the first outburst of the tremendous
35 world-conquering power of religion, it is very interesting also.

36 I am mostly interested in this lecture in India as it has been
37 affected by Buddhism; and to understand Buddhism and its rise a
38 bit, we have to get a few ideas about India as it existed when this
39 great prophet was born.

40 There was already in India a vast religion with an organised
41 scripture--the Vedas; and these Vedas existed as a mass of
42 literature and not a book--just as you find the Old Testament, the
43 Bible. Now, the Bible is a mass of literature of different ages;
44 different persons are the writers, and so on. It is a collection. Now,
45 the Vedas are a vast collection. I do not know whether, if the texts
46 were all found--nobody has found all the texts, nobody even in India
47 has seen all the books--if all the books were known, this room would
48 contain them. It is a huge mass of literature, carried down from
49 generation to generation from God, who gave the scriptures. And
50 the idea about the scriptures in India became tremendously
51 orthodox. You complain of your orthodoxies in book-worship. If you
52 get the Hindus' idea, where will you be? The Hindus think the

1 Veda are the direct knowledge of God, that God has created the
2 whole universe in and through the Veda, and that the whole
3 universe exists because it is in the Veda. The cow exists outside
4 because the word "cow" is in the Veda; man exists outside because
5 of the word in the Veda. Here you see the beginning of that theory
6 which later on Christians developed and expressed in the text: "In
7 the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God." It is the
8 old, ancient theory of India. Upon that is based the whole idea of
9 the scriptures. And mind, every word is the power of God. The word
10 is only the external manifestation on the material plane. So, all this
11 manifestation is just the manifestation on the material plane; and
12 the Word is the Veda, and Sanskrit is the language of God. God
13 spoke once. He spoke in Sanskrit, and that is the divine language.
14 Every other language, they consider, is no more than the braying of
15 animals; and to denote that they call every other nation that does
16 not speak Sanskrit [Mlechchhas], the same word as the barbarians
17 of the Greeks. They are braying, not talking, and Sanskrit is the
18 divine language.

19 Now, the Veda were not written by anybody; they were
20 eternally coexistent with God. God is infinite. So is knowledge, and
21 through this knowledge is created the world. Their idea of ethics is
22 [that a thing is good] because the law says so. Everything is
23 bounded by that book--nothing [can go] beyond that, because the
24 knowledge of God--you cannot get beyond that. That is Indian
25 orthodoxy.

26 In the latter part of the Veda, you see the highest, the
27 spiritual. In the early portions, there is the crude part. You quote a
28 passage from the Veda--"That is not good," you say. "Why?" "There
29 is a positive evil injunction"--the same as you see in the Old
30 Testament. There are numbers of things in all old books, curious
31 ideas, which we would not like in our present day. You say: "This
32 doctrine is not at all good; why, it shocks my ethics!" How did you
33 get your idea? [Merely] by your own thought? Get out! If it is
34 ordained by God, what right have you to question? When the Veda
35 say, "Do not do this; this is immoral," and so on, no more have you
36 the right to question at all. And that is the difficulty. if you tell a
37 Hindu, "But our Bible does not say so," [he will reply] "Oh, your
38 Bible! it is a babe of history. What other Bible could there be except
39 the Veda? What other book could there be? All knowledge is in
40 God. Do you mean to say that He teaches by two or more Bibles?
41 His knowledge came out in the Veda. Do you mean to say that He
42 committed a mistake, then? Afterwards, He wanted to do something
43 better and taught another Bible to another nation? You cannot bring
44 another book that is as old as Veda. Everything else--it was all
45 copied after that." They would not listen to you. And the Christian
46 brings the Bible. They say: "That is fraud. God only speaks once,
47 because He never makes mistakes."

48 Now, just think of that. That orthodoxy is terrible. And if you
49 ask a Hindu that he is to reform his society and do this and that, he
50 says: "Is it in the books? If it is not, I do not care to change. You
51 wait. In five [hundred] years more you will find this is good." If you
52 say to him, "This social institution that you have is not right," he

1 says, "How do you know that?" Then he says, "Our social
2 institutions in this matter are the better. Wait five [hundred] years
3 and your institutions will die. The test is the survival of the fittest.
4 You live, but there is not one community in the world which lives
5 five hundred years together. Look here! We have been standing all
6 the time." That is what they would say. Terrible orthodoxy! And
7 thank God I have crossed that ocean.

8 This was the orthodoxy of India. What else was there?
9 Everything was divided, the whole society, as it is today, though in a
10 much more rigorous form then--divided into castes. There is
11 another thing to learn. There is a tendency to make castes just
12 [now] going on here in the West. And I myself--I am a renegade. I
13 have broken everything. I do not believe in caste, individually. It has
14 very good things in it. For myself, Lord help me! I would not have
15 any caste, if He helps me. You understand what I mean by caste,
16 and you are all trying to make it very fast. It is a hereditary trade
17 [for] the Hindu. The Hindu said in olden times that life must be
18 made easier and smoother. And what makes everything alive?
19 Competition. Hereditary trade kills. You are a carpenter? Very good,
20 your son can be only a carpenter. What are you? A blacksmith?
21 Blacksmithing becomes a caste; your children will become
22 blacksmiths. We do not allow anybody else to come into that trade,
23 so you will be quiet and remain there. You are a military man, a
24 fighter? Make a caste. You are a priest? Make a caste. The
25 priesthood is hereditary. And so on. Rigid, high power! That has a
26 great side, and that side is [that] it really rejects competition. It is
27 that which has made the nation live while other nations have died--
28 that caste. But there is a great evil: it checks individuality. I will
29 have to be a carpenter because I am born a carpenter; but I do not
30 like it. That is in the book, and that was before Buddha was born. I
31 am talking to you of India as it was before Buddha. And you are
32 trying today what you call socialism! Good things will come; but in
33 the long run you will be a [blight] upon the race. Freedom is the
34 watchword. Be free! A free body, a free mind, and a free soul! That
35 is what I have felt all my life; I would rather be doing evil freely
36 than good under bondage.

37 Well, these things that they are crying for now in the West,
38 they have done ages before there. Land has been nationalised . . .
39 by thousands all these things. There is blame upon this hide-bound
40 caste. The Indian people are intensely socialistic. But, beyond that,
41 there is a wealth of individualism. They are as tremendously
42 individualistic--that is to say, after laying down all these minute
43 regulations. They have regulated how you should eat, drink, sleep,
44 die! Everything is regulated there; from early morning to when you
45 go to bed and sleep, you are following regulations and law. Law,
46 law. Do you wonder that a nation should [live] under that? Law is
47 death. The more of the law in a country, the worse for that country.
48 [But to be an individual] we go to the mountains, where there is no
49 law, no government. The more of law you make, the more of police
50 and socialism, the more of blackguards there are. Now this
51 tremendous regulation of law [is] there. As soon as a child is born,
52 he knows that he is born a slave: slave to his caste, first; slave to his

1 nation, next. Slave, slave, slave. Every action--his drinking and his
2 eating. He must eat under a regular method; this prayer with the
3 first morsel, this prayer with the second, that prayer with the third,
4 and that prayer when he drinks water. Just think of that! Thus, from
5 day to day, it goes on and on.

6 But they were thinkers. They knew that this would not lead to
7 real greatness. So they left a way out for them all. After all, they
8 found out that all these regulations are only for the world and the
9 life of the world. As soon as you do not want money [and] you do
10 not want children--no business for this world--you can go out
11 entirely free. Those that go out thus were called Sannyasins--people
12 who have given up. They never organised themselves, nor do they
13 now; they are a free order of men and women who refuse to marry,
14 who refuse to possess property, and they have no law--not even the
15 Vedas bind them. They stand on [the] top of the Vedas. They are [at]
16 the other pole [from] our social institutions. They are beyond caste.
17 They have grown beyond. They are too big to be bound by these
18 little regulations and things. Only two things [are] necessary for
19 them: they must not possess property and they must not marry. If
20 you marry, settle down, or possess property, immediately the
21 regulations will be upon you; but if you do not do either of these
22 two, you are free. They were the living gods of the race, and ninety-
23 nine per cent of our great men and women were to be found among
24 them.

25 In every country, real greatness of the soul means
26 extraordinary individuality, and that individuality you cannot get in
27 society. It frets and fumes and wants to burst society. If society
28 wants to keep it down, that soul wants to burst society into pieces.
29 And they made an easy channel. They say: "Well, once you get out
30 of society, then you may preach and teach everything that you like.
31 We only worship you from a distance. So there were the
32 tremendous, individualistic men and women, and they are the
33 highest persons in all society. If one of those yellow-clad shaven-
34 heads comes, the prince even dare not remain seated in his
35 presence; he must stand. The next half hour, one of these
36 Sannyasins might be at the door of one of the cottages of the
37 poorest subjects, glad to get only a piece of bread. And he has to
38 mix with all grades; now he sleeps with a poor man in his cottage;
39 tomorrow [he] sleeps on the beautiful bed of a king. One day he
40 dines on gold plates in kings' palaces; the next day, he has not any
41 food and sleeps under a tree. Society looks upon these men with
42 great respect; and some of them, just to show their individuality,
43 will try to shock the public ideas. But the people are never shocked
44 so long as they keep to these principles: perfect purity and no
45 property.

46 These men, being very individualistic, they are always trying
47 new theories and plans--visiting in every country. They must think
48 something new; they cannot run in the old groove. Others are all
49 trying to make us run in the old groove, forcing us all to think alike.
50 But human nature is greater than any human foolishness. Our
51 greatness is greater than our weakness; the good things are
52 stronger than the evil things. Supposing they succeeded in making

1 us all think in the same groove, there we would be--no more
2 thought to think; we would die.

3 Here was a society which had almost no vitality, its members
4 pressed down by iron chains of law. They were forced to help each
5 other. There, one was under regulations [that were] tremendous:
6 regulations even how to breathe; how to wash face and hands; how
7 to bathe; how to brush the teeth; and so on, to the moment of death.
8 And beyond these regulations was the wonderful individualism of
9 the Sannyasin. There he was. And every day a new sect was rising
10 amongst these strong, individualistic men and women. The ancient
11 Sanskrit books tell about their standing out--of one woman who was
12 a very quaint, queer old thing; sometimes [she was] criticised, but
13 always people were afraid of her, obeying her quietly. So, there
14 were those great men and women of olden times.

15 And within this society so oppressed by regulations, the
16 power was in the hands of the priests. In the social scale, the
17 highest caste is [that of] the priest, and that being a business--I do
18 not know any other word, that is why I use the word "priest." It is
19 not in the same sense as in this country, because our priest is not a
20 man who teaches religion or philosophy. The business of a priest is
21 to perform all these minute details of regulations which have been
22 laid down. The priest is the man who helps in these regulations. He
23 marries you; to your funeral he comes to pray. So at all the
24 ceremonies performed upon a man or a woman, the priest must be
25 there. In society the ideal is marriage.

26 [Everyone] must marry. It is the rule. Without marriage, man
27 is not able to perform any religious ceremony; he is only half a man;
28 [he] is not competent to officiate--even the priest himself cannot
29 officiate as priest, except he marries. Half a man is unfit within
30 society.

31 Now, the power of the priests increased tremendously. . . .
32 The general policy of our national law-givers was to give the priests
33 this honour. They also had the same socialistic plan [you are] just
34 ready to [try] that checked them from getting money. What [was]
35 the motive? Social honour. Mind you, the priest in all countries is
36 the highest in the social scale, so much so in India that the poorest
37 Brahmin is greater than the greatest king in the country, by birth.
38 He is the nobleman in India. But the law does not allow him ever to
39 become rich. The law grinds him down to poverty--only, it gives him
40 this honour. He cannot do a thousand things; and the higher is the
41 caste in the social scale, the more restricted are its enjoyments. The
42 higher the caste, the less the number of kinds of food that man can
43 eat, the less the amount of food that man may eat, the less the
44 number of occupations [he may] engage in. To you, his life would be
45 only a perpetual train of hardships--nothing more than that. It is a
46 perpetual discipline in eating, drinking, and everything; and all
47 [penalties] which are required from the lower caste are required
48 from the higher ten times more. The lowest man tells a lie; his fine
49 is one dollar. A Brahmin, he must pay, say, a hundred dollars--[for]
50 he knows better.

51 But this was a grand organisation to start with. Later on, the

1 time came when they, these priests, began to get all the power in
2 their hands; and at last they forgot the secret of their power:
3 poverty. They were men whom society fed and clad so that they
4 might simply learn and teach and think. Instead of that, they began
5 to spread out their hands to clutch at the riches of society. They
6 became "money-grabbers"--to use your word--and forgot all these
7 things.

8 Then there was the second caste, the kingly caste, the
9 military. Actual power was in their hands. Not only so--they have
10 produced all of our great thinkers, and not the Brahmins. It is
11 curious. All our great prophets, almost without exception, belong to
12 the kingly caste. The great man Krishna was also of that caste;
13 Rama, he also, and all our great philosophers, almost all [sat] on
14 the throne; thence came all the great philosophers of renunciation.
15 From the throne came the voice that always cried, "Renounce."
16 These military people were the kings; and they [also] were the
17 philosophers; they were the speakers in the Upanishads. In their
18 brains and in their thought, they were greater than the priests, they
19 were more powerful, they were the kings--and yet the priests got all
20 the power and tried to tyrannise over them. And so that was going
21 on: political competition between the two castes, the priests and
22 the kings.

23 Another phenomenon is there. Those of you that have been to
24 hear the first lecture already know that in India there are two great
25 races: one is called the Aryan; the other, the non-Aryan. It is the
26 Aryan race that has the three castes; but the whole of the rest are
27 dubbed with one name, Shudras--no caste. They are not Aryans at
28 all. (Many people came from outside of India, and they found the
29 Shudras [there], the aborigines of the country). However it may be,
30 these vast masses of non-Aryan people and the mixed people among
31 them, they gradually became civilised and they began to scheme for
32 the same rights as the Aryans. They wanted to enter their schools
33 and their colleges; they wanted to take the sacred thread of the
34 Aryans; they wanted to perform the same ceremonies as the
35 Aryans, and wanted to have equal rights in religion and politics like
36 the Aryans. And the Brahmin priest, he was the great antagonist of
37 such claims. You see, it is the nature of priests in every country--
38 they are the most conservative people, naturally. So long as it is a
39 trade, it must be; it is to their interest to be conservative. So this
40 tide of murmur outside the Aryan pale, the priests were trying to
41 check with all their might. Within the Aryan pale, there was also a
42 tremendous religious ferment, and [it was] mostly led by this
43 military caste.

44 There was already the sect of Jains [who are a] conservative
45 [force] in India [even] today. It is a very ancient sect. They declared
46 against the validity of the scriptures of the Hindus, the Vedas. They
47 wrote some books themselves, and they said: "Our books are the
48 only original books, the only original Vedas, and the Vedas that now
49 are going on under that name have been written by the Brahmins to
50 dupe the people." And they also laid the same plan. You see, it is
51 difficult for you to meet the arguments of the Hindus about the
52 scriptures. They also claimed [that] the world has been created

1 through those books. And they were written in the popular
2 language. The Sanskrit, even then, had ceased to be a spoken
3 language--[it had] just the same relation [to the spoken language]
4 as Latin has to modern Italian. Now, they wrote all their books in
5 Pali; and when a Brahmin said, "Why, your books are in Pali!" they
6 said, "Sanskrit is a language of the dead."

7 In their methods and manners they were different. For, you
8 see, these Hindu scriptures, the Vedas, are a vast mass of
9 accumulation--some of them crude--until you come to where religion
10 is taught, only the spiritual. Now, that was the portion of the Vedas
11 which these sects all claimed to preach. Then, there are three steps
12 in the ancient Vedas: first, work; second, worship; third, knowledge.
13 When a man purifies himself by work and worship, then God is
14 within that man. He has realised He is already there. He only can
15 have seen Him because the mind has become pure. Now, the man
16 can become purified by work and worship. That is all. Salvation is
17 already there. We don't know it. Therefore, work, worship, and
18 knowledge are the three steps. By work, they mean doing good to
19 others. That has, of course, something in it, but mostly, as to the
20 Brahmins, work means to perform these elaborate ceremonials:
21 killing of cows and killing of bulls, killing of goats and all sorts of
22 animals, that are taken fresh and thrown into the fire, and so on.
23 "Now" declared the Jains, "that is no work at all, because injuring
24 others can never be any good work"; and they said, "This is the
25 proof that your Vedas are false Vedas, manufactured by the priests,
26 because you do not mean to say that any good book will order us [to
27 be] killing animals and doing these things. You do not believe it. So
28 all this killing of animals and other things that you see in the Vedas,
29 they have been written by the Brahmins, because they alone are
30 benefited. It is the priest only [who] pockets the money and goes
31 home. So, therefore, it is all priestcraft."

1 It was one of their doctrines that there cannot be any God:
2 "The priests have invented God, that the people may believe in God
3 and pay them money. All nonsense! there is no God. There is nature
4 and there are souls, and that is all. Souls have got entangled into
5 this life and got round them the clothing of man you call a body.
6 Now, do good work." But from that naturally came the doctrine that
7 everything that is matter is vile. They are the first teachers of
8 asceticism. If the body is the result of impurity, why, therefore the
9 body is vile. If a man stands on one leg for some time--"All right, it
10 is a punishment." If the head comes up bump against a
11 wall--"Rejoice, it is a very good punishment." Some of the great
12 founders of the [Franciscan Order]--one of them St. Francis--were
13 going to a certain place to meet somebody; and St. Francis had one
14 of his companions with him, and he began to talk as to whether [the
15 person] would receive them or not, and this man suggested that
16 possibly he would reject them. Said St. Francis: "That is not
17 enough, brother, but if, when we go and knock at the door, the man
18 comes and drives us away, that is not enough. But if he orders us to
19 be bound and gives us a thorough whipping, even that is not
20 enough. And then, if he binds us hand and foot and whips us until
21 we bleed at every pore and throws us outside in the snow, that
22 would be enough."

23 These [same] ascetic ideas prevailed at that time. These Jains
24 were the first great ascetics; but they did some great work. "Don't
25 injure any and do good to all that you can, and that is all the
26 morality and ethics, and that is all the work there is, and the rest is
27 all nonsense--the Brahmins created that. Throw it all away." And
28 then they went to work and elaborated this one principle all
29 through, and it is a most wonderful ideal: how all that we call ethics
30 they simply bring out from that one great principle of non-injury
31 and doing good.

32 This sect was at least five hundred years before Buddha, and
33 he was five hundred and fifty years before Christ.¹⁰ Now the whole
34 of the animal creation they divide into five sections: the lowest have
35 only one organ, that of touch; the next one, touch and taste; the
36 next, touch, taste and hearing; the next, touch, taste, hearing and
37 sight. And the next, the five organs. The first two, the one-organ
38 and the two-organ, are invisible to the naked eye, and they are
39 everywhere in the water. A terrible thing, killing these [low forms of
40 life]. This bacteriology has come into existence in the modern world
41 only in the last twenty years and theretofore nobody knew anything
42 about it. They said, the lowest organs are only one-organ, touch;
43 nothing else. The next greater [were] also invisible. And they all
44 knew that if you boiled water these animals were all killed. So these
45 monks, if they died of thirst, they would never kill these animals by
46 drinking water. But if [a monk] stands at your door and you give
47 him a little boiled water, the sin is on you of killing the animals--and
48 he will get the benefit. They carry these ideas to ludicrous
49 extremes. For instance, in rubbing the body--if he bathes--he will

1 ¹⁰ ?The dates of the Jaina Buddha were not known accurately in
2 those days.
3

1 have to kill numbers of animalcules; so he never bathes. He gets
2 killed himself; he says that is all right. Life has no care for him; he
3 will get killed and save life.

4 These Jains were there. There were various other sects of
5 ascetics; and while this was going on, on the one hand, there was
6 the political jealousy between the priests and the kings. And then
7 these different dissatisfied sects [were] springing up everywhere.
8 And there was the greater problem: the vast multitudes of people
9 wanting the same rights as the Aryans, dying of thirst while the
10 perennial stream of nature went flowing by them, and no right to
11 drink a drop of water.

12 And that man was born--the great man Buddha. Most of you
13 know about him, his life. And in spite of all the miracles and stories
14 that generally get fastened upon any great man, in the first place,
15 he is one of the most historical prophets of the world. Two are very
16 historical: one, the most ancient, Buddha, and the other,
17 Mohammed, because both friends and foes are agreed about them.
18 So we are perfectly sure that there were such persons. As for the
19 other persons, we have only to take for granted what the disciples
20 say--nothing more. Our Krishna--you know, the Hindu prophet--he is
21 very mythological. A good deal of his life, and everything about him,
22 is written only by his disciples; and then there seem to be,
23 sometimes, three or four men, who all loom into one. We do not
24 know so clearly about many of the prophets; but as to this man,
25 because both friends and foes write of him, we are sure that there
26 was such a historical personage. And if we analyse through all the
27 fables and reports of miracles and stories that generally are heaped
28 upon a great man in this world, we find an inside core; and all
29 through the account of that man, he never did a thing for himself--
30 never! How do you know that? Because, you see, when fables are
31 fastened upon a man, the fables must be tinged with that man's
32 general character. Not one fable tried to impute any vice or any
33 immorality to the man. Even his enemies have favourable accounts.

34 When Buddha was born, he was so pure that whosoever
35 looked at his face from a distance immediately gave up the
36 ceremonial religion and became a monk and became saved. So the
37 gods held a meeting. They said, "We are undone." Because most of
38 the gods live upon the ceremonials. These sacrifices go to the gods
39 and these sacrifices were all gone. The gods were dying of hunger
40 and [the reason for] it was that their power was gone. So the gods
41 said: "We must, anyhow, put this man down. He is too pure for our
42 life". And then the gods came and said: "Sir, we come to ask you
43 something. We want to make a great sacrifice and we mean to make
44 a huge fire, and we have been seeking all over the world for a pure
45 spot to light the fire on and could not find it, and now we have
46 found it. If you will lie down, on your breast we will make the huge
47 fire." "Granted," he says, "go on." And the gods built the fire high
48 upon the breast of Buddha, and they thought he was dead, and he
49 was not. And then they went about and said, "We are undone." And
50 all the gods began to strike him. No good. They could not kill him.
51 From underneath the voice comes: "Why [are you] making all these
52 vain attempts?" "Whoever looks upon you becomes purified and is

1 saved, and nobody is going to worship us." "Then, your attempt is
2 vain, because purity can never be killed." This fable was written by
3 his enemies, and yet throughout the fable the only blame that
4 attaches to Buddha is that he was so great a teacher of purity.

5 About his doctrines, some of you know a little. It is his
6 doctrines that appeal to many modern thinkers whom you call
7 agnostics. He was a great preacher of the brotherhood of mankind:
8 "Aryan or non-Aryan, caste or no caste, and sects or no sects, every
9 one has a same right to God and to religion and to freedom. Come
10 in all of you." But as to other things, he was very agnostic. "Be
11 practical." There came to him one day five young men, Brahmin
12 born, quarrelling about a question. They came to him to ask him the
13 way to truth. And one said: "My people teach this, and this is the
14 way to truth." The other said: "I have been taught this, and this is
15 the only way to truth." "Which is the right way, sir?" "Well, you say
16 your people taught this is truth and is the way to God?" "Yes." "But
17 did you see God?" "No, sir." "Your father?" "No, sir." "Your
18 grandfather?" "No, sir." "None of them saw God?" "No." "Well, and
19 your teachers--neither [any] of them saw God?" "No." And he asked
20 the same to the others. They all declared that none had seen God.
21 "Well," said Buddha, "in a certain village came a young man
22 weeping and howling and crying: 'Oh, I love her so! oh my, I love
23 her so!' And then the villagers came; and the only thing he said was
24 he loved her so. 'Who is she that you love?' 'I do not know.' 'Where
25 does she live?' 'I do not know'--but he loved her so. 'How does she
26 look?' 'That I do not know; but oh, I love her so.'" Then asked
27 Buddha: "Young man, what would you call this young man?" "Why,
28 sir, he was a fool!" And they all declared: "Why, sir, that young man
29 was certainly a fool, to be crying and all that about a woman, to say
30 he loved her so much and he never saw her or knew that she
31 existed or anything?" "Are you not the same? You say that this God
32 your father or your grandfather never saw, and now you are
33 quarrelling upon a thing which neither you nor your ancestors ever
34 knew, and you are trying to cut each other's throats about it." Then
35 the young men asked: "What are we to do?" "Now, tell me: did your
36 father ever teach that God is ever angry?" "No, sir." "Did your
37 father ever teach that God is evil?" "No, sir; He is always pure."
38 "Well, now, if you are pure and good and all that, do you not think
39 that you will have more chance to come near to that God than by
40 discussing all this and trying to cut each other's throats? Therefore,
41 say I: be pure and be good; be pure and love everyone." And that
42 was [all].

43 You see that non-killing of animals and charity towards
44 animals was an already existing doctrine when he was born; but it
45 was new with him--the breaking down of caste, that tremendous
46 movement. And the other thing that was new: he took forty of his
47 disciples and sent them all over the world, saying, "Go ye; mix with
48 all races and nations and preach the excellent gospel for the good
49 of all, for the benefit of all." And of course, he was not molested by
50 the Hindus. He died at a ripe old age. All his life he was a most
51 stern man: he never yielded to weakness. I do not believe many of
52 his doctrines; of course, I do not. I believe that the Vedantism of the

1 old Hindus is much more thoughtful, is a grander philosophy of life.
2 I like his method of work, but what I like [most] in that man is that,
3 among all the prophets of mankind, here was a man who never had
4 any cobwebs in his brain, and [who was] sane and strong. When
5 kingdoms were at his feet, he was still the same man, maintaining,
6 "I am a man amongst men."

7 Why, the Hindus, they are dying to worship somebody. You
8 will find, if you live long enough, I will be worshipped by our people.
9 If you go there to teach them something, before you die you will be
10 worshipped. Always trying to worship somebody. And living in that
11 race, the world-honoured Buddha, he died always declaring that he
12 was but man. None of his adulators could draw from him one
13 remark that he was anything different from any other man.

14 Those last dying words of his always thrilled through my
15 heart. He was old, he was suffering, he was near his death, and
16 then came the despised outcaste--he lives on carrion, dead animals;
17 the Hindus would not allow them to come into cities--one of these
18 invited him to a dinner and he came with his disciples, and the poor
19 Chanda, he wanted to treat this great teacher according to what he
20 thought would be best; so he had a lot of pig's flesh and a lot of rice
21 for him, and Buddha looked at that. The disciples were all
22 [hesitating], and the Master said: "Well, do not eat, you will be
23 hurt." But he quietly sat down and ate. The teacher of equality must
24 eat the [outcaste] Chanda's dinner, even the pig's flesh. He sat
25 down and ate it.

26 He was already dying. He found death coming on, and he
27 said, "Spread for me something under this tree, for I think the end
28 is near." And he was there under the tree, and he laid himself down;
29 he could not sit up any more. And the first thing he did, he said: "Go
30 to that Chanda and tell him that he has been one of my greatest
31 benefactors; for his meal, I am going to Nirvana." And then several
32 men came to be instructed, and a disciple said, "Do not go near
33 now, the Master is passing away." And as soon as he heard it, the
34 Lord said, "Let them come in." And somebody else came and the
35 disciples would not [let them enter]. Again they came, and then the
36 dying Lord said: "And O, thou Ananda, I am passing away. Weep not
37 for me. Think not for me. I am gone. Work out diligently your own
38 salvation. Each one of you is just what I am. I am nothing but one of
39 you. What I am today is what I made myself. Do you struggle and
40 make yourselves what I am. . . ."

41 These are the memorable words of Buddha: "Believe not
42 because an old book is produced as an authority. Believe not
43 because your father said [you should] believe the same. Believe not
44 because other people like you believe it. Test everything, try
45 everything, and then believe it, and if you find it for the good of
46 many, give it to all." And with these words, the Master passed away.

47 See the sanity of the man. No gods, no angels, no demons--
48 nobody. Nothing of the kind. Stern, sane, every brain-cell perfect
49 and complete, even at the moment of death. No delusion. I do not
50 agree with many of his doctrines. You may not. But in my opinion--
51 oh, if I had only one drop of that strength! The sanest philosopher

1 the world ever saw. Its best and its sanest teacher. And never that
2 man bent before even the power of the tyrannical Brahmins. Never
3 that man bent. Direct and everywhere the same: weeping with the
4 miserable, helping the miserable, singing with the singing, strong
5 with the strong, and everywhere the same sane and able man.

6 And, of course, with all this I can [not] understand his
7 doctrine. You know he denied that there was any soul in man--that
8 is, in the Hindu sense of the word. Now, we Hindus all believe that
9 there is something permanent in man, which is unchangeable and
10 which is living through all eternity. And that in man we call Atman,
11 which is without beginning and without end. And [we believe] that
12 there is something permanent in nature [and that we call Brahman,
13 which is also without beginning and without end]. He denied both
14 of these. He said there is no proof of anything permanent. It is all a
15 mere mass of change; a mass of thought in a continuous change is
16 what you call a mind. . . . The torch is leading the procession. The
17 circle is a delusion. [Or take the example of a river.] It is a
18 continuous river passing on; every moment a fresh mass of water
19 passing on. So is this life; so is all body, so is all mind.

20 Well, I do not understand this doctrine--we Hindus never
21 understood it. But I can understand the motive behind that. Oh, the
22 gigantic motive! The Master says that selfishness is the great curse
23 of the world; that we are selfish and that therein is the curse. There
24 should be no motive for selfishness. You are [like a river] passing
25 [on]--a continuous phenomenon. Have no God; have no soul; stand
26 on your feet and do good for good's sake--neither for fear of
27 punishment nor for [the sake of] going anywhere. Stand sane and
28 motiveless. The motive is: I want to do good, it is good to do good.
29 Tremendous! Tremendous! I do not sympathise with his
30 metaphysics at all; but my mind is jealous when I think of the moral
31 force. Just ask your minds which one of you can stand for one hour,
32 able and daring like that man. I cannot for five minutes. I would
33 become a coward and want a support. I am weak--a coward. And I
34 warm to think of this tremendous giant. We cannot approach that
35 strength. The world never saw [anything] compared to that
36 strength. And I have not yet seen any other strength like that. We
37 are all born cowards. If we can save ourselves [we care about
38 nothing else]. Inside is the tremendous fear, the tremendous
39 motive, all the time. Our own selfishness makes us the most arrant
40 cowards; our own selfishness is the great cause of fear and
41 cowardice. And there he stood: "Do good because it is good; ask no
42 more questions; that is enough. A man made to do good by a fable,
43 a story, a superstition--he will be doing evil as soon as the
44 opportunity comes. That man alone is good who does good for
45 good's sake, and that is the character of the man."

46 "And what remains of man?" was asked of the Master.
47 "Everything--everything. But what is in the man? Not the body not
48 the soul, but character. And that is left for all ages. All that have
49 passed and died, they have left for us their characters, eternal
50 possessions for the rest of humanity; and these characters are
51 working--working all through." What of Buddha? What of Jesus of
52 Nazareth? The world is full of their characters. Tremendous

1 doctrine!

2 Let us come down a little--we have not come to the subject at
3 all. (*Laughter*) I must add not a few words more this evening. . .

4 And then, what he did. His method of work: organisation. The
5 idea that you have today of church is his character. He left the
6 church. He organised these monks and made them into a body.
7 Even the voting by ballot is there five hundred and sixty years
8 before Christ. Minute organisation. The church was left and
9 became a tremendous power, and did great missionary work in
10 India and outside India. Then came, three hundred years after, two
11 hundred years before Christ, the great emperor Asoka, as he has
12 been called by your Western historians, the divinest of monarchs,
13 and that man became entirely converted to the ideas of Buddha,
14 and he was the greatest emperor of the world at that time. His
15 grandfather was a contemporary of Alexander, and since
16 Alexander's time, India had become more intimately connected with
17 Greece. . . . Every day in Central Asia some inscription or other is
18 being found. India had forgotten all about Buddha and Asoka and
19 everyone. But there were pillars, obelisks, columns, with ancient
20 letters which nobody could read. Some of the old Mogul emperors
21 declared they would give millions for anybody to read those; but
22 nobody could. Within the last thirty years those have been read;
23 they are all written in Pali.

24 The first inscription is: ". . ."

25 And then he writes this inscription, describing the terror and
26 the misery of war; and then he became converted to religion. Then
27 said he: "Henceforth let none of my descendants think of acquiring
28 glory by conquering other races. If they want glory, let them help
29 other races; let them send teachers of sciences and teachers of
30 religion. A glory won by the sword is no glory at all." And next you
31 find how he is sending missionaries even to Alexandria. . . . You
32 wonder that you find all over that part of the country sects rising
33 immediately, called Theraputae, Essenes, and all those-extreme
34 vegetarians, and so on. Now this great Emperor Asoka built
35 hospitals for men and for animals. The inscriptions show they are
36 ordering hospitals, building hospitals for men and for animals. That
37 is to say, when an animal gets old, if I am poor and cannot keep it
38 any longer, I do not shoot it down for mercy. These hospitals are
39 maintained by public charity. The coasting traders pay so much
40 upon every hundredweight they sell, and all that goes to the
41 hospital; so nobody is touched. If you have a cow that is old--
42 anything--and do not want to keep it, send it to the hospital; they
43 keep it, even down to rats and mice and anything you send. Only,
44 our ladies try to kill these animals sometimes, you know. They go in
45 large numbers to see them and they bring all sorts of cakes; the
46 animals are killed many times by this food. He claimed that the
47 animals should be as much under the protection of the government
48 as man. Why should animals be allowed to be killed? [There] is no
49 reason. But he says, before prohibiting the killing of animals for
50 food even, [people] must be provided with all sorts of vegetables.
51 So he sent and collected all kinds of vegetables and planted them in
52 India; and then, as soon as these were introduced, the order was:

1 henceforth, whosoever kills an animal will be punished. A
2 government is to be a government; the animals must be protected
3 also. What business has a man to kill a cow, a goat, or any other
4 animal for food?

5 Thus Buddhism was and did become a great political power in
6 India. Gradually it also fell to pieces--after all, this tremendous
7 missionary enterprise. But to their credit it must be said, they never
8 took up the sword to preach religion. Excepting the Buddhist
9 religion, there is not one religion in the world which could not make
10 one step without bloodshed--not one which could get a hundred
11 thousand converts just by brain power alone. No, no. All through.
12 And this is just what you are going to do in the Philippines. That is
13 your method. Make them religious by the sword. That is what your
14 priests are preaching. Conquer and kill them that they may get
15 religion. A wonderful way of preaching religion!

16 You know how this great emperor Asoka was converted. This
17 great emperor in his youth was not so good. [He had a brother.]
18 And the two brothers quarrelled and the other brother defeated this
19 one, and the emperor in vengeance wanted to kill him. The emperor
20 got the news that he had taken shelter with a Buddhist monk. Now,
21 I have told you how our monks are very holy; no one would come
22 near them. The emperor himself came. He said, "Deliver the man to
23 me." Then the monk preached to him: "Vengeance is bad. Disarm
24 anger with love. Anger is not cured by anger, nor hatred by hatred.
25 Dissolve anger by love. Cure hatred by love. Friend, if for one evil
26 thou returnest another, thou curest not the first evil, but only add
27 one evil more to the world." The emperor said: "That is all right,
28 fool that you are. Are you ready to give your life--to give your life for
29 that man?" "Ready, sir." And he came out. And the emperor drew his
30 sword, and he said: "Get ready." And just [as he] was going to
31 strike, he looked at the face of the man. There was not a wink in
32 those eyes. The emperor stopped, and he said: "Tell me, monk,
33 where did you learn this strength, poor beggar, not to wink?" And
34 then he preached again. "Go on, monk," he said, "That is nice," he
35 said. Accordingly, he [fell under] the charm of the Master--Buddha's
36 charm.

37 There have been three things in Buddhism: the Buddha
38 himself, his law, his church. At first it was so simple. When the
39 Master died, before his death, they said: "What shall we do with
40 you?" "Nothing." "What monuments shall we make over you?" He
41 said: "Just make a little heap if you want, or just do not do
42 anything." By and by, there arose huge temples and all the
43 paraphernalia. The use of images was unknown before then. I say
44 they were the first to use images. There are images of Buddha and
45 all the saints, sitting about and praying. All this paraphernalia went
46 on multiplying with this organisation. Then these monasteries
47 became rich. The real cause of the downfall is here. Monasticism is
48 all very good for a few; but when you preach it in such a fashion
49 that every man or every woman who has a mind immediately gives
50 up social life, when you find over the whole of India monasteries,
51 some containing a hundred thousand monks, sometimes twenty
52 thousand monks in one building--huge, gigantic buildings, these

1 monasteries, scattered all over India and, of course, centres of
2 learning, and all that--who were left to procreate progeny, to
3 continue the race? Only the weaklings. All the strong and vigorous
4 minds went out. And then came national decay by the sheer loss of
5 vigour.

6 I will tell you of this marvellous brotherhood. It is great. But
7 theory and idea is one thing and actual working is another thing.
8 The idea is very great: practising non-resistance and all that, but if
9 all of us go out in the street and practise non-resistance, there
10 would be very little left in this city. That is to say, the idea is all
11 right, but nobody has yet found a practical solution [as to] how to
12 attain it.

13 There is something in caste, so far as it means blood; such a
14 thing as heredity there is, certainly. Now try to [understand]--why
15 do you not mix your blood with the Negroes, the American Indians?
16 Nature will not allow you. Nature does not allow you to mix your
17 blood with them. There is the unconscious working that saves the
18 race. That was the Aryan's caste. Mind you, I do not say that they
19 are not equal to us. They must have the same privileges and
20 advantages, and everything; but we know that if certain races mix
21 up, they become degraded. With all the strict caste of the Aryan
22 and non-Aryan, that wall was thrown down to a certain extent, and
23 hordes of these outlandish races came in with all their queer
24 superstitions and manners and customs. Think of this: not decency
25 enough to wear clothes, eating carrion, etc. But behind him came
26 his fetish, his human sacrifice, his superstition, his diabolism. He
27 kept it behind, [he remained] decent for a few years. After that he
28 brought all [these] things out in front. And that was degrading to
29 the whole race. And then the blood mixed; [intermarriages] took
30 place with all sorts of unmixable races. Then race fell down. But, in
31 the long run, it proved good. If you mix up Negroes and American
32 Indians surely this civilisation will fall down. But hundreds and
33 hundreds years after, out of this mixture will come a gigantic race
34 once more, stronger than ever; but, for the time being, you will
35 have to suffer. The Hindus believe--that is a peculiar belief, I think;
36 and I do not know, I have nothing to say to the contrary, I have not
37 found anything to the contrary--they believe there was only one
38 civilised race: the Aryan. Until he gives his blood, no other race can
39 be civilised. No teaching will do. The Aryan gives his blood to a
40 race, and then it becomes civilised. Teaching alone will not do. He
41 would be an example in your country: would you give your blood to
42 the Negro race? Then he would get higher culture.

43 The Hindu loves caste. I may have a little taint of that
44 superstition--I do not know. I love the Master's ideal. Great! But, for
45 me, I do not think that the working was very practical; and that was
46 one of the great causes that led to the downfall of the Indian nation,
47 in the long run. But then it brought about this tremendous fusion.
48 Where so many different races are all fusing, mingling--one man
49 white like you, or yellow, while another man as black as I am, and
50 all grades between these two extremes, and each race keeping
51 their customs, manners, and everything--in the long run a fusion is
52 taking place, and out of this fusion surely will come a tremendous

1 upheaval; but, for the time being, the giant must sleep. That is the
2 effect of all such fusion.

3 When Buddhism went down that way, there came the
4 inevitable reaction. There is but one entity in the whole world. It is
5 a unit world. The diversity is only eye-service. It is all one. The idea
6 of unity and what we call monism--without duality--is the idea in
7 India. This doctrine has been always in India; [it was] brought
8 forward whenever materialism and skepticism broke down
9 everything. When Buddhism broke down everything by introducing
10 all sorts of foreign barbarians into India--their manners and
11 customs and things--there was a reaction, and that reaction was led
12 by a young monk [Shankaracharya]. And [instead] of preaching new
13 doctrines and always thinking new thoughts and making sects, he
14 brought back the Vedas to life: and modern Hinduism has thus an
15 admixture of ancient Hinduism, over which the Vedantists
16 predominate. But, you see, what once dies never comes back to life,
17 and those ceremonials of [Hinduism] never came back to life. You
18 will be astonished if I tell you that, according to the old
19 ceremonials, he is not a good Hindu who does not eat beef. On
20 certain occasions he must sacrifice a bull and eat it. That is
21 disgusting now. However they may differ from each other in India,
22 in that they are all one--they never eat beef. The ancient sacrifices
23 and the ancient gods, they are all gone; modern India belongs to
24 the spiritual part of the Vedas.

25 Buddhism was the first sect in India. They were the first to
26 say: "Ours is the only path. Until you join our church, you cannot be
27 saved." That was what they said: "It is the correct path." But, being
28 of Hindu blood they could not be such stony-hearted sectarians as
29 in other countries. There will be salvation for you: nobody will go
30 wrong for ever. No, no. [There was] too much of Hindu blood in
31 them for that. The heart was not so stony as that. But you have to
32 join them.

33 But the Hindu idea, you know, is not to join anybody.
34 Wherever you are, that is a point from which you can start to the
35 centre. All right. It--Hinduism--has this advantage: its secret is
36 that doctrines and dogmas do not mean anything; what you are is
37 what matters. If you talk all the best philosophies the world ever
38 produced, [but] if you are a fool in your behaviour, they do not
39 count; and if in your behaviour you are good, you have more
40 chances. This being so, the Vedantist can wait for everybody.
41 Vedantism teaches that there is but one existence and one thing
42 real, and that is God. It is beyond all time and space and causation
43 and everything. We can never define Him. We can never say what
44 He is except [that] He is Absolute Existence, Absolute Knowledge,
45 Absolute Blissfulness. He is the only reality. Of everything He is
46 the reality; of you and me, of the wall and of [everything]
47 everywhere. It is His knowledge upon which all our knowledge
48 depends: it is His blissfulness upon which depends our pleasure;
49 and he is the only reality. And when man realises this, he knows
50 that "I am the only reality, because I am He--what is real in me is
51 He also". So that when a man is perfectly pure and good and
52 beyond all grossness, he finds, as Jesus found: "I and my Father are

1 one." The Vedantist has patience to wait for everybody. Wherever
2 you are, this is the highest: "I and my Father are one." Realise it. If
3 an image helps, images are welcome. If worshipping a great man
4 helps you, worship him. If worshipping Mohammed helps you, go
5 on. Only be sincere; and if you are sincere, says Vedantism, you are
6 sure to be brought to the goal. None will be left. Your heart, which
7 contains all truth, will unfold itself chapter after chapter, till you
8 know the last truth, that "I and my Father are one." And what is
9 salvation? To live with God. Where? Anywhere. Here this moment.
10 One moment in infinite time is quite as good as any other moment.
11 This is the old doctrine of the Vedas, you see. This was revived.
12 Buddhism died out in India. It left its mark on their charity, its
13 animals, etc. in India; and Vedantism is reconquering India from
14 one end to the other.
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ADDRESSES ON BHAKTI-YOGA

The Preparation

The best definition given of Bhakti-Yoga is perhaps embodied in the verse: "May that love undying which the non-discriminating have for the fleeting objects of the senses never leave this heart of mine--of me who seek after Thee!" We see what a strong love men, who do not know any better, have for sense-objects, for money, dress, their wives, children, friends, and possessions. What a tremendous clinging they have to all these things! So in the above prayer the sage says, "I will have that attachment, that tremendous clinging, only to Thee." This love, when given to God, is called Bhakti. Bhakti is not destructive; it teaches us that no one of these faculties we have has been given in vain, that through them is the natural way to come to liberation. Bhakti does not kill out our tendencies, it does not go against nature, but only gives it a higher and more powerful direction. How naturally we love objects of the senses! We cannot but do so, because they are so real to us. We do not ordinarily see anything real about higher things, but when a man has seen something real beyond the senses, beyond the universe of senses, the idea is that he can have a strong attachment, only it should be transferred to the object beyond the senses, which is God. And when the same kind of love that has before been given to sense objects is given to God, it is called Bhakti. According to the sage Ramanuja, the following are the preparations for getting the intense love.

1 The first is Viveka. It is a very curious thing, especially to the
2 people of the West. It means, according to Ramanuja,
3 "discrimination of food". Food contains all the energies that go to
4 make up the forces of our body and mind; it has been transferred,
5 and conserved, and given new directions in my body, but my body
6 and mind have nothing essentially different from the food that I ate.
7 Just as the force and matter we find in the material world become
8 body and mind in us, so, essentially, the difference between body
9 and mind and the food we eat is only in manifestation. It being so,
10 that out of the material particles of our food we construct the
11 instrument of thought, and that from the finer forces lodged in
12 these particles we manufacture thought itself, it naturally follows,
13 that both this thought and the instrument will be modified by the
14 food we take. There are certain kinds of food that produce a certain
15 change in the mind; we see it every day. There are other sorts
16 which produce a change in the body, and in the long run have a
17 tremendous effect on the mind. It is a great thing to learn; a good
18 deal of the misery we suffer is occasioned by the food we take. You
19 find that after a heavy and indigestible meal it is very hard to
20 control the mind; it is running, running all the time. There are
21 certain foods which are exciting; if you eat such food, you find that
22 you cannot control the mind. It is obvious that after drinking a large
23 quantity of wine, or other alcoholic beverage, a man finds that his
24 mind would not be controlled; it runs away from his control.

25 According to Ramanuja, there are three things in food we
26 must avoid. First, there is Jati, the nature, or species of the food,
27 that must be considered. All exciting food should be avoided, as
28 meat, for instance; this should not be taken because it is by its very
29 nature impure. We can get it only by taking the life of another. We
30 get pleasure for a moment, and another creature has to give up its
31 life to give us that pleasure. Not only so, but we demoralise other
32 human beings. It would be rather better if every man who eats
33 meat killed the animals himself; but, instead of doing so, society
34 gets a class of persons to do that business for them, for doing
35 which, it hates them. In England no butcher can serve on a jury, the
36 idea being that he is cruel by nature. Who makes him cruel?
37 Society. If we did not eat beef and mutton, there would be no
38 butchers. Eating meat is only allowable for people who do very hard
39 work, and who are not going to be Bhaktas; but if you are going to
40 be Bhaktas, you should avoid meat. Also, all exciting foods, such as
41 onions, garlic, and all evil-smelling food, as "sauerkraut". Any food
42 that has been standing for days, till its condition is changed, any
43 food whose natural juices have been almost dried up, any food that
44 is malodorous, should be avoided.

45 The next thing that is to be considered as regards food is
46 still more intricate to Western minds--it is what is called Ashraya,
47 i.e. the person from whom it comes. This is rather a mysterious
48 theory of the Hindus. The idea is that each man has a certain aura
49 round him, and whatever thing he touches, a part of his character,
50 as it were, his influence, is left on it. It is supposed that a man's
51 character emanates from him, as it were, like a physical force, and
52 whatever he touches is affected by it. So we must take care who

1 touches our food when it is cooked; a wicked or immoral person
2 must not touch it. One who wants to be a Bhakta must not dine with
3 people whom he knows to be very wicked, because their infection
4 will come through the food.

5 The other form of purity to be observed is Nimatta, or
6 instruments. Dirt and dust must not be in food. Food should not be
7 brought from the market and placed on the table unwashed. We
8 must be careful also about the saliva and other secretions. The lips
9 ought never, for instance, to be touched with the fingers. The
10 mucous membrane is the most delicate part of the body, and all
11 tendencies are conveyed very easily by the saliva. Its contact,
12 therefore, is to be regarded as not only offensive, but dangerous.
13 Again, we must not eat food, half of which has been eaten by
14 someone else. When these things are avoided in food, it becomes
15 pure, and in a pure mind is a constant memory of God.

16 Let me tell you the same thing as explained by another
17 commentator, Shankaracharya, who takes quite another view. This
18 word for food, in Sanskrit, is derived from the root, meaning to
19 gather. Ahara means "gathered in". What is his explanation? He
20 says, the passage that when food is pure the mind will become pure
21 really means that lest we become subject to the senses we should
22 avoid the following: First as to attachment; we must not be
23 extremely attached to anything excepting God. See everything, do
24 everything, but be not attached. As soon as extreme attachment
25 comes, a man loses himself, he is no more master of himself, he is a
26 slave. If a woman is tremendously attached to a man, she becomes
27 a slave to that man. There is no use in being a slave. There are
28 higher things in this world than becoming a slave to a human being.
29 Love and do good to everybody, but do not become a slave. In the
30 first place, attachment degenerates us, individually, and in the
31 second place, makes us extremely selfish. Owing to this failing, we
32 want to injure others to do good to those we love. A good many of
33 the wicked deeds done in this world are really done through
34 attachment to certain persons. So all attachment excepting that for
35 good works should be avoided; but love should be given to
36 everybody. Then as to jealousy. There should be no jealousy in
37 regard to objects of the senses; jealousy is the root of all evil, and a
38 most difficult thing to conquer. Next, delusion. We always take one
39 thing for another, and act upon that, with the result that we bring
40 misery upon ourselves. We take the bad for the good. Anything that
41 titillates our nerves for a moment we think as the highest good, and
42 plunge into it immediately, but find, when it is too late, that it has
43 given us a tremendous blow. Every day, we run into this error, and
44 we often continue in it all our lives. When the senses, without being
45 extremely attached, without jealousy, or without delusion, work in
46 the world, such work or collection of impressions is called pure
47 food, according to Shankaracharya. When pure food is taken, the
48 mind is able to take in objects and think about them without
49 attachment, jealousy or delusion; then the mind becomes pure, and
50 then there is constant memory of God in that mind.

51 It is quite natural for one to say that Shankara's meaning is
52 the best, but I wish to add that one should not neglect Ramanuja's

1 interpretation either. It is only when you take care of the real
2 material food that the rest will come. It is very true that mind is the
3 master, but very few of us are not bound by the senses. We are all
4 controlled by matter; and as long as we are so controlled, we must
5 take material aids; and then, when we have become strong, we can
6 eat or drink anything we like. We have to follow Ramanuja in taking
7 care about food and drink; at the same time we must also take care
8 about our mental food. It is very easy to take care about material
9 food, but mental work must go along with it; then gradually our
10 spiritual self will become stronger and stronger, and the physical
11 self less assertive. Then will food hurt you no more. The great
12 danger is that every man wants to jump at the highest ideal, but
13 jumping is not the way. That ends only in a fall. We are bound down
14 here, and we have to break our chains slowly. This is called Viveka,
15 discrimination.

16 The next is called Vimoka, freedom from desires. He who
17 wants to love God must get rid of extreme desires; desire nothing
18 except God. This world is good so far as it helps one to go to the
19 higher world. The objects of the senses are good so far as they help
20 us to attain higher objects. We always forget that this world is a
21 means to an end, and not an end itself. If this were the end we
22 should be immortal here in our physical body; we should never die.
23 But we see people every moment dying around us, and yet,
24 foolishly, we think we shall never die; and from that conviction we
25 come to think that this life is the goal. That is the case with ninety-
26 nine per cent of us. This notion should be given up at once. This
27 world is good so far as it is a means to perfect ourselves; and as
28 soon as it has ceased to be so, it is evil. So wife, husband, children,
29 money and learning, are good so long as they help us forward; but
30 as soon as they cease to do that, they are nothing but evil. If the
31 wife help us to attain God, she is a good wife; so with a husband or
32 a child. If money help a man to do good to others, it is of some
33 value; but if not, it is simply a mass of evil, and the sooner it is got
34 rid of, the better.

35 The next is Abhyasa, practice. The mind should always go
36 towards God. No other things have any right to withhold it. It
37 should continuously think of God, though this is a very hard task;
38 yet it can be done by persistent practice. What we are now is the
39 result of our past practice. Again, practice makes us what we shall
40 be. So practise the other way; one sort of turning round has
41 brought us this way, turn the other way and get out of it as soon as
42 you can. Thinking of the senses has brought us down here--to cry
43 one moment, to rejoice the next, to be at the mercy of every breeze,
44 slave to everything. This is shameful, and yet we call ourselves
45 spirits. Go the other way, think of God; let the mind not think of any
46 physical or mental enjoyment, but of God alone. When it tries to
47 think of anything else, give it a good blow, so that it may turn round
48 and think of God. As oil poured from one vessel to another falls in
49 an unbroken line, as chimes coming from a distance fall upon the
50 ear as one continuous sound, so should the mind flow towards God
51 in one continuous stream. We should not only impose this practice
52 on the mind, but the senses too should be employed. Instead of

1 hearing foolish things, we must hear about God; instead of talking
2 foolish words, we must talk about God. Instead of reading foolish
3 books, we must read good ones which tell of God.

4 The greatest aid to this practice of keeping God in memory
5 is, perhaps, music. The Lord says to Narada, the great teacher of
6 Bhakti, "I do not live in heaven, nor do I live in the heart of the Yogi,
7 but where My devotees sing My praise, there am I". Music has such
8 tremendous power over the human mind; it brings it to
9 concentration in a moment. You will find the dull, ignorant, low,
10 brute-like human beings, who never steady their mind for a moment
11 at other times, when they hear attractive music, immediately
12 become charmed and concentrated. Even the minds of animals,
13 such as dogs, lions, cats, and serpents, become charmed with
14 music.

15 The next is Kriya, work--doing good to others. The memory
16 of God will not come to the selfish man. The more we come out and
17 do good to others, the more our hearts will be purified, and God will
18 be in them. According to our scriptures, there are five sorts of
19 work, called the fivefold sacrifice. First, study. A man must study
20 every day something holy and good. Second, worship of God,
21 angels, or saints, as it may be. Third, our duty to our forefathers.
22 Fourth, our duty to human beings. Man has no right to live in a
23 house himself, until he builds for the poor also, or for anybody who
24 needs it. The householder's house should be open to everybody that
25 is poor and suffering; then he is a real householder. If he builds a
26 house only for himself and his wife to enjoy, he will never be a lover
27 of God. No man has the right to cook food only for himself; it is for
28 others, and he should have what remains. It is a common practice
29 in India that when the season's produce first comes into the market,
30 such as strawberries or mangoes, a man buys some of them and
31 gives to the poor. Then he eats of them; and it is a very good
32 example to follow in this country. This training will make a man
33 unselfish, and at the same time, be an excellent object-lesson to his
34 wife and children. The Hebrews in olden times used to give the first
35 fruits to God. The first of everything should go to the poor; we have
36 only a right to what remains. The poor are God's representatives;
37 anyone that suffers is His representative. Without giving, he who
38 eats and enjoys eating, enjoys sin. Fifth, our duty to the lower
39 animals. It is diabolical to say that all animals are created for men
40 to be killed and used in any way man likes. It is the devil's gospel,
41 not God's. Think how diabolical it is to cut them up to see whether a
42 nerve quivers or not, in a certain part of the body. I am glad that in
43 our country such things are not countenanced by the Hindus,
44 whatever encouragement they may get from the foreign
45 government they are under. One portion of the food cooked in a
46 household belongs to the animals also. They should be given food
47 every day; there ought to be hospitals in every city in this country
48 for poor, lame, or blind horses, cows, dogs, and cats, where they
49 should be fed and taken care of.

50 Then there is Kalyana, purity, which comprises the following:
51 Satya, truthfulness. He who is true, unto him the God of truth
52 comes. Thought, word, and deed should be perfectly true. Next

1 Arjava, straightforwardness, rectitude. The word means, to be
2 simple, no crookedness in the heart, no double-dealing. Even if it is
3 a little harsh, go straightforward, and not crookedly. Daya, pity,
4 compassion. Ahimsa, not injuring any being by thought, word, or
5 deed. Dana, charity. There is no higher virtue than charity. The
6 lowest man is he whose hand draws in, in receiving; and he is the
7 highest man whose hand goes out in giving. The hand was made to
8 give always. Give the last bit of bread you have even if you are
9 starving. You will be free in a moment if you starve yourself to
10 death by giving to another. Immediately you will be perfect, you will
11 become God. People who have children are bound already. They
12 cannot give away. They want to enjoy their children, and they must
13 pay for it. Are there not enough children in the world? It is only
14 selfishness which says, "I'll have a child for myself."

15 The next is Anavasada-not desponding, cheerfulness.
16 Despondency is not religion, whatever else it may be. By being
17 pleasant always and smiling, it takes you nearer to God, nearer
18 than any prayer. How can those minds that are gloomy and dull
19 love? If they talk of love, it is false; they want to hurt others. Think
20 of the fanatics; they make the longest faces, and all their religion is
21 to fight against others in word and act. Think of what they have
22 done in the past, and of what they would do now if they were given
23 a free hand. They would deluge the whole world in blood tomorrow
24 if it would bring them power. By worshipping power and making
25 long faces, they lose every bit of love from their hearts. So the man
26 who always feels miserable will never come to God. It is not
27 religion, it is diabolism to say, "I am so miserable." Every man has
28 his own burden to bear. If you are miserable, try to be happy, try to
29 conquer it.

30 God is not to be reached by the weak. Never be weak. You
31 must be strong; you have infinite strength within you. How else will
32 you conquer anything? How else will you come to God? At the same
33 time you must avoid excessive merriment, Uddharsha, as it is
34 called. A mind in that state never becomes calm; it becomes fickle.
35 Excessive merriment will always be followed by sorrow. Tears and
36 laughter are near kin. People so often run from one extreme to the
37 other. Let the mind be cheerful, but calm. Never let it run into
38 excesses, because every excess will be followed by a reaction.

39 These, according to Ramanuja, are the preparations for
40 Bhakti.

42 THE FIRST STEPS

44 The philosophers who wrote on Bhakti defined it as extreme
45 love for God. Why a man should love God is the question to be
46 solved; and until we understand that, we shall not be able to grasp
47 the subject at all. There are two entirely different ideals of life. A
48 man of any country who has any religion knows that he is a body
49 and a spirit also. But there is a great deal of difference as to the
50 goal of human life.

1 In Western countries, as a rule, people lay more stress on
2 the body aspect of man; those philosophers who wrote on Bhakti in
3 India laid stress on the spiritual side of man; and this difference
4 seems to be typical of the Oriental and Occidental nations. It is so
5 even in common language. In England, when speaking of death it is
6 said, a man gave up his ghost; in India, a man gave up his body. The
7 one idea is that man *is* a body and *has* a soul; the other that man *is*
8 a soul and *has* a *body*. More intricate problems arise out of this. It
9 naturally follows that the ideal which holds that man is a body and
10 has a soul lays all the stress on the body. If you ask why man lives,
11 you will be told it is to enjoy the senses, to enjoy possessions and
12 wealth. He cannot dream of anything beyond even if he is told of it;
13 his idea of a future life would be a continuation of this enjoyment.
14 He is very sorry that it cannot continue all the time here, but he has
15 to depart; and he thinks that somehow or other he will go to some
16 place where the same thing will be renewed. He will have the same
17 enjoyments, the same senses, only heightened and strengthened.
18 He wants to worship God, because God is the means to attain this
19 end. The goal of his life is enjoyment of sense-objects, and he comes
20 to know there is a Being who can give him a very long lease of
21 these enjoyments, and that is why he worships God.

22 On the other hand the Indian idea is that God is the goal of
23 life; there is nothing beyond God, and the sense-enjoyments are
24 simply something through which we are passing now in the hope of
25 getting better things. Not only so; it would be disastrous and
26 terrible if man had nothing but sense-enjoyments. In our everyday
27 life we find that the less the sense-enjoyments, the higher the life of
28 the man. Look at the dog when he eats. No man ever ate with the
29 same satisfaction. Observe the pig giving grunts of satisfaction as
30 he eats; it is his heaven, and if the greatest archangel came and
31 looked on, the pig would not even notice him. His whole existence is
32 in his eating. No man was ever born who could eat that way. Think
33 of the power of hearing in lower animals, the power of seeing; all
34 their senses are highly developed. Their enjoyment of the senses is
35 extreme; they become simply mad with delight and pleasure. And
36 the lower the man also, the more delight he finds in the senses. As
37 he gets higher, the goal becomes reason and love. In proportion as
38 these faculties develop, he loses the power of enjoying the senses.

39 For illustration's sake, if we take for granted that a certain
40 amount of power is given to man, and that that can be spent either
41 on the body, or the mind, or the spirit, then all the powers spent on
42 any one of these leaves just so much less to be expended on the
43 others. The ignorant or savage races have much stronger sensual
44 faculties than the civilised races, and this is, in fact, one of the
45 lessons we learn from history that as a nation becomes civilised the
46 nerve organisation becomes finer, and they become physically
47 weaker. Civilise a savage race, and you will find the same thing;
48 another barbarian race comes up and conquers it. It is nearly
49 always the barbarian race that conquers. We see then that if we
50 desire only to have sense-enjoyments all the time, we degrade
51 ourselves to the brute state. A man does not know what he is asking
52 for when he says, he wants to go to a place where his sense-

1 enjoyments will be intensified; that he can only have by going down
2 to the brutes.

3 So with men desiring a heaven full of sense-pleasures. They
4 are like swine wallowing in the mire of the senses, unable to see
5 anything beyond. This sense-enjoyment is what they want, and the
6 loss of it is the loss of heaven to them. These can never be Bhaktas
7 in the highest sense of the word; they can never be true lovers of
8 God. At the same time, though this lower ideal be followed for a
9 time, it will also in course of time change, each man will find that
10 there is something higher, of which he did not know, and so this
11 clinging to life and to things of the senses will gradually die away.
12 When I was a little boy at school, I had a fight with another
13 schoolfellow about some sweetmeats, and he being the stronger
14 boy snatched them from my hand. I remember the feeling I had; I
15 thought that boy was the most wicked boy ever born, and that as
16 soon as I grew strong enough I would punish him; there was no
17 punishment sufficient for his wickedness. We have both grown up
18 now, and we are fast friends. This world is full of babies to whom
19 eating and drinking, and all these little cakes are everything. They
20 will dream of these cakes, and their idea of future life is where
21 these cakes will be plentiful. Think of the American Indian who
22 believes that his future life will be in a place which is a very good
23 hunting ground. Each one of us has an ideal of heaven just as we
24 want it to be; but in course of time, as we grow older and see
25 higher things, we catch higher glimpses beyond. But let us not
26 dispense with our ideas of future life in the ordinary way of modern
27 times, by not believing in anything--that is destruction. The agnostic
28 who thus destroys everything is mistaken; the Bhakta sees higher.
29 The agnostic does not want to go to heaven, because he has none;
30 while the Bhakta does not want to go to heaven, because he thinks
31 it is child's play. What he wants is God.

32 What can be a higher end than God? God Himself is the
33 highest goal of man; see Him, enjoy Him. We can never conceive
34 anything higher, because God is perfection. We cannot conceive of
35 any higher enjoyment than that of love, but this word love has
36 different meanings. It does not mean the ordinary selfish love of the
37 world; it is blasphemy to call that love. The love for our children
38 and our wives is mere animal love; that love which is perfectly
39 unselfish is the only love, and that is of God. It is a very difficult
40 thing to attain to. We are passing through all these different loves--
41 love of children, father, mother, and so forth. We slowly exercise the
42 faculty of love; but in the majority of cases we never learn anything
43 from it, we become bound to one step, to one person. In some cases
44 men come out of this bondage. Men are ever running after wives
45 and wealth and fame in this world; sometimes they are hit very
46 hard on the head, and they find out what this world really is. No one
47 in this world can really love anything but God. Man finds out that
48 human love is all hollow. Men cannot love though they talk of it. The
49 wife says she loves her husband and kisses him; but as soon as he
50 dies, the first thing she thinks about is the bank account, and what
51 she shall do the next day. The husband loves the wife; but when she
52 becomes sick and loses her beauty, or becomes haggard, or makes

1 a mistake, he ceases to care for her. All the love of the world is
2 hypocrisy and hollowness.

3 A finite subject cannot love, nor a finite object be loved.
4 When the object of the love of a man is dying every moment, and
5 his mind is also constantly changing as he grows, what eternal love
6 can you expect to find in the world? There cannot be any real love
7 but in God: why then all these loves? These are mere stages. There
8 is a power behind impelling us forward, we do not know where to
9 seek for the real object, but this love is sending us forward in
10 search of it. Again and again we find out our mistake. We grasp
11 something, and find it slips through our fingers, and then we grasp
12 something else. Thus on and on we go, till at last comes light; we
13 come to God, the only One who loves. His love knows no change
14 and is ever ready to take us in. How long would any of you bear
15 with me if I injured you? He in whose mind is no anger, hatred, or
16 envy, who never loses his balance, dies, or is born, who is he but
17 God? But the path of God is long and difficult, and very few people
18 attain Him. We are all babies struggling. Millions of people make a
19 trade of religion. A few men in a century attain to that love of God,
20 and the whole country becomes blessed and hallowed. When a son
21 of God appears, a whole country becomes blessed. It is true that
22 few such are born in any one century in the whole world, but all
23 should strive to attain that love of God. Who knows but you or I may
24 be the next to attain? Let us struggle therefore.

25 We say that a wife loves her husband. She thinks that her
26 whole soul is absorbed in him: a baby comes, and half of it goes out
27 to the baby, or more. She herself will feel that the same love of
28 husband does not exist now. So with the father. We always find that
29 when more intense objects of love come to us, the previous love
30 slowly vanishes. Children at school think that some of their
31 schoolfellows are the dearest beings that they have in life, or their
32 fathers or mothers are so; then comes the husband or wife, and
33 immediately the old feeling disappears, and the new love becomes
34 uppermost. One star arises, another bigger one comes, and then a
35 still bigger one, and at last the sun comes, and all the lesser lights
36 vanish. That sun is God. The stars are the smaller loves. When that
37 Sun bursts upon him, a man becomes mad, what Emerson calls "a
38 God-intoxicated man". Man becomes transfigured into God,
39 everything is merged in that one ocean of love. Ordinary love is
40 mere animal attraction. Otherwise why is the distinction between
41 the sexes? If one kneels before an image, it is dreadful idolatry; but
42 if one kneels before husband or wife, it is quite permissible!

43 The world presents to us manifold stages of love. We have
44 first to clear the ground. Upon our view of life the whole theory of
45 love will rest. To think that this world is the aim and end of life is
46 brutal and degrading. Any man who starts in life with that idea
47 degenerates himself. He will never rise higher, he will never catch
48 this glimpse from behind, he will always be a slave to the senses.
49 He will struggle for the dollar that will get him a few cakes to eat.
50 Better die than live that life. Slaves of this world, slaves of the
51 senses, let us rouse ourselves; there is something higher than this
52 sense-life. Do you think that man, the Infinite Spirit was born to be

1 a slave to his eyes, his nose, and his ears? There is an Infinite,
2 Omniscient Spirit behind that can do everything, break every bond;
3 and that Spirit we are, and we get that power through love. This is
4 the ideal we must remember. We cannot, of course, get it in a day.
5 We may fancy that we have it, but it is a fancy after all; it is a long,
6 long way off. We must take man where he stands, and help him
7 upwards. Man stands in materialism; you and I are materialists.
8 Our talking about God and Spirit is good; but it is simply the vogue
9 in our society to talk thus: we have learnt it parrot-like and repeat
10 it. So we have to take ourselves where we are as materialists, and
11 must take the help of matter and go on slowly until we become real
12 spiritualists, and feel ourselves spirits, understand the spirit, and
13 find that this world which we call the infinite is but a gross external
14 form of that world which is behind.

15 But something besides that is necessary. You read in the
16 Sermon on the Mount, "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye
17 shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." The difficulty is,
18 who seeks, and who wants? We all say we know God. One man
19 writes a book to disprove God, another to prove Him. One man
20 thinks it his duty to prove Him all his life; another, to disprove Him,
21 and he goes about to teach man there is no God. What is the use of
22 writing a book either to prove or disprove God? What does it matter
23 to most people whether there is a God or not? The majority of men
24 work just like a machine with no thought of God and feeling no
25 need of Him. Then one day comes Death and says, "Come." The
26 man says, "Wait a little, I want a little more time. I want to see my
27 son grow a little bigger." But Death says, "Come at once." So it goes
28 on. So goes poor John. What shall we say to poor John? He never
29 found anything in which God was the highest; perhaps he was a pig
30 in the past, and he is much better as a man. But there are some
31 who get a little awakening. Some misery comes, someone whom we
32 love most dies, that upon which we had bent our whole soul, that
33 for which we had cheated the whole world and perhaps our own
34 brother, that vanishes, and a blow comes to us. Perhaps a voice
35 comes in our soul and asks, "What after this?" Sometimes death
36 comes without a blow, but such cases are few. Most of us, when
37 anything slips through our fingers, say, "What next?" How we cling
38 to the senses! You have heard of a drowning man clutching at a
39 straw; a man will clutch at a straw first, and when it fails, he will
40 say someone must help him. Still people must, as the English
41 phrase goes, "sow their wild oats", before they can rise to higher
42 things.

43 Bhakti is a religion. Religion is not for the many, that is
44 impossible. A sort of knee-drill, standing up and sitting down, may
45 be suited for the many; but religion is for the few. There are in
46 every country only a few hundreds who can be, and will be
47 religious. The others cannot be religious, because they will not be
48 awakened, and they do not want to be. The chief thing is to *want*
49 God. We want everything except God, because our ordinary wants
50 are supplied by the external world; it is only when our necessities
51 have gone beyond the external world that we want a supply from
52 the internal, from God. So long as our needs are confined within the

1 narrow limits of this physical universe, we cannot have any need for
2 God; it is only when we have become satiated with everything there
3 that we look beyond for a supply. It is only when the need is there
4 that the demand will come. Have done with this child's play of the
5 world as soon as you can, and then you will feel the necessity of
6 something beyond the world, and the first step in religion will come.

7 There is a form of religion which is fashionable. My friend
8 has much furniture in her parlour; it is the fashion to have a
9 Japanese vase, so she must have one even if it costs a thousand
10 dollars. In the same way she will have a little religion and join a
11 church. Bhakti is not for such. That is not *want*. Want is that
12 without which we cannot live. We want breath, we want food, we
13 want clothes; without them we cannot live. When a man loves a
14 woman in this world, there are times when he feels that without her
15 he cannot live, although that is a mistake. When a husband dies, the
16 wife thinks she cannot live without him; but she lives all the same.
17 This is the secret of necessity: it is that without which we cannot
18 live; either it must come to us or we die. When the time comes that
19 we feel the same about God, or in other words, we want something
20 beyond this world, something above all material forces, then we
21 may become Bhaktas. What are our little lives when for a moment
22 the cloud passes away, and we get one glimpse from beyond, and
23 for that moment all these lower desires seem like a drop in the
24 ocean? Then the soul grows, and feels the want of God, and must
25 have Him.

26 The first step is: *What* do we want? Let us ask ourselves this
27 question every day, do we want God? You may read all the books in
28 the universe, but this love is not to be had by the power of speech,
29 not by the highest intellect, not by the study of various sciences. He
30 who desires God will get Love, unto him God gives Himself. Love is
31 always mutual, reflective. You may hate me, and if I want to love
32 you, you repulse me. But if I persist, in a month or a year you are
33 bound to love me. It is a well-known psychological phenomenon. As
34 the loving wife thinks of her departed husband, with the same love
35 we must desire the Lord, and then we will find God, and all books
36 and the various sciences would not be able to teach us anything. By
37 reading books we become parrots; no one becomes learned by
38 reading books. If a man reads but one word of love, he indeed
39 becomes learned. So we want first to get that desire.

40 Let us ask ourselves each day, "Do we want God?" When we
41 begin to talk religion, and especially when we take a high position
42 and begin to teach others, we must ask ourselves the same
43 question. I find many times that I don't want God, I want bread
44 more. I may go mad if I don't get a piece of bread; many ladies will
45 go mad if they don't get a diamond pin, but they do not have the
46 same desire for God; they do not know the only Reality that is in the
47 universe. There is a proverb in our language--If I want to be a
48 hunter, I'll hunt the rhinoceros; if I want to be a robber, I'll rob the
49 king's treasury. What is the use of robbing beggars or hunting ants?
50 So if you want to love, love God. Who cares for these things of the
51 world? This world is utterly false; all the great teachers of the world
52 found that out; there is no way out of it but through God. He is the

1 goal of our life; all ideas that the world is the goal of life are
2 pernicious. This world and this body have their own value, a
3 secondary value, as a means to an end; but the world should not be
4 the end.

5 Unfortunately, too often we make the world the end and God
6 the means. We find people going to church and saying, "God, give
7 me such and such; God, heal my disease." They want nice healthy
8 bodies; and because they hear that someone will do this work for
9 them, they go and pray to Him. It is better to be an atheist than to
10 have such an idea of religion. As I have told you, this Bhakti is the
11 highest ideal; I don't know whether we shall reach it or not in
12 millions of years to come, but we must make it our highest ideal,
13 make our senses aim at the highest. If we cannot get to the end, we
14 shall at last come nearer to it. We have slowly to work through the
15 world and the senses to reach God.

16 17 **THE TEACHER OF SPIRITUALITY**

18
19 Every soul is destined to be perfect, and every being, in the
20 end, will attain to that state. Whatever we are now is the result of
21 whatever we have been or thought in the past; and whatever we
22 shall be in the future will be the result of what we do or think now.
23 But this does not preclude our receiving help from outside; the
24 possibilities of the soul are always quickened by some help from
25 outside, so much so that in the vast majority of cases in the world,
26 help from outside is almost absolutely necessary. Quickening
27 influence comes from outside, and that works upon our own
28 potentialities; and then the growth begins, spiritual life comes, and
29 man becomes holy and perfect in the end. This quickening impulse
30 which comes from outside cannot be received from books; the soul
31 can receive impulse only from another soul, and from nothing else.
32 We may study books all our lives, we may become very intellectual,
33 but in the end we find we have not developed at all spiritually. It
34 does not follow that a high order of intellectual development always
35 shows an equivalent development of the spiritual side of man; on
36 the other hand, we find cases almost every day where the intellect
37 has become very highly developed at the expense of the spirit.

38 Now in intellectual development we can get much help from
39 books, but in spiritual development, almost nothing. In studying
40 books, sometimes we are deluded into thinking that we are being
41 spiritually helped; but if we analyse ourselves, we shall find that
42 only our intellect has been helped, and not the spirit. That is the
43 reason why almost everyone of us can *speak* most wonderfully on
44 spiritual subjects, but when the time of action comes, we find
45 ourselves so woefully deficient. It is because books cannot give us
46 that impulse from outside. To quicken the spirit, that impulse must
47 come from another soul.

48 That soul from which this impulse comes is called the Guru,
49 the teacher; and the soul to which the impulse is conveyed is called
50 the disciple, the student. In order to convey this impulse, in the first

1 place, the soul from which it comes must possess the power of
2 transmitting it, as it were, to another; and in the second place, the
3 object to which it is transmitted must be fit to receive it. The seed
4 must be a living seed, and the field must be ready ploughed; and
5 when both these conditions are fulfilled, a wonderful growth of
6 religion takes place. "The speaker of religion must be wonderful, so
7 must the hearer be"; and when both of these are really wonderful,
8 extraordinary, then alone will splendid spiritual growth come, and
9 not otherwise. These are real teachers, and these are the real
10 students. Besides these, the others are playing with spirituality--just
11 having a little intellectual struggle, just satisfying a little curiosity--
12 but are standing only on the outward fringes of the horizon of
13 religion. There is some value in that; real thirst for religion may
14 thus be awakened; all comes in course of time. It is a mysterious
15 law of nature that as soon as the field is ready the seed *must* come,
16 as soon as the soul *wants* religion, the transmitter of religious
17 force *must* come. "The seeking sinner meeteth the seeking Saviour."
18 When the power that attracts in the receiving soul is full and ripe,
19 the power which answers to that attraction must come.

20 But there are great dangers in the way. There is the danger
21 to the receiving soul of mistaking its momentary emotion for real
22 religious yearning. We find that in ourselves. Many times in our
23 lives, somebody dies whom we loved; we receive a blow; for a
24 moment we think that this world is slipping between our fingers,
25 and that we want something higher, and that we are going to be
26 religious. In a few days that wave passes away, and we are left
27 stranded where we were. We oftentimes mistake such impulses for
28 real thirst after religion, but so long as these momentary emotions
29 are thus mistaken, that continuous, real want of the soul will not
30 come, and we shall not find the "transmitter".

31 So when we complain that we have not got the truth, and
32 that we want it so much, instead of complaining, our first duty
33 ought to be to look into our own souls and find whether we *really*
34 want it. In the vast majority of cases we shall find that we are not
35 fit; we do not want; there was no thirst after the spiritual.

36 There are still more difficulties for the "transmitter". There
37 are many who, though immersed in ignorance, yet, in the pride of
38 their hearts, think they know everything, and not only do not stop
39 there, but offer to take others on their shoulders, and thus "the
40 blind leading the blind, they both fall into the ditch". The world is
41 full of these; everyone wants to be a teacher, every beggar wants to
42 make a gift of a million dollars. Just as the latter is ridiculous, so are
43 these teachers.

44 How are we to know a teacher then? In the first place, the
45 sun requires no torch to make it visible. We do not light a candle to
46 see the sun. When the sun rises, we instinctively become aware of
47 its rising; and when a teacher of men comes to help us, the soul will
48 instinctively know that it has found the truth. Truth stands on its
49 own evidences; it does not require any other testimony to attest it;
50 it is self-effulgent. It penetrates into the inmost recesses of our
51 nature, and the whole universe stands up and says, "This is Truth."
52 These are the very great teachers, but we get help from the lesser

1 ones also; and as we ourselves are not always sufficiently intuitive
2 to be certain of our judgment of the man from whom we receive,
3 there ought to be certain tests. There are certain conditions
4 necessary in the taught, and also the teacher.

5 The conditions necessary in the taught are purity, a real
6 thirst after knowledge, and perseverance. No impure soul can be
7 religious; that is the one great condition; purity in every way is
8 absolutely necessary. The other condition is a real thirst after
9 knowledge. Who *wants* ? That is the old question. We get whatever
10 we want--that is an old, old law. He who wants, gets. To want
11 religion is a very difficult thing, not so easy as we generally think.
12 Then we always forget that religion does not consist in hearing
13 talks, or in reading books, but it is a continuous struggle, a
14 grappling with our own nature, a continuous fight till the victory is
15 achieved. It is not a question of one or two days, of years, or of
16 lives, but it may be hundreds of lifetimes, and we must be ready for
17 that. It may come immediately, or it may not come in hundreds of
18 lifetimes; and we must be ready for that. The student who sets out
19 with such a spirit finds success.

20 In the teacher we must first see that he knows the secret of
21 the scriptures. The whole world reads scriptures--Bibles, Vedas,
22 Korans, and others; but they are only words, external arrangement,
23 syntax, the etymology, the philosophy, the dry bones of religion. The
24 teacher may be able to find what is the age of any book, but words
25 are only the external forms in which things come. Those who deal
26 too much in words and let the mind run always in the force of words
27 lose the spirit. So the teacher must be able to know the *spirit* of the
28 scriptures. The network of words is like a huge forest in which the
29 human mind loses itself and finds no way out. The various methods
30 of joining words, the various methods of speaking a beautiful
31 language, the various methods of explaining the *dicta* of the
32 scriptures, are only for the enjoyment of the learned. They do not
33 attain perfection; they are simply desirous to show their learning,
34 so that the world may praise them and see that they are learned
35 men. You will find that no one of the great teachers of the world
36 went into these various explanations of texts; on their part there is
37 no attempt at "text-torturing", no saying, "This word means this,
38 and this is the philological connection between this and that word."
39 You study all the great teachers the world has produced, and you
40 will see that no one of them goes that way. Yet *they* taught, while
41 others, who have nothing to teach, will take a word and write a
42 three-volume book on its origin and use. As my Master used to say,
43 what would you think of men who went into a mango orchard and
44 busied themselves in counting leaves, the size of twigs, the number
45 of branches, and so forth, while only one of them had the sense to
46 begin to eat the mangoes? So leave this counting of leaves and
47 twigs and this note-taking to others. That work has its own value in
48 its proper place, but not here in the spiritual realm. Men never
49 become spiritual through such work; you have never once seen a
50 strong spiritual man among these "leaf-counters". Religion is the
51 highest aim of man, the highest glory, but it does not require "leaf-
52 counting". If you want to be a Christian, it is not necessary to know

1 whether Christ was born in Jerusalem or Bethlehem or just the
2 exact date on which he pronounced the Sermon on the Mount; you
3 only require to *feel* the Sermon on the Mount. It is not necessary to
4 read two thousand words on when it was delivered.

5 All that is for the enjoyment of the learned. Let them have it;
6 say amen to that. Let *us* eat the mangoes.

7 The second condition in the teacher is that he must be
8 sinless. The question was once asked me in England by a friend,
9 "Why should we look to the personality of a teacher? We have only
10 to judge of what he says, and take that up." Not so. If a man wants
11 to teach me something of dynamics or chemistry or any other
12 physical science, he may be of any character; he can still teach
13 dynamics or any other science. For the knowledge that the physical
14 sciences require is simply intellectual and depends on intellectual
15 strength; a man can have in such a case a gigantic intellectual
16 power without the least development of his soul. But in the spiritual
17 sciences it is impossible from first to last that there can be any
18 spiritual light in that soul which is impure. What can such a soul
19 teach? It knows nothing. Spiritual truth is purity. "Blessed are the
20 pure in heart, for they shall see God". In that one sentence is the
21 gist of all religions. If you have learnt that, all that has been said in
22 the past and all that it is possible to say in the future, you have
23 known; you need not look into anything else, for you have all that is
24 necessary in that one sentence; it could save the world, were all the
25 other scriptures lost. A vision of God, a glimpse of the beyond never
26 comes until the soul is pure. Therefore in the teacher of spirituality,
27 purity is the one thing indispensable; we must see *first* what he *is*,
28 and *then* what he *says*. Not so with intellectual teachers; there we
29 care more for what he says than what he is. With the teacher of
30 religion we must first and foremost see what he is, and then alone
31 comes the value of the words, because he is the transmitter. What
32 will he transmit, if he has not that spiritual power in him? To give a
33 simile: If a heater is hot, it can convey heat vibrations, but if not, it
34 is impossible to do so. Even so is the case with the mental
35 vibrations of the religious teacher which he conveys to the mind of
36 the taught. It is a question of transference, and not of stimulating
37 only our intellectual faculties. Some power, real and tangible, goes
38 out from the teacher and begins to grow in the mind of the taught.
39 Therefore the necessary condition is that the teacher must be true.

40 The third condition is motive. We should see that he does not
41 teach with any ulterior motive, for name, or fame, or anything else,
42 but simply for love, pure love for you. When spiritual forces are
43 transmitted from the teacher to the taught, they can only be
44 conveyed through the medium of love; there is no other medium
45 that can convey them. Any other motive, such as gain or name,
46 would immediately destroy the conveying medium; therefore all
47 must be done through love. One who has known God can alone be a
48 teacher. When you see that in the teacher these conditions are
49 fulfilled, you are safe; if they are not fulfilled, it is unwise to accept
50 him. There is a great risk, if he cannot convey goodness, of his
51 conveying wickedness sometimes. This must be guarded against;
52 therefore it naturally follows that we cannot be taught by anybody

1 and everybody.

2 The preaching of sermons by brooks and stones may be true
3 as a poetical figure but no one can preach a single grain of truth
4 until he has it in himself. To whom do the brooks preach sermons?
5 To that human soul only whose lotus of life has already opened.
6 When the heart has been opened, it can receive teaching from the
7 brooks or the stones--it can get some religious teaching from all
8 these; but the unopened heart will see nothing but brooks and
9 rolling stones. A blind man may come to a museum, but he comes
10 and goes only; if he is to see, his eyes must first be opened. This
11 eye-opener of religion is the teacher. With the teacher, therefore,
12 our relationship is that of ancestor and descendant; the teacher is
13 the spiritual ancestor, and the disciple is the spiritual descendant. It
14 is all very well to talk of liberty and independence, but without
15 humility, submission, veneration, and faith, there will not be any
16 religion. It is a significant fact that where this relation still exists
17 between the teacher and the taught, there alone gigantic spiritual
18 souls grow; but in those who have thrown it off religion is made into
19 a diversion. In nations and churches where this relation between
20 teacher and taught is not maintained spirituality is almost an
21 unknown quantity. It never comes without that feeling; there is no
22 one to transmit and no one to be transmitted to, because they are
23 all independent. Of whom can they learn? And if they come to learn,
24 they come to *buy* learning. Give me a dollar's worth of religion;
25 cannot I pay a dollar for it? Religion cannot be got that way!

26 There is nothing higher and holier than the knowledge which
27 comes to the soul transmitted by a spiritual teacher. If a man has
28 become a perfect Yogi it comes by itself, but it cannot be got in
29 books. You may go and knock your head against the four corners of
30 the world, seek in the Himalayas, the Alps, the Caucasus, the
31 Desert of Gobi or Sahara, or the bottom of the sea, but it will not
32 come until you find a teacher. Find the teacher, serve him as a child,
33 open your heart to his influence, see in him God manifested. Our
34 attention should be fixed on the teacher as the highest
35 manifestation of God; and as the power of attention concentrates
36 there, the picture of the teacher as man will melt away; the frame
37 will vanish, and the real God will be left there. Those that come to
38 truth with such a spirit of veneration and love--for them the Lord of
39 truth speaks the most wonderful words. "Take thy shoes from off
40 thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground".
41 Wherever His name is spoken, that place is holy. How much more
42 so is a man who speaks His name, and with what veneration ought
43 we to approach a man out of whom come spiritual truths! This is
44 the spirit in which we are to be taught. Such teachers are few in
45 number, no doubt, in this world, but the world is never altogether
46 without them. The moment it is absolutely bereft of these, it will
47 cease to be, it will become a hideous hell and will just drop. These
48 teachers are the fair flowers of human life and keep the world
49 going; it is the strength that is manifested from these hearts of life
50 that keeps the bounds of society intact.

51 Beyond these is another set of teachers, the Christs of the
52 world. These Teachers of all teachers represent God Himself in the

1 form of man. They are much higher; they can transmit spirituality
2 with a touch, with a wish, which makes even the lowest and most
3 degraded characters saints in one second. Do you not read of how
4 they used to do these things? They are not the teachers about
5 whom I was speaking; they are the Teachers of all teachers, the
6 greatest manifestations of God to man; we cannot see God and they
7 are the only beings we are bound to worship.

8 No man hath "seen" God but as He is manifested in the Son.
9 We cannot see God. If we try to see Him, we make a hideous
10 caricature of God. There is an Indian story that an ignorant man
11 was asked to make an image of the God Shiva, and after days of
12 struggle he made an image of a monkey. So whenever we attempt
13 to make an image of God, we make a caricature of Him, because we
14 cannot understand Him as anything higher than man so long as we
15 are men. The time will come when we transcend our human nature
16 and know Him as He is; but so long as we are men we must worship
17 Him in man. Talk as we may, try as we may, we cannot see God
18 except as a man. We may deliver great intellectual speeches,
19 become very great rationalists, and prove that these tales of God as
20 all nonsense, but let us come to practical common sense. What is
21 behind this remarkable intellect? Zero, nothing, simply so much
22 froth. When next you hear a man delivering great intellectual
23 lectures against this worship of God, get hold of him and ask him
24 what is his idea of God, what he means by "omnipotence", and
25 "omniscience", and "omnipresent love", and so forth, beyond the
26 spelling of the words. He means nothing, he cannot formulate an
27 idea, he is no better than the man in the street who has not read a
28 single book. That man in the street, however, is quiet and does not
29 disturb the world, while the other man's arguments cause
30 disturbance. He has no actual perception, and both are on the same
31 plane.

32 Religion is realisation, and you must make the sharpest
33 distinction between talk and realisation. What you perceive in your
34 soul is realisation. Man has no idea of the Spirit, he has to think of
35 it with the forms he has before him. He has to think of the blue
36 skies, or the expansive fields, or the sea, or something huge. How
37 else can you think of God? So what are you doing in reality? You are
38 talking of omnipresence, and thinking of the sea. Is God the sea? A
39 little more common sense is required. Nothing is so uncommon as
40 common sense, the world is too full of talk. A truce to all this frothy
41 argument of the world. We are by our present constitution limited
42 and bound to see God as man. If the buffaloes want to worship God,
43 they will see Him as a huge buffalo. If a fish wants to worship God,
44 it will have to think of Him as a big fish. You and I, the buffalo, the
45 fish, each represents so many different vessels. All these go to the
46 sea to be filled with water according to the shape of each vessel. In
47 each of these vessels is nothing but water. So with God. When men
48 see Him, they see Him as man, and the animals as animal--each
49 according to his ideal. That is the only way you can see Him; you
50 have to worship Him as man, because there is no other way out of
51 it. Two classes of men do not worship God as man--the human brute
52 who has no religion, and the Paramahansa (highest Yogi) who has

1 gone beyond humanity, who has thrown off his mind and body and
2 gone beyond the limits of nature. All nature has become his Self. He
3 has neither mind nor body, and can worship God as God, as can a
4 Jesus or a Buddha. They do not worship God as man. The other
5 extreme is the human brute. You know how extremes look alike.
6 Similar is the case with the extreme of ignorance and the other
7 extreme of knowledge; neither of these worships anybody. The
8 extremely ignorant do not worship God, not being developed
9 enough to feel the need for so doing. Those that have attained the
10 highest knowledge also do not worship God--having realised and
11 become one with God. God never worships God. Between these two
12 poles of existence, if anyone tells you he is not going to worship
13 God as man, take care of him. He is an irresponsible talker, he is
14 mistaken; his religion is for frothy thinkers, it is intellectual
15 nonsense.

16 Therefore it is absolutely necessary to worship God as man,
17 and blessed are those races which has such a "God-man" to
18 worship. Christians have such a God-man in Christ; therefore cling
19 close to Christ; never give up Christ. That is the natural way to see
20 God; see God in man. All our ideas of God are concentrated there.
21 The great limitation Christians have is that they do not heed other
22 manifestations of God besides Christ. He was a manifestation of
23 God; so was Buddha; so were some others, and there will be
24 hundreds of others. Do not limit God to anywhere. Pay all the
25 reverence that you think is due to God, to Christ; that is the only
26 worship we can have. God cannot be worshipped; He is the
27 immanent Being of the universe. It is only to His manifestation as
28 man that we can pray. It would be a very good plan, when
29 Christians pray, to say, "in the name of Christ". It would be wise to
30 stop praying to God, and only pray to Christ. God understands
31 human failings and becomes a man to do good to humanity.
32 "Whenever virtue subsides and immorality prevails, then I come to
33 help mankind", says Krishna. He also says, "Fools, not knowing that
34 I, the Omnipotent and Omnipresent God of the universe, have taken
35 this human form, deride Me and think that cannot be." Their minds
36 have been clouded with demoniacal ignorance, so they cannot see
37 in Him the Lord of the universe. These great Incarnations of God
38 are to be worshipped. Not only so, they alone can be worshipped;
39 and on the days of their birth, and on the days when they went out
40 of this world, we ought to pay more particular reverence to them. In
41 worshipping Christ I would rather worship Him just as He desires;
42 on the day of His birth I would rather worship him by fasting than
43 by feasting--by praying. When these are thought of, these great
44 ones, they manifest themselves in our souls, and they make us like
45 unto them. Our whole nature changes, and we become like them.

46 But you must not mix up Christ or Buddha with hobgoblins
47 flying through the air and all that sort of nonsense. Sacrilege!
48 Christ coming into a spiritualistic seance to dance! I have seen that
49 pretence in this country. It is not in that way that these
50 manifestations of God come. The very touch of one of them will be
51 manifest upon a man; when Christ *touches*, the whole soul of man
52 will change, that man will be transfigured just as He was. His whole

1 life will be spiritualised; from every pore of his body spiritual power
2 will emanate. What were the great powers of Christ in miracles and
3 healing, in one of his character? They were low, vulgar things that
4 He could not help doing because He was among vulgar beings.
5 Where was this miracle-making done? Among the Jews; and the
6 Jews did not take Him. Where was it not done? In Europe. The
7 miracle-making went to the Jews, who rejected Christ, and the
8 Sermon on the Mount to Europe, which accepted Him. The human
9 spirit took on what was true and rejected what was spurious. The
10 great strength of Christ is not in His miracles or His healing. Any
11 fool could do those things. Fools can heal others, devils can heal
12 others. I have seen horrible demoniacal men do wonderful miracles.
13 They seem to manufacture fruits out of the earth. I have known
14 fools and diabolical men tell the past, present, and future. I have
15 seen fools heal at a glance, by the will, the most horrible diseases.
16 These are powers, truly, but often demoniacal powers. The other is
17 the spiritual power of Christ which will live and always has lived--an
18 almighty, gigantic love, and the words of truth which He preached.
19 The action of healing men at a glance is forgotten, but His saying,
20 "Blessed are the pure in heart", that lives today. These words are a
21 gigantic magazine of power--inexhaustible. So long as the human
22 mind lasts, so long as the name of God is not forgotten, these words
23 will roll on and on and never cease to be. These are the powers
24 Jesus taught, and the powers He had. The power of purity; that is a
25 definite power. So in worshipping Christ, in praying to Him, we
26 must always remember what we are seeking. Not those foolish
27 things of miraculous display, but the wonderful powers of the Spirit,
28 which make man free, give him control over the whole of nature,
29 take from him the badge of slavery, and show God unto him.

31 **THE NEED OF SYMBOLS**

32
33 Bhakti is divided into two portions. One is called Vaidhi,
34 formal or ceremonial; the other portion is called Mukhya, supreme.
35 The word Bhakti covers all the ground between the lowest form of
36 worship and the highest form of life. All the worship that you have
37 seen in any country in the world, or in any religion, is regulated by
38 love. There is a good deal that is simple ceremony; there is also a
39 good deal which, though not ceremony, is still not love, but a lower
40 state. Yet these ceremonies are necessary. The external part of
41 Bhakti is absolutely necessary to help the soul onward. Man makes
42 a great mistake when he thinks that he can at once jump to the
43 highest state. If a baby thinks he is going to be an old man in a day,
44 he is mistaken; and I hope you will always bear in mind this one
45 ideal, that religion is neither in books, nor in intellectual consent,
46 nor in reasoning. Reasoning, theories, documents, doctrines, books,
47 religious ceremonies, are all *helps* to religion: religion itself
48 consists in *realisation*. We all say, "There is a God." Have you seen
49 God? That is the question. You hear a man say, "There is a God in
50 heaven." You ask him if he has seen Him, and if he says he has, you
51 would laugh at him and say he is a maniac. With most people
52 religion is a sort of intellectual assent and goes no further than a

1 document. I would not call it religion. It is better to be an atheist
2 than to have that sort of religion. Religion does not depend on our
3 intellectual assent or dissent. You say there is a soul. Have you seen
4 the soul? How is it we all have souls and do not see them? You have
5 to answer the question and find out the way to see the soul. If not, it
6 is useless to talk of religion. If any religion is true, it must be able to
7 show us the soul and show us God and the truth in ourselves. If you
8 and I fight for all eternity about one of these doctrines or
9 documents, we shall never come to any conclusion. People have
10 been fighting for ages, and what is the outcome? Intellect cannot
11 reach there at all. We have to go beyond the intellect; the proof of
12 religion is in direct perception. The proof of the existence of this
13 wall is that we see it; if you sat down and argued about its existence
14 or non-existence for ages, you could never come to any conclusion;
15 but directly you see it, it is enough. If all the men in the world told
16 you it did not exist, you would not believe them, because you know
17 that all the evidence of your own eyes is superior to that of all the
18 doctrines and documents in the world.

19 To be religious, you have first to throw books overboard. The
20 less you read of books, the better for you; do one thing at a time. It
21 is a tendency in Western countries, in these modern times, to make
22 a hotchpotch of the brain; all sorts of unassimilated ideas run riot in
23 the brain and form a chaos without ever obtaining a chance to
24 settle down and crystallize into a definite shape. In many cases it
25 becomes a sort of disease, but this is not religion. Then some want
26 a sensation. Tell them about ghosts and people coming from the
27 North Pole or any other remote place, with wings or in any other
28 form, and that they are invisibly present and watching over them,
29 and make them feel uncanny, then they are satisfied and go home;
30 but within twenty-four hours they are ready for a fresh sensation.
31 This is what some call religion. This is the way to the lunatic
32 asylum, and not to religion. The Lord is not to be reached by the
33 weak, and all these weird things tend to weakness. Therefore go
34 not near them; they only make people weak, bring disorder to the
35 brain, weaken the mind, demoralise the soul, and a hopeless
36 muddle is the result. You must bear in mind that religion does not
37 consist in talk, or doctrine, or books, but in realisation; it is not
38 learning, but *being*. Everybody knows, "Do not steal", but what of
39 it? That man has really known who has not stolen. Everybody
40 knows, "Do not injure others", but of what value is it? Those who
41 have not done so have realised it, they know it and have built their
42 character on it. Religion is realising; and I will call you a
43 worshipper of God when you have become able to realise the Idea.
44 Before that it is the spelling of the word, and no more. It is this
45 power of realisation that makes religion. No amount of doctrines or
46 philosophies or ethical books, that you may have stuffed into your
47 brain, will matter much, only what you *are* and what you have
48 *realised*. So we have to realise religion, and this realisation of
49 religion is a long process. When men hear of something very high
50 and wonderful, they all think they will get that, and never stop for a
51 moment to consider that they will have to work their way up to it;
52 they all want to jump there. If it is the highest, we are for it. We
53 never stop to consider whether we have the power, and the result is

1 that we do not do anything. You cannot take a man with a pitchfork
2 and push him up there; we all have to work up gradually. Therefore
3 the first part of religion is Vaidhi Bhakti, the lower phase of
4 worship.

5 What are these lower phases of worship? They are various.
6 In order to attain to the state where we can realise, we must pass
7 through the concrete--just as you see children learn through the
8 concrete first--and gradually come to the abstract. If you tell a baby
9 that five times two is ten, it will not understand; but if you bring ten
10 things and show how five times two is ten, it will understand.
11 Religion is a long, slow process. We are all of us babies here; we
12 may be old, and have studied all the books in the universe, but we
13 are all spiritual babies. We have learnt the doctrines and dogmas,
14 but realised nothing in our lives. We shall have to begin now in the
15 concrete, through forms and words, prayers and ceremonies; and of
16 these concrete forms there will be thousands; one form need not be
17 for everybody. Some may be helped by images, some may not. Some
18 require an image outside, others one inside the brain. The man who
19 puts it inside says, "I am a superior man. When it is inside it is all
20 right; when it is outside, it is idolatry, I will fight it." When a man
21 puts an image in the form of a church or a temple, he thinks it is
22 holy; but when it is in a human form, he objects to it!

23 So there are various forms through which the mind will take
24 this concrete exercise; and then, step by step, we shall come to the
25 abstract understanding, abstract realisation. Again, the same form
26 is not for everyone; there is one form that will suit you, and another
27 will suit somebody else, and so on. All forms, though leading to the
28 same goal, may not be for all of us. Here is another mistake we
29 generally make. My ideal does not suit you; and why should I force
30 it on you? My fashion of building churches or reading hymns does
31 not suit you; why should I force it on you? Go into the world and
32 every fool will tell you that his form is the only right one, that every
33 other form is diabolical, and he is the only chosen man ever born in
34 the universe. But in fact, all these forms are good and helpful. Just
35 as there are certain varieties in human nature, so it is necessary
36 that there should be an equal number of forms in religion; and the
37 more there are, the better for the world. If there are twenty forms
38 of religion in the world, it is very good; if there are four hundred, so
39 much the better--there will be the more to choose from. So we
40 should rather be glad when the number of religions and religious
41 ideas increase and multiply, because they will then include every
42 man and help mankind more. Would to God that religions multiplied
43 until every man had his own religion, quite separate from that of
44 any other! This is the idea of the Bhakti-Yogi.

45 The final idea is that my religion cannot be yours, or yours
46 mine. Although the goal and the aim are the same, yet each one has
47 to take a different road, according to the tendencies of his mind;
48 and although these roads are various, they must all be true,
49 because they lead to the same goal. It cannot be that one is true
50 and the rest not. The choosing of one's own road is called in the
51 language of Bhakti, Ishta, the chosen way.

52 Then there are words. All of you have heard of the power of

1 words, how wonderful they are! Every book--the Bible, the Koran,
2 and the Vedas--is full of the power of words. Certain words have
3 wonderful power over mankind. Again, there are other forms,
4 known as symbols. Symbols have great influence on the human
5 mind. But great symbols in religion were not created indefinitely.
6 We find that they are the natural expressions of thought. We think
7 symbolically. All our words are but symbols of the thought behind,
8 and different people have come to use different symbols without
9 knowing the reason why. It was all behind, and these symbols are
10 associated with the thoughts; and as the thought brings the symbol
11 outside, so the symbol, on the contrary, can bring the thought
12 inside. So one portion of Bhakti tells about these various subjects of
13 symbols and words and prayers. Every religion has prayers, but one
14 thing you must bear in mind--praying for health or wealth is not
15 Bhakti, it is all Karma or meritorious action. Praying for any
16 physical gain is simply Karma, such as a prayer for going to heaven
17 and so forth. One that wants to love God, to be a Bhakta, must
18 discard all such prayers. He who wants to enter the realms of light
19 must first give up this buying and selling, this "shopkeeping"
20 religion, and then enter the gates. It is not that you do not get what
21 you pray for; you get everything, but such praying is a beggar's
22 religion. "Foolish indeed is he who, living on the banks of the
23 Ganga, digs a little well for water. A fool indeed is the man who,
24 coming to a mine of diamonds, seeks for glass beads." This body
25 will die some time, so what is the use of praying for its health again
26 and again? What is there in health and wealth? The wealthiest man
27 can use and enjoy only a little portion of his wealth. We can never
28 get all the things of this world; and if not, who cares? This body will
29 go, who cares for these things? If good things come, welcome; if
30 they go away, let them go. Blessed are they when they come, and
31 blessed are they when they go. We are striving to come into the
32 presence of the King of kings. We cannot get there in a beggar's
33 dress. Even if we wanted to enter the presence of an emperor,
34 should we be admitted? Certainly not. We should be driven out. This
35 is the Emperor of emperors, and in these beggar's rags we cannot
36 enter. Shopkeepers never have admission there; buying and selling
37 have no place there. As you read in the Bible, Jesus drove the
38 buyers and sellers out of the Temple. Do not pray for these little
39 things. If you seek only bodily comforts, where is the difference
40 between man and animals? Think yourselves a little higher than
41 that.

42 So it goes without saying that the first task in becoming a
43 Bhakta is to give up all desires of heaven and other things. The
44 question is how to get rid of these desires. What makes men
45 miserable? Because they are slaves, bound by laws, puppets in the
46 hand of nature, tumbled about like playthings. We are continually
47 taking care of this body that anything can knock down; and so we
48 are living in a constant state of fear. I have read that a deer has to
49 run on the average sixty or seventy miles every day, because it is
50 frightened. We ought to know that we are in a worse plight than the
51 deer. The deer has some rest, but we have none. If the deer gets
52 grass enough it is satisfied, but we are always multiplying our
53 wants. We have become so unhinged and unnatural that nothing

1 natural will satisfy us. We are always grasping after morbid things,
2 must have unnatural excitement--unnatural food, drink,
3 surroundings, and life. As to fear, what are our lives but bundles of
4 fear? The deer has only one class of fear, such as that from tigers,
5 wolves, etc. Man has the whole universe to fear.

6 How are we to free ourselves from this is the question.
7 Utilitarians say, "Don't talk of God and hereafter; we don't know
8 anything of these things, let us live happily in this world." I would
9 be the first to do so if we could, but the world will not allow us. As
10 long as you are a slave of nature, how can you? The more you
11 struggle, the more enveloped you become. You have been devising
12 plans to make you happy, I do not know for how many years, but
13 each year things seem to grow worse. Two hundred years ago in
14 the old world people had few wants; but if their knowledge
15 increased in arithmetical progression, their wants increased in
16 geometrical progression. We think that in salvation at least our
17 desires will be fulfilled, so we desire to go to heaven. This eternal,
18 unquenchable thirst! Always wanting something! When a man is a
19 beggar, he wants money. When he has money, he wants other
20 things, society; and after that, something else. Never at rest. How
21 are we to quench this? If we get to heaven, it will only increase
22 desire. If a poor man gets rich, it does not quench his desires, it is
23 only like throwing butter on the fire, increasing its bright flames.
24 Going to heaven means becoming intensely richer, and then desire
25 comes more and more. We read of many human things in heaven in
26 the different Bibles of the world; they are not always very good
27 there; and after all, this desire to go to heaven is a desire after
28 enjoyment. This has to be given up. It is too little, too vulgar a thing
29 for you to think of going to heaven. It is just the same as thinking, I
30 will become a millionaire and lord it over people. There are many of
31 these heavens, but through them you cannot gain the right to enter
32 the gates of religion and love.

33 34 THE CHIEF SYMBOLS 35

36 There are two Sanskrit words, Pratika and Pratima. Pratika
37 means coming towards, nearing. In all countries you find various
38 grades of worship. In this country, for instance, there are people
39 who worship images of saints, there are people who worship
40 certain forms and symbols. Then there are people who worship
41 different beings who are higher than men, and their number is
42 increasing very rapidly--worshippers of departed spirits. I read that
43 there are something like eight millions of them here. Then there are
44 other people who worship certain beings of higher grade--the
45 angels, the gods, and so forth. Bhakti-Yoga does not condemn any
46 one of these various grades, but they are all classed under one
47 name, Pratika. These people are not worshipping God, but Pratika,
48 something which is near, a step towards God. This Pratika worship
49 cannot lead us to salvation and freedom; it can only give us certain
50 particular things for which we worship them. For instance, if a man
51 worships his departed ancestors or departed friends, he may get

1 certain powers or certain information from them. Any particular gift
2 that is got from these objects of worship is called Vidya, particular
3 knowledge; but freedom, the highest aim, comes only by worship of
4 God Himself. Some Orientalists think, in expounding the Vedas, that
5 even the Personal God Himself is a Pratika. The Personal God may
6 be a Pratika, but the Pratikas are neither the Personal nor
7 Impersonal God. They cannot be worshipped as God. So it would be
8 a great mistake if people thought that by worshipping these
9 different Pratikas, either as angels, or ancestors, or Mahatmas (holy
10 men, saints), etc., or departed spirits, they could ever reach to
11 freedom. At best they can only reach to certain powers, but God
12 alone can make us free. But because of that they are not to be
13 condemned, their worship produces some result. The man who does
14 not understand anything higher may get some power, some
15 enjoyment, by the worship of these Pratikas; and after a long
16 course of experience, when he will be ready to come to freedom, he
17 will of his own accord give up the Pratikas.

18 Of these various Pratikas the most prevalent form is the
19 worship of departed friends. Human nature--personal love, love for
20 our friends--is so strong in us that when they die, we wish to see
21 them once more--clinging on to their forms. We forget that these
22 forms while living were constantly changing, and when they die, we
23 think they become constant, and that we shall see them so. Not only
24 so, but if I have a friend or a son who has been a scoundrel, as soon
25 as he dies, I begin to think he is the saintliest person in existence;
26 he becomes a god. There are people in India who, if a baby dies, do
27 not burn it, but bury it and build a temple over it; and that little
28 baby becomes the god of that temple. This is a very prevalent form
29 of religion in many countries, and there are not wanting
30 philosophers who think this has been the origin of all religions. Of
31 course they cannot prove it.

32 We must remember, however, that this worship of Pratikas
33 can never bring us to salvation or to freedom.

34 Secondly, it is very dangerous. The danger is that these
35 Pratikas, "nearing-stages", so far as they lead us on to a further
36 stage, are all right; but the chances are ninety-nine to one that we
37 shall stick to the Pratikas all our lives. It is very good to be born in a
38 church, but it is very bad to die there. To make it clearer, it is very
39 good to be born in a certain sect and have its training--it brings out
40 our higher qualities; but in the vast majority of cases we die in that
41 little sect, we never come out or grow. That is the great danger of
42 all these worships of Pratikas. One says that these are all the stages
43 which one has to pass, but one never gets out of them; and when
44 one becomes old, one still sticks to them. If a young man does not
45 go to church, he ought to be condemned. But if an old man goes to
46 church, he also ought to be condemned; he has no business with
47 this child's play any more; the church should have been merely a
48 preparation for something higher. What business has he any more
49 with forms and Pratikas and all the preliminaries?

50 Book worship is another strong form of this Pratika, the
51 strongest form. You find in every country that the book becomes the
52 God. There are sects in my country who believe that God incarnates

1 and becomes man, but even God incarnate as man must conform to
2 the Vedas, and if His teachings do not so conform, they will not take
3 Him. Buddha is worshipped by the Hindus, but if you say to them,
4 "If you worship Buddha, why don't you take His teachings?" they
5 will say, because they, the Buddhists, deny the Vedas. Such is the
6 meaning of book worship. Any number of lies in the name of a
7 religious book are all right. In India if I want to teach anything new,
8 and simply state it on my own authority, as what I think, nobody will
9 come to listen to me; but if I take some passage from the Vedas,
10 and juggle with it, and give it the most impossible meaning, murder
11 everything that is reasonable in it, and bring out my own ideas as
12 the ideas that were meant by the Vedas, all the fools will follow me
13 in a crowd. Then there are men preaching a sort of Christianity that
14 would frighten the ordinary Christian out of his wits; but they say,
15 "This is what Jesus Christ meant", and many come round them.
16 People do not want anything new, if it is not in the Vedas or the
17 Bible. It is a case of nerves: when you hear a new and striking
18 thing, you are startled; it is constitutional. It is much more so with
19 thoughts. The mind has been running in ruts, and to take up a new
20 idea is too much of a strain; so the idea has to be put near the ruts,
21 and then we slowly take it. It is a good policy, but bad morality.
22 Think of the mass of incongruities that reformers, and what you call
23 the liberal preachers, pour into society today. According to
24 Christian Scientists, Jesus was a great healer; according to the
25 Spiritualists, He was a great psychic; according to the
26 Theosophists, He was a Mahatma. All these have to be deduced
27 from the same text. There is a text in the Vedas which says,
28 "Existence (Sat) alone existed, O beloved, nothing else existed in
29 the beginning". Many different meanings are given to the word Sat
30 in this text. The Atomists say the word meant "atoms", and out of
31 these atoms the world has been produced. The Naturalists say it
32 meant "nature", and out of nature everything has come. The
33 Shunyavadins (maintainers of the Void) say it meant "nothing",
34 "zero", and out of nothing everything has been produced. The
35 Theists say it meant "God", and the Advaitists say it was "Absolute
36 Existence", and all refer to the same text as their authority.

37 These are the defects of book worship. But there is, on the
38 other hand, a great advantage in it; it gives strength. All religious
39 sects have disappeared excepting those that have a book. Nothing
40 seems to kill them.

41 Some of you have heard of the Parsees. They were the
42 ancient Persians, and at one time there were about a hundred
43 millions of them. The majority of them were conquered by the
44 Arabs, and converted to Mohammedanism. A handful fled from their
45 persecutors with their book, which is still preserving them. A book
46 is the most tangible form of God. Think of the Jews; if they had not
47 had a book, they would have simply melted into the world. But that
48 keeps them up; the Talmud keeps them together, in spite of the
49 most horrible persecution. One of the great advantages of a book is
50 that it crystallises everything in tangible and convenient form, and
51 is the handiest of all idols. Just put a book on an altar and everyone
52 sees it; a good book everybody reads. I am afraid I may be

1 considered partial. But, in my opinion books have produced more
2 evil than good. They are accountable for many mischievous
3 doctrines. Creeds all come from books, and books are alone
4 responsible for the persecution and fanaticism in the world. Books
5 in modern times are making liars everywhere. I am astonished at
6 the number of liars abroad in every country.

7 The next thing to be considered is the Pratima, or image, the
8 use of images. All over the world you will find images in some form
9 or other. With some, it is in the form of man, which is the best form.
10 If I wanted to worship an image I would rather have it in the form
11 of a man than of an animal, or building, or any other form. One sect
12 thinks a certain form is the right sort of image, and another thinks
13 it is bad. The Christian thinks that when God came in the form of a
14 dove it was all right, but if He comes in the form of a fish, as the
15 Hindus say, it is very wrong and superstitious. The Jews think if an
16 idol be made in the form of a chest with two angels sitting on it, and
17 a book on it, it is all right, but if it is in the form of a man or a
18 woman, it is awful. The Mohammedans think that when they pray, if
19 they try to form a mental image of the temple with the Caaba, the
20 black stone in it, and turn towards the west, it is all right, but if you
21 form the image in the shape of a church, it is idolatry. This is the
22 defect of image-worship. Yet all these seem to be necessary stages.

23 In this matter it is of supreme importance to think what we
24 ourselves believe. What we have realised, is the question. What
25 Jesus, or Buddha, or Moses did is nothing to us, unless we too do it
26 for ourselves. It would not satisfy our hunger to shut ourselves up
27 in a room and think of what Moses ate, nor would what Moses
28 thought save *us*. My ideas are very radical on these points.
29 Sometimes I think that I am right when I agree with all the ancient
30 teachers, at other times I think they are right when they agree with
31 me. I believe in thinking independently. I believe in becoming
32 entirely free from the holy teachers; pay all reverence to them, but
33 look at religion as an independent research. I have to find my light,
34 just as they found theirs. Their finding the light will not satisfy us at
35 all. You have to *become* the Bible, and not to follow it, excepting as
36 paying reverence to it as a light on the way, as a guide-post, a mark:
37 that is all the value it has. But these images and other things are
38 quite necessary. You may try to concentrate your mind, or even to
39 project any thought. You will find that you naturally form images in
40 your mind. You cannot help it. Two sorts of persons never require
41 any image--the human animal who never thinks of any religion, and
42 the perfected being who has passed through these stages. Between
43 these two points all of us require some sort of ideal, outside and
44 inside. It may be in the form of a departed human being, or of a
45 living man or woman. This is clinging to personality and bodies, and
46 is quite natural. We are prone to concretise. How could we be here
47 if we did not concretise? We are concreted spirits, and so we find
48 ourselves here on this earth. Concretisation has brought us here,
49 and it will take us out. Going after things of the senses has made us
50 human beings, and we are bound to worship personal beings,
51 whatever we may say to the contrary. It is very easy to say "Don't be
52 personal"; but the same man who says so is generally most

1 personal. His attachment for particular men and women is very
2 strong; it does not leave him when they die, he wants to follow them
3 beyond death. That is idolatry; it is the seed, the very cause of
4 idolatry; and the cause being there it will come out in some form. Is
5 it not better to have a personal attachment to an image of Christ or
6 Buddha than to an ordinary man or woman? In the West, people say
7 that it is bad to kneel before images, but they can kneel before a
8 woman, and say, "You are my life, the light of my eyes, my soul."
9 That is worse idolatry. What is this talk about my soul, my life? It
10 will soon go away. It is only sense-attachment. It is selfish love
11 covered by a mass of flowers. Poets give it a good name and throw
12 lavender-water and all sorts of attractive things over it. Is it not
13 better to kneel before a statue of Buddha or the Jina conqueror and
14 say, "*Thou* art my life"? I would rather do that.

15 There is another sort of Pratika which is not recognised in
16 Western countries, but is taught in our books. This teaches the
17 worship of mind as God. Anything that is worshipped as God is a
18 stage, a nearing, as it were. An example of this is the method of
19 showing the fine star known as Arundhati, near the group Pleiades.
20 One is shown a big star near to it, and when he has fixed his
21 attention on this and has come to know it, he is shown a finer and
22 still nearer star; and when he has fixed his attention on that, he is
23 led up to Arundhati. So all these various Pratikas and Pratimas lead
24 to God. The worship of Buddha and of Christ constitute a Pratika, a
25 drawing near to the worship of God. But this worship of Buddha
26 and of Christ will not save a man, he must go beyond them to Him
27 who manifested Himself as Jesus Christ, for God alone can give us
28 freedom. There are even some philosophers who say these should
29 be regarded as God; they are not Pratikas, but God Himself.
30 However, we can take all these different Pratikas, these different
31 stages of approach, and not be hurt by them; but if we think while
32 we are worshipping them that we are worshipping God, we are
33 mistaken. If a man worships Jesus Christ, and thinks he will be
34 saved by that, he is mistaken entirely. If a man thinks that by
35 worshipping an idol or the ghosts of spirits of the departed he will
36 be saved, he is entirely mistaken. We may worship anything by
37 seeing God *in* it, if we can forget the idol and see God there. We
38 must not project any image upon God. But we may fill any image
39 with that Life which is God. Only forget the image, and you are
40 right enough-for "*Out of Him comes everything*". He is everything.
41 We may worship a picture as God, but not God as the picture. God
42 in the picture is right, but the picture as God is wrong. God *in* the
43 image is perfectly right. There is no danger there. This is the real
44 worship of God. But the image-God is a mere Pratika.

45 The next great thing to consider in Bhakti is the "word", the
46 Namashakti, the power of the name. The whole universe is
47 composed of name and form. Whatever we see is either a
48 compound of name and form, or simply name with form which is a
49 mental image. So, after all, there is nothing that is not name and
50 form. We all believe God to be without form or shape, but as soon
51 as we begin to *think* of Him, He acquires both name and form. The
52 Chitta is like the calm lake, thoughts being like waves upon this

1 Chitta--and name and form are the normal ways in which these
2 waves arise; no wave can rise without name and form. The uniform
3 cannot be thought of; it is beyond thought; as soon as it becomes
4 thought and matter, it must have name and form. We cannot
5 separate these. It is said in many books that God created the
6 universe out of the Word. Shabdabrahman, in Sanskrit, is the
7 Christian theory of the Word. An old Indian theory, it was taken to
8 Alexandria by Indian preachers and was planted there. Thus the
9 idea of the Word and the Incarnation became fixed there.

10 There is deep meaning in the thought that God created
11 everything out of the Word. God Himself being formless, this is the
12 best way to describe the projection of forms, or the creation. The
13 Sanskrit word for creation is Srishti, projection. What is meant by
14 "God created things out of nothing"? The universe is projected out
15 of God. He becomes the universe, and it all returns to Him, and
16 again it proceeds forth, and again returns. Through all eternity it
17 will go on in that way. We have seen that the projection of anything
18 in the mind cannot be without name and form. Suppose the mind to
19 be perfectly calm, entirely without thought; nevertheless, as soon
20 as thought begins to rise it will immediately take name and form.
21 Every thought has a certain name and a certain form. In the same
22 way the very fact of creation, the very fact of projection is eternally
23 connected with name and form. Thus we find that every idea that
24 man has, or can have, must be connected with a certain name or
25 word as its counterpart. This being so, it is quite natural to suppose
26 that this universe is the outcome of mind, just as your body is the
27 outcome of your idea--your idea, as it were, made concrete and
28 externalised. If it be true, moreover, that the whole universe is built
29 on the same plan, then, if you know the manner in which one atom
30 is built, you can understand how the whole universe is built. If it is
31 true that in you, the body forms the gross part outside and the mind
32 forms the fine part inside, and both are eternally inseparable, then,
33 when you cease to have the body, you will cease to have the mind
34 also. When a man's brain is disturbed, his ideas also get disturbed,
35 because they are but one, the finer and the grosser parts. There are
36 not two such things as matter and mind.

37 As in a high column of air there are dense and rarefied
38 strata of one and the same element air, so it is with the body; it is
39 one thing throughout, layer on layer, from grosser to finer. Again,
40 the body is like the finger nails. As these continue growing even
41 when they are cut, so from our subtle ideas grows body after body.
42 The finer a thing the more persistent it is; we find that always. The
43 grosser it is the less persistent. Thus, form is the grosser and name
44 the finer state of a single manifesting power called thought. But
45 these three are one; it is the Unity and the Trinity, the three
46 degrees of existence of the same thing. Finer, the more condensed,
47 and most condensed. Wherever the one is, the others are there
48 also. Wherever name is, there is form and thought.

49 It naturally follows that if the universe is built upon the same
50 plan as the body, the universe also must have the same divisions of
51 form, name, and thought. The "thought" is the finest part of the
52 universe, the real motive power. The thought behind our body is

1 called soul, and the thought behind the universe is called God. Then
2 after that is the name, and last of is the form which we see and feel.
3 For instance, you are a particular person, a little universe in this
4 universe, a body with a particular form; then behind that a name,
5 John or Jane, and behind that again a thought; similarly there is this
6 whole universe, and behind that is the name, what is called the
7 "Word" in all religions, and behind that is God. The universal
8 thought is Mahat, as the Sankhyas call it, universal consciousness.
9 What is that name? There must be some name. The world is
10 homogeneous, and modern science shows beyond doubt that each
11 atom is composed of the same material as the whole universe. If
12 you know one lump of clay you know the whole universe. Man is the
13 most representative being in the universe, the microcosm, a small
14 universe in himself. So in man we find there is the form, behind that
15 the name, and behind that the thought, the thinking being. So this
16 universe must be on exactly the same plan. The question is: What is
17 that name? According to the Hindus that word is Om. The old
18 Egyptians also believed that. The Katha Upanishad says, "That,
19 seeking which a man practises Brahmacharya, I will tell you in
20 short what that is, that is Om. . . . This is Brahman, the Immutable
21 One, and is the highest; knowing this Immutable One, whatever one
22 desires one gets."

23 This Om stands for the name of the whole universe, or God.
24 Standing midway between the external world and God, it
25 represents both. But then we can take the universe piecemeal,
26 according to the different senses, as touch, as colour, as taste, and
27 in various other ways. In each case we can make of this universe
28 millions of universes from different standpoints, each of which will
29 be a complete universe by itself, and each one will have a name,
30 and a form, and a thought behind. These thoughts behind are
31 Pratikas. Each of them has a name. These names of sacred symbols
32 are used in Bhakti-Yoga. They have almost infinite power. Simply by
33 repetition of these words we can get anything we desire, we can
34 come to perfection. But two things are necessary. "The teacher
35 must be wonderful, so also must be the taught", says the Katha
36 Upanishad. Such a name must come from a person to whom it has
37 descended through right succession. From master to disciple, the
38 spiritual current has been coming from ancient times, bearing its
39 power. The person from whom such a word comes is called a Guru,
40 and the person to whom it goes is called Shishya, the disciple.
41 When the word has been received in the regular way, and when it
42 has been repeated, much advance has been made in Bhakti-Yoga.
43 Simply by the repetition of that word will come even the highest
44 state of Bhakti. "Thou hast so many names. Thou understandest
45 what is meant by them, all these names are Thine, and in each is
46 Thine infinite power; there is neither time nor place for repeating
47 these names, for all times and places are holy. Thou art so easy,
48 Thou art so merciful, how unfortunate am I, that I have no love for
49 Thee!"

51 THE ISHTA

52 The theory of Ishta, which I briefly referred to before, is a

1 subject requiring careful attention because with a proper
2 understanding of this, all the various religions of the world can be
3 understood. The word Ishta is derived from the root Ish, to desire,
4 choose. The ideal of all religions, all sects, is the same--the attaining
5 of liberty and cessation of misery. Wherever you find religion, you
6 find this ideal working in one form or other. Of course in lower
7 stages of religion it is not so well expressed; but still, well or ill-
8 expressed, it is the one goal to which every religion approaches. All
9 of us want to get rid of misery; we are struggling to attain to
10 liberty--physical, mental, spiritual. This is the whole idea upon
11 which the world is working. Though the goal is one and the same,
12 there may be many ways to reach it; and these ways are
13 determined by the peculiarities of our nature. One man's nature is
14 emotional, another's intellectual, another's active, and so forth.
15 Again, in the same nature there may be many subdivisions. Take for
16 instance love, with which we are specially concerned in this subject
17 of Bhakti. One man's nature has a stronger love for children;
18 another has it for wife, another for mother, another for father,
19 another for friends. Another by nature has love for country, and a
20 few love humanity in the broadest sense; they are of course very
21 few, although everyone of us talks of it as if it were the guiding
22 motive power of our lives. Some few sages have experienced it. A
23 few great souls among mankind feel this universal love, and let us
24 hope that this world will never be without such men.

25 We find that even in one subject there are so many different
26 ways of attaining to its goal. All Christians believe in Christ; but
27 think, how many different explanations they have of him. Each
28 church sees him in a different light, from different standpoints. The
29 Presbyterian's eyes are fixed upon that one scene in Christ's life
30 when he went to the money-changers; he looks on him as a fighter.
31 If you ask a Quaker, perhaps he will say, "He forgave his enemies."
32 The Quaker takes that view, and so on. If you ask a Roman Catholic,
33 what point of Christ's life is the most pleasing to him, he, perhaps,
34 will say, "When he gave the keys to Peter". Each sect is bound to
35 see him in its own way.

36 It follows that there will be many divisions and sub-divisions
37 even of the same subject. Ignorant persons take one of these
38 subdivisions and take their stand upon it, and they not only deny
39 the right of every other man to interpret the universe according to
40 his own light, but dare to say that others are entirely wrong, and
41 they alone are right. If they are opposed, they begin to fight. They
42 say that they will kill any man who does not believe as they believe,
43 just as the Mohammedans do. These are people who think they are
44 sincere, and who ignore all others. But what is the position we want
45 to take in this Bhakti-Yoga? Not only that we would not tell others
46 that they are wrong, but that we would tell them that they are
47 right--all of these who follow their own ways. That way, which your
48 nature makes it absolutely necessary for you to take, is the right
49 way. Each one of us is born with a peculiarity of nature as the result
50 of our past existence. Either we call it our own reincarnated past
51 experience or a hereditary past; whatever way we may put it, we
52 are the result of the past--that is absolutely certain, through

1 whatever channels that past may have come. It naturally follows
2 that each one of us is an effect, of which our past has been the
3 cause; and as such, there is a peculiar movement, a peculiar train,
4 in each one of us; and therefore each one will have to find way for
5 himself.

6 This way, this method, to which each of us is naturally
7 adapted, is called the "chosen way". This is the theory of Ishta, and
8 that way which is ours we call our own Ishta. For instance, one
9 man's idea of God is that He is the omnipotent Ruler of the
10 universe. His nature is perhaps such. He is an overbearing man
11 who wants to rule everyone; he naturally finds God an omnipotent
12 Ruler. Another man, who was perhaps a schoolmaster, and severe,
13 cannot see any but a just God, a God of punishment, and so on.
14 Each one sees God according to his own nature; and this vision,
15 conditioned by our own nature, is our Ishta. We have brought
16 ourselves to a position where we can see that vision of God, and
17 that alone; we cannot see any other vision. You will perhaps
18 sometimes think of the teaching of a man that is the best and fits
19 you exactly, and the next day you ask one of your friends to go and
20 hear him; but he comes away with the idea that it was the worst
21 teaching he had ever heard. He is not wrong, and it is useless to
22 quarrel with him. The teaching was all right, but it was not fitted to
23 that man. To extend it a little further, we must understand that truth
24 seen from different standpoints can be truth, and yet not the same
25 truth.

26 This would seem at first to be a contradiction in terms, but
27 we must remember that an absolute truth is only one, while relative
28 truths are necessarily various. Take your vision of this universe, for
29 instance. This universe, as an absolute entity, is unchangeable, and
30 unchanged, and the same throughout. But you and I and everybody
31 else hear and see, each one his own universe. Take the sun. The sun
32 is one; but when you and I and a hundred other people stand at
33 different places and look at it, each one of us sees a different sun.
34 We cannot help it. A very little change of place will change a man's
35 whole vision of the sun. A slight change in the atmosphere will
36 make again a different vision. So, in relative perception, truth
37 always appears various. But the Absolute Truth is only one.
38 Therefore we need not fight with others when we find they are
39 telling something about religion which is not exactly according to
40 our view of it. We ought to remember that both of us may be true,
41 though apparently contradictory. There may be millions of radii
42 converging towards the same centre in the sun. The further they
43 are from the centre, the greater is the distance between any two.
44 But as they all meet at the centre, all difference vanishes. There is
45 such a centre, which is the absolute goal of mankind. It is God. We
46 are the radii. The distances between the radii are the constitutional
47 limitations through which we alone can catch the vision of God.
48 While standing on this plane, we are bound each one of us to have a
49 different view of the Absolute Reality; and as such, all views are
50 true, and no one of us need quarrel with another. The only solution
51 lies in approaching the centre. If we try to settle our differences by
52 argument or quarrelling, we shall find that we can go on for

1 hundreds of years without coming to a conclusion. History proves
2 that. The only solution is to march ahead and go towards the
3 centre; and the sooner we do that the sooner our differences will
4 vanish.

5 This theory of Ishta, therefore, means allowing a man to
6 choose his own religion. One man should not force another to
7 worship what he worships. All attempts to herd together human
8 beings by means of armies, force, or arguments, to drive them pell-
9 mell into the same enclosure and make them worship the same God
10 have failed, and will fail always, because it is constitutionally
11 impossible to do so. Not only so, there is the danger of arresting
12 their growth. You scarcely meet any man or woman who is not
13 struggling for some sort of religion; and how many are satisfied, or
14 rather how few are satisfied! How few find anything! And why?
15 Simply because most of them go after impossible tasks. They are
16 forced into these by the

1 dictation of others. For instance, when I am a child, my
2 father puts a book into my hand which says God is such and such.
3 What business has he to put that into my mind? How does he know
4 what way I would develop? And being ignorant of my constitutional
5 development, he wants to force his ideas on my brain, with the
6 result that my growth is stunted. You cannot make a plant grow in
7 soil unsuited to it. A child teaches itself. But you can *help* it to go
8 forward in its own way. What you can do is not of the positive
9 nature, but of the negative. You can take away the obstacles, but
10 knowledge comes out of its own nature. Loosen the soil a little, so
11 that it may come out easily. Put a hedge around it; see that it is not
12 killed by anything, and there your work stops. You cannot do
13 anything else. The rest is a manifestation from *within* its own
14 nature. So with the education of a child; a child educates itself. You
15 come to hear me, and when you go home, compare what you have
16 learnt, and you will find you have thought out the same thing; I have
17 only given it expression. I can never teach you anything: you will
18 have to teach yourself, but I can help you perhaps in giving
19 expression to that thought.

20 So in religion--more so--I must teach myself religion. What
21 right has my father to put all sorts of nonsense into my head? What
22 right has my master or society to put things into my head? Perhaps
23 they are good, but they may not be *my* way. Think of the appalling
24 evil that is in the world today, of the millions and millions of
25 innocent children perverted by wrong ways of teaching. How many
26 beautiful things which would have become wonderful spiritual
27 truths have been nipped in the bud by this horrible idea of a family
28 religion, a social religion, a national religion, and so forth. Think of
29 what a mass of superstition is in your head just now about your
30 childhood's religion, or your country's religion, and what an amount
31 of evil it does, or can do. Man does not know

1 what a potent power lies behind each thought and action.
2 The old saying is true that, "Fools rush in where angels fear to
3 tread." This should be kept in view from the very first. How? By this
4 belief in Ishta. There are so many ideals; I have no right to say what
5 shall be your ideal, to force any ideal on you. My duty should be to
6 lay before you all the ideals I know of and enable you to see by your
7 own constitution what you like best, and which is most fitted to you.
8 Take up that one which suits you best and persevere in it. This is
9 your Ishta, your special ideal.

10 We see then that a congregational religion can never be. The
11 *real* work of religion must be one's own concern. I have an idea of
12 my own, I must keep it sacred and secret, because I know that it
13 need not be your idea. Secondly, why should I create a disturbance
14 by wanting to tell everyone what my idea is? Other people would
15 come and fight me. They cannot do so if I do not tell them; but if I
16 go about telling them what my ideas are, they will all oppose me. So
17 what is the use of talking about them? This Ishta should be kept
18 secret, it is between you and God. All theoretical portions of
19 religion can be preached in public and made congregational, but
20 higher religion cannot be made public. I cannot get ready my
21 religious feelings at a moment's notice. What is the result of this
22 mummery and mockery? It is making a joke of religion, the worst of
23 blasphemy. The result is what you find in the churches of the
24 present day. How can human beings stand this religious drilling? It
25 is like soldiers in a barrack. Shoulder arms, kneel down, take a
26 book, all regulated exactly. Five minutes of feeling, five minutes of
27 reason, five minutes of prayer, all arranged beforehand. These
28 mummeries have driven out religion. Let the churches preach
29 doctrines, theories, philosophies to their hearts' content, but when
30 it comes to worship, the real practical part of religion, it should be
31 as Jesus says,

1 "When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou
2 hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret."

3 This is the theory of Ishta. It is the only way to make religion
4 meet practically the necessities of different constitutions, to avoid
5 quarrelling with others, and to make real practical progress in
6 spiritual life. but I must warn you that you do not misconstrue my
7 words into the formation of secret societies. If there were a devil, I
8 would look for him within a secret society--as the invention of secret
9 societies. They are diabolical schemes. The Ishta is *sacred*, not
10 secret. But in what sense? Why should I not speak of my Ishta to
11 others? Because it is my own most holy thing. It may help others,
12 but how do I know that it will not rather hurt them? There may be a
13 man whose nature is such that he cannot worship a Personal God,
14 but can only worship as an Impersonal God his own highest Self.
15 Suppose I leave him among you, and he tells you that there is no
16 Personal God, but only God as the Self in you or me. You will be
17 shocked. His idea is sacred, but not secret. There never was a great
18 religion or a great teacher that formed secret societies to preach
19 God's truths. There are no such secret societies in India. Such
20 things are purely Western in idea, and merely foisted upon India.
21 We never knew anything about them. Why indeed should there be
22 secret societies in India? In Europe, people were not allowed to talk
23 a word about religion that did not agree with the views of the
24 Church. So they were forced to go about amongst the mountains in
25 hiding and form secret societies, that they might follow their own
26 kind of worship. There was never a time in India when a man was
27 persecuted for holding his own views on religion. There were never
28 secret religious societies in India, so any idea of that sort you must
29 give up at once. These secret societies always degenerate into the
30 most horrible things. I have seen enough of this world to know what
31 evil they cause, and how easily they slide into free love societies
32 and ghost societies, how men play into the hands of other men or
33 women, and how their future possibilities of growth in thought and
34 act are destroyed, and so on. Some of you may be displeased with
35 me for talking in this way, but I must tell you the truth. Perhaps only
36 half a dozen men and women will follow me in all my life; but they
37 will be real men and women, pure and sincere, and I do not want a
38 crowd. What can crowds do? The history of the world was made by
39 a few dozens, whom you can count on your fingers, and the rest
40 were a rabble. All these secret societies and humbugs make men
41 and women impure, weak, and narrow; and the weak have no will,
42 and can never work. Therefore have nothing to do with them. All
43 this false love of mystery should be knocked on the head the first
44 time it comes into your mind. No one who is the least bit impure
45 will ever become religious. Do not try to cover festering sores with
46 masses of roses. Do you think you can cheat God? None can. Give
47 me a straightforward man or woman; but Lord save me from
48 ghosts, flying angels, and devils. Be common, everyday, nice people.

49 There is such a thing as instinct in us, which we have in
50 common with the animals, a reflex mechanical movement of the
51 body. There is again a higher form of guidance, which we call
52 reason, when the intellect obtains facts and then generalises them.

1 There is a still higher form of knowledge which we call inspiration,
2 which does not reason, but knows thing by flashes. That is the
3 highest form of knowledge. But how shall we know it from instinct?
4 That is the great difficulty. Everyone comes to you, nowadays, and
5 says he is inspired, and puts forth superhuman claims. How are we
6 to distinguish between inspiration and deception? In the first place,
7 inspiration must not contradict reason. The old man does not
8 contradict the child, he is the development of the child. What we
9 call inspiration is the development of reason. The way to intuition is
10 through reason. Instinctive movements of your body do not oppose
11 reason. As you cross a street, how instinctively you move your body
12 to save yourself from the cars. Does your mind tell you it was
13 foolish to save your body that way? It does not. Similarly, no
14 genuine inspiration ever contradicts reason. Where it does it is no
15 inspiration. Secondly, inspiration must be for the good of one and
16 all, and not for name or fame, or personal gain. It should always be
17 for the good of the world, and perfectly unselfish. When these tests
18 are fulfilled, you are quite safe to take it as inspiration. You must
19 remember that there is not one in a million that is inspired, in the
20 present state of the world. I hope their number will increase. We
21 are now only playing with religion. With inspiration we shall begin
22 to have religion. Just as St. Paul says, "For now we see through a
23 glass darkly, but then face to face." But in the present state of the
24 world they are few and far between who attain to that state; yet
25 perhaps at no other period were such false claims made to
26 inspiration, as now. It is said that women have intuitive faculties,
27 while men drag themselves slowly upward by reason. Do not
28 believe it. There are just as many inspired men as women, though
29 women have perhaps more claim to peculiar forms of hysteria and
30 nervousness. You had better die as an unbeliever than be played
31 upon by cheats and jugglers. The power of reasoning was given you
32 for use. Show then that you have used it properly. Doing so, you will
33 be able to take care of higher things.

34 We must always remember that God is Love. "A fool indeed
35 is he who, living on the banks of the Ganga, seeks to dig a little well
36 for water. A fool indeed is the man who, living near a mine of
37 diamonds, spends his life in searching for beads of glass." God is
38 that mine of diamonds. We are fools indeed to give up God for
39 legends of ghosts or flying hobgoblins. It is a disease, a morbid
40 desire. It degenerates the race, weakens the nerves and the brain,
41 living in incessant morbid fear of hobgoblins, or stimulating the
42 hunger for wonders; all these wild stories about them keep the
43 nerves at an unnatural tension--a slow and sure degeneration of the
44 race. It is degeneration to think of giving up God, purity, holiness,
45 and spirituality, to go after all this nonsense! Reading other men's
46 thought! If I must read everyone else's thoughts for five minutes at
47 a time I shall go crazy. Be strong and stand up and seek the God of
48 Love. This is the highest strength. What power is higher than the
49 power of purity? Love and purity govern the world. This love of God
50 cannot be reached by the weak; therefore, be not weak, either
51 physically, mentally, morally or spiritually. The Lord alone is true.
52 Everything else is untrue; everything else should be rejected for the
53 sake of the Lord. Vanity of vanities, all is vanity. Serve the Lord and

1 Him alone.

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THE RAMAYANA

(Delivered at the Shakespeare Club, Pasadena, California, January 31, 1900)

There are two great epics in the Sanskrit language, which are very ancient. Of course, there are hundreds of other epic poems. The Sanskrit language and literature have been continued down to the present day, although, for more than two thousand years, it has ceased to be a spoken language. I am now going to speak to you of the two most ancient epics, called the Ramayana and the Mahabharata. They embody the manners and customs, the state of society, civilisation, etc., of the ancient Indians. The oldest of these epics is called Ramayana, "The Life of Rama". There was some poetical literature before this--most of the Vedas, the sacred books of the Hindus, are written in a sort of metre--but this book is held by common consent in India as the very beginning of poetry.

The name of the poet or sage was Valmiki. Later on, a great many poetical stories were fastened upon that ancient poet; and subsequently, it became a very general practice to attribute to his authorship very many verses that were not his. Notwithstanding all these interpolations, it comes down to us as a very beautiful arrangement, without equal in the literatures of the world.

There was a young man that could not in any way support his family. He was strong and vigorous and, finally, became a highway robber; he attacked persons in the street and robbed them, and with that money he supported his father, mother, wife, and children. This went on continually, until one day a great saint called Narada was passing by, and the robber attacked him.

1 The sage asked the robber, "Why are you going to rob me? It
2 is a great sin to rob human beings and kill them. What do you incur
3 all this sin for?" The robber said, "Why, I want to support my family
4 with this money." "Now", said the sage, "do you think that they take
5 a share of your sin also?" "Certainly they do," replied the robber.
6 "Very good," said the sage, "make me safe by tying me up here,
7 while you go home and ask your people whether they will share
8 your sin in the same way as they share the money you make." The
9 man accordingly went to his father, and asked, "Father, do you
10 know how I support you?" He answered, "No, I do not." "I am a
11 robber, and I kill persons and rob them." "What! you do that, my
12 son? Get away! You outcast!" He then went to his mother and asked
13 her, "Mother, do you know how I support you?" "No," she replied.
14 "Through robbery and murder." "How horrible it is!" cried the
15 mother. "But, do you partake in my sin?" said the son. "Why should
16 I? I never committed a robbery," answered the mother. Then, he
17 went to his wife and questioned her, "Do you know how I maintain
18 you all?" "No," she responded. "Why, I am a highwayman," he
19 rejoined, "and for years have been robbing people; that is how I
20 support and maintain you all. And what I now want to know is,
21 whether you are ready to share in my sin." "By no means. You are
22 my husband, and it is your duty to support me."

23 The eyes of the robber were opened. "That is the way of the
24 world--even my nearest relatives, for whom I have been robbing,
25 will not share in my destiny." He came back to the place where he
26 had bound the sage, unfastened his bonds, fell at his feet,
27 recounted everything and said, "Save me! What can I do?" The sage
28 said, "Give up your present course of life. You see that none of your
29 family really loves you, so give up all these delusions. They will
30 share your prosperity; but the moment you have nothing, they will
31 desert you. There is none who will share in your evil, but they will
32 all share in your good. Therefore worship Him who alone stands by
33 us whether we are doing good or evil. He never leaves us, for love
34 never drags down, knows no barter, no selfishness."

35 Then the sage taught him how to worship. And this man left
36 everything and went into a forest. There he went on praying and
37 meditating until he forgot himself so entirely that the ants came
38 and built ant-hills around him, and he was quite unconscious of it.
39 After many years had passed, a voice came saying, "Arise, O sage!"
40 Thus aroused he exclaimed, "Sage? I am a robber!" "No more
41 'robber'," answered the voice, "a purified sage art thou. Thine old
42 name is gone. But now, since thy meditation was so deep and great
43 that thou didst not remark even the ant-hills which surrounded
44 thee, henceforth, thy name shall be Valmiki--'he that was born in
45 the ant-hill'." So, he became a sage.

46 And this is how he became a poet. One day as this sage,
47 Valmiki, was going to bathe in the holy river Ganga, he saw a pair
48 of doves wheeling round and round, and kissing each other. The
49 sage looked up and was pleased at the sight, but in a second an
50 arrow whisked past him and killed the male dove. As the dove fell
51 down on the ground, the female dove went on whirling round and
52 round the dead body of its companion in grief. In a moment the poet

1 became miserable, and looking round, he saw the hunter. "Thou art
2 a wretch," he cried, "without the smallest mercy! Thy slaying hand
3 would not even stop for love!" "What is this? What am I saying?" the
4 poet thought to himself, "I have never spoken in this sort of way
5 before." And then a voice came: "Be not afraid. This is poetry that is
6 coming out of your mouth. Write the life of Rama in poetic language
7 for the benefit of the world." And that is how the poem first began.
8 The first verse sprang out of pity from the mouth of Valmiki, the
9 first poet. And it was after that, that he wrote the beautiful
10 Ramayana, "The Life of Rama".

11 There was an ancient Indian town called Ayodhya--and it
12 exists even in modern times. The province in which it is still located
13 is called Oudh, and most of you may have noticed it in the map of
14 India. That was the ancient Ayodhya. There, in ancient times,
15 reigned a king called Dasharatha. He had three queens, but the
16 king had not any children by them. And like good Hindus, the king
17 and the queens, all went on pilgrimages fasting and praying, that
18 they might have children and, in good time, four sons were born.
19 The eldest of them was Rama.

20 Now, as it should be, these four brothers were thoroughly
21 educated in all branches of learning. To avoid future quarrels there
22 was in ancient India a custom for the king in his own lifetime to
23 nominate his eldest son as his successor, the Yuvaraja, young king,
24 as he is called.

25 Now, there was another king, called Janaka, and this king
26 had a beautiful daughter named Sita. Sita was found in a field; she
27 was a daughter of the Earth, and was born without parents. The
28 word "Sita" in ancient Sanskrit means the furrow made by a plough.
29 In the ancient mythology of India you will find persons born of one
30 parent only, or persons born without parents, born of sacrificial fire,
31 born in the field, and so on--dropped from the clouds as it were. All
32 those sorts of miraculous birth were common in the mythological
33 lore of India.

34 Sita, being the daughter of the Earth, was pure and
35 immaculate. She was brought up by King Janaka. When she was of
36 a marriageable age, the king wanted to find a suitable husband for
37 her.

38 There was an ancient Indian custom called Svayamvara, by
39 which the princesses used to choose husbands. A number of princes
40 from different parts of the country were invited, and the princess in
41 splendid array, with a garland in her hand, and accompanied by a
42 crier who enumerated the distinctive claims of each of the royal
43 suitors, would pass in the midst of those assembled before her, and
44 select the prince she liked for her husband by throwing the garland
45 of flowers round his neck. They would then be married with much
46 pomp and grandeur.

47 There were numbers of princes who aspired for the hand of
48 Sita; the test demanded on this occasion was the breaking of a huge
49 bow, called Haradhanu. All the princes put forth all their strength to
50 accomplish this feat, but failed. Finally, Rama took the mighty bow
51 in his hands and with easy grace broke it in twain. Thus Sita

1 selected Rama, the son of King Dasharatha for her husband, and
2 they were wedded with great rejoicings. Then, Rama took his bride
3 to his home, and his old father thought that the time was now come
4 for him to retire and appoint Rama as Yuvaraja. Everything was
5 accordingly made ready for the ceremony, and the whole country
6 was jubilant over the affair, when the younger queen Kaikeyi was
7 reminded by one of her maidservants of two promises made to her
8 by the king long ago. At one time she had pleased the king very
9 much, and he offered to grant her two boons: "Ask any two things in
10 my power and I will grant them to you," said he, but she made no
11 request then. She had forgotten all about it; but the evil-minded
12 maidservant in her employ began to work upon her jealousy with
13 regard to Rama being installed on the throne, and insinuated to her
14 how nice it would be for her if her own son had succeeded the king,
15 until the queen was almost mad with jealousy. Then the servant
16 suggested to her to ask from the king the two promised boons: one
17 would be that her own son Bharata should be placed on the throne,
18 and the other, that Rama should be sent to the forest and be exiled
19 for fourteen years.

20 Now, Rama was the life and the soul of the old king and
21 when this wicked request was made to him, he as a king felt he
22 could not go back on his word. So he did not know what to do. But
23 Rama came to the rescue and willingly offered to give up the throne
24 and go into exile, so that his father might not be guilty of falsehood.
25 So Rama went into exile for fourteen years, accompanied by his
26 loving wife Sita and his devoted brother Lakshmana, who would on
27 no account be parted from him.

28 The Aryans did not know who were the inhabitants of these
29 wild forests. In those days the forest tribes they called "monkeys",
30 and some of the so-called "monkeys", if unusually strong and
31 powerful, were called demons.

32 So, into the forest, inhabited by demons and monkeys,
33 Rama, Lakshmana, and Sita went. When Sita had offered to
34 accompany Rama, he exclaimed, "How can you, a princess, face
35 hardships and accompany me into a forest full of unknown
36 dangers!" But Sita replied, "Wherever Rama goes, there goes Sita.
37 How can you talk of 'princess' and 'royal birth' to me? I go before
38 you!" So, Sita went. And the younger brother, he also went with
39 them. They penetrated far into the forest, until they reached the
40 river Godavari. On the banks of the river they built little cottages,
41 and Rama and Lakshmana used to hunt deer and collect fruits.
42 After they had lived thus for some time, one day there came a
43 demon giantess. She was the sister of the giant king of Lanka
44 (Ceylon). Roaming through the forest at will, she came across
45 Rama, and seeing that he was a very handsome man, she fell in love
46 with him at once. But Rama was the purest of men, and also he was
47 a married man; so of course he could not return her love. In
48 revenge, she went to her brother, the giant king, and told him all
49 about the beautiful Sita, the wife of Rama.

50 Rama was the most powerful of mortals; there were no
51 giants or demons or anybody else strong enough to conquer him.
52 So, the giant king had to resort to subterfuge. He got hold of

1 another giant who was a magician and changed him into a beautiful
2 golden deer; and the deer went prancing round about the place
3 where Rama lived, until Sita was fascinated by its beauty and asked
4 Rama to go and capture the deer for her. Rama went into the forest
5 to catch the deer, leaving his brother in charge of Sita. Then
6 Lakshmana laid a circle of fire round the cottage, and he said to
7 Sita, "Today I see something may befall you; and, therefore, I tell
8 you not to go outside of this magic circle. Some danger may befall
9 you if you do." In the meanwhile, Rama had pierced the magic deer
10 with his arrow, and immediately the deer, changed into the form of
11 a man, died.

12 Immediately, at the cottage was heard the voice of Rama,
13 crying, "Oh, Lakshmana, come to my help!" and Sita said,
14 "Lakshmana, go at once into the forest to help Rama!" "That is not
15 Rama's voice," protested Lakshmana. But at the entreaties of Sita,
16 Lakshmana had to go in search of Rama. As soon as he went away,
17 the giant king, who had taken the form of a mendicant monk, stood
18 at the gate and asked for alms. "Wait awhile," said Sita, "until my
19 husband comes back and I will give you plentiful alms." "I cannot
20 wait, good lady," said he, "I am very hungry, give me anything you
21 have." At this, Sita, who had a few fruits in the cottage, brought
22 them out. But the mendicant monk after many persuasions
23 prevailed upon her to bring the alms to him, assuring her that she
24 need have no fear as he was a holy person. So Sita came out of the
25 magic circle, and immediately the seeming monk assumed his giant
26 body, and grasping Sita in his arms he called his magic chariot, and
27 putting her therein, he fled with the weeping Sita. Poor Sita! She
28 was utterly helpless, nobody was there to come to her aid. As the
29 giant was carrying her away, she took off a few of the ornaments
30 from her arms and at intervals dropped them to the ground.

31 She was taken by Ravana to his kingdom, Lanka, the island
32 of Ceylon. He made proposals to her to become his queen, and
33 tempted her in many ways to accede to his request. But Sita was
34 chastity itself, would not even speak to the giant; and he to punish
35 her, made her live under a tree, day and night, until she should
36 consent to be his wife.

37 When Rama and Lakshmana returned to the cottage and
38 found that Sita was not there, their grief knew no bounds. They
39 could not imagine what had become of her. The two brothers went
40 on, seeking, seeking everywhere for Sita, but could find no trace of
41 her. After long searching, they came across a group of "monkeys",
42 and in the midst of them was Hanuman, the "divine monkey".
43 Hanuman, the best of monkeys, became the most faithful servant of
44 Rama and helped him in rescuing Sita, as we shall see later on. His
45 devotion to Rama was so great that he is worshipped by the Hindus
46 as the ideal of a true servant of the Lord. You see, by the "monkeys"
47 and "demons" are meant the aborigines of South India.

48 So, Rama, at last, fell in with these monkeys. They told him
49 that they had seen flying through the sky a chariot, in which was
50 seated a demon who was carrying away a most beautiful lady, and
51 that she was weeping bitterly, and as the chariot passed over their
52 heads she dropped one of her ornaments to attract their attention.

1 Then they showed Rama the ornament. Lakshmana took up the
2 ornament, and said, "I do not know whose ornament this is." Rama
3 took it from him and recognised it at once, saying "Yes, it is Sita's."
4 Lakshmana could not recognise the ornament, because in India the
5 wife of the elder brother was held in so much reverence that he had
6 never looked upon the arms and the neck of Sita. So you see, as it
7 was a necklace, he did not know whose it was. There is in this
8 episode a touch of the old Indian custom. Then, the monkeys told
9 Rama who this demon king was, and where he lived, and then they
10 all went to seek for him.

11 Now, the monkey-king Vali and his younger brother Sugriva
12 were then fighting amongst themselves for the kingdom. The
13 younger brother was helped by Rama, and he regained the kingdom
14 for Vali, who had driven him away; and he, in return, promised to
15 help Rama. They searched the country all round, but could not find
16 Sita. At last Hanuman leaped by one bound from the coast of India
17 to the island of Ceylon, and there went looking all over Lanka for
18 Sita, but nowhere could he find her.

19 You see, this giant king had conquered the gods, the men, in
20 fact the whole world; and he had collected all the beautiful women
21 and made them his concubines. So, Hanuman thought to himself,
22 "Sita cannot be with them in the palace. She would rather die than
23 be in such a place." So Hanuman went to seek for her elsewhere. At
24 last, he found Sita under a tree, pale and thin, like the new moon
25 that lies low in the horizon. Now Hanuman took the form of a little
26 monkey and settled on the tree, and there he witnessed how
27 giantesses sent by Ravana came and tried to frighten Sita into
28 submission, but she would not even listen to the name of the giant
29 king.

30 Then, Hanuman came nearer to Sita and told her how he
31 became the messenger of Rama, who had sent him to find out
32 where Sita was; and Hanuman showed to Sita the signet ring which
33 Rama had given as a token for establishing his identity. He also
34 informed her that as soon as Rama would know her whereabouts,
35 he would come with an army and conquer the giant and recover
36 her. However, he suggested to Sita that if she wished it, he would
37 take her on his shoulders and could with one leap clear the ocean
38 and get back to Rama. But Sita could not bear the idea, as she was
39 chastity itself, and could not touch the body of any man except her
40 husband. So, Sita remained where she was. But she gave him a
41 jewel from her hair to carry to Rama; and with that Hanuman
42 returned.

43 Learning everything about Sita from Hanuman, Rama
44 collected an army, and with it marched towards the southernmost
45 point of India. There Rama's monkeys built a huge bridge, called
46 Setu-Bandha, connecting India with Ceylon. In very low water even
47 now it is possible to cross from India to Ceylon over the sand-banks
48 there.

1 Now Rama was God incarnate, otherwise, how could he
2 have done all these things? He was an Incarnation of God,
3 according to the Hindus. They in India believe him to be the
4 seventh Incarnation of God.

5 The monkeys removed whole hills, placed them in the sea
6 and covered them with stones and trees, thus making a huge
7 embankment. A little squirrel, so it is said, was there rolling himself
8 in the sand and running backwards and forwards on to the bridge
9 and shaking himself. Thus in his small way he was working for the
10 bridge of Rama by putting in sand. The monkeys laughed, for they
11 were bringing whole mountains, whole forests, huge loads of sand
12 for the bridge--so they laughed at the little squirrel rolling in the
13 sand and then shaking himself. But Rama saw it and remarked:
14 "Blessed be the little squirrel; he is doing his work to the best of his
15 ability, and he is therefore quite as great as the greatest of you."
16 Then he gently stroked the squirrel on the bank, and the marks of
17 Rama's fingers, running lengthways, are seen on the squirrel's back
18 to this day.

19 Now, when the bridge was finished, the whole army of
20 monkeys, led by Rama and his brother entered Ceylon. For several
21 months afterwards tremendous war and bloodshed followed. At
22 last, this demon king, Ravana, was conquered and killed; and his
23 capital, with all the palaces and everything, which were entirely of
24 solid gold, was taken. In far-away villages in the interior of India,
25 when I tell them that I have been in Ceylon, the simple folk say,
26 "There, as our books tell, the houses are built of gold." So, all these
27 golden cities fell into the hands of Rama, who gave them over to
28 Vibhishana, the younger brother of Ravana, and seated him on the
29 throne in the place of his brother, as a return for the valuable
30 services rendered by him to Rama during the war.

31 Then Rama and Sita and his followers left Lanka. But there
32 ran a murmur among his followers. "The test! The test!" they cried,
33 "Sita has not given the test that she was perfectly pure in Ravana's
34 household." "Pure! she is chastity itself!" exclaimed Rama. "Never
35 mind! We want the test," persisted the people. Subsequently, a huge
36 sacrificial fire was made ready, into which Sita had to plunge
37 herself. Rama was in agony, thinking that Sita was lost; but in a
38 moment, the God of fire himself appeared with a throne upon his
39 head, and upon the throne was Sita. Then, there was universal
40 rejoicing, and everybody was satisfied.

41 Early during the period of exile, Bharata, the younger
42 brother had come and informed Rama, of the death of the old king
43 and vehemently insisted on his occupying the throne. During
44 Rama's exile Bharata would on no account ascend the throne and
45 out of respect placed a pair of Rama's wooden shoes on it as a
46 substitute for his brother. Then Rama returned to his capital, and by
47 the common consent of his people, he became the king of Ayodhya.

48 After Rama regained his kingdom, he took the necessary
49 vows which in olden times the king had to take for the benefit of his
50 people. The king was the slave of his people, he had to bow to
51 public opinion, as we shall see later on. Rama passed a few years in

1 happiness with Sita, when the people again began to murmur that
2 Sita had been stolen by a demon and carried across the ocean. They
3 were not satisfied with the former test and clamoured for another
4 test, otherwise she must be banished.

5 In order to satisfy the demands of the people, Sita was
6 banished, and left to live in the forest, where was the hermitage of
7 the sage and poet Valmiki. The sage found poor Sita weeping and
8 forlorn, and hearing her sad story, sheltered her in his Ashrama.
9 Sita was expecting soon to become a mother, and she gave birth to
10 twin boys. The poet never told the children who they were. He
11 brought them up together in the Brahmacharin life. He then
12 composed the poem known as Ramayana, set it to music, and
13 dramatised it.

14 The drama, in India, was a very holy thing. Drama and music
15 are themselves held to be religion. Any song--whether it be a love-
16 song or otherwise--if one's whole soul is in that song, one attains
17 salvation, one has nothing else to do. They say it leads to the same
18 goal as meditation.

19 So, Valmiki dramatised "The Life of Rama", and taught
20 Rama's two children how to recite and sing it.

21 There came a time when Rama was going to perform a huge
22 sacrifice, or Yajna, such as the old kings used to celebrate. But no
23 ceremony in India can be performed by a married man without his
24 wife: he must have the wife with him, the Sahadharmini, the "co-
25 religionist"--that is the expression for the wife. The Hindu
26 householder has to perform hundreds of ceremonies, but not one
27 can be duly performed according to the Shastras, if he has not a
28 wife to complement it with her part in it.

1 Now Rama's wife was not with him then, as she had been
2 banished. So, the people asked him to marry again. But at this
3 request Rama for the first time in his life stood against the people.
4 He said, "This cannot be. My life is Sita's." So, as substitute, a
5 golden statue of Sita was made, in order that the ceremony could
6 be accomplished. They arranged even a dramatic entertainment, to
7 enhance the religious feeling of this great festival. Valmiki, the
8 great sage-poet, came with his pupils, Lava and Kusha, the
9 unknown sons of Rama. A stage had been erected and everything
10 was ready for the performance. Rama and his brothers attended
11 with all his nobles and his people--a vast audience. Under the
12 direction of Valmiki, the life of Rama was sung by Lava and Kusha,
13 who fascinated the whole assembly by their charming voice and
14 appearance. Poor Rama was nearly maddened, and when in the
15 drama, the scene of Sita's exile came about, he did not know what
16 to do. Then the sage said to him, "Do not be grieved, for I will show
17 you Sita." Then Sita was brought upon the stage and Rama
18 delighted to see his wife. All of a sudden, the old murmur arose:
19 "The test! The test!" Poor Sita was so terribly overcome by the
20 repeated cruel slight on her reputation that it was more than she
21 could bear. She appealed to the gods to testify to her innocence,
22 when the Earth opened and Sita exclaimed, "Here is the test", and
23 vanished into the bosom of the Earth. The people were taken aback
24 at this tragic end. And Rama was overwhelmed with grief.

25 A few days after Sita's disappearance, a messenger came to
26 Rama from the gods, who intimated to him that his mission on earth
27 was finished and he was to return to heaven. These tidings brought
28 to him the recognition of his own real Self. He plunged into the
29 waters of the Sarayu, the mighty river that laved his capital, and
30 joined Sita in the other world.

31 This is the great, ancient epic of India. Rama and Sita are
32 the ideal of the Indian nation. All children, especially girls, worship
33 Sita. The height of a woman's ambition is to be like Sita, the pure,
34 the devoted, the all-suffering! When you study these characters, you
35 can at once find out how different is the ideal in India from that of
36 the West. For the race, Sita stands as the ideal of suffering. The
37 West says, 'Do! Show your power by doing.' India says, "Show your
38 power by suffering." The West has solved the problem of how much
39 a man can have: India has solved the problem of how little a man
40 can have. The two extremes, you see. Sita is typical of India--the
41 idealised India. The question is not whether she ever lived, whether
42 the story is history or not, we know that the ideal is there. There is
43 no other Pauranika story that has so permeated the whole nation,
44 so entered into its very life, and has so tingled in every drop of
45 blood of the race, as this ideal of Sita. Sita is the name in India for
46 everything that is good, pure and holy--everything that in woman
47 we call womanly. If a priest has to bless a woman he says, "Be Sita!"
48 If he blesses a child, he says "Be Sita!" They are all children of Sita,
49 and are struggling to be Sita, the patient, the all-suffering, the ever-
50 faithful, the ever-pure wife. Through all this suffering she
51 experiences, there is not one harsh word against Rama. She takes it
52 as her own duty, and performs her own part in it. Think of the

1 terrible injustice of her being exiled to the forest! But Sita knows no
2 bitterness. That is, again, the Indian ideal. Says the ancient
3 Buddha, "When a man hurts you, and you turn back to hurt him,
4 that would not cure the first injury; it would only create in the world
5 one more wickedness." Sita was a true Indian by nature; she never
6 returned injury.

7 Who knows which is the truer ideal? The apparent power
8 and strength, as held in the West, or the fortitude in suffering, of
9 the East?

10 The West says, "We minimise evil by conquering it." India
11 says, "We destroy evil by suffering, until evil is nothing to us, it
12 becomes positive enjoyment." Well, both are great ideals. Who
13 knows which will survive in the long run? Who knows which
14 attitude will really most benefit humanity? Who knows which will
15 disarm and conquer animality? Will it be suffering, or doing?

16 In the meantime, let us not try to destroy each other's ideals.
17 We are both intent upon the same work, which is the annihilation of
18 evil. You take up your method; let us take up our method. Let us not
19 destroy the ideal. I do not say to the West, "Take up our method."
20 Certainly not. The goal is the same, but the methods can never be
21 the same. And so, after hearing about the ideals of India, I hope
22 that you will say in the same breath to India, "We know, the goal,
23 the ideal, is all right for us both. You follow your own ideal. You
24 follow your method in your own way, and Godspeed to you!" My
25 message in life is to ask the East and West not to quarrel over
26 different ideals, but to show them that the goal is the same in both
27 cases, however opposite it may appear. As we wend our way
28 through this mazy vale of life, let us bid each other Godspeed.

THE MAHABHARATA

(Delivered at the Shakespeare Club, Pasadena, California, February 1, 1900)

The other epic about which I am going to speak to you this evening, is called the Mahabharata. It contains the story of a race descended from King Bharata, who was the son of Dushyanta and Shakuntala. Maha means great, and Bharata means the descendants of Bharata, from whom India has derived its name, Bharata. Mahabharata means Great India, or the story of the great descendants of Bharata. The scene of this epic is the ancient kingdom of the Kurus, and the story is based on the great war which took place between the Kurus and the Panchalas. So the region of the quarrel is not very big. This epic is the most popular one in India; and it exercises the same authority in India as Homer's poems did over the Greeks. As ages went on, more and more matter was added to it, until it has become a huge book of about a hundred thousand couplets. All sorts of tales, legends and myths, philosophical treatises, scraps of history, and various discussion have been added to it from time to time, until it is a vast, gigantic mass of literature; and through it all runs the old, original story. The central story of the Mahabharata is of a war between two families of cousins, one family, called the Kauravas, the other the Pandavas--for the empire of India.

The Aryans came into India in small companies. Gradually, these tribes began to extend, until, at last, they became the undisputed rulers of India, and then arose this fight to gain the mastery, between two branches of the same family. Those of you who have studied the Gita know how the book opens with a description of the battle-field, with two armies arrayed one against the other. That is the war of the Mahabharata.

There were two brothers, sons of the emperor. The elder one was called Dhritarashtra, and the other was called Pandu. Dhritarashtra, the elder one, was born blind. According to Indian law, no blind, halt, maimed, consumptive, or any other constitutionally diseased person, can inherit. He can only get a maintenance. So, Dhritarashtra could not ascend the throne, though he was the elder son, and Pandu became the emperor.

Dhritarashtra had a hundred sons, and Pandu only had five. After the death of Pandu at an early age, Dhritarashtra became king of the Kurus and brought up the sons of Pandu along with his own children. When they grew up, they were placed under the tutorship of the great priest-warrior, Drona, and were well trained in the various material arts and sciences befitting princes. The education of the princes being finished, Dhritarashtra put Yudhishtira, the eldest of the sons of Pandu, on the throne of his father. The sterling virtues of Yudhishtira and the valour and devotion of his other brothers aroused jealousies in the hearts of the sons of the blind king, and at the instigation of Duryodhana, the eldest of them, the

1 five Pandava brothers were prevailed upon to visit Vâranâvata, on
2 the plea of a religious festival that was being held there. There they
3 were accommodated in a palace made under Duryodhana's
4 instructions, of hemp, resin, and lac, and other inflammable
5 materials, which were subsequently set fire to secretly. But the
6 good Vidura, the step-brother of Dhritarashtra, having become
7 cognisant of the evil intentions of Duryodhana and his party, had
8 warned the Pandavas of the plot, and they managed to escape
9 without anyone's knowledge. When the Kurus saw the house was
10 reduced to ashes, they heaved a sigh of relief and thought all
11 obstacles were now removed out of their path. Then the children of
12 Dhritarashtra got hold of the kingdom. The five Pandava brothers
13 had fled to the forest with their mother, Kunti. They lived there by
14 begging, and went about in disguise giving themselves out as
15 Brahmana students. Many were the hardships and adventures they
16 encountered in the wild forests, but their fortitude of mind, and
17 strength, and valour made them conquer all dangers. So things
18 went on until they came to hear of the approaching marriage of the
19 princess of a neighbouring country.

20 I told you last night of the peculiar form of the ancient
21 Indian marriage. It was called Svayamvara, that is, the choosing of
22 the husband by the princess. A great gathering of princes and
23 nobles assembled, amongst whom the princess would chose her
24 husband. Preceded by her trumpeters and heralds she would
25 approach, carrying a garland of flowers in her hand. At the throne
26 of each candidate for her hand, the praises of that prince and all his
27 great deeds in battle would be declared by the heralds. And when
28 the princess decided which prince she desired to have for a
29 husband, she would signify the fact by throwing the marriage-
30 garland round his neck. Then the ceremony would turn into a
31 wedding. King Drupada was a great king, king of the Panchalas,
32 and his daughter, Draupadi, famed far and wide for her beauty and
33 accomplishments, was going to choose a hero.

34 At a Svayamvara there was always a great feat of arms or
35 something of the kind. On this occasion, a mark in the form of a fish
36 was set up high in the sky; under that fish was a wheel with a hole
37 in the centre, continually turning round, and beneath was a tub of
38 water. A man looking at the reflection of the fish in the tub of water
39 was asked to send an arrow and hit the eye of the fish through the
40 Chakra or wheel, and he who succeeded would be married to the
41 princess. Now, there came kings and princes from different parts of
42 India, all anxious to win the hand of the princess, and one after
43 another they tried their skill, and every one of them failed to hit the
44 mark.

45 You know, there are four castes in India: the highest caste is
46 that of the hereditary priest, the Brahmana; next is the caste of the
47 Kshatriya, composed of kings and fighters; next, the Vaishyas, the
48 traders or businessmen, and then Shudras, the servants. Now, this
49 princess was, of course, a Kshatriya, one of the second caste.

50 When all those princes failed in hitting the mark, then the
51 son of King Drupada rose up in the midst of the court and said:
52 "The Kshatriya, the king caste has failed; now the contest is open to

1 the other castes. Let a Brahmana, even a Shudra, take part in it;
2 whosoever hits the mark, marries Draupadi."

3 Among the Brahmanas were seated the five Pandava
4 brothers. Arjuna, the third brother, was the hero of the bow. He
5 arose and stepped forward. Now, Brahmanas as a caste are very
6 quiet and rather timid people. According to the law, they must not
7 touch a warlike weapon, they must not wield a sword, they must not
8 go into any enterprise that is dangerous. Their life is one of
9 contemplation, study, and control of the inner nature. Judge,
10 therefore, how quiet and peaceable a people they are. When the
11 Brahmanas saw this man get up, they thought this man was going
12 to bring the wrath of the Kshatriyas upon them, and that they would
13 all be killed. So they tried to dissuade him, but Arjuna did not listen
14 to them, because he was a soldier. He lifted the bow in his hand,
15 strung it without any effort, and drawing it, sent the arrow right
16 through the wheel and hit the eye of the fish.

17 Then there was great jubilation. Draupadi, the princess,
18 approached Arjuna and threw the beautiful garland of flowers over
19 his head. But there arose a great cry among the princes, who could
20 not bear the idea that this beautiful princess who was a Kshatriya
21 should be won by a poor Brahmana, from among this huge
22 assembly of kings and princes. So, they wanted to fight Arjuna and
23 snatch her from him by force. The brothers had a tremendous fight
24 with the warriors, but held their own, and carried off the bride in
25 triumph.

26 The five brothers now returned home to Kunti with the
27 princess. Brahmanas have to live by begging. So they, who lived as
28 Brahmanas, used to go out, and what they got by begging they
29 brought home and the mother divided it among them. Thus the five
30 brothers, with the princess, came to the cottage where the mother
31 lived. They shouted out to her jocosely, "Mother, we have brought
32 home a most wonderful alms today." The mother replied, "Enjoy it in
33 common, all of you, my children." Then the mother seeing the
34 princess, exclaimed, "Oh! what have I said! It is a girl!" But what
35 could be done! The mother's word was spoken once for all. It must
36 not be disregarded. The mother's words must be fulfilled. She could
37 not be made to utter an untruth, as she never had done so. So
38 Draupadi became the common wife of all the five brothers.

39 Now, you know, in every society there are stages of
40 development. Behind this epic there is a wonderful glimpse of the
41 ancient historic times. The author of the poem mentions the fact of
42 the five brothers marrying the same woman, but he tries to gloss it
43 over, to find an excuse and a cause for such an act; it was the
44 mother's command, the mother sanctioned this strange betrothal,
45 and so on. You know, in every nation there has been a certain stage
46 in society that allowed polyandry--all the brothers of a family would
47 marry one wife in common. Now, this was evidently a glimpse of the
48 past polyandrous stage.

49 In the meantime, the brother of the princess was perplexed
50 in his mind and thought: "Who are these people? Who is this man
51 whom my sister is going to marry? They have not any chariots,

1 horses, or anything. Why, they go on foot!" So he had followed them
2 at a distance, and at night overheard their conversation and
3 became fully convinced that they were really Kshatriyas. Then King
4 Drupada came to know who they were and was greatly delighted.

5 Though at first much objection was raised, it was declared
6 by Vyasa that such a marriage was allowable for these princes, and
7 it was permitted. So the king Drupada had to yield to this
8 polyandrous marriage, and the princess was married to the five
9 sons of Pandu.

10 Then the Pandavas lived in peace and prosperity and
11 became more powerful every day. Though Duryodhana and his
12 party conceived of fresh plots to destroy them, King Dhritarashtra
13 was prevailed upon by the wise counsels of the elders to make
14 peace with the Pandavas; and so he invited them home amidst the
15 rejoicings of the people and gave them half of the kingdom. Then,
16 the five brothers built for themselves a beautiful city, called
17 Indraprastha, and extended their dominions, laying all the people
18 under tribute to them. Then the eldest, Yudhishtira, in order to
19 declare himself emperor over all the kings of ancient India, decided
20 to perform a Rajasuya Yajna, or Imperial Sacrifice, in which the
21 conquered kings would have to come with tribute and swear
22 allegiance, and help the performance of the sacrifice by personal
23 services. Shri Krishna, who had become their friend and a relative,
24 came to them and approved of the idea. But there was one obstacle
25 to its performance. A king, Jarasandha by name, who intended to
26 offer a sacrifice of a hundred kings, had eighty-six of them kept as
27 captives with him. Shri Krishna counselled an attack on Jarasandha.
28 So he, Bhima, and Arjuna challenged the king, who accepted the
29 challenge and was finally conquered by Bhima after fourteen days'
30 continuous wrestling. The captive kings were then set free.

31 Then the four younger brothers went out with armies on a
32 conquering expedition, each in a different direction, and brought all
33 the kings under subjection to Yudhishtira.

34 Returning, they laid all the vast wealth they secured at the
35 feet of the eldest brother to meet the expenses of the great
36 sacrifice.

37 So, to this Rajasuya sacrifice all the liberated kings came,
38 along with those conquered by the brothers, and rendered homage
39 to Yudhishtira. King Dhritarashtra and his sons were also invited
40 to come and take a share in the performance of the sacrifice. At the
41 conclusion of the sacrifice, Yudhishtira was crowned emperor, and
42 declared as lord paramount. This was the sowing of the future feud.
43 Duryodhana came back from the sacrifice filled with jealousy
44 against Yudhishtira, as their sovereignty and vast splendour and
45 wealth were more than he could bear; and so he devised plans to
46 effect their fall by guile, as he knew that to overcome them by force
47 was beyond his power. This king, Yudhishtira, had the love of
48 gambling, and he was challenged at an evil hour to play dice with
49 Shakuni, the crafty gambler and the evil genius of Duryodhana. In
50 ancient India, if a man of the military caste was challenged to fight,
51 he must at any price accept the challenge to uphold his honour. And

1 if he was challenged to play dice, it was a point of honour to play,
2 and dishonourable to decline the challenge. King Yudhishtira, says
3 the Epic, was the incarnation of all virtues. Even he, the great sage-
4 king, had to accept the challenge. Shakuni and his party had made
5 false dice. So Yudhishtira lost game after game, and stung with his
6 losses, he went on with the fatal game, staking everything he had,
7 and losing all, until all his possessions, his kingdom and everything,
8 were lost. The last stage came when, under further challenge, he
9 had no other resources left but to stake his brothers, and then
10 himself, and last of all, the fair Draupadi, and lost all. Now they
11 were completely at the mercy of the Kauravas, who cast all sorts of
12 insults upon them, and subjected Draupadi to the most inhuman
13 treatment. At last through the intervention of the blind king, they
14 got their liberty, and were asked to return home and rule their
15 kingdom. But Duryodhana saw the danger and forced his father to
16 allow one more throw of the dice in which the party which would
17 lose, should retire to the forests for twelve years, and then live
18 unrecognised in a city for one year; but if they were found out, the
19 same term of exile should have to be undergone once again and
20 then only the kingdom was to be restored to the exiled. This last
21 game also Yudhishtira lost, and the five Pandava brothers retired
22 to the forests with Draupadi, as homeless exiles. They lived in the
23 forests and mountains for twelve years. There they performed many
24 deeds of virtue and valour, and would go out now and then on a
25 long round of pilgrimages, visiting many holy places. That part of
26 the poem is very interesting and instructive, and various are the
27 incidents, tales, and legends with which this part of the book is
28 replete. There are in it beautiful and sublime stories of ancient
29 India, religious and philosophical. Great sages came to see the
30 brothers in their exile and narrated to them many telling stories of
31 ancient India, so as to make them bear lightly the burden of their
32 exile. One only I will relate to you here.

33 There was a king called Ashvapati. The king had a daughter,
34 who was so good and beautiful that she was called Savitri, which is
35 the name of a sacred prayer of the Hindus. When Savitri grew old
36 enough, her father asked her to choose a husband for herself.
37 These ancient Indian princesses were very independent, you see,
38 and chose their own princely suitors.

39 Savitri consented and travelled in distant regions, mounted
40 in a golden chariot, with her guards and aged courtiers to whom
41 her father entrusted her, stopping at different courts, and seeing
42 different princes, but not one of them could win the heart of Savitri.
43 They came at last to a holy hermitage in one of those forests that in
44 ancient India were reserved for animals, and where no animals
45 were allowed to be killed. The animals lost the fear of man--even
46 the fish in the lakes came and took food out of the hand. For
47 thousands of years no one had killed anything therein. The sages
48 and the aged went there to live among the deer and the birds. Even
49 criminals were safe there. When a man got tired of life, he would go
50 to the forest; and in the company of sages, talking of religion and
51 meditating thereon, he passed the remainder of his life.

52 Now it happened that there was a king, Dyumatsena, who

1 was defeated by his enemies and was deprived of his kingdom when
2 he was struck with age and had lost his sight. This poor, old, blind
3 king, with his queen and his son, took refuge in the forest and
4 passed his life in rigid penance. The boy's name was Satyavan.

5 It came to pass that after having visited all the different
6 royal courts, Savitri at last came to this hermitage, or holy place.
7 Not even the greatest king could pass by the hermitages, or
8 Ashramas as they were called, without going to pay homage to the
9 sages, for such honour and respect was felt for these holy men. The
10 greatest emperor of India would be only too glad to trace his
11 descent to some sage who lived in a forest, subsisting on roots and
12 fruits, and clad in rags. We are all children of sages. That is the
13 respect that is paid to religion. So, even kings, when they pass by
14 the hermitages, feel honoured to go in and pay their respects to the
15 sages. If they approach on horseback, they descend and walk as
16 they advance towards them. If they arrive in a chariot, chariot and
17 armour must be left outside when they enter. No fighting man can
18 enter unless he comes in the manner of a religious man, quiet and
19 gentle.

20 So Savitri came to this hermitage and saw there Satyavan,
21 the hermit's son, and her heart was conquered. She had escaped all
22 the princes of the palaces and the courts, but here in the forest-
23 refuge of the King Dyumatsena, his son, Satyavan, stole her heart.

24 When Savitri returned to her father's house, he asked her,
25 "Savitri, dear daughter, speak. Did you see anybody whom you
26 would like to marry?" Then softly with blushes, said Savitri, "Yes,
27 father." "What is the name of the prince?" "He is no prince, but the
28 son of King Dyumatsena who has lost his kingdom--a prince without
29 a patrimony, who lives a monastic life, the life of a Sannyasin in a
30 forest, collecting roots and herbs, helping and feeding his old father
31 and mother, who live in a cottage."

32 On hearing this the father consulted the Sage Narada, who
33 happened to be then present there, and he declared it was the most
34 ill-omened choice that was ever made. The king then asked him to
35 explain why it was so. And Narada said, "Within twelve months
36 from this time the young man will die." Then the king started with
37 terror, and spoke, "Savitri, this young man is going to die in twelve
38 months, and you will become a widow: think of that! Desist from
39 your choice, my child, you shall never be married to a short-lived
40 and fated bridegroom." "Never mind, father; do not ask me to marry
41 another person and sacrifice the chastity of mind, for I love and
42 have accepted in my mind that good and brave Satyavan only as my
43 husband. A maiden chooses only once, and she never departs from
44 her troth." When the king found that Savitri was resolute in mind
45 and heart, he complied. Then Savitri married prince Satyavan, and
46 she quietly went from the palace of her father into the forest, to live
47 with her chosen husband and help her husband's parents. Now,
48 though Savitri knew the exact date when Satyavan was to die, she
49 kept it hidden from him. Daily he went into the depths of the
50 forests, collected fruits and flowers, gathered faggots, and then
51 came back to the cottage, and she cooked the meals and helped the
52 old people. Thus their lives went on until the fatal day came near,

1 and three short days remained only. She took a severe vow of three
2 nights' penance and holy fasts, and kept her hard vigils. Savitri
3 spent sorrowful and sleepless nights with fervent prayers and
4 unseen tears, till the dreaded morning dawned. That day Savitri
5 could not bear him out of her sight, even for a moment. She begged
6 permission from his parents to accompany her husband, when he
7 went to gather the usual herbs and fuel, and gaining their consent
8 she went. Suddenly, in faltering accents, he complained to his wife
9 of feeling faint, "My head is dizzy, and my senses reel, dear Savitri,
10 I feel sleep stealing over me; let me rest beside thee for a while." In
11 fear and trembling she replied, "Come, lay your head upon my lap,
12 my dearest lord." And he laid his burning head in the lap of his wife,
13 and ere long sighed and expired. Claspings him to her, her eyes
14 flowing with tears, there she sat in the lonesome forest, until the
15 emissaries of Death approached to take away the soul of Satyavan.
16 But they could not come near to the place where Savitri sat with the
17 dead body of her husband, his head resting in her lap. There was a
18 zone of fire surrounding her, and not one of the emissaries of Death
19 could come within it. They all fled back from it, returned to King
20 Yama, the God of Death, and told him why they could not obtain the
21 soul of this man.

22 Then came Yama, the God of Death, the Judge of the dead.
23 He was the first man that died--the first man that died on earth--and
24 he had become the presiding deity over all those that die. He
25 judges whether, after a man has died, he is to be punished or
26 rewarded. So he came himself. Of course, he could go inside that
27 charmed circle, as he was a god. When he came to Savitri, he said,
28 "Daughter, give up this dead body, for know, death is the fate of
29 mortals, and I am the first of mortals who died. Since then,
30 everyone has had to die. Death is the fate of man." Thus told, Savitri
31 walked off, and Yama drew the soul out. Yama having possessed
32 himself of the soul of the young man proceeded on his way. Before
33 he had gone far, he heard footfalls upon the dry leaves. He turned
34 back. "Savitri, daughter, why are you following me? This is the fate
35 of all mortals." "I am not following thee, Father," replied Savitri,
36 "but this is, also, the fate of woman, she follows where her love
37 takes her, and the Eternal Law separates not loving man and
38 faithful wife." Then said the God of Death, "Ask for any boon, except
39 the life of your husband." "If thou art pleased to grant a boon, O
40 Lord of Death, I ask that my father-in-law may be cured of his
41 blindness and made happy." "Let thy pious wish be granted, duteous
42 daughter." And then the King of Death travelled on with the soul of
43 Satyavan. Again the same footfall was heard from behind. He
44 looked round. "Savitri, my daughter, you are still following me?"
45 "Yes, my Father; I cannot help doing so; I am trying all the time to
46 go back, but the mind goes after my husband and the body follows.
47 The soul has already gone, for in that soul is also mine; and when
48 you take the soul, the body follows, does it not?" "Pleased am I with
49 your words, fair Savitri. Ask yet another boon of me, but it must not
50 be the life of your husband." "Let my father-in-law regain his lost
51 wealth and kingdom, Father, if thou art pleased to grant another
52 supplication." "Loving daughter," Yama answered, "this boon I now
53 bestow; but return home, for living mortal cannot go with King

1 Yama." And then Yama pursued his way. But Savitri, meek and
2 faithful, still followed her departed husband. Yama again turned
3 back. "Noble Savitri, follow not in hopeless woe." "I cannot choose
4 but follow where thou takest my beloved one." "Then suppose,
5 Savitri, that your husband was a sinner and has to go to hell. In that
6 case goes Savitri with the one she loves?" "Glad am I to follow
7 where he goes, be it life or death, heaven or hell," said the loving
8 wife. "Blessed are your words, my child, pleased am I with you, ask
9 yet another boon, but the dead come not to life again." "Since you
10 so permit me, then, let the imperial line of my father-in-law be not
11 destroyed; let his kingdom descend to Satyavan's sons." And then
12 the God of Death smiled. "My daughter, thou shalt have thy desire
13 now: here is the soul of thy husband, he shall live again. He shall
14 live to be a father and thy children also shall reign in due course.
15 Return home. Love has conquered Death! Woman never loved like
16 thee, and thou art the proof that even I, the God of Death, am
17 powerless against the power of the true love that abideth!"

18 This is the story of Savitri, and every girl in India must
19 aspire to be like Savitri, whose love could not be conquered by
20 death, and who through this tremendous love snatched back from
21 even Yama, the soul of her husband.

22 The book is full of hundreds of beautiful episodes like this. I
23 began by telling you that the Mahabharata is one of the greatest
24 books in the world and consists of about a hundred thousand verses
25 in eighteen Parvans, or volumes.

26 To return to our main story. We left the Pandava brothers in
27 exile. Even there they were not allowed to remain unmolested
28 from the evil plots of Duryodhana; but all of them were futile.

29 A story of their forest life, I shall tell you here. One day the
30 brothers became thirsty in the forest. Yudhishtira bade his brother,
31 Nakula, go and fetch water. He quickly proceeded towards the
32 place where there was water and soon came to a crystal lake, and
33 was about to drink of it, when he heard a voice utter these words:
34 "Stop, O child. First answer my questions and then drink of this
35 water." But Nakula, who was exceedingly thirsty, disregarded these
36 words, drank of the water, and having drunk of it, dropped down
37 dead. As Nakula did not return, King Yudhishtira told Sahadeva to
38 seek his brother and bring back water with him. So Sahadeva
39 proceeded to the lake and beheld his brother lying dead. Afflicted at
40 the death of his brother and suffering severely from thirst, he went
41 towards the water, when the same words were heard by him: "O
42 child, first answer my questions and then drink of the water." He
43 also disregarded these words, and having satisfied his thirst,
44 dropped down dead. Subsequently Arjuna and Bhima were sent,
45 one after the other, on a similar quest; but neither returned, having
46 drunk of the lake and dropped down dead. Then Yudhishtira rose
47 up to go in search of his brothers. At length, he came to the
48 beautiful lake and saw his brothers lying dead. His heart was full of
49 grief at the sight, and he began to lament. Suddenly he heard the
50 same voice saying, "Do not, O child, act rashly. I am a Yaksha living
51 as a crane on tiny fish. It is by me that thy younger brothers have
52 been brought under the sway of the Lord of departed spirits. If

1 thou, O Prince, answer not the questions put by me, even thou shalt
2 number the fifth corpse. Having answered my questions first, do
3 thou, O Kunti's son, drink and carry away as much as thou
4 requirest." Yudhishtira replied, "I shall answer thy questions
5 according to my intelligence. Do thou ask me!" The Yaksha then
6 asked him several questions, all of which Yudhishtira answered
7 satisfactorily. One of the questions was: "What is the most
8 wonderful fact in this world?" "We see our fellow-beings every
9 moment falling off around us; but those that are left behind think
10 that they will never die. This is the most curious fact: in face of
11 death, none believes he will die!" Another question was: "What is
12 the path of knowing the secret of religion?" And Yudhishtira
13 answered, "By argument nothing can be settled; doctrines there are
14 many; various are the scriptures, one part contradicting the other.
15 There are not two sages who do not differ in their opinions. The
16 secret of religion is buried deep, as it were, in dark caves. So the
17 path to be followed is that which the great ones have trodden."
18 Then the Yaksha said, "I am pleased. I am Dharma, the God of
19 Justice in the form of a crane. I came to test you. Now, your
20 brothers, see, not one of them is dead. It is all my magic. Since
21 abstention from injury is regarded by thee as higher than both
22 profit and pleasure, therefore, let all thy brothers live, O bull of the
23 Bharata race." And at these words of the Yaksha, the Pandavas rose
24 up.

25 Here is a glimpse of the nature of King Yudhishtira. We find
26 by his answers that he was more of a philosopher, more of a Yogi,
27 than a king.

28 Now, as the thirteenth year of the exile was drawing nigh,
29 the Yaksha bade them go to Virata's kingdom and live there in such
30 disguises as they would think best.

31 So, after the term of the twelve years' exile had expired,
32 they went to the kingdom of Virata in different disguises to spend
33 the remaining one year in concealment, and entered into menial
34 service in the king's household. Thus Yudhishtira became a
35 Brahmana courtier of the king, as one skilled in dice; Bhima was
36 appointed a cook; Arjuna, dressed as a eunuch, was made a teacher
37 of dancing and music to Uttara, the princess, and remained in the
38 inner apartments of the king; Nakula became the keeper of the
39 king's horses; and Sahadeva got the charge of the cows; and
40 Draupadi, disguised as a waiting-woman was also admitted into the
41 queen's household. Thus concealing their identity the Pandava
42 brothers safely spent a year, and the search of Duryodhana to find
43 them out was of no avail. They were only discovered just when the
44 year was out.

45 Then Yudhishtira sent an ambassador to Dhritarashtra and
46 demanded that half of the kingdom should, as their share, be
47 restored to them. But Duryodhana hated his cousins and would not
48 consent to their legitimate demands. They were even willing to
49 accept a single province, nay, even five villages. But the headstrong
50 Duryodhana declared that he would not yield without fight even as
51 much land as a needle's point would hold. Dhritarashtra pleaded
52 again and again for peace, but all in vain. Krishna also went and

1 tried to avert the impending war and death of kinsmen, so did the
2 wise elders of the royal court; but all negotiations for a peaceful
3 partition of the kingdom were futile. So, at last, preparations were
4 made on both sides for war, and all the warlike nations took part in
5 it.

6 The old Indian customs of the Kshatriyas were observed in
7 it. Duryodhana took one side, Yudhishtira, the other. From
8 Yudhishtira messengers were at once sent to all the surrounding
9 kings, entreating their alliance, since honourable men would grant
10 the request that first reached them. So, warriors from all parts
11 assembled to espouse the cause of either the Pandavas or the Kurus
12 according to the precedence of their requests; and thus one brother
13 joined this side, and the other that side, the father on one side, and
14 the son on the other. The most curious thing was the code of war of
15 those days; as soon as the battle for the day ceased and evening
16 came, the opposing parties were good friends, even going to each
17 other's tents; however, when the morning came, again they
18 proceeded to fight each other. That was the strange trait that the
19 Hindus carried down to the time of the Mohammedan invasion.
20 Then again, a man on horseback must not strike one on foot; must
21 not poison the weapon; must not vanquish the enemy in any
22 unequal fight, or by dishonesty; and must never take undue
23 advantage of the other, and so on. If any deviated from these rules
24 he would be covered with dishonour and shunned. The Kshatriyas
25 were trained in that way. And when the foreign invasion came from
26 Central Asia, the Hindus treated the invaders in the selfsame way.
27 They defeated them several times, and on as many occasions sent
28 them back to their homes with presents, etc. The code laid down
29 was that they must not usurp anybody's country; and when a man
30 was beaten he must be sent back to his country with due regard to
31 his position. The Mohammedan conquerors treated the Hindu kings
32 differently, and when they got them once, they destroyed them
33 without remorse.

34 Mind you, in those days--in the times of our story, the poem
35 says--the science of arms was not the mere use of bows and arrows
36 at all; it was magic archery in which the use of Mantras,
37 concentration, etc., played a prominent part. One man could fight
38 millions of men and burn them at will. He could send one arrow,
39 and it would rain thousands of arrows and thunder; he could make
40 anything burn, and so on--it was all divine magic. One fact is
41 curious in both these poems--the Ramayana and the Mahabharata--
42 along with these magic arrows and all these things going on, you
43 see the cannon already in use. The cannon is an old, old thing, used
44 by the Chinese and the Hindus. Upon the walls of the cities were
45 hundreds of curious weapons made of hollow iron tubes, which
46 filled with powder and ball would kill hundreds of men. The people
47 believed that the Chinese, by magic, put the devil inside a hollow
48 iron tube, and when they applied a little fire to a hole, the devil
49 came out with a terrific noise and killed many people.

50 So in those old days, they used to fight with magic arrows.
51 One man would be able to fight millions of others. They had their
52 military arrangements and tactics: there were the foot soldiers,

1 termed the Pada; then the cavalry, Turaga; and two other divisions
2 which the moderns have lost and given up--there was the elephant
3 corps--hundreds and hundreds of elephants, with men on their
4 backs, formed into regiments and protected with huge sheets of
5 iron mail; and these elephants would bear down upon a mass of the
6 enemy--then, there were the chariots, of course (you have all seen
7 pictures of those old chariots, they were used in every country).
8 These were the four divisions of the army in those old days.

9 Now, both parties alike wished to secure the alliance of
10 Krishna. But he declined to take an active part and fight in the war,
11 but offered himself as charioteer to Arjuna, and as the friend and
12 counsellor of the Pandavas, while to Duryodhana he gave his army
13 of mighty soldiers.

14 Then was fought on the vast plain of Kurukshetra the great
15 battle in which Bhishma, Drona, Karna, and the brothers of
16 Duryodhana with the kinsmen on both sides and thousands of other
17 heroes fell. The war lasted eighteen days. Indeed, out of the
18 eighteen Akshauhinis of soldiers very few men were left. The death
19 of Duryodhana ended the war in favour of the Pandavas. It was
20 followed by the lament of Gandhari, the queen, and the widowed
21 women, and the funerals of the deceased warriors.

22 The greatest incident of the war was the marvellous and
23 immortal poem of the Gita, the Song Celestial. It is the popular
24 scripture of India and the loftiest of all teachings. It consists of a
25 dialogue held by Arjuna with Krishna, just before the
26 commencement of the fight on the battle-field of Kurukshetra. I
27 would advise those of you who have not read that book to read it. If
28 you only knew how much it has influenced your own country even!
29 If you want to know the source of Emerson's inspiration, it is this
30 book, the Gita. He went to see Carlyle, and Carlyle made him a
31 present of the Gita; and that little book is responsible for the
32 Concord Movement. All the broad movements in America, in one
33 way or other, are indebted to the Concord party.

34 The central figure of the Gita is Krishna. As you worship
35 Jesus of Nazareth as God come down as man, so the Hindus
36 worship many Incarnations of God. They believe in not one or two
37 only, but in many, who have come down from time to time,
38 according to the needs of the world, for the preservation of Dharma
39 and destruction of wickedness. Each sect has one, and Krishna is
40 one of them. Krishna, perhaps, has a larger number of followers in
41 India than any other Incarnation of God. His followers hold that he
42 was the most perfect of those Incarnations. Why? "Because," they
43 say, "look at Buddha and other Incarnations; they were only monks,
44 and they had no sympathy for married people. How could they
45 have? But look at Krishna; he was great as a son, as a king, as a
46 father, and all through his life he practised the marvellous
47 teachings which he preached." "He who in the midst of the greatest
48 activity finds the sweetest peace, and in the midst of the greatest
49 calmness is most active, he has known the secret of life." Krishna
50 shows the way how to do this--by being non-attached: do everything
51 but do not get identified with anything. You are the soul, the pure,
52 the free, all the time; you are the Witness. Our misery comes, not

1 from work, but by our getting attached to something. Take for
2 instance, money: money is a great thing to have, earn it, says
3 Krishna; struggle hard to get money, but don't get attached to it. So
4 with children, with wife, husband, relatives, fame, everything; you
5 have no need to shun them, only don't get attached. There is only
6 one attachment and that belongs to the Lord, and to none other.
7 Work for them, love them, do good to them, sacrifice a hundred
8 lives, if need be, for them, but never be attached. His own life was
9 the exact exemplification of that.

10 Remember that the book which delineates the life of Krishna
11 is several thousand years old, and some parts of his life are very
12 similar to those of Jesus of Nazareth. Krishna was of royal birth;
13 there was a tyrant king, called Kamsa, and there was a prophecy
14 that one would be born of such and such a family, who would be
15 king. So Kamsa ordered all the male children to be massacred. The
16 father and mother of Krishna were cast by King Kamsa into prison,
17 where the child was born. A light suddenly shone in the prison and
18 the child spoke saying, "I am the Light of the world, born for the
19 good of the world." You find Krishna again symbolically represented
20 with cows--"The Great Cowherd" as he is called. Sages affirmed
21 that God Himself was born, and they went to pay him homage. In
22 other parts of the story, the similarity between the two does not
23 continue.

24 Shri Krishna conquered this tyrant Kamsa, but he never
25 thought of accepting or occupying the throne himself. He had
26 nothing to do with that. He had done his duty and there it ended.

27 After the conclusion of the Kurukshetra War, the great
28 warrior and venerable grandsire, Bhishma, who fought ten days out
29 of the eighteen days' battle, still lay on his deathbed and gave
30 instructions to Yudhishtira on various subjects, such as the duties
31 of the king, the duties of the four castes, the four stages of life, the
32 laws of marriage, the bestowing of gifts, etc., basing them on the
33 teachings of the ancient sages. He explained Sankhya philosophy
34 and Yoga philosophy and narrated numerous tales and traditions
35 about saints and gods and kings. These teachings occupy nearly
36 one-fourth of the entire work and form an invaluable storehouse of
37 Hindus laws and moral codes. Yudhishtira had in the meantime
38 been crowned king. But the awful bloodshed and extinction of
39 superiors and relatives weighed heavily on his mind; and then,
40 under the advice of Vyasa, he performed the Ashvamedha sacrifice.

41 After the war, for fifteen years Dhritarashtra dwelt in peace
42 and honour, obeyed by Yudhishtira and his brothers. Then the
43 aged monarch leaving Yudhishtira on the throne, retired to the
44 forest with his devoted wife and Kunti, the mother of the Pandava
45 brothers, to pass his last days in asceticism.

46 Thirty-six years had now passed since Yudhishtira regained
47 his empire. Then came to him the news that Krishna had left his
48 mortal body. Krishna, the sage, his friend, his prophet, his
49 counsellor, had departed. Arjuna hastened to Dwaraka and came
50 back only to confirm the sad news that Krishna and the Yadavas
51 were all dead. Then the king and the other brothers, overcome with

1 sorrow, declared that the time for them to go, too, had arrived. So
2 they cast off the burden of royalty, placed Parikshit, the grandson of
3 Arjuna, on the throne, and retired to the Himalayas, on the Great
4 Journey, the Mahaprasthana. This was a peculiar form of Sannyasa.
5 It was a custom for old kings to become Sannyasins. In ancient
6 India, when men became very old, they would give up everything.
7 So did the kings. When a man did not want to live any more, then
8 he went towards the Himalayas, without eating or drinking and
9 walked on and on till the body failed. All the time thinking of God,
10 he just marched on till the body gave way.

11 Then came the gods, the sages, and they told King
12 Yudhishtira that he should go and reach heaven. To go to heaven
13 one has to cross the highest peaks of the Himalayas. Beyond the
14 Himalayas is Mount Meru. On the top of Mount Meru is heaven.
15 None ever went there in this body. There the gods reside. And
16 Yudhishtira was called upon by the gods to go there.

17 So the five brothers and their wife clad themselves in robes
18 of bark, and set out on their journey. On the way, they were
19 followed by a dog. On and on they went, and they turned their
20 weary feet northward to where the Himalayas lifts his lofty peaks,
21 and they saw the mighty Mount Meru in front of them. Silently they
22 walked on in the snow, until suddenly the queen fell, to rise no
23 more. To Yudhishtira who was leading the way, Bhima, one of the
24 brothers said, "Behold, O King, the queen has fallen." The king shed
25 tears, but he did not look back. "We are going to meet Krishna," he
26 says. "No time to look back. March on." After a while, again Bhima
27 said, "Behold, our brother, Sahadeva has fallen." The king shed
28 tears; but paused not. "March on," he cried.

29 One after the other, in the cold and snow, all the four
30 brothers dropped down, but unshaken, though alone, the king
31 advanced onward. Looking behind, he saw the faithful dog was still
32 following him. And so the king and the dog went on, through snow
33 and ice, over hill and dale, climbing higher and higher, till they
34 reached Mount Meru; and there they began to hear the chimes of
35 heaven, and celestial flowers were showered upon the virtuous king
36 by the gods. Then descended the chariot of the gods, and Indra
37 prayed him, "Ascend in this chariot, greatest of mortals: thou that
38 alone art given to enter heaven without changing the mortal body."
39 But no, that Yudhishtira would not do without his devoted brothers
40 and his queen; then Indra explained to him that the brothers had
41 already gone thither before him.

42 And Yudhishtira looked around and said to his dog, "Get
43 into the chariot, child." The dog stood aghast. "What! the dog?" he
44 cried. "Do thou cast off this dog! The dog goeth not to heaven!
45 Great King, what dost thou mean? Art thou mad? Thou, the most
46 virtuous of the human race, thou only canst go to heaven in thy
47 body." "But he has been my devoted companion through the snow
48 and ice. When all my brothers were dead, my queen dead, he alone
49 never left me. How can I leave him now?" "There is no place in
50 heaven for men with dogs. He has to be left behind. There is
51 nothing unrighteous in this." "I do not go to heaven," replied the
52 king, "without this dog. I shall never give up such a one who has

1 taken refuge with me, until my own life is at an end. I shall never
2 swerve from righteousness, nay, not even for the joys of heaven or
3 the urging of a god." "Then," said Indra, "on one condition the dog
4 goes to heaven. You have been the most virtuous of mortals and he
5 has been a dog, killing and eating animals; he is sinful, hunting, and
6 taking other lives. You can exchange heaven with him." "Agreed,"
7 says the king. "Let the dog go to heaven."

8 At once, the scene changed. Hearing these noble words of
9 Yudhishtira, the dog revealed himself as Dharma; the dog was no
10 other than Yama, the Lord of Death and Justice. And Dharma
11 exclaimed, "Behold, O King, no man was ever so unselfish as thou,
12 willing to exchange heaven with a little dog, and for his sake
13 disclaiming all his virtues and ready to go to hell even for him. Thou
14 art well born, O King of kings. Thou hast compassion for all
15 creatures, O Bharata, of which this is a bright example. Hence,
16 regions of undying felicity are thine! Thou has won them, O King,
17 and thine is a celestial and high goal."

18 Then Yudhishtira, with Indra, Dharma, and other gods,
19 proceeds to heaven in a celestial car. He undergoes some trials,
20 bathes in the celestial Ganga, and assumes a celestial body. He
21 meets his brothers who are now immortals, and all at last is bliss.

22 Thus ends the story of the Mahabharata, setting forth in a
23 sublime poem the triumph of virtue and the defeat of vice.

24 In speaking of the Mahabharata to you, it is simply
25 impossible for me to present the unending array of the grand and
26 majestic characters of the mighty heroes depicted by the genius
27 and master-mind of Vyasa. The internal conflicts between
28 righteousness and filial affection in the mind of the god-fearing, yet
29 feeble, old, blind King Dhritarashtra; the majestic character of the
30 grandsire Bhishma; the noble and virtuous character of the royal
31 Yudhishtira, and of the other four brothers, as mighty in valour as
32 in devotion and loyalty; the peerless character of Krishna,
33 unsurpassed in human wisdom; and not less brilliant, the
34 characters of the women--the stately queen Gandhari, the loving
35 mother Kunti, the ever-devoted and all-suffering Draupadi--these
36 and hundreds of other characters of this Epic and those of the
37 Ramayana have been the cherished heritage of the whole Hindu
38 world for the last several thousands of years and form the basis of
39 their thoughts and of their moral and ethical ideas. In fact, the
40 Ramayana and the Mahabharata are the two encyclopaedias of the
41 ancient Aryan life and wisdom, portraying an ideal civilisation
42 which humanity has yet to aspire after.

1
2
3 *THOUGHTS ON THE GITA*
4

5 During his sojourn in Calcutta in 1897, Swami Vivekananda
6 used to stay for the most part at the Math, the headquarters of the
7 Ramakrishna Mission, located then at Alambazar. During this time
8 several young men, who had been preparing themselves for some
9 time previously, gathered round him and took the vows of
10 Brahmacharya and Sannyasa, and Swamiji began to train them for
11 future work, by holding classes on the Gita and Vedanta, and
12 initiating them into the practices of meditation. In one of these
13 classes he talked eloquently in Bengali on the Gita. The following is
14 a translation of the summary of the discourse as it was entered in
15 the Math diary:

16 The book known as the Gita forms a part of the
17 Mahabharata. To understand the Gita properly, several things are
18 very important to know. First, whether it formed a part of the
19 Mahabharata, i.e. whether the authorship attributed to Veda-Vyasa
20 was true, or if it was merely interpolated within the great epic;
21 secondly, whether there was any historical personality of the name
22 of Krishna; thirdly, whether the great war of Kurukshetra as
23 mentioned in the Gita actually took place; and fourthly, whether
24 Arjuna and others were real historical persons.

25 Now in the first place, let us see what grounds there are for
26 such inquiry. We know that there were many who went by the name
27 of Veda-Vyasa; and among them who was the real author of the
28 Gita--the Badarayana Vyasa or the Dvaipayana Vyasa? "Vyasa" was
29 only a title. Anyone who composed a new Purana was known by the
30 name of Vyasa, like the word Vikramaditya, which was also a
31 general name. Another point is, the book, Gita, had not been much
32 known to the generality of people before Shankaracharya made it
33 famous by writing his great commentary on it. Long before that,
34 there was current, according to many, the commentary on it by
35 Bodhayana. If this could be proved, it would go a long way, no
36 doubt, to establish the antiquity of the Gita and the authorship of
37 Vyasa. But the Bodhayana Bhashya on the *Vedanta-Sutras*--from
38 which Ramanuja compiled his *Shri-Bhashya*, which Shankaracharya
39 mentions and even quotes in part here and there in his own
40 commentary, and which was so greatly discussed by the Swami
41 Dayananda--not a copy even of that Bodhayana Bhashya could I find
42 while travelling throughout India. It is said that even Ramanuja
43 compiled his Bhashya from a worm-eaten manuscript which he
44 happened to find. When even this great Bodhayana Bhashya on the
45 *Vedanta-Sutras* is so much enshrouded in the darkness of
46 uncertainty, it is simply useless to try to establish the existence of
47 the Bodhayana Bhashya on the Gita. Some infer that
48 Shankaracharya was the author of the Gita, and that it was he who
49 foisted it into the body of the Mahabharata.

50 Then as to the second point in question, much doubt exists

1 about the personality of Krishna. In one place in the Chhandogya
2 Upanishad we find mention of Krishna, the son of Devaki, who
3 received spiritual instructions from one Ghora, a Yogi. In the
4 Mahabharata, Krishna is the king of Dwaraka; and in the *Vishnu*
5 *Purana* we find a description of Krishna playing with the Gopis.
6 Again, in the *Bhagavata*, the account of his Rasalila is detailed at
7 length. In very ancient times in our country there was in vogue an
8 Utsava called Madanotsava (celebration in honour of Cupid). That
9 very thing was transformed into Dola and thrust upon the shoulders
10 of Krishna. Who can be so bold as to assert that the Rasalila and
11 other things connected with him were not similarly fastened upon
12 him? In ancient times there was very little tendency in our country
13 to find out truths by historical research. So any one could say what
14 he thought best without substantiating it with proper facts and
15 evidence. Another thing: in those ancient times there was very little
16 hankering after name and fame in men. So it often happened that
17 one man composed a book and made it pass current in the name of
18 his Guru or of someone else. In such cases it is very hazardous for
19 the investigator of historical facts to get at the truth. In ancient
20 times they had no knowledge whatever of geography; imagination
21 ran riot. And so we meet with such fantastic creations of the brain
22 as sweet-ocean, milk-ocean, clarified-butter-ocean, curd-ocean, etc!
23 In the Puranas, we find one living ten thousand years, another a
24 hundred thousand years! But the Vedas say, {Sanskrit}--"Man lives
25 a hundred years." Whom shall we follow here? So, to reach a
26 correct conclusion in the case of Krishna is well-nigh impossible.

27 It is human nature to build round the real character of a
28 great man all sorts of imaginary superhuman attributes. As regards
29 Krishna the same must have happened, but it seems quite probable
30 that he was a king. Quite probable I say, because in ancient times in
31 our country it was chiefly the kings who exerted themselves most in
32 the preaching of Brahma-Jnana. Another point to be especially
33 noted here is that whoever might have been the author of the Gita,
34 we find its teachings the same as those in the whole of the
35 Mahabharata. From this we can safely infer that in the age of the
36 Mahabharata some great man arose and preached the Brahma-
37 Jnana in this new garb to the then existing society. Another fact
38 comes to the fore that in the olden days, as one sect after another
39 arose, there also came into existence and use among them one new
40 scripture or another. It happened, too, that in the lapse of time both
41 the sect and its scripture died out, or the sect ceased to exist but its
42 scripture remained. Similarly, it was quite probable that the Gita
43 was the scripture of such a sect which had embodied its high and
44 noble ideals in this sacred book.

45 Now to the third point, bearing on the subject of the
46 Kurukshetra War, no special evidence in support of it can be
47 adduced. But there is no doubt that there was a war fought
48 between the Kurus and the Panchalas. Another thing: how could
49 there be so much discussion about Jnana, Bhakti, and Yoga on the
50 battle-field, where the huge army stood in battle array ready to
51 fight, just waiting for the last signal? And was any shorthand writer
52 present there to note down every word spoken between Krishna

1 and Arjuna, in the din and turmoil of the battle-field? According to
2 some, this Kurukshetra War is only an allegory. When we sum up its
3 esoteric significance, it means the war which is constantly going on
4 within man between the tendencies of good and evil. This meaning,
5 too, may not be irrational.

6 About the fourth point, there is enough ground of doubt as
7 regards the historicity of Arjuna and others, and it is this:
8 Shatapatha Brahmana is a very ancient book. In it are mentioned
9 somewhere all the names of those who were the performers of the
10 Ashvamedha Yajna: but in those places there is not only no mention,
11 but no hint even of the names of Arjuna and others, though it
12 speaks of Janamejaya, the son of Parikshit who was a grandson of
13 Arjuna. Yet in the Mahabharata and other books it is stated that
14 Yudhishtira, Arjuna, and others celebrated the Ashvamedha
15 sacrifice.

16 One thing should be especially remembered here, that there
17 is no connection between these historical researches and our real
18 aim, which is the knowledge that leads to the acquirement of
19 Dharma. Even if the historicity of the whole thing is proved to be
20 absolutely false today, it will not in the least be any loss to us. Then
21 what is the use of so much historical research, you may ask. It has
22 its use, because we have to get at the truth; it will not do for us to
23 remain bound by wrong ideas born of ignorance. In this country
24 people think very little of the importance of such inquiries. Many of
25 the sects believe that in order to preach a good thing which may be
26 beneficial to many, there is no harm in telling an untruth, if that
27 helps such preaching, or in other words, the end justifies the
28 means. Hence we find many of our Tantras beginning with,
29 "Mahadeva said to Parvati". But our duty should be to convince
30 ourselves of the truth, to believe in truth only. Such is the power of
31 superstition, or faith in old traditions without inquiry into its truth,
32 that it keeps men bound hand and foot, so much so, that even Jesus
33 the Christ, Mohammed, and other great men believed in many such
34 superstitions and could not shake them off. You have to keep your
35 eye always fixed on truth only and shun all superstitions completely.

36 Now it is for us to see what there is in the Gita. If we study
37 the Upanishads we notice, in wandering through the mazes of many
38 irrelevant subjects, the sudden introduction of the discussion of a
39 great truth, just as in the midst of a huge wilderness a traveller
40 unexpectedly comes across here and there an exquisitely beautiful
41 rose, with its leaves, thorns, roots, all entangled. Compared with
42 that, the Gita is like these truths beautifully arranged together in
43 their proper places--like a fine garland or a bouquet of the choicest
44 flowers. The Upanishads deal elaborately with Shraddha in many
45 places, but hardly mention Bhakti. In the Gita, on the other hand,
46 the subject of Bhakti is not only again and again dealt with, but in
47 it, the innate spirit of Bhakti has attained its culmination.

48 Now let us see some of the main points discussed in the
49 Gita. Wherein lies the originality of the Gita which distinguishes it
50 from all preceding scriptures? It is this: Though before its advent,
51 Yoga, Jnana, Bhakti, etc. had each its strong adherents, they all
52 quarrelled among themselves, each claiming superiority for its own

1 chosen path; no one ever tried to seek for reconciliation among
2 these different paths. It was the author of the Gita who for the first
3 time tried to harmonise these. He took the best from what all the
4 sects then existing had to offer and threaded them in the Gita. But
5 even where Krishna failed to show a complete reconciliation
6 (Samanvaya) among these warring sects, it was fully accomplished
7 by Ramakrishna Paramahansa in this nineteenth century.

8 The next is, Nishkama Karma, or work without desire or
9 attachment. People nowadays understand what is meant by this in
10 various ways. Some say what is implied by being unattached is to
11 become purposeless. If that were its real meaning, then heartless
12 brutes and the walls would be the best exponents of the
13 performance of Nishkama Karma. Many others, again, give the
14 example of Janaka, and wish themselves to be equally recognised as
15 past masters in the practice of Nishkama Karma! Janaka (lit. father)
16 did not acquire that distinction by bringing forth children, but these
17 people all want to be Janakas, with the sole qualification of being
18 the fathers of a brood of children! No! The true Nishkama Karmi
19 (performer of work without desire) is neither to be like a brute, nor
20 to be inert, nor heartless. He is not Tamasika but of pure Sattva.
21 His heart is so full of love and sympathy that he can embrace the
22 whole world with his love. The world at large cannot generally
23 comprehend his all-embracing love and sympathy.

24 The reconciliation of the different paths of Dharma, and
25 work without desire or attachment--these are the two special
26 characteristics of the Gita.

27 Now let us read a little from the second chapter.

28 {Sanskrit}

29 "Sanjaya said:

30 To him who was thus overwhelmed with pity and sorrowing,
31 and whose eyes were dimmed with tears, Madhusudana spoke
32 these words.

33 The Blessed Lord said:

34 In such a strait, whence comes upon thee, O Arjuna, this
35 dejection, un-Aryan-like, disgraceful, and contrary to the attainment
36 of heaven?

37 Yield not to unmanliness, O son of Pritha! Ill doth it become
38 thee. Cast off this mean faint-heartedness and arise, O scorcher of
39 thine enemies!"

40 In the Shlokas beginning with {Sanskrit}, how poetically,
41 how beautifully, has Arjuna's real position been painted! Then Shri
42 Krishna advises Arjuna; and in the words {Sanskrit} etc., why is he
43 goading Arjuna to fight? Because it was not that the disinclination
44 of Arjuna to fight arose out of the overwhelming predominance of
45 pure Sattva Guna; it was all Tamas that brought on this
46 unwillingness. The nature of a man of Sattva Guna is that he is
47 equally calm in all situations in life--whether it be prosperity or
48 adversity. But Arjuna was afraid, he was overwhelmed with pity.
49 That he had the instinct and the inclination to fight is proved by the

1 simple fact that he came to the battle-field with no other purpose
2 than that. Frequently in our lives also such things are seen to
3 happen. Many people think they are Sattvika by nature, but they
4 are really nothing but Tamasika. Many living in an uncleanly way
5 regard themselves as Paramahamsas! Why? Because the Shastras
6 say that Paramahamsas live like one inert, or mad, or like an
7 unclean spirit. Paramahamsas are compared to children, but here it
8 should be understood that the comparison is one-sided. The
9 Paramahamsa and the child are not one and non-different. They
10 only appear similar, being the two extreme poles, as it were. One
11 has reached to a state beyond Jnana, and the other has not got even
12 an inkling of Jnana. The quickest and gentlest vibrations of light are
13 both beyond the reach of our ordinary vision; but in the one it is
14 intense heat, and in the other it may be said to be almost without
15 any heat. So it is with the opposite qualities of Sattva and Tamas.
16 They seem in some respects to be the same, no doubt, but there is a
17 world of difference between them. The Tamoguna loves very much
18 to array itself in the garb of the Sattva. Here, in Arjuna, the mighty
19 warrior, it has come under the guise of Daya (pity).

20 In order to remove this delusion which had overtaken
21 Arjuna, what did the Bhagavan say? As I always preach that you
22 should not decry a man by calling him a sinner, but that you should
23 draw his attention to the omnipotent power that is in him, in the
24 same way does the Bhagavan speak to Arjuna. {Sanskrit}--"It doth
25 not befit thee!" "Thou art Atman imperishable, beyond all evil.
26 Having forgotten thy real nature, thou hast, by thinking thyself a
27 sinner, as one afflicted with bodily evils and mental grief, thou hast
28 made thyself so--this doth not befit thee!"--so says the Bhagavan:
29 "{Sanskrit}--Yield not to unmanliness, O son of Pritha. There is in
30 the world neither sin nor misery, neither disease nor grief; if there
31 is anything in the world which can be called sin, it is this--`fear';
32 know that any work which brings out the latent power in thee is
33 Punya (virtue); and that which makes thy body and mind weak is,
34 verily, sin. Shake off this weakness, this faint-heartedness!
35 {Sanskrit} Thou art a hero, a Vira; this is unbecoming of thee."

36 If you, my sons, can proclaim this message to the world--
37 {Sanskrit}--then all this disease, grief, sin, and sorrow will vanish
38 from off the face of the earth in three days. All these ideas of
39 weakness will be nowhere. Now it is everywhere--this current of the
40 vibration of fear. Reverse the current; bring in the opposite
41 vibration, and behold the magic transformation! Thou art
42 omnipotent--go, go to the mouth of the cannon, fear not.

43 Hate not the most abject sinner, look not to his exterior. Turn
44 thy gaze inward, where resides the Paramatman. Proclaim to the
45 whole world with trumpet voice, "There is no sin in thee, there is no
46 misery in thee; thou art the reservoir of omnipotent power. Arise,
47 awake, and manifest the Divinity within!"

48 If one reads this one Shloka--{Sanskrit}--one gets all the
49 merits of reading the entire Gita; for in this one Shloka lies
50 imbedded the whole Message of the Gita.

THE STORY OF JADA BHARATA

(Delivered in California)

There was a great monarch named Bharata. The land which is called India by foreigners is known to her children as Bharata Varsha. Now, it is enjoined on every Hindu when he becomes old, to give up all worldly pursuits--to leave the cares of the world, its wealth, happiness, and enjoyments to his son--and retire into the forest, there to meditate upon the Self which is the only reality in him, and thus break the bonds which bind him to life. King or priest, peasant or servant, man or woman, none is exempt from this duty; for all the duties of the householder--of the son, the brother, the husband, the father, the wife, the daughter, the mother, the sister--are but preparations towards that one stage, when all the bonds which bind the soul to matter are severed asunder for ever.

The great king Bharata in his old age gave over his throne to his son, and retired into the forest. He who had been ruler over millions and millions of subjects, who had lived in marble palaces, inlaid with gold and silver, who had drunk out of jewelled cups--this king built a little cottage with his own hands, made of reeds and grass, on the banks of a river in the Himalayan forests. There he lived on roots and wild herbs, collected by his own hands, and constantly meditated upon Him who is always present in the soul of man. Days, months, and years passed. One day, a deer came to drink water near by where the royal sage was meditating. At the same moment, a lion roared at a little distance off. The deer was so terrified that she, without satisfying her thirst, made a big jump to cross the river. The deer was with young, and this extreme exertion and sudden fright made her give birth to a little fawn, and immediately after she fell dead. The fawn fell into the water and was being carried rapidly away by the foaming stream, when it caught the eyes of the king. The king rose from his position of meditation and rescuing the fawn from the water, took it to his cottage, made a fire, and with care and attention fondled the little thing back to life. Then the kindly sage took the fawn under his protection, bringing it up on soft grass and fruits. The fawn thrived under the paternal care of the retired monarch, and grew into a beautiful deer. Then, he whose mind had been strong enough to break away from lifelong attachment to power, position, and family, became attached to the deer which he had saved from the stream. As he became fonder and fonder of the deer, the less and less he could concentrate his mind upon the Lord. When the deer went out to graze in the forest, if it were late in returning, the mind of the royal sage would become anxious and worried. He would think, "Perhaps my little one has been attacked by some tiger--or perhaps some other danger has befallen it; otherwise, why is it late?"

Some years passed in this way, but one day death came, and the royal sage laid himself down to die. But his mind, instead of being intent upon the Self, was thinking about the deer; and with

1 his eyes fixed upon the sad looks of his beloved deer, his soul left
2 the body. As the result of this, in the next birth he was born as a
3 deer. But no Karma is lost, and all the great and good deeds done
4 by him as a king and sage bore their fruit. This deer was a born
5 Jatismara, and remembered his past birth, though he was bereft of
6 speech and living in an animal body. He always left his companions
7 and was instinctively drawn to graze near hermitages where
8 oblations were offered and the Upanishads were preached.

9 After the usual years of a deer's life had been spent, it died
10 and was next born as the youngest son of a rich Brahmin. And in
11 that life also, he remembered all his past, and even in his childhood
12 was determined no more to get entangled in the good and evil of
13 life. The child, as it grew up, was strong and healthy, but would not
14 speak a word, and lived as one inert and insane, for fear of getting
15 mixed up with worldly affairs. His thoughts were always on the
16 Infinite, and he lived only to wear out his past Prarabdha Karma. In
17 course of time the father died, and the sons divided the property
18 among themselves; and thinking that the youngest was a dumb,
19 good-for-nothing man, they seized his share. Their charity, however,
20 extended only so far as to give him enough food to live upon. The
21 wives of the brothers were often very harsh to him, putting him to
22 do all the hard work; and if he was unable to do everything they
23 wanted, they would treat him very unkindly. But he showed neither
24 vexation nor fear, and neither did he speak a word. When they
25 persecuted him very much, he would stroll out of the house and sit
26 under a tree, by the hour, until their wrath was appeased, and then
27 he would quietly go home again.

28 One day, when the wives of the brothers had treated him
29 with more than usual unkindness, Bharata went out of the house,
30 seated himself under the shadow of a tree and rested. Now it
31 happened that the king of the country was passing by, carried in a
32 palanquin on the shoulders of bearers. One of the bearers had
33 unexpectedly fallen ill, and so his attendants were looking about for
34 a man to replace him. They came upon Bharata seated under a tree;
35 and seeing he was a strong young man, they asked him if he would
36 take the place of the sick man in bearing the king's palanquin. But
37 Bharata did not reply. Seeing that he was so able-bodied, the king's
38 servants caught hold of him and placed the pole on his shoulders.
39 Without speaking a word, Bharata went on. Very soon after this, the
40 king remarked that the palanquin was not being evenly carried, and
41 looking out of the palanquin addressed the new bearer, saying
42 "Fool, rest a while; if thy shoulders pain thee, rest a while." Then
43 Bharata laying the pole of the palanquin down, opened his lips for
44 the first time in his life, and spoke, "Whom dost thou, O King, call a
45 fool? Whom dost thou ask to lay down the palanquin? Who dost thou
46 say is weary? Whom dost thou address as 'thou'? If thou meanest,
47 O King, by the word 'thee' this mass of flesh, it is composed of the
48 same matter as thine; it is unconscious, and it knoweth no
49 weariness, it knoweth no pain. If it is the mind, the mind is the
50 same as thine; it is universal. But if the word 'thee' is applied to
51 something beyond that, then it is the Self, the Reality in me, which
52 is the same as in thee, and it is the One in the universe. Dost thou

1 mean, O King, that the Self can ever be weary, that It can ever be
2 tired, that It can ever be hurt? I did not want, O King--this body did
3 not want--to trample upon the poor worms crawling on the road,
4 and therefore, in trying to avoid them, the palanquin moved
5 unevenly. But the Self was never tired; It was never weak; It never
6 bore the pole of the palanquin: for It is omnipotent and
7 omnipresent." And so he dwelt eloquently on the nature of the soul,
8 and on the highest knowledge, etc. The king, who was proud of his
9 learning, knowledge, and philosophy, alighted from the palanquin,
10 and fell at the feet of Bharata, saying, "I ask thy pardon, O mighty
11 one, I did not know that thou wast a sage, when I asked thee to
12 carry me." Bharata blessed him and departed. He then resumed the
13 even tenor of his previous life. When Bharata left the body, he was
14 freed for ever from the bondage of birth.

THE STORY OF PRAHLADA

(Delivered in California)

Hiranyakashipu was the king of the Daityas. The Daityas, though born of the same parentage as the Devas or gods, were always, at war with the latter. The Daityas had no part in the oblations and offerings of mankind, or in the government of the world and its guidance. But sometimes they waxed strong and drove all the Devas from the heaven, and seized the throne of the gods and ruled for a time. Then the Devas prayed to Vishnu, the Omnipresent Lord of the universe, and He helped them out of their difficulty. The Daityas were driven out, and once more the gods reigned. Hiranyakashipu, king of the Daityas, in his turn, succeeded in conquering his cousins, the Devas, and seated himself on the throne of the heavens and ruled the three worlds--the middle world, inhabited by men and animals; the heavens, inhabited by gods and godlike beings; and the nether world, inhabited by the Daityas. Now, Hiranyakashipu declared himself to be the God of the whole universe and proclaimed that there was no other God but himself, and strictly enjoined that the Omnipotent Vishnu should have no worship offered to Him anywhere; and that all the worship should henceforth be given to himself only.

Hiranyakashipu had a son called Prahlada. Now, it so happened, that this Prahlada from his infancy was devoted to God. He showed inclinations of this as a child; and the king of the Daityas, fearing that the evil he wanted to drive away from the world would crop up in his own family, made over his son to two teachers called Shanda and Amarka, who were very stern disciplinarians, with strict injunctions that Prahlada was never to hear even the name of Vishnu mentioned. The teachers took the prince to their home, and there he was put to study with the other children of his age. But the little Prahlada, instead of learning from his books, devoted all the time in teaching the other boys how to worship Vishnu. When the teachers found it out, they were frightened, for the fear of the mighty king Hiranyakashipu was upon them, and they tried their best to dissuade the child from such teachings. But Prahlada could no more stop his teaching and worshipping Vishnu than he could stop breathing. To clear themselves, the teachers told the terrible fact to the king, that his son was not only worshipping Vishnu himself, but also spoiling all the other children by teaching them to worship Vishnu.

The monarch became very much enraged when he heard this and called the boy to his presence. He tried by gentle persuasions to dissuade Prahlada from the worship of Vishnu and taught him that he, the king, was the only God to worship. But it was to no purpose. The child declared, again and again, that the Omnipresent Vishnu, Lord of the universe, was the only Being to be worshipped--for even he, the king, held his throne only so long as it

1 pleased Vishnu. The rage of the king knew no bounds, and he
2 ordered the boy to be immediately killed. So the Daityas struck him
3 with pointed weapons; but Prahlad's mind was so intent upon
4 Vishnu that he felt no pain from them.

5 When his father, the king, saw that it was so, he became
6 frightened but, roused to the worst passions of a Daitya, contrived
7 various diabolical means to kill the boy. He ordered him to be
8 trampled under foot by an elephant. The enraged elephant could
9 not crush the body any more than he could have crushed a block of
10 iron. So this measure also was to no purpose. Then the king
11 ordered the boy to be thrown over a precipice, and this order too
12 was duly carried out; but, as Vishnu resided in the heart of
13 Prahlada, he came down upon the earth as gently as a flower drops
14 upon the grass. Poison, fire, starvation, throwing into a well,
15 enchantments, and other measures were then tried on the child one
16 after another, but to no purpose. Nothing could hurt him in whose
17 heart dwelt Vishnu.

18 At last, the king ordered the boy to be tied with mighty
19 serpents called up from the nether worlds, and then cast to the
20 bottom of the ocean, where huge mountains were to be piled high
21 upon him, so that in course of time, if not immediately, he might die;
22 and he ordered him to be left in this plight. Even though treated in
23 this manner, the boy continued to pray to his beloved Vishnu:
24 "Salutation to Thee, Lord of the universe. Thou beautiful Vishnu!"
25 Thus thinking and meditating on Vishnu, he began to feel that
26 Vishnu was near him, nay, that He was in his own soul, until he
27 began to feel that he was Vishnu and that he was everything and
28 everywhere.

29 As soon as he realised this, all the snake bonds snapped
30 asunder; the mountains were pulverised, the ocean upheaved, and
31 he was gently lifted up above the waves, and safely carried to the
32 shore. As Prahlada stood there, he forgot that he was a Daitya and
33 had a mortal body: he felt he was the universe and all the powers of
34 the universe emanated from him; there was nothing in nature that
35 could injure him; he himself was the ruler of nature. Time passed
36 thus, in one unbroken ecstasy of bliss, until gradually Prahlada
37 began to remember that he had a body and that he was Prahlada.
38 As soon as he became once more conscious of the body, he saw that
39 God was within and without; and everything appeared to him as
40 Vishnu.

41 When the King Hiranyakashipu found to his horror that all
42 mortal means of getting rid of the boy who was perfectly devoted to
43 his enemy, the God Vishnu, were powerless, he was at a loss to
44 know what to do. The king had the boy again brought before him,
45 and tried to persuade him once more to listen to his advice, through
46 gentle means. But Prahlada made the same reply. Thinking,
47 however, that these childish whims of the boy would be rectified
48 with age and further training, he put him again under the charge of
49 the teachers, Shanda and Amarka, asking them to teach him the
50 duties of the king. But those teachings did not appeal to Prahlada,
51 and he spent his time in instructing his schoolmates in the path of
52 devotion to the Lord Vishnu.

1 When his father came to hear about it, he again became
2 furious with rage, and calling the boy to him, threatened to kill him,
3 and abused Vishnu in the worst language. But Prahlada still
4 insisted that Vishnu was the Lord of the universe, the
5 Beginningless, the Endless, the Omnipotent and the Omnipresent,
6 and as such, he alone was to be worshipped. The king roared with
7 anger and said: "Thou evil one, if thy Vishnu is God omnipresent,
8 why doth he not reside in that pillar yonder?" Prahlada humbly
9 submitted that He did do so. "If so," cried the king, "let him defend
10 thee; I will kill thee with this sword." Thus saying the king rushed at
11 him with sword in hand, and dealt a terrible blow at the pillar.
12 Instantly a thundering voice was heard, and lo and behold, there
13 issued forth from the pillar Vishnu in His awful Nrisimha form--half-
14 lion, half-man! Panic-stricken, the Daityas ran away in all directions;
15 but Hiranyakashipu fought with him long and desperately, till he
16 was finally overpowered and killed.

17 Then the gods descended from heaven and offered hymns to
18 Vishnu, and Prahlada also fell at His feet and broke forth into
19 exquisite hymns of praise and devotion. And he heard the Voice of
20 God saying, "Ask, Prahlada, ask for anything thou desirest; thou art
21 My favourite child; therefore ask for anything thou mayest wish."
22 And Prahlada choked with feelings replied, "Lord, I have seen Thee.
23 What else can I want? Do thou not tempt me with earthly or
24 heavenly boons." Again the Voice said: "Yet ask something, my son."
25 And then Prahlada replied, "That intense love, O Lord, which the
26 ignorant bear to worldly things, may I have the same love for Thee;
27 may I have the same intensity of love for Thee, but only for love's
28 sake!"

29 Then the Lord said, "Prahlada, though My intense devotees
30 never desire for anything, here or hereafter, yet by My command,
31 do thou enjoy the blessings of this world to the end of the present
32 cycle, and perform works of religious merit, with thy heart fixed on
33 Me. And thus in time, after the dissolution of thy body, thou shalt
34 attain Me." Thus blessing Prahlada, the Lord Vishnu disappeared.
35 Then the gods headed by Brahma installed Prahlada on the throne
36 of the Daityas and returned to their respective spheres.

THE GREAT TEACHERS OF THE WORLD

*(Delivered at the Shakespeare Club, Pasadena, California,
February 3, 1900)*

The universe, according to the theory of the Hindus, is moving in cycles of wave forms. It rises, reaches its zenith, then falls and remains in the hollow, as it were, for some time, once more to rise, and so on, in wave after wave and fall after fall. What is true of the universe is true of every part of it. The march of human affairs is like that. The history of nations is like that: they rise and they fall; after the rise comes a fall, again out of the fall comes a rise, with greater power. This motion is always going on. In the religious world the same movement exists. In every nation's spiritual life, there is a fall as well as a rise. The nation goes down, and everything seems to go to pieces. Then, again, it gains strength, rises; a huge wave comes, sometimes a tidal wave--and always on the topmost crest of the wave is a shining soul, the Messenger. Creator and created by turns, he is the impetus that makes the wave rise, the nation rise: at the same time, he is created by the same forces which make the wave, acting and interacting by turns. He puts forth his tremendous power upon society; and society makes him what he is. These are the great world-thinkers. These are the Prophets of the world, the Messengers of life, the Incarnations of God.

Man has an idea that there can be only one religion, that there can be only one Prophet, and that there can be only one Incarnation; but that idea is not true. By studying the lives of all these great Messengers, we find that each, as it were, was destined to play a part, and a part only; that the harmony consists in the sum total and not in one note. As in the life of races--no race is born to alone enjoy the world. None dare say no. Each race has a part of play in this divine harmony of nations. Each race has its mission to perform, its duty to fulfil. The sum total is the great harmony.

So, not any one of these Prophets is born to rule the world for ever. None has yet succeeded and none is going to be the ruler for ever. Each only contributes a part; and, as to that part, it is true that in the long run every Prophet will govern the world and its destinies.

Most of us are born believers in a personal religion. We talk of principles, we think of theories, and that is all right; but every thought and every movement, every one of our actions, shows that we can only understand the principle when it comes to us through a person. We can grasp an idea only when it comes to us through a materialised ideal person. We can understand the precept only through the example. Would to God that all of us were so developed that we would not require any example, would not require any person. But that we are not; and, naturally, the vast majority of

1 mankind have put their souls at the feet of these extraordinary
2 personalities, the Prophets, the Incarnations of God--Incarnations
3 worshipped by the Christians, by the Buddhists, and by the Hindus.
4 The Mohammedans from the beginning stood against any such
5 worship. They would have nothing to do with worshipping the
6 Prophets or the Messengers, or paying any homage to them; but,
7 practically, instead of one Prophet, thousands upon thousands of
8 saints are being worshipped. We cannot go against facts! We are
9 bound to worship personalities, and it is good. Remember that word
10 from your great Prophet to the query: "Lord, show us the Father",
11 "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Which of us can
12 imagine anything except that He is a man? We can only see Him in
13 and through humanity. The vibration of light is everything in this
14 room: why cannot we see it everywhere? You have to see it only in
15 that lamp. God is an Omnipresent Principle--everywhere: but we
16 are so constituted at present that we can see Him, feel Him, only in
17 and through a human God. And when these great Lights come, then
18 man realises God. And they come in a different way from what we
19 come. We come as beggars; they come as Emperors. We come here
20 like orphans, as people who have lost their way and do not know it.
21 What are we to do? We do not know what is the meaning of our
22 lives. We cannot realise it. Today we are doing one thing, tomorrow
23 another. We are like little bits of straw rocking to and fro in water,
24 like feathers blown about in a hurricane.

25 But, in the history of mankind, you will find that there come
26 these Messengers, and that from their very birth their mission is
27 found and formed. The whole plan is there, laid down; and you see
28 them swerving not one inch from that. Because they come with a
29 mission, they come with a message, they do not want to reason. Did
30 you ever hear or read of these great Teachers, or Prophets,
31 reasoning out what they taught? No, not one of them did so. They
32 speak direct. Why should they reason? They see the Truth. And not
33 only do they see it but they show it! If you ask me, "Is there any
34 God?" and I say "Yes", you immediately ask my grounds for saying
35 so, and poor me has to exercise all his powers to provide you with
36 some reason. If you had come to Christ and said, "Is there any
37 God?" he would have said, "Yes"; and if you had asked, "Is there any
38 proof?" he would have replied, "Behold the Lord!" And thus, you
39 see, it is a direct perception, and not at all the ratiocination of
40 reason. There is no groping in the dark, but there is the strength of
41 direct vision. I see this table; no amount of reason can take that
42 faith from me. It is a direct perception. Such is their faith--faith in
43 their ideals, faith in their mission, faith in themselves, above all
44 else. The great shining Ones believe in themselves as nobody else
45 ever does. The people say, "Do you believe in God? Do you believe
46 in a future life? Do you believe in this doctrine or that dogma?" But
47 here the base is wanting: this belief in oneself. Ay, the man who
48 cannot believe in himself, how can they expect him to believe in
49 anything else? I am not sure of my own existence. One moment I
50 think that I am existing and nothing can destroy me; the next
51 moment I am quaking in fear of death. One minute I think I am
52 immortal; the next minute, a spook appears, and then I don't know
53 what I am, nor where I am. I don't know whether I am living or

1 dead. One moment I think that I am spiritual, that I am moral; and
2 the next moment, a blow comes, and I am thrown flat on my back.
3 And why?--I have lost faith in myself, my moral backbone is broken.

4 But in these great Teachers you will always find this sign:
5 that they have intense faith in themselves. Such intense faith is
6 unique, and we cannot understand it. That is why we try to explain
7 away in various ways what these Teachers speak of themselves; and
8 people invent twenty thousand theories to explain what they say
9 about their realisation. We do not think of ourselves in the same
10 way, and, naturally, we cannot understand them.

11 Then again, when they speak, the world is bound to listen.
12 When they speak, each word is direct; it bursts like a bomb-shell.
13 What is in the word, unless it has the Power behind? What matters
14 it what language you speak, and how you arrange your language?
15 What matters it whether you speak correct grammar or with fine
16 rhetoric? What matters it whether your language is ornamental or
17 not? The question is whether or not you have anything to give. It is
18 a question of giving and taking, and not listening. Have you
19 anything to give?--that is the first question. If you have, then give.
20 Words but convey the gift: it is but one of the many modes.
21 Sometimes we do not speak at all. There is an old Sanskrit verse
22 which says, "I saw the Teacher sitting under a tree. He was a young
23 man of sixteen, and the disciple was an old man of eighty. The
24 preaching of the Teacher was silence, and the doubts of the disciple
25 departed."

26 Sometimes they do not speak at all, but yet they convey the
27 Truth from mind to mind. They come to give. They command, they
28 are the Messengers; you have to receive the Command. Do you not
29 remember in your own scriptures the authority with which Jesus
30 speaks? "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations . . . teaching them
31 to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you." It runs
32 through all his utterances, that tremendous faith in his own
33 message. That you find in the life of all these great giants whom the
34 world worships as its Prophets.

35 These great Teachers are the living Gods on this earth.
36 Whom else should we worship? I try to get an idea of God in my
37 mind, and I find what a false little thing I conceive; it would be a sin
38 to worship that God. I open my eyes and look at the actual life of
39 these great ones of the earth. They are higher than any conception
40 of God that I could ever form. For, what conception of mercy could a
41 man like me form who would go after a man if he steals anything
42 from me and send him to jail? And what can be my highest idea of
43 forgiveness? Nothing beyond myself. Which of you can jump out of
44 your own bodies? Which of you can jump out of your own minds?
45 Not one of you. What idea of divine love can you form except what
46 you actually live? What we have never experienced we can form no
47 idea of. So, all my best attempts at forming an idea of God would
48 fail in every case. And here are plain facts, and not idealism--actual
49 facts of love, of mercy, of purity, of which I can have no conception
50 even. What wonder that I should fall at the feet of these men and
51 worship them as God? And what else can anyone do? I should like
52 to see the man who can do anything else, however much he may

1 talk. Talking is not actuality. Talking about God and the Impersonal,
2 and this and that, is all very good; but these man-Gods are the real
3 Gods of all nations and all races. These divine men have been
4 worshipped and will be worshipped so long as man is man. Therein
5 is our faith, therein is our hope, of a reality. Of what avail is a mere
6 mystical principle!

7 The purpose and intent of what I have to say to you is this,
8 that I have found it possible in my life to worship all of them, and to
9 be ready for all that are yet to come. A mother recognises her son
10 in any dress in which he may appear before her; and if one does not
11 do so, I am sure she is not the mother of that man. Now, as regards
12 those of you that think that you understand Truth and Divinity and
13 God in only one Prophet in the world, and not in any other,
14 naturally, the conclusion which I draw is that you do not understand
15 Divinity in anybody; you have simply swallowed words and
16 identified yourself with one sect, just as you would in party politics,
17 as a matter of opinion; but that is no religion at all. There are some
18 fools in this world who use brackish water although there is
19 excellent sweet water near by, because, they say, the brackish-
20 water well was dug by their father. Now, in my little experience I
21 have collected this knowledge--that for all the devilry that religion
22 is blamed with, religion is not at all in fault: no religion ever
23 persecuted men, no religion ever burnt witches, no religion ever did
24 any of these things. What then incited people to do these things?
25 Politics, but never religion; and if such politics takes the name of
26 religion whose fault is that?

27 So, when each man stands and says "My Prophet is the only
28 true Prophet," he is not correct--he knows not the alpha of religion.
29 Religion is neither talk, nor theory, nor intellectual consent. It is
30 realisation in the heart of our hearts; it is touching God; it is
31 feeling, realising that I am a spirit in relation with the Universal
32 Spirit and all Its great manifestations. If you have really entered the
33 house of the Father, how can you have seen His children and not
34 known them? And if you do not recognise them, you have not
35 entered the house of the Father. The mother recognises her child in
36 any dress and knows him however disguised. Recognise all the
37 great, spiritual men and women in every age and country, and see
38 that they are not really at variance with one another. Wherever
39 there has been actual religion--this touch of the Divine, the soul
40 coming in direct sense-contact with the Divine--there has always
41 been a broadening of the mind which enables it to see the light
42 everywhere. Now, some Mohammedans are the crudest in this
43 respect, and the most sectarian. Their watchword is: "There is one
44 God, and Mohammed is His Prophet." Everything beyond that not
45 only is bad, but must be destroyed forthwith; at a moment's notice,
46 every man or woman who does not exactly believe in that must be
47 killed; everything that does not belong to this worship must be
48 immediately broken; every book that teaches anything else must be
49 burnt. From the Pacific to the Atlantic for five hundred years blood
50 ran all over the world. That is Mohammedanism! Nevertheless,
51 among these Mohammedans, wherever there was a philosophic
52 man, he was sure to protest against these cruelties. In that he

1 showed the touch of the Divine and realised a fragment of the truth;
2 he was not playing with his religion; for it was not his father's
3 religion he was talking, but spoke the truth direct like a man.

4 Side by side with the modern theory of evolution there is
5 another thing: atavism. There is a tendency in us to revert to old
6 ideas in religion. Let us think something new, even if it be wrong. It
7 is better to do that. Why should you not try to hit the mark? We
8 come wiser through failures. Time is infinite. Look at the wall. Did
9 the wall ever tell a lie? It is always the wall. Man tells a lie--and
10 becomes a god too. It is better to do something; never mind even if
11 it proves to be wrong; it is better than doing nothing. The cow
12 never tells a lie, but she remains a cow, all the time. Do something!
13 Think some thought; it doesn't matter whether you are right or
14 wrong. But think something! Because my forefathers did not think
15 this way, shall I sit down quietly and gradually lose my sense of
16 feeling and my own thinking faculties? I may as well be dead! And
17 what is life worth if we have no living ideas, no convictions of our
18 own about religion? There is some hope for the atheists, because
19 though they differ from others, they think for themselves. The
20 people who never think anything for themselves are not yet born
21 into the world of religion; they have a mere jelly-fish existence.
22 They will not think; they do not care for religion. But the
23 disbeliever, the atheist, cares, and he is struggling. So think
24 something! Struggle Godward! Never mind if you fail, never mind if
25 you get hold of a queer theory. If you are afraid to be called queer,
26 keep it in your own mind--you need not go and preach it to others.
27 But do something! Struggle Godward! Light must come. If a man
28 feeds me every day of my life, in the long run I shall lose the use of
29 my hands. Spiritual death is the result of following each other like a
30 flock of sheep. Death is the result of inaction. Be active; and
31 wherever there is activity, there must be difference. Difference is
32 the sauce of life; it is the beauty, it is the art of everything.
33 Difference makes all beautiful here. It is variety that is the source
34 of life, the sign of life. Why should we be afraid of it?

35 Now, we are coming into a position to understand about the
36 Prophets. Now, we see that the historical evidence is--apart from
37 the jelly-fish existence in religion--that where there has been any
38 real thinking, any real love for God, the soul has grown Godwards
39 and has got as it were, a glimpse now and then, has come into
40 direct perception, even for a second, even once in its life.
41 Immediately, "All doubts vanish for ever, and all the crookedness of
42 the heart is made straight, and all bondages vanish, and the results
43 of action and Karma fly when He is seen who is the nearest of the
44 near and the farthest of the far." That is religion, that is all of
45 religion; the rest is mere theory, dogma, so many ways of going to
46 that state of direct perception. Now we are fighting over the basket
47 and the fruits have fallen into the ditch.

48 If two men quarrel about religion, just ask them the
49 question: "Have you seen God? Have you seen these things?" One
50 man says that Christ is the only Prophet: well, has he seen Christ?
51 "Has your father seen Him?" "No, Sir." "Has your grandfather seen
52 Him?" "No, Sir." "Have you seen Him?" "No, Sir." "Then what are

1 you quarrelling for? The fruits have fallen into the ditch, and you
2 are quarrelling over the basket!" Sensible men and woman should
3 be ashamed to go on quarrelling in that way!

4 These great Messengers and Prophets are great and true.
5 Why? Because, each one has come to preach a great idea. Take the
6 Prophets of India, for instance. They are the oldest of the founders
7 of religion. We take, first, Krishna. You who have read the Gita see
8 all through the book that the one idea is non-attachment. Remain
9 unattached. The heart's love is due to only One. To whom? To Him
10 who never changeth. Who is that One? It is God. Do not make the
11 mistake of giving the heart to anything that is changing, because
12 that is misery. You may give it to a man; but if he dies, misery is the
13 result. You may give it to a friend, but he may tomorrow become
14 your enemy. If you give it to your husband, he may one day quarrel
15 with you. You may give it to your wife, and she may die the day
16 after tomorrow. Now, this is the way the world is going on. So says
17 Krishna in the Gita: The Lord is the only One who never changes.
18 His love never fails. Wherever we are and whatever we do, He is
19 ever and ever the same merciful, the same loving heart. He never
20 changes, He is never angry, whatever we do. How can God be angry
21 with us? Your babe does many mischievous things: are you angry
22 with that babe? Does not God know what we are going to be? He
23 knows we are all going to be perfect, sooner or later. He has
24 patience, infinite patience. We must love Him, and everyone that
25 lives--only in and through Him. This is the keynote. You must love
26 the wife, but not for the wife's sake. "Never, O Beloved, is the
27 husband loved on account of the husband, but because the Lord is
28 in the husband." The Vedanta philosophy says that even in the love
29 of the husband and wife, although the wife is thinking that she is
30 loving the husband, the real attraction is the Lord, who is present
31 there. He is the only attraction, there is no other; but the wife in
32 most cases does not know that it is so, but ignorantly she is doing
33 the right thing, which is, loving the Lord. Only, when one does it
34 ignorantly, it may bring pain. If one does it knowingly, that is
35 salvation. This is what our scriptures say. Wherever there is love,
36 wherever there is a spark of joy, know that to be a spark of His
37 presence because He is joy, blessedness, and love itself. Without
38 that there cannot be any love.

39 This is the trend of Krishna's instruction all the time. He has
40 implanted that upon his race, so that when a Hindu does anything,
41 even if he drinks water, he says, "If there is any virtue in it, let it go
42 to the Lord." The Buddhist says, if he does any good deed, "Let the
43 merit of the good deed belong to the world; if there is any virtue in
44 what I do, let it go to the world, and let the evils of the world come
45 to me." The Hindu says he is a great believer in God; the Hindu
46 says that God is omnipotent and that He is the Soul of every soul
47 everywhere; the Hindu says, "If I give all my virtues unto Him, that
48 is the greatest sacrifice, and they will go to the whole universe."

49 Now, this is one phase; and what is the other message of
50 Krishna? "Whosoever lives in the midst of the world, and works, and
51 gives up all the fruit of his action unto the Lord, he is never touched
52 with the evils of the world. Just as the lotus, born under the water,

1 rises up and blossoms above the water, even so is the man who is
2 engaged in the activities of the world, giving up all the fruit of his
3 activities unto the Lord." (Gita, V. 10).

4 Krishna strikes another note as a teacher of intense activity.
5 Work, work, work day and night, says the Gita. You may ask, "Then,
6 where is peace? If all through life I am to work like a cart-horse and
7 die in harness, what am I here for?" Krishna says, "Yes, you will find
8 peace. Flying from work is never the way to find peace." Throw off
9 your duties if you can, and go to the top of a mountain; even there
10 the mind is going--whirling, whirling, whirling. Someone asked a
11 Sannyasin, "Sir, have you found a nice place? How many years have
12 you been travelling in the Himalayas?" "For forty years," replied the
13 Sannyasin. "There are so many beautiful spots to select from, and to
14 settle down in: why did you not do so?" "Because for these forty
15 years my mind would not allow me to do so." We all say, "Let us find
16 peace"; but the mind will not allow us to do so.

17 You know the story of the man who caught a Tartar. A
18 soldier was outside the town, and he cried out when he came near
19 the barracks, "I have caught a Tartar." A voice called out, "Bring
20 him in." "He won't come in, sir." "Then you come in." "He won't let
21 me come in, sir." So, in this mind of ours, we have "caught a Tartar":
22 neither can we tone it down, nor will it let us be toned down. We
23 have all "caught Tartars". We all say, be quiet, and peaceful, and so
24 forth. But every baby can say that and thinks he can do it. However,
25 that is very difficult. I have tried. I threw overboard all my duties
26 and fled to the tops of mountains; I lived in caves and deep forests--
27 but all the same, I "caught a Tartar", because I had my world with
28 me all the time. The "Tartar" is what I have in my own mind, so we
29 must not blame poor people outside. "These circumstances are
30 good, and these are bad," so we say, while the "Tartar" is here,
31 within; if we can quiet him down, we shall be all right.

32 Therefore Krishna teaches us not to shirk our duties, but to
33 take them up manfully, and not think of the result. The servant has
34 no right to question. The soldier has no right to reason. Go forward,
35 and do not pay too much attention to the nature of the work you
36 have to do. Ask your mind if you are unselfish. If you are, never
37 mind anything, nothing can resist you! Plunge in! Do the duty at
38 hand. And when you have done this, by degrees you will realise the
39 Truth: "Whosoever in the midst of intense activity finds intense
40 peace, whosoever in the midst of the greatest peace finds the
41 greatest activity, he is a Yogi, he is a great soul, he has arrived at
42 perfection."

43 Now, you see that the result of this teaching is that all the
44 duties of the world are sanctified. There is no duty in this world
45 which we have any right to call menial: and each man's work is
46 quite as good as that of the emperor on his throne.

47 Listen to Buddha's message--a tremendous message. It has a
48 place in our heart. Says Buddha, "Root out selfishness, and
49 everything that makes you selfish. Have neither wife, child, nor
50 family. Be not of the world; become perfectly unselfish." A worldly
51 man thinks he will be unselfish, but when he looks at the face of his

1 wife it makes him selfish. The mother thinks she will be perfectly
2 unselfish, but she looks at her baby, and immediately selfishness
3 comes. So with everything in this world. As soon as selfish desires
4 arise, as soon as some selfish pursuit is followed, immediately the
5 whole man, the real man, is gone: he is like a brute, he is a slave, he
6 forgets his fellow men. No more does he say, "You first and I
7 afterwards," but it is "I first and let everyone else look out for
8 himself."

9 We find that Krishna's message has also a place for us.
10 Without that message, we cannot move at all. We cannot
11 conscientiously and with peace, joy, and happiness, take up any
12 duty of our lives without listening to the message of Krishna: "Be
13 not afraid even if there is evil in your work, for there is no work
14 which has no evil." "Leave it unto the Lord, and do not look for the
15 results."

16 On the other hand, there is a corner in the heart for the
17 other message: Time flies, this world is finite and all misery. With
18 your good food, nice clothes, and your comfortable home, O
19 sleeping man and woman, do you ever think of the millions that are
20 starving and dying? Think of the great fact that it is all misery,
21 misery, misery! Note the first utterance of the child: when it enters
22 into the world, it weeps. That is the fact--the child weeps. This is a
23 place for weeping! If we listen to the Messenger, we should not be
24 selfish.

25 Behold another Messenger, He of Nazareth. He teaches, "Be
26 ready, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." I have pondered over
27 the message of Krishna, and am trying to work without attachment,
28 but sometimes I forget. Then, suddenly, comes to me the message
29 of Buddha: "Take care, for everything in the world is evanescent,
30 and there is always misery in this life." I listen to that, and I am
31 uncertain which to accept. Then again comes, like a thunderbolt,
32 the message: "Be ready, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Do
33 not delay a moment. Leave nothing for tomorrow. Get ready for the
34 final event, which may overtake you immediately, even now. That
35 message, also, has a place, and we acknowledge it. We salute the
36 Messenger, we salute the Lord.

37 And then comes Mohammed, the Messenger of equality. You
38 ask, "What good can there be in his religion?" If there were no
39 good, how could it live? The good alone lives, that alone survives;
40 because the good alone is strong, therefore it survives. How long is
41 the life of an impure man, even in this life? Is not the life of the
42 pure man much longer? Without doubt, for purity is strength,
43 goodness is strength. How could Mohammedanism have lived, had
44 there been nothing good in its teaching? There is much good.
45 Mohammed was the Prophet of equality, of the brotherhood of man,
46 the brotherhood of all Mussalmans.

47 So we see that each Prophet, each Messenger, has a
48 particular message. When you first listen to that message, and then
49 look at his life, you will see his whole life stands explained, radiant.

50 Now, ignorant fools start twenty thousand theories, and put
51 forward, according to their own mental development, explanations

1 to suit their own ideas, and ascribe them to these great Teachers.
2 They take their teachings and put their misconstruction upon them.
3 With every great Prophet his life is the only commentary. Look at
4 his life: what he did will bear out the texts. Read the Gita, and you
5 will find that is exactly borne out by the life of the Teacher.

6 Mohammed by his life showed that amongst Mohammedans
7 there should be perfect equality and brotherhood. There was no
8 question of race, caste, creed, colour, or sex. The Sultan of Turkey
9 may buy a Negro from the mart of Africa, and bring him in chains to
10 Turkey; but should he become a Mohammedan and have sufficient
11 merit and abilities, he might even marry the daughter of the Sultan.
12 Compare this with the way in which the Negroes and the American
13 Indians are treated in this country! And what do Hindus do? If one
14 of your missionaries chance to touch the food of an orthodox
15 person, he would throw it away. Notwithstanding our grand
16 philosophy, you note our weakness in practice; but there you see
17 the greatness of the Mohammedan beyond other races, showing
18 itself in equality, perfect equality regardless of race or colour.

19 Will other and greater Prophets come? Certainly they will
20 come in this world. But do not look forward to that. I should better
21 like that each one of you became a Prophet of this real New
22 Testament, which is made up of all the Old Testaments. Take all the
23 old messages, supplement them with your own realisations, and
24 become a Prophet unto others. Each one of these Teachers has
25 been great; each has left something for us; they have been our
26 Gods. We salute them, we are their servants; and, all the same, we
27 salute ourselves; for if they have been Prophets and children of
28 God, we also are the same. They reached their perfection, and we
29 are going to attain ours now. Remember the words of Jesus: "The
30 Kingdom of Heaven is at hand!" This very moment let every one of
31 us make a staunch resolution: "I will become a Prophet, I will
32 become a messenger of Light, I will become a child of God, nay, I
33 will become a God!"

ON LORD BUDDHA

(Delivered in Detroit)

In every religion we find one type of self-devotion particularly developed. The type of working without a motive is most highly developed in Buddhism. Do not mistake Buddhism and Brahminism. In this country you are very apt to do so. Buddhism is one of our sects. It was founded by a great man called Gautama, who became disgusted at the eternal metaphysical discussions of his day, and the cumbrous rituals, and more especially with the caste system. Some people say that we are born to a certain state, and therefore we are superior to others who are not thus born. He was also against the tremendous priestcraft. He preached a religion in which there was no motive power, and was perfectly agnostic about metaphysics or theories about God. He was often asked if there was a God, and he answered, he did not know. When asked about right conduct, he would reply, "Do good and be good." There came five Brahmins, who asked him to settle their discussion. One said, "Sir, my book says that God is such and such, and that this is the way to come to God." Another said, "That is wrong, for my book says such and such, and this is the way to come to God"; and so the others. He listened calmly to all of them, and then asked them one by one, "Does any one of your books say that God becomes angry, that He ever injures anyone, that He is impure?" "No, Sir, they all teach that God is pure and good." "Then, my friends, why do you not become pure and good first, that you may know what God is?"

Of course I do not endorse all his philosophy. I want a good deal of metaphysics, for myself. I entirely differ in many respects, but, because I differ, is that any reason why I should not see the beauty of the man? He was the only man who was bereft of all motive power. There were other great men who all said they were the Incarnations of God Himself, and that those who would believe in them would go to heaven. But what did Buddha say with his dying breath? "None can help you; help yourself; work out your own salvation." He said about himself, "Buddha is the name of infinite knowledge, infinite as the sky; I, Gautama, have reached that state; you will all reach that too if you struggle for it." Bereft of all motive power, he did not want to go to heaven, did not want money; he gave up his throne and everything else and went about begging his bread through the streets of India, preaching for the good of men and animals with a heart as wide as the ocean.

He was the only man who was ever ready to give up his life for animals to stop a sacrifice. He once said to a king, "If the sacrifice of a lamb helps you to go to heaven, sacrificing a man will help you better; so sacrifice me." The king was astonished. And yet this man was without any motive power. He stands as the perfection of the active type, and the very height to which he attained shows that through the power of work we can also attain to the highest spirituality.

1 To many the path becomes easier if they believe in God. But
2 the life of Buddha shows that even a man who does not believe in
3 God, has no metaphysics, belongs to no sect, and does not go to any
4 church, or temple, and is a confessed materialist, even he can
5 attain to the highest. We have no right to judge him. I wish I had
6 one infinitesimal part of Buddha's heart. Buddha may or may not
7 have believed in God; that does not matter to me. He reached the
8 same state of perfection to which others come by Bhakti--love of
9 God-Yoga, or Jnana. Perfection does not come from belief or faith.
10 Talk does not count for anything. Parrots can do that. Perfection
11 comes through the disinterested performance of action.

1
2 *CHRIST THE MESSENGER*

3 *(Delivered at Los Angeles, California, 1900)*
4

5 The wave rises on the ocean, and there is a hollow. Again
6 another wave rises, perhaps bigger than the former, to fall down
7 again, similarly, again to rise--driving onward. In the march of
8 events, we notice the rise and fall, and we generally look towards
9 the rise, forgetting the fall. But both are necessary, and both are
10 great. This is the nature of the universe. Whether in the world of
11 our thoughts, the world of our relations in society, or in our spiritual
12 affairs, the same movement of succession, of rises and falls, is
13 going on. Hence great predominances in the march of events, the
14 liberal ideals, are marshalled ahead, to sink down, to digest, as it
15 were, to ruminate over the past--to adjust, to conserve, to gather
16 strength once more for a rise and a bigger rise.

17 The history of nations also has ever been like that. The great
18 soul, the Messenger we are to study this afternoon, came at a
19 period of the history of his race which we may well designate as a
20 great fall. We catch only little glimpses here and there of the stray
21 records that have been kept of his sayings and doings; for verily it
22 has been well said, that the doings and sayings of that great soul
23 would fill the world if they had all been written down. And the three
24 years of his ministry were like one compressed, concentrated age,
25 which it has taken nineteen hundred years to unfold, and who
26 knows how much longer it will yet take! Little men like you and me
27 are simply the recipients of just a little energy. A few minutes, a few
28 hours, a few years at best, are enough to spend it all, to stretch it
29 out, as it were, to its fullest strength, and then we are gone for ever.
30 But mark this giant that came; centuries and ages pass, yet the
31 energy that he left upon the world is not yet stretched, nor yet
32 expended to its full. It goes on adding new vigour as the ages roll
33 on.

34 Now what you see in the life of Christ is the life of all the
35 past. The life of every man is, in a manner, the life of the past. It
36 comes to him through heredity, through surroundings, through
37 education, through his own reincarnation--the past of the race. In a
38 manner, the past of the earth, the past of the whole world is there,
39 upon every soul. What are we, in the present, but a result, an effect,
40 in the hands of that infinite past? What are we but floating wavelets
41 in the eternal current of events, irresistibly moved forward and
42 onward and incapable of rest? But you and I are only little things,
43 bubbles. There are always some giant waves in the ocean of affairs,
44 and in you and me the life of the past race has been embodied only
45 a little; but there are giants who embody, as it were, almost the
46 whole of the past and who stretch out their hands for the future.
47 These are the sign-posts here and there which point to the march of
48 humanity; these are verily gigantic, their shadows covering the
49 earth--they stand undying, eternal! As it has been said by the same
50 Messenger, "No man hath seen God at any time, but through the
51 Son." And that is true. And where shall we see God but in the Son?

1 It is true that you and I, and the poorest of us, the meanest even,
2 embody that God, even reflect that God. The vibration of light is
3 everywhere, omnipresent; but we have to strike the light of the
4 lamp before we can see the light. The Omnipresent God of the
5 universe cannot be seen until He is reflected by these giant lamps
6 of the earth--the Prophets, the man-Gods, the Incarnations, the
7 embodiments of God.

8 We all know that God exists, and yet we do not see Him, we
9 do not understand Him. Take one of these great Messengers of
10 light, compare his character with the highest ideal of God that you
11 ever formed, and you will find that your God falls short of the ideal,
12 and that the character of the Prophet exceeds your conceptions.
13 You cannot even form a higher ideal of God than what the actually
14 embodied have practically realised and set before us as an example.
15 Is it wrong, therefore, to worship these as God? Is it a sin to fall at
16 the feet of these man-Gods and worship them as the only divine
17 beings in the world? If they are really, actually, higher than all our
18 conceptions of God, what harm is there in worshipping them? Not
19 only is there no harm, but it is the only possible and positive way of
20 worship. However much you may try to struggle, by abstraction, by
21 whatsoever method you like, still so long as you are a man in the
22 world of men, your world is human, your religion is human, and
23 your God is human. And that must be so. Who is not practical
24 enough to take up an actually existing thing and give up an idea
25 which is only an abstraction, which he cannot grasp, and is difficult
26 of approach except through a concrete medium? Therefore, these
27 Incarnations of God have been worshipped in all ages and in all
28 countries.

29 We are now going to study a little of the life of Christ, the
30 Incarnation of the Jews. When Christ was born, the Jews were in
31 that state which I call a state of fall between two waves; a state of
32 conservatism; a state where the human mind is, as it were, tired for
33 the time being of moving forward and is taking care only of what it
34 has already; a state when the attention is more bent upon
35 particulars, upon details, than upon the great, general, and bigger
36 problems of life; a state of stagnation, rather than a towing ahead; a
37 state of suffering more than of doing. Mark you, I do not blame this
38 state of things. We have no right to criticise it--because had it not
39 been for this fall, the next rise, which was embodied in Jesus of
40 Nazareth would have been impossible. The Pharisees and
41 Sadducees might have been insincere, they might have been doing
42 things which they ought not to have done; they might have been
43 even hypocrites; but whatever they were, these factors were the
44 very cause, of which the Messenger was the effect. The Pharisees
45 and Sadducees at one end were the very impetus which came out at
46 the other end as the gigantic brain of Jesus of Nazareth.

47 The attention to forms, to formulas, to the everyday details
48 of religion, and to rituals, may sometimes be laughed at; but
49 nevertheless, within them is strength. Many times in the rushing
50 forward we lose much strength. As a fact, the fanatic is stronger
51 than the liberal man. Even the fanatic, therefore, has one great
52 virtue, he conserves energy, a tremendous amount of it. As with the

1 individual so with the race, energy is gathered to be conserved.
2 Hemmed in all around by external enemies, driven to focus in a
3 centre by the Romans, by the Hellenic tendencies in the world of
4 intellect, by waves from Persia, India, and Alexandria--hemmed in
5 physically, mentally, and morally--there stood the race with an
6 inherent, conservative, tremendous strength, which their
7 descendants have not lost even today. And the race was forced to
8 concentrate and focus all its energies upon Jerusalem and Judaism.
9 But all power when once gathered cannot remain collected; it must
10 expend and expand itself. There is no power on earth which can be
11 kept long confined within a narrow limit. It cannot be kept
12 compressed too long to allow of expansion at a subsequent period.

13 This concentrated energy amongst the Jewish race found its
14 expression at the next period in the rise of Christianity. The
15 gathered streams collected into a body. Gradually, all the little
16 streams joined together, and became a surging wave on the top of
17 which we find standing out the character of Jesus of Nazareth.
18 Thus, every Prophet is a creation of his own times, the creation of
19 the past of his race; he himself is the creator of the future. The
20 cause of today is the effect of the past and the cause for the future.
21 In this position stands the Messenger. In him is embodied all that is
22 the best and greatest in his own race, the meaning, the life, for
23 which that race has struggled for ages; and he himself is the
24 impetus for the future, not only to his own race but to unnumbered
25 other races of the world.

26 We must bear another fact in mind: that my view of the great
27 Prophet of Nazareth would be from the standpoint of the Orient.
28 Many times you forget, also, that the Nazarene himself was an
29 Oriental of Orientals. With all your attempts to paint him with blue
30 eyes and yellow hair, the Nazarene was still an Oriental. All the
31 similes, the imageries, in which the Bible is written--the scenes, the
32 locations, the attitudes, the groups, the poetry, and symbol--speak
33 to you of the Orient: of the bright sky, of the heat, of the sun, of the
34 desert, of the thirsty men and animals; of men and women coming
35 with pitchers on their heads to fill them at the wells; of the flocks, of
36 the ploughmen, of the cultivation that is going on around; of the
37 water-mill and wheel, of the mill-pond, of the millstones. All these
38 are to be seen today in Asia.

39 The voice of Asia has been the voice of religion. The voice of
40 Europe is the voice of politics. Each is great in its own sphere. The
41 voice of Europe is the voice of ancient Greece. To the Greek mind,
42 his immediate society was all in all: beyond that, it is Barbarian.
43 None but the Greek has the right to live. Whatever the Greeks do is
44 right and correct; whatever else there exists in the world is neither
45 right nor correct, nor should be allowed to live. It is intensely
46 human in its sympathies, intensely natural, intensely artistic,
47 therefore. The Greek lives entirely in this world. He does not care
48 to dream. Even is poetry is practical. His gods and goddesses are
49 not only human beings, but intensely human, with all human
50 passions and feelings almost the same as with any of us. He loves
51 what is beautiful, but, mind you, it is always external nature; the
52 beauty of the hills, of the snows, of the flowers, the beauty of forms

1 and of figures, the beauty in the human face, and, more often, in the
2 human form--that is what the Greeks liked. And the Greeks being
3 the teachers of all subsequent Europeanism, the voice of Europe is
4 Greek.

5 There is another type in Asia. Think of that vast, huge
6 continent, whose mountain-tops go beyond the clouds, almost
7 touching the canopy of heaven's blue; a rolling desert of miles upon
8 miles where a drop of water cannot be found, neither will a blade of
9 grass grow; interminable forests and gigantic rivers rushing down
10 to the sea. In the midst of all these surroundings, the oriental love
11 of the beautiful and of the sublime developed itself in another
12 direction. It looked inside, and not outside. There is also the thirst
13 for nature, and there is also the same thirst for power; there is also
14 the same thirst for excellence, the same idea of the Greek and
15 Barbarian, but it has extended over a larger circle. In Asia, even
16 today, birth or colour or language never makes a race. That which
17 makes a race is its religion. We are all Christians; we are all
18 Mohammedans; we are all Hindus, or all Buddhists. No matter if a
19 Buddhist is a Chinaman, or is a man from Persia, they think that
20 they are brothers, because of their professing the same religion.
21 Religion is the tie, unity of humanity. And then again, the Oriental,
22 for the same reason, is a visionary, is a born dreamer. The ripples of
23 the waterfalls, the songs of the birds, the beauties of the sun and
24 moon and the stars and the whole earth are pleasant enough; but
25 they are not sufficient for the oriental mind. He wants to dream a
26 dream beyond. He wants to go beyond the present. The present, as
27 it were, is nothing to him. The Orient has been the cradle of the
28 human race for ages, and all the vicissitudes of fortune are there--
29 kingdoms succeeding kingdoms, empires succeeding empires,
30 human power, glory, and wealth, all rolling down there; a Golgotha
31 of power and learning. That is the Orient: a Golgotha of power, of
32 kingdoms, of learning. No wonder, the oriental mind looks with
33 contempt upon the things of this world and naturally wants to see
34 something that changeth not, something which dieth not, something
35 which in the midst of this world of misery and death is eternal,
36 blissful, undying. An oriental Prophet never tires of insisting upon
37 these ideals; and, as for Prophets, you may also remember that
38 without one exception, all the Messengers were Orientals.

1 We see, therefore, in the life of this great Messenger of life,
2 the first watchword: "Not this life, but something higher"; and, like
3 the true son of the Oriental, he is practical in that. You people in the
4 West are practical in your own department, in military affairs, and
5 in managing political circles and other things. Perhaps the Oriental
6 is not practical in those ways, but he is practical in his own field; he
7 is practical in religion. If one preaches a philosophy, tomorrow
8 there are hundreds who will struggle their best to make it practical
9 in their lives. If a man preaches that standing on one foot would
10 lead one to salvation, he will immediately get five hundred to stand
11 on one foot. You may call it ludicrous; but, mark you, beneath that is
12 their philosophy--that intense practicality. In the West, plans of
13 salvation mean intellectual gymnastics--plans which are never
14 worked out, never brought into practical life. In the West, the
15 preacher who talks the best is the greatest preacher.

16 So, we find Jesus of Nazareth, in the first place, the true son
17 of the Orient, intensely practical. He has no faith in this evanescent
18 world and all its belongings. No need of text-torturing, as is the
19 fashion in the West in modern times, no need of stretching out texts
20 until they will not stretch any more. Texts are not India rubber, and
21 even that has its limits. Now, no making of religion to pander to the
22 sense vanity of the present day! Mark you, let us all be honest. If
23 we cannot follow the ideal, let us confess our weakness, but not
24 degrade it; let not any try to pull it down. One gets sick at heart at
25 the different accounts of the life of the Christ that Western people
26 give. I do not know what he was or what he was not! One would
27 make him a great politician; another, perhaps, would make of him a
28 great military general; another, a great patriotic Jew; and so on. Is
29 there any warrant in the books for all such assumptions? The best
30 commentary on the life of a great teacher is his own life. "The foxes
31 have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of man hath
32 not where to lay his head." That is what Christ says as the only way
33 to salvation; he lays down no other way. Let us confess in sackcloth
34 and ashes that we cannot do that. We still have fondness for "me
35 and mine". We want property, money, wealth. Woe unto us! Let us
36 confess and not put to shame that great Teacher of Humanity! He
37 had no family ties. But do you think that, that Man had any physical
38 ideas in him? Do you think that, this mass of light, this God and not-
39 man, came down to earth, to be the brother of animals? And yet,
40 people make him preach all sorts of things. He had no sex ideas! He
41 was a soul! Nothing but a soul--just working a body for the good of
42 humanity; and that was all his relation to the body. In the soul there
43 is no sex. The disembodied soul has no relation to the animal, no
44 relationship to the body. The ideal may be far away beyond us. But
45 never mind, keep to the ideal. Let us confess that it is our ideal, but
46 we cannot approach it yet.

47 He had no other occupation in life, no other thought except
48 that one, that he was a spirit. He was a disembodied, unfettered,
49 unbound spirit. And not only so, but he, with his marvellous vision,
50 had found that every man and woman, whether Jew or Gentile,
51 whether rich or poor, whether saint or sinner, was the embodiment
52 of the same undying spirit as himself. Therefore, the one work his

1 whole life showed was to call upon them to realise their own
2 spiritual nature. Give up he says, these superstitious dreams that
3 you are low and that you are poor. Think not that you are trampled
4 upon and tyrannised over as if you were slaves, for within you is
5 something that can never be tyrannised over, never be trampled
6 upon, never be troubled, never be killed. You are all Sons of God,
7 immortal spirit. "Know", he declared, "the Kingdom of Heaven is
8 within you." "I and my Father are one." Dare you stand up and say,
9 not only that "I am the Son of God", but I shall also find in my heart
10 of hearts that "I and my Father are one"? That was what Jesus of
11 Nazareth said. He never talks of this world and of this life. He has
12 nothing to do with it, except that he wants to get hold of the world
13 as it is, give it a push and drive it forward and onward until the
14 whole world has reached to the effulgent Light of God, until
15 everyone has realised his spiritual nature, until death is vanished
16 and misery banished.

17 We have read different stories that have been written about
18 him; we know the scholars and their writings, and the higher
19 criticism; and we know all that has been done by study. We are not
20 here to discuss how much of the New Testament is true, we are not
21 here to discuss how much of that life is historical. It does not matter
22 at all whether the New Testament was written within five hundred
23 years of his birth, nor does it matter even, how much of that life is
24 true. But there is something behind it, something we want to
25 imitate. To tell a lie, you have to imitate a truth, and that truth is a
26 fact. You cannot imitate that which never existed. You cannot
27 imitate that which you never perceived. But there must have been a
28 nucleus, a tremendous power that came down, a marvellous
29 manifestation of spiritual power--and of that we are speaking. It
30 stands there. Therefore, we are not afraid of all the criticisms of the
31 scholars. If I, as an Oriental, have to worship Jesus of Nazareth,
32 there is only one way left to me, that is, to worship him as God and
33 nothing else. Have we no right to worship him in that way, do you
34 mean to say? If we bring him down to our own level and simply pay
35 him a little respect as a great man, why should we worship at all?
36 Our scriptures say, "These great children of Light, who manifest the
37 Light themselves, who are Light themselves, they, being
38 worshipped, become, as it were, one with us and we become one
39 with them."

40 For, you see, in three ways man perceives God. At first the
41 undeveloped intellect of the uneducated man sees God as far away,
42 up in the heavens somewhere, sitting on a throne as a great Judge.
43 He looks upon Him as a fire, as a terror. Now, that is good, for there
44 is nothing bad in it. You must remember that humanity travels not
45 from error to truth, but from truth to truth; it may be, if you like it
46 better, from lower truth to higher truth, but never from error to
47 truth. Suppose you start from here and travel towards the sun in a
48 straight line. From here the sun looks only small in size. Suppose
49 you go forward a million miles, the sun will be much bigger. At
50 every stage the sun will become bigger and bigger. Suppose twenty
51 thousand photographs had been taken of the same sun, from
52 different standpoints; these twenty thousand photographs will all

1 certainly differ from one another. But can you deny that each is a
2 photograph of the same sun? So all forms of religion, high or low,
3 are just different stages toward that eternal state of Light, which is
4 God Himself. Some embody a lower view, some a higher, and that is
5 all the difference. Therefore, the religions of the unthinking masses
6 all over the world must be, and have always been, of a God who is
7 outside of the universe, who lives in heaven, who governs from that
8 place, who is a punisher of the bad and a rewarder of the good, and
9 so on. As man advanced spiritually, he began to feel that God was
10 omnipresent, that He must be in him, that He must be everywhere,
11 that He was not a distant God, but clearly the Soul of all souls. As
12 my soul moves my body, even so is God the mover of my soul. Soul
13 within soul. And a few individuals who had developed enough and
14 were pure enough, went still further, and at last found God. As the
15 New Testament says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall
16 see God." And they found at last that they and the Father were one.

17 You find that all these three stages are taught by the Great
18 Teacher in the New Testament. Note the Common Prayer he taught:
19 "Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name," and so
20 on--a simple prayer, a child's prayer. Mark you, it is the "Common
21 Prayer" because it is intended for the uneducated masses. To a
22 higher circle, to those who had advanced a little more, he gave a
23 more elevated teaching: "I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in
24 you." Do you remember that? And then, when the Jews asked him
25 who he was, he declared that he and his Father were one, and the
26 Jews thought that that was blasphemy. What did he mean by that?
27 This has been also told by your old Prophets, "Ye are gods and all of
28 you are children of the Most High." Mark the same three stages.
29 You will find that it is easier for you to begin with the first and end
30 with the last.

31 The Messenger came to show the path: that the spirit is not
32 in forms, that it is not through all sorts of vexations and knotty
33 problems of philosophy that you know the spirit. Better that you had
34 no learning, better that you never read a book in your life. These
35 are not at all necessary for salvation--neither wealth, nor position
36 nor power, not even learning; but what is necessary is that one
37 thing, purity. "Blessed are the pure in heart," for the spirit in its
38 own nature is pure. How can it be otherwise? It is of God, it has
39 come from God. In the language of the Bible, "It is the breath of
40 God." In the language of the Koran, "It is the soul of God." Do you
41 mean to say that the Spirit of God can ever be impure? But, alas, it
42 has been, as it were, covered over with the dust and dirt of ages,
43 through our own actions, good and evil. Various works which were
44 not correct, which were not true, have covered the same spirit with
45 the dust and dirt of the ignorance of ages. It is only necessary to
46 clear away the dust and dirt, and then the spirit shines immediately.
47 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." "The
48 Kingdom of Heaven is within you." Where goest thou to seek for the
49 Kingdom of God, asks Jesus of Nazareth, when it is there, within
50 you? Cleanse the spirit, and it is there. It is already yours. How can
51 you get what is not yours? It is yours by right. You are the heirs of
52 immortality, sons of the Eternal Father.

1 This is the great lesson of the Messenger, and another which
2 is the basis of all religions, is renunciation. How can you make the
3 spirit pure? By renunciation. A rich young man asked Jesus, "Good
4 Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?" And Jesus
5 said unto him, "One thing thou lackest; go thy way, sell whatsoever
6 thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasures in
7 heaven: and come, take up thy cross, and follow Me." And he was
8 sad at that saying and went away grieved; for he had great
9 possessions. We are all more or less like that. The voice is ringing in
10 our ears day and night. In the midst of our pleasures and joys, in
11 the midst of worldly things, we think that we have forgotten
12 everything else. Then comes a moment's pause and the voice rings
13 in our ears: "Give up all that thou hast and follow Me." "Whosoever
14 will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for
15 My sake shall find it." For whoever gives up this life for His sake,
16 finds the life immortal. In the midst of all our weakness there is a
17 moment of pause and the voice rings: "Give up all that thou hast;
18 give it to the poor and follow me." This is the one ideal he preaches,
19 and this has been the ideal preached by all the great Prophets of
20 the world: renunciation. What is meant by renunciation? That there
21 is only one ideal in morality: unselfishness. Be selfless. The ideal is
22 perfect unselfishness. When a man is struck on the right cheek, he
23 turns the left also. When a man's coat is carried off, he gives away
24 his cloak also.

25 We should work in the best way we can, without dragging
26 the ideal down. Here is the ideal. When a man has no more self in
27 him, no possession, nothing to call "me" or "mine", has given
28 himself up entirely, destroyed himself as it were--in that man is God
29 Himself; for in him self-will is gone, crushed out, annihilated. That
30 is the ideal man. We cannot reach that state yet; yet, let us worship
31 the ideal, and slowly struggle to reach the ideal, though, maybe,
32 with faltering steps. It may be tomorrow, or it may be a thousand
33 years hence; but that ideal has to be reached. For it is not only the
34 end, but also the means. To be unselfish, perfectly selfless, is
35 salvation itself; for the man within dies, and God alone remains.

36 One more point. All the teachers of humanity are unselfish.
37 Suppose Jesus of Nazareth was teaching, and a man came and told
38 him, "What you teach is beautiful. I believe that it is the way to
39 perfection, and I am ready to follow it; but I do not care to worship
40 you as the only begotten Son of God." What would be the answer of
41 Jesus of Nazareth? "Very well, brother, follow the ideal and advance
42 in your own way. I do not care whether you give me the credit for
43 the teaching or not. I am not a shopkeeper. I do not trade in
44 religion. I only teach truth, and truth is nobody's property. Nobody
45 can patent truth. Truth is God Himself. Go forward." But what the
46 disciples say nowadays is: "No matter whether you practise the
47 teachings or not, do you give credit to the Man? If you credit the
48 Master, you will be saved; if not, there is no salvation for you." And
49 thus the whole teaching of the Master is degenerated, and all the
50 struggle and fight is for the personality of the Man. They do not
51 know that in imposing that difference, they are, in a manner,
52 bringing shame to the very Man they want to honour--the very Man

1 that would have shrunk with shame from such an idea. What did he
2 care if there was one man in the world that remembered him or
3 not? He had to deliver his message, and he gave it. And if he had
4 twenty thousand lives, he would give them all up for the poorest
5 man in the world. If he had to be tortured millions of times for a
6 million despised Samaritans, and if for each one of them the
7 sacrifice of his own life would be the only condition of salvation, he
8 would have given his life. And all this without wishing to have his
9 name known even to a single person. Quiet, unknown, silent, would
10 he work, just as the Lord works. Now, what would the disciple say?
11 He will tell you that you may be a perfect man, perfectly unselfish;
12 but unless you give the credit to our teacher, to our saint, it is of no
13 avail. Why? What is the origin of this superstition, this ignorance?
14 The disciple thinks that the Lord can manifest Himself only once.
15 There lies the whole mistake. God manifests Himself to you in man.
16 But throughout nature, what happens once must have happened
17 before, and must happen in future. There is nothing in nature which
18 is not bound by law; and that means that whatever happens once
19 must go on and must have been going on.

20 In India they have the same idea of the Incarnations of God.
21 One of their great Incarnations, Krishna, whose grand sermon, the
22 Bhagavad-Gita, some of you might have read, says, "Though I am
23 unborn, of changeless nature, and Lord of beings, yet subjugating
24 My Prakriti, I come into being by My own Maya. Whenever virtue
25 subsides and immorality prevails, then I body Myself forth. For the
26 protection of the good, for the destruction of the wicked, and for
27 the establishment of Dharma, I come into being, in every age."
28 Whenever the world goes down, the Lord comes to help it forward;
29 and so He does from time to time and place to place. In another
30 passage He speaks to this effect: Wherever thou findest a great soul
31 of immense power and purity struggling to raise humanity, know
32 that he is born of My splendour, that I am there working through
33 him.

34 Let us, therefore, find God not only in Jesus of Nazareth, but
35 in all the great Ones that have preceded him, in all that came after
36 him, and all that are yet to come. Our worship is unbounded and
37 free. They are all manifestations of the same Infinite God. They are
38 all pure and unselfish; they struggled and gave up their lives for us,
39 poor human beings. They each and all suffer vicarious atonement
40 for every one of us, and also for all that are to come hereafter.

41 In a sense you are all Prophets; every one of you is a
42 Prophet, bearing the burden of the world on your own shoulders.
43 Have you ever seen a man, have you ever seen a woman, who is not
44 quietly, patiently, bearing his or her little burden of life? The great
45 Prophets were giants-they bore a gigantic world on their
46 shoulders. Compared with them we are pigmies, no doubt, yet we
47 are doing the same task; in our little circles, in our little homes, we
48 are bearing our little crosses. There is no one so evil, no one so
49 worthless, but he has to bear his own cross. But with all our
50 mistakes, with all our evil thoughts and evil deeds, there is a bright
51 spot somewhere, there is still somewhere the golden thread
52 through which we are always in touch with the divine. For, know for

1 certain, that the moment the touch of the divine is lost there would
2 be annihilation. And because none can be annihilated, there is
3 always somewhere in our heart of hearts, however low and
4 degraded we may be, a little circle of light which is in constant
5 touch with the divine.

6 Our salutations go to all the past Prophets whose teachings
7 and lives we have inherited, whatever might have been their race,
8 clime, or creed! Our salutations go to all those Godlike men and
9 women who are working to help humanity, whatever be their birth,
10 colour, or race! Our salutations to those who are coming in the
11 future--living Gods--to work unselfishly for our descendants.

4 "Whenever virtue subsides and vice prevails, I come down to
5 help mankind," declares Krishna, in the Bhagavad-Gita. Whenever
6 this world of ours, on account of growth, on account of added
7 circumstances, requires a new adjustment, a wave of power comes,
8 and as man is acting on two planes, the spiritual and the material,
9 waves of adjustment come on both planes. On the one side, of the
10 adjustment on the material plane, Europe has mainly been the basis
11 during modern times, and of the adjustment on the other, the
12 spiritual plane, Asia has been the basis throughout the history of
13 the world. Today, man requires one more adjustment on the
14 spiritual plane; today, when material ideas are at the height of their
15 glory and power, today when man is likely to forget his divine
16 nature, through his growing dependence on matter, and is likely to
17 be reduced to a mere money-making machine, an adjustment is
18 necessary; the voice has spoken, and the power is coming to drive
19 away the clouds of gathering materialism. The power has been set
20 in motion which, at no distant date, will bring unto mankind once
21 more the memory of their real nature; and again the place from
22 which this power will start will be Asia.

23 This world of ours is on the plan of the division of labour. It
24 is vain to say that one man shall possess everything. Yet how
25 childish we are! The baby in his ignorance thinks that his doll is the
26 only possession that is to be coveted in this whole universe. So a
27 nation which is great in the possession of material powers thinks
28 that that is all that is to be coveted, that that is all that is meant by
29 progress, that that is all that is meant by civilisation, and if there
30 are other nations which do not care for possession, and do not
31 possess that power, they are not fit to live, their whole existence is
32 useless! On the other hand, another nation may think that mere
33 material civilisation is utterly useless. From the Orient came the
34 voice which once told the world that if a man possesses everything
35 that is under the sun or above it, and does not possess spirituality,
36 what avails it? This is the Oriental type; the other is the Occidental
37 type.

38 Each of these types has its grandeur, each has its glory. The
39 present adjustment will be the harmonising, the mingling of these
40 two ideals. To the Oriental, the world of spirit is as real as to the
41 Occidental is the world of senses. In the spiritual, the Oriental finds
42 everything he wants or hopes for; in it he finds all that makes life
43 real to him. To the Occidental he is a dreamer; to the Oriental, the
44 Occidental is a dreamer playing with ephemeral toys, and he laughs
45 to think that grown-up men and women should make so much of a
46 handful of matter which they will have to leave sooner or later.
47 Each calls the other a dreamer. But the oriental ideal is as
48 necessary for the progress of the human race as is the occidental,
49 and I think it is more necessary. Machines never made mankind
50 happy, and never will make. He who is trying to make us believe
51 this, will claim that happiness is in the machine; but it is always in

1 the mind. That man alone who is the lord of his own mind can
2 become happy, and none else. And what, after all, is this power of
3 machinery? Why should a man who can send a current of electricity
4 through a wire be called a very great man, and a very intelligent
5 man? Does not nature do a million times more than that every
6 moment? Why not then fall down and worship nature? What avails
7 it if you have power over the whole of the world, if you have
8 mastered every atom in the universe? That will not make you happy
9 unless you have the power of happiness in yourself, until you have
10 conquered yourself. Man is born to conquer nature, it is true, but
11 the Occidental means by "nature" only physical or external nature.
12 It is true that external nature is majestic, with its mountains, and
13 oceans, and rivers, and with its infinite powers and varieties. Yet
14 there is a more majestic internal nature of man, higher than the
15 sun, moon and stars, higher than this earth of ours, higher than the
16 physical universe, transcending these little lives of ours; and it
17 affords another field of study. There the Orientals excel, just as the
18 Occidentals excel in the other. Therefore it is fitting that, whenever
19 there is a spiritual adjustment, it should come from the Orient. It is
20 also fitting that when the Oriental wants to learn about machine-
21 making he should sit at the feet of the Occidental and learn from
22 him. When the Occident wants to learn about the spirit, about God,
23 about the soul, about the meaning and the mystery of this universe,
24 he must sit at the feet of the Orient to learn.

25 I am going to present before you the life of one man who has
26 put in motion such a wave in India. But before going into the life of
27 this man I will try to present before you the secret of India, what
28 India means. If those whose eyes have been blinded by the glamour
29 of material things, whose whole dedication of life is to eating and
30 drinking and enjoying, whose ideal of possession is lands and gold,
31 whose ideal of pleasure is that of the senses, whose God is money,
32 and whose goal is a life of ease and comfort in this world and death
33 after that, whose minds never look forward, and who rarely think of
34 anything higher than the sense-objects in the midst of which they
35 live--if such as these go to India, what do they see? Poverty, squalor,
36 superstition, darkness, hideousness everywhere. Why? Because in
37 their minds enlightenment means dress, education, social
38 politeness. Whereas occidental nations have used every effort to
39 improve their material position, India has done differently. There
40 live the only men in the world who, in the whole history of
41 humanity, never went beyond their frontiers to conquer anyone,
42 who never coveted that which belonged to anyone else, whose only
43 fault was that their lands were so fertile, and they accumulated
44 wealth by the hard labour of their hands, and so tempted other
45 nations to come and despoil them. They are contented to be
46 despoiled, and to be called barbarians; and in return they want to
47 send to this world visions of the Supreme, to lay bare for the world
48 the secrets of human nature, to rend the veil that conceals the real
49 man, because they know the dream, because they know that behind
50 this materialism lives the real divine nature of man which no sin
51 can tarnish, no crime can spoil, no lust can taint, which fire cannot
52 burn, nor water wet, which heat cannot dry, nor death kill. And to
53 them this true nature of man is as real as is any material object to

1 the senses of an Occidental.

2 Just as you are brave to jump at the mouth of a cannon with
3 a hurrah, just as you are brave in the name of patriotism to stand
4 up and give up your lives for your country, so are they brave in the
5 name of God. There it is that when a man declares that this is a
6 world of ideas, that it is all a dream, he casts off clothes and
7 property to demonstrate that what he believes and thinks is true.
8 There it is that a man sits on the banks of a river, when he has
9 known that life is eternal, and wants to give up his body just as
10 nothing, just as you can give up a bit of straw. Therein lies their
11 heroism, that they are ready to face death as a brother, because
12 they are convinced that there is no death for them. Therein lies the
13 strength that has made them invincible through hundreds of years
14 of oppression and foreign invasion, and tyranny. The nation lives
15 today, and in that nation even in the days of the direst disaster,
16 spiritual giants have never failed to arise. Asia produces giants in
17 spirituality just as the Occident produces giants in politics, giants in
18 science. In the beginning of the present century, when Western
19 influence began to pour into India, when Western conquerors,
20 sword in hand, came to demonstrate to the children of the sages
21 that they were mere barbarians, a race of dreamers, that their
22 religion was but mythology, and God and soul and everything they
23 had been struggling for were mere words without meaning, that the
24 thousands of years of struggle, the thousands of years of endless
25 renunciation, had all been in vain, the question began to be agitated
26 among young men at the universities whether the whole national
27 existence up to then had been a failure, whether they must begin
28 anew on the occidental plan, tear up their old books, burn their
29 philosophies, drive away their preachers, and break down their
30 temples. Did not the occidental conqueror, the man who
31 demonstrated his religion with sword and gun, say that all the old
32 ways were mere superstition and idolatry? Children brought up and
33 educated in the new schools started on the occidental plan, drank
34 in these ideas, from their childhood, and it is not to be wondered at
35 that doubts arose. But instead of throwing away superstition and
36 making a real search after truth, the test of truth became, "What
37 does the West say?" The priests must go, the Vedas must be burned,
38 because the West has said so. Out of the feeling of unrest thus
39 produced, there arose a wave of so-called reform in India.

40 If you wish to be a true reformer, three things are
41 necessary. The first is to feel. Do you really feel for your brothers?
42 Do you really feel that there is so much misery in the world, so
43 much ignorance and superstition? Do you really feel that men are
44 your brothers? Does this idea come into your whole being? Does it
45 run with your blood? Does it tingle in your veins? Does it course
46 through every nerve and filament of your body? Are you full of that
47 idea of sympathy? If you are, that is only the first step. You must
48 think next if you have found any remedy. The old ideas may be all
49 superstition, but in and around these masses of superstition are
50 nuggets of gold and truth. Have you discovered means by which to
51 keep that gold alone, without any of the dross? If you have done
52 that, that is only the second step; one more thing is necessary. What

1 is your motive? Are you sure that you are not actuated by greed of
2 gold, by thirst for fame, or power? Are you really sure that you can
3 stand to your ideals, and work on, even if the whole world wants to
4 crush you down? Are you sure you know what you want and will
5 perform your duty, and that alone, even if your life is at stake? Are
6 you sure that you will persevere so long as life endures, so long as
7 there is one pulsation left in the heart? Then you are a real
8 reformer, you are a teacher, a Master, a blessing to mankind. But
9 man is so impatient, so short-sighted! He has not the patience to
10 wait, he has not the power to see. He wants to rule, he wants
11 results immediately. Why? He wants to reap the fruits himself, and
12 does not really care for others. Duty for duty's sake is not what he
13 wants. "To work you have the right, but not to the fruits thereof,"
14 says Krishna. Why cling to results? Ours are the duties. Let the
15 fruits take care of themselves. But man has no patience, he takes
16 up any scheme. The larger number of would-be reformers all over
17 the world, can be classed under this heading.

18 As I have said, the idea of reform came to India when it
19 seemed as if the wave of materialism that had invaded her shores
20 would sweep away the teachings of the sages. But the nation had
21 borne the shocks of a thousand such waves of change. This one was
22 mild in comparison. Wave after wave had flooded the land, breaking
23 and crushing everything for hundreds of years. The sword had
24 flashed, and "Victory unto Allah" had rent the skies of India; but
25 these floods subsided, leaving the national ideals unchanged.

26 The Indian nation cannot be killed. Deathless it stands and
27 it will stand so long as that spirit shall remain as the background, so
28 long as her people do not give up their spirituality. Beggars they
29 may remain, poor and poverty-stricken; dirt and squalor may
30 surround them perhaps throughout all time, but let them not give
31 up their God, let them not forget that they are the children of the
32 sages. Just as in the West even the man in the street wants to trace
33 his descent from some robber-baron of the Middle Ages, so in India,
34 even an Emperor on the throne wants to trace his descent from
35 some beggar-sage in the forest, from a man who wore the bark of a
36 tree, lived upon the fruits of the forest and communed with God.
37 That is the type of descent we want; and while holiness is thus
38 supremely venerated, India cannot die.

39 Many of you perhaps have read the article by Prof. Max
40 Muller in a recent issue of the *Nineteenth Century*, headed "A Real
41 Mahatman". The life of Sri Ramakrishna is interesting, as it was a
42 living illustration of the ideas that he preached. Perhaps it will be a
43 little romantic for you who live in the West in an atmosphere
44 entirely different from that of India. For the methods and manners
45 in the busy rush of life in the West vary entirely from those of India.
46 Yet perhaps it will be of all the more interest for that, because it
47 will bring into a newer light, things about which many have already
48 heard.

49 It was while reforms of various kinds were being
50 inaugurated in India that a child was born of poor Brahmin parents
51 on the eighteenth of February, 1836, in one of the remote villages of
52 Bengal. The father and mother were very orthodox people. The life

1 of a really orthodox Brahmin is one of continuous renunciation. Very
2 few things can he do; and over and beyond them the orthodox
3 Brahmin must not occupy himself with any secular business. At the
4 same time he must not receive gifts from everybody. You may
5 imagine how rigorous that life becomes. You have heard of the
6 Brahmins and their priest-craft many times, but very few of you
7 have ever stopped to ask what makes this wonderful band of men
8 the rulers of their fellows. They are the poorest of all the classes in
9 the country; and the secret of their power lies in their renunciation.
10 They never covet wealth. Theirs is the poorest priesthood in the
11 world, and therefore the most powerful. Even in this poverty, a
12 Brahmin's wife will never allow a poor man to pass through the
13 village without giving him something to eat. That is considered the
14 highest duty of the mother in India; and because she is the mother
15 it is her duty to be served last; she must see that everyone is served
16 before her turn comes. That is why the mother is regarded as God
17 in India. This particular woman, the mother of our subject, was the
18 very type of a Hindu mother. The higher the caste the greater the
19 restrictions. The lowest caste people can eat and drink anything
20 they like, but as men rise in the social scale more and more
21 restrictions come; and when they reach the highest caste, the
22 Brahmin, the hereditary priesthood of India, their lives, as I have
23 said, are very much circumscribed. Compared to Western manners
24 their lives are of continuous asceticism. The Hindus are perhaps the
25 most exclusive nation in the world. They have the same great
26 steadiness as the English, but much more amplified. When they get
27 hold of an idea they carry it out to its very conclusion, and they
28 keep hold of it generation after generation until they make
29 something out of it. Once give them an idea and it is not easy to
30 take it back, but it is hard to make them grasp a new idea.

31 The orthodox Hindus therefore, are very exclusive, living
32 entirely within their own horizon of thought and feeling. Their lives
33 are laid down in our old books in every little detail, and the least
34 detail is grasped with almost adamant firmness by them. They
35 would starve rather than eat a meal cooked by the hands of a man
36 not belonging to their own small section of caste. But withal, they
37 have intensity and tremendous earnestness. That force of intense
38 faith and religious life occurs often among the orthodox Hindus,
39 because their very orthodoxy comes from the tremendous
40 conviction that it is right. We may not all think that that to which
41 they hold on with such perseverance is right; but to them it is. Now
42 it is written in our books that a man should always be charitable
43 even to the extreme. If a man starves himself to death to help
44 another man, to save that man's life, it is all right; it is even held
45 that a man ought to do that. And it is expected of a Brahmin to
46 carry this idea out to the very extreme. Those who are acquainted
47 with the literature of India will remember a beautiful old story
48 about this extreme charity, how a whole family, as related in the
49 Mahabharata, starved themselves to death and gave their last meal
50 to a beggar. This is not an exaggeration, for such things still
51 happen. The character of the father and mother of my Master were
52 very much like that. Very poor they were and yet many a time the
53 mother would starve herself a whole day to help a poor man. Of

1 them this child was born; and he was a peculiar child from very
2 boyhood. He remembered his past from his birth, and was
3 conscious for what purpose he came into the world, and every
4 power was devoted to the fulfilment of that purpose.

5 While he was quite young his father died; and the boy was
6 sent to school. A Brahmin's boy must go to school; the caste
7 restricts him to a learned profession only. The old system of
8 education in India, still prevalent in many parts of the country,
9 especially in connection with Sannysins, was very different from the
10 modern system. The students had not to pay. It was thought that
11 knowledge is so sacred that no man ought to sell it. Knowledge
12 must be given freely and without any price. The teachers used to
13 take students without charge, and not only so, but most of them
14 gave their students food and clothes. To support these teachers the
15 wealthy families on certain occasions, such as a marriage festival,
16 or at the ceremonies for the dead, made gifts to them. They were
17 considered the first and foremost claimants to certain gifts; and
18 they in their turn had to maintain their students. So whenever there
19 is a marriage, especially in a rich family, these professors are
20 invited, and they attend and discuss various subjects. This boy went
21 to one of these gatherings of professors, and the professors were
22 discussing various topics, such as logic or astronomy, subjects much
23 beyond his age. The boy was peculiar, as I have said, and he
24 gathered this moral out of it: "This is the outcome of all their
25 knowledge. Why are they fighting so hard? It is simply for money;
26 the man who can show the highest learning here will get the best
27 pair of cloth, and that is all these people are struggling for. I will
28 not go to school any more." And he did not; that was the end of his
29 going to school. But this boy had an elder brother, a learned
30 professor, who took him to Calcutta, however, to study with him.
31 After a short time the boy became convinced that the aim of all
32 secular learning was mere material advancement, and he resolved
33 to give up study and devote himself to the pursuit of spiritual
34 knowledge. The father being dead, the family was very poor; and
35 this boy had to make his own living. He went to a place near
36 Calcutta and became a temple priest. To become a temple priest is
37 thought very degrading to a Brahmin. Our temples are not churches
38 in your sense of the word, they are not places for public worship;
39 for, properly speaking, there is no such thing as public worship in
40 India. Temples are erected mostly by rich persons as a meritorious
41 religious act.

42 If a man has much property, he wants to build a temple. In
43 that he puts a symbol or an image of an Incarnation of God, and
44 dedicates it to worship in the name of God. The worship is akin to
45 that which is conducted in Roman Catholic churches, very much
46 like the mass, reading certain sentences from the sacred books,
47 waving a light before the image, and treating the image in every
48 respect as we treat a great man. This is all that is done in the
49 temple. The man who goes to a temple is not considered thereby a
50 better man than he who never goes. More properly the latter is
51 considered the more religious man, for religion in India is to each
52 man his own private affair. In the house of every man there is either

1 a little chapel, or a room set apart, and there he goes morning and
2 evening, sits down in a corner, and there does his worship. And this
3 worship is entirely mental, for another man does not hear or know
4 what he is doing. He sees him only sitting there, and perhaps
5 moving his fingers in a peculiar fashion, or closing his nostrils and
6 breathing in a peculiar manner. Beyond that, he does not know
7 what his brother is doing; even his wife, perhaps, will not know.
8 Thus, all worship is conducted in the privacy of his own home.
9 Those who cannot afford to have a chapel go to the banks of a river,
10 or a lake, or the sea if they live at the seaside, but people
11 sometimes go to worship in a temple by making salutation to the
12 image. There their duty to the temple ends. Therefore, you see, it
13 has been held from the most ancient times in our country, legislated
14 upon by Manu, that it is a degenerating occupation to become a
15 temple priest. Some of the books say it is so degrading as to make a
16 Brahmin worthy of reproach. Just as with education, but in a far
17 more intense sense with religion, there is the other idea behind it
18 that the temple priests who take fees for their work are making
19 merchandise of sacred things. So you may imagine the feelings of
20 that boy when he was forced through poverty to take up the only
21 occupation open to him, that of a temple priest.

22 There have been various poets in Bengal whose songs have
23 passed down to the people; they are sung in the streets of Calcutta
24 and in every village. Most of these are religious songs, and their
25 one central idea, which is perhaps peculiar to the religions of India,
26 is the idea of realisation. There is not a book in India on religion
27 which does not breathe this idea. Man must realise God, feel God,
28 see God, talk to God. That is religion. The Indian atmosphere is full
29 of stories of saintly persons having visions of God. Such doctrines
30 form the basis of their religion; and all these ancient books and
31 scriptures are the writings of persons who came into direct contact
32 with spiritual facts. These books were not written for the intellect,
33 nor can any reasoning understand them, because they have been
34 written by men who saw the things of which they wrote, and they
35 can be understood only by men who have raised themselves to the
36 same height. They say there is such a thing as realisation even in
37 this life, and it is open to everyone, and religion begins with the
38 opening of this faculty, if I may call it so. This is the central idea in
39 all religions and this is why we may find one man with the most
40 finished oratorical powers, or the most convincing logic, preaching
41 the highest doctrines and yet unable to get people to listen to him,
42 while we may find another, a poor man, who scarcely can speak the
43 language of his own motherland, yet half the nation worships him in
44 his own lifetime as God. When in India the idea somehow or other
45 gets abroad that a man has raised himself to that state of
46 realisation, that religion is no more a matter of conjecture to him,
47 that he is no more groping in the dark in such momentous questions
48 as religion, the immortality of the soul, and God, people come from
49 all quarters to see him and gradually they begin to worship him.

50 In the temple was an image of the "Blissful Mother." This
51 boy had to conduct the worship morning and evening, and by
52 degrees this one idea filled his mind: "Is there anything behind this

1 image? Is it true that there is a Mother of Bliss in the universe? Is it
2 true that She lives and guides this universe, or is it all a dream? Is
3 there any reality in religion?"

4 This scepticism comes to almost every Hindu child. It is the
5 scepticism of our country: Is this that we are doing real? And
6 theories will not satisfy us, although there are ready at hand almost
7 all the theories that have ever been made with regard to God and
8 soul. Neither books nor theories can satisfy us, the one idea that
9 gets hold of thousands of our people is this idea of realisation. Is it
10 true that there is a God? If it be true, can I see Him? Can I realise
11 the truth? The Western mind may think all this very impracticable,
12 but to us it is intensely practical. For this idea men will give up their
13 lives. You have just heard how from the earliest times there have
14 been persons who have given up all comforts and luxuries to live in
15 caves, and hundreds have given up their homes to weep bitter tears
16 of misery, on the banks of sacred rivers, in order to realise this
17 idea--not to know in the ordinary sense of the word, not intellectual
18 understanding, not a mere rationalistic comprehension of the real
19 thing, not mere groping in the dark, but intense realisation, much
20 more real than this world is to our senses. That is the idea. I do not
21 advance any proposition as to that just now, but that is the one fact
22 that is impressed upon them. Thousands will be killed, other
23 thousands will be ready. So upon this one idea the whole nation for
24 thousands of years have been denying and sacrificing themselves.
25 For this idea thousands of Hindus every year give up their homes
26 and many of them die through the hardships they have to undergo.
27 To the Western mind this must seem most visionary, and I can see
28 the reason for this point of view. But though I have resided in the
29 West, I still think this idea the most practical thing in life.

30 Every moment I think of anything else is so much loss to
31 me--even the marvels of earthly sciences; everything is vain if it
32 takes me away from that thought. Life is but momentary whether
33 you have the knowledge of an angel or the ignorance of an animal.
34 Life is but momentary, whether you have the poverty of the poorest
35 man in rags or the wealth of the richest living person. Life is but
36 momentary, whether you are a downtrodden man living in one of
37 the big streets of the big cities of the West or a crowned Emperor
38 ruling over millions. Life is but momentary, whether you have the
39 best of health or the worst. Life is but momentary, whether you
40 have the most poetical temperament or the most cruel. There is but
41 one solution of life, says the Hindu, and that solution is what they
42 call God and Religion. If these be true, life becomes explained, life
43 becomes bearable, becomes enjoyable. Otherwise, life is but a
44 useless burden. That is our idea, but no amount of reasoning can
45 demonstrate it; it can only make it probable, and there it rests. The
46 highest demonstration of reasoning that we have in any branch of
47 knowledge can only make a fact probable, and nothing further. The
48 most demonstrable facts of physical science are only probabilities,
49 not facts yet. Facts are only in the senses. Facts have to be
50 perceived, and we have to perceive religion to demonstrate it to
51 ourselves. We have to sense God to be convinced that there is a
52 God. We must sense the facts of religion to know that they are facts.

1 Nothing else, and no amount of reasoning, but our own perception
2 can make these things real to us, can make my belief firm as a rock.
3 That is my idea, and that is the Indian idea.

4 This idea took possession of the boy and his whole life
5 became concentrated upon that. Day after day he would weep and
6 say: "Mother, is it true that Thou existest, or is it all poetry? Is the
7 Blissful Mother an imagination of poets and misguided people, or is
8 there such a reality?" We have seen that of books, of education in
9 our sense of the word, he had none and so much the more natural,
10 so much the more healthy, was his mind, so much the purer his
11 thoughts, undiluted by drinking in the thoughts of others. Because
12 he did not go to the university, therefore he thought for himself.
13 Because we have spent half our lives in the university we are filled
14 with a collection of other people's thoughts. Well has Prof. Max
15 Muller said in the article I have just referred to that this was a
16 clean, original man; and the secret of that originality was that he
17 was not brought up within the precincts of a university. However,
18 this thought--whether God can be seen--which was uppermost in his
19 mind gained in strength every day until he could think of nothing
20 else. He could no more conduct the worship properly, could no
21 more attend to the various details in all their minuteness. Often he
22 would forget to place the food offering before the image, sometimes
23 he would forget to wave the light; at other times he would wave it
24 for hours, and forget everything else.

25 And that one idea was in his mind every day: "Is it true that
26 Thou existest, O Mother? Why dost Thou not speak? Art Thou
27 dead?" Perhaps some of us here will remember that there are
28 moments in our lives when, tired of all these ratiocinations of dull
29 and dead logic, tired of plodding through books--which after all
30 teach us nothing, become nothing but a sort of intellectual opium-
31 eating--we must have it at stated times or we die--tired with all this,
32 the heart of our hearts sends out a wail: "Is there no one in this
33 universe who can show me the light? If Thou art, show the light
34 unto me. Why dost Thou not speak? Why dost Thou make Thyself so
35 scarce, why send so many Messengers and not Thyself come to me?
36 In this world of fights and factions whom am I to follow and believe?
37 If Thou art the God of every man and woman alike, why comest
38 Thou not to speak to Thy child and see if he is not ready?" Well, to
39 us all come such thoughts in moments of great depression; but such
40 are the temptations surrounding us, that the next moment we
41 forget. For the moment it seemed that the doors of the heavens
42 were going to be opened, for the moment it seemed as if we were
43 going to plunge into the light effulgent; but the animal man again
44 shakes off all these angelic visions. Down we go, animal man once
45 more, eating and drinking and dying, and dying and drinking and
46 eating again and again. But there are exceptional minds which are
47 not turned away so easily, which once attracted can never be
48 turned back, whatever may be the temptation in the way, which
49 want to see the Truth, knowing that life must go. They say, let it go
50 in a noble conquest, and what conquest is nobler than the conquest
51 of the lower man, than this solution of the problem of life and death,
52 of good and evil?

1 At last it became impossible for him to serve in the temple.
2 He left it and entered into a little wood that was near and lived
3 there. About this part of his life he has told me many times that he
4 could not tell when the sun rose or set, nor how he lived. He lost all
5 thought of himself and forgot to eat. During this period he was
6 lovingly watched over by a relative who put into his mouth food
7 which he mechanically swallowed.

8 Days and nights thus passed with the boy. When a whole
9 day would pass, towards the evening, when the peal of bells in the
10 temples, and the voices singing, would reach the wood, it would
11 make the boy very sad, and he would cry: "Another day is gone in
12 vain, Mother, and Thou dost not come. Another day of this short life
13 has gone and I have not known the Truth." In the agony of his soul,
14 sometimes he would rub his face against the ground and weep, and
15 this one prayer burst forth: "Do Thou manifest Thyself in me, Thou
16 Mother of the universe! See that I need Thee and nothing else!"
17 Verily, he wanted to be true to his own ideal. He had heard that the
18 Mother never came until everything had been given up for Her. He
19 had heard that the Mother wanted to come to everyone, but they
20 would not have Her, that people wanted all sorts of foolish little
21 idols to pray to, that they wanted their own enjoyments, and not the
22 Mother, and that the moment they really wanted Her with their
23 whole soul, and nothing else, that moment She would come. So he
24 began to break himself into that idea; he wanted to be exact, even
25 on the plane of matter. He threw away all the little property he had,
26 and took a vow that he would never touch money, and this one idea,
27 "I will not touch money", became a part of him. It may appear to be
28 something occult, but even in after-life when he was sleeping, if I
29 touched him with a piece of money his hand would become bent,
30 and his whole body would become, as it were, paralysed. The other
31 idea that came into his mind was that lust was the other enemy.
32 Man is a soul, and soul is sexless, neither man nor woman. The idea
33 of sex and the idea of money were the two things, he thought, that
34 prevented him from seeing the Mother. This whole universe is the
35 manifestation of the Mother, and She lives in every woman's body.
36 "Every woman represents the Mother; how can I think of woman in
37 mere sex relation?" That was the idea: Every woman was his
38 Mother, he must bring himself to the state when he would see
39 nothing but Mother in every woman. And he carried it out in his life.

40 This is the tremendous thirst that seizes the human heart.
41 Later on, this very man said to me: "My child, suppose there is a
42 bag of gold in one room, and a robber in the next room, do you
43 think that the robber can sleep? He cannot. His mind will be always
44 thinking how to get into that room and obtain possession of that
45 gold. Do you think then that a man firmly persuaded that there is a
46 Reality behind all these appearances, that there is a God, that there
47 is One who never dies, One who is infinite bliss, a bliss compared
48 with which these pleasures of the senses are simply playthings, can
49 rest contented without struggling to attain It? Can he cease his
50 efforts for a moment? No.

51 He will become mad with longing." This divine madness
52 seized the boy. At that time he had no teacher, nobody to tell him

1 anything, and everyone thought that he was out of his mind. This is
2 the ordinary condition of things. If a man throws aside the vanities
3 of the world we hear him called mad. But such men are the salt of
4 the earth. Out of such madness have come the powers that have
5 moved this world of ours, and out of such madness alone will come
6 the powers of the future, that are going to move the world.

7 So days, weeks, months passed in continuous struggle of the
8 soul to arrive at Truth. The boy began to see visions, to see
9 wonderful things; the secrets of his nature were beginning to open
10 to him. Veil after veil was, as it were, being taken off. Mother
11 Herself became the teacher, and initiated the boy into the truths he
12 sought. At this time there came to this place a woman of beautiful
13 appearance, learned beyond compare. Later on this saint used to
14 say about her that she was not learned, but was the embodiment of
15 learning; she was learning itself, in human form. There too, you find
16 the peculiarity of the Indian nation. In the midst of the ignorance in
17 which the average Hindu woman lives, in the midst of what is called
18 in Western countries her lack of freedom, there could arise a
19 woman of this supreme spirituality. She was a Sannyasini; for
20 women also give up the world, throw away their property, do not
21 marry, and devote themselves to the worship of the Lord. She came;
22 and when she heard of this boy in the grove she offered to go and
23 see him; and hers was the first help he received. At once she
24 recognised what his trouble was, and she said to him: "My son,
25 blessed is the man upon whom such madness comes. The whole of
26 this universe is mad--some for wealth, some for pleasure, some for
27 fame, some for a hundred other things. They are mad for gold, or
28 husbands, or wives, for little trifles, mad to tyrannise over
29 somebody, mad to become rich, mad for every foolish thing except
30 God. And they can understand only their own madness. When
31 another man is mad after gold, they have fellow-feeling and
32 sympathy for him, and they say he is the right man, as lunatics
33 think that lunatics alone are sane. But if a man is mad after the
34 Beloved, after the Lord, how can they understand? They think he
35 has gone crazy; and they say, 'Have nothing to do with him.' That is
36 why they call you mad; but yours is the right kind of madness.
37 Blessed is the man who is mad after God. Such men are very few."
38 This woman remained near the boy for years, taught him the forms
39 of the religions of India, initiated him in the different practices of
40 Yoga, and, as it were, guided and brought into harmony this
41 tremendous river of spirituality.

42 Later there came to the same grove, a Sannyasin, one of the
43 begging friars of India, a learned man, a philosopher. He was a
44 peculiar man, he was an idealist. He did not believe that this world
45 existed in reality; and to demonstrate that he would never go under
46 a roof, he would always live out of doors, in storm and sunshine
47 alike. This man began to teach the boy the philosophy of the Vedas;
48 and he found very soon, to his astonishment, that the pupil was in
49 some respects wiser than the master. He spent several months
50 there with the boy, after which he initiated him into the order of
51 Sannyasins, and took his departure.

52 When as a temple priest his extraordinary worship made

1 people think him deranged in his head, his relatives took him home
2 and married him to a little girl, thinking that that would turn his
3 thoughts and restore the balance of his mind. But he came back
4 and, as we have seen, merged deeper in his madness. Sometimes,
5 in our country, boys are married as children and have no voice in
6 the matter; their parents marry them. Of course such a marriage is
7 little more than a betrothal. When they are married they still
8 continue to live with their parents, and the real marriage takes
9 place when the wife grows older, when it is customary for the
10 husband to go and bring his bride to his own home. In this case,
11 however, the husband had entirely forgotten he had a wife. In her
12 far-off home the girl had heard that her husband had become a
13 religious enthusiast and that he was even considered insane by
14 many. She resolved to learn the truth for herself, so she set out and
15 walked to the place where her husband was. When at last she stood
16 in her husband's presence, he at once admitted her right to his life,
17 although in India any person, man or woman, who embraces a
18 religious life is thereby freed from all other obligations. The young
19 man fell at the feet of his wife and said, "As for me, the Mother has
20 shown me that She resides in every woman, and so I have learnt to
21 look upon every woman as Mother. That is the one idea I can have
22 about you; but if you wish to drag me into the world, as I have been
23 married to you, I am at your service."

24 The maiden was a pure and noble soul, and was able to
25 understand her husband's aspirations and sympathise with them.
26 She quickly told him that she had no wish to drag him down to a life
27 of worldliness; but that all she desired was to remain near him, to
28 serve him, and to learn of him. She became one of his most devoted
29 disciples, always revering him as a divine being. Thus through his
30 wife's consent the last barrier was removed, and he was free to
31 lead the life he had chosen.

32 The next desire that seized upon the soul of this man was to
33 know the truth about the various religions. Up to that time he had
34 not known any religion but his own. He wanted to understand what
35 other religions were like. So he sought teachers of other religions.
36 By teachers you must always remember what we mean in India, not
37 a book-worm, but a man of realisation, one who knows truth at first
38 hand and not through an intermediary. He found a Mohammedan
39 saint and placed himself under him; he underwent the disciplines
40 prescribed by him, and to his astonishment found that when
41 faithfully carried out, these devotional methods led him to the same
42 goal he had already attained. He gathered similar experience from
43 following the true religion of Jesus the Christ. He went to all the
44 sects he could find, and whatever he took up he went into with his
45 whole heart. He did exactly as he was told, and in every instance he
46 arrived at the same result. Thus from actual experience he came to
47 know that the goal of every religion is the same, that each is trying
48 to teach the same thing, the difference being largely in method, and
49 still more in language. At the core, all sects and all religions have
50 the same aim; and they were only quarrelling for their own selfish
51 purposes--they were not anxious about the truth, but about "my
52 name" and "your name". Two of them preached the same truth, but

1 one of them said, "That cannot be true, because I have not put upon
2 it the seal of my name. Therefore do not listen to him." And the
3 other man said, "Do not hear him, although he is preaching very
4 much the same thing, yet it is not true because he does not preach
5 it in my name."

6 That is what my Master found, and he then set about to
7 learn humility, because he had found that the one idea in all
8 religions is, "not me, but Thou", and he who says, "not me", the
9 Lord fills his heart. The less of this little "I" the more of God there is
10 in him. That he found to be the truth in every religion in the world,
11 and he set himself to accomplish this. As I have told you, whenever
12 he wanted to do anything he never confined himself to fine theories,
13 but would enter into the practice immediately. We see many
14 persons talking the most wonderfully fine things about charity and
15 about equality and the rights of other people and all that, but it is
16 only in theory. I was so fortunate as to find one who was able to
17 carry theory into practice. He had the most wonderful faculty of
18 carrying everything into practice which he thought was right.

19 Now, there was a family of Pariahs living near the place. The
20 Pariahs number several millions in the whole of India and are a sect
21 of people so low that some of our books say that if a Brahmin
22 coming out from his house sees the face of a Pariah, he has to fast
23 that day and recite certain prayers before he becomes holy again.
24 In some Hindu cities when a Pariah enters, he has to put a crow's
25 feather on his head as a sign that he is a Pariah, and he has to cry
26 aloud, "Save yourselves, the Pariah is passing through the street",
27 and you will find people flying off from him as if by magic, because
28 if they touch him by chance, they will have to change their clothes,
29 bathe, and do other things. And the Pariah for thousands of years
30 has believed that it is perfectly right; that his touch will make
31 everybody unholy. Now my Master would go to a Pariah and ask to
32 be allowed to clean his house. The business of the Pariah is to clean
33 the streets of the cities and to keep houses clean. He cannot enter
34 the house by the front door; by the back door he enters; and as
35 soon as he has gone, the whole place over which he has passed is
36 sprinkled with and made holy by a little Ganga water. By birth the
37 Brahmin stands for holiness, and the Pariah for the very reverse.
38 And this Brahmin asked to be allowed to do the menial services in
39 the house of the Pariah. The Pariah of course could not allow that,
40 for they all think that if they allow a Brahmin to do such menial
41 work it will be an awful sin, and they will become extinct. The
42 Pariah would not permit it; so in the dead of night, when all were
43 sleeping, Ramakrishna would enter the house. He had long hair,
44 and with his hair he would wipe the place, saying, "Oh, my Mother,
45 make me the servant of the Pariah, make me feel that I am even
46 lower than the Pariah." "They worship Me best who worship My
47 worshippers. These are all My children and your privilege is to
48 serve them"--is the teaching of Hindu scriptures.

49 There were various other preparations which would take a
50 long time to relate, and I want to give you just a sketch of his life.
51 For years he thus educated himself. One of the Sadhanas was to
52 root out the sex idea. Soul has no sex, it is neither male nor female.

1 It is only in the body that sex exists, and the man who desires to
2 reach the spirit cannot at the same time hold to sex distinctions.
3 Having been born in a masculine body, this man wanted to bring the
4 feminine idea into everything. He began to think that he was a
5 woman, he dressed like a woman, spoke like a woman, gave up the
6 occupations of men, and lived in the household among the women
7 of a good family, until, after years of this discipline, his mind
8 became changed, and he entirely forgot the idea of sex; thus the
9 whole view of life became changed to him.

10 We hear in the West about worshipping woman, but this is
11 usually for her youth and beauty. This man meant by worshipping
12 woman, that to him every woman's face was that of the Blissful
13 Mother, and nothing but that. I myself have seen this man standing
14 before those women whom society would not touch, and falling at
15 their feet bathed in tears, saying: "Mother, in one form Thou art in
16 the street, and in another form Thou art the universe. I salute Thee,
17 Mother, I salute Thee." Think of the blessedness of that life from
18 which all carnality has vanished, which can look upon every woman
19 with that love and reverence when every woman's face becomes
20 transfigured, and only the face of the Divine Mother, the Blissful
21 One, the Protectress of the human race shines upon it! That is what
22 we want. Do you mean to say that the divinity back of a woman can
23 ever be cheated? It never was and never will be. It always asserts
24 itself. Unfailingly it detects fraud, it detects hypocrisy, unerringly it
25 feels the warmth of truth, the light of spirituality, the holiness of
26 purity. Such purity is absolutely necessary if real spirituality is to be
27 attained.

28 This rigorous, unsullied purity came into the life of that
29 man. All the struggles which we have in our lives were past for him.
30 His hard-earned jewels of spirituality, for which he had given three-
31 quarters of his life, were now ready to be given to humanity, and
32 then began his mission. His teaching and preaching were peculiar.
33 In our country a teacher is a most highly venerated person, he is
34 regarded as God Himself. We have not even the same respect for
35 our father and mother. Father and mother give us our body, but the
36 teacher shows us the way to salvation. We are his children, we are
37 born in the spiritual line of the teacher. All Hindus come to pay
38 respect to an extraordinary teacher, they crowd around him. And
39 here was such a teacher, but the teacher had no thought whether
40 he was to be respected or not, he had not the least idea that he was
41 a great teacher, he thought that it was Mother who was doing
42 everything and not he. He always said: "If any good comes from my
43 lips, it is the Mother who speaks; what have I to do with it?" That
44 was his one idea about his work, and to the day of his death he
45 never gave it up. This man sought no one. His principle was, first
46 form character, first earn spirituality, and results will come of
47 themselves. His favorite illustration was, "When the lotus opens,
48 the bees come of their own accord to seek the honey; so let the
49 lotus of your character be full-blown and the results will follow."
50 This is a great lesson to learn.

51 My Master taught me this lesson hundreds of times, yet I
52 often forget it. Few understand the power of thought. If a man goes

1 into a cave, shuts himself in, and thinks one really great thought
2 and dies, that thought will penetrate the walls of that cave, vibrate
3 through space, and at last permeate the whole human race. Such is
4 the power of thought; be in no hurry therefore to give your thoughts
5 to others. First have something to give. He alone teaches who has
6 something to give, for teaching is not talking, teaching is not
7 imparting doctrines, it is communicating. Spirituality can be
8 communicated just as really as I can give you a flower. This is true
9 in the most literal sense. This idea is very old in India and finds
10 illustration in the West in the theory, in the belief, of apostolic
11 succession. Therefore, first make character--that is the highest duty
12 you can perform. Know Truth for yourself, and there will be many to
13 whom you can teach it afterwards; they will all come. This was the
14 attitude of my Master. He criticised no one. For years I lived with
15 that man, but never did I hear those lips utter one word of
16 condemnation for any sect. He had the same sympathy for all sects;
17 he had found the harmony between them. A man may be
18 intellectual, or devotional, or mystic, or active; the various religions
19 represent one or the other of these types. Yet it is possible to
20 combine all the four in one man, and this is what future humanity is
21 going to do. That was his idea. He condemned no one, but saw the
22 good in all.

23 People came by thousands to see this wonderful man who
24 spoke in a *patois*, every word of which was forceful and instinct
25 with light. For it is not what is spoken, much less the language in
26 which it is spoken, but it is the personality of the speaker which
27 dwells in everything he says that carries weight. Every one of us
28 feels this at times. We hear most splendid orations, most
29 wonderfully reasoned-out discourses, and we go home and forget
30 them all. At other times we hear a few words in the simplest of
31 language, and they enter into our lives, become part and parcel of
32 ourselves and produce lasting results. The words of a man who can
33 put his personality into them take effect, but he must have
34 tremendous personality. All teaching implies giving and taking, the
35 teacher gives and the taught receives, but the one must have
36 something to give, and the other must be open to receive.

37 This man came to live near Calcutta, the capital of India, the
38 most important university town in our country, which was sending
39 out sceptics and materialists by the hundreds every year. Yet many
40 of these university men--skeptics and agnostics--used to come and
41 listen to him. I heard of this man, and I went to hear him. He looked
42 just like an ordinary man, with nothing remarkable about him. He
43 used the most simple language, and I thought, "Can this man be a
44 great teacher?"--crept near to him and asked him the question
45 which I had been asking others all my life: "Do you believe in God,
46 Sir?" "Yes," he replied. "Can you prove it, Sir?" "Yes." "How?"
47 "Because I see Him just as I see you here, only in a much intenser
48 sense." That impressed me at once. For the first time I had found a
49 man who dared to say that he saw God, that religion was a reality to
50 be felt, to be sensed in an infinitely more intense way than we can
51 sense the world. I began to go to that man, day after day, and I
52 actually saw that religion could be given. One touch, one glance,

1 can change a whole life. I had read about Buddha and Christ and
2 Mohammed, about all those different luminaries of ancient times,
3 how they would stand up and say, "Be thou whole," and the man
4 became whole. I now found it to be true, and when I myself saw this
5 man, all scepticism was brushed aside. It could be done; and my
6 Master used to say: "Religion can be given and taken more tangibly,
7 more really than anything else in the world." Be therefore spiritual
8 first; have something to give, and then stand before the world and
9 give it. Religion is not talk, or doctrines or theories; nor is it
10 sectarianism. Religion cannot live in sects and societies. It is the
11 relation between the soul and God; how can it be made into a
12 society? It would then degenerate into a business, and wherever
13 there are business and business principles in religion, spirituality
14 dies. Religion does not consist in erecting temples, or building
15 churches, or attending public worship. It is not to be found in
16 books, or in words, or in lectures, or in organisations. Religion
17 consists in realisation. As a fact, we all know that nothing will
18 satisfy us until we know the truth for ourselves. However we may
19 argue, however much we may hear, but one thing will satisfy us,
20 and that is our own realisation; and such an experience is possible
21 for every one of us, if we will only try. The first ideal of this attempt
22 to realise religion is that of renunciation. As far as we can, we must
23 give up. Darkness and light, enjoyment of the world and enjoyment
24 of God will never go together. "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."
25 Let people try it if they will, and I have seen millions in every
26 country who have tried; but after all, it comes to nothing. If one
27 word remains true in the saying, it is, give up everything for the
28 sake of the Lord. This is a hard and long task, but you can begin it
29 here and now. Bit by bit we must go towards it.

30 The second idea that I learnt from my Master, and which is
31 perhaps the most vital, is the wonderful truth that the religions of
32 the world are not contradictory or antagonistic. They are but
33 various phases of one eternal religion. That one eternal religion is
34 applied to different planes of existence, is applied to the opinions of
35 various minds and various races. There never was my religion or
36 yours, my national religion or your national religion; there never
37 existed many religions, there is only the one. One Infinite religion
38 existed all through eternity and will ever exist, and this religion is
39 expressing itself in various countries in various ways. Therefore we
40 must respect all religions and we must try to accept them all as far
41 as we can. Religions manifest themselves not only according to race
42 and geographical position, but according to individual powers. In
43 one man religion is manifesting itself as intense activity, as work. In
44 another it is manifesting itself as intense devotion, in yet another as
45 mysticism, in others as philosophy, and so forth. It is wrong when
46 we say to others: "Your methods are not right." Perhaps a man,
47 whose nature is that of love, thinks that the man who does good to
48 others is not on the right road to religion, because it is not his own
49 way, and is therefore wrong. If the philosopher thinks, "Oh, the poor
50 ignorant people, what do they know about a God of Love, and loving
51 Him? They do not know what they mean," he is wrong, because
52 they may be right and he also.

1 To learn this central secret that the Truth may be one and
2 yet many at the same time, that we may have different visions of the
3 same Truth from different standpoints, is exactly what must be
4 done. Then, instead of antagonism to anyone, we shall have infinite
5 sympathy with all. Knowing that as long as there are different
6 natures born in this world, the same religious truth will require
7 different adaptations, we shall understand that we are bound to
8 have forbearance with each other. Just as nature is unity in variety--
9 an infinite variation in the phenomenal--as in and through all these
10 variations of the phenomenal runs the Infinite, the Unchangeable,
11 the Absolute Unity, so it is with every man; the microcosm is but a
12 miniature repetition of the macrocosm; in spite of all these
13 variations, in and through them all runs this eternal harmony, and
14 we have to recognise this. This idea, above all other ideas, I find to
15 be the crying necessity of the day. Coming from a country which is a
16 hotbed of religious sects--through good fortune or ill fortune,
17 everyone who has a religious idea wants to send an advance guard--
18 I have been acquainted from my childhood with the various sects of
19 the world. Even the Mormons came to preach in India. Welcome
20 them all! That is the soil on which to preach religion. There it takes
21 root more than in any other country. If you come and teach politics
22 to the Hindus they do not understand; but if you come to preach
23 religion, however curious it may be, you will have hundreds and
24 thousands of followers in no time, and you have every chance of
25 becoming a living God in your lifetime. I am glad it is so, it is the
26 one thing we want in India.

27 The sects among the Hindus are various, a great many in
28 number, and some of them apparently hopelessly contradictory. Yet
29 they all tell you they are but different manifestations of religion. "As
30 different rivers, taking their start from different mountains, running
31 crooked or straight, all come and mingle their waters in the ocean,
32 so the different sects, with their different points of view, at last all
33 come unto Thee." This is not a theory, it has to be recognised, but
34 not in that patronising way which we see with some people. "Oh,
35 yes, there are some very good things in it. These are what we call
36 the ethnical religions. These ethnical religions have some good in
37 them." Some even have the most wonderfully liberal idea that other
38 religions are all little bits of a prehistoric evolution, but "ours is the
39 fulfilment of things." One man says because his is the oldest
40 religion it is the best; another makes the same claim because his is
41 the latest.

42 We have to recognise that each one of them has the same
43 saving power as the other. What you have heard about their
44 difference, whether in the temple or in the church, is a mass of
45 superstition. The same God answers all; and it is not you, or I, or
46 any body of men that is responsible for the safety and salvation of
47 the least little bit of the soul; the same Almighty God is responsible
48 for all. I do not understand how people declare themselves to be
49 believers in God, and at the same time think that God has handed
50 over to a little body of men all truth, and that they are the
51 guardians of the rest of humanity. How can you call that religion?
52 Religion is realisation; but mere talk--mere trying to believe, mere

1 groping in darkness, mere parroting the words of ancestors and
2 thinking it is religion, mere making a political something out of the
3 truths of religion--is not religion at all. In every sect--even among
4 the Mohammedans whom we always regard as the most exclusive--
5 even among them we find that wherever there was a man trying to
6 realise religion, from his lips have come the fiery words: "Thou art
7 the Lord of all, Thou art in the heart of all, Thou art the guide of all,
8 Thou art the Teacher of all, and Thou carest infinitely more for the
9 land of Thy children than we can ever do." Do not try to disturb the
10 faith of any man. If you can, give him something better, if you can
11 get hold of a man where he stands and give him a push upwards; do
12 so, but do not destroy what he has. The only true teacher is he who
13 can convert himself, as it were, into a thousand persons at a
14 moment's notice. The only true teacher is he who can immediately
15 come down to the level of the student, and transfer his soul to the
16 student's soul and see through the student's eyes and hear through
17 his ears and understand through his mind. Such a teacher can
18 really teach and none else. All these negative, breaking-down,
19 destructive teachers that are in the world can never do any good.

20 In the presence of my Master I found out that man could be
21 perfect, even in this body. Those lips never cursed anyone, never
22 even criticised anyone. Those eyes were beyond the possibility of
23 seeing evil, that mind had lost the power of thinking evil. He saw
24 nothing but good. That tremendous purity, that tremendous
25 renunciation is the one secret of spirituality. "Neither through
26 wealth, nor through progeny, but through renunciation alone, is
27 immortality to be reached," say the Vedas. "Sell all that thou hast
28 and give to the poor, and follow me," says the Christ. So all great
29 saints and prophets have expressed it, and have carried it out in
30 their lives. How can great spirituality come without that
31 renunciation? Renunciation is the background of all religious
32 thought wherever it be, and you will always find that as this idea of
33 renunciation lessens, the more will the senses creep into the field of
34 religion, and spirituality will decrease in the same ratio.

35 That man was the embodiment of renunciation. In our
36 country it is necessary for a man who becomes a Sannyasin to give
37 up all worldly wealth and position, and this my Master carried out
38 literally. There were many who would have felt themselves blessed
39 if he would only have accepted a present from their hands, who
40 would gladly have given him thousands of rupees if he would have
41 taken them, but these were the only men from whom he would turn
42 away. He was a triumphant example, a living realisation of the
43 complete conquest of lust and of desire for money. He was beyond
44 all ideas of either, and such men are necessary for this century.
45 Such renunciation is necessary in these days when men have begun
46 to think that they cannot live a month without what they call their
47 "necessities," and which they are increasing out of all proportion. It
48 is necessary in a time like this that a man shall arise to demonstrate
49 to the sceptics of the world that there yet breathes a man who does
50 not care a straw for all the gold or all the fame that is in the
51 universe. Yet there are such men.

52 The other idea of his life was intense love for others. The

1 first part of my Master's life was spent in acquiring spirituality, and
2 the remaining years in distributing it. People in our country have
3 not the same customs as you have in visiting a religious teacher or
4 a Sannyasin. Somebody would come to ask him about something,
5 some perhaps would come hundreds of miles, walking all the way,
6 just to ask one question, to hear one word from him, "Tell me one
7 word for my salvation." That is the way they come. They come in
8 numbers, unceremoniously, to the place where he is mostly to be
9 found; they may find him under a tree and question him; and before
10 one set of people has gone, others have arrived. So if a man is
11 greatly revered, he will sometimes have no rest day or night. He
12 will have to talk constantly. For hours people will come pouring in,
13 and this man will be teaching them.

14 So men came in crowds to hear him, and he would talk
15 twenty hours in the twenty-four, and that not for one day, but for
16 months and months, until at last the body broke down under the
17 pressure of this tremendous strain. His intense love for mankind
18 would not let him refuse to help even the humblest of the thousands
19 who sought his aid. Gradually there developed a vital throat
20 disorder, and yet he could not be persuaded to refrain from these
21 exertions. As soon as he heard that people were asking to see him,
22 he would insist upon having them admitted and would answer all
23 their questions. When expostulated with, he replied, "I do not care.
24 I will give up twenty thousand such bodies to help one man. It is
25 glorious to help even one man." There was no rest for him. Once a
26 great man asked him: "Sir, you are a great yogi, why do you not put
27 your mind a little on your body and cure your disease?" At first he
28 did not answer, but when the question had been repeated he gently
29 said: "My friend, I thought you were a sage, but you talk like other
30 men of the world. This mind has been given to the Lord. Do you
31 mean to say that I should take it back and put it upon the body
32 which is but a mere cage of the soul?"

1 So he went on preaching to the people, and the news
2 spread that his body was about to pass away, and the people began
3 to flock to him in greater crowds than ever. You cannot imagine the
4 way they come to these great religious teachers in India, how they
5 crowd around them and make gods of them while they are yet
6 living. Thousands wait simply to touch the hem of their garments. It
7 is through this appreciation of spirituality in others that spirituality
8 is produced. Whatever any man wants and appreciates, that he will
9 get, and it is the same with nations. If you go to India and deliver a
10 political lecture, however grand it may be, you will scarcely find
11 people to listen to you; but just go and teach religion, *live* it, not
12 merely talk it, and hundreds will crowd just to look at you, to touch
13 your feet. When the people heard that this holy man was likely to go
14 from them soon, they began to come around him more than ever,
15 and my Master went on teaching them without the least regard for
16 his health. We could not prevent this. Many of the people came
17 from long distances, and he would not rest until he had answered
18 their questions. "While I can speak I must teach them," he would
19 say, and he was as good as his word. One day he told us that he
20 would lay down the body that day, and repeating the most sacred
21 word of the Vedas he entered into Samadhi and passed away.

22 His thoughts and his message were known to very few who
23 were capable of giving them out. Among others, he left a few young
24 boys who had renounced the world, and were ready to carry on his
25 work. Attempts were made to crush them. But they stood firm,
26 having the inspiration of that great life before them. Having had the
27 contact of that blessed life for years, they stood their ground. These
28 young men, living as Sannyasins, begged through the streets of the
29 city where they were born, although some of them came from high
30 families. At first they met with great antagonism, but they
31 persevered and went on from day to day spreading all over India
32 the message of that great man, until the whole country was filled
33 with the ideas he had preached. This man from a remote village of
34 Bengal, without education, simply by the sheer force of his own
35 determination, realised the truth and gave it to others, leaving only
36 a few young boys to keep it alive.

37 Today the name of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa is
38 known all over India to its millions of people. Nay, the power of that
39 man has spread beyond India, and if there has ever been a word of
40 truth, a word of spirituality that I have spoken anywhere in the
41 world, I owe it to my Master; only the mistakes are mine.

42 This is the message of Shri Ramakrishna to the modern
43 world. "Do not care for doctrines, do not care for dogmas, or sects,
44 or churches or temples; they count for little compared with the
45 essence of existence in each man, which is spirituality; and the
46 more that this is developed in a man, the more powerful is he for
47 good. Earn that first, acquire that, and criticise no one, for all
48 doctrines and creeds have some good in them. Show by your lives
49 that religion does not mean words, or names, or sects, but that it
50 means spiritual realisation. Only those can understand who have
51 felt. Only those that have attained to spirituality can communicate it
52 to others, can be great teachers of mankind. They alone are the

1 powers of light."

2 The more such men are produced in a country, the more
3 that country will be raised; and that country where such men
4 absolutely do not exist is simply doomed, nothing can save it.
5 Therefore, my Master's message to mankind is "Be spiritual and
6 realise truth for yourself." He would have you give up for the sake
7 of your fellow beings. He would have you cease talking about love
8 for your brother, and set to work to prove your words. The time has
9 come for renunciation, for realisation; and then you will see the
10 harmony in all the religions of the world. You will know that there is
11 no need of any quarrel, and then only will you be ready to help
12 humanity. To proclaim and make clear the fundamental unity
13 underlying all religions was the mission of my Master. Other
14 teachers have taught special religions which bear their names, but
15 this great teacher of the nineteenth century made no claim for
16 himself. He left every religion undisturbed because he had realised
17 that in reality, they are all part and parcel of one eternal religion.

INDIAN RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

(Delivered under the auspices of the Brooklyn Ethical Society, in the Art Gallery of the Pouch Mansion, Clinton Avenue, Brooklyn, U.S.A.)

India, although only half the size of the United States, contains a population of over two hundred and ninety millions, and there are three religions which hold sway over them--the Mohammedan, the Buddhist, and the Hindu. The adherents of the first mentioned number about sixty millions, of the second about nine millions, while the last embrace nearly two hundred and six millions. The cardinal features of the Hindu religion are founded on the meditative and speculative philosophy and on the ethical teachings contained in the various books of the Vedas, which assert that the universe is infinite in space and eternal in duration. It never had a beginning, and it never will have an end. Innumerable have been the manifestations of the power of the spirit in the realm of matter, of the force of the Infinite in the domain of the finite; but the Infinite Spirit Itself is self-existent, eternal, and unchangeable. The passage of time makes no mark whatever on the dial of eternity. In its supersensuous region which cannot be comprehended at all by the human understanding, there is no past, and there is no future. The Vedas teach that the soul of man is immortal. The body is subject to the law of growth and decay; what grows must of necessity decay. But the indwelling spirit is related to the infinite and eternal life; it never had a beginning and it never will have an end. One of the chief distinctions between the Hindu and the Christian religions is that the Christian religion teaches that each human soul had its beginning at its birth into this world, whereas the Hindu religion asserts that the spirit of man is an emanation of the Eternal Being, and had no more a beginning than God Himself. Innumerable have been and will be its manifestations in its passage from one personality to another, subject to the great law of spiritual evolution, until it reaches perfection, when there is no more change.

It has been often asked: If this be so, why is it we do not remember anything of our past lives? This is our explanation: Consciousness is the name of the surface only of the mental ocean, but within its depths are stored up all our experiences, both pleasant and painful. The desire of the human soul is to find out something that is stable. The mind and the body, in fact all the various phenomena of nature, are in a condition of incessant change. But the highest aspiration of our spirit is to find out something that does not change, that has reached a state of permanent perfection. And this is the aspiration of the human soul after the Infinite! The finer our moral and intellectual development, the stronger will become this aspiration after the Eternal that changes not.

The modern Buddhists teach that everything that cannot be

1 known by the five senses is non-existent, and that it is a delusion to
2 suppose that man is an independent entity. The idealists, on the
3 contrary, claim that each individual is an independent entity, and
4 the external world does not exist outside of his mental conception.
5 But the sure solution of this problem is that nature is a mixture of
6 independence and dependence, of reality and idealism. Our mind
7 and bodies are dependent on the external world, and this
8 dependence varies according to the nature of their relation to it;
9 but the indwelling spirit is free, as God is free, and is able to direct
10 in a greater or lesser degree, according to the state of their
11 development, the movements of our minds and bodies.

12 Death is but a change of condition. We remain in the same
13 universe, and are subject to the same laws as before. Those who
14 have passed beyond and have attained high planes of development
15 in beauty and wisdom are but the advance-guard of a universal
16 army who is following after them. The spirit of the highest is related
17 to the spirit of the lowest, and the germ of infinite perfection exists
18 in all. We should cultivate the optimistic temperament, and
19 endeavour to see the good that dwells in everything. If we sit down
20 and lament over the imperfection of our bodies and minds, we proift
21 nothing; it is the heroic endeavour to subdue adverse
22 circumstances that carries our spirit upwards. The object of life is
23 to learn the laws of spiritual progress. Christians can learn from
24 Hindus, and Hindus can learn from Christians. Each has made a
25 contribution of value to the wisdom of the world.

26 Impress upon your children that true religion is positive and
27 not negative, that it does not consist in merely refraining from evil,
28 but in a persistent performance of noble deeds. True religion comes
29 not from the teaching of men or the reading of books; it is the
30 awakening of the spirit within us, consequent upon pure and heroic
31 action. Every child born into the world brings with it a certain
32 accumulated experience from previous incarnations; and the
33 impress of this experience is seen in the structure of its mind and
34 body. But the feeling of independence which possesses us all shows
35 there is something in us besides mind and body. The soul that
36 reigns within is independent and creates the desire for freedom. If
37 we are not free, how can we hope to make the world better? We
38 hold that human progress is the result of the action of the human
39 spirit. What the world is, and what we ourselves are, are the fruits
40 of the freedom of the spirit.

41 We believe in one God, the Father of us all, who is
42 omnipresent and omnipotent, and who guides and preserves His
43 children with infinite love. We believe in a Personal God as the
44 Christians do, but we go further: we believe that we are He! That
45 His personality is manifested in us, that God is in us, and that we
46 are in God. We believe there is a germ of truth in all religions, and
47 the Hindu bows down to them all; for in this world, truth is to be
48 found not in subtraction but in addition. We would offer God a
49 bouquet of the most beautiful flowers of all the diverse faiths. We
50 must love God for love's sake, not for the hope of reward. We must
51 do our duty for duty's sake, not for the hope of reward. We must
52 worship the beautiful for beauty's sake, not for the hope of reward.

1 Thus in the purity of our hearts shall we see God. Sacrifices,
2 genuflexions, mumblings, and mutterings are not religion. They are
3 only good if they stimulate us to the brave performance of beautiful
4 and heroic deeds and lift our thoughts to the apprehension of the
5 divine perfection.

6 What good is it, if we acknowledge in our prayers that God is
7 the Father of us all, and in our daily lives do not treat every man as
8 our brother? Books are only made so that they may point the way to
9 a higher life; but no good results unless the path is trodden with
10 unflinching steps! Every human personality may be compared to a
11 glass globe. There is the same pure white light--an emission of the
12 divine Being--in the centre of each, but the glass being of different
13 colours and thickness, the rays assume diverse aspects in the
14 transmission. The equality and beauty of each central flame is the
15 same, and the apparent inequality is only in the imperfection of the
16 temporal instrument of its expression. As we rise higher and higher
17 in the scale of being, the medium becomes more and more
18 translucent.

4 It was not often that Swami Vivekananda, while in the West,
5 took part in debates. One such occasion in London when he did so
6 was during the discussion of a lecture on, "Can Psychic Phenomena
7 be proved from a Scientific Basis?" Referring first to a remark
8 which he had heard in the course of this debate, not for the first
9 time in the West, he said:

10 One point I want to remark upon. It is a mistaken statement
11 that has been made to us that the Mohammedans do not believe
12 that women have souls. I am very sorry to say it is an old mistake
13 among Christian people, and they seem to like the mistake. That is
14 a peculiarity in human nature, that people want to say something
15 very bad about others whom they do not like. By the by, you know I
16 am not a Mohammedan, but yet I have had opportunity for studying
17 this religion, and there is not one word in the Koran which says that
18 women have no souls, but in fact it says they have.

19 About the psychical things that have been the subject of
20 discussion, I have very little to say here, for in the first place, the
21 question is whether psychical subjects are capable of scientific
22 demonstration. What do you mean by this demonstration? First of
23 all, there will be the subjective and the objective side necessary.
24 Taking chemistry and physics, with which we are so familiar, and of
25 which we have read so much, is it true that everyone in this world is
26 able to understand the demonstration even of the commonest
27 subjects? Take any boor and show him one of your experiments.
28 What will he understand of it? Nothing. It requires a good deal of
29 previous training to be brought up to the point of understanding an
30 experiment. Before that he cannot understand it at all. That is a
31 great difficulty in the way. If scientific demonstration means
32 bringing down certain facts to a plane which is universal for all
33 human beings, where all beings can understand it, I deny that there
34 can be any such scientific demonstration for any subject in the
35 world. If it were so, all our universities and education would be in
36 vain. Why are we educated if by birth we can understand
37 everything scientific? Why so much study? It is of no use
38 whatsoever. So, on the face of it, it is absurd if this be the meaning
39 of scientific demonstration, the bringing down of intricate facts to
40 the plane on which we are now. The next meaning should be the
41 correct one, perhaps, that certain facts should be adduced as
42 proving certain more intricate facts. There are certain more
43 complicated, intricate phenomena, which we explain by less
44 intricate ones, and thus get, perhaps, near to them; in this way they
45 are gradually brought down to the plane of our present ordinary
46 consciousness. But even this is very complicated and very difficult,
47 and means a training also, a tremendous amount of education. So
48 all I have to say is that in order to have scientific explanation of
49 psychical phenomena, we require not only perfect evidence on the
50 side of the phenomena themselves, but a good deal of training on
51 the part of those who want to see. All this being granted, we shall

1 be in a position to say yea or nay, about the proof or disproof of any
2 phenomena which are presented before us. But, before that, the
3 most remarkable phenomena or the most oft-recorded phenomena
4 that have happened in human society, in my opinion, would be very
5 hard indeed to prove even in an offhand manner.

6 Next, as to those hasty explanations that religions are the
7 outcome of dreams, those who have made a particular study of
8 them would think of them but as mere guesses.

9 We have no reason to suppose that religions were the
10 outcome of dreams as has been so easily explained. Then it would
11 be very easy indeed to take even the agnostic's position, but
12 unfortunately the matter cannot be explained so easily. There are
13 many other wonderful phenomena happening, even at the present
14 time, and these have all to be investigated, and not only have to be,
15 but have been investigated all along. The blind man says there is no
16 sun. That does not prove that there is no sun. These phenomena
17 have been investigated years before. Whole races of mankind have
18 trained themselves for centuries to become fit instruments for
19 discovering the fine workings of the nerves; their records have been
20 published ages ago, colleges have been created to study these
21 subjects, and men and women there are still who are living
22 demonstrations of these phenomena. Of course I admit that there is
23 a good deal of hoax in the whole thing, a good deal of what is wrong
24 and untrue in these things; but with what is this not the case? Take
25 any common scientific phenomenon; there are two or three facts
26 which either scientists or ordinary men may regard as absolute
27 truths, and the rest as mere frothy suppositions. Now let the
28 agnostic apply the same test to his own science which he would
29 apply to what he does not want to believe. Half of it would be
30 shaken to its foundation at once. We are bound to live on
31 suppositions. We cannot live satisfied where we are; that is the
32 natural growth of the human soul. We cannot become agnostics on
33 this side and at the same time go about seeking for anything here;
34 we have to pick. And, for this reason, we have to get beyond our
35 limits, struggle to know what seems to be unknowable; and this
36 struggle must continue.

37 In my opinion, therefore, I go really one step further than
38 the lecturer, and advance the opinion that most of the psychical
39 phenomena--not only little things like spirit-rappings or table-
40 rappings which are mere child's play, not merely little things like
41 telepathy which I have seen boys do even--most of the psychical
42 phenomena which the last speaker calls the higher clairvoyance,
43 but which I would rather beg to call the experiences of the super-
44 conscious state of the mind, are the very stepping-stones to real
45 psychological investigation. The first thing to be seen is whether the
46 mind can attain to that state or not. My explanation would, of
47 course, be a little different from his, but we should probably agree
48 when we explain terms. Not much depends on the question whether
49 this present consciousness continues after death or not, seeing that
50 this universe, as it is now, is not bound to this state of
51 consciousness. Consciousness is not co-existent with existence. In
52 my own body, and in all of our bodies, we must all admit that we are

1 conscious of very little of the body, and of the greater part of it we
2 are unconscious. Yet it exists. Nobody is ever conscious of his brain,
3 for example. I never saw my brain, and I am never conscious of it.
4 Yet I know that it exists. Therefore we may say that it is not
5 consciousness that we want, but the existence of something which
6 is not this gross matter; and that that knowledge can be gained
7 even in this life, and that that knowledge has been gained and
8 demonstrated, as far as any science has been demonstrated, is a
9 fact. We have to look into these things, and I would insist on
10 reminding those who are here present on one other point. It is well
11 to remember that very many times we are deluded on this. Certain
12 people place before us the demonstration of a fact which is not
13 ordinary to the spiritual nature, and we reject that fact because we
14 say we cannot find it to be true. In many cases the fact may not be
15 correct, but in many cases also we forget to consider whether we
16 are fit to receive the demonstration or not, whether we have
17 permitted our bodies and our minds to become fit subjects for their
18 discovery.

1
2
3 *ON ART IN INDIA*
4

5 "Arts and Sciences in India" was the topic under which the
6 Swami Vivekananda was introduced to the audience at Wendte
7 Hall, San Francisco. The Swami held the attention of his hearers
8 throughout as was demonstrated by the many questions which were
9 put to him after his address.

10 The Swami said in part:

11 In the history of nations, the government at the beginning has
12 always been in the hands of the priests. All the learning also has
13 proceeded from the priests. Then, after the priests, the government
14 changes hands, and the Kshatriya or the kingly power prevails, and
15 the military rule is triumphant. This has always been true. And last
16 comes the grasp of luxury, and the people sink down under it to be
17 dominated by stronger and more barbarous races.

18 Amongst all races of the world, from the earliest time in
19 history, India has been called the land of wisdom. For ages India
20 itself has never gone out to conquer other nations. Its people have
21 never been fighters. Unlike your Western people, they do not eat
22 meat, for meat makes fighters; the blood of animals makes you
23 restless, and you desire to do something.

24 Compare India and England in the Elizabethan period. What
25 a dark age it was for your people, and how enlightened we were
26 even then. The Anglo-Saxon people have always been badly fitted
27 for art. They have good poetry--for instance, how wonderful is the
28 blank verse of Shakespeare! Merely the rhyming of words is not
29 good. It is not the most civilised thing in the world.

30 In India, music was developed to the full seven notes, even
31 to half and quarter notes, ages ago. India led in music, also in
32 drama and sculpture. Whatever is done now is merely an attempt at
33 imitation. Everything now in India hinges on the question of how
34 little a man requires to live upon.

IS INDIA A BENIGHTED COUNTRY?

The following is a report of a lecture at Detroit, United States, America, with the editorial comments of the *Boston Evening Transcript*, 5th April, 1894:

Swami Vivekananda has been in Detroit recently and made a profound impression there. All classes flocked to hear him, and professional men in particular were greatly interested in his logic and his soundness of thought. The opera-house alone was large enough for his audience. He speaks English extremely well, and he is as handsome as he is good. The Detroit newspapers have devoted much space to the reports of his lectures. An editorial in the *Detroit Evening News* says: Most people will be inclined to think that Swami Vivekananda did better last night in his opera-house lecture than he did in any of his former lectures in this city. The merit of the Hindu's utterances last night lay in their clearness. He drew a very sharp line of distinction between Christianity and Christianity, and told his audience plainly wherein he himself is a Christian in one sense and not a Christian in another sense. He also drew a sharp line between Hinduism and Hinduism, carrying the implication that he desired to be classed as a Hindu only in its better sense. Swami Vivekananda stands superior to all criticism when he says, "We want missionaries of Christ. Let such come to India by the hundreds and thousands. Bring Christ's life to us and let it permeate the very core of society. Let him be preached in every village and corner of India."

When a man is as sound as that on the main question, all else that he may say must refer to the subordinate details. There is infinite humiliation in this spectacle of a pagan priest reading lessons of conduct and of life to the men who have assumed the spiritual supervision of Greenland's icy mountains and India's coral strand; but the sense of humiliation is the *sine qua non* of most reforms in this world. Having said what he did of the glorious life of the author of the Christian faith, Vivekananda has the right to lecture the way he has the men who profess to represent that life among the nations abroad. And after all, how like the Nazarene that sounds: "Provide neither gold nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves; for the workman is worthy of his meat." Those who have become at all familiar with the religious literature of India before the advent of Vivekananda are best prepared to understand the utter abhorrence of the Orientals of our Western commercial spirit--or what Vivekananda calls, "the shopkeeper's spirit"--in all that we do even in our very religion.

Here is a point for the missionaries which they cannot afford to ignore. They who would convert the Eastern world of paganism

1 must live up to what they preach, in contempt for the kingdoms of
2 this world and all the glory of them.

3 Brother Vivekananda considers India the most moral nation
4 in the world. Though in bondage, its spirituality still endures. Here
5 are extracts from the notices of some of his recent Detroit
6 addresses: At this point the lecturer struck the great moral keynote
7 of his discourse stating that with his people it was the belief that all
8 non-self is good and all self is bad. This point was emphasised
9 throughout the evening and might be termed the text of the
10 address. "To build a home is selfish, argues the Hindu, so he builds
11 it for the worship of God and for the entertainment of guests. To
12 cook food is selfish, so he cooks it for the poor; he will serve himself
13 last if any hungry stranger applies; and this feeling extends
14 throughout the length and breadth of the land. Any man can ask for
15 food and shelter and any house will be opened to him.

16 "The caste system has nothing to do with religion. A man's
17 occupation is hereditary--a carpenter is born a carpenter; a
18 goldsmith, a goldsmith; a workman, a workman; and a priest, a
19 priest.

20 "Two gifts are especially appreciated, the gift of learning
21 and the gift of life. But the gift of learning takes precedence. One
22 may save a man's life, and that is excellent; one may impart to
23 another knowledge, and that is better. To instruct for money is an
24 evil, and to do this would bring opprobrium upon the head of the
25 man who barter learning for gold as though it were an article of
26 trade. The Government makes gifts from time to time to the
27 instructors, and the moral effect is better than it would be if the
28 conditions were the same as exist in certain alleged civilised
29 countries." The speaker had asked throughout the length and
30 breadth of the land what was the definition of "civilisation", and he
31 had asked the question in many countries. Sometimes the reply has
32 been, "What we are, that is civilisation." He begged to differ in the
33 definition of the word. A nation may conquer the waves, control the
34 elements, develop the utilitarian problems of life seemingly to the
35 utmost limits, and yet not realise that in the individual, the highest
36 type of civilisation is found in him who has learned to conquer self.
37 This condition is found more in India than in any other country on
38 earth, for there the material conditions are subservient to the
39 spiritual, and the individual looks to the soul manifestations in
40 everything that has life, studying nature to this end. Hence that
41 gentle disposition to endure with indomitable patience the flings of
42 what appears unkind fortune, the while there is a full consciousness
43 of a spiritual strength and knowledge greater than that possessed
44 by any other people. Therefore the existence of a country and
45 people from which flows an unending stream that attracts the
46 attention of thinkers far and near to approach and throw from their
47 shoulders an oppressive earthly burden.

48 This lecture was prefaced with the statement that the
49 speaker had been asked many questions. A number of these he
50 preferred to answer privately, but three he had selected for
51 reasons, which would appear, to answer from the pulpit. They
52 were: "Do the people of India throw their children into the jaws of

1 the crocodiles?" "Do they kill themselves beneath the wheels of
2 Jagannatha?" "Do they burn widows with their husbands?" The
3 first question the lecturer treated in the same vein as an American
4 abroad would in answering inquiries about Indians running round
5 in the streets of New York and similar myths which are even today
6 entertained by many persons on the Continent. The statement was
7 too ludicrous to give a serious response to it. When asked by
8 certain well-meaning but ignorant people why they gave only
9 female children to the crocodiles, he could only ironically reply
10 that probably it was because they were softer and more tender
11 and could be more easily masticated by the inhabitants of the
12 river in that benighted country. Regarding the Jagannatha legend,
13 the lecturer explained the old practice of the Car-festival in the
14 sacred city, and remarked that possibly a few pilgrims in their zeal
15 to grasp the rope and participate in the drawing of the Car
16 slipped and fell and were so destroyed. Some such mishaps had
17 been exaggerated into the distorted versions from which the good
18 people of other countries shrank with horror. Vivekananda denied
19 that people burned widows. It was true, however, that widows had
20 burned themselves. In the few cases where this had happened,
21 they had been urged not to do so by holy men, who were always
22 opposed to suicide. Where the devoted widows insisted, stating
23 that they desired to accompany their husbands in the
24 transformation that had taken place, they were obliged to submit
25 themselves to the fiery test. That is, they thrust their hands within
26 the flames, and if they permitted them to be consumed, no further
27 opposition was placed in the way of the fulfilment of their desires.
28 But India is not the only country where women, who have loved,
29 have followed immediately the beloved one to the realms of
30 immortality; suicides in such cases have occurred in every land. It is
31 an uncommon bit of fanaticism in any country--as unusual in India
32 as elsewhere. "No," the speaker repeated, "the people do not burn
33 women in India; nor have they ever burned witches."

34 This latter touch is decidedly acute by way of reflection. No
35 analysis of the philosophy of the Hindu monk need be attempted
36 here, except to say that it is based in general on the struggle of the
37 soul to individually attain Infinity. One learned Hindu opened the
38 Lowell Institute Course this year. What Mr. Mozoomdar began,
39 might worthily be ended by Brother Vivekananda. This new visitor
40 has by far the most interesting personality, although in the Hindu
41 philosophy, of course, personality is not to be taken into
42 consideration. At the Parliament of Religions they used to keep
43 Vivekananda until the end of the programme to make people stay
44 until the end of the session. On a warm day, when a prosy speaker
45 talked too long and people began going home by hundreds, the
46 Chairman would get up and announce that Swami Vivekananda
47 would make a short address just before the benediction. Then he
48 would have the peaceable hundreds perfectly in tether. The four
49 thousand fanning people in the Hall of Columbus would sit smiling
50 and expectant, waiting for an hour or two of other men's speeches,
51 to listen to Vivekananda for fifteen minutes. The Chairman knew
52 the old rule of keeping the best until the last.

1
2 *THE CLAIMS OF RELIGION*
3

4 Many of you remember the thrill of joy with which in your
5 childhood you saw the glorious rising sun; all of you, sometimes in
6 your life, stand and gaze upon the glorious setting sun, and at least
7 in imagination, try to pierce through the beyond. This, in fact, is at
8 the bottom of the whole universe--this rising from and this setting
9 into the beyond, this whole universe coming up out of the unknown,
10 and going back again into the unknown, crawling in as a child out of
11 darkness, and crawling out again as an old man into darkness.

12 This universe of ours, the universe of the senses, the
13 rational, the intellectual, is bounded on both sides by the
14 illimitable, the unknowable, the ever unknown. Herein is the
15 search, herein are the inquiries, here are the facts; from this comes
16 the light which is known to the world as religion. Essentially,
17 however, religion belongs to the supersensuous and not to the
18 sense plane. It is beyond all reasoning, and not on the plane of
19 intellect. It is a vision, an inspiration, a plunge into the unknown
20 and unknowable, making the unknowable more than known, for it
21 can never be "known". This search has been in the human mind, as
22 I believe, from the very beginning of humanity. There cannot have
23 been human reasoning and intellect in any period of the world's
24 history without this struggle, this search beyond. In our little
25 universe, this human mind, we see a thought arise. Whence it rises
26 we do not know, and when it disappears, where it goes, we know
27 not either. The macrocosm and the microcosm are, as it were, in
28 the same groove, passing through the same stages, vibrating in the
29 same key.

30 I shall try to bring before you the Hindu theory that
31 religions do not come from without, but from within. It is my belief
32 that religious thought is in man's very constitution, so much so that
33 it is impossible for him to give up religion until he can give up his
34 mind and body, until he can stop thought and life. As long as a man
35 thinks, this struggle must go on, and so long man must have some
36 form of religion. Thus we see various forms of religion in the world.
37 It is a bewildering study; but it is not, as many of us think, a vain
38 speculation. Amidst this chaos there is harmony, throughout these
39 discordant sounds there is a note of concord; and he who is
40 prepared to listen to it, will catch the tone.

41 The great question of all questions at the present time is
42 this: Taking for granted that the knowable and the known are
43 bounded on both sides by the unknowable and the infinitely
44 unknown, why struggle for that unknown? Why shall we not be
45 content with the known? Why shall we not rest satisfied with
46 eating, drinking, and doing a little good to society? This idea is in
47 the air. From the most learned professor to the prattling baby, we
48 are told, "Do good to the world, that is all of religion, and don't
49 bother your head about questions of the beyond." So much so is
50 this the case that it has become a truism.

1 But fortunately we *must* inquire into the beyond. This
2 present, this expressed, is only one part of that unexpressed. The
3 sense universe is, as it were, only one portion, one bit of that
4 infinite spiritual universe projected into the plane of sense
5 consciousness. How can this little bit of projection be explained, be
6 understood, without knowing that which is beyond? It is said of
7 Socrates that one day while lecturing at Athens, he met a
8 Brahmana who had travelled into Greece, and Socrates told the
9 Brahmana that the greatest study for mankind is man. And the
10 Brahmana sharply retorted, "How can you know man until you
11 know God?" This God, this eternally Unknowable, or Absolute, or
12 Infinite, or without name--you may call Him by what name you like--
13 is the rationale, the only explanation, the *raison d'etre* of that
14 which is known and knowable, this present life. Take anything
15 before you, the most material thing--take any one of these most
16 materialistic sciences, such as chemistry or physics, astronomy or
17 biology--study it, push the study forward and forward, and the
18 gross forms will begin to melt and become finer and finer, until
19 they come to a point where you are bound to make a tremendous
20 leap from these material things into the immaterial. The gross melt
21 into the fine, physics into metaphysics, in every department of
22 knowledge.

23 So with everything we have--our society, our relations with
24 each other, our religion, and what you call ethics. There are
25 attempts at producing a system of ethics from the mere grounds of
26 utility. I challenge any man to produce such a rational system of
27 ethics. Do good to others. Why? Because it is the highest utility.
28 Suppose a man says, "I do not care for utility; I want to cut the
29 throats of others and make myself rich." What will you answer? It is
30 out-Heroding Herod! But where is the utility of my doing good to
31 the world? Am I a fool to work my life out that others may be
32 happy? Why shall I myself not be happy, if there is no other
33 sentiency beyond society, no other power in the universe beyond
34 the five senses? What prevents me from cutting the throats of my
35 brothers so long as I can make myself safe from the police, and
36 make myself happy? What will you answer? You are bound to show
37 some utility. When you are pushed from your ground you answer,
38 "My friend, it is good to be good." What is the power in the human
39 mind which says, "It is good to do good", which unfolds before us in
40 glorious view the grandeur of the soul, the beauty of goodness, the
41 all attractive power of goodness, the infinite power of goodness?
42 That is what we call God. Is it not?

43 Secondly, I want to tread on a little more delicate ground. I
44 want your attention, and ask you not to make any hasty conclusions
45 from what I say. We cannot do much good to this world. Doing good
46 to the world is very good. But can we do much good to the world?
47 Have we done much good these hundreds of years that we have
48 been struggling--have we increased the sum total of the happiness
49 in the world? Thousands of means have been created every day to
50 conduce to the happiness of the world, and this has been going on
51 for hundreds and thousands of years. I ask you: Is the sum total of
52 the happiness in the world today more than what it was a century

1 ago? It cannot be. Each wave that rises in the ocean must be at the
2 expense of a hollow somewhere. If one nation becomes rich and
3 powerful, it must be at the expense of another nation somewhere.
4 Each piece of machinery that is invented will make twenty people
5 rich and a twenty thousand people poor. It is the law of competition
6 throughout. The sum total of the energy displayed remains the
7 same throughout. It is, too, a foolhardy task. It is unreasonable to
8 state that we can have happiness without misery. With the increase
9 of all these means, you are increasing the want of the world, and
10 increased wants means insatiable thirst which will never be
11 quenched. What can fill this want, this thirst? And so long as there
12 is this thirst, misery is inevitable. It is the very nature of life to be
13 happy and miserable by turns. Then again is this world left to you to
14 do good to it? Is there no other power working in this universe? Is
15 God dead and gone, leaving His universe to you and me--the
16 Eternal, the Omnipotent, the All-merciful, the Ever-awakened, the
17 One who never sleeps when the universe is sleeping, whose eyes
18 never blink? This infinite sky is, as it were, His ever-open eye. Is He
19 dead and gone? Is He not acting in this universe? It is going on; you
20 need not be in a hurry; you need not make yourself miserable.

21 [The Swami here told the story of the man who wanted a
22 ghost to work for him, but who, when he had the ghost, could not
23 keep him employed, until he gave him a curly dog's tail to
24 straighten.]

25 Such is the case with us, with this doing good to the
26 universe. So, my brothers, we are trying to straighten out the tail of
27 the dog these hundreds and thousands of years. It is like
28 rheumatism. You drive it out from the feet, and it goes to the head;
29 you drive it from the head, and it goes somewhere else.

30 This will seem to many of you to be a terrible, pessimistic
31 view of the world, but it is not. Both pessimism and optimism are
32 wrong. Both are taking up the extremes.

33 So long as man has plenty to eat and drink, and good clothes
34 to wear, he becomes a great optimist; but that very man, when he
35 loses everything, becomes a great pessimist. When a man loses all
36 his money and is very poor, then and then alone, with the greatest
37 force come to him the ideas of brotherhood of humanity. This is the
38 world, and the more I go to different countries and see of this
39 world, and the older I get, the more I am trying to avoid both these
40 extremes of optimism and pessimism. The world is neither good nor
41 evil. It is the Lord's world. It is beyond both good and evil, perfect
42 in itself. His will is going on, showing all these different pictures;
43 and it will go on without beginning and without end. It is a great
44 gymnasium in which you and I, and millions of souls must come and
45 get exercises, and make ourselves strong and perfect. This is what
46 it is for. Not that God could not make a perfect universe; not that
47 He could not help the misery of the world. You remember the story
48 of the young lady and the clergyman, who were both looking at the
49 moon through the telescope, and found the moon spots. And the
50 clergyman said, "I am sure they are the spires of some churches."
51 "Nonsense," said the young lady, "I am sure they are the young
52 lovers kissing each other." So we are doing with this world. When

1 we are inside, we think we are seeing the inside. According to the
2 plane of existence in which we are, we see the universe. Fire in the
3 kitchen is neither good nor bad. When it cooks a meal for you, you
4 bless the fire, and say, "How good it is!" And when it burns your
5 finger, you say, "What a nuisance it is!" It would be equally correct
6 and logical to say: This universe is neither good nor evil. The world
7 is the world, and will be always so. If we open ourselves to it in
8 such a manner that the action of the world is beneficial to us, we
9 call it good. If we put ourselves in the position in which it is painful,
10 we call it evil. So you will always find children, who are innocent
11 and joyful and do not want to injure anyone, are very optimistic.
12 They are dreaming golden dreams. Old men who have all the
13 desires in their hearts and not the means to fulfil them, and
14 especially those who have been thumped and bumped by the world
15 a good deal, are very pessimistic. Religion wants to know the truth.
16 And the first thing it has discovered is that without a knowledge of
17 this truth there will be no life worth living.

18 Life will be a desert, human life will be vain, if we cannot
19 know the beyond. It is very good to say: Be contented with the
20 things of the present moment. The cows and the dogs are, and so
21 are all animals, and that is what makes them animals. So if man
22 rests content with the present and gives up all search into the
23 beyond, mankind will all have to go back to the animal plane again.
24 It is religion, this inquiry into the beyond, that makes the difference
25 between man and an animal. Well has it been said that man is the
26 only animal that naturally looks upwards; every other animal
27 naturally looks down. That looking upward and going upward and
28 seeking perfection are what is called salvation, and the sooner a
29 man begins to go higher, the sooner he raises himself towards this
30 idea of truth as salvation. It does not consist in the amount of
31 money in your pocket, or the dress you wear, or the house you live
32 in, but in the wealth of spiritual thought in your brain. That is what
33 makes for human progress; that is the source of all material and
34 intellectual progress, the motive power behind, the enthusiasm
35 that pushes mankind forward.

36 What again is the goal of mankind? Is it happiness, sensuous
37 pleasure? They used to say in the olden time that in heaven they
38 will play on trumpets and live round a throne; in modern time I find
39 that they think this ideal is very weak, and they have improved upon
40 it and say that they will have marriages and all these things there.
41 If there is any improvement in these two things, the second is an
42 improvement for the worse. All these various theories of heaven
43 that are being put forward show weakness in the mind. And that
44 weakness is here:

45 First, they think that sense happiness is the goal of life.
46 Secondly, they cannot conceive of anything that is beyond the five
47 senses. They are as irrational as the Utilitarians. Still they are much
48 better than the modern Atheistic Utilitarians, at any rate. Lastly,
49 this Utilitarian position is simply childish. What right have you to
50 say, "Here is my standard, and the whole universe must be
51 governed by my standard?" What right have you to say that every
52 truth shall be judged by this standard of yours--the standard that

1 preaches mere bread, and money, and clothes as God?

2 Religion does not live in bread, does not dwell in a house.
3 Again and again you hear this objection advanced: "What good can
4 religion do? Can it take away the poverty of the poor and give them
5 more clothes?" Supposing it cannot, would that prove the untruth
6 of religion? Suppose a baby stands up among you, when you are
7 trying to demonstrate an astronomical theory, and says, "Does it
8 bring gingerbread?" "No, it does not," you answer. "Then," says the
9 baby, "it is useless." Babies judge the whole universe from their
10 own standpoint, that of producing gingerbread, and so do the
11 babies of the world.

12 Sad to say at the later end of this nineteenth century that
13 these are passing for the learned, the most rational, the most
14 logical, the most intelligent crowd ever seen on this earth.

15 We must not judge of higher things from this low standpoint
16 of ours. Everything must be judged by its own standard, and the
17 infinite must be judged by the standard of infinity. Religion
18 permeates the whole of man's life, not only the present, but the
19 past, present, and future. It is therefore the eternal relation
20 between the eternal Soul, and the eternal God. Is it logical to
21 measure its value by its action upon five minutes of human life?
22 Certainly not. But these are all negative arguments.

23 Now comes the question: Can religion really do anything? It
24 can.

25 Can religion really bring bread and clothes? It does. It is
26 always doing so, and it does infinitely more than that; it brings to
27 man eternal life. It has made man what he is, and will make of this
28 human animal a God. That is what religion can do. Take off religion
29 from human society, what will remain? Nothing but a forest of
30 brutes. As I have just tried to show you that it is absurd to suppose
31 that sense happiness is the goal of humanity, we find as a
32 conclusion that knowledge is the goal of all life. I have tried to show
33 to you that in these thousands of years of struggle for the search of
34 truth and the benefit of mankind, we have scarcely made the least
35 appreciable advance. But mankind has made gigantic advance in
36 knowledge. The highest utility of this progress lies not in the
37 creature comforts that it brings, but in manufacturing a god out of
38 this animal man. Then, with knowledge, naturally comes bliss.
39 Babies think that the happiness of the senses is the highest thing
40 they can have. Most of you know that there is a keener enjoyment
41 in man in the intellect, than in the senses. No one of you can feel
42 the same pleasure in eating as a dog does. You can mark that.
43 Where does the pleasure come from in man? Not that whole-souled
44 enjoyment of eating that the pig or the dog has. See how the pig
45 eats. It is unconscious of the universe while it is eating; its whole
46 soul is bound up in the food. It may be killed but it does not care
47 when it has food. Think of the intense enjoyment that the pig has!
48 No man has that. Where is it gone? Man has changed it into
49 intellectual enjoyment. The pig cannot enjoy religious lectures. That
50 is one step higher and keener yet than intellectual pleasures, and
51 that is the spiritual plane, spiritual enjoyment of things divine,

1 soaring beyond reason and intellect. To procure that we shall have
2 to lose all these sense-enjoyments. This is the highest utility. Utility
3 is what I enjoy, and what everyone enjoys, and we run for that.

4 We find that man enjoys his intellect much more than an
5 animal enjoys his senses, and we see that man enjoys his spiritual
6 nature even more than his rational nature. So the highest wisdom
7 must be this spiritual knowledge. With this knowledge will come
8 bliss. All these things of this world are but the shadows, the
9 manifestations in the third or fourth degree of the real Knowledge
10 and Bliss.

11 It is this Bliss that comes to you through the love of
12 humanity; the shadow of this spiritual Bliss is this human love, but
13 do not confound it with that human bliss. There is that great error:
14 We are always mistaking the love that we have--this carnal, human
15 love, this attachment for particles, this electrical attraction for
16 human beings in society--for this spiritual Bliss. We are apt to
17 mistake this for that eternal state, which it is not. For want of any
18 other name in English, I would call it Bliss, which is the same as
19 eternal knowledge--and that is our goal. Throughout the world,
20 wherever there has been a religion, and wherever there will be a
21 religion, they have all sprung and will all spring out of one source,
22 called by various names in various countries; and that is what in the
23 Western countries you call "inspiration". What is this inspiration?
24 Inspiration is the only source of religious knowledge. We have seen
25 that religion essentially belongs to the plane beyond the senses. It
26 is "where the eyes cannot go, or the ears, where the mind cannot
27 reach, or what words cannot express". That is the field and goal of
28 religion, and from this comes that which we call inspiration. It
29 naturally follows, therefore, that there must be some way to go
30 beyond the senses. It is perfectly true that our reason cannot go
31 beyond the senses; all reasoning is within the senses, and reason is
32 based upon the facts which the senses reach. But can a man go
33 beyond the senses? Can a man know the unknowable? Upon this
34 the whole question of religion is to be and has been decided. From
35 time immemorial there was that adamant wall, the barrier to the
36 senses; from time immemorial hundreds and thousands of men and
37 woman have dashed themselves against this wall to penetrate
38 beyond.

39 Millions have failed, and millions have succeeded. This is the
40 history of the world. Millions more do not believe that anyone ever
41 succeeded; and these are the sceptics of the present day. Man
42 succeeds in going beyond this wall if he only tries. Man has not only
43 reason, he has not only senses, but there is much in him which is
44 beyond the senses. We shall try to explain it a little. I hope you will
45 feel that it is within you also.

46 I move my hand, and I feel and I know that I am moving my
47 hand. I call it consciousness. I am conscious that I am moving my
48 hand. But my heart is moving. I am not conscious of that; and yet
49 who is moving the heart? It must be the same being. So we see that
50 this being who moves the hands and speaks, that is to say, acts
51 consciously, also acts unconsciously. We find, therefore, that this
52 being can act upon two planes--one, the plane of consciousness, and

1 the other, the plane below that. The impulsions from the plane of
2 unconsciousness are what we call instinct, and when the same
3 impulsions come from the plane of consciousness, we call it reason.
4 But there is a still higher plane, superconsciousness in man. This is
5 apparently the same as unconsciousness, because it is beyond the
6 plane of consciousness, but it is above consciousness and not below
7 it. It is not instinct, it is inspiration. There is proof of it. Think of all
8 these great prophets and sages that the world has produced, and it
9 is well known how there will be times in their lives, moments in
10 their existence, when they will be apparently unconscious of the
11 external world; and all the knowledge that subsequently comes out
12 of them, they claim, was gained during this state of existence. It is
13 said of Socrates that while marching with the army, there was a
14 beautiful sunrise, and that set in motion in his mind a train of
15 thought; he stood there for two days in the sun quite unconscious.
16 It was such moments that gave the Socratic knowledge to the
17 world.

18 So with all the great preachers and prophets, there are
19 moments in their lives when they, as it were, rise from the
20 conscious and go above it. And when they come back to the plane of
21 consciousness, they come radiant with light; they have brought
22 news from the beyond, and they are the inspired seers of the world.

1 But there is a great danger. Any man may say he is inspired;
2 many times they say that. Where is the test? During sleep we are
3 unconscious; a fool goes to sleep; he sleeps soundly for three hours;
4 and when he comes back from that state, he is the same fool if not
5 worse. Jesus of Nazareth goes into his transfiguration, and when he
6 comes out, he has become Jesus the Christ. That is all the
7 difference. One is inspiration, and the other is instinct. The one is a
8 child, and the other is the old experienced man. This inspiration is
9 possible for everyone of us. It is the source of all religions, and will
10 ever be the source of all higher knowledge. Yet there are great
11 dangers in the way. Sometimes fraudulent people try to impose
12 themselves upon mankind. In these days it is becoming all too
13 prevalent. A friend of mine had a very fine picture. Another
14 gentleman who was rather religiously inclined, and a rich man, had
15 his eyes upon this picture; but my friend would not sell it. This
16 other gentleman one day comes and says to my friend, I have an
17 inspiration and I have a message from God. "What is your
18 message?" my friend asked. "The message is that you must deliver
19 that picture to me." My friend was up to his mark; he immediately
20 added, "Exactly so; how beautiful! I had exactly the same
21 inspiration, that I should have to deliver to you the picture. Have
22 you brought your cheque?" "Cheque? What cheque?" "Then", said
23 my friend, "I don't think your inspiration was right. My inspiration
24 was that I must give the picture to the man who brought a cheque
25 for \$100,000. You must bring the cheque first." The other man
26 found he was caught, and gave up the inspiration theory. These are
27 the dangers. A man came to me in Boston and said he had visions in
28 which he had been talked to in the Hindu language. I said, "If I can
29 see what he says I will believe it." But he wrote down a lot of
30 nonsense. I tried my best to understand it, but I could not. I told
31 him that so far as my knowledge went, such language never was
32 and never will be in India. They had not become civilised enough to
33 have such a language as that. He thought of course that I was a
34 rogue and sceptic, and went away; and I would not be surprised
35 next to hear that he was in a lunatic asylum. These are the two
36 dangers always in this world--the danger from frauds, and the
37 danger from fools. But that need not deter us, for all great things in
38 this world are fraught with danger. At the same time we must take
39 a little precaution. Sometimes I find persons perfectly wanting in
40 logical analysis of anything. A man comes and says, "I have a
41 message from such and such a god", and asks, "Can you deny it? Is
42 it not possible that there will be such and such a god, and that he
43 will give such a message?" And 90 per cent of fools will swallow it.
44 They think that that is reason enough. But one thing you ought to
45 know, that it is possible for anything to happen--quite possible that
46 the earth may come into contact with the Dog star in the next year
47 and go to pieces. But if I advance this proposition, you have the
48 right to stand up and ask me to prove it to you. What the lawyers
49 call the *onus probandi* is on the man who made the proposition. It
50 is not your duty to prove that I got my inspiration from a certain
51 god, but mine, because I produced the proposition to you. If I
52 cannot prove it, I should better hold my tongue. Avoid both these
53 dangers, and you can get anywhere you please. Many of us get

1 many messages in our lives, or think we get them, and as long as
2 the message is regarding our own selves, go on doing what you
3 please; but when it is in regard to our contact with and behaviour to
4 others, think a hundred times before you act upon it; and then you
5 will be safe.

6 We find that this inspiration is the only source of religion; yet
7 it has always been fraught with many dangers; and the last and
8 worst of all dangers is excessive claims. Certain men stand up and
9 say they have a communication from God, and they are the
10 mouthpiece of God Almighty, and no one else has the right to have
11 that communication. This, on the face of it, is unreasonable. If there
12 is anything in the universe, it must be universal; there is not one
13 movement here that is not universal, because the whole universe is
14 governed by laws. It is systematic and harmonious all through.
15 Therefore what is anywhere must be everywhere. Each atom in the
16 universe is built on the same plan as the biggest sun and the stars.
17 If one man was ever inspired, it is possible for each and every one
18 of us to be inspired, and that is religion. Avoid all these dangers,
19 illusions and delusions, and fraud and making excessive claims, but
20 come face to face with religious facts, and come into direct contact
21 with the science of religion. Religion does not consist in believing
22 any number of doctrines or dogmas, in going to churches or
23 temples, in reading certain books. Have you seen God? Have you
24 seen the soul? If not, are you struggling for it? It is here and now,
25 and you have not to wait for the future. What is the future but the
26 present illimitable? What is the whole amount of time but one
27 second repeated again and again? Religion is here and now, in this
28 present life.

29 One question more: What is the goal? Nowadays it is
30 asserted that man is progressing infinitely, forward and forward,
31 and there is no goal of perfection to attain to. Ever approaching,
32 never attaining, whatever that may mean, and however wonderful
33 it may be, it is absurd on the face of it. Is there any motion in a
34 straight line? A straight line infinitely projected becomes a circle, it
35 returns back to the starting point. You must end where you begin;
36 and as you began in God, you must go back to God. What remains?
37 Detail work. Through eternity you have to do the detail work.

38 Yet another question: Are we to discover new truths of
39 religion as we go on? Yea and nay. In the first place, we cannot
40 know anything more of religion; it has been all known. In all the
41 religions of the world you will find it claimed that there is a unity
42 within us. Being one with the Divinity, there cannot be any further
43 progress in that sense. Knowledge means finding this unity in
44 variety. I see you as men and women, and this is variety. It becomes
45 scientific knowledge when I group you together and call you human
46 beings. Take the science of chemistry, for instance. Chemists are
47 seeking to resolve all known substances into their original
48 elements, and if possible, to find the one element from which all
49 these are derived. The time may come when they will find the one
50 element. That is the source of all other elements. Reaching that,
51 they can go no further; the science of chemistry will have become
52 perfect. So it is with the science of religion. If we can discover this

1 perfect unity, then there cannot be any further progress.

2 When it was discovered that "I and my Father are one", the
3 last word was said of religion. Then there only remained detail
4 work. In true religion there is no faith or belief in the sense of blind
5 faith. No great preacher ever preached that. That only comes with
6 degeneracy. Fools pretend to be followers of this or that spiritual
7 giant, and although they may be without power, endeavour to teach
8 humanity to believe blindly. Believe what? To believe blindly is to
9 degenerate the human soul. Be an atheist if you want, but do not
10 believe in anything unquestioningly. Why degrade the soul to the
11 level of animals? You not only hurt yourselves thereby, but you
12 injure society, and make danger for those that come after you.
13 Stand up and reason out, having no blind faith. Religion is a
14 question of being and becoming, not of believing. This is religion,
15 and when you have attained to that you have religion. Before that
16 you are no better than the animals. "Do not believe in what you
17 have heard," says the great Buddha, "do not believe in doctrines
18 because they have been handed down to you through generations;
19 do not believe in anything because it is followed blindly by many; do
20 not believe because some old sage makes a statement; do not
21 believe in truths to which you have become attached by habit; do
22 not believe merely on the authority of your teachers and elders.
23 Have deliberation and analyse, and when the result agrees with
24 reason and conduces to the good of one and all, accept it and live
25 up to it."

1
2
3 *CONCENTRATION*
4

5 [This and the following two lectures are reproduced here
6 from the *Vedanta and the West* with the kind permission of the
7 Vedanta Society of Southern California, by whom is reserved the
8 copyright for America. The lectures were recorded by Ida Ansell
9 under circumstances which she herself relates thus:

10 "Swami Vivekananda's second trip to the West occurred in
11 1899-1900. During the first half of 1900 he worked in and around
12 San Francisco, California. I was a resident of that city, twenty-two
13 years old at the time. . . . I heard him lecture perhaps a score of
14 times from March to May of 1900, and recorded seventeen of his
15 talks. . . .

16 "The lectures were given in San Francisco, Oakland, and
17 Alameda, in churches, in the Alameda and San Francisco Homes of
18 Truth, and in rented halls. . . . Altogether Swamiji gave, besides
19 nearly daily interviews and informal classes, at least thirty or forty
20 major addresses in March, April, and May. . . .

21 "I was long hesitant about transcribing and releasing these
22 lectures because of the imperfectness of my notes. I was just an
23 amateur stenographer, at the time I took them. . . . One would have
24 needed a speed of at least three hundred words per minute to
25 capture all of Swamiji's torrents of eloquence. I possessed less than
26 half the required speed, and at the time I had no idea that the
27 material would have value to anyone but myself. In addition to his
28 fast speaking pace, Swamiji was a superb actor. His stories and
29 imitations absolutely forced one to stop writing, to enjoy watching
30 him. . . . Even though my notes were somewhat fragmentary, I have
31 yielded to the opinion that their contents are precious and must be
32 given for publication.

33 "Swamiji's speaking style was colloquial, fresh, and forceful.
34 No alterations have been made in it; no adjusting or smoothing out
35 of his spontaneous flow for purposes of publication has been done.
36 Where omissions were made because of some obscurity in the
37 meaning, they have been indicated by three dots. Anything inserted
38 for purposes of clarification has been placed in square brackets.
39 With these qualifications, the words are exactly as Swamiji spoke
40 them.

41 "Everything Swamiji said had tremendous power. These
42 lectures have slept in my old stenographer's notebook for more
43 than fifty years. Now as they emerge, one feels that the power is
44 still there."]

45 All knowledge we have, either of the external or internal
46 world, is obtained through only one method--by the concentration of
47 the mind. No knowledge can be had of any science unless we can
48 concentrate our minds upon the subject. The astronomer
49 concentrates his mind through the telescope . . . and so on. If you

1 want to study your own mind, it will be the same process. You will
2 have to concentrate your mind and turn it back upon itself. The
3 difference in this world between mind and mind is simply the fact of
4 concentration. One, more concentrated than the other, gets more
5 knowledge.

6 In the lives of all great men, past and present, we find this
7 tremendous power of concentration. Those are men of genius, you
8 say. The science of Yoga tells us that we are all geniuses if we try
9 hard to be. Some will come into this life better fitted and will do it
10 quicker perhaps. We can all do the same. The same power is in
11 everyone. The subject of the present lecture is how to concentrate
12 the mind in order to study the mind itself.

13 Yogis have laid down certain rules and this night I am going
14 to give you a sketch of some of these rules.

15 Concentration, of course, comes from various sources.
16 Through the senses you can get concentration. Some get it when
17 they hear beautiful music, others when they see beautiful
18 scenery. . . . Some get concentrated by lying upon beds of spikes,
19 sharp iron spikes, others by sitting upon sharp pebbles. These are
20 extraordinary cases [using] most unscientific procedure. Scientific
21 procedure is gradually training the mind.

22 One gets concentrated by holding his arm up. Torture gives
23 him the concentration he wants. But all these are extraordinary.

24 Universal methods have been organised according to
25 different philosophers. Some say the state we want to attain is
26 super-consciousness of the mind--going beyond the limitations the
27 body has made for us. The value of ethics to the Yogi lies in that it
28 makes the mind pure. The purer the mind, the easier it is to control
29 it. The mind takes every thought that rises and works it out. The
30 grosser the mind, the more difficult [it is] to control [it]. The
31 immoral man will never be able to concentrate his mind to study
32 psychology. He may get a little control as he begins, get a little
33 power of hearing . . . and even those powers will go from him. The
34 difficulty is that if you study closely, you see how [the] extraordinary
35 power arrived at was not attained by regular scientific training. The
36 men who, by the power of magic, control serpents will be killed by
37 serpents. . . . The man who attains any extraordinary powers will in
38 the long run succumb to those powers. There are millions [who]
39 receive power through all sorts of ways in India. The vast majority
40 of them die raving lunatics. Quite a number commit suicide, the
41 mind [being] unbalanced.

42 The study must be put on the safe side: scientific, slow,
43 peaceful. The first requisite is to be moral. Such a man wants the
44 gods to come down, and they will come down and manifest
45 themselves to him. That is our psychology and philosophy in
46 essence, [to be] perfectly moral. Just think what that means! No
47 injury, perfect purity, perfect austerity! These are absolutely
48 necessary. Just think, if a man can attain all these in perfection!
49 What more do you want? If he is free from all enmity towards any
50 being, . . . all animals will give up their enmity [in his presence].
51 The Yogis lay down very strict laws . . . so that one cannot pass off

1 for a charitable man without being charitable. . . .

2 If you believe me, I have seen a man who used to live in a
3 hole and there were cobras and frogs living with him. . . .
4 Sometimes he would fast for [days and months] and then come out.
5 He was always silent. One day there came a robber. . . .

6 My old master used to say, "When the lotus of the heart has
7 bloomed, the bees will come by themselves." Men like that are
8 there yet. They need not talk. . . . When the man is perfect from his
9 heart, without a thought of hatred, all animals will give up their
10 hatred [before him]. So with purity. These are necessary for our
11 dealings with our fellow beings. We must love all. . . . We have no
12 business to look at the faults of others: it does no good. We must not
13 even think of them. Our business is with the good. We are not here
14 to deal with faults. Our business is to be good.

15 Here comes Miss So-and-so. She says, "I am going to be a
16 Yogi." She tells the news twenty times, meditates fifty days, then
17 she says, "There is nothing in this religion. I have tried it. There is
18 nothing in it."

19 The very basis [of spiritual life] is not there. The foundation
20 [must be] this perfect morality. That is the great difficulty. . . .

21 In our country there are vegetarian sects. They will take in
22 the early morning pounds of sugar and place it on the ground for
23 ants, and the story is, when one of them was putting sugar on the
24 ground for ants, a man placed his foot upon the ants. The former
25 said, "Wretch, you have killed the animals!" And he gave him such a
26 blow that it killed the man.

27 External purity is very easy and all the world rushes towards
28 [it]. If a certain kind of dress is the kind of morality [to be
29 observed], any fool can do that. When it is grappling with the mind
30 itself, it is hard work.

31 The people who do external, superficial things are so self-
32 righteous! I remember, when I was a boy I had a great regard for
33 the character of Jesus Christ. [Then I read about the wedding feast
34 in the Bible.] I closed the book and said, "He ate meat and drank
35 wine! He cannot be a good man."

36 We are always losing sight of the real meaning of things. The
37 little eating and dress! Every fool can see that. Who sees that which
38 is beyond? It is culture of the heart that we want. . . . One mass of
39 people in India we see bathing twenty times a day sometimes,
40 making themselves very pure. And they do not touch anyone. . . .
41 The coarse facts, the external things! [If by bathing one could be
42 pure,] fish are the purest beings.

43 Bathing, and dress, and food regulation--all these have their
44 proper value when they are complementary to the spiritual. . . .
45 That first, and these all help. But without it, no amount of eating
46 grass . . . is any good at all. They are helps if properly understood.
47 But improperly understood, they are derogatory. . . .

48 This is the reason why I am explaining these things: First,
49 because in all religions everything degenerates upon being

1 practised by [the ignorant]. The camphor in the bottle evaporated,
2 and they are fighting over the bottle.

3 Another thing: . . . [Spirituality] evaporates when they say,
4 "This is right, and that is wrong." All quarrels are [with forms and
5 creeds] never in the spirit. The Buddhist offered for years glorious
6 preaching; gradually, this spirituality evaporated. . . . [Similarly with
7 Christianity.] And then began the quarrel whether it is three gods
8 in one or one in three, when nobody wants to go to God Himself and
9 know what He is. We have to go to God Himself to know whether
10 He is three in one or one in three.

11 Now, with this explanation, the posture. Trying to control the
12 mind, a certain posture is necessary. Any posture in which the
13 person can sit easily--that is the posture for that person. As a rule,
14 you will find that the spinal column must be left free. It is not
15 intended to bear the weight of the body. . . . The only thing to
16 remember in the sitting posture: [use] any posture in which the
17 spine is perfectly free of the weight of the body.

18 Next [Pranayama] . . . the breathing exercises. A great deal
19 of stress is laid upon breathing. . . . What I am telling you is not
20 something gleaned from some sect in India. It is universally true.
21 Just as in this country you teach your children certain prayers, [in
22 India] they get the children and give them certain facts etc.

23 Children are not taught any religion in India except one or
24 two prayers. Then they begin to seek for somebody with whom they
25 can get *en rapport*. They go to different persons and find that "This
26 man is the man for me", and get initiation. If I am married, my wife
27 may possibly get another man teacher and my son will get
28 somebody else, and that is always my secret between me and my
29 teacher. The wife's religion the husband need not know, and he
30 would not dare ask her what her religion is. It is well known that
31 they would never say. It is only known to that person and the
32 teacher. . . . Sometimes you will find that what would be quite
33 ludicrous to one will be just teaching for another. . . . Each is
34 carrying his own burden and is to be helped according to his
35 particular mind. It is the business of every individual, between him,
36 his teacher, and God. But there are certain general methods which
37 all these teachers preach. Breathing [and] meditating are universal.
38 That is the worship in India.

39 On the banks of the Ganga, we will see men, women, and
40 children all [practising] breathing and then meditating. Of course,
41 they have other things to do. They cannot devote much time to this.
42 But those who have taken this as the study of life, they practise
43 various methods. There are eighty-four different Asanas (postures).
44 Those that take it up under some person, they always feel the
45 breath and the movements in all the different parts of the body. . . .

46 Next comes Dharana [concentration]. . . . Dharana is holding
47 the mind in certain spots.

48 The Hindu boy or girl . . . gets initiation. He gets from his
49 Guru a word. This is called the root word. This word is given to the
50 Guru [by his Guru], and he gives it to his disciples. One such word

1 is OM. All these symbols have a great deal of meaning, and they
2 hold it secret, never write it. They must receive it through the ear--
3 not through writing--from the teacher, and then hold it as God
4 himself. Then they meditate on the word. . . .

5 I used to pray like that at one time, all through the rainy
6 season, four months. I used to get up and take a plunge in the river,
7 and with all my wet clothes on repeat [the Mantra] till the sun set.
8 Then I ate something--a little rice or something. Four months in the
9 rainy season!

10 The Indian mind believes that there is nothing in the world
11 that cannot be obtained. If a man wants money in this country, he
12 goes to work and earns money. There, he gets a formula and sits
13 under a tree and believes that money must come. Everything must
14 come by the power of his [thought]. You make money here. It is the
15 same thing. You put forth your whole energy upon money-making.

16 There are some sects called Hatha-Yogis. . . . They say the
17 greatest good is to keep the body from dying. . . . Their whole
18 process is clinging to the body. Twelve years training! And they
19 begin with little children, otherwise it is impossible. . . . One thing
20 [is] very curious about the Hatha-Yogi: When he first becomes a
21 disciple, he goes into the wilderness and lives alone forty days
22 exactly. All they have they learn within those forty days.

23 A man in Calcutta claims to have lived five hundred years.
24 The people all tell me that their grandfathers saw him. . . . He takes
25 a constitutional twenty miles, never walks, he runs. Goes into the
26 water, covers himself [from] top to toe with mud. After that he
27 plunges again into the water, again sticks himself with mud. . . . I do
28 not see any good in that. (Snakes, they say, live two hundred years.)
29 He must be very old, because I have travelled fourteen years in
30 India and wherever I went everybody knew him. He has been
31 travelling all his life. . . . [The Hatha Yogi] will swallow a piece of
32 rubber eighty inches long and take it out again. Four times a day he
33 has to wash every part of his body, internal and external parts. . . .

34 The walls can keep their bodies thousands of years. . . .
35 What of that? I would not want to live so long. "Sufficient unto the
36 day is the evil thereof." One little body, with all its delusions and
37 limitations, is enough.

38 There are other sects. . . . They give you a drop of the elixir
39 of life and you remain young. . . . It will take me months to
40 enumerate [all the sects]. All their activity is on this side [in the
41 material world]. Every day a new sect. . . .

42 The power of all those sects is in the mind. Their idea is to
43 hold the mind. First concentrate it and hold it at a certain place.
44 They generally say, at certain parts of the body along the spinal
45 column or upon the nerve centres. By holding the mind at the nerve
46 centres, [the Yogi] gets power over the body. The body is the great
47 cause of disturbance to his peace, is opposite of his highest ideal, so
48 he wants control: [to] keep the body as servant.

49 Then comes meditation. That is the highest state. . . . When
50 [the mind] is doubtful that is not its great state. Its great state is

1 meditation. It looks upon things and sees things, not identifying
2 itself with anything else. As long as I feel pain, I have identified
3 myself with the body. When I feel joy or pleasure, I have identified
4 myself with the body. But the high state will look with the same
5 pleasure or blissfulness upon pleasure or upon pain. . . . Every
6 meditation is direct superconsciousness. In perfect concentration
7 the soul becomes actually free from the bonds of the gross body
8 and knows itself as it is. Whatever one wants, that comes to him.
9 Power and knowledge are already there. The soul identifies itself
10 with that which is powerless matter and thus weeps. It identifies
11 itself with mortal shapes. . . . But if that free soul wants to exercise
12 any power, it will have it. If it does not, it does not come. He who
13 has known God has become God. There is nothing impossible to
14 such a free soul. No more birth and death for him. He is free for
15 ever.

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MEDITATION

(Delivered at the Washington Hall, San Francisco, April 3, 1900)

Meditation has been laid stress upon by all religions. The meditative state of mind is declared by the Yogis to be the highest state in which the mind exists. When the mind is studying the external object, it gets identified with it, loses itself. To use the simile of the old Indian philosopher: the soul of man is like a piece of crystal, but it takes the colour of whatever is near it. Whatever the soul touches . . . it has to take its colour. That is the difficulty. That constitutes the bondage. The colour is so strong, the crystal forgets itself and identifies itself with the colour. Suppose a red flower is near the crystal and the crystal takes the colour and forgets itself, thinks it is red. We have taken the colour of the body and have forgotten what we are. All the difficulties that follow come from that one dead body. All our fears, all worries, anxieties, troubles, mistakes, weakness, evil, are from that one great blunder--that we are bodies. This is the ordinary person. It is the person taking the colour of the flower near to it. We are no more bodies than the crystal is the red flower.

The practice of meditation is pursued. The crystal knows what it is, takes its own colour. It is meditation that brings us nearer to truth than anything else. . . .

In India two persons meet. In English they say, "How do you do?" The Indian greeting is, "Are you upon yourself?" The moment you stand upon something else, you run the risk of being miserable. This is what I mean by meditation--the soul trying to stand upon itself. That state must surely be the healthiest state of the soul, when it is thinking of itself, residing in its own glory. No, all the other methods that we have--by exciting emotions, prayers, and all that--really have that one end in view. In deep emotional excitement the soul tries to stand upon itself. Although the emotion may arise from anything external, there is concentration of mind.

There are three stages in meditation. The first is what is called [Dharana], concentrating the mind upon an object. I try to concentrate my mind upon this glass, excluding every other object from my mind except this glass. But the mind is wavering. . . . When it has become strong and does not waver so much, it is called [Dhyana], meditation. And then there is a still higher state when the differentiation between the glass and myself is lost--[Samadhi or absorption]. The mind and the glass are identical. I do not see any difference. All the senses stop and all powers that have been working through other channels of other senses [are focused in the mind]. Then this glass is under the power of the mind entirely. This is to be realised. It is a tremendous play played by the Yogis. . . . Take for granted, the external object exists. Then that which is really outside of us is not what we see. The glass that I see is not the external object certainly. That external something which is the glass I do not know and will never know.

1 Something produces an impression upon me. Immediately I
2 send the reaction towards that, and the glass is the result of the
3 combination of these two. Action from outside--X. Action from
4 inside--Y. The glass is XY. When you look at X, call it external world--
5 at Y, internal world. . . . If you try to distinguish which is your mind
6 and which is the world--there is no such distinction. The world is
7 the combination of you and something else. . . .

8 Let us take another example. You are dropping stones upon
9 the smooth surface of a lake. Every stone you drop is followed by a
10 reaction. The stone is covered by the little waves in the lake.
11 Similarly, external things are like the stones dropping into the lake
12 of the mind. So we do not really see the external . . . ; we see the
13 wave only. . . .

14 These waves that rise in the mind have caused many things
15 outside. We are not discussing the [merits of] idealism and realism.
16 We take for granted that things exist outside, but what we see is
17 different from things that exist outside, as we see what exists
18 outside plus ourselves.

19 Suppose I take my contribution out of the glass. What
20 remains? Almost nothing. The glass will disappear. If I take my
21 contribution from the table, what would remain of the table?
22 Certainly not this table, because it was a mixture of the outside plus
23 my contribution. The poor lake has got to throw the wave towards
24 the stone whenever [the stone] is thrown in it. The mind must
25 create the wave towards any sensation. Suppose . . . we can
26 withhold the mind. At once we are masters. We refuse to contribute
27 our share to all these phenomena. . . . If I do not contribute my
28 share, it has got to stop.

29 You are creating this bondage all the time. How? By putting
30 in your share. We are all making our own beds, forging our own
31 chains. . . . When the identifying ceases between this external
32 object and myself, then I will be able to take my contribution off,
33 and this thing will disappear. Then I will say, "Here is the glass",
34 and then take my mind off, and it disappears. . . . If you can take
35 away your share, you can walk upon water. Why should it drown
36 you any more? What of poison? No more difficulties. In every
37 phenomenon in nature you contribute at least half, and nature
38 brings half. If your half is taken off, the thing must stop.

39 . . . To every action there is equal reaction. . . . If a man
40 strikes me and wounds me, it is that man's action and my body's
41 reaction. . . . Suppose I have so much power over the body that I
42 can resist even that automatic action. Can such power be attained?
43 The books say it can. . . . If you stumble on [it], it is a miracle. If you
44 learn it scientifically, it is Yoga.

45 I have seen people healed by the power of mind. There is the
46 miracle worker. We say he prays and the man is healed. Another
47 man says, "Not at all. It is just the power of the mind. The man is
48 scientific. He knows what he is about."

49 The power of meditation gets us everything. If you want to
50 get power over nature, [you can have it through meditation]. It is

1 through the power of meditation all scientific facts are discovered
2 today. They study the subject and forget everything, their own
3 identity and everything, and then the great fact comes like a flash.
4 Some people think that is inspiration. There is no more inspiration
5 than there is expiration; and never was anything got for nothing.

6 The highest so-called inspiration was the work of Jesus. He
7 worked hard for ages in previous births. That was the result of his
8 previous work--hard work. . . . It is all nonsense to talk about
9 inspiration. Had it been, it would have fallen like rain. Inspired
10 people in any line of thought only come among nations who have
11 general education and [culture]. There is no inspiration. . . .
12 Whatever passes for inspiration is the result that comes from
13 causes already in the mind. One day, flash comes the result! Their
14 past work was the [cause].

15 Therein also you see the power of meditation--intensity of
16 thought. These men churn up their own souls. Great truths come to
17 the surface and become manifest. Therefore the practice of
18 meditation is the great scientific method of knowledge. There is no
19 knowledge without the power of meditation. From ignorance,
20 superstition, etc., we can get cured by meditation for the time being
21 and no more. [Suppose] a man has told me that if you drink such a
22 poison you will be killed, and another man comes in the night and
23 says, "Go drink the poison!" and I am not killed, [what happens is
24 this:] my mind cut out from the meditation the identity between the
25 poison and myself just for the time being. In another case of
26 [drinking] the poison, I will be killed.

27 If I know the reason and scientifically raise myself up to that
28 [state of meditation], I can save anyone. That is what the books say;
29 but how far it is correct you must appraise.

30 I am asked, "Why do you Indian people not conquer these
31 things? You claim all the time to be superior to all other people. You
32 practise Yoga and do it quicker than anybody else. You are fitter.
33 Carry it out! If you are a great people, you ought to have a great
34 system. You will have to say good-bye to all the gods. Let them go to
35 sleep as you take up the great philosophers. You are mere babies,
36 as superstitious as the rest of the world. And all your claims are
37 failures. If you have the claims, stand up and be bold, and all the
38 heaven that ever existed is yours. There is the musk deer with
39 fragrance inside, and he does not know where the fragrance [comes
40 from]. Then after days and days he finds it in himself. All these gods
41 and demons are within them. Find out, by the powers of reason,
42 education, and culture that it is all in yourself. No more gods and
43 superstitions. You want to be rational, to be Yogis, really spiritual."

44 [My reply is: With you too] everything is material. What is
45 more material than God sitting on a throne? You look down upon
46 the poor man who is worshipping the image. You are no better. And
47 you, gold worshippers, what are you? The image worshipper
48 worships his god, something that he can see. But you do not even
49 do that. You do not worship the spirit nor something that you can
50 understand. . . . Word worshippers! "God is spirit!" God *is* spirit
51 and should be worshipped in spirit and faith. Where does the spirit

1 reside? On a tree? On a cloud? What do you mean by God being
2 *ours* ? *You are* the spirit. That is the first fundamental belief you
3 must never give up. I am the spiritual being. It is there. All this skill
4 of Yoga and this system of meditation and everything is just to find
5 Him there.

6 Why am I saying all this just now? Until you fix the location,
7 you cannot talk. You fix it up in heaven and all the world over except
8 in the right place. I am spirit, and therefore the spirit of all spirits
9 must be in my soul. Those who think it anywhere else are ignorant.
10 Therefore it is to be sought here in this heaven; all the heaven that
11 ever existed [is within myself]. There are some sages who, knowing
12 this, turn their eyes inward and find the spirit of all spirits in their
13 own spirit. That is the scope of meditation. Find out the truth about
14 God and about your own soul and thus attain to liberation. . . .

15 You are all running after life, and we find that is foolishness.
16 There is something much higher than life even. This life is inferior,
17 material. Why should I live at all? I am something higher than life.
18 Living is always slavery. We always get mixed up. . . . Everything is
19 a continuous chain of slavery.

20 You get something, and no man can teach another. It is
21 through experience [we learn]. . . . That young man cannot be
22 persuaded that there are any difficulties in life. You cannot
23 persuade the *old* man that life is all smooth. He has had many
24 experiences. That is the difference.

25 By the power of meditation we have got to control, step by
26 step, all these things. We have seen philosophically that all these
27 differentiations--spirit, mind, matter, etc.--[have no real existence]. .
28 . . . Whatever exists is one. There cannot be many. That is what is
29 meant by science and knowledge. Ignorance sees manifold.
30 Knowledge realises one. . . . Reducing the many into one is
31 science. . . . The whole of the universe has been demonstrated into
32 one. That science is called the science of Vedanta. The whole
33 universe is one. The one runs through all this seeming variety. . . .

34 We have all these variations now and we see them--what we
35 call the five elements: solid, liquid, gaseous, luminous, ethereal.
36 After that the state of existence is mental and beyond that spiritual.
37 Not that spirit is one and mind is another, ether another, and so on.
38 It is the one existence appearing in all these variations. To go back,
39 the solid must become liquid. The way [the elements evolved] they
40 must go back. The solids will become liquid, etherised. This is the
41 idea of the macrocosm--and universal. There is the external
42 universe and universal spirit, mind, ether, gas, luminosity, liquid,
43 solid.

44 The same with the mind. I am just exactly the same in the
45 microcosm. I am the spirit; I am mind; I am the ether, solid, liquid,
46 gas. What I want to do is to go back to my spiritual state. It is for
47 the individual to live the life of the universe in one short life. Thus
48 man can be free in this life. He in his own short lifetime shall have
49 the power to live the whole extent of life. . . .

1 We all struggle. . . . If we cannot reach the Absolute, we will
2 get somewhere, and it will be better than we are now.

3 Meditation consists in this practice [of dissolving everything
4 into the ultimate Reality--spirit]. The solid melts into liquid, that into
5 gas, gas into ether, then mind, and mind will melt away. All is spirit.

6 Some of the Yogis claim that this body will become liquid
7 etc. You will be able to do anything with it--make it little, or gas,
8 pass through this wall--they claim.

9 I do not know. I have never seen anybody do it. But it is in
10 the books. We have no reason to disbelieve the books.

11 Possibly, some of us will be able to do it in this life. Like a
12 flash it comes, as the result of our past work. Who knows but some
13 here are old Yogis with just a little to do to finish the whole work.
14 Practice!

15 Meditation, you know, comes by a process of imagination.
16 You go through all these processes of purification of the elements--
17 making the one melt into the other, that into the next higher, that
18 into mind, that into spirit, and then you are spirit.¹¹

19 Spirit is always free, omnipotent, omniscient. Of course,
20 under God. There cannot be many Gods. These liberated souls are
21 wonderfully powerful, almost omnipotent. [But] none can be as
22 powerful as God. If one [liberated soul] said, "I will make this planet
23 go this way", and another said, "I will make it go that way", [there
24 would be confusion].

25 Don't you make this mistake! When I say in English, "I am
26 God!" it is because I have no better word. In Sanskrit, God means
27 absolute existence, knowledge, and wisdom, infinite self-luminous
28 consciousness. No person. It is impersonal. . . .

29 I am never Rama [never one with Ishvara, the personal
30 aspect of God], but I am [one with Brahman, the impersonal, all-
31 pervading existence]. Here is a huge mass of clay. Out of that clay I
32 made a little [mouse] and you made a little [elephant]. Both are
33 clay. Melt both down. They are essentially one. "I and my Father are
34 one." [But the clay mouse can never be one with the clay elephant.]

35 I stop somewhere; I have a little knowledge. You a little
36 more; you stop somewhere. There is one soul which is the greatest
37 of all. This is Ishvara, Lord of Yoga [God as Creator, with
38 attributes]. He is the individual. He is omnipotent. He resides in
39 every heart. There is no body. He does not need a body. All you get
40 by the practice of meditation etc., you can get by meditation upon
41 Ishvara, Lord of Yogis. . . .

42 The same can be attained by meditating upon a great soul;

11 ¹¹ This purification of the elements, known as Bhuta-shuddhi, is part of the ritualistic
worship. The worshipper tries to feel that he is dissolving earth, water, fire, air, and ether
with their subtle essences, and the sense-organs into mind. Mind, intellect, and sense of
individual ego are merged into Mahat, the cosmic ego; Mahat is dissolved into Prakriti, the
power of Brahman, and Prakriti merges into Brahman, the ultimate Reality. The Kundalini,
the coiled-up power at the base of the spine, in his thoughts is led to the highest centre of
consciousness in the brain, where he meditates on his oneness with the supreme Spirit.

1 or upon the harmony of life. These are called objective meditations.
2 So you begin to meditate upon certain external things, objective
3 things, either outside or inside. If you take a long sentence, that is
4 no meditation at all. That is simply trying to get the mind collected
5 by repetition. Meditation means the mind is turned back upon itself.
6 The mind stops all the [thought-waves] and the world stops. Your
7 consciousness expands. Every time you meditate you will keep your
8 growth. . . . Work a little harder, more and more, and meditation
9 comes. You do not feel the body or anything else. When you come
10 out of it after the hour, you have had the most beautiful rest you
11 ever had in your life. That is the only way you ever give rest to your
12 system. Not even the deepest sleep will give you such rest as that.
13 The mind goes on jumping even in deepest sleep. Just those few
14 minutes [in meditation] your brain has almost stopped. Just a little
15 vitality is kept up. You forget the body. You may be cut to pieces and
16 not feel it at all. You feel such pleasure in it. You become so light.
17 This perfect rest we get in meditation.

18 Then, meditation upon different objects. There are
19 meditations upon different centres of the spine. [According to the
20 Yogis, there are two nerves in the spinal column, called Ida and
21 Pingala. They are the main channels through which the afferent and
22 efferent currents travel.] The hollow [canal called Shushumna] runs
23 through the middle of the spinal column. The Yogis claim this cord
24 is closed, but by the power of meditation it has to be opened. The
25 energy has to be sent down to [the base of the spine], and the
26 Kundalini rises. The world will be changed. . . .

27 Thousands of divine beings are standing about you. You do
28 not see them because our world is determined by our senses. We
29 can only see this outside. Let us call it X. We see that X according to
30 our mental state. Let us take the tree standing outside. A thief came
31 and what did he see in the stump? A policeman. The child saw a
32 huge ghost. The young man was waiting for his sweetheart, and
33 what did he see? His sweetheart. But the stump of the tree had not
34 changed. It remained the same. This is God Himself, and with our
35 foolishness we see Him to be man, to be dust, to be dumb,
36 miserable.

37 Those who are similarly constituted will group together
38 naturally and live in the same world. Otherwise stated, you live in
39 the same place. All the heavens and all the hells are right here. For
40 example: [take planes in the form of] big circles cutting each other
41 at certain points. . . . On this plane in one circle we can be in touch
42 with a certain point in another [circle]. If the mind gets to the
43 centre, you begin to be conscious on all planes. In meditation
44 sometimes you touch another plane, and you see other beings,
45 disembodied spirits, and so on. You get there by the power of
46 meditation. This power is changing our senses, you see, refining our
47 senses. If you begin to practise meditation five days, you will feel
48 the pain from within these centres [of consciousness] and hearing
49 [becomes finer]. . . . That is why all the Indian gods have three eyes.
50 That is the psychic eye that opens out and shows you spiritual
51 things.

52 As this power of Kundalini rises from one centre to the other

1 in the spine, it changes the senses and you begin to see this world
2 another. It is heaven. You cannot talk. Then the Kundalini goes
3 down to the lower centres. You are again man until the Kundalini
4 reaches the brain, all the centres have been passed, and the whole
5 vision vanishes and you [perceive] . . . nothing but the one
6 existence. You are God. All heavens you make out of Him, all worlds
7 out of Him. He is the one existence. Nothing else exists.

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THE PRACTICE OF RELIGION

(Delivered at Alameda, California, on April 18, 1900)

We read many books, many scriptures. We get various ideas from our childhood, and change them every now and then. We understand what is meant by theoretical religion. We think we understand what is meant by practical religion. Now I am going to present to you my idea of practical religion.

We hear all around us about practical religion, and analysing all that, we find that it can be brought down to one conception--charity to our fellow beings. Is that all of religion? Every day we hear in this country about practical Christianity--that a man has done some good to his fellow beings. Is that all?

What is the goal of life? Is this world the goal of life? Nothing more? Are we to be just what we are, nothing more? Is man to be a machine which runs smoothly without a hitch anywhere? Are all the sufferings he experiences today all he can have, and doesn't he want anything more?

The highest dream of many religions is the world. . . . The vast majority of people are dreaming of the time when there will be no more disease, sickness, poverty, or misery of any kind. They will have a good time all around. Practical religion, therefore, simply means: "Clean the streets! Make it nice!" We see how all enjoy it.

Is enjoyment the goal of life? Were it so, it would be a tremendous mistake to become a man at all. What man can enjoy a meal with more gusto than the dog or the cat? Go to a menagerie and see the [wild animals] tearing the flesh from the bone. Go back and become a bird! . . . What a mistake then to become a man! Vain have been my years--hundreds of years--of struggle only to become the man of sense-enjoyments.

Mark, therefore, the ordinary theory of practical religion, what it leads to. Charity is great, but the moment you say it is all, you run the risk of running into materialism. It is not religion. It is no better than atheism--a little less. . . . You Christians, have you found nothing else in the Bible than working for fellow creatures, building . . . hospitals? . . . Here stands a shopkeeper and says how Jesus would have kept the shop! Jesus would neither have kept a saloon, nor a shop, nor have edited a newspaper. That sort of practical religion is good, not bad; but it is just kindergarten religion. It leads nowhere. . . . If you believe in God, if you are Christians and repeat everyday, "Thy will be done", just think what it means! You say every moment, "Thy will be done", really meaning, "My will be done by Thee, O God." The Infinite is working His own plans out. Even He has made mistakes, and you and I are going to remedy that! The Architect of the universe is going to be taught by the carpenters! He has left the world a dirty hole, and you are going to make it a beautiful place!

What is the goal of it all? Can senses ever be the goal? Can

1 enjoyment of pleasure ever be the goal? Can this life ever be the
2 goal of the soul? If it is, better die this moment; do not want this
3 life! If that is the fate of man, that he is going to be only the
4 perfected machine, it would just mean that we go back to being
5 trees and stones and things like that. Did you ever hear a cow tell a
6 lie or see a tree steal? They are perfect machines. They do not
7 make mistakes. They live in a world where everything is finished. . .
8 .

9 What is the ideal of religion, then, if this cannot be practical
10 [religion]? And it certainly cannot be. What are we here for? We are
11 here for freedom, for knowledge.

12 We want to know in order to make ourselves free. That is our
13 life: one universal cry for freedom. What is the reason the . . . plant
14 grows from the seed, overturning the ground and raising itself up to
15 the skies? What is the offering for the earth from the sun? What is
16 your life? The same struggle for freedom. Nature is trying all
17 around to suppress us, and the soul wants to express itself. The
18 struggle with nature is going on. Many things will be crushed and
19 broken in this struggle for freedom. That is your real misery. Large
20 masses of dust and dirt must be raised on the battlefield. Nature
21 says, "I will conquer." The soul says, "I must be the conqueror."
22 Nature says, "Wait! I will give you a little enjoyment to keep you
23 quiet." The soul enjoys a little, becomes deluded a moment, but the
24 next moment it [cries for freedom again]. Have you marked the
25 eternal cry going on through the ages in every breast? We are
26 deceived by poverty. We become wealthy and are deceived with
27 wealth. We are ignorant. We read and learn and are deceived with
28 knowledge. No man is ever satisfied. That is the cause of misery,
29 but it is also the cause of all blessing. That is the sure sign. How
30 can you be satisfied with this world? . . . If tomorrow this world
31 becomes heaven, we will say, "Take this away. Give us something
32 else."

33 The infinite human soul can never be satisfied but by the
34 Infinite itself. . . . Infinite desire can only be satisfied by infinite
35 knowledge--nothing short of that. Worlds will come and go. What of
36 that? The soul lives and for ever expands. Worlds must come into
37 the soul. Worlds must disappear in the soul like drops in the ocean.
38 And this world to become the goal of the soul! If we have common
39 sense, we cannot be satisfied, though this has been the theme of
40 the poets in all the ages, always telling us to be satisfied. And
41 nobody has been satisfied yet! Millions of prophets have told us,
42 "Be satisfied with your lot"; poets sing. We have told ourselves to be
43 quiet and satisfied, yet we are not. It is the design of the Eternal
44 that there is nothing in this world to satisfy my soul, nothing in the
45 heavens above, and nothing beneath. Before the desire of my soul,
46 the stars and the worlds, upper and lower, the whole universe, is
47 but a hateful disease, nothing but that. That is the meaning.
48 Everything is an evil unless that is the meaning. Every desire is evil
49 unless that is the meaning, unless you understand its true
50 importance, its goal. All nature is crying through all the atoms for
51 one thing--its perfect freedom.

52 What is practical religion, then? To get to that state--

1 freedom, the attainment of freedom. And this world, if it helps us on
2 to that goal, [is] all right; if not--if it begins to bind one more layer
3 on the thousands already there, it becomes an evil. Possessions,
4 learning, beauty, everything else--as long as they help us to that
5 goal, they are of practical value. When they have ceased helping us
6 on to that goal of freedom, they are a positive danger. What is
7 practical religion, then? Utilise the things of this world and the next
8 just for one goal--the attainment of freedom. Every enjoyment,
9 every ounce of pleasure is to be bought by the expenditure of the
10 infinite heart and mind combined.

11 Look at the sum total of good and evil in this world. Has it
12 changed? Ages have passed, and practical religion has worked for
13 ages. The world thought that each time the problem would be
14 solved. It is always the same problem. At best it changes its form. . .
15 . It trades consumption and nerve-disease for twenty thousand
16 shops. . . . It is like old rheumatism: Drive it from one place, it goes
17 to another. A hundred years ago man walked on foot or bought
18 horses. Now he is happy because he rides the railroad; but he is
19 unhappy because he has to work more and earn more. Every
20 machine that saves labour puts more stress upon labour.

21 This universe, nature, or whatever you call it, must be
22 limited; it can never be unlimited. The Absolute, to become nature,
23 must be limited by time, space, and causation. The energy [at our
24 disposal] is limited. You can spend it in one place, losing it in
25 another. The sum total is always the same. Wherever there is a
26 wave in one place, there is a hollow in another. If one nation
27 becomes rich, others become poor. Good balances evil. The person
28 for the moment on top of the wave thinks all is good; the person at
29 the bottom says the world is [all evil]. But the man who stands aside
30 sees the divine play going on. Some weep and others laugh. The
31 latter will weep in their turn and the others laugh. What can we do?
32 We know we cannot do anything. . . .

33 Which of us do anything because we want to do good? How
34 few! They can be counted on the fingers. The rest of us also do
35 good, but because we are forced to do so. . . . We cannot stop.
36 Onward we go, knocked about from place to place. What can we
37 do? The world will be the same world, the earth the same. It will be
38 changed from blue to brown and from brown to blue. One language
39 translated into another, one set of evils changed into another set of
40 evils--that is what is going on. . . . Six of one, half a dozen of the
41 other. The American Indian in the forest cannot attend a lecture on
42 metaphysics as you can, but he can digest his meal. You cut him to
43 pieces, and the next moment he is all right. You and I, if we get
44 scratched, we have to go to the hospital for six months. . . .

45 The lower the organism, the greater is its pleasure in the
46 senses. Think of the lowest animals and the power of touch.
47 Everything is touch. . . . When you come to man, you will see that
48 the lower the civilisation of the man, the greater is the power of the
49 senses. . . . The higher the organism, the lesser is the pleasure of
50 the senses. A dog can eat a meal, but cannot understand the
51 exquisite pleasure of thinking about metaphysics. He is deprived of
52 the wonderful pleasure which you get through the intellect. The

1 pleasures of the senses are great. Greater than those is the
2 pleasure of the intellect. When you attend the fine fifty-course
3 dinner in Paris, that is pleasure indeed. But in the observatory,
4 looking at the stars, seeing . . . worlds coming and developing--think
5 of that! It must be greater, for I know you forget all about eating.
6 That pleasure must be greater than what you get from worldly
7 things. You forget all about wives, children, husbands, and
8 everything; you forget all about the sense-plane. That is intellectual
9 pleasure. It is common sense that it must be greater than sense-
10 pleasure. It is always for greater joy that you give up the lesser.
11 This is practical religion--the attainment of freedom, renunciation.
12 Renounce!

13 Renounce the lower so that you may get the higher. What is
14 the foundation of society? Morality, ethics, laws. Renounce.
15 Renounce all temptation to take your neighbour's property, to put
16 hands upon your neighbour, all the pleasure of tyrannising over the
17 weak, all the pleasure of cheating others by telling lies. Is not
18 morality the foundation of society? What is marriage but the
19 renunciation of unchastity? The savage does not marry. Man
20 marries because he renounces. So on and on. Renounce! Renounce!
21 Sacrifice! Give up! Not for zero. Not for nothing. But to get the
22 higher. But who can do this? You cannot, until you have got the
23 higher. You may talk. You may struggle. You may try to do many
24 things. But renunciation comes by itself when you have got the
25 higher. Then the lesser falls away by itself.

26 This is practical religion. What else? Cleaning streets and
27 building hospitals? Their value consists only in this renunciation.
28 And there is no end to renunciation. The difficulty is they try to put
29 a limit to it--thus far and no farther. But there is no limit to this
30 renunciation.

31 Where God is, there is no other. Where the world is, there is
32 no God. These two will never unite. [Like] light and darkness. That
33 is what I have understood from Christianity and the life of the
34 Teacher. Is not that Buddhism? Is not that Hinduism? Is not that
35 Mohammedanism? Is not that the teaching of all the great sages
36 and teachers? What is the world that is to be given up? It is here. I
37 am carrying it all with me. My own body. It is all for this body that I
38 put my hand voluntarily upon my fellow man, just to keep it nice
39 and give it a little pleasure; [all for this body] that I injure others
40 and make mistakes. . . .

41 Great men have died. Weak men have died. Gods have died.
42 Death--death everywhere. This world is a graveyard of the infinite
43 past, yet we cling to this [body]: "I am never going to die". Knowing
44 for sure [that the body must die] and yet clinging to it. There is
45 meaning in that too [because in a sense we do not die]. The mistake
46 is that we cling to the body when it is the spirit that is really
47 immortal.

48 You are all materialists, because you believe that you are the
49 body. If a man give me a hard punch, I would say I am punched. If
50 he strikes me, I would say I am struck. If I am not the body, why
51 should I say so? It makes no difference if I say I am the spirit. I am

1 the body just now. I have converted myself into matter. That is why I
2 am to renounce the body, to go back to what I really am. I am the
3 spirit--the soul no instrument can pierce, no sword can cut asunder,
4 no fire can burn, no air can dry. Unborn and uncreated, without
5 beginning and without end, deathless, birthless and omnipresent--
6 that is what I am; and all misery comes just because I think this
7 little lump of clay is myself. I am identifying myself with matter and
8 taking all the consequences.

9 Practical religion is identifying myself with my Self.

10 Stop this wrong identification! How far are you advanced in
11 that? You may have built two thousand hospitals, built fifty thousand
12 roads, and yet what of that, if you have not realised that you are the
13 spirit? You die a dog's death, with the same feelings that the dog
14 does. The dog howls and weeps because he knows that he is only
15 matter and he is going to be dissolved.

16 There is death, you know, inevitable death, in water, in air, in
17 the palace, in the prison--death everywhere. What makes you
18 fearless? When you have realised what you are--that infinite spirit,
19 deathless, birthless. Him no fire can burn, no instrument kill, no
20 poison hurt. Not theory, mind you. Not reading books. . . . [Not
21 parroting.] My old Master used to say, "It is all very good to teach
22 the parrot to say, 'Lord, Lord, Lord' all the time; but let the cat
23 come and take hold of its neck, it forgets all about it." [You may]
24 pray all the time, read all the scriptures in the world, and worship
25 all the gods there are, [but] unless you realise the soul there is no
26 freedom. Not talking, theorising, argumentation, but realisation.
27 That I call practical religion.

28 This truth about the soul is first to be heard. If you have
29 heard it, think about it. Once you have done that, meditate upon it.
30 No more vain arguments! Satisfy yourself once that you are the
31 infinite spirit. If that is true, it must be nonsense that you are the
32 body. You are the Self, and that must be realised. Spirit must see
33 itself as spirit. Now the spirit is seeing itself as body. That must
34 stop. The moment you begin to realise that, you are released.

35 You see this glass, and you know it is simply an illusion.
36 Some scientists tell you it is light and vibration. . . . Seeing the
37 spirit must be infinitely more real than that, must be the only true
38 state, the only true sensation, the only true vision. All these [objects
39 you see] are but dreams. You know that now. Not the old idealists
40 alone, but modern physicists also tell you that light is there. A little
41 more vibration makes all the difference. . . .

42 You must see God. The spirit must be realised, and that is
43 practical religion. It is not what Christ preached that *you* call
44 practical religion: "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the
45 Kingdom of Heaven." Was it a joke? What is the practical religion
46 you are thinking of? Lord help us! "Blessed are the pure in heart,
47 for they shall see God." That means street-cleaning, hospital-
48 building, and all that? Good works, when you do them with a pure
49 mind. Don't give the man twenty dollars and buy all the papers in
50 San Francisco to see your name! Don't you read in your own books
51 how no man will help you? Serve as worship of the Lord Himself in

1 the poor, the miserable, the weak. That done, the result is
2 secondary. That sort of work, done without any thought of gain,
3 benefits the soul. And even of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.

4 The Kingdom of Heaven is within us. He is there. He is the
5 soul of all souls. See Him in your own soul. That is practical
6 religion. That is freedom. Let us ask each other how much we are
7 advanced in that: how much we are worshippers of the body, or real
8 believers in God, the spirit; how much we believe ourselves to be
9 spirit. That is selfless. That is freedom. That is real worship. Realise
10 yourself. That is all there is to do. Know yourself as you are--infinite
11 spirit. That is practical religion. Everything else is impractical, for
12 everything else will vanish. That alone will never vanish. It is
13 eternal. Hospitals will tumble down. Railroad givers will all die.
14 This earth will be blown to pieces, suns wiped out. The soul
15 endureth for ever.

16 Which is higher, running after these things which perish
17 or . . . worshipping that which never changes? Which is more
18 practical, spending all the energies of life in getting things, and
19 before you have got them death comes and you have to leave them
20 all?--like the great [ruler] who conquered all, [who when] death
21 came, said, "Spread out all the jars of things before me." He said,
22 "Bring me that big diamond." And he placed it on his breast and
23 wept. Thus weeping, he died, the same as the dog dies.

24 Man says, "I live." He knows not that it is [the fear of] death
25 that makes him cling slavishly to life. He says, "I enjoy." He never
26 dreams that nature has enslaved him.

27 Nature grinds all of us. Keep count of the ounce of pleasure
28 you get. In the long run, nature did her work through you, and
29 when you die your body will make other plants grow. Yet we think
30 all the time that we are getting pleasure ourselves. Thus the wheel
31 goes round.

32 Therefore to realise the spirit as spirit is practical religion.
33 Everything else is good so far as it leads to this one grand idea.
34 That [realisation] is to be attained by renunciation, by meditation--
35 renunciation of all the senses, cutting the knots, the chains that
36 bind us down to matter. "I do not want to get material life, do not
37 want the sense-life, but something higher." That is renunciation.
38 Then, by the power of meditation, undo the mischief that has been
39 done.

40 We are at the beck and call of nature. If there is sound
41 outside, I have to hear it. If something is going on, I have to see it.
42 Like monkeys. We are two thousand monkeys concentrated, each
43 one of us. Monkeys are very curious. So we cannot help ourselves,
44 and call this "enjoying". Wonderful this language! We are enjoying
45 the world! We cannot help enjoying it. Nature wants us to do it. A
46 beautiful sound: I am hearing it. As if I could choose to hear it or
47 not! Nature says, "Go down to the depths of misery." I become
48 miserable in a moment. . . . We talk about pleasures [of the senses]
49 and possessions. One man thinks me very learned. Another thinks,
50 "He is a fool." This degradation, this slavery, without knowing
51 anything! In a dark room we are knocking our heads against each

1 other. . . .

2 What is meditation? Meditation is the power which enables
3 us to resist all this. Nature may call us, "Look, there is a beautiful
4 thing!" I do not look. Now she says, "There is a beautiful smell;
5 smell it!" I say to my nose, "Do not smell it", and the nose doesn't.
6 "Eyes, do not see!" Nature does such an awful thing--kills one of my
7 children, and says, "Now, rascal, sit down and weep! Go to the
8 depths!" I say, "I don't have to." I jump up. I must be free. Try it
9 sometimes. . . . [In meditation], for a moment, you can change this
10 nature. Now, if you had that power in yourself, would not that be
11 heaven, freedom? That is the power of meditation.

12 How is it to be attained? In a dozen different ways. Each
13 temperament has its own way. But this is the general principle: get
14 hold of the mind. The mind is like a lake, and every stone that drops
15 into it raises waves. These waves do not let us see what we are. The
16 full moon is reflected in the water of the lake, but the surface is so
17 disturbed that we do not see the reflection clearly. Let it be calm.
18 Do not let nature raise the wave. Keep quiet, and then after a little
19 while she will give you up. Then we know what we are. God is there
20 already, but the mind is so agitated, always running after the
21 senses. You close the senses and [yet] you whirl and whirl about.
22 Just this moment I think I am all right and I will meditate upon God,
23 and then my mind goes to London in one minute. And if I pull it
24 away from there, it goes to New York to think about the things I
25 have done there in the past. These [waves] are to be stopped by the
26 power of meditation.

27 Slowly and gradually we are to train ourselves. It is no joke--
28 not a question of a day, or years, or maybe of births. Never mind!
29 The pull must go on. Knowingly, voluntarily, the pull must go on.
30 Inch by inch we will gain ground. We will begin to feel and get real
31 possessions, which no one can take away from us--the wealth that
32 no man can take, the wealth that nobody can destroy, the joy that
33 no misery can hurt any more. . . .

34 All these years we have depended upon others. If I have a
35 little pleasure and that person goes away, my pleasure is gone. . . .
36 See the folly of man: he depends for happiness upon men! All
37 separations are misery. Naturally. Depending upon wealth for
38 happiness? There is fluctuation of wealth. Depending upon health
39 or upon anything except the unchangeable spirit must bring misery
40 today or tomorrow.

41 Excepting the infinite spirit, everything else is changing.
42 There is the whirl of change. Permanence is nowhere except in
43 yourself. There is the infinite joy, unchanging. Meditation is the gate
44 that opens that to us. Prayers, ceremonials, and all the other forms
45 of worship are simply kindergartens of meditation. You pray, you
46 offer something. A certain theory existed that everything raised
47 one's spiritual power. The use of certain words, flowers, images,
48 temples, ceremonials like the waving of lights brings the mind to
49 that attitude, but that attitude is always in the human soul, nowhere
50 else. [People] are all doing it; but what they do without knowing it,
51 do knowingly. That is the power of meditation. All knowledge you

1 have--how did it come? From the power of meditation. The soul
2 churned the knowledge out of its own depths. What knowledge was
3 there ever outside of it? In the long run this power of meditation
4 separates ourselves from the body, and then the soul knows itself as
5 it is--the unborn, the deathless, and birthless being. No more is
6 there any misery, no more births upon this earth, no more evolution.
7 [The soul knows itself as having] ever been perfect and free.

1
2
3 *IS THE SOUL IMMORTAL?*

4 *"None has power to destroy the unchangeable."*

5 ----Bhagavad-Gita.
6

7 In the great Sanskrit epic, the Mahabharata, the story is told
8 how the hero, Yudhishtira, when asked by Dharma to tell what was
9 the most wonderful thing in the world, replied, that it was the
10 persistent belief of mankind in their own deathlessness in spite of
11 their witnessing death everywhere around them almost every
12 moment of their lives. And, in fact, this is the most stupendous
13 wonder in human life. In spite of all arguments to the contrary
14 urged in different times by different schools, in spite of the inability
15 of reason to penetrate the veil of mystery which will ever hang
16 between the sensuous and the supersensuous worlds, man is
17 thoroughly persuaded that he cannot die.

18 We may study all our lives, and in the end fail to bring the
19 problem of life and death to the plane of rational demonstration,
20 affirmative or negative. We may talk or write, preach or teach, for
21 or against the permanency or impermanency of human existence as
22 much as we like; we may become violent partisans of this side or
23 that; we may invent names by the hundred, each more intricate
24 than its predecessor, and lull ourselves into a momentary rest under
25 the delusion of our having solved the problem once for all; we may
26 cling with all our powers to any one of the curious religious
27 superstitions or the far more objectionable scientific superstitions--
28 but in the end, we find ourselves playing an external game in the
29 bowling alley of reason and raising intellectual pin after pin, only to
30 be knocked over again and again.

31 But behind all this mental strain and torture, not
32 infrequently productive of more dangerous results than mere
33 games, stands a fact unchallenged and unchallengeable--the fact,
34 the wonder, which the Mahabharata points out as the inability of
35 our mind to conceive our own annihilation. Even to imagine my own
36 annihilation I shall have to stand by and look on as a witness.

37 Now, before trying to understand what this curious
38 phenomenon means, we want to note that upon this one fact the
39 whole world stands. The permanence of the external world is
40 inevitably joined to the permanence of the internal; and, however
41 plausible any theory of the universe may seem which asserts the
42 permanence of the one and denies that of the other, the theorist
43 himself will find that in his own mechanism not one conscious
44 action is possible, without the permanence of both the internal and
45 the external worlds being one of the factors in the motive cause.
46 Although it is perfectly true that when the human mind transcends
47 its own limitations, it finds the duality reduced to an indivisible
48 unity, on this side of the unconditioned, the whole objective world--
49 that is to say, the world we know--is and can be alone known to us
50 as existing for the subject, and therefore, before we would be able

1 to conceive the annihilation of the subject we are bound to conceive
2 the annihilation of the object.

3 So far it is plain enough. But now comes the difficulty. I
4 cannot think of myself ordinarily as anything else but a body. My
5 idea of my own permanence includes my idea of myself as a body.
6 But the body is obviously impermanent, as is the whole of nature--a
7 constantly vanishing quantity.

8 Where, then, is this permanence?

9 There is one more wonderful phenomenon connected with
10 our lives, without which "who will be able to live, who will be able
11 to enjoy life a moment?"--the idea of freedom.

12 This is the idea that guides each footstep of ours, makes our
13 movements possible, determines our relations to each other--nay, is
14 the very warp and woof in the fabric of human life. Intellectual
15 knowledge tries to drive it inch by inch from its territory, post after
16 post is snatched away from its domains, and each step is made fast
17 and iron-bound with the railroadings of cause and effect. But it
18 laughs at all our attempts, and, lo, it keeps itself above all this
19 massive pile of law and causation with which we tried to smother it
20 to death! How can it be otherwise? The limited always requires a
21 higher generalisation of the unlimited to explain itself. The bound
22 can only be explained by the free, the caused by the uncaused. But
23 again, the same difficulty is also here. What is free? The body or
24 even the mind? It is apparent to all that they are as much bound by
25 law as anything else in the universe.

26 Now the problem resolves itself into this dilemma: either the
27 whole universe is a mass of never-ceasing change and nothing
28 more, irrevocably bound by the law of causation, not one particle
29 having a unity of itself, yet is curiously producing an ineradicable
30 delusion of permanence and freedom, or there is in us and in the
31 universe something which is permanent and free, showing that the
32 basal constitutional belief of the human mind is not a delusion. It is
33 the duty of science to explain facts by bringing them to a higher
34 generalisation. Any explanation, therefore, that first wants to
35 destroy a part of the fact given to be explained, in order to fit itself
36 to the remainder, is not scientific, whatever else it may be.

37 So any explanation that wants to overlook the fact of this
38 persistent and all-necessary idea of freedom commits the above-
39 mentioned mistake of denying a portion of the fact in order to
40 explain the rest, and is, therefore, wrong. The only other alternative
41 possible, then, is to acknowledge, in harmony with our nature, that
42 there is something in us which is free and permanent.

43 But it is not the body; neither is it the mind. The body is
44 dying every minute. The mind is constantly changing. The body is a
45 combination, and so is the mind, and as such can never reach to a
46 state beyond all change. But beyond this momentary sheathing of
47 gross matter, beyond even the finer covering of the mind is the
48 Atman, the true Self of man, the permanent, the ever free. It is his
49 freedom that is percolating through layers of thought and matter,
50 and, in spite of the colourings of name and form, is ever asserting

1 its unshackled existence. It is his deathlessness, his bliss, his peace,
2 his divinity that shines out and makes itself felt in spite of the
3 thickest layers of ignorance. He is the real man, the fearless one,
4 the deathless one, the free.

5 Now freedom is only possible when no external power can
6 exert any influence, produce any change. Freedom is only possible
7 to the being who is beyond all conditions, all laws, all bondages of
8 cause and effect. In other words, the unchangeable alone can be
9 free and, therefore, immortal. This Being, this Atman, this real Self
10 of man, the free, the unchangeable is beyond all conditions, and as
11 such, it has neither birth nor death.

12 "Without birth or death, eternal, ever-existing is this soul of
13 man."

REINCARNATION

*"Both you and I have passed through many births;
you know them not, I know them all."*

----Bhagavad-Gita

Of the many riddles that have perplexed the intellect of man in all climes and times, the most intricate is himself. Of the myriad mysteries that have called forth his energies to struggle for solution from the very dawn of history, the most mysterious is his own nature. It is at once the most insoluble enigma and the problem of all problems. As the starting-point and the repository of all we know and feel and do, there never has been, nor will be, a time when man's own nature will cease to demand his best and foremost attention.

Though through hunger after that truth, which of all others has the most intimate connection with his very existence, though through an all-absorbing desire for an inward standard by which to measure the outward universe, though through the absolute and inherent necessity of finding a fixed point in a universe of change, man has sometimes clutched at handfuls of dust for gold, and even when urged on by a voice higher than reason or intellect, he has many times failed rightly to interpret the real meaning of the divinity within--still there never was a time since the search began, when some race, or some individuals, did not hold aloft the lamp of truth.

Taking a one-sided, cursory and prejudiced view of the surroundings and the unessential details, sometimes disgusted also with the vagueness of many schools and sects, and often, alas, driven to the opposite extreme by the violent superstitions of organised priestcraft--men have not been wanting, especially among advanced intellects, in either ancient or modern times, who not only gave up the search in despair, but declared it fruitless and useless. Philosophers might fret and sneer, and priests ply their trade even at the point of the sword, but truth comes to those alone who worship at her shrine for her sake only, without fear and without shopkeeping.

Light comes to individuals through the conscious efforts of their intellect; it comes, slowly though, to the whole race through unconscious percolations. The philosophers show the volitional struggles of great minds; history reveals the silent process of permeation through which truth is absorbed by the masses.

Of all the theories that have been held by man about himself, that of a soul entity, separate from the body and immortal, has been the most widespread; and among those that held the belief in such a soul, the majority of the thoughtful had always believed also in its pre-existence.

1 At present the greater portion of the human race, having
2 organised religion, believe in it; and many of the best thinkers in
3 the most favoured lands, though nurtured in religions avowedly
4 hostile to every idea of the pre-existence of the soul, have endorsed
5 it. Hinduism and Buddhism have it for their foundation; the
6 educated classes among the ancient Egyptians believed in it; the
7 ancient Persians arrived at it; the Greek philosophers made it the
8 corner-stone of their philosophy; the Pharisees among the Hebrews
9 accepted it; and the Sufis among the Mohammedans almost
10 universally acknowledged its truth.

11 There must be peculiar surroundings which generate and
12 foster certain forms of belief among nations. It required ages for
13 the ancient races to arrive at any idea about a part, even of the
14 body, surviving after death; it took ages more to come to any
15 rational idea about this something which persists and lives apart
16 from the body. It was only when the idea was reached of an entity
17 whose connection with the body was only for a time, and only
18 among those nations who arrived at such a conclusion, that the
19 unavoidable question arose: Whither? Whence?

20 The ancient Hebrews never disturbed their equanimity by
21 questioning themselves about the soul. With them death ended all.
22 Karl Heckel justly says, "Though it is true that in the Old Testament,
23 preceding the exile, the Hebrews distinguish a life-principle,
24 different from the body, which is sometimes called 'Nephesh', or
25 'Ruakh', or 'Neshama', yet all these words correspond rather to the
26 idea of breath than to that of spirit or soul. Also in the writings of
27 the Palestinian Jews, after the exile, there is never made mention of
28 an individual immortal soul, but always only of a life-breath
29 emanating from God, which, after the body is dissolved, is
30 reabsorbed into the Divine 'Ruakh'."

31 The ancient Egyptians and the Chaldeans had peculiar
32 beliefs of their own about the soul; but their ideas about this living
33 part after death must not be confused with those of the ancient
34 Hindu, the Persian, the Greek, or any other Aryan race. There was,
35 from the earliest times, a broad distinction between the Aryas and
36 the non-Sanskrit speaking Mlechchhas in the conception of the
37 soul. Externally it was typified by their disposal of the dead--the
38 Mlechchhas mostly trying their best to *preserve* the dead bodies
39 either by careful burial or by the more elaborate processes of
40 mummifying, and the Aryas generally burning their dead.

41 Herein lies the key to a great secret--the fact that no
42 Mlechchha race, whether Egyptian, Assyrian, or Babylonian, ever
43 attained to the idea of the soul as a separate entity which can live
44 *independent* of the body, without the help of the Aryas, especially
45 of the Hindus.

46 Although Herodotus states that the Egyptians were the first
47 to conceive the idea of the immortality of the soul, and states as a
48 doctrine of the Egyptians "that the soul after the dissolution of the
49 body enters again and again into a creature that comes to life; then,
50 that the soul wanders through all the animals of the land and the
51 sea and through all the birds, and finally after three thousand years

1 returns to a human body," yet, modern researches into Egyptology
2 have hitherto found no trace of metempsychosis in the popular
3 Egyptian religion. On the other hand, the most recent researches of
4 Maspero, A. Erman, and other eminent Egyptologists tend to
5 confirm the supposition that the doctrine of palingenesis was not at
6 home with the Egyptians.

7 With the ancient Egyptians the soul was only a double,
8 having no individuality of its own, and never able to break its
9 connection with the body. It persists only so long as the body lasts;
10 and if by chance the corpse is destroyed, the departed soul must
11 suffer a second death and annihilation. The soul after death was
12 allowed to roam freely all over the world, but always returning at
13 night to where the corpse was, always miserable, always hungry
14 and thirsty, always extremely desirous to enjoy life once more, and
15 never being able to fulfil the desire. If any part of its old body was
16 injured, the soul was also invariably injured in its corresponding
17 part. And this idea explains the solicitude of the ancient Egyptians
18 to preserve their dead. At first the deserts were chosen as the
19 burial-place, because the dryness of the air did not allow the body
20 to perish soon, thus granting to the departed soul a long lease of
21 existence. In course of time one of the gods discovered the process
22 of making mummies, through which the devout hoped to preserve
23 the dead bodies of their ancestors for almost an infinite length of
24 time, thus securing immortality to the departed ghost, however
25 miserable it might be.

26 The perpetual regret for the world, in which the soul can
27 take no further interest, never ceased to torture the deceased. "O,
28 my brother," exclaims the departed, "withhold not thyself from
29 drinking and eating, from drunkenness, from love, from all
30 enjoyment, from following thy desire by night and by day; put not
31 sorrow within thy heart, for, what are the years of man upon earth?
32 The West is a land of sleep and of heavy shadows, a place wherein
33 the inhabitants, when once installed, slumber on in their mummy
34 forms, never more waking to see their brethren; never more to
35 recognise their fathers and mothers, with hearts forgetful of their
36 wives and children. The living water, which earth giveth to all who
37 dwell upon it, is for me stagnant and dead; that water floweth to all
38 who are on earth, while for me it is but liquid putrefaction, this
39 water that is mine. Since I came into this funeral valley I know not
40 where nor what I am. Give me to drink of running water . . . let me
41 be placed by the edge of the water with my face to the North, that
42 the breeze may caress me and my heart be refreshed from its
43 sorrow."

44 Among the Chaldeans also, although they did not speculate
45 so much as the Egyptians as to the condition of the soul after death,
46 the soul is still a double and is bound to its sepulchre. They also
47 could not conceive of a state without this physical body, and
48 expected a resurrection of the corpse again to life; and though the
49 goddess Ishtar, after great perils and adventures, procured the
50 resurrection of her shepherd husband, Dumuzi, the son of Ea and
51 Damkina, "The most pious votaries pleaded in vain from temple to
52 temple, for the resurrection of their dead friends."

1 Thus we find, that the ancient Egyptians or Chaldeans never
2 could entirely dissociate the idea of the soul from the corpse of the
3 departed or the sepulchre. The state of earthly existence was best
4 after all; and the departed are always longing to have a chance
5 once more to renew it; and the living are fervently hoping to help
6 them in prolonging the existence of the miserable double and
7 striving the best they can to help them.

8 This is not the soil out of which any higher knowledge of the
9 soul could spring. In the first place it is grossly materialistic, and
10 even then it is one of terror and agony. Frightened by the almost
11 innumerable powers of evil, and with hopeless, agonised efforts to
12 avoid them, the souls of the living, like their ideas of the souls of the
13 departed--wander all over the world though they might--could never
14 get beyond the sepulchre and the crumbling corpse.

15 We must turn now for the source of the higher ideas of the
16 soul to another race, whose God was an all-merciful, all-pervading
17 Being manifesting Himself through various bright, benign, and
18 helpful Devas, the first of all the human race who addressed their
19 God as Father--"Oh, take me by the hands even as a father takes his
20 dear son"; with whom life was a hope and not a despair; whose
21 religion was not the intermittent groans escaping from the lips of
22 an agonised man during the intervals of a life of mad excitement;
23 but whose ideas come to us redolent with the aroma of the field and
24 forest; whose songs of praise--spontaneous, free, joyful, like the
25 songs which burst forth from the throats of the birds when they hail
26 this beautiful world illuminated by the first rays of the lord of the
27 day--come down to us even now through the vista of eighty
28 centuries as fresh calls from heaven; we turn to the ancient Aryas.

29 "Place me in that deathless, undecaying world where is the
30 light of heaven, and everlasting lustre shines"; "Make me immortal
31 in that realm where dwells the King Vivasvan's son, where is the
32 secret shrine of heaven"; "Make me immortal in that realm where
33 they move even as they list"; "In the third sphere of inmost heaven,
34 where worlds are full of light, make me immortal in that realm of
35 bliss"--These are the prayers of the Aryas in their oldest record, the
36 Rig-Veda Samhita.

37 We find at once a whole world of difference between the
38 Mlechchha and the Aryan ideals. To the one, this body and this
39 world are all that are real, and all that are desirable. A little life-
40 fluid which flies off from the body at death, to feel torture and
41 agony at the loss of the enjoyments of the senses, can, they fondly
42 hope, be brought back if the body is carefully preserved; and thus a
43 corpse became more an object of care than the living man. The
44 other found out that, that which left the body was the real man; and
45 when separated from the body, it enjoyed a state of bliss higher
46 than it ever enjoyed when in the body. And they hastened to
47 annihilate the corrupted corpse by burning it.

48 Here we find the germ out of which a true idea of the soul
49 could come. Here it was--where the real man was not the body, but
50 the soul, where all ideas of an inseparable connection between the
51 real man and the body were utterly absent--that a noble idea of the

1 freedom of the soul could rise. And it was when the Aryas
2 penetrated even beyond the shining cloth of the body with which
3 the departed soul was enveloped, and found its real nature of a
4 formless, individual, unit principle, that the question inevitably
5 arose: Whence?

6 It was in India and among the Aryas that the doctrine of the
7 pre-existence, the immortality, and the individuality of the soul first
8 arose. Recent researches in Egypt have failed to show any trace of
9 the doctrines of an independent and individual soul existing before
10 and after the earthly phase of existence. Some of the mysteries
11 were no doubt in possession of this idea, but in those it has been
12 traced to India.

13 "I am convinced", says Karl Heckel, "that the deeper we
14 enter into the study of the Egyptian religion, the clearer it is shown
15 that the doctrine of metempsychosis was entirely foreign to the
16 popular Egyptian religion; and that even that which single
17 mysteries possessed of it was not inherent to the Osiris teachings,
18 but derived from Hindu sources."

19 Later on, we find the Alexandrian Jews imbued with the
20 doctrine of an individual soul, and the Pharisees of the time of
21 Jesus, as already stated, not only had faith in an individual soul, but
22 believed in its wandering through various bodies; and thus it is easy
23 to find how Christ was recognised as an incarnation of an older
24 Prophet, and Jesus himself directly asserted that John the Baptist
25 was the Prophet Elias come back again. "If ye will receive it, this is
26 Elias, which was for to come."--*Matt. XI.14.*

27 The ideas of a soul and of its individuality among the
28 Hebrews, evidently came through the higher mystical teachings of
29 the Egyptians, who in their turn derived it from India. And that it
30 should come through Alexandria is significant, as the Buddhistic
31 records clearly show Buddhistic missionary activity in Alexandria
32 and Asia Minor.

33 Pythagoras is said to have been the first Greek who taught
34 the doctrine of palingenesis among the Hellenes. As an Aryan race,
35 already burning their dead and believing in the doctrine of an
36 individual soul, it was easy for the Greeks to accept the doctrine of
37 reincarnation through the Pythagorean teachings. According to
38 Apuleius, Pythagoras had come to India, where he had been
39 instructed by the Brahmins.

40 So far we have learnt that wherever the soul was held to be
41 an individual, the real man, and not a vivifying part of the body only,
42 the doctrine of its pre-existence had inevitably come, and that
43 externally those nations that believed in the independent
44 individuality of the soul had almost always signified it by burning
45 the bodies of the departed. Though one of the ancient Aryan races,
46 the Persian, developed at an early period and without any Semitic
47 influence a peculiar method of disposing of the bodies of the dead,
48 the very name by which they call their "Towers of silence", comes
49 from the root *Dah*, to burn.

50 In short, the races who did not pay much attention to the

1 analysis of their own nature, never went beyond the material body
2 as their all in all, and even when driven by higher light to penetrate
3 beyond, they only came to the conclusion that somehow or other, at
4 some distant period of time, this body will become incorruptible.

5 On the other hand, that race which spent the best part of its
6 energies in the inquiry into the nature of man as a thinking being--
7 the Indo-Aryan--soon found out that beyond this body, beyond even
8 the shining body which their forefathers longed after, is the real
9 man, the principle, the individual who clothes himself with this
10 body, and then throws it off when worn out. Was such a principle
11 created? If creation means something coming out of nothing, their
12 answer is a decisive "No". This soul is without birth and without
13 death; it is not a compound or combination but an independent
14 individual, and as such it cannot be created or destroyed. It is only
15 travelling through various states.

16 Naturally, the question arises: Where was it all this time?
17 The Hindu philosophers say, "It was passing through different
18 bodies in the physical sense, or, really and metaphysically speaking,
19 passing through different mental planes."

20 Are there any proofs apart from the teachings of the Vedas
21 upon which the doctrine of reincarnation has been founded by the
22 Hindu philosophers? There are, and we hope to show later on that
23 there are grounds as valid for it as for any other universally
24 accepted doctrine. But first we will see what some of the greatest of
25 modern European thinkers have thought about reincarnation.

26 I. H. Fichte, speaking about the immortality of the soul, says:

27 "It is true there is one analogy in nature which might be
28 brought forth in refutation of the continuance. It is the well-known
29 argument that everything that has a beginning in time must also
30 perish at some period of time; hence, that the claimed past
31 existence of the soul necessarily implies its pre-existence. This is a
32 fair conclusion, but instead of being an objection to, it is rather an
33 additional argument for its continuance. Indeed, one needs only to
34 understand the full meaning of the metaphysico-physiological axiom
35 that in reality nothing can be created or annihilated, to recognise
36 that the soul must have existed prior to its becoming visible in a
37 physical body."

38 Schopenhauer, in his book, *Die Welt als Wille und*
39 *Vorstellung*, speaking about palingenesis, says:

40 "What sleep is for the individual, death is for the 'will'. It
41 would not endure to continue the same actions and sufferings
42 throughout an eternity without true gain, if memory and
43 individuality remained to it. It flings them off, and this is Lethe, and
44 through this sleep of death it reappears fitted out with another
45 intellect as a new being; a new day tempts to new shores. These
46 constant new births, then, constitute the succession of the life-
47 dreams of a will which in itself is indestructible, until instructed and
48 improved by so much and such various successive knowledge in a
49 constantly new form, it abolishes and abrogates itself. . . . It must
50 not be neglected that even empirical grounds support a

1 palingenesis of this kind. As a matter of fact, there does exist a
2 connection between the birth of the newly appearing beings and
3 the death of those that are worn out. It shows itself in the great
4 fruitfulness of the human race which appears as a consequence of
5 devastating diseases. When in the fourteenth century the Black
6 Death had for the most part depopulated the Old World, a quite
7 abnormal fruitfulness appeared among the human race, and twin-
8 births were very frequent. The circumstance was also remarkable
9 that none of the children born at this time obtained their full
10 number of teeth; thus nature, exerting itself to the utmost, was
11 niggardly in details. This is related by F. Schnurrer in his *Chronik*
12 *der Seuchen*, 1825. Casper, also, in his *Ueber die Wahrscheinliche*
13 *Lebensdauer des Menschen*, 1835, confirms the principle that the
14 number of births in a given population has the most decided
15 influence upon the length of life and mortality in it, as this always
16 keeps pace with mortality; so that always and everywhere the
17 deaths and the births increase and decrease in like proportion,
18 which he places beyond doubt by an accumulation of evidence
19 collected from many lands and their various provinces. And yet it is
20 impossible that there can be physical, causal connection between
21 my early death and the fruitfulness of a marriage with which I have
22 nothing to do, or conversely. Thus here the metaphysical appears
23 undeniable, and in a stupendous manner, as the immediate ground
24 of explanation of the physical. Every new-born being comes fresh
25 and blithe into the new existence, and enjoys it as a free gift; but
26 there is and can be nothing freely given. Its fresh existence is paid
27 for by the old age and death of a worn-out existence which has
28 perished, but which contained the indestructible seed out of which
29 the new existence has arisen; they are one being."

30 The great English philosopher Hume, nihilistic though he
31 was, says in the sceptical essay on immortality, "The
32 metempsychosis is therefore the only system of this kind that
33 philosophy can listen to." The philosopher Lessing, with a deep
34 poetical insight, asks, "Is this hypothesis so laughable merely
35 because it is the oldest, because the human understanding, before
36 the sophistries of the schools had dissipated and debilitated it,
37 lighted upon it at once? . . . Why should not I come back as often as
38 I am capable of acquiring fresh knowledge, fresh experience? Do I
39 bring away so much from once that there is nothing to repay the
40 trouble of coming back?"

41 The arguments for and against the doctrine of a pre-existing
42 soul reincarnating through many lives have been many, and some of
43 the greatest thinkers of all ages have taken up the gauntlet to
44 defend it; and so far as we can see, if there is an individual soul,
45 that it existed before seems inevitable. If the soul is not an
46 individual but a combination of "Skandhas" (notions), as the
47 Madhyamikas among the Buddhists insist, still they find pre-
48 existence absolutely necessary to explain their position.

49 The argument showing the impossibility of an infinite
50 existence beginning in time is unanswerable, though attempts have
51 been made to ward it off by appealing to the omnipotence of God to
52 do anything, however contrary to reason it may be. We are sorry to

1 find this most fallacious argument proceeding from some of the
2 most thoughtful persons.

3 In the first place, God being the universal and common
4 cause of all phenomena, the question was to find the natural causes
5 of certain phenomena in the human soul, and the *Deus ex machina*
6 theory is, therefore, quite irrelevant. It amounts to nothing less
7 than confession of ignorance. We can give that answer to every
8 question asked in every branch of human knowledge and stop all
9 inquiry and, therefore, knowledge altogether.

10 Secondly, this constant appeal to the omnipotence of God is
11 only a word-puzzle. The cause, as cause, is and can only be known
12 to us as sufficient for the effect, and nothing more. As such we have
13 no more idea of an infinite effect than of an omnipotent cause.
14 Moreover, all our ideas of God are only limited; even the idea of
15 cause limits our idea of God. Thirdly, even taking the position for
16 granted, we are not bound to allow any such absurd theories as
17 "Something coming out of nothing", or "Infinity beginning in time",
18 so long as we can give a better explanation.

19 A so-called great argument is made against the idea of pre-
20 existence by asserting that the majority of mankind are not
21 conscious of it. To prove the validity of this argument, the party who
22 offers it must prove that the whole of the soul of man is bound up in
23 the faculty of memory. If memory be the test of existence, then all
24 that part of our lives which is not now in it must be non-existent,
25 and every person who in a state of coma or otherwise loses his
26 memory must be non-existent also.

27 The premises from which the inference is drawn of a
28 previous existence, and that too on the plane of conscious action, as
29 adduced by the Hindu philosophers, are chiefly these:

30 First, how to explain this world of inequalities? Here is one
31 child born in the province of a just and merciful God, with every
32 circumstance conducing to his becoming a good and useful member
33 of the human race, and perhaps at the same instant and in the same
34 city another child is born under circumstances every one of which is
35 against his becoming good. We see children born to suffer, perhaps
36 all their lives, and that owing to no fault of theirs. Why should it be
37 so? What is the cause? Of whose ignorance is it the result? If not
38 the child's, why should it suffer for its parents' actions?

39 It is much better to confess ignorance than to try to evade
40 the question by the allurements of future enjoyments in proportion
41 to the evil here, or by posing "mysteries". Not only undeserved
42 suffering forced upon us by any agent is immoral--not to say unjust--
43 but even the future-making-up theory has no legs to stand upon.

44 How many of the miserably born struggle towards a higher
45 life, and how many more succumb to the circumstances they are
46 placed under? Should those who grow worse and more wicked by
47 being forced to be born under evil circumstances be rewarded in
48 the future for the wickedness of their lives? In that case the more
49 wicked the man is here, the better will be his deserts hereafter.

50 There is no other way to vindicate the glory and the liberty

1 of the human soul and reconcile the inequalities and the horrors of
2 this world than by placing the whole burden upon the legitimate
3 cause--our own independent actions or Karma. Not only so, but
4 every theory of the creation of the soul from nothing inevitably
5 leads to fatalism and preordination, and instead of a Merciful
6 Father, places before us a hideous, cruel, and an ever-angry God to
7 worship. And so far as the power of religion for good or evil is
8 concerned, this theory of a created soul, leading to its corollaries of
9 fatalism and predestination, is responsible for the horrible idea
10 prevailing among some Christians and Mohammedans that the
11 heathens are the lawful victims of their swords, and all the horrors
12 that have followed and are following it still.

13 But an argument which the philosophers of the Nyaya school
14 have always advanced in favour of reincarnation, and which to us
15 seems conclusive, is this: Our experiences cannot be annihilated.
16 Our actions (Karma) though apparently disappearing, remain still
17 unperceived (Adrishta), and reappear again in their effect as
18 tendencies (Pravrittis). Even little babies come with certain
19 tendencies--fear of death, for example.

20 Now if a tendency is the result of repeated actions, the
21 tendencies with which we are born must be explained on that
22 ground too. Evidently we could not have got them in this life;
23 therefore we must have to seek for their genesis in the past. Now it
24 is also evident that some of our tendencies are the effects of the
25 self-conscious efforts peculiar to man; and if it is true that we are
26 born with such tendencies, it rigorously follows that their causes
27 were conscious efforts in the past--that is, we must have been on
28 the same mental plane which we call the human plane, before this
29 present life.

30 So far as explaining the tendencies of the present life by
31 past conscious efforts goes, the reincarnationists of India and the
32 latest school of evolutionists are at once; the only difference is that
33 the Hindus, as spiritualists, explain it by the conscious efforts of
34 individual souls, and the materialistic school of evolutionists, by a
35 hereditary physical transmission. The schools which hold to the
36 theory of creation out of nothing are entirely out of court.

37 The issue has to be fought out between the reincarnationists
38 who hold that all experiences are stored up as tendencies in the
39 subject of those experiences, the individual soul, and are
40 transmitted by reincarnation of that unbroken individuality--and the
41 materialists who hold that the brain is the subject of all actions and
42 the theory of the transmission through cells.

1 It is thus that the doctrine of reincarnation assumes an
2 infinite importance to our mind, for the fight between reincarnation
3 and mere cellular transmission is, in reality, the fight between
4 spiritualism and materialism. If cellular transmission is the all-
5 sufficient explanation, materialism is inevitable, and there is no
6 necessity for the theory of a soul. If it is not a sufficient explanation,
7 the theory of an individual soul bringing into this life the
8 experiences of the past is as absolutely true. There is no escape
9 from the alternative, reincarnation or materialism. Which shall we
10 accept?

More than a decade has passed since a young German student, one of eight children of a not very well-to-do clergyman, heard on a certain day Professor Lassen lecturing on a language and literature new--very new even at that time--to European scholars, namely, Sanskrit. The lectures were of course free; for even now it is impossible for any one in any European University to make a living by teaching Sanskrit, unless indeed the University backs him.

Lassen was almost the last of that heroic band of German scholars, the pioneers of Sanskrit scholarship in Germany. Heroic certainly they were--what interest except their pure and unselfish love of knowledge could German scholars have had at that time in Indian literature? The veteran Professor was expounding a chapter of *Shakuntala*; and on that day there was no one present more eagerly and attentively listening to Lassen's exposition than our young student. The subject-matter of the exposition was of course interesting and wonderful, but more wonderful was the strange language, the strange sounds of which, although uttered with all those difficult peculiarities that Sanskrit consonants are subjected to in the mouths of unaccustomed Europeans, had strange fascination for him. He returned to his lodgings, but that night sleep could not make him oblivious of what he had heard. A glimpse of a hitherto unknown land had been given to him, a land far more gorgeous in its colours than any he had yet seen, and having a power of fascination never yet experienced by his young and ardent soul.

Naturally his friends were anxiously looking forward to the ripening of his brilliant parts, and expected that he would soon enter a learned profession which might bring him respect, fame, and, above all, a good salary and a high position. But then there was this Sanskrit! The vast majority of European scholars had not even heard of it then; as for making it pay--I have already said that such a thing is impossible even now. Yet his desire to learn it was strong.

It has unfortunately become hard for us modern Indians to understand how it could be like that; nevertheless, there are to be met with in Varanasi and Nadia and other places even now, some old as well as young persons among our Pandits, and mostly among the Sannyasins, who are mad with this kind of thirst for knowledge for its own sake. Students, not placed in the midst of the luxurious surroundings and materials of the modern Europeanised Hindu, and with a thousand times less facilities for study, poring over manuscripts in the flickering light of an oil lamp, night after night, which alone would have been enough to completely destroy the eyesight of the students of any other nation; travelling on foot hundreds of miles, begging their way all along, in search of a rare manuscript or a noted teacher; and wonderfully concentrating all the energy of their body and mind upon their one object of study,

1 year in and year out, till the hair turns grey and the infirmity of age
2 overtakes them--such students have not, through God's mercy, as
3 yet disappeared altogether from our country. Whatever India now
4 holds as a proud possession, has been undeniably the result of such
5 labour on the part of her worthy sons in days gone by; and the truth
6 of this remark will become at once evident on comparing the depth
7 and solidity as well as the unselfishness and the earnestness of
8 purpose of India's ancient scholarship with the results attained by
9 our modern Indian Universities. Unselfish and genuine zeal for real
10 scholarship and honest earnest thought must again become
11 dominant in the life of our countrymen if they are ever to rise to
12 occupy among nations a rank worthy of their own historic past. It is
13 this kind of desire for knowledge which has made Germany what
14 she is now--one of the foremost, if not the foremost, among the
15 nations of the world.

16 Yes, the desire to learn Sanskrit was strong in the heart of
17 this German student. It was long, uphill work--this learning of
18 Sanskrit; with him too it was the same world-old story of successful
19 scholars and their hard work, their privations and their indomitable
20 energy--and also the same glorious conclusion of a really heroic
21 achievement. He thus achieved success; and now--not only Europe,
22 but all India knows this man, Paul Deussen, who is the Professor of
23 Philosophy in the University of Kiel. I have seen professors of
24 Sanskrit in America and in Europe. Some of them are very
25 sympathetic towards Vedantic thought. I admire their intellectual
26 acumen and their lives of unselfish labour. But Paul Deussen--or as
27 he prefers to be called in Sanskrit, Deva-Sena--and the veteran Max
28 Muller have impressed me as being the truest friends of India and
29 Indian thought. It will always be among the most pleasing episodes
30 in my life--my first visit to this ardent Vedantist at Kiel, his gentle
31 wife who travelled with him in India, and his little daughter, the
32 darling of his heart--and our travelling together through Germany
33 and Holland to London, and the pleasant meetings we had in and
34 about London.

35 The earliest schools of Sanskritists in Europe entered into
36 the study of Sanskrit with more imagination than critical ability.
37 They knew a little, expected much from that little, and often tried to
38 make too much of what little they knew. Then, in those days even,
39 such vagaries as the estimation of *Shakuntala* as forming the high
40 watermark of Indian philosophy were not altogether unknown!
41 These were naturally followed by a reactionary band of superficial
42 critics, more than real scholars of any kind, who knew little or
43 nothing of Sanskrit, expected nothing from Sanskrit studies, and
44 ridiculed everything from the East. While criticising the unsound
45 imaginativeness of the early school to whom everything in Indian
46 literature was rose and musk, these, in their turn, went into
47 speculations which, to say the least, were equally highly unsound
48 and indeed very venturesome. And their boldness was very
49 naturally helped by the fact that these over-hasty and
50 unsympathetic scholars and critics were addressing an audience
51 whose entire qualification for pronouncing any judgment in the
52 matter was their absolute ignorance of Sanskrit. What a medley of

1 results from such critical scholarship! Suddenly, on one fine
2 morning, the poor Hindu woke up to find that everything that was
3 his was gone; one strange race had snatched away from him his
4 arts, another his architecture, and a third, whatever there was of
5 his ancient sciences; why, even his religion was not his own! Yes--
6 that too had migrated into India in the wake of a Pehlevi cross of
7 stone! After a feverish period of such treading-on-each-other's-toes
8 of original research, a better state of things has dawned. It has now
9 been found out that mere adventure without some amount of the
10 capital of real and ripe scholarship produces nothing but ridiculous
11 failure even in the business of Oriental research, and that the
12 traditions in India are not to be rejected with supercilious
13 contempt, as there is really more in them than most people ever
14 dream of.

15 There is now happily coming into existence in Europe a new
16 type of Sanskrit scholars, reverential, sympathetic, and learned--
17 reverential because they are a better stamp of men, and
18 sympathetic because they are learned. And the link which connects
19 the new portion of the chain with the old one is, of course, our Max
20 Muller. We Hindus certainly owe more to him than to any other
21 Sanskrit scholar in the West, and I am simply astonished when I
22 think of the gigantic task which he, in his enthusiasm, undertook as
23 a young man and brought to a successful conclusion in his old age.
24 Think of this man without any help, poring over old manuscripts,
25 hardly legible to the Hindus themselves, and in a language to
26 acquire which takes a lifetime even in India--without even the help
27 of any needy Pandit whose "brains could be picked", as the
28 Americans say, for ten shillings a month, and a mere mention of his
29 name in the introduction to some book of "very new researches"--
30 think of this man, spending days and sometimes months in
31 elucidating the correct reading and meaning of a word or a
32 sentence in the commentary of Sayana (as he has himself told me),
33 and in the end succeeding in making an easy road through the
34 forest of Vedic literature for all others to go along; think of him and
35 his work, and then say what he really is to us! Of course we need
36 not all agree with him in all that he says in his many writings;
37 certainly such an agreement is impossible. But agreement or no
38 agreement, the fact remains that this one man has done a thousand
39 times more for the preservation, spreading, and appreciation of the
40 literature of our forefathers than any of us can ever hope to do, and
41 he has done it all with a heart which is full of the sweet balm of love
42 and veneration.

43 If Max Muller is thus the old pioneer of the new movement,
44 Deussen is certainly one of its younger advance-guard. Philological
45 interest had hidden long from view the gems of thought and
46 spirituality to be found in the mine of our ancient scriptures. Max
47 Muller brought out a few of them and exhibited them to the public
48 gaze, compelling attention to them by means of his authority as the
49 foremost philologist. Deussen, unhampered by any philological
50 leanings and possessing the training of a philosopher singularly
51 well versed in the speculations of ancient Greece and modern
52 Germany, took up the cue and plunged boldly into the metaphysical

1 depths of the Upanishads, found them to be fully safe and
2 satisfying, and then - equally boldly declared that fact before the
3 whole world. Deussen is certainly the freest among scholars in the
4 expression of his opinion about the Vedanta. He never stops to think
5 about the "What they would say" of the vast majority of scholars.
6 We indeed require bold men in this world to tell us bold words
7 about truth; and nowhere is this more true now than in Europe
8 where, through the fear of social opinion and such other causes,
9 there has been enough in all conscience of the whitewashing and
10 apologising attitude among scholars towards creeds and customs
11 which, in all probability, not many among them really believe in.
12 The greater is the glory, therefore, to Max Muller and to Deussen
13 for their bold and open advocacy of truth! May they be as bold in
14 showing to us our defects, the later corruptions in our thought-
15 systems in India, especially in their application to our social needs!
16 Just now we very much require the help of such genuine friends as
17 these to check the growing virulence of the disease, very prevalent
18 in India, of running either to the one extreme of slavish panegyrists
19 who cling to every village superstition as the innermost essence of
20 the Shastras, or to the other extreme of demoniacal denouncers
21 who see no good in us and in our history, and will, if they can, at
22 once dynamite all the social and spiritual organisations of our
23 ancient land of religion and philosophy.

ON PROFESSOR MAX MULLER

Though the ideal of work of our *Brahmavadin* should always be "{Sanskrit}--To work thou hast the right, but never to the fruits thereof", yet no sincere worker passes out of the field of activity without making himself known and catching at least a few rays of light.

The beginning of our work has been splendid, and the steady earnestness shown by our friends is beyond all praise. Sincerity of conviction and purity of motive will surely gain the day; and even a small minority, armed with these, is surely destined to prevail against all odds.

Keep away from all insincere claimants to supernatural illumination; not that such illumination is impossible, but, my friends, in this world of ours "Lust, or gold, or fame" is the hidden motive behind ninety per cent of all such claims, and of the remaining ten per cent, nine per cent are cases which require the tender care of physicians more than the attention of metaphysicians.

The first great thing to accomplish is to establish a character, to obtain, as we say, the {Sanskrit} (established in Wisdom). This applies equally to individuals and to organised bodies of individuals. Do not fret because the world looks with suspicion at every new attempt, even though it be in the path of spirituality. The poor world, how often has it been cheated! The more the {Sanskrit}, that is, the worldly aspect of life, looks at any growing movement with eyes of suspicion, or, even better still, presents to it a semi-hostile front, so much the better is it for the movement. If there is any truth this movement has to disseminate, any need it is born to supply, soon will condemnation be changed into praise, and contempt converted into love. People in these days are apt to take up religion as a means to some social or political end. Beware of this. Religion is its own end. That religion which is only a means to worldly well-being is not religion, whatever else it may be; and it is sheer blasphemy against God and man to hold that man has no other end than the free and full enjoyment of all the pleasure of his senses.

Truth, purity, and unselfishness--wherever these are present, there is no power below or above the sun to crush the possessor thereof. Equipped with these, one individual is able to face the whole universe in opposition.

Above all, beware of compromises. I do not mean that you are to get into antagonism with anybody, but you have to hold on to your own principles in weal or woe and never adjust them to others' "fads" through the greed of getting supporters. Your Atman is the support of the universe--whose support do you stand in need of? Wait with patience and love and strength; if helpers are not ready

1 now, they will come in time. Why should we be in a hurry? The real
2 working force of all great work is in its almost unperceived
3 beginnings.

4 Whoever could have thought that the life and teachings of a
5 boy born of poor Brahmin parents in a wayside Bengal village
6 would, in a few years, reach such distant lands as our ancestors
7 never even dreamed of? I refer to Bhagavan Ramakrishna. Do you
8 know that Prof. Max Muller has already written an article on Shri
9 Ramakrishna for the *Nineteenth Century*, and will be very glad to
10 write a larger and fuller account of his life and teachings if
11 sufficient materials are forthcoming? What an extraordinary man is
12 Prof. Max Muller! I paid a visit to him a few days ago. I should say,
13 that I went to pay my respects to him, for whosoever loves Shri
14 Ramakrishna, whatever be his or her sect, or creed, or nationality,
15 my visit to that person I hold as a pilgrimage. "{Sanskrit}--

16 They who are devoted to those who love Me--they are My
17 best devotees." Is that not true?

18 The Professor was first induced to inquire about the power
19 behind, which led to sudden and momentous changes in the life of
20 the late Keshab Chandra Sen, the great Brahmo leader; and since
21 then, he has been an earnest student and admirer of the life and
22 teachings of Shri Ramakrishna. "Ramakrishna is worshipped by
23 thousands today, Professor", I said. "To whom else shall worship be
24 accorded, if not to such", was the answer. The Professor was
25 kindness itself, and asked Mr. Sturdy and myself to lunch with him.
26 He showed us several colleges in Oxford and the Bodleian library.
27 He also accompanied us to the railway station; and all this he did
28 because, as he said, "It is not every day one meets a disciple of
29 Ramakrishna Paramahansa."

30 The visit was really a revelation to me. That nice little house
31 in its setting of a beautiful garden, the silver-headed sage, with a
32 face calm and benign, and forehead smooth as a child's in spite of
33 seventy winters, and every line in that face speaking of a deep-
34 seated mine of spirituality somewhere behind; that noble wife, the
35 helpmate of his life through his long and arduous task of exciting
36 interest, overriding opposition and contempt, and at last creating a
37 respect for the thoughts of the sages of ancient India--the trees, the
38 flowers, the calmness, and the clear sky--all these sent me back in
39 imagination to the glorious days of Ancient India, the days of our
40 Brahmarshis and Rajarshis, the days of the great Vanaprasthas, the
41 days of Arundhatis and Vasishthas.

42 It was neither the philologist nor the scholar that I saw, but
43 a soul that is every day realising its oneness with the Brahman, a
44 heart that is every moment expanding to reach oneness with the
45 Universal. Where others lose themselves in the desert of dry
46 details, he has struck the well-spring of life. Indeed his heartbeats
47 have caught the rhythm of the Upanishads "{Sanskrit}--Know the
48 Atman alone, and leave off all other talk."

49 Although a world-moving scholar and philosopher, his
50 learning and philosophy have only led him higher and higher to the
51 realisation of the Spirit, his {Sanskrit} (lower knowledge) has

1 indeed helped him to reach the {Sanskrit} (higher knowledge). This
2 is real learning. {Sanskrit}--"Knowledge gives humility." Of what
3 use is knowledge if it does not show us the way to the Highest?

4 And what love he bears towards India! I wish I had a
5 hundredth part of that love for my own motherland! Endued with an
6 extraordinary, and at the same time intensely active mind, he has
7 lived and moved in the world of Indian thought for fifty years or
8 more, and watched the sharp interchange of light and shade in the
9 interminable forest of Sanskrit literature with deep interest and
10 heartfelt love, till they have all sunk into his very soul and coloured
11 his whole being.

12 Max Muller is a Vedantist of Vedantists. He has, indeed,
13 caught the real soul of the melody of the Vedanta, in the midst of all
14 its settings of harmonies and discords--the one light that lightens
15 the sects and creeds of the world, the Vedanta, the one principle of
16 which all religions are only applications. And what was
17 Ramakrishna Paramahansa? The practical demonstration of this
18 ancient principle, the embodiment of India that is past, and a
19 foreshadowing of the India that is to be, the bearer of spiritual light
20 unto nations. The jeweller alone can understand the worth of
21 jewels; this is an old proverb. Is it a wonder that this Western sage
22 does study and appreciate every new star in the firmament of
23 Indian thought, before even the Indians themselves realise its
24 magnitude?

25 "When are you coming to India? Every heart there would
26 welcome one who has done so much to place the thoughts of their
27 ancestors in the true light", I said. The face of the aged sage
28 brightened up--there was almost a tear in his eyes, a gentle nodding
29 of the head, and slowly the words come out: "I would not return
30 then; you would have to cremate me there." Further questions
31 seemed an unwarrantable intrusion into realms wherein are stored
32 the holy secrets of man's heart. Who knows but that it was what the
33 poet has said--{Sanskrit}

34 --"He remembers with his mind the friendships of former
35 births, firmly rooted in his heart."

36 His life has been a blessing to the world; and may it be
37 many, many years more, before he changes the present plane of his
38 existence!

SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF PAVHARI BABA

To help the suffering world was the gigantic task to which the Buddha gave prominence, brushing aside for the time being almost all other phases of religion; yet he had to spend years in self-searching to realise the great truth of the utter hollowness of clinging to a selfish individuality. A more unselfish and untiring worker is beyond our most sanguine imagination: yet who had harder struggles to realise the meaning of things than he? It holds good in all times that the greater the work, the more must have been the power of realisation behind. Working out the details of an already laid out masterly plan may not require much concentrated thought to back it, but the great impulses are only transformed great concentrations. The theory alone perhaps is sufficient for small exertions, but the push that creates the ripple is very different from the impulsion that raises the wave, and yet the ripple is only the embodiment of a bit of the power that generates the wave.

Facts, naked facts, gaunt and terrible may be; truth, bare truth, though its vibrations may snap every chord of the heart; motive selfless and sincere, though to reach it, limb after limb has to be lopped off--such are to be arrived at, found, and gained, before the mind on the lower plane of activity can raise huge work-waves. The fine accumulates round itself the gross as it rolls on through time and becomes manifest, the unseen crystalises into the seen, the possible becomes the practical, the cause the effect, and thought, muscular work.

The cause, held back by a thousand circumstances, will manifest itself, sooner or later, as the effect; and potent thought, however powerless at present, will have its glorious day on the plane of material activity. Nor is the standard correct which judges of everything by its power to contribute to our sense-enjoyment.

The lower the animal, the more is its enjoyment in the senses, the more it lives in the senses. Civilisation, true civilisation, should mean the power of taking the animal-man out of his sense-life--by giving him visions and tastes of planes much higher--and not external comforts.

Man knows this instinctively. He may not formulate it to himself under all circumstances. He may form very divergent opinions about the life of thought. But it is there, pressing itself to the front in spite of everything, making him pay reverence to the hoodoo-worker, the medicine-man, the magician, the priest, or the professor of science. The growth of man can only be gauged by his power of living in the higher atmosphere where the senses are left behind, the amount of the pure thought-oxygen his lungs can breathe in, and the amount of time he can spend on that height.

As it is, it is an obvious fact that, with the exception of what

1 is taken up by the necessities of life, the man of culture is loth to
2 spend his time on the so-called comforts, and even necessary
3 actions are performed with lessened zeal, as the process moves
4 forward.

5 Even luxuries are arranged according to ideas and ideals, to
6 make them reflect as much of thought-life as possible--and this is
7 Art.

8 "As the one fire coming into the universe is manifesting itself
9 in every form, and yet is more besides"--yes, infinitely more
10 besides! A bit, only a small bit, of infinite thought can be made to
11 descend to the plane of matter to minister to our comfort--the rest
12 will not allow itself to be rudely handled. The superfine always
13 eludes our view and laughs at our attempts to bring it down. In this
14 case Mohammed must go to the mountain, and no "nay". Man must
15 raise himself to that higher plane if he wants to enjoy its beauties,
16 to bathe in its light, to feel his life pulsating in unison with the
17 Cause-Life of the universe.

18 It is knowledge that opens the door to regions of wonder,
19 knowledge that makes a god of an animal: and that knowledge
20 which brings us to That, "knowing which everything else is known"
21 (the heart of all knowledge--whose pulsation brings life to all
22 sciences--the science of religion) is certainly the highest, as it alone
23 can make man live a complete and perfect life in thought. Blessed
24 be the land which has styled it "supreme science"!

25 The principle is seldom found perfectly expressed in the
26 practical, yet the ideal is never lost. On the one hand, it is our duty
27 never to lose sight of the ideal, whether we can approach it with
28 sensible steps, or crawl towards it with imperceptible motion: on
29 the other hand, the truth is, it is always looming in front of us--
30 though we try our best to cover its light with our hands before our
31 eyes.

32 The life of the practical is in the ideal. It is the ideal that has
33 penetrated the whole of our lives, whether we philosophise, or
34 perform the hard, everyday duties of life. The rays of the ideal,
35 reflected and refracted in various straight or tortuous lines, are
36 pouring in through every aperture and windhole, and consciously or
37 unconsciously, every function has to be performed in its light, every
38 object has to be seen transformed, heightened, or deformed by it. It
39 is the ideal that has made us what we are, and will make us what
40 we are going to be. It is the power of the ideal that has enshrouded
41 us, and is felt in our joys or sorrows, in our great acts or mean
42 doings, in our virtues and vices.

43 If such is the power of the ideal over the practical, the
44 practical is no less potent in forming the ideal. The truth of the
45 ideal is in the practical. The fruition of the ideal has been through
46 the sensing of the practical. That the ideal is there is a proof of the
47 existence of the practical somehow, somewhere. The ideal may be
48 vaster, yet it is the multiplication of little bits of the practical. The
49 ideal mostly is the summed-up, generalised, practical units.

50 The power of the ideal is in the practical. Its work on us is in

1 and through the practical. Through the practical, the ideal is
2 brought down to our sense-perception, changed into a form fit for
3 our assimilation. Of the practical we make the steps to rise to the
4 ideal. On that we build our hopes; it gives us courage to work.

5 One man who manifests the ideal in his life is more powerful
6 than legions whose words can paint it in the most beautiful colours
7 and spin out the finest principles.

8 Systems of philosophy mean nothing to mankind, or at best
9 only intellectual gymnastics, unless they are joined to religion and
10 can get a body of men struggling to bring them down to practical
11 life with more or less success. Even systems having not one positive
12 hope, when taken up by groups and made somewhat practical, had
13 always a multitude; and the most elaborate positive systems of
14 thought withered away without it.

15 Most of us cannot keep our activities on a par with our
16 thought-lives. Some blessed ones can. Most of us seem to lose the
17 power of work as we think deeper, and the power of deep thought if
18 we work more. That is why most great thinkers have to leave to
19 time the practical realisation of their great ideals. Their thoughts
20 must wait for more active brains to work them out and spread
21 them. Yet, as we write, comes before us a vision of him, the
22 charioteer of Arjuna, standing in his chariot between the
23 contending hosts, his left hand curbing the fiery steeds--a mail-clad
24 warrior, whose eagle-glance sweeps over the vast army, and as if by
25 instinct weighs every detail of the battle array of both parties--at
26 the same time that we hear, as it were, falling from his lips and
27 thrilling the awe-struck Arjuna, that most marvellous secret of
28 work: "He who finds rest in the midst of activity, and activity in rest,
29 he is the wise amidst men, he the Yogi, he is the doer of all work"
30 (Gita, IV. 18).

31 This is the ideal complete. But few ever reach it. We must
32 take things as they are, therefore, and be contented to piece
33 together different aspects of human perfection, developed in
34 different individuals.

35 In religion we have the man of intense thought, of great
36 activity in bringing help to others, the man of boldness and daring
37 self-realisation, and the man of meekness and humility.

38 The subject of this sketch was a man of wonderful humility
39 and intense self-realisation.

40 Born of Brahmin parents in a village near Guzi, Varanasi,
41 Pavhari Baba, as he was called in after life, came to study and live
42 with his uncle in Ghazipur, when a mere boy. At present, Hindu
43 ascetics are split up into the main divisions of Sannyasins, Yogis,
44 Vairagis, and Panthis. The Sannyasins are the followers of
45 Advaitism after Shankaracharya; the Yogis, though following the
46 Advaita system, are specialists in practising the different systems of
47 Yoga; the Vairagis are the dualistic disciples of Ramanujacharya
48 and others; the Panthis, professing either philosophy, are orders
49 founded during the Mohammedan rule. The uncle of Pavhari Baba
50 belonged to the Ramanuja or Shri sect, and was a Naishthika

1 Brahmacharin, i.e. one who takes the vow of lifelong celibacy. He
2 had a piece of land on the banks of the Ganga, about two miles to
3 the north of Ghazipur, and had established himself there. Having
4 several nephews, he took Pavhari Baba into his home and adopted
5 him, intending him to succeed to his property and position.

6 Not much is known of the life of Pavhari Baba at this period.
7 Neither does there seem to have been any indication of those
8 peculiarities which made him so well known in after years. He is
9 remembered merely as a diligent student of Vyakarana and Nyaya,
10 and the theology of his sect, and as an active lively boy whose jollity
11 at times found vent in hard practical jokes at the expense of his
12 fellow-students.

13 Thus the future saint passed his young days, going through
14 the routine duties of Indian students of the old school; and except
15 that he showed more than ordinary application to his studies, and a
16 remarkable aptitude for learning languages, there was scarcely
17 anything in that open, cheerful, playful student life to foreshadow
18 the tremendous seriousness which was to culminate in a most
19 curious and awful sacrifice.

20 Then something happened which made the young scholar
21 feel, perhaps for the first time, the serious import of life, and made
22 him raise his eyes, so long riveted on books, to scan his mental
23 horizon critically and crave for something in religion which was a
24 fact, and not mere booklore. His uncle passed away. One face on
25 which all the love of that young heart was concentrated had gone,
26 and the ardent boy, struck to the core with grief, determined to
27 supply the gap with a vision that can never change.

28 In India, for everything, we want a Guru. Books, we Hindus
29 are persuaded, are only outlines. The living secrets must be handed
30 down from Guru to disciple, in every art, in every science, much
31 more so in religion. From time immemorial earnest souls in India
32 have always retired to secluded spots, to carry on uninterrupted
33 their study of the mysteries of the inner life, and even today there is
34 scarcely a forest, a hill, or a sacred spot which rumour does not
35 consecrate as the abode of a great sage. The saying is well known:

36 "The water is pure that flows.

37 The monk is pure that goes."

38 As a rule, those who take to the celibate religious life in
39 India spend a good deal of their life in journeying through various
40 countries of the Indian continent, visiting different shrines--thus
41 keeping themselves from rust, as it were, and at the same time
42 bringing religion to the door of everyone. A visit to the four great
43 sacred places, situated in the four corners of India, is considered
44 almost necessary to all who renounce the world.

45 All these considerations may have had weight with our
46 young Brahmacharin, but we are sure that the chief among them
47 was the thirst for knowledge. Of his travels we know but little,
48 except that, from his knowledge of Dravidian languages, in which a
49 good deal of the literature of his sect is written, and his thorough
50 acquaintance with the old Bengali of the Vaishnavas of Shri

1 Chaitanya's order, we infer that his stay in Southern India and
2 Bengal could not have been very short.

3 But on his visit to one place, the friends of his youth lay
4 great stress. It was on the top of mount Girnar in Kathiawar, they
5 say, that he was first initiated into the mysteries of practical Yoga.

6 It was this mountain which was so holy to the Buddhists. At
7 its foot is the huge rock on which is inscribed the first-deciphered
8 edict of the "divinest of monarchs", Asoka. Beneath it, through
9 centuries of oblivion, lay the conclave of gigantic Stupas, forest
10 covered, and long taken for hillocks of the Girnar range. No less
11 sacred is it still held by the sect of which Buddhism is now thought
12 to be a revised edition, and which strangely enough did not venture
13 into the field of architectural triumphs till its world-conquering
14 descendant had melted away into modern Hinduism. Girnar is
15 celebrated amongst Hindus as having been sanctified by the stay of
16 the great Avadhuta Guru Dattatreya, and rumour has it that great
17 and perfected Yogis are still to be met with by the fortunate on its
18 top.

19 The next turning-point in the career of our youthful
20 Brahmacharin we trace to the banks of the Ganga somewhere near
21 Varanasi, as the disciple of a Sannyasin who practised Yoga and
22 lived in a hole dug in the high bank of the river. To this Yogi can be
23 traced the after-practice of our saint, of living inside a deep tunnel,
24 dug out of the ground on the bank of the Ganga near Ghazipur.
25 Yogis have always inculcated the advisability of living in caves or
26 other spots where the temperature is even, and where sounds do
27 not disturb the mind. We also learn he was about the same time
28 studying the Advaita system under a Sannyasin in Varanasi.

29 After years of travel, study, and discipline, the young
30 Brahmacharin came back to the place where he had been brought
31 up. Perhaps his uncle, if alive, would have found in the face of the
32 boy the same light which of yore a greater sage saw in that of his
33 disciple and exclaimed, "Child, thy face today shines with the glory
34 of Brahman!" But those that welcomed him to his home were only
35 the companions of his boyhood--most of them gone into, and
36 claimed for ever by, the world of small thought and eternal toil.

37 Yet there was a change, a mysterious--to them an awe-
38 inspiring--change, in the whole character and demeanour of that
39 school-day friend and playmate whom they had been wont to
40 understand. But it did not arouse in them emulation, or the same
41 research. It was the mystery of a man who had gone beyond this
42 world of trouble and materialism, and this was enough. They
43 instinctively respected it and asked no questions.

44 Meanwhile, the peculiarities of the saint began to grow more
45 and more pronounced. He had a cave dug in the ground, like his
46 friend near Varanasi, and began to go into it and remain there for
47 hours. Then began a process of the most awful dietary discipline.
48 The whole day he worked in his little Ashrama, conducted the
49 worship of his beloved Ramachandra, cooked good dinners--in
50 which art he is said to have been extraordinarily proficient--
51 distributed the whole of the offered food amongst his friends and

1 the poor, looked after their comforts till night came, and when they
2 were in their beds, the young man stole out, crossed the Ganga by
3 swimming, and reached the other shore. There he would spend the
4 whole night in the midst of his practices and prayers, come back
5 before daybreak and wake up his friends, and then begin once more
6 the routine business of "worshipping others", as we say in India.

7 His own diet, in the meanwhile, was being attenuated every
8 day, till it came down, we are told, to a handful of bitter Nimba
9 leaves, or a few pods of red pepper, daily. Then he gave up going
10 nightly to the woods on the other bank of the river and took more
11 and more to his cave. For days and months, we are told, he would
12 be in the hole, absorbed in meditation, and then come out. Nobody
13 knows what he subsisted on during these long intervals, so the
14 people called him Pav-ahari (or air-eater) Baba (or father).

15 He would never during his life leave this place. Once,
16 however, he was so long inside the cave that people gave him up as
17 dead, but after a long time, the Baba emerged and gave a Bhandara
18 (feast) to a large number of Sadhus.

19 When not absorbed in his meditations, he would be living in
20 a room above the mouth of his cave, and during this time he would
21 receive visitors. His fame began to spread, and to Rai Gagan
22 Chandra Bahadur of the Opium Department, Ghazipur--a gentleman
23 whose innate nobility and spirituality have endeared him to all--we
24 owe our introduction to the saint.

25 Like many others in India, there was no striking or stirring
26 external activity in this life. It was one more example of that Indian
27 ideal of teaching through life and not through words, and that truth
28 bears fruit in those lives only which have become ready to receive.
29 Persons of this type are entirely averse to preaching what they
30 know, for they are for ever convinced that it is internal discipline
31 alone that leads to truth, and not words. Religion to them is no
32 motive to social conduct, but an intense search after and realisation
33 of *truth* in this life. They deny the greater potentiality of one
34 moment over another, and every moment in eternity being equal to
35 every other, they insist on seeing the truths of religion face to face
36 now and here, not waiting for death.

37 The present writer had occasion to ask the saint the reason
38 of his not coming out of his cave to help the world. At first, with his
39 native humility and humour, he gave the following strong reply:

40 "A certain wicked person was caught in some criminal act
41 and had his nose cut off as a punishment. Ashamed to show his
42 noseless features to the world and disgusted with himself, he fled
43 into a forest; and there, spreading a tiger-skin on the ground, he
44 would feign deep meditation whenever he thought anybody was
45 about. This conduct, instead of keeping people off, drew them in
46 crowds to pay their respects to this wonderful saint; and he found
47 that his forest-life had brought him once again an easy living. Thus
48 years went by. At last the people around became very eager to
49 listen to some instruction from the lips of the silent meditative
50 saint; and one young man was specially anxious to be initiated into
51 the order. It came to such a pass that any more delay in that line

1 would undermine the reputation of the saint. So one day he broke
2 his silence and asked the enthusiastic young man to bring on the
3 morrow a sharp razor with him. The young man, glad at the
4 prospect of the great desire of his life being speedily fulfilled, came
5 early the next morning with the razor. The noseless saint led him to
6 a very retired spot in the forest, took the razor in his hand, opened
7 it, and with one stroke cut off his nose, repeating in a solemn voice,
8 `Young man, this has been my initiation into the order. The same I
9 give to you. Do you transmit it diligently to others when the
10 opportunity comes!' The young man could not divulge the secret of
11 this wonderful initiation for shame, and carried out to the best of
12 his ability the injunctions of his master. Thus a whole sect of nose-
13 cut saints spread over the country. Do you want me to be the
14 founder of another such?"

15 Later on, in a more serious mood, another query brought the
16 answer: "Do you think that physical help is the only help possible?
17 Is it not possible that one mind can help other minds even without
18 the activity of the body?"

19 When asked on another occasion why he, a great Yogi,
20 should perform Karma, such as pouring oblations into the sacrificial
21 fire, and worshipping the image of Shri Raghunathji, which are
22 practices only meant for beginners, the reply came: "Why do you
23 take for granted that everybody makes Karma for his own good?
24 Cannot one perform Karma for others?"

25 Then again, everyone has heard of the thief who had come to
26 steal from his Ashrama, and who at the sight of the saint got
27 frightened and ran away, leaving the goods he had stolen in a
28 bundle behind; how the saint took the bundle up, ran after the thief,
29 and came up to him after miles of hard running; how the saint laid
30 the bundle at the feet of the thief, and with folded hands and tears
31 in his eyes asked his pardon for his own intrusion, and begged hard
32 for his acceptance of the goods, since they belonged to him, and not
33 to himself.

34 We are also told, on reliable authority, how once he was
35 bitten by a cobra; and though he was given up for hours as dead, he
36 revived; and when his friends asked him about it, he only replied
37 that the cobra "was a messenger from the Beloved".

38 And well may we believe this, knowing as we do the extreme
39 gentleness, humility, and love of his nature. All sorts of physical
40 illness were to him only "messengers from the Beloved", and he
41 could not even bear to hear them called by any other name, even
42 while he himself suffered tortures from them. This silent love and
43 gentleness had conveyed themselves to the people around, and
44 those who have travelled through the surrounding villages can
45 testify to the unspoken influence of this wonderful man. Of late, he
46 did not show himself to anyone. When out of his underground
47 retiring-place, he would speak to people with a closed door
48 between. His presence above ground was always indicated by the
49 rising smoke of oblations in the sacrificial fire, or the noise of
50 getting things ready for worship.

51 One of his great peculiarities was his entire absorption at

1 the time in the task in hand, however trivial. The same amount of
2 care and attention was bestowed in cleaning a copper pot as in the
3 worship of Shri Raghunathji, he himself being the best example of
4 the secret he once told us of work: "The means should be loved and
5 cared for as if it were the end itself."

6 Neither was his humility kindred to that which means pain
7 and anguish or self-abasement. It sprang naturally from the
8 realisation of that which he once so beautifully explained to us, "O
9 King, the Lord is the wealth of those who have nothing--yes, of
10 those", he continued, "who have thrown away all desires of
11 possession, even that of one's own soul." He would never directly
12 teach, as that would be assuming the role of a teacher and placing
13 himself in a higher position than another. But once the spring was
14 touched, the fountain welled up with infinite wisdom; yet always the
15 replies were indirect.

16 In appearance he was tall and rather fleshy, had but one eye,
17 and looked much younger than his real age. His voice was the
18 sweetest we have ever heard. For the last ten years or more of his
19 life, he had withdrawn himself entirely from the gaze of mankind. A
20 few potatoes and a little butter were placed behind the door of his
21 room, and sometimes during the night this was taken in when he
22 was not in Samadhi and was living above ground. When inside his
23 cave, he did not require even these. Thus, this silent life went on,
24 witnessing to the science of Yoga, and a living example of purity,
25 humility, and love.

26 The smoke, which, as we have said already, indicated his
27 coming out of Samadhi, one day smelled of burning flesh. The
28 people around could not guess what was happening; but when the
29 smell became overpowering, and the smoke was seen to rise up in
30 volumes, they broke open the door, and found that the great Yogi
31 had offered himself as the last oblation to his sacrificial fire, and
32 very soon a heap of ashes was all that remained of his body.

33 Let us remember the words of Kalidasa: "Fools blame the
34 actions of the great, because they are extraordinary and their
35 reasons past the finding-out of ordinary mortals."

36 Yet, knowing him as we do, we can only venture to suggest
37 that the saint saw that his last moments had come, and not wishing
38 to cause trouble to any, even after death, performed this last
39 sacrifice of an Arya, in full possession of body and mind.

40 The present writer owes a deep debt of gratitude to the
41 departed saint and dedicates these lines, however unworthy, to the
42 memory of one of the greatest Masters he has loved and served.

1
2
3 *ARYANS AND TAMILIANS*
4

5 A veritable ethnological museum! Possibly, the half-ape
6 skeleton of the recently discovered Sumatra link will be found on
7 search here, too. The Dolmens are not wanting. Flint implements
8 can be dug out almost anywhere. The lake-dwellers--at least the
9 river-dwellers--must have been abundant at one time. The cave-men
10 and leaf-wearers still persist. The primitive hunters living in forests
11 are in evidence in various parts of the country. Then there are the
12 more historical varieties--the Negrito-Kolarian, the Dravidian, and
13 the Aryan. To these have been added from time to time dashes of
14 nearly all the known races, and a great many yet unknown--various
15 breeds of Mongoloids, Mongols, Tartars, and the so-called Aryans of
16 the philologists. Well, here are the Persian, the Greek, the Yunchi,
17 the Hun, the Chin, the Scythian, and many more, melted and fused,
18 the Jews, Parsees, Arabs, Mongols, down to the descendants of the
19 Vikings and the lords of the German forests, yet undigested--an
20 ocean of humanity, composed of these race-waves seething, boiling,
21 struggling, constantly changing form, rising to the surface, and
22 spreading, and swallowing little ones, again subsiding--this is the
23 history of India.

24 In the midst of this madness of nature, one of the contending
25 factions discovered a method and, through the force of its superior
26 culture, succeeded in bringing the largest number of Indian
27 humanity under its sway.

28 The superior race styled themselves the Aryas or nobles, and
29 their method was the Varnashramachara--the so-called caste.

30 Of course the men of the Aryan race reserved for
31 themselves, consciously or unconsciously a good many privileges;
32 yet the institution of caste has always been very flexible, sometimes
33 too flexible to ensure a healthy uprise of the races very low in the
34 scale of culture.

35 It put, theoretically at least, the whole of India under the
36 guidance--not of wealth, nor of the sword--but of intellect--intellect
37 chastened and controlled by spirituality. The leading caste in India
38 is the highest of the Aryans--the Brahmins.

39 Though apparently different from the social methods of
40 other nations, on close inspection, the Aryan method of caste will
41 not be found so very different except on two points:

42 The first is, in every other country the highest honour
43 belongs to the Kshatriya--the man of the sword. The Pope of Rome
44 will be glad to trace his descent to some robber baron on the banks
45 of the Rhine. In India, the highest honour belongs to the man of
46 peace--the Sharman, the Brahmin, the man of God.

47 The greatest Indian king would be gratified to trace his
48 descent to some ancient sage who lived in the forest, probably a
49 recluse, possessing nothing, dependent upon the villagers for his

1 daily necessities, and all his life trying to solve the problems of this
2 life and the life hereafter.

3 The second point is, the difference of *unit*. The law of caste
4 in every other country takes the individual man or woman as the
5 sufficient unit. Wealth, power, intellect, or beauty suffices for the
6 individual to leave the status of birth and scramble up to anywhere
7 he can.

8 Here, the unit is all the members of a caste community.

9 Here, too, one has every chance of rising from a low caste to
10 a higher or the highest: only, in this birth-land of altruism, one is
11 compelled to take his whole caste along with him.

12 In India, you cannot, on account of your wealth, power, or
13 any other merit, leave your fellows behind and make common cause
14 with your superiors; you cannot deprive those who helped in your
15 acquiring the excellence of any benefit therefrom and give them in
16 return only contempt. If you want to rise to a higher caste in India,
17 you have to elevate all your caste first, and then there is nothing in
18 your onward path to hold you back.

19 This is the Indian method of fusion, and this has been going
20 on from time immemorial. For in India, more than elsewhere, such
21 words as Aryans and Dravidians are only of philological import, the
22 so-called craniological differentiation finding no solid ground to
23 work upon.

24 Even so are the names Brahmin, Kshatriya, etc. They simply
25 represent the status of a community in itself continuously
26 fluctuating, even when it has reached the summit and all further
27 endeavours are towards fixity of the type by non-marriage, by being
28 forced to admit fresh groups, from lower castes or foreign lands,
29 within its pale.

30 Whatever caste has the power of the sword, becomes
31 Kshatriya; whatever learning, Brahmin; whatever wealth, Vaishya.

32 The groups that have already reached the coveted goal,
33 indeed, try to keep themselves aloof from the newcomers, by
34 making sub-divisions in the same caste, but the fact remains that
35 they coalesce in the long run. This is going on before our own eyes,
36 all over India.

37 Naturally, a group having raised itself would try to preserve
38 the privileges to itself. Hence, whenever it was possible to get the
39 help of a king, the higher castes, especially the Brahmins, have
40 tried to put down similar aspirations in lower castes, by the sword if
41 practicable. But the question is: Did they succeed? Look closely into
42 your Puranas and Upa-puranas, look especially into the local
43 Khandas of the big Puranas, look round and see what is happening
44 before your eyes, and you will find the answer.

45 We are, in spite of our various castes, and in spite of the
46 modern custom of marriage restricted within the sub-divisions of a
47 caste (though this is not universal), a mixed race in every sense of
48 the word.

49 Whatever may be the import of the philological terms

1 "Aryan" and "Tamilian", even taking for granted that both these
2 grand sub-divisions of Indian humanity came from outside the
3 Western frontier, the dividing line had been, from the most ancient
4 times, one of language and not of blood. Not one of the epithets
5 expressive of contempt for the ugly physical features of the Dasyus
6 of the Vedas would apply to the great Tamilian race; in fact if there
7 be a toss for good looks between the Aryans and Tamilians, no
8 sensible man would dare prognosticate the result.

9 The super-arrogated excellence of birth of any caste in India
10 is only pure myth, and in no part of India has it, we are sorry to say,
11 found such congenial soil, owing to linguistic differences, as in the
12 South.

13 We purposely refrain from going into the details of this
14 social tyranny in the South, just as we have stopped ourselves from
15 scrutinising the genesis of the various modern Brahmins and other
16 castes. Sufficient for us to note the extreme tension of feeling that
17 is evident between the Brahmins and non-Brahmins of the Madras
18 Presidency.

19 We believe in Indian caste as one of the greatest social
20 institutions that the Lord gave to man. We also believe that though
21 the unavoidable defects, foreign persecutions, and, above all, the
22 monumental ignorance and pride of many Brahmins who do not
23 deserve the name, have thwarted, in many ways, the legitimate
24 fructification of this most glorious Indian institution, it has already
25 worked wonders for the land of Bharata and is destined to lead
26 Indian humanity to its goal.

27 We earnestly entreat the Brahmins of the South not to forget
28 the ideal of India--the production of a universe of Brahmins, pure as
29 purity, good as God Himself; this was at the beginning, says the
30 Mahabharata, and so will it be in the end.

31 Then anyone who claims to be a Brahmins should prove his
32 pretensions, first by manifesting that spirituality, and next by
33 raising others to the same status. On the face of this, it seems that
34 most of them are only nursing a false pride of birth; and any
35 schemer, native or foreign, who can pander to this vanity and
36 inherent laziness by fulsome sophistry, appears to satisfy most.

37 Beware, Brahmins, this is the sign of death! Arise and show
38 your manhood, your Brahminhood, by raising the non-Brahmins
39 around you--not in the spirit of a master--not with the rotten canker
40 of egotism crawling with superstitions and the charlatanry of East
41 and West--but in the spirit of a servant. For verily he who knows
42 how to serve knows how to rule.

43 The non-Brahmins also have been spending their energy in
44 kindling the fire of caste hatred--vain and useless to solve the
45 problem--to which every non-Hindu is only too glad to throw on a
46 load of fuel.

47 Not a step forward can be made by these inter-caste
48 quarrels, not one difficulty removed; only the beneficent onward
49 march of events would be thrown back, possibly for centuries, if the
50 fire bursts out into flames.

1 It would be a repetition of Buddhistic political blunders.

2 In the midst of this ignorant clamour and hatred, we are
3 delighted to find Pandit D. Savariroyan pursuing the only legitimate
4 and the only sensible course. Instead of wasting precious vitality in
5 foolish and meaningless quarrels, Pandit Savariroyan has
6 undertaken in his articles on the "Admixture of the Aryan with
7 Tamilian" in the *Siddhanta Deepika*, to clear away not only a lot of
8 haze, created by a too adventurous Western philology, but to pave
9 the way to a better understanding of the caste problem in the
10 South.

11 Nobody ever got anything by begging. We get only what we
12 deserve. The first step to deserve is to desire; and we desire with
13 success what we feel ourselves worthy to get.

14 A gentle yet clear brushing off of the cobwebs of the so-
15 called Aryan theory and all its vicious corollaries is therefore
16 absolutely necessary, especially for the South, and a proper self-
17 respect created by a knowledge of the past grandeur of one of the
18 great ancestors of the Aryan race--the great Tamilians.

19 We stick, in spite of Western theories, to that definition of
20 the word "Arya" which we find in our sacred books, and which
21 includes only the multitude we now call Hindus. This Aryan race,
22 itself a mixture of two great races, Sanskrit-speaking and Tamil-
23 speaking, applies to all Hindus alike. That the Shudras have in
24 some Smritis been excluded from this epithet means nothing, for
25 the Shudras were and still are only the waiting Aryas--Aryas in
26 novitiate.

27 Though we know Pandit Savariroyan is walking over rather
28 insecure ground, though we differ from many of his sweeping
29 explanations of Vedic names and races, yet we are glad that he has
30 undertaken the task of beginning a proper investigation into the
31 culture of the great mother of Indian civilisation--if the Sanskrit-
32 speaking race was the father.

33 We are glad also that he boldly pushes forward the Accado-
34 Sumerian racial identity of the ancient Tamilians. And this makes us
35 proud of the blood of the great civilisation which flowered before all
36 others--compared to whose antiquity the Aryans and Semites are
37 babies.

38 We would suggest, also, that the land of Punt of the
39 Egyptians was not only Malabar, but that the Egyptians as a race
40 bodily migrated from Malabar across the ocean and entered the
41 delta along the course of the Nile from north to south, to which
42 Punt they have been always fondly looking back as the home of the
43 blessed.

44 This is a move in the right direction. Detailed and more
45 careful work is sure to follow with a better study of the Tamilian
46 tongues and the Tamilian elements found in the Sanskrit literature,
47 philosophy, and religion. And who are more competent to do this
48 work than those who learn the Tamilian idioms as their mother-
49 tongue?

1 As for us Vedantins and Sannyasins, we are proud of our
2 Sanskrit-speaking ancestors of the Vedas; proud of our Tamil-
3 speaking ancestors whose civilisation is the oldest yet known; we
4 are proud of our Kolarian ancestors older than either of the above--
5 who lived and hunted in forests; we are proud of our ancestors with
6 flint implements--the first of the human race; and if evolution is
7 true, we are proud of our animal ancestors, for they antedated man
8 himself. We are proud that we are descendants of the whole
9 universe, sentient or insentient. Proud that we are born, and work,
10 and suffer--prouder still that we die when the task is finished and
11 enter for ever the realm where there is no more delusion.

1
2
3 *THE SOCIAL CONFERENCE ADDRESS*
4

5 "God created the native, God created the European, but
6 somebody else created the mixed breed"--we heard a horribly
7 blasphemous Englishman say.

8 Before us lies the inaugural address of Mr. Justice Ranade,
9 voicing the reformatory zeal of the Indian Social Conference. In it
10 there is a huge array of instances of inter-caste marriages of yore, a
11 good deal about the liberal spirit of the ancient Kshatriyas, good
12 sober advice to students, all expressed with an earnestness of good-
13 will and gentleness of language that is truly admirable.

14 The last part, however, which offers advice as to the creation
15 of a body of teachers for the new movement strong in the Punjab,
16 which we take for granted is the Arya Samaj, founded by a
17 Sannyasin, leaves us wondering and asking ourselves the question:

18 It seems God created the Brahmin, God created the
19 Kshatriya, but who created the Sannyasin?

20 There have been and are Sannyasins or monks in every
21 known religion. There are Hindu monks, Buddhist monks, Christian
22 monks, and even Islam had to yield its rigorous denial and take in
23 whole orders of mendicant monks.

24 There are the wholly shaved, the partly shaved, the long
25 hair, short hair, matted hair, and various other hirsute types.

26 There are the sky-clad, the rag-clad, the ochre-clad, the
27 yellow-clad (monks), the black-clad Christian, and the blue-clad
28 Mussulman. Then there have been those that tortured their flesh in
29 various ways, and others who believed in keeping their bodies well
30 and healthy. There was also, in old days in every country, the monk
31 militant. The same spirit and similar manifestations have run in
32 parallel lines with women, too--the nuns. Mr. Ranade is not only the
33 President of the Indian Social Conference but a chivalrous
34 gentleman also: the nuns of the Shrutis and Smritis seem to have
35 been to his entire satisfaction. The ancient celibate Brahmadakinis,
36 who travelled from court to court challenging great philosophers,
37 do not seem to him to thwart the central plan of the Creator--the
38 propagation of the species; nor did they seem to have lacked in the
39 variety and completeness of human experience, in Mr. Ranade's
40 opinion, as the stronger sex following the same line of conduct
41 seem to have done.

42 We therefore dismiss the ancient nuns and their modern
43 spiritual descendants as having passed muster.

44 The arch-offender, man alone, has to bear the brunt of Mr.
45 Ranade's criticism, and let us see whether he survives it or not.

46 It seems to be the consensus of opinion amongst savants
47 that this world-wide monastic institution had its first inception in
48 this curious land of ours, which appears to stand so much in need of

1 "social reform".

2 The married teacher and the celibate are both as old as the
3 Vedas. Whether the Soma-sipping married Rishi with his "all-
4 rounded" experience was the first in order of appearance, or the
5 lack-human-experience celibate Rishi was the primeval form, is
6 hard to decide just now. Possibly Mr. Ranade will solve the problem
7 for us independently of the hearsay of the so-called Western
8 Sanskrit scholars; till then the question stands a riddle like the hen
9 and egg problem of yore.

10 But whatever be the order of genesis, the celibate teachers
11 of the Shrutis and Smritis stand on an entirely different platform
12 from the married ones, which is perfect chastity, Brahmacharya.

13 If the performance of Yajnas is the corner-stone of the work-
14 portion of the Vedas, as surely is Brahmacharya the foundation of
15 the knowledge-portion.

16 Why could not the blood-shedding sacrificers be the
17 exponents of the Upanishads--why?

18 On the one side was the married Rishi, with his meaningless,
19 bizarre, nay, terrible ceremonials, his misty sense of ethics, to say
20 the least; on the other hand, the celibate monks tapping, in spite of
21 their want of human experience, springs of spirituality and ethics at
22 which the monastic Jinas, the Buddhas, down to Shankara,
23 Ramanuja, Kabir, and Chaitanya, drank deep and acquired energy
24 to propagate their marvellous spiritual and social reforms, and
25 which, reflected third-hand, fourth-hand from the West, is giving
26 our social reformers the power even to criticise the Sannyasins.

27 At the present day, what support, what pay, do the
28 mendicants receive in India, compared to the pay and privilege of
29 our social reformers? And what work does the social reformer do,
30 compared to the Sannyasin's silent selfless labour of love?

31 But they have not learnt the modern method of self-
32 advertisement!!

33 The Hindu drank in with his mother's milk that this life is as
34 nothing--a dream! In this he is at one with the Westerners; but the
35 Westerner sees no further and his conclusion is that of the
36 Charvaka--to "make hay while the sun shines". "This world being a
37 miserable hole, let us enjoy to the utmost what morsels of pleasure
38 are left to us." To the Hindu, on the other hand, God and soul are
39 the only realities, infinitely more real than this world, and he is
40 therefore ever ready to let this go for the other.

41 So long as this attitude of the national mind continues, and
42 we pray it will continue for ever, what hope is there in our
43 anglicised compatriots to check the impulse in Indian men and
44 women to renounce all "for the good of the universe and for one's
45 own freedom"?

46 And that rotten corpse of an argument against the monk--
47 used first by the Protestants in Europe, borrowed by the Bengali
48 reformers, and now embraced by our Bombay brethren--the monk
49 on account of his celibacy must lack the realisation of life "in all its

1 fullness and in all its varied experiences!" We hope this time the
2 corpse will go for good into the Arabian Sea, especially in these
3 days of plague, and notwithstanding the filial love one may suppose
4 the foremost clan of Brahmins there may have for ancestors of
5 great perfume, if the Pauranika accounts are of any value in tracing
6 their ancestry.

7 By the bye, In Europe, between the monks and nuns, they
8 have brought up and educated most of the children, whose parents,
9 though married people, were utterly unwilling to taste of the
10 "varied experiences of life".

11 Then, of course, every faculty has been given to us by God
12 for some use. Therefore the monk is wrong in not propagating the
13 race--a sinner! Well, so also have been given us the faculties of
14 anger, lust, cruelty, theft, robbery, cheating, etc., every one of these
15 being absolutely necessary for the maintenance of social life,
16 reformed or unreformed. What about these? Ought they also to be
17 maintained at full steam, following the varied-experience-theory or
18 not? Of course the social reformers, being in intimate acquaintance
19 with God Almighty and His purposes, must answer the query in the
20 positive. Are we to follow Vishvamisra, Atri, and others in their
21 ferocity and the Vasishtha family in particular in their "full and
22 varied experience" with womankind? For the majority of married
23 Rishis are as celebrated for their liberality in begetting children
24 wherever and whenever they could, as for their hymn-singing and
25 Soma-bibbing; or are we to follow the celibate Rishis who upheld
26 Brahmacharya as the *sine qua non* of spirituality?

27 Then there are the usual backsliders, who ought to come in
28 for a load of abuse--monks who could not keep up to their idea--
29 weak, wicked.

30 But if the ideal is straight and sound, a backsliding monk is
31 head and shoulders above any householder in the land, on the
32 principle, "It is better to have loved and lost."

33 Compared to the coward that never made the attempt, he is
34 a hero.

35 If the searchlight of scrutiny were turned on the inner
36 workings of our social reform conclave, angels would have to take
37 note of the percentage of backsliders as between the monk and the
38 householder; and the recording angel is in our own heart.

39 But then, what about this marvellous experience of standing
40 alone, discarding all help, breasting the storms of life, of working
41 without any sense of recompense, without any sense of putrid duty?
42 Working a whole life, joyful, free--not goaded on to work like slaves
43 by false human love or ambition?

44 This the monk alone can have. What about religion? Has it to
45 remain or vanish? If it remains, it requires its experts, its soldiers.
46 The monk is the religious expert, having made religion his one
47 *metier* of life. He is the soldier of God. What religion dies so long
48 as it has a band of devoted monks?

1 Why are Protestant England and America shaking before the
2 onrush of the Catholic monk?
3 *Vive* Ranade and the Social Reformers!--but, O India!
4 Anglicised India! Do not forget, child, that there are in this society
5 problems that neither you nor your Western Guru can yet grasp the
6 meaning of--much less solve!

1
2
3 *INDIA'S MESSAGE TO THE WORLD*
4

5 The following notes were discovered among Swami
6 Vivekananda's papers. He intended to write a book and jotted down
7 forty-two points as a syllabus for the work, but only a few points
8 were dealt with as an introduction by him and the work was left
9 unfinished. We give the manuscript as found.

10
11 Syllabus
12

13 1. Bold has been my message to the people of the West.
14 Bolder to those at home.

15 2. Four years of residence in the marvellous West has made
16 India only the better understood. The shades are deeper and the
17 lights brighter.

18 3. The survey--it is not true that the Indians have
19 degenerated.

20 4. The problem here has been as it has been everywhere
21 else--the assimilation of various races, but nowhere has it been so
22 vast as here.

23 5. Community of language, government and, above all,
24 religion has been the power of fusion.

25 6. In other lands this has been attempted by "force", that is,
26 the enforcement of the culture of *one* race only over the rest. The
27 result being the production of a short-lived vigorous national life;
28 then, dissolution.

29 7. In India, on the other hand, the attempts have been as
30 gentle as the problem vast, and from the earliest times, the
31 customs, and especially the religions, of the different elements
32 tolerated.

33 8. Where it was a small problem and force was sufficient to
34 form a unity, the effect really was the nipping in the bud of various
35 healthy types in the germ of all the elements except the dominant
36 one. It was only one set of brains using the vast majority for its own
37 good, thus losing the major portion of the possible amount of
38 development; and thus when the dominant type had spent itself, the
39 apparently impregnable building tottered to its ruins, e.g., Greece,
40 Rome, the Norman.

41 9. A common language would be a great desideratum; but
42 the same criticism applies to it, the destruction of the vitality of the
43 various existing ones.

44 10. The only solution to be reached was the finding of a great
45 sacred language of which all the others would be considered as
46 manifestations, and that was found in the Sanskrit.

1 11.The Dravidian languages may or may not have been
2 originally Sanskritic, but for practical purposes they are so now,
3 and every day we see them approaching the ideal more and more,
4 yet keeping their distinctive vital peculiarities.

5 12.A racial background was found--the Aryas.

6 13.The speculation whether there was a distinct, separate
7 race called the Aryas living in Central Asia to the Baltic.

8 14.The so-called types. Races were always mixed.

9 15.The "blonde" and the "brunette".

10 16.Coming to practical common sense from so-called
11 historical imagination. The Aryas in their oldest records were in the
12 land between Turkistan and the Punjab and N.W. Tibet.

13 17.This leads to the attempt at fusion between races and
14 tribes of various degrees of culture.

15 18.Just as Sanskrit has been the linguistic solution, so the
16 Arya the racial solution. So the Brahminhood is the solution of the
17 varying degrees of progress and culture as well as that of all social
18 and political problems.

19 19.The great ideal of India--Brahminhood.

20 20.Property-less, selfless, subject to no laws, no king except
21 the moral.

22 21.Brahminhood by descent--various races have claimed and
23 acquired the right in the past as well as in the present.

24 22.No claim is made by the doer of great deeds, only by lazy
25 worthless fools.

26 23.Degradation of Brahminhood and Kshatriyahood. The
27 Puranas said there will be only non-Brahmins in the Kali Yuga, and
28 that is true, becoming truer every day. Yet a few Brahmins remain,
29 and in India alone.

30 24.Kshatriyahood--we must pass through that to become a
31 Brahmin. Some may have passed through in the past, but the
32 present must show that.

33 25.But the disclosure of the whole plan is to be found in
34 religion.

35 26.The different tribes of the same race worship similar
36 gods, under a generic name as the Baals of the Babylonians, the
37 Molochs of the Hebrews.

38 27.The attempt in Babylonia of making all the Baals merge
39 in Baal-Merodach--the attempt of the Israelites to merge all the
40 Molochs in the Moloch Yavah or Yahu.

41 28.The Babylonians destroyed by the Persians; and the
42 Hebrews who took the Babylonian mythology and adapted it to
43 their own needs, succeeded in producing a strict monotheistic
44 religion.

45 29.Monotheism like absolute monarchy is quick in executing
46 orders, and a great centralisation of force, but it grows no farther,

1 and its worst feature is its cruelty and persecution. All nations
2 coming within its influence perish very soon after a flaring up of a
3 few years.

4 30.In India the same problem presented itself--the solution
5 found--{Sanskrit}.

6 This is the keynote to everything which has succeeded, and
7 the keystone of the arch.

8 31.The result is that wonderful toleration of the Vedantist.

9 32.The great problem therefore is to harmonise and unify
10 without destroying the individuality of these various elements.

11 33.No form of religion which depends upon persons, either
12 of this earth or even of heaven, is able to do that.

13 34.Here is the glory of the Advaita system preaching a
14 principle, not a person, yet allowing persons, both human and
15 divine, to have their full play.

16 35.This has been going on all the time; in this sense we have
17 been always progressing. The Prophets during the Mohammedan
18 rule.

19 36.It was fully conscious and vigorous in old days, and less
20 so of late; in this sense alone we have degenerated.

21 37.This is going to be in the future. If the manifestation of
22 the power of one tribe utilising the labours of the rest produced
23 wonderful results at least for a certain length of time, here is going
24 to be the accumulation and the concentration of all the races that
25 have been slowly and inevitably getting mixed up in blood and
26 ideas, and in my mind's eye, I see the future giant slowly maturing.
27 The future of India, the youngest and the most glorious of the
28 nations of earth as well as the oldest.

29 38.The way--we will have to work. Social customs as
30 barriers, some as founded upon the Smritis. But none from the
31 Shrutis. The Smritis must change with time. This is the admitted
32 law.

33 39.The principles of the Vedanta not only should be
34 preached everywhere in India, but also outside. Our thought must
35 enter into the make-up of the minds of every nation, not through
36 writings, but through persons.

37 40.Gift is the only Karma in Kali Yuga. None attaining
38 knowledge until purified by Karma.

39 41.Gift of spiritual and secular knowledge.

40 42. Renunciation--Renouncers--the national call.

41 42 *INTRODUCTION*

43
44 Bold has been my message to the people of the West, bolder
45 is my message to you, my beloved countrymen. The message of
46 ancient India to new Western nations I have tried my best to voice--

1 ill done or well done the future is sure to show; but the mighty voice
2 of the same future is already sending forward soft but distinct
3 murmurs, gaining strength as the days go by, the message of India
4 that is to be to India as she is at present.

5 Many wonderful institutions and customs, and many
6 wonderful manifestations of strength and power it has been my
7 good fortune to study in the midst of the various races I have seen,
8 but the most wonderful of all was to find that beneath all these
9 apparent variations of manners and customs, of culture and power,
10 beats the same mighty human heart under the impulsion of the
11 same joys and sorrows, of the same weakness and strength.

12 Good and evil are everywhere and the balance is wondrously
13 even; but, above all, is the glorious soul of man everywhere which
14 never fails to understand any one who knows how to speak its own
15 language. Men and women are to be found in every race whose
16 lives are blessings to humanity, verifying the words of the divine
17 Emperor Asoka: "In every land dwell Brahmins and Shramanas."

18 I am grateful to the lands of the West for the many warm
19 hearts that received me with all the love that pure and disinterested
20 souls alone could give; but my life's allegiance is to this my
21 motherland; and if I had a thousand lives, every moment of the
22 whole series would be consecrated to your service, my countrymen,
23 my friends.

24 For to this land I owe whatever I possess, physical, mental,
25 and spiritual; and if I have been successful in anything, the glory is
26 yours, not mine. Mine alone are my weaknesses and failures, as
27 they come through my inability of profiting by the mighty lessons
28 with which this land surrounds one, even from his very birth.

29 And what a land! Whosoever stands on this sacred land,
30 whether alien or a child of the soil, feels himself surrounded--unless
31 his soul is degraded to the level of brute animals--by the living
32 thoughts of the earth's best and purest sons, who have been
33 working to raise the animal to the divine through centuries, whose
34 beginning history fails to trace. The very air is full of the pulsations
35 of spirituality. This land is sacred to philosophy, to ethics and
36 spirituality, to all that tends to give a respite to man in his incessant
37 struggle for the preservation of the animal, to all training that
38 makes man throw off the garment of brutality and stand revealed as
39 the spirit immortal, the birthless, the deathless, the ever-blessed--
40 the land where the cup of pleasure was full, and fuller has been the
41 cup of misery, until here, first of all, man found out that it was all
42 vanity; here, first of all in the prime of youth, in the lap of luxury, in
43 the height of glory and plenitude of power, he broke through the
44 fetters of delusion. Here, in this ocean of humanity, amidst the
45 sharp interaction of strong currents of pleasure and pain, of
46 strength and weakness, of wealth and poverty, of joy and sorrow, of
47 smile and tear, of life and death, in the melting rhythm of eternal
48 peace and calmness, arose the throne of renunciation! Here in this
49 land, the great problems of life and death, of the thirst for life, and
50 the vain mad struggles to preserve it only resulting in the
51 accumulation of woes, were first grappled with and solved--solved

1 as they never were before and never will be hereafter; for here and
2 here alone was discovered that even life itself is an evil, the shadow
3 only of something which alone is real. This is the land where alone
4 religion was practical and real, and here alone men and women
5 plunged boldly in to realise the goal, just as in other lands they
6 madly plunge in to realise the pleasures of life by robbing their
7 weaker brethren. Here and here alone the human heart expanded
8 till it included not only the human, but birds, beasts, and plants;
9 from the highest gods to grains of sand, the highest and the lowest,
10 all find a place in the heart of man, grown great, infinite. And here
11 alone, the human soul studied the universe as one unbroken unity
12 whose every pulse was his own pulse.

13 We all hear so much about the degradation of India. There
14 was a time when I also believed in it. But today standing on the
15 vantage-ground of experience, with eyes cleared of obstructive
16 predispositions and above all, of the highly-coloured pictures of
17 other countries toned down to their proper shade and light by
18 actual contact, I confess in all humility that I was wrong. Thou
19 blessed land of the Aryas, thou wast never degraded. Sceptres have
20 been broken and thrown away, the ball of power has passed from
21 hand to hand, but in India, courts and kings always touched only a
22 few; the vast mass of the people, from the highest to the lowest, has
23 been left to pursue its own inevitable course, the current of national
24 life flowing at times slow and half-conscious, at others, strong and
25 awakened. I stand in awe before the unbroken procession of scores
26 of shining centuries, with here and there a dim link in the chain,
27 only to flare up with added brilliance in the next, and there she is
28 walking with her own majestic steps--my motherland--to fulfil her
29 glorious destiny, which no power on earth or in heaven can check--
30 the regeneration of man the brute into man the God.

31 Ay, a glorious destiny, my brethren, for as far back as the
32 days of the Upanishads we have thrown the challenge to the world:
33 {Sanskrit}--"Not by progeny, not by wealth, but by renunciation
34 alone immortality is reached." Race after race has taken the
35 challenge up and tried their utmost to solve the world-riddle on the
36 plane of desires. They have all failed in the past--the old ones have
37 become extinct under the weight of wickedness and misery, which
38 lust for power and gold brings in its train, and the new ones are
39 tottering to their fall. The question has yet to be decided whether
40 peace will survive or war; whether patience will survive or non-
41 forbearance, whether goodness will survive or wickedness; whether
42 muscle will survive or brain; whether worldliness will survive or
43 spirituality. We have solved our problem ages ago, and held on to it
44 through good or evil fortune, and mean to hold on to it till the end
45 of time. Our solution is unworldliness--renunciation.

46 This is the theme of Indian life-work, the burden of her
47 eternal songs, the backbone of her existence, the foundation of her
48 being, the *raison d'etre* of her very existence--the spiritualisation of
49 the human race. In this her life-course she has never deviated,
50 whether the Tartar ruled or the Turk, whether the Mogul ruled or
51 the English.

52 And I challenge anybody to show one single period of her

1 national life when India was lacking in spiritual giants capable of
2 moving the world. But her work is spiritual, and that cannot be
3 done with blasts of war-trumpets or the march of cohorts. Her
4 influence has always fallen upon the world like that of the gentle
5 dew, unheard and scarcely marked, yet bringing into bloom the
6 fairest flowers of the earth. This influence, being in its nature
7 gentle, would have to wait for a fortunate combination of
8 circumstances, to go out of the country into other lands, though it
9 never ceased to work within the limits of its native land. As such,
10 every educated person knows that whenever the empire-building
11 Tartar or Persian or Greek or Arab brought this land in contact with
12 the outside world, a mass of spiritual influence immediately flooded
13 the world from here. The very same circumstances have presented
14 themselves once more before us. The English high roads over land
15 and sea and the wonderful power manifested by the inhabitants of
16 that little island have once more brought India in contact with the
17 rest of the world, and the same work has already begun. Mark my
18 words, this is but the small beginning, big things are to follow; what
19 the result of the present work outside India will be I cannot exactly
20 state, but this I know for certain that millions, I say deliberately,
21 millions in every civilised land are waiting for the message that will
22 save them from the hideous abyss of materialism into which modern
23 money-worship is driving them headlong, and many of the leaders
24 of the new social movements have already discovered that Vedanta
25 in its highest form can alone spiritualise their social aspirations. I
26 shall have to return to this towards the end. I take up therefore the
27 other great subject, the work within the country.

28 The problem assumes a twofold aspect, not only
29 spiritualisation but assimilation of the various elements of which
30 the nation is composed. The assimilation of different races into one
31 has been the common task in the life of every nation.

1
2
3 *STRAY REMARKS ON THEOSOPHY*
4

5 The Theosophists are having a jubilee time of it this year,
6 and several press-notices are before us of their goings and doings
7 for the last twenty-five years.

8 Nobody has a right now to say that the Hindus are not
9 liberal to a fault. A coterie of young Hindus has been found to
10 welcome even this graft of American Spiritualism, with its panoply
11 of taps and raps and hitting back and forth with Mahatmic pellets.

12 The Theosophists claim to possess the original divine
13 knowledge of the universe. We are glad to learn of it, and gladder
14 still that they mean to keep it rigorously a secret. Woe unto us, poor
15 mortals, and Hindus as that, if all this is at once let out on us!
16 Modern Theosophy is Mrs. Besant. Blavatskism and Olcottism seem
17 to have taken a back seat. Mrs. Besant means well at least--and
18 nobody can deny her perseverance and zeal.

19 There are, of course, carping critics. We on our part see
20 nothing but good in Theosophy--good in what is directly beneficial,
21 good in what is pernicious, as they say, indirectly good as we say--
22 the intimate geographical knowledge of various heavens, and other
23 places, and the denizens thereof; and the dexterous finger work on
24 the visible plane accompanying ghostly communications to live
25 Theosophists--all told. For Theosophy is the best serum we know of,
26 whose injection never fails to develop the queer moths finding
27 lodgment in some brains attempting to pass muster as sound.

28 We have no wish to disparage the good work of the
29 Theosophical or any other society. Yet exaggeration has been in the
30 past the bane of our race and if the several articles on the work of
31 the Theosophical Society that appeared in the *Advocate* of
32 Lucknow be taken as the temperamental gauge of Lucknow, we are
33 sorry for those it represents, to say the least; foolish depreciation is
34 surely vicious, but fulsome praise is equally loathsome.

35 This Indian grafting of American Spiritualism--with only a
36 few Sanskrit words taking the place of spiritualistic jargon--
37 Mahatma missiles taking the place of ghostly raps and taps, and
38 Mahatmic inspiration that of obsession by ghosts.

39 We cannot attribute a knowledge of all this to the writer of
40 the articles in the *Advocate*, but he must not confound himself and
41 his Theosophists with the great Hindu nation, the majority of whom
42 have clearly seen through the Theosophical phenomena from the
43 start and, following the great Swami Dayananda Sarasvati who took
44 away his patronage from Blavatskism the moment he found it out,
45 have held themselves aloof.

46 Again, whatever be the predilection of the writer in
47 question, the Hindus have enough of religious teaching and
48 teachers amidst themselves even in this Kali Yuga, and they do not
49 stand in need of dead ghosts of Russians and Americans.

1 The articles in question are libels on the Hindus and their
2 religion. We Hindus-let the writer, like that of the articles referred
3 to, know once for all-have no need nor desire to import religion
4 from the West. Sufficient has been the degradation of importing
5 almost everything else.

6 The importation in the case of religion should be mostly on
7 the side of the West, we are sure, and our work has been all along
8 in that line. The only help the religion of the Hindus got from the
9 Theosophists in the West was not a ready field, but years of uphill
10 work, necessitated by Theosophical sleight-of-hand methods. The
11 writer ought to have known that the Theosophists wanted to crawl
12 into the heart of Western Society, catching on to the skirts of
13 scholars like Max Muller and poets like Edwin Arnold, all the same
14 denouncing these very men and posing as the only receptacles of
15 universal wisdom. And one heaves a sigh of relief that this
16 wonderful wisdom is kept a secret. Indian thought, charlatanry, and
17 mango-growing fakirism had all become identified in the minds of
18 educated people in the West, and this was all the help rendered to
19 Hindu religion by the Theosophists.

20 The great immediate visible good effect of Theosophy in
21 every country, so far as we can see, is to separate, like Prof. Koch's
22 injections into the lungs of consumptives, the healthy, spiritual,
23 active, and patriotic from the charlatans, the morbid, and the
24 degenerates posing as spiritual beings.

1
2
3 **REPLY TO THE ADDRESS OF THE MAHARAJA**
4 **OF KHETRI**

5 India--The Land Of Religion
6

7 During the residence of the Swamiji in America, the
8 following Address from the Maharaja of Khetri (Rajputana), dated
9 March 4th, 1895, was received by him:

10 My dear Swamiji,

11 As the head of this Durbar (a formal stately assemblage)
12 held today for this special purpose, I have much pleasure in
13 conveying to you, in my own name and that of my subjects, the
14 heartfelt thanks of this State for your worthy representation of
15 Hinduism at the Parliament of Religions, held at Chicago, in
16 America.

17 I do not think the general principles of Hinduism could be
18 expressed more accurately and clearly in English than what you
19 have done, with all the restrictions imposed by the very natural
20 shortcomings of language itself.

21 The influence of your speech and behaviour in foreign lands
22 has not only spread admiration among men of different countries
23 and different religions, but has also served to familiarise you with
24 them, to help in the furtherance of your unselfish cause. This is very
25 highly and inexpressibly appreciated by us all, and we should feel to
26 be failing in our duty, were I not to write to you formally at least
27 these few lines, expressing our sincere gratitude for all the trouble
28 you have taken in going to foreign countries, and to expound in the
29 American Parliament of Religions the truths of our ancient religion
30 which we ever hold so dear. It is certainly applicable to the pride of
31 India that it has been fortunate in possessing the privilege of having
32 secured so able a representative as yourself.

33 Thanks are also due to those noble souls whose efforts
34 succeeded in organising the Parliament of Religions, and who
35 accorded to you a very enthusiastic reception. As you were quite a
36 foreigner in that continent, their kind treatment of you is due to
37 their love of the several qualifications you possess, and this speaks
38 highly of their noble nature.

39 I herewith enclose twenty printed copies of this letter, and
40 have to request that, keeping this one with yourself, you will kindly
41 distribute the other copies among your friends.

42 With best regards,

43 I remain,

44 Yours very sincerely,

45 RAJA AJIT SINGH BAHADUR OF KHETRI
46

1 The Swamiji sent the following reply:

2 *"Whenever virtue subsides, and wickedness raises its head, I*
3 *manifest Myself to restore the glory of religion"*--are the words, O
4 noble Prince, of the Eternal One in the holy Gita, striking the
5 keynote of the pulsating ebb and flow of the spiritual energy in the
6 universe.

7 These changes are manifesting themselves again and again
8 in rhythms peculiar to themselves, and like every other tremendous
9 change, though affecting, more or less, every particle within their
10 sphere of action, they show their effects more intensely upon those
11 particles which are naturally susceptible to their power.

12 As in a universal sense, the primal state is a state of
13 sameness of the qualitative forces--a disturbance of this equilibrium
14 and all succeeding struggles to regain it, composing what we call
15 the manifestation of nature, this universe, which state of things
16 remains as long as the primitive sameness is not reached--so, in a
17 restricted sense on our own earth, differentiation and its inevitable
18 counterpart, this struggle towards homogeneity, must remain as
19 long as the human race shall remain as such, creating strongly
20 marked peculiarities between ethnic divisions, sub-races and even
21 down to individuals in all parts of the world.

22 In this world of impartial division and balance, therefore,
23 each nation represents, as it were, a wonderful dynamo for the
24 storage and distribution of a particular species of energy, and
25 amidst all other possessions that particular property shines forth as
26 the special characteristic of that race. And as any upheaval in any
27 particular part of human nature, though affecting others more or
28 less, stirs to its very depth that nation of which it is a special
29 characteristic, and from which as a centre it generally starts, so any
30 commotion in the religious world is sure to produce momentous
31 changes in India, that land which again and again has had to
32 furnish the centre of the wide-spread religious upheavals; for, above
33 all, India is the land of religion.

34 Each man calls that alone real which helps him to realise his
35 ideal. To the worldly-minded, everything that can be converted into
36 money is real, that which cannot be so converted is unreal. To the
37 man of a domineering spirit, anything that will conduce to his
38 ambition of ruling over his fellow men is real--the rest is naught;
39 and man finds nothing in that which does not echo back the
40 heartbeats of his special love in life.

41 Those whose only aim is to barter the energies of life for
42 gold, or name, or any other enjoyment; those to whom the tramp of
43 embattled cohorts is the only manifestation of power; those to
44 whom the enjoyments of the senses are the only bliss that life can
45 give--to these, India will ever appear as an immense desert whose
46 every blast is deadly to the development of life, as it is known by
47 them.

48 But to those whose thirst for life has been quenched for ever
49 by drinking from the stream of immortality that flows from far
50 away beyond the world of the senses, whose souls have cast away--

1 as a serpent its slough--the three-fold bondages of lust, gold, and
2 fame, who, from their height of calmness, look with love and
3 compassion upon the petty quarrels and jealousies and fights for
4 little gilded puff-balls, filled with dust, called "enjoyment" by those
5 under a sense-bondage; to those whose accumulated force of past
6 good deeds has caused the scales of ignorance to fall off from their
7 eyes, making them see through the vanity of name and form--to
8 such wheresoever they be, India, the motherland and eternal mine
9 of spirituality, stands transfigured, a beacon of hope to everyone in
10 search of Him who is the only real Existence in a universe of
11 vanishing shadows.

12 The majority of mankind can only understand power when it
13 is presented to them in a concrete form, fitted to their perceptions.
14 To them, the rush and excitement of war, with its power and spell,
15 is something very tangible, and any manifestation of life that does
16 not come like a whirlwind, bearing down everything before it, is to
17 them as death. And India, for centuries at the feet of foreign
18 conquerors, without any idea or hope of resistance, without the
19 least solidarity among its masses, without the least idea of
20 patriotism, must needs appear to such, as a land of rotten bones, a
21 lifeless putrescent mass.

22 It is sad--the fittest alone survive. How is it, then, that this
23 most unfitted of all races, according to commonly accepted ideas,
24 could bear the most awful misfortunes that ever befall a race, and
25 yet not show the least signs of decay? How is it that, while the
26 multiplying powers of the so-called vigorous and active races are
27 dwindling every day, the immoral (?) Hindu shows a power of
28 increase beyond them all? Great laurels are due, no doubt, to those
29 who can deluge the world with blood at a moment's notice; great
30 indeed is the glory of those who, to keep up a population of a few
31 millions in plenty, have to starve half the population of the earth,
32 but is no credit due to those who can keep hundreds of millions in
33 peace and plenty, without snatching the bread from the mouth of
34 anyone else? Is there no power displayed in bringing up and
35 guiding the destinies of countless millions of human beings, through
36 hundreds of centuries, without the least violence to others?

37 The mythologists of all ancient races supply us with fables of
38 heroes whose life was concentrated in a certain small portion of
39 their bodies, and until that was touched they remained
40 invulnerable. It seems as if each nation also has such a peculiar
41 centre of life, and so long as that remains untouched, no amount of
42 misery and misfortune can destroy it.

43 In religion lies the vitality of India, and so long as the Hindu
44 race do not forget the great inheritance of their forefathers, there is
45 no power on earth to destroy them.

46 Nowadays everybody blames those who constantly look back
47 to their past. It is said that so much looking back to the past is the
48 cause of all India's woes. To me, on the contrary, it seems that the
49 opposite is true. So long as they forgot the past, the Hindu nation
50 remained in a state of stupor; and as soon as they have begun to
51 look into their past, there is on every side a fresh manifestation of

1 life. It is out of this past that the future has to be moulded; this past
2 will become the future.

3 The more, therefore, the Hindus study the past, the more
4 glorious will be their future, and whoever tries to bring the past to
5 the door of everyone, is a great benefactor to his nation. The
6 degeneration of India came not because the laws and customs of
7 the ancients were bad, but because they were not allowed to be
8 carried to their legitimate conclusions.

9 Every critical student knows that the social laws of India
10 have always been subject to great periodic changes. At their
11 inception, these laws were the embodiment of a gigantic plan,
12 which was to unfold itself slowly through time. The great seers of
13 ancient India saw so far ahead of their time that the world has to
14 wait centuries yet to appreciate their wisdom, and it is this very
15 inability on the part of their own descendants to appreciate the full
16 scope of this wonderful plan that is the one and only cause of the
17 degeneration of India.

18 Ancient India had for centuries been the battlefield for the
19 ambitious projects of two of her foremost classes--the Brahmins and
20 the Kshatriyas.

21 On the other hand, the priesthood stood between the lawless
22 social tyranny of the princes over the masses, whom the Kshatriyas
23 declared to be their legal food. On the other hand, the Kshatriya
24 power was the one potent force which struggled with any success
25 against the spiritual tyranny of the priesthood and the ever-
26 increasing chain of ceremonials which they were forging to bind
27 down the people with.

28 The tug of war began in the earliest periods of the history of
29 our race, and throughout the Shrutis it can be distinctly traced. A
30 momentary lull came when Shri Krishna, leading the faction of
31 Kshatriya power and of Jnana, showed the way to reconciliation.
32 The result was the teachings of the Gita--the essence of philosophy,
33 of liberality, of religion. Yet the causes were there, and the effect
34 must follow.

35 The ambition of these two classes to be the masters of the
36 poor and ignorant was there, and the strife once more became
37 fierce. The meagre literature that has come down to us from that
38 period brings to us but faint echoes of that mighty past strife, but at
39 last it broke out as a victory for the Kshatriyas, a victory for Jnana,
40 for liberty--and ceremonial had to go down, much of it for ever. This
41 upheaval was what is known as the Buddhistic reformation. On the
42 religious side, it represented freedom from ceremonial; on the
43 political side, overthrow of the priesthood by the Kshatriyas.

44 It is a significant fact that the two greatest men ancient
45 India produced, were both Kshatriyas--Krishna and Buddha--and
46 still more significant is the fact that both of these God-men threw
47 open the door of knowledge to everyone, irrespective of birth or
48 sex.

49 In spite of its wonderful moral strength, Buddhism was
50 extremely iconoclastic; and much of its force being spent in merely

1 negative attempts, it had to die out in the land of its birth, and what
2 remained of it became full of superstitions and ceremonials, a
3 hundred times cruder than those it was intended to suppress.
4 Although it partially succeeded in putting down the animal
5 sacrifices of the Vedas, it filled the land with temples, images,
6 symbols, and bones of saints.

7 Above all, in the medley of Aryans, Mongols, and aborigines
8 which it created, it unconsciously led the way to some of the
9 hideous Vamacharas. This was especially the reason why this
10 travesty of the teaching of the great Master had to be driven out of
11 India by Shri Shankara and his band of Sannyasins.

12 Thus even the current of life, set in motion by the greatest
13 soul that ever wore a human form, the Bhagavan Buddha himself,
14 became a miasmic pool, and India had to wait for centuries until
15 Shankara arose, followed in quick succession by Ramanuja and
16 Madhva.

17 By this time, an entirely new chapter had opened in the
18 history of India. The ancient Kshatriyas and the Brahmins had
19 disappeared. The land between the Himalayas and the Vindhya,
20 the home of the Aryas, the land which gave birth to Krishna and
21 Buddha, the cradle of great Rajarshis and Brahmarshis, became
22 silent, and from the very farther end of the Indian Peninsula, from
23 races alien in speech and form, from families claiming descent from
24 the ancient Brahmins, came the reaction against the corrupted
25 Buddhism.

26 What had become of the Brahmins and Kshatriyas of
27 Aryavarta? They had entirely disappeared, except here and there a
28 few mongrel clans claiming to be Brahmins and Kshatriyas, and in
29 spite of their inflated, self-laudatory assertions that the whole world
30 ought to learn from {Sanskrit}, they had to sit in sackcloth and
31 ashes, in all humility, to learn at the feet of the Southerners. The
32 result was the bringing back of the Vedas to India--a revival of
33 Vedanta, such as India never before had seen; even the
34 householders began to study the Aranyakas.

35 In the Buddhistic movement, the Kshatriyas were the real
36 leaders, and whole masses of them became Buddhists. In the zeal of
37 reform and conversion, the popular dialects had been almost
38 exclusively cultivated to the neglect of Sanskrit, and the larger
39 portion of Kshatriyas had become disjointed from the Vedic
40 literature and Sanskrit learning. Thus this wave of reform, which
41 came from the South, benefited to a certain extent the priesthood,
42 and the priests only. For the rest of India's millions, it forged more
43 chains than they had ever known before.

44 The Kshatriyas had always been the backbone of India, so
45 also they had been the supporters of science and liberty, and their
46 voices had rung out again and again to clear the land from
47 superstitions; and throughout the history of India they ever formed
48 the invulnerable barrier to aggressive priestly tyranny.

49 When the greater part of their number sank into ignorance,
50 and another portion mixed their blood with savages from Central

1 Asia and lent their swords to establish the rules of priests in India,
2 her cup became full to the brim, and down sank the land of
3 Bharata, not to rise again, until the Kshatriya rouses himself, and
4 making himself free, strikes the chains from the feet of the rest.
5 Priestcraft is the bane of India. Can man degrade his brother, and
6 himself escape degradation?

7 Know, Rajaji, the greatest of all truths, discovered by your
8 ancestors, is that the universe is one. Can one injure anyone
9 without injuring himself? The mass of Brahmin and Kshatriya
10 tyranny has recoiled upon their own heads with compound interest;
11 and a thousand years of slavery and degradation is what the
12 inexorable law of Karma is visiting upon them.

13 This is what one of your ancestors said: "Even in this life,
14 they have conquered relativity whose mind is fixed in sameness"--
15 one who is believed to be God incarnate. We all believe it. Are his
16 words then vain and without meaning? If not, and we know they are
17 not, any attempt against this perfect equality of all creation,
18 irrespective of birth, sex, or even qualification, is a terrible mistake,
19 and no one can be saved until he has attained to this idea of
20 sameness.

21 Follow, therefore, noble Prince, the teachings of the
22 Vedanta, not as explained by this or that commentator, but as the
23 Lord within you understands them. Above all, follow this great
24 doctrine of sameness in all things, through all beings, seeing the
25 same God in all.

26 This is the way to freedom; inequality, the way to bondage.
27 No man and no nation can attempt to gain physical freedom without
28 physical equality, nor mental freedom without mental equality.

29 Ignorance, inequality, and desire are the three causes of
30 human misery, and each follows the other in inevitable union. Why
31 should a man think himself above any other man, or even an
32 animal? It is the same throughout:

33 {Sanskrit}

34 --"Thou art the man, Thou the woman, Thou art the young
35 man, Thou the young woman."

36 Many will say, "That is all right for the Sannyasins, but we
37 are householders." No doubt, a householder having many other
38 duties to perform, cannot as fully attain to this sameness; yet this
39 should be also their ideal, for it is the ideal of all societies, of all
40 mankind, all animals, and all nature, to attain to this sameness. But
41 alas! they think inequality is the way to attain equality, as if they
42 could come to right by doing wrong!

43 This is the bane of human nature, the curse upon mankind,
44 the root of all misery--this inequality. This is the source of all
45 bondage, physical, mental, and spiritual.

46 {Sanskrit}

47 --"Since seeing the Lord equally existent everywhere, he
48 injures not Self by self, and so goes to the Highest Goal" (Gita, XIII.
49 28). This one saying contains, in a few words, the universal way to

1 salvation.

2 You, Rajputs, have been the glories of ancient India. With
3 your degradation came national decay, and India can only be raised
4 if the descendants of the Kshatriyas co-operate with the
5 descendants of the Brahmins, not to share the spoils of pelf and
6 power, but to help the weak, to enlighten the ignorant, and to
7 restore the lost glory of the holy land of their forefathers.

8 And who can say but that the time is propitious? Once more
9 the wheel is turning up, once more vibrations have been set in
10 motion from India, which are destined at no distant day to reach the
11 farthest limits of the earth. One voice has spoken, whose echoes are
12 rolling on and gathering strength every day, a voice even mightier
13 than those which have preceded it, for it is the summation for them
14 all. Once more the voice that spoke to the sages on the banks of the
15 Sarasvati, the voice whose echoes reverberated from peak to peak
16 of the "Father of Mountains", and descended upon the plains
17 through Krishna, Buddha, and Chaitanya in all-carrying floods, has
18 spoken again. Once more the doors have opened. Enter ye into the
19 realms of light, the gates have been opened wide once more.

20 And you, my beloved Prince--you the scion of a race who are
21 the living pillars upon which rests the religion eternal, its sworn
22 defenders and helpers, the descendants of Rama and Krishna, will
23 you remain outside? I know, this cannot be. Yours, I am sure, will be
24 the first hand that will be stretched forth to help religion once
25 more. And when I think of you, Raja Ajit Singh, one in whom the
26 well-known scientific attainments of your house have been joined to
27 a purity of character of which a saint ought to be proud, to an
28 unbounded love for humanity, I cannot help believing in the glorious
29 renaissance of the religion eternal, when such hands are willing to
30 rebuild it again.

31 May the blessings of Ramakrishna be on you and yours for
32 ever and ever, and that you may live long for the good of many, and
33 for the spread of truth is the constant prayer of--

34 Vivekananda.

35

REPLY TO THE MADRAS ADDRESS

Friends, Fellow-Countrymen and Co-Religionists of Madras,

It is most gratifying to me to find that my insignificant service to the cause of our religion has been acceptable to you, not because it is as a personal appreciation of me and my work in a foreign and distant land, but as a sure sign that, though whirlwind after whirlwind of foreign invasion has passed over the devoted head of India, though centuries of neglect on our part and contempt on the part of our conquerors have visibly dimmed the glories of ancient Aryavarta, though many a stately column on which it rested, many a beautiful arch, and many a marvellous corner have been washed away by the inundations that deluged the land for centuries--the centre is all sound, the keystone is unimpaired. The spiritual foundation upon which the marvellous monument of glory to God and charity to all beings has been reared stands unshaken, strong as ever. Your generous appreciation of Him whose message to India and to the whole world, I, the most unworthy of His servant, had the privilege to bear shows your innate spiritual instinct which saw in Him and His message the first murmurs of that tidal wave of spirituality which is destined at no distant future to break upon India in all its irresistible powers, carrying away in its omnipotent flood all that is weak and defective, and raising the Hindu race to the platform it is destined to occupy in the providence of God, crowned with more glory than it ever had even in the past, the reward of centuries of silent suffering, and fulfilling its mission amongst the races of the world--the evolution of spiritual humanity.

The people of Northern India are especially grateful to you of the South, as the great source to which most of the impulses that are working in India today can be traced. The great Bhashyakaras, epoch-making Acharyas, Shankara, Ramanuja, and Madhva were born in Southern India. Great Shankara to whom every Advaitavadin in the world owes allegiance; great Ramanuja whose heavenly touch converted the downtrodden pariahs into Alwars; great Madhva whose leadership was recognised even by the followers of the only Northern Prophet whose power has been felt all over the length and breadth of India--Shri Krishna Chaitanya. Even at the present day it is the South that carries the palm in the glories of Varanasi--your renunciation controls the sacred shrines on the farthest peaks of the Himalayas, and what wonder that with the blood of Prophets running in your veins, with your lives blessed by such Acharyas, you are the first and foremost to appreciate and hold on to the message of Bhagavan Shri Ramakrishna.

The South had been the repository of Vedic learning, and you will understand me when I state that, in spite of the reiterated assertions of aggressive ignorance, it is the Shruti still that is the backbone of all the different divisions of the Hindu religion.

However great may be the merits of the Samhita and the

1 Brahmana portions of the Vedas to the ethnologists or the
2 philologists, however desirable may be the results that the
3 {Sanskrit} or {Sanskrit} or {Sanskrit} in conjunction with the
4 different Vedis (altars) and sacrifices and libations produce--it was
5 all in the way of Bhoga; and no one ever contended that it could
6 produce Moksha. As such, the Jnana-Kanda, the Aranyakas, the
7 Shrutis *par excellence* which teach the way to spirituality, the
8 Moksha-Marga, have always ruled and will always rule in India.

9 Lost in the mazes and divisions of the "Religion Eternal", by
10 prepossession and prejudice unable to grasp the meaning of the
11 only religion whose universal adaptation is the exact shadow of the
12 {Sanskrit}.¹² God it preaches, groping in the dark with a standard
13 of spiritual truth borrowed second-hand from nations who never
14 knew anything but rank materialism, the modern young Hindu
15 struggles in vain to understand the religion of his forefathers, and
16 gives up the quest altogether, and becomes a hopeless wreck of an
17 agnostic, or else, unable to vegetate on account of the promptings
18 of his innate religious nature, drinks carelessly of some of those
19 different decoctions of Western materialism with an Eastern flavour,
20 and thus fulfils the prophecy of the Shruti:

21 {Sanskrit}

22 --"Fools go staggering to and fro, like blind men led by the
23 blind." They alone escape whose spiritual nature has been touched
24 and vivified by the life-giving touch of the "Sad-Guru".¹³

25 Well has it been said by Bhagavan Bhashyakara:

26 {Sanskrit}

27 --"These three are difficult to obtain in this world, and
28 depend on the mercy of the gods--the human birth, the desire for
29 salvation, and the company of the great-souled ones."

30 Either in the sharp analysis of the Vaisheshikas, resulting in
31 the wonderful theories about the Paramanus, Dvyanus, and
32 Trasarenu,¹⁴ or the still more wonderful analysis displayed in the
33 discussions of the Jati, Dravya, Guna, Samavaya,¹⁵ and to the
34 various categories of the Naiyayikas, rising to the solemn march of
35 the thought of the Sankhyas, the fathers of the theories of
36 evolution, ending with the ripe fruit, the result of all these
37 researches, the Sutras of Vyasa--the one background to all these
38 different analyses and syntheses of the human mind is still the
39 Shrutis. Even in the philosophical writings of the Buddhists or Jains,
40 the help of Shrutis is never rejected, and at least in some of the
41 Buddhistic schools and in the majority of the Jain writings, the
42 authority of the Shrutis is fully admitted, excepting what they call

1 ¹² ?Smaller than the smallest, greater than the greatest (Katha, II.20).

2
3 ¹³ ?The good teacher.

4
5 ¹⁴ ?Atoms, Entities composed of two atoms, Entities composed of three atoms.

6
7 ¹⁵ ?Genus, Substance, Quality, Inhesion or Inseparability.

1 the Himsaka Shrutis, which they hold to be interpolations of the
2 Brahmins. In recent times, such a view has been held by the late
3 great Swami Dayananda Saraswati.

4 If one be asked to point out the system of thought towards
5 which as a centre all the ancient and modern Indian thoughts have
6 converged, if one wants to see the real backbone of Hinduism in all
7 its various manifestations, the Sutras of Vyasa will unquestionably
8 be pointed out as constituting all that.

9 Either one hears the Advaita-Keshari roaring in peals of
10 thunder--the Asti, Bhati, and Priya¹⁶--amidst the heart-stopping
11 solemnities of the Himalayan forests, mixing with the solemn
12 cadence of the river of heaven, or listens to the cooing of the Piya,
13 Pitam in the beautiful bowers of the grove of Vrinda: whether one
14 mingles with the sedate meditations of the monasteries of Varanasi
15 or the ecstatic dances of the followers of the Prophet of Nadia;
16 whether one sits at the feet of the teacher of the Vishishtadvaita
17 system with its Vadakale, Tenkale,¹⁷ and all the other sub-divisions,
18 or listens with reverence to the Acharyas of the Madhva school;
19 whether one hears the martial "Wa Guruki Fateh"¹⁸ of the secular
20 Sikhs or the sermons on the Grantha Sahib of the Udasis and
21 Nirmalas; whether he salutes the Sannyasin disciples of Kabir with
22 "Sat Sahib" and listens with joy to the Sakhis (Bhajans); whether he
23 pores upon the wonderful lore of that reformer of Rajputana, Dadu,
24 or the works of his royal disciple, Sundaradasa, down to the great
25 Nishchaladasa, the celebrated author of *Vichara sagara*, which
26 book has more influence in India than any that has been written in
27 any language within the last three centuries; if even one asks the
28 Bhangi Mehtar of Northern India to sit down and give an account of
29 the teachings of his Lalguru--one will find that all these various
30 teachers and schools have as their basis that system whose
31 authority is the Shruti, Gita its divine commentary, the *Shariraka-*
32 *Sutras* its organised system, and all the different sects in India,
33 from the Paramahansa Parivrajakacharyas to the poor despised
34 Mehtar disciples of Lalguru, are different manifestations.

35 The three Prasthanas,¹⁹ then, in their different explanations
36 as Dvaita, Vishishtadvaita, or Advaita, with a few minor recensions,
37 form the "authorities" of the Hindu religion. The Puranas, the
38 modern representations of the ancient Narasamsi (anecdote portion
39 of the Vedas), supply the mythology, and the Tantras, the modern
40 representations of the Brahmanas (ritual and explanatory portion of
41 the Vedas), supply the ritual. Thus the three Prasthanas, as
42 authorities, are common to all the sects; but as to the Puranas and
43 Tantras, each sect has its own.

1 ¹⁶ ?Exists (Sat), Shines (Chit), Is beloved (Ananda)--the three indicatives of
2 Brahman.

3
4 ¹⁷ ?The two divisions of the Ramanuja sect.

5
6 ¹⁸ ?Victory to the Guru.

7
8 ¹⁹ ?"Courses", viz, the Upanishad (Shruti), the Gita, and the *Shariraka-Sutras*.
9

1 The Tantras, as we have said, represent the Vedic rituals in a
2 modified form; and before any one jumps into the most absurd
3 conclusions about them, I will advise him to read the Tantras in
4 conjunction with the Brahmanas, especially the Adhvaryu portion.
5 And most of the Mantras, used in the Tantras, will be found taken
6 verbatim from their Brahmanas. As to their influence, apart from
7 the Shrouta and Smarta rituals, all the forms of the rituals in vogue
8 from the Himalayas to the Comorin have been taken from the
9 Tantras, and they direct the worship of the Shakta, or Shaiva, or
10 Vaishnava, and all the others alike.

11 Of course, I do not pretend that all the Hindus are
12 thoroughly acquainted with these sources of their religion. Many,
13 especially in lower Bengal, have not heard of the names of these
14 sects and these great systems; but consciously or unconsciously, it
15 is the plan laid down in the three Prasthanas that they are all
16 working out.,

17 Wherever, on the other hand, the Hindi language is spoken,
18 even the lowest classes have more knowledge of the Vedantic
19 religion than many of the highest in lower Bengal.

20 And why so?

21 Transported from the soil of Mithila to Navadvipa, nurtured
22 and developed by the fostering genius of Shiromani, Gadadhara,
23 Jagadisha, and a host of other great names, an analysis of the laws
24 of reasoning, in some points superior to every other system in the
25 whole world, expressed in a wonderful and precise mosaic of
26 language, stands the Nyaya of Bengal, respected and studied
27 throughout the length and breadth of Hindusthan. But, alas, the
28 Vedic study was sadly neglected, and until within the last few years,
29 scarcely anyone could be found in

30 Bengal to teach the *Mahabhashya* of Patanjali. Once only a
31 mighty genius rose above the never-ending Avachchhinnas and
32 Avachchhedakas²⁰--Bhagavan Shri Krishna Chaitanya. For once the
33 religious lethargy of Bengal was shaken, and for a time it entered
34 into a communion with the religious life of other parts of India.

35 It is curious to note that though Shri Chaitanya obtained his
36 Sannyasa from a Bharati, and as such was a Bharati himself, it was
37 through Madhavendra Puri that his religious genius was first
38 awakened.

39 The Puris seem to have a peculiar mission in rousing the
40 spirituality of Bengal. Bhagavan Shri Ramakrishna got his
41 Sannyasahrama from Tota Puri.

1 ²⁰ 'In Nyaya, 'Determined', and 'determining attribute'.
2

1 The commentary that Shri Chaitanya wrote on the *Vyasa-*
2 *Sutras* has either been lost or not found yet. His disciples joined
3 themselves to the Madhvas of the South, and gradually the mantles
4 of such giants as Rupa and Sanatana and Jiva Goswami fell on the
5 shoulders of Babajis, and the great movement of Shri Chaitanya
6 was decaying fast, till of late years there is a sign of revival. Hope
7 that it will regain its lost splendour.

8 The influence of Shri Chaitanya is all over India. Wherever
9 the Bhakti-Marga is known, there he is appreciated, studied, and
10 worshipped. I have every reason to believe that the whole of the
11 Vallabhacharya recension is only a branch of the sect founded by
12 Shri Chaitanya. But most of his so-called disciples in Bengal do not
13 know how his power is still working all over India; and how can
14 they? The disciples have become Gadians (Heads of monasteries),
15 while he was preaching barefooted from door to door in India,
16 begging Achandalas (all down to the lowest) to love God.

17 The curious and unorthodox custom of hereditary Gurus that
18 prevails in Bengal, and for the most part in Bengal alone, is another
19 cause of its being cut off from the religious life of the rest of India.

20 The greatest cause of all is that the life of Bengal never
21 received an influx from that of the great brotherhood of Sannyasins
22 who are the representatives and repositories of the highest Indian
23 spiritual culture even at the present day.

24 Tyaga (renunciation) is never liked by the higher classes of
25 Bengal. Their tendency is for Bhoga (enjoyment). How can they get
26 a deep insight into spiritual things? {Sanskrit}--"By renunciation
27 alone immortality was reached." How can it be otherwise?

28 On the other hand, throughout the Hindi-speaking world, a
29 succession of brilliant Tyagi teachers of far-reaching influence has
30 brought the doctrines of the Vedanta to every door. Especially the
31 impetus given to Tyaga during the reign of Ranjit Singh of the
32 Punjab has made the highest teachings of the Vedantic philosophy
33 available for the very lowest of the low. With true pride, the Punjabi
34 peasant girl says that even her spinning wheel repeats: "Soham",
35 "Soham". And I have seen Mehtar Tyagis in the forest of Hrishikesh
36 wearing the garb of the Sannyasin, studying the Vedanta. And many
37 a proud high-class man would be glad to sit at their feet and learn.
38 And why not? {Sanskrit}--"Supreme knowledge (can be learnt)
39 even from the man of low birth."

40 Thus it is that the North-West and the Punjab have a
41 religious education which is far ahead of that of Bengal, Bombay, or
42 Madras. The ever-travelling Tyagis of the various orders,
43 Dasanamis or Vairagis or Panthis bring religion to everybody's door,
44 and the cost is only a bit of bread. And how noble and disinterested
45 most of them are! There is one Sannyasin belonging to the Kachu
46 Panthis or independents (who do not identify themselves with any
47 sect), who has been instrumental in the establishing of hundreds of
48 schools and charitable asylums all over Rajputana. He has opened
49 hospitals in forests, and thrown iron bridges over the gorges in the
50 Himalayas, and this man never touches a coin with his hands, has
51 no earthly possession except a blanket, which has given him the

1 nickname of the "Blanket Swami", and begs his bread from door to
2 door. I have never known him taking a whole dinner from one
3 house, lest it should be a tax on the householder. And he is only one
4 amongst many. Do you think that so long as these Gods on earth live
5 in India and protect the "Religion Eternal" with the impenetrable
6 rampart of such godly characters, the old religion will die?

7 In this country,²¹ the clergymen sometimes receive as high
8 salaries as rupees thirty thousand, forty thousand, fifty thousand,
9 even ninety thousand a year, for preaching two hours on Sunday
10 only, and that only six months in a year. Look at the millions upon
11 millions they spend for the support of their religion, and Young
12 Bengal has been taught that these Godlike, absolutely unselfish
13 men like Kambli-Swami are idle vagabonds. {Sanskrit}--"Those who
14 are devoted to My worshippers are regarded as the best of
15 devotees."

16 Take even an extreme case, that of an extremely ignorant
17 Vairagi. Even he, when he goes into a village tries his best to impart
18 to the villagers whatever he knows, from Tulasidasa, or *Chaitanya-*
19 *Charitamrita* or the Alwars in Southern India. Is that not doing
20 some good? And all this for only a bit of bread and a rag of cloth.
21 Before unmercifully criticising them, think how much you do, my
22 brother, for your poor fellow-countrymen, at whose expense you
23 have got your education, and by grinding whose face you maintain
24 your position and pay your teachers for teaching you that the
25 Babajis are only vagabonds.

26 A few of your fellow-countrymen in Bengal have criticised
27 what they call a new development of Hinduism. And well they may.
28 For Hinduism is only just now penetrating into Bengal, where so
29 long the whole idea of religion was a bundle of Deshacharas (local
30 customs) as to eating and drinking and marriage.

31 This short paper has not space for the discussion of such a
32 big subject as to whether the view of Hinduism, which the disciples
33 of Ramakrishna have been preaching all over India, was according
34 to the "Sad-Shastras" or not. But I will give a few hints to our
35 critics, which may help them in understanding our position better.

36 In the first place, I never contended that a correct idea of
37 Hinduism can be gathered from the writings of Kashidasa or
38 Krittivasa, though their words are "Amrita Samana" (like nectar),
39 and those that hear them are "Punyavans" (virtuous). But we must
40 go to Vedic and Darshanika authorities, and to the great Acharyas
41 and their disciples all over India.

42 If, brethren, you begin with the Sutras of Gautama, and read
43 his theories about the Aptas (inspired) in the light of the
44 commentaries of Vatsyayana, and go up to the Mimamsakas with
45 Shabara and other commentators, and find out what they say about
46 the {Sanskrit} (super-sensuous realisation), and who are Aptas,
47 and whether every being can become an Apta or not, and that the
48 proof of the Vedas is in their being the words of such Aptas if you

²¹ ?United States of America.

1 have time to look into the introduction of Mahidhara to the Yajur-
2 Veda, you will find a still more lucid discussion as to the Vedas
3 being laws of the inner life of man, and as such they are eternal.

4 As to the eternity of creation--this doctrine is the corner-
5 stone not only of the Hindu religion, but of the Buddhists and Jains
6 also.

7 Now all the sects in India can be grouped roughly as
8 following the Jnana-Marga or the Bhakti-Marga. If you will kindly
9 look into the introduction to the *Shariraka-Bhashya* of Shri
10 Shankaracharya, you will find there the Nirapekshata
11 (transcendence) of Jnana is thoroughly discussed, and the
12 conclusion is that realisation of Brahman or the attainment of
13 Moksha do not depend upon ceremonial, creed, caste, colour, or
14 doctrine. It will come to any being who has the four Sadhanas,
15 which are the most perfect moral culture.

16 As to the Bhaktas, even Bengali critics know very well that
17 some of their authorities even declared that caste or nationality or
18 sex, or, as to that, even the human birth, was never necessary to
19 Moksha. Bhakti is the one and only thing necessary.

20 Both Jnana and Bhakti are everywhere preached to be
21 unconditioned, and as such there is not one authority who lays
22 down the conditions of caste or creed or nationality in attaining
23 Moksha. See the discussion on the Sutra of Vyasa--{Sanskrit}²² by
24 Shankara, Ramanuja, and Madhva.

25 Go through all the Upanishads, and even in the Samhitas,
26 nowhere you will find the limited ideas of Moksha which every
27 other religion has. As to toleration, it is everywhere, even in the
28 Samhita of the Adhvarya Veda, in the third or fourth verse of the
29 fortieth chapter, if my memory does not fail; it begins with
30 {Sanskrit}.²³ This is running through every where. Was anybody
31 persecuted in India for choosing his Ishta Devata, or becoming an
32 atheist or agnostic even, so long as he obeyed the social
33 regulations? Society may punish anybody by its disapprobation for
34 breaking any of its regulations, but no man, the lowest Patita
35 (fallen), is ever shut out from Moksha. You must not mix up the two
36 together. As to that, in Malabar a Chandala is not allowed to pass
37 through the same street as a high-caste man, but let him become a
38 Mohammedan or Christian, he will be immediately allowed to go
39 anywhere; and this rule has prevailed in the dominion of a Hindu
40 sovereign for centuries. It may be queer, but it shows the idea of
41 toleration for other religions even in the most untoward

22 ?"But also (persons standing) between (are qualified for knowledge); for that
is seen (in scripture)." III.iv.36. A person even if he does not belong to an Ashrama
(possessing not the means to entitle him to one or other of the Ashramas, stages
of life) and thus stands between, as it were, is qualified for the knowledge of
Brahman; for we meet scriptural passages declaring that persons of such a class
possessed the knowledge of Brahman. Vide Chhand. Upa. IV. i.; Bri. Upa. III. vi. &
viii.

23 ?"(The wise one) should not unsettle the understanding of the ignorant,
attached to action." The line also occurs in the Gita (III.26).

1 circumstances.

2 The one idea the Hindu religions differ in from every other
3 in the world, the one idea to express which the sages almost
4 exhaust the vocabulary of the Sanskrit language, is that man must
5 realise God even in this life. And the Advaita texts very logically
6 add, "To know God is to become God."

7 And here comes as a necessary consequence the broadest
8 and most glorious idea of inspiration--not only as asserted and
9 declared by the Rishis of the Vedas, not only by Vidura and
10 Dharmavyadha and a number of others, but even the other day
11 Nischaladasa, a Tyagi of the Dadu panthi sect, boldly declared in
12 his *Vichara-Sagara*: "He who has known Brahman has become
13 Brahman. His words are Vedas, and they will dispel the darkness of
14 ignorance, either expressed in Sanskrit or any popular dialect."

15 Thus to realise God, the Brahman, as the Dvaitins say, or to
16 become Brahman, as the Advaitins say--is the aim and end of the
17 whole teaching of the Vedas; and every other teaching, therein
18 contained, represents a stage in the course of our progress thereto.
19 And the great glory of Bhagavan Bhashyakara Shankaracharya is
20 that it was his genius that gave the most wonderful expression to
21 the ideas of Vyasa.

22 As absolute, Brahman alone is true; as relative truth, all the
23 different sects, standing upon different manifestations of the same
24 Brahman, either in India or elsewhere, are true. Only some are
25 higher than others. Suppose a man starts straight towards the sun.
26 At every step of his journey he will see newer and newer visions of
27 the sun--the size, the view, and light will every moment be new, until
28 he reaches the real sun. He saw the sun at first like a big ball, and
29 then it began to increase in size. The sun was never small like the
30 ball he saw; nor was it ever like all the succession of suns he saw in
31 his journey. Still is it not true that our traveller always saw the sun,
32 and nothing but the sun? Similarly, all these various sects are true--
33 some nearer, some farther off from the real sun which is our
34 {Sanskrit}--"One without a second".

35 And as the Vedas are the only scriptures which teach this
36 real absolute God, of which all other ideas of God are but minimised
37 and limited visions; as the {Sanskrit}²⁴ Shruti takes the devotee
38 gently by the hand, and leads him from one stage to another,
39 through all the stages that are necessary for him to travel to reach
40 the Absolute; and as all other religions represent one or other of
41 these stages in an unprogressive and crystallised form, all the other
42 religions of the world are included in the nameless, limitless,
43 eternal Vedic religion.

44 Work hundreds of lives out, search every corner of your
45 mind for ages--and still you will not find one noble religious idea
46 that is not already imbedded in that infinite mine of spirituality.

47 As to the so-called Hindu idolatry--first go and learn the
48 forms they are going through, and where it is that the worshippers

1 ²⁴ The well-wisher to all the world.

1 are really worshipping, whether in the temple, in the image, or in
2 the temple of their own bodies. First know for certain what they are
3 doing--which more than ninety per cent of the revilers are
4 thoroughly ignorant of--and then it will explain itself in the light of
5 the Vedantic philosophy.

6 Still these Karmas are not compulsory. On the other hand,
7 open your Manu and see where it orders every old man to embrace
8 the fourth Ashrama, and whether he embraces it or not, he must
9 give up all Karma. It is reiterated everywhere that all these Karmas
10 {Sanskrit}--"finally end in Jnana".

11 As to the matter of that, a Hindu peasant has more religious
12 education than many a gentleman in other countries. A friend
13 criticised the use of European terms of philosophy and religion in
14 my addresses. I would have been very glad to use Sanskrit terms; it
15 would have been much more easy, as being the only perfect vehicle
16 of religious thought. But the friend forgot that I was addressing an
17 audience of Western people; and although a certain Indian
18 missionary declared that the Hindus had forgotten the meaning of
19 their Sanskrit books, and that it was the missionaries who
20 unearthed the meaning, I could not find one in that large concourse
21 of missionaries who could understand a line in Sanskrit--and yet
22 some of them read learned papers criticising the Vedas, and all the
23 sacred sources of the Hindu religion!

24 It is not true that I am against any religion. It is equally
25 untrue that I am hostile to the Christian missionaries in India. But I
26 protest against certain of their methods of raising money in
27 America. What is meant by those pictures in the school-books for
28 children where the Hindu mother is painted as throwing her
29 children to the crocodiles in the Ganga? The mother is black, but
30 the baby is painted white, to arouse more sympathy and get more
31 money. What is meant by those pictures which paint a man burning
32 his wife at a stake with his own hands, so that she may become a
33 ghost and torment the husband's enemy? What is meant by the
34 pictures of huge cars crushing over human beings? The other day a
35 book was published for children in this country, where one of these
36 gentlemen tells a narrative of his visit to Calcutta. He says he saw a
37 car running over fanatics in the streets of Calcutta. I have heard
38 one of these gentlemen preach in Memphis that in every village of
39 India there is a pond full of the bones of little babies.

40 What have the Hindus done to these disciples of Christ that
41 every Christian child is taught to call the Hindus "vile", and
42 "wretches", and the most horrible devils on earth? Part of the
43 Sunday School education for children here consists in teaching
44 them to hate everybody who is not a Christian, and the Hindus
45 especially, so that, from their very childhood they may subscribe
46 their pennies to the missions. If not for truth's sake, for the sake of
47 the morality of their own children, the Christian missionaries ought
48 not to allow such things going on. Is it any wonder that such
49 children grow up to be ruthless and cruel men and women? The
50 greater a preacher can paint the tortures of eternal hell--the fire
51 that is burning there, the brimstone--the higher is his position
52 among the orthodox. A servant-girl in the employ of a friend of mine

1 had to be sent to a lunatic asylum as a result of her attending what
2 they call here the revivalist-preaching. The dose of hell-fire and
3 brimstone was too much for her. Look again at the books published
4 in Madras against the Hindu religion. If a Hindu writes one such
5 line against the Christian religion, the missionaries will cry fire and
6 vengeance.

7 My countrymen, I have been more than a year in this
8 country. I have seen almost every corner of the society, and, after
9 comparing notes, let me tell you that neither are we devils, as the
10 missionaries tell the world we are, nor are they angels, as they
11 claim to be. The less the missionaries talk of immorality, infanticide,
12 and the evils of the Hindu marriage system, the better for them.
13 There may be actual pictures of some countries before which all the
14 imaginary missionary pictures of the Hindu society will fade away
15 into light. But my mission in life is not to be a paid reviler. I will be
16 the last man to claim perfection for the Hindu society. No man is
17 more conscious of the defects that are therein, or the evils that
18 have grown up under centuries of misfortunes. If, foreign friends,
19 you come with genuine sympathy to help and not to destroy,
20 Godspeed to you. But if by abuses, incessantly hurled against the
21 head of a prostrate race in season and out of season, you mean only
22 the triumphant assertion of the moral superiority of your own
23 nation, let me tell you plainly, if such a comparison be instituted
24 with any amount of justice, the Hindu will be found head and
25 shoulders above all other nations in the world as a moral race.

26 In India religion was never shackled. No man was ever
27 challenged in the selection of his Ishta Devata, or his sect, or his
28 preceptor, and religion grew, as it grew nowhere else. On the other
29 hand, a fixed point was necessary to allow this infinite variation to
30 religion, and society was chosen as that point in India. As a result,
31 society became rigid and almost immovable. For liberty is the only
32 condition of growth.

33 On the other hand, in the West, the field of variation was
34 society, and the constant point was religion. Conformity was the
35 watchword, and even now is the watchword of European religion,
36 and each new departure had to gain the least advantage only by
37 wading through a river of blood. The result is a splendid social
38 organisation, with a religion that never rose beyond the grossest
39 materialistic conceptions.

40 Today the West is awakening to its wants; and the "true self
41 of man and spirit" is the watchword of the advanced school of
42 Western theologians. The student of Sanskrit philosophy knows
43 where the wind is blowing from, but it matters not whence the
44 power comes so long as it brings new life.

45 In India, new circumstances at the same time are
46 persistently demanding a new adjustment of social organisations.
47 For the last three-quarters of a century, India has been bubbling
48 over with reform societies and reformers. But, alas, every one of
49 them has proved a failure. They did not know the secret. They had
50 not learnt the great lesson to be learnt. In their haste, they laid all
51 the evils in our society at the door of religion; and like the man in

1 the story, wanting to kill the mosquito that sat on a friend's
2 forehead, they were trying to deal such heavy blows as would have
3 killed man and mosquito together. But in this case, fortunately, they
4 only dashed themselves against immovable rocks and were crushed
5 out of existence in the shock of recoil. Glory unto those noble and
6 unselfish souls who have struggled and failed in their misdirected
7 attempts. Those galvanic shocks of reformatory zeal were
8 necessary to rouse the sleeping leviathan. But they were entirely
9 destructive, and not constructive, and as such they were mortal,
10 and therefore died.

11 Let us bless them and profit by their experience. They had
12 not learnt the lesson that all is a growth from inside out, that all
13 evolution is only a manifestation of a preceding involution. They did
14 not know that the seed can only assimilate the surrounding
15 elements, but grows a tree in its own nature. Until all the Hindu
16 race becomes extinct, and a new race takes possession of the land,
17 such a thing can never be--try East or West, India can never be
18 Europe until she dies.

19 And will she die--this old Mother of all that is noble or moral
20 or spiritual, the land which the sages trod, the land in which
21 Godlike men still live and breathe? I will borrow the lantern of the
22 Athenian sage and follow you, my brother, through the cities and
23 villages, plains and forests, of this broad world--show me such men
24 in other lands if you can. Truly have they said, the tree is known by
25 its fruits. Go under every mango tree in India; pick up bushels of
26 the worm-eaten, unripe, fallen ones from the ground, and write
27 hundreds of the most learned volumes on each one of them--still
28 you have not described a single mango. Pluck a luscious, full-grown,
29 juicy one from the tree, and now you have known all that the mango
30 is.

31 Similarly, these Man-Gods show what the Hindu religion is.
32 They show the character, the power, and the possibilities of that
33 racial tree which counts culture by centuries, and has borne the
34 buffets of a thousand years of hurricane, and still stands with the
35 unimpaired vigour of eternal youth.

36 Shall India die? Then from the world all spirituality will be
37 extinct, all moral perfection will be extinct, all sweet-souled
38 sympathy for religion will be extinct, all ideality will be extinct; and
39 in its place will reign the duality of lust and luxury as the male and
40 female deities, with money as its priest, fraud, force, and
41 competition its ceremonies, and the human soul its sacrifice. Such a
42 thing can never be. The power of suffering is infinitely greater than
43 the power of doing; the power of love is infinitely of greater potency
44 than the power of hatred. Those that think that the present revival
45 of Hinduism is only a manifestation of patriotic impulse are
46 deluded.

47 First, let us study the quaint phenomenon.

48 Is it not curious that, whilst under the terrific onset of
49 modern scientific research, all the old forts of Western dogmatic
50 religions are crumbling into dust; whilst the sledge-hammer blows
51 of modern science are pulverising the porcelain mass of systems

1 whose foundation is either in faith or in belief or in the majority of
2 votes of church synods; whilst Western theology is at its wit's end to
3 accommodate itself to the ever-rising tide of aggressive modern
4 thought; whilst in all other sacred books the texts have been
5 stretched to their utmost tension under the ever-increasing
6 pressure of modern thought, and the majority of them are broken
7 and have been stored away in lumber rooms; whilst the vast
8 majority of thoughtful Western humanity have broken asunder all
9 their ties with the church and are drifting about in a sea of unrest,
10 the religions which have drunk the water of life at that fountain of
11 light, the Vedas--Hinduism and Buddhism--alone are reviving?

12 The restless Western atheist or agnostic finds in the Gita or
13 in the *Dhammapada* the only place where his soul can anchor.

14 The tables have been turned, and the Hindu, who saw
15 through tears of despair his ancient homestead covered with
16 incendiary fire, ignited by unfriendly hands, now sees, when the
17 searchlight of modern thought has dispersed the smoke, that his
18 home is the one that is standing in all its strength, and all the rest
19 have either vanished or are building their houses anew after the
20 Hindu plan. He has wiped away his tears, and has found that the
21 axe that tried to cut down to the roots the {Sanskrit} (Gita, XV.1)
22 has proved the merciful knife of the surgeon.

23 He has found that he has neither to torture texts nor commit
24 any other form of intellectual dishonesty to save his religion. Nay,
25 he may call all that is weak in his scriptures, weak, because they
26 were meant to be so by the ancient sages, to help the weak, under
27 the theory of {Sanskrit}.²⁵ Thanks to the ancient sages who have
28 discovered such an all-pervading, ever-expanding system of religion
29 that can accommodate all that has been discovered in the realm of
30 matter, and all that is to be known; he has begun to appreciate
31 them anew, and discover anew, that those discoveries which have
32 proved so disastrous to every limited little scheme of religion are
33 but rediscoveries, in the plane of intellect and sense-consciousness,
34 of truths which his ancestors discovered ages ago in the higher
35 plane of intuition and superconsciousness.

36 He has not, therefore, to give up anything, nor go about
37 seeking for anything anywhere, but it will be enough for him if he
38 can utilise only a little from the infinite store he has inherited and
39 apply it to his needs. And that he has begun to do and will do more
40 and more. Is this not the real cause of this revival?

41 Young men of Bengal, to you I especially appeal. Brethren,
42 we know to our shame that most of the real evils for which the
43 foreign races abuse the Hindu nation are only owing to us. We have

1 ²⁵ ?When a bride is brought to the house of her husband for the first time he
2 shows her a very tiny star, called Arundhati. To do this, he has to direct her gaze
3 the right way, which he does by asking her to look at something near and
4 something big in the direction of the star, e.g., a branch of a tree. Next he draws
5 her attention to a large bright star observed beyond this branch and so on, till by
6 several steps, he succeeds in leading her eyes to the right thing. This method of
7 leading to a subtle object through easy and gradual steps is called Arundhati
8 Nyaya.
9

1 been the cause of bringing many undeserved calumnies on the head
2 of the other races in India. But glory unto God, we have been fully
3 awakened to it, and with His blessings, we will not only cleanse
4 ourselves, but help the whole of India to attain the ideals preached
5 in the religion eternal.

6 Let us wipe off first that mark which nature always puts on
7 the forehead of a slave--the stain of jealousy. Be jealous of none. Be
8 ready to lend a hand to every worker of good. Send a good thought
9 for every being in the three worlds.

10 Let us take our stand on the one central truth in our
11 religion--the common heritage of the Hindus, the Buddhists, and
12 Jains alike--the spirit of man, the Atman of man, the immortal,
13 birthless, all-pervading, eternal soul of man whose glories the
14 Vedas cannot themselves express, before whose majesty the
15 universe with its galaxy upon galaxy of suns and stars and nebulae
16 is as a drop. Every man or woman, nay, from the highest Devas to
17 the worm that crawls under our feet, is such a spirit evolved or
18 involuted. The difference is not in kind, but in degree.

19 This infinite power of the spirit, brought to bear upon matter
20 evolves material development, made to act upon thought evolves
21 intellectuality, and made to act upon itself makes of man a God.

22 First, let us be Gods, and then help others to be Gods. "Be
23 and make." Let this be our motto. Say not man is a sinner. Tell him
24 that he is a God. Even if there were a devil, it would be our duty to
25 remember God always, and not the devil.

26 If the room is dark, the constant feeling and repeating of
27 darkness will not take it away, but bring in the light. Let us know
28 that all that is negative, all that is destructive, all that is mere
29 criticism, is bound to pass away; it is the positive, the affirmative,
30 the constructive that is immortal, that will remain for ever. Let us
31 say, "We are" and "God is" and "We are God", "Shivoham,
32 Shivoham", and march on. Not matter but spirit. All that has name
33 and form is subject to all that has none. This is the eternal truth the
34 Shrutis preach. Bring in the light; the darkness will vanish of itself.
35 Let the lion of Vedanta roar; the foxes will fly to their holes. Throw
36 the ideas broadcast, and let the result take care of itself. Let us put
37 the chemicals together; the crystallisation will take its own course.
38 Bring forth the power of the spirit, and pour it over the length and
39 breadth of India; and all that is necessary will come by itself.

40 Manifest the divinity within you, and everything will be
41 harmoniously arranged around it. Remember the illustration of
42 Indra and Virochana in the Vedas; both were taught their divinity.
43 But the Asura, Virochana, took his body for his God. Indra, being a
44 Deva, understood that the Atman was meant. You are the children
45 of India. You are the descendants of the Devas. Matter can never be
46 your God; body can never be your God.

47 India will be raised, not with the power of the flesh, but with
48 the power of the spirit; not with the flag of destruction, but with the
49 flag of peace and love, the garb of the Sannyasin; not by the power
50 of wealth, but by the power of the begging bowl. Say not that you

1 are weak. The spirit is omnipotent. Look at that handful of young
2 men called into existence by the divine touch of Ramakrishna's feet.
3 They have preached the message from Assam to Sindh, from the
4 Himalayas to Cape Comorin. They have crossed the Himalayas at a
5 height of twenty thousand feet, over snow and ice on foot, and
6 penetrated into the mysteries of Tibet. They have begged their
7 bread, covered themselves with rags; they have been persecuted,
8 followed by the police, kept in prison, and at last set free when the
9 Government was convinced of their innocence.

10 They are now twenty. Make them two thousand tomorrow.
11 Young men of Bengal, your country requires it. The world requires
12 it. Call up the divinity within you, which will enable you to bear
13 hunger and thirst, heat and cold. Sitting in luxurious homes,
14 surrounded with all the comforts of life, and doling out a little
15 amateur religion may be good for other lands, but India has a truer
16 instinct. It intuitively detects the mask. You must give up. Be great.
17 No great work can be done without sacrifice. The Purusha Himself
18 sacrificed Himself to create this world. Lay down your comforts,
19 your pleasures, your names, fame or position, nay even your lives,
20 and make a bridge of human chains over which millions will cross
21 this ocean of life. Bring all the forces of good together. Do not care
22 under what banner you march. Do not care what be your colour--
23 green, blue, or red--but mix up all the colours and produce that
24 intense glow of white, the colour of love. Ours is to work. The
25 results will take care of themselves. If any social institution stands
26 in your way of becoming God, it will give way before the power of
27 Spirit. I do not see into the future; nor do I care to see. But one
28 vision I see clear as life before me: that the ancient Mother has
29 awakened once more, sitting on Her throne rejuvenated, more
30 glorious than ever. Proclaim Her to all the world with the voice of
31 peace and benediction.

32 Yours ever in love and
33 labour,

34 Vivekananda.

A MESSAGE OF SYMPATHY TO A FRIEND

"Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Thus said the old Jewish saint when suffering the greatest calamities that could befall man, and he erred not. Herein lies the whole secret of Existence. Waves may roll over the surface and tempest rage, but deep down there is the stratum of infinite calmness, infinite peace, and infinite bliss. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." And why? Because it is during these moments of visitations when the heart is wrung by hands which never stop for the father's cries or the mother's wail, when under the load of sorrow, dejection, and despair, the world seems to be cut off from under our feet, and when the whole horizon seems to be nothing but an impenetrable sheet of misery and utter despair--that the internal eyes open, light flashes all of a sudden, the dream vanishes, and intuitively we come face to face with the grandest mystery in nature--Existence. Yes, then it is--when the load would be sufficient to sink a lot of frail vessels--that the man of genius, of strength, the hero, sees that infinite, absolute, ever-blissful Existence *per se*, that infinite being who is called and worshipped under different names in different climes. Then it is, the shackles that bind the soul down to this hole of misery break, as it were, for a time, and unfettered it rises and rises until it reaches the throne of the Lord, "Where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest". Cease not, brother, to send up petitions day and night, cease not to say day and night--THY WILL BE DONE.

"Ours is not to question why,

Ours but to do and die."

Blessed be Thy name, O Lord! And Thy will be done. Lord, we know that we are to submit; Lord, we know that it is the Mother's hand that is striking, and "The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak." There is, Father of Love, an agony at the heart which is fighting against that calm resignation which Thou teachest. Give us strength, O Thou who sawest Thy whole family destroyed before Thine eyes, with Thine hands crossed on Thy breast. Come, Lord, Thou Great Teacher, who has taught us that the soldier is only to obey and speak not. Come, Lord, come Arjuna's Charioteer, and teach me as Thou once taughtest him, that resignation in *Thyself* is the highest end and aim of this life, so that with those great ones of old, I may also firmly and resignedly cry, Om Shri Krishnarpanamastu.

May the Lord send you peace is the prayer day and night of--

Vivekananda

WHAT WE BELIEVE IN

I agree with you so far that faith is a wonderful insight and that it alone can save; but there is the danger in it of breeding fanaticism and barring further progress.

Jnana is all right; but there is the danger of its becoming dry intellectualism. Love is great and noble; but it may die away in meaningless sentimentalism.

A harmony of all these is the thing required. Ramakrishna was such a harmony. Such beings are few and far between; but keeping him and his teachings as the ideal, we can move on. And if amongst us, each one may not individually attain to that perfection, still we may get it collectively by counteracting, equipoising, adjusting, and fulfilling one another. This would be *harmony* by a number of persons and a decided advance on all other forms and creeds.

For a religion to be effective, enthusiasm is necessary. At the same time we must try to avoid the danger of multiplying creeds. We avoid that by being a non-sectarian sect, having all the advantages of a sect and the broadness of a universal religion.

God, though everywhere, can be known to us in and through human character. No character was ever so perfect as Ramakrishna's, and that should be the centre round which we ought to rally, at the same time allowing everybody to regard him in his own light, either as God, saviour, teacher, model, or great man, just as he pleases. We preach neither social equality nor inequality, but that every being has the same rights, and insist upon freedom of thought and action in every way.

We reject none, neither theist, nor pantheist, monist, polytheist, agnostic, nor atheist; the only condition of being a disciple is modelling a character at once the broadest and the most intense. Nor do we insist upon particular codes of morality as to conduct, or character, or eating and drinking, except so far as it injures others.

Whatever retards the onward progress or helps the downward fall is *vice*; whatever helps in coming up and becoming harmonised is *virtue*.

1 We leave everybody free to know, select, and follow
2 whatever suits and helps him. Thus, for example, eating meat may
3 help one, eating fruit another. Each is welcome to his own
4 peculiarity, but he has no right to criticise the conduct of others,
5 because that would, if followed by him, injure him, much less to
6 insist that others should follow his way. A wife may help some
7 people in this progress, to others she may be a positive injury. But
8 the unmarried man has no right to say that the married disciple is
9 wrong, much less to force his own ideal of morality upon his
10 brother.

11 We believe that every being is divine, is God. Every soul is a
12 sun covered over with clouds of ignorance, the difference between
13 soul and soul is owing to the difference in density of these layers of
14 clouds. We believe that this is the conscious or unconscious basis of
15 all religions, and that this is the explanation of the whole history of
16 human progress either in the material, intellectual, or spiritual
17 plane--the same Spirit is manifesting through different planes.

18 We believe that this is the very essence of the Vedas.

19 We believe that it is the duty of every *soul* to treat, think of,
20 and behave to other *souls* as such, i.e. as *Gods*, and not hate or
21 despise, or vilify, or try to injure them by any manner or means.
22 This is the duty not only of the Sannyasin, but of all men and
23 women.

24 The soul has neither sex, nor caste, nor imperfection.

25 We believe that nowhere throughout the Vedas, Darshanas,
26 or Puranas, or Tantras, is it ever said that the soul has any sex,
27 creed, or caste. Therefore we agree with those who say, "What has
28 religion to do with social reforms?" But they must also agree with
29 us when we tell them that religion has no business to formulate
30 social laws and insist on the difference between beings, because its
31 aim and end is to obliterate all such fictions and monstrosities.

32 If it be pleaded that through this difference we would reach
33 the final equality and unity, we answer that the same religion has
34 said over and over again that mud cannot be washed with mud. As
35 if a man can be moral by being immoral!

36 Social laws were created by economic conditions under the
37 sanction of religion. The terrible mistake of religion was to interfere
38 in social matters. But how hypocritically it says and thereby
39 contradicts itself, "Social reform is not the business of religion"! True,
40 what we want is that religion should not be a social reformer,
41 but we insist at the same time that society has no right to become a
42 religious law-giver. Hands off! Keep yourself to your own bounds
43 and everything would come right.

44 Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in
45 man.

46 Religion is the manifestation of the Divinity already in man.

47 Therefore the only duty of the teacher in both cases is to
48 remove all obstructions from the way. Hands off! as I always say,
49 and everything will be right. That is, our duty is to clear the way.

1 The Lord does the rest.

2 Especially, therefore, you must bear in mind that religion has
3 to do only with the soul and has no business to interfere in social
4 matters; you must also bear in mind that this applies completely to
5 the mischief which has already been done. It is as if a man after
6 forcibly taking possession of another's property cries through the
7 nose when that man tries to regain it--and preaches the doctrine of
8 the sanctity of human right!

9 What business had the priests to interfere (to the misery of
10 millions of human beings) in every social matter?

11 You speak of the meat-eating Kshatriya. Meat or no meat, it
12 is they who are the fathers of all that is noble and beautiful in
13 Hinduism. Who wrote the Upanishads? Who was Rama? Who was
14 Krishna? Who was Buddha? Who were the Tirthankaras of the
15 Jains? Whenever the Kshatriyas have preached religion, they have
16 given it to everybody; and whenever the Brahmins wrote anything,
17 they would deny all right to others. Read the Gita and the Sutras of
18 Vyasa, or get someone to read them to you. In the Gita the way is
19 laid open to all men and women, to all caste and colour, but Vyasa
20 tries to put meanings upon the Vedas to cheat the poor Shudras. Is
21 God a nervous fool like you that the flow of His river of mercy would
22 be dammed up by a piece of meat? If such be He, His value is not a
23 pie!

24 Hope nothing from me, but I am convinced as I have written
25 to you, and spoken to you, that India is to be saved by the Indians
26 themselves. So you, young men of the motherland, can dozens of
27 you become almost fanatics over this new ideal? Take thought,
28 collect materials, write a sketch of the life of Ramakrishna,
29 *studiously avoiding all miracles*. The life should be written as an
30 illustration of the doctrines he preached. Only his--do not bring me
31 or any living persons into that. The main aim should be to give to
32 the world what he taught, and the life as illustrating that. I,
33 unworthy though I am, had one commission--to bring out the casket
34 of jewels that was placed in my charge and make it over to you.
35 Why to you? Because the hypocrites, the jealous, the slavish, and
36 the cowardly, those who believe in matter only, can never do
37 anything. Jealousy is the bane of our national character, natural to
38 slaves. Even the Lord with all His power could do nothing on
39 account of this jealousy. Think of me as one who has done all his
40 duty and is now dead and gone. Think that the whole work is upon
41 your shoulders. Think that you, young men of our motherland, are
42 destined to do this. Put yourselves to the task. Lord bless you.
43 Leave me, throw me quite out of sight. Preach the new ideal, the
44 new doctrine, the new life. Preach against nobody, against no
45 custom. Preach neither for nor against caste or any other social
46 evil. Preach to let "hands off", and everything will come right.

47 My blessings on you all, my brave, steadfast, and loving
48 souls.

1
2
3 OUR DUTY TO THE MASSES
4

5 Shri Narayana bless you and yours. Through your Highness'
6 kind help it has been possible for me to come to this country. Since
7 then I have become well known here, and the hospitable people of
8 this country have supplied all my wants. It is a wonderful country,
9 and this is a wonderful nation in many respects. No other nation
10 applies so much machinery in their everyday work as do the people
11 of this country. Everything is machine. Then again, they are only
12 one-twentieth of the whole population of the world. Yet they have
13 fully one-sixth of all the wealth in the world. There is no limit to
14 their wealth and luxuries. Yet everything here is so dear. The wages
15 of labour are the highest in the world; yet the fight between labour
16 and capital is constant.

17 Nowhere on earth have women so many privileges as in
18 America. They are slowly taking everything into their hands; and,
19 strange to say, the number of cultured women is much greater than
20 that of cultured men. Of course, the higher geniuses are mostly
21 from the ranks of males. With all the criticism of the Westerners
22 against our caste, they have a worse one--that of money. The
23 almighty dollar, as the Americans say, can do anything here.

24 No country on earth has so many laws, and in no country are
25 they so little regarded. On the whole our poor Hindu people are
26 infinitely more moral than any of the Westerners. In religion they
27 practise here either hypocrisy or fanaticism. Sober-minded men
28 have become disgusted with their superstitious religions and are
29 looking forward to India for new light. Your Highness cannot realise
30 without seeing how eagerly they take in any little bit of the grand
31 thoughts of the holy Vedas, which resist and are unharmed by the
32 terrible onslaughts of modern science. The theories of creation out
33 of nothing, of a created soul, and of the big tyrant of a God sitting
34 on a throne in a place called heaven, and of the eternal hell-fires
35 have disgusted all the educated; and the noble thoughts of the
36 Vedas about the eternity of creation and of the soul, and about the
37 God in our own soul, they are imbibing fast in one shape or other.
38 Within fifty years the educated of the world will come to believe in
39 the eternity of both soul and creation, and in God as our highest
40 and perfect nature, as taught in our holy Vedas. Even now their
41 learned priests are interpreting the Bible in that way. My
42 conclusion is that they require more spiritual civilisation, and we,
43 more material.

44 The one thing that is at the root of all evils in India is the
45 condition of the poor. The poor in the West are devils; compared to
46 them ours are angels, and it is therefore so much the easier to raise
47 our poor. The only service to be done for our lower classes is to give
48 them education, *to develop their lost individuality*. That is the great
49 task between our people and princes. Up to now nothing has been
50 done in that direction. Priest-power and foreign conquest have

1 trodden them down for centuries, and at last the poor of India have
2 forgotten that they are human beings. They are to be given ideas;
3 their eyes are to be opened to what is going on in the world around
4 them; and then they will work out their own salvation. Every nation,
5 every man, and every woman must work out their own salvation.
6 Give them ideas--that is the only help they require, and then the
7 rest must follow as the effect. Ours is to put the chemicals together,
8 the crystallisation comes in the law of nature. Our duty is to put
9 ideas into their heads, they will do the rest. This is what is to be
10 done in India. It is this idea that has been in my mind for a long
11 time. I could not accomplish it in India, and that was the reason of
12 my coming to this country. The great difficulty in the way of
13 educating the poor is this. Supposing even your Highness opens a
14 free school in every village, still it would do no good, for the poverty
15 in India is such, that the poor boys would rather go to help their
16 fathers in the fields, or otherwise try to make a living, than come to
17 the school. Now if the mountain does not come to Mohammed,
18 Mohammed must go to the mountain. If the poor boy cannot come
19 to education, education must go to him. There are thousands of
20 single-minded, self-sacrificing Sannyasins in our own country, going
21 from village to village, teaching religion. If some of them can be
22 organised as teachers of secular things also, they will go from place
23 to place, from door to door, not only preaching, but teaching also.
24 Suppose two of these men go to a village in the evening with a
25 camera, a globe, some maps, etc. They can teach a great deal of
26 astronomy and geography to the ignorant. By telling stories about
27 different nations, they can give the poor a hundred times more
28 information through the ear than they can get in a lifetime through
29 books. This requires an organisation, which again means money.
30 Men enough there are in India to work out this plan, but alas! they
31 have no money. It is very difficult to set a wheel in motion; but when
32 once set, it goes on with increasing velocity. After seeking help in
33 my own country and failing to get any sympathy from the rich, I
34 came over to this country through your Highness' aid. The
35 Americans do not care a bit whether the poor of India die or live.
36 And why should they, when our own people never think of anything
37 but their own selfish ends?

38 My noble Prince, this life is short, the vanities of the world
39 are transient, but they alone live who live for others, the rest are
40 more dead than alive. One such high, noble-minded, and royal son
41 of India as your Highness can do much towards raising India on her
42 feet again and thus leave a name to posterity which shall be
43 worshipped.

44 That the Lord may make your noble heart feel intensely for
45 the suffering millions of India, sunk in ignorance, is the prayer of--

46 Vivekananda.

REPLY TO THE CALCUTTA ADDRESS

I am in receipt of the resolutions that were passed at the recent Town Hall meeting in Calcutta and the kind words my fellow-citizens sent over to me.

Accept, sir, my most heartfelt gratitude for your appreciation of my insignificant services.

I am thoroughly convinced that no individual or nation can live by holding itself apart from the community of others, and whenever such an attempt has been made under the false ideas of greatness, policy, or holiness--the result has always been disastrous to the secluding one.

To my mind, the one great cause of the downfall and the degeneration of India was the building of a wall of custom--whose foundation was hatred of others--round the nation, and the real aim of which in ancient times was to prevent the Hindus from coming in contact with the surrounding Buddhistic nations.

Whatever cloak ancient or modern sophistry may try to throw over it, the inevitable result--the vindication of the moral law, that none can hate others without degenerating himself--is that the race that was foremost amongst the ancient races is now a byword, and a scorn among nations. We are object-lessons of the violation of that law which our ancestors were the first to discover and disseminate.

Give and take is the law; and if India wants to raise herself once more, it is absolutely necessary that she brings out her treasures and throws them broadcast among the nations of the earth, and in return be ready to receive what others have to give her. Expansion is life, contraction is death. Love is life, and hatred is death. We commenced to die the day we began to hate other races; and nothing can prevent our death unless we come back to expansion, which is life.

We must mix, therefore, with all the races of the earth. And every Hindu that goes out to travel in foreign parts renders more benefit to his country than hundreds of men who are bundles of superstitions and selfishness, and whose one aim in life seems to be like that of the dog in the manger. The wonderful structures of national life which the Western nations have raised, are supported by the strong pillars of character, and until we can produce numbers of such, it is useless to fret and fume against this or that power.

Do any deserve liberty who are not ready to give it to others? Let us calmly and in a manly fashion go to work, instead of dissipating our energy in unnecessary frettings and fumings. I, for one, thoroughly believe that no power in the universe can withhold from anyone anything he really deserves. The past was great no

1 doubt, but I sincerely believe that the future will be more glorious
2 still.
3 May Shankara keep us steady in purity, patience, and
4 perseverance!

TO MY BRAVE BOYS

Push on with the organisation. Nothing else is necessary but these--*love, sincerity, and patience*. What is life but growth, i.e. expansion, i.e. love? Therefore all love is life, it is the only law of life; all selfishness is death, and this is true here or hereafter. It is life to do good, it is death not to do good to others. Ninety per cent of human brutes you see are dead, are ghosts--for none lives, my boys, but he who loves. Feel, my children, feel; feel for the poor, the ignorant, the downtrodden; feel till the heart stops and the brain reels and you think you will go mad--then pour the soul out at the feet of the Lord, and then will come power, help, and indomitable energy. Struggle, struggle, was my motto for the last ten years. Struggle, still say I. When it was all dark, I used to say, struggle; when light is breaking in, I still say, struggle. Be not afraid, my children. Look not up in that attitude of fear towards that infinite starry vault as if it would crush you. Wait! In a few hours more, the whole of it will be under your feet. Wait, money does not pay, nor name; fame does not pay, nor learning. It is love that pays; it is character that cleaves its way through adamant walls of difficulties.

Now the question before us is this. There cannot be any growth without liberty. Our ancestors freed religious thought, and we have a wonderful religion. But they put a heavy chain on the feet of society, and our society is, in a word, horrid, diabolical. In the West, society always had freedom, and look at them. On the other hand, look at their religion.

Liberty is the first condition of growth. Just as man must have liberty to think and speak, so he must have liberty in food, dress, and marriage, and in every other thing, so long as he does not injure others.

We talk foolishly against material civilisation. The grapes are sour. Even taking all that foolishness for granted, in all India there are, say, a hundred thousand really spiritual men and women. Now, for the spiritualisation of these, must three hundred millions be sunk in savagery and starvation? Why should any starve? How was it possible for the Hindus to have been conquered by the Mohammedans? It was due to the Hindus' ignorance of material civilisation. Even the Mohammedans taught them to wear tailor-made clothes. Would the Hindus had learnt from the Mohammedans how to eat in a cleanly way without mixing their food with the dust of the streets! Material civilisation, nay, even luxury, is necessary to create work for the poor. Bread! Bread! I do not believe in a God, who cannot give me bread here, giving me eternal bliss in heaven! Pooh! India is to be raised, the poor are to be fed, education is to be spread, and the evil of priestcraft is to be removed. No priestcraft, no social tyranny! More bread, more opportunity for everybody!

1 Our young fools organise meetings to get more power from the
2 English. They only laugh. None deserves liberty who is not ready to
3 give liberty. Suppose the English give over to you all the power.
4 Why, the powers that be then, will hold the people down, and let
5 them not have it. Slaves want power to make slaves.

6 Now, this is to be brought about slowly, and by only insisting
7 on our religion and giving liberty to society. Root up priestcraft
8 from the old religion, and you get the best religion in the world. Do
9 you understand me? Can you make a European society with India's
10 religion? I believe it is possible, and must be.

11 The grand plan is to start a colony in Central India, where
12 you can follow your own ideas independently, and then a little
13 leaven will leaven all. In the meanwhile form a Central Association
14 and go on branching off all over India. Start only on religious
15 grounds now, and do not preach any violent social reform at
16 present; only do not countenance foolish superstitions. Try to revive
17 society on the old grounds of universal salvation and equality as laid
18 down by the old Masters, such as Shankaracharya, Ramanuja, and
19 Chaitanya.

20 Have fire and spread all over. Work, work. Be the servant
21 while leading. Be unselfish, and *never listen to one friend in private*
22 *accusing another*. Have infinite patience, and success is yours.

23 Now take care of this: Do not try to "boss" others, as the
24 Yankees say. Because I always direct my letters to you, you need
25 not try to show your consequence over my other friends. I know you
26 never can be such a fool, but still I think it is my duty to warn you.
27 This is what kills all organisations. Work, work, for, to work only for
28 the good of others is life.

29 I want that there should be no hypocrisy, no Jesuitism, no
30 roguery. I have depended always on the Lord, always on Truth
31 broad as the light of day. Let me not die with stains on my
32 conscience for having played Jesuitism to get up name or fame, or
33 even to do good. There should not be a breath of immorality, nor a
34 stain of policy which is bad.

35 No shilly-shally, no *esoteric blackguardism*, no secret
36 humbug, nothing should be done in a corner. No special favouritism
37 of the Master, no Master at that, even. Onward, my brave boys--
38 money or no money--men or no men! Have you love? Have you God?
39 Onward and forward to the breach, you are irresistible.

40 How absurd! The Theosophical magazines are saying that
41 they, the Theosophists, prepared the way to my success! Indeed!
42 Pure nonsense! Theosophists prepared the way!

43 Take care! Beware of everything that is untrue; stick to truth
44 and we shall succeed, maybe slowly, but surely. Work on as if I
45 never existed. Work as if on each of you depended the whole work.
46 Fifty centuries are looking on you, the future of India depends on
47 you. Work on. I do not know when I shall be able to come. This is a
48 great field for work. They can at best praise in India, but they will
49 not give a cent for anything; and where shall they get it, *beggars*
50 themselves? Then, they have lost the faculty of doing public good

1 for the last two thousand years or more. They are just learning the
2 ideas of nation, public, etc. So I need not blame them.
3 Blessings to you all!

1
2
3 *A PLAN OF WORK FOR INDIA*
4

5 It is with a heart full of love, gratitude, and trust that I take
6 up my pen to write to you. Let me tell you first, that you are one of
7 the few men that I have met in my life who are thorough in their
8 convictions. You have a whole-souled possession of a wonderful
9 combination of feeling and knowledge, and withal a practical ability
10 to bring ideas into realised forms. Above all, you are sincere, and as
11 such I confide to you some of my ideas.

12 The work has begun well in India, and it should not only be
13 kept up, but pushed on with the greatest vigour. Now or never is
14 the time. After taking a far and wide view of things, my mind has
15 now been concentrated on the following plan. First, it would be well
16 to open a Theological College in Madras, and then gradually extend
17 its scope, to give a thorough education to young men in the Vedas
18 and the different Bhashyas and philosophies, including a knowledge
19 of the other religions of the world. At the same time a paper in
20 English and the vernacular should be started as an organ of the
21 College.

22 This is the first step to be taken, and huge things grow out of
23 small undertakings. Madras just now is following the golden mean
24 by appreciating both the ancient and modern phases of life.

25 I fully agree with the educated classes in India that a
26 thorough overhauling of society is necessary. But how to do it? The
27 destructive plans of reformers have failed. My plan is this. We have
28 not done *badly* in the past, certainly not. Our society is not *bad* but
29 good, only I want it to be better still. Not from error to truth, nor
30 from bad to good, but from truth to higher truth, from good to
31 better, best. I tell my countrymen that so far they have done well--
32 now is the time to do better.

33 Now, take the case of caste--in Sanskrit, Jati, i.e. species.
34 Now, this is the first idea of creation. Variation (Vichitrata), that is
35 to say Jati, means creation. "I am One, I become many" (various
36 Vedas). Unity is before creation, diversity is creation. Now if this
37 diversity stops, creation will be destroyed. So long as any species is
38 vigorous and active, it must throw out varieties. When it ceases or
39 is stopped from breeding varieties, it dies. Now the original idea of
40 Jati was this freedom of the individual to express his nature, his
41 Prakriti, his Jati, his caste; and so it remained for thousands of
42 years. Not even in the latest books is inter-dining prohibited; nor in
43 any of the older books is inter-marriage forbidden. Then what was
44 the cause of India's downfall?--the giving up of this idea of caste. As
45 Gita says, with the extinction of caste the world will be destroyed.
46 Now does it seem true that with the stoppage of these variations
47 the world will be destroyed? The present caste is not the real Jati,
48 but a hindrance to its progress. It really has prevented the free
49 action of Jati, i.e. caste or variation. Any crystallised custom or
50 privilege or hereditary class in any shape really prevents caste (Jati)

1 from having its full sway; and whenever any nation ceases to
2 produce this immense variety, it must die. Therefore what I have to
3 tell you, my countrymen, is this, that India fell because you
4 prevented and abolished caste. Every frozen aristocracy or
5 privileged class is a blow to caste and is not-caste. Let Jati have its
6 sway; break down every barrier in the way of caste, and we shall
7 rise. Now look at Europe. When it succeeded in giving free scope to
8 caste and took away most of the barriers that stood in the way of
9 individuals, each developing his caste--Europe rose. In America,
10 there is the best scope for caste (real Jati) to develop, and so the
11 people are great. Every Hindu knows that astrologers try to fix the
12 caste of every boy or girl as soon as he or she is born. That is the
13 real caste--the individuality, and Jyotisha (astrology) recognises
14 that. And we can only rise by giving it full sway again. This variety
15 does not mean inequality, nor any special privilege.

16 This is my method--to show the Hindus that they have to give
17 up nothing, but only to move on in the line laid down by the sages
18 and shake off their inertia, the result of centuries of servitude. Of
19 course, we had to stop advancing during the Mohammedan tyranny,
20 for then it was not a question of progress but of life and death. Now
21 that that pressure has gone, we must move forward, not on the
22 lines of destruction directed by renegades and missionaries, but
23 along our own line, our own road. Everything is hideous because
24 the building is unfinished. We had to stop building during centuries
25 of oppression. Now finish the building and everything will look
26 beautiful in its own place. This is all my plan. I am thoroughly
27 convinced of this. Each nation has a main current in life; in India it
28 is religion. Make it strong and the waters on either side must move
29 along with it. This is one phase of my line of thought. In time, I hope
30 to bring them all out, but at present I find I have a mission in this
31 country also. Moreover, I expect help in this country and from here
32 alone. But up to date I could not do anything except spreading my
33 ideas. Now I want that a similar attempt be made in India.

34 I do not know when I shall go over to India. I obey the
35 leading of the Lord. I am in His hands.

36 "In this world in search of wealth, Thou art, O Lord, the
37 greatest jewel I have found. I sacrifice myself unto Thee."

38 "In search of some one to love, Thou art the One Beloved I
39 have found. I sacrifice myself unto Thee." (Yajurveda Samhita).

40 May the Lord bless you for ever and ever!

FUNDAMENTALS OF RELIGIONS

My mind can best grasp the religions of the world, ancient or modern, dead or living, through this fourfold division:

1. Symbology--The employment of various external aids to preserve and develop the religious faculty of man.

2. History--The philosophy of each religion as illustrated in the lives of divine or human teachers acknowledged by each religion. This includes mythology; for what is mythology to one race, or period, is or was history to other races or periods. Even in cases of human teachers, much of their history is taken as mythology by successive generations.

3. Philosophy--The rationale of the whole scope of each religion.

4. Mysticism--The assertion of something superior to sense-knowledge and reason which particular persons, or all persons under certain circumstances, possess; runs through the other divisions also.

All the religions of the world, past or present, embrace one or more of these principles, the highly developed ones having all the four.

Of these highly developed religions again, some had no sacred book or books and they have disappeared; but those which were based on sacred books are living to the present day. As such, all the great religions of the world today are founded on sacred books.

The Vedic on the Vedas (misnamed the Hindu or Brahminic).

The Avestic on the Avesta.

The Mosaic on the Old Testament.

The Buddhistic on the Tripitaka.

The Christian on the New Testament.

The Mohammedan on the Koran.

The Taoists and the Confucianists in China, having also books, are so inextricably mixed up with the Buddhistic form of religion as to be catalogued with Buddhism.

Again, although strictly speaking there are no absolutely

1 racial religions, yet it may be said that, of this group, the Vedic, the
2 Mosaic, and the Avestic religions are confined to the races to which
3 they originally belonged; while the Buddhistic, the Christian, and
4 the Mohammedan religions have been from their very beginning
5 spreading religions.

6 The struggle will be between the Buddhists and Christians
7 and Mohammedans to conquer the world, and the racial religions
8 also will have unavoidably to join in the struggle. Each one of these
9 religions, racial or spreading, has been already split into various
10 branches and has undergone vast changes consciously or
11 unconsciously to adapt itself to varying circumstances. This very
12 fact shows that not one of them is fitted alone to be the religion of
13 the entire human race. Each religion being the effect of certain
14 peculiarities of the race it sprang from, and being in turn the cause
15 of the intensification and preservation of those very peculiarities,
16 not one of them can fit the universal human nature. Not only so, but
17 there is a negative element in each. Each one helps the growth of a
18 certain part of human nature, but represses everything else which
19 the race from which it sprang had not. Thus one religion to become
20 universal would be dangerous and degenerating to man.

21 Now the history of the world shows that these two dreams--
22 that of a universal political Empire and that of a universal religious
23 Empire--have been long before mankind, but that again and again
24 the plans of the greatest conquerors had been frustrated by the
25 splitting up of his territories before he could conquer only a little
26 part of the earth; and similarly every religion has been split into
27 sects before it was fairly out of its cradle.

28 Yet it seems to be true, that the solidarity of the human race,
29 social as well as religious, with a scope for infinite variation, is the
30 plan of nature; and if the line of least resistance is the true line of
31 action, it seems to me that this splitting up of each religion into
32 sects is the preservation of religion by frustrating the tendency to
33 rigid sameness, as well as the clear indication to us of the line of
34 procedure.

35 The end seems, therefore, to be not destruction but a
36 multiplication of sects until each individual is a sect unto himself.
37 Again a background of unity will come by the fusion of all the
38 existing religions into one grand philosophy. In the mythologies or
39 the ceremonials there never will be unity, because we differ more in
40 the concrete than in the abstract. Even while admitting the same
41 *principle*, men will differ as to the greatness of each of his ideal
42 teacher.

43 So, by this fusion will be found out a union of philosophy as
44 the basis of union, leaving each at liberty to choose his teacher or
45 his form as illustrations of that unity. This fusion is what is naturally
46 going on for thousands of years; only, by mutual antagonism, it has
47 been woefully held back.

48 Instead of antagonising, therefore, we must help all such
49 interchange of ideas between different races, by sending teachers
50 to each other, so as to educate humanity in all the various religions
51 of the world; but we must insist as the great Buddhist Emperor of

1 India, Ashoka, did, in the second century before Christ, not to abuse
2 others, or to try to make a living out of others' faults; but to help, to
3 sympathise, and to enlighten.

4 There is a great outcry going over the world against
5 metaphysical knowledge as opposed to what is styled physical
6 knowledge. This crusade against the metaphysical and the beyond-
7 this-life, to establish the present life and the present world on a
8 firmer basis, is fast becoming a fashion to which even the preachers
9 of religion one after the other are fast succumbing. Of course, the
10 unthinking multitude are always following things which present to
11 them a pleasing surface; but when those who ought to know better,
12 follow unmeaning fashions, pseudo-philosophical though they
13 profess to be, it becomes a mournful fact.

14 Now, no one denies that our senses, as long as they are
15 normal, are the most trustworthy guides we have, and the facts
16 they gather in for us form the very foundation of the structure of
17 human knowledge. But if they mean that all human knowledge is
18 only sense-perception and nothing but that, we deny it. If by
19 physical sciences are meant systems of knowledge which are
20 entirely based and built upon sense-perception, and nothing but
21 that, we contend that such a science never existed nor will ever
22 exist. Nor will any system of knowledge, built upon sense-
23 perception alone, ever be a science.

24 Senses no doubt cull the materials of knowledge and find
25 similarities and dissimilarities; but there they have to stop. In the
26 first place the physical gatherings of facts are conditioned by
27 certain metaphysical conceptions, such as space and time.
28 Secondly, grouping facts, or generalisation, is impossible without
29 some abstract notion as the background. The higher the
30 generalisation, the more metaphysical is the abstract background
31 upon which the detached facts are arranged. Now, such ideas as
32 matter, force, mind, law, causation, time, and space are the results
33 of very high abstractions, and nobody has ever sensed any one of
34 them; in other words, they are entirely metaphysical. Yet without
35 these metaphysical conceptions, no physical fact is possible to be
36 understood. Thus a certain motion becomes understood when it is
37 referred to a force; certain sensations, to matter; certain changes
38 outside, to law; certain changes in thought, to mind; certain order
39 singly, to causation--and joined to time, to law. Yet nobody has seen
40 or even imagined matter or force, law or causation, time or space.

41 It may be urged that these, as abstracted concepts, do not
42 exist, and that these abstractions are nothing separate or separable
43 from the groups of which they are, so to say, only qualities.

44 Apart from the question whether abstractions are possible
45 or not, or whether there is something besides the generalised
46 groups or not, it is plain that these notions of matter or force, time
47 or space, causation, law, or mind, are held to be units abstracted
48 and independent (by themselves) of the groups, and that it is only
49 when they are thought of as such, they furnish themselves as
50 explanations of the facts in sense-perception. That is to say, apart
51 from the validity of these notions, we see two facts about them--

1 first, they are metaphysical; second, that only as metaphysical do
2 they explain the physical and not otherwise.

3 Whether the external conforms to the internal, or the
4 internal to the external, whether matter conforms to mind, or mind
5 to matter, whether the surroundings mould the mind, or the mind
6 moulds the circumstances, is old, old question, and is still today as
7 new and vigorous as it ever was. Apart from the question of
8 precedence or causation--without trying to solve the problem as to
9 whether the mind is the cause of matter or matter the cause of
10 mind--it is evident that whether the external was formed by the
11 internal or not, it must conform itself to the internal for us to be
12 able to know it. Supposing that the external world is the cause of
13 the internal, yet we shall have to admit that the external world, as
14 cause of our mind, is unknown and unknowable, because the mind
15 can only know that much or that view of the external or that view
16 which conforms to or is a reflection of its own nature. That which is
17 its own reflection could not have been its cause. Now that view of
18 the whole mass of existence, which is cut off by mind and known,
19 certainly cannot be the cause of mind, as its very existence is
20 known in and through the mind.

21 Thus it is impossible to deduce a mind from matter. Nay, it is
22 absurd. Because on the very face of it that portion of existence
23 which is bereft of the qualities of thought and life and endowed
24 with the quality of externality is called matter, and that portion
25 which is bereft of externality and endowed with the qualities of
26 thought and life is called mind. Now to prove matter from mind, or
27 mind from matter, is to deduce from each the very qualities we have
28 taken away from each; and, therefore, all the fight about the
29 causality of mind or matter is merely a word puzzle and nothing
30 more. Again, throughout all these controversies runs, as a rule, the
31 fallacy of imparting different meanings to the words mind and
32 matter. If sometimes the word mind is used as something opposed
33 and external to matter, at others as something which embraces both
34 the mind and matter, i.e. of which both the external and internal are
35 parts on the materialistic side; the word matter is sometimes used
36 in the restricted sense of something external which we sense, and
37 again it means something which is the cause of all the phenomena
38 both external and internal. The materialist frightens the idealist by
39 claiming to derive his mind from the elements of the laboratory,
40 while all the time he is struggling to express something higher than
41 all elements and atoms, something of which both the external and
42 the internal phenomena are results, and which he terms matter. The
43 idealist, on the other hand, wants to derive all the elements and
44 atoms of the materialist from his own thought, even while catching
45 glimpses of something which is the cause of both mind and matter,
46 and which he oftentimes calls God. That is to say, one party wants to
47 explain the whole universe by a portion of it which is external, the
48 other by another portion which is internal. Both of these attempts
49 are impossible. Mind and matter cannot explain each other. The
50 only explanation is to be sought for in something which will
51 embrace both matter and mind.

52 It may be argued that thought cannot exist without mind, for

1 supposing there was a time when there was no thought, matter, as
2 we know it, certainly could not have existed. On the other hand, it
3 may be said that knowledge being impossible without experience,
4 and experience presupposing the external world, the existence of
5 mind, as we know it, is impossible without the existence of matter.

6 Nor is it possible that either of them had a beginning.
7 Generalisation is the essence of knowledge. Generalisation is
8 impossible without a storage of similarities. Even the fact of
9 comparison is impossible without previous experience. Knowledge
10 thus is impossible without previous knowledge--and knowledge
11 necessitating the existence of both thought and matter, both of
12 them are without beginning.

13 Again generalisation, the essence of sense-knowledge, is
14 impossible without something upon which the detached facts of
15 perception unite. The whole world of external perceptions requires
16 something upon which to unite in order to form a concept of the
17 world, as painting must have its canvas. If thought or mind be this
18 canvas to the external world, it, in its turn requires another. Mind
19 being a series of different feelings and willing—and not a unit,
20 requires something besides itself as its background of unity. Here
21 all analysis is bound to stop, for a real unity has been found. The
22 analysis of a compound cannot stop until an indivisible unit has
23 been reached. The fact that presents us with such a *unity* for both
24 thought and matter must necessarily be the last indivisible basis of
25 every phenomenon, for we cannot conceive any further analysis;
26 nor is any further analysis necessary, as this includes an analysis of
27 all our external and internal perceptions.

28 So far then, we see that a totality of mental and material
29 phenomena, *and* something beyond, upon which they are both
30 playing, are the results of our investigation.

31 Now this something beyond is not in sense-perception; it is a
32 logical necessity, and a feeling of its indefinable presence runs
33 through all our sense-perceptions. We see also that to this
34 something we are driven by the sheer necessity of being true to our
35 reason and generalising faculty.

36 It may be urged that there is no necessity whatsoever of
37 postulating any such substance or being beyond the mass of mental
38 and material phenomena. The totality of phenomena is all that we
39 know or can know, and it requires nothing beyond itself to explain
40 itself. An analysis beyond the senses is impossible, and the feeling
41 of a substance in which everything inheres is simply an illusion.

42 We see, that from the most ancient times, there have been
43 these two schools among thinkers. One party claims that the
44 unavoidable necessity of the human mind to form concepts and
45 abstractions is the natural guide to knowledge, and that it can stop
46 nowhere until we have transcended all phenomena and formed a
47 concept which is absolute in all directions, transcending time and
48 space and causality. Now if this ultimate concept is arrived at by
49 analysing the whole phenomena of thought and matter, step by
50 step, taking the cruder first and resolving it into a finer, and still
51 finer, until we arrive at something which stands as the solution of

1 everything else, it is obvious that everything else beyond this final
2 result is a momentary modification of itself, and as such, this final
3 result alone is real and everything else is but its shadow. The
4 reality, therefore, is not in the senses but beyond them.

5 On the other hand, the other party holds that the only reality
6 in the universe is what our senses bring to us, and although a sense
7 of something beyond hangs on to all our sense-perceptions, that is
8 only a trick of the mind, and therefore unreal.

9 Now a changing something can never be understood,
10 without the idea of something unchanging; and if it be said that that
11 unchanging something, to which the changing is referred, is also a
12 changing phenomenon only relatively unchanging, and is therefore
13 to be referred to something else, and so on, we say that however
14 infinitely long this series be, the very fact of our inability to
15 understand a changeable without an unchangeable forces us to
16 postulate one as the background of all the changeable. And no one
17 has the right to take one part of a whole as right and reject the
18 other at will. If one takes the obverse he must take the reverse of
19 the same coin also, however he may dislike it.

20 Again, with every movement, man asserts his freedom. From
21 the highest thinker to the most ignorant man everyone knows that
22 he is free. Now every man at the same time finds out with a little
23 thinking that every action of his had motives and conditions, and
24 given those motives and conditions his particular action can be as
25 rigorously deduced as any other fact in causation.

26 Here, again, the same difficulty occurs. Man's will is as
27 rigorously bound by the law of causation as the growth of any little
28 plant or the falling of a stone, and, yet, through all this bondage
29 runs the indestructible idea of freedom. Here also the totality side
30 will declare that the idea of freedom is an illusion and man is wholly
31 a creature of necessity.

32 Now, on the one hand, this denial of freedom as an illusion is
33 no explanation; on the other hand, why not say that the idea of
34 necessity or bondage or causation is an illusion of the ignorant? Any
35 theory which can fit itself to facts which it wants to explain, by first
36 cutting as many of them as prevents its fitting itself into them, is on
37 the face of it wrong. Therefore the only way left to us is to admit
38 first that the body is not free, neither is the will, but that there must
39 be something beyond both the mind and body which is free and

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41 *(incomplete)*

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KALI THE MOTHER

The stars are blotted out,
The clouds are covering clouds,
It is darkness vibrant, sonant.
In the roaring, whirling wind
Are the souls of a million lunatics
Just loose from the prison-house,
Wrenching trees by the roots,
Sweeping all from the path.
The sea has joined the fray,
And swirls up mountain-waves,
To reach the pitchy sky.
The flash of lurid light
Reveals on every side
A thousand, thousand shades
Of Death begrimed and black--
Scattering plagues and sorrows,
Dancing mad with joy,
Come, Mother, come!
For Terror is Thy name,
Death is in Thy breath,
And every shaking step
Destroys a world for e'er.
Thou "Time", the All-Destroyer!
Come, O Mother, come!
Who dares misery love,
And hug the form of Death,
Dance in Destruction's dance,
To him the Mother comes.

ANGELS UNAWARES

I

One bending low with load of life--
That meant no joy, but suffering harsh and hard--
And wending on his way through dark and dismal paths
Without a flash of light from brain or heart
To give a moment's cheer, till the line
That marks out pain from pleasure, death from life,
And good from what is evil was well-nigh wiped from sight,
Saw, one blessed night, a faint but beautiful ray of light
Descend to him. He knew not what or wherefrom,
But called it God and worshipped.
Hope, an utter stranger, came to him and spread
Through all his parts, and life to him meant more
Than he could ever dream and covered all he knew,
Nay, peeped beyond his world. The Sages
Winked, and smiled, and called it "superstition".
But he did feel its power and peace
And gently answered back--
"O Blessed Superstition! "

II

One drunk with wine of wealth and power
And health to enjoy them both, whirled on
His maddening course, till the earth, he thought,
Was made for him, his pleasure-garden, and man,
The crawling worm, was made to find him sport,
Till the thousand lights of joy, with pleasure fed,
That flickered day and night before his eyes,
With constant change of colours, began to blur
His sight, and cloy his senses; till selfishness,
Like a horny growth, had spread all o'er his heart;
And pleasure meant to him no more than pain,
Bereft of feeling; and life in the sense,
So joyful, precious once, a rotting corpse between his arms,

1 Which he forsooth would shun, but more he tried, the more
2 It clung to him; and wished, with frenzied brain,
3 A thousand forms of death, but quailed before the charm,
4 Then sorrow came--and Wealth and Power went--
5 And made him kinship find with all the human race
6 In groans and tears, and though his friends would laugh,
7 His lips would speak in grateful accents--
8 "O Blessed Misery!"

9
10 III

11 One born with healthy frame--but not of will
12 That can resist emotions deep and strong,
13 Nor impulse throw, surcharged with potent strength--
14 And just the sort that pass as good and kind,
15 Beheld that *he* was safe, whilst others long
16 And vain did struggle 'gainst the surging waves.
17 Till, morbid grown, his mind could see, like flies
18 That seek the putrid part, but what was bad.
19 Then Fortune smiled on him, and his foot slipped.
20 That ope'd his eyes for e'er, and made him find
21 *That stones and trees ne'er break the law,*
22 *But stones and trees remain;* that man alone
23 Is blest with power to fight and conquer Fate,
24 Transcending bounds and laws.
25 From him his passive nature fell, and life appeared
26 As broad and new, and broader, newer grew,
27 Till light ahead began to break, and glimpse of That
28 Where Peace Eternal dwells--yet one can only reach
29 By wading through the sea of struggles--courage-giving,
30 came.
31 Then looking back on all that made him kin
32 To stocks and stones, and on to what the world
33 Had shunned him for, his fall, he blessed the fall,
34 And with a joyful heart, declared it--
35 "Blessed Sin!"

36
37

1 *TO THE AWAKENED INDIA*

2
3 Once more awake!

4 For sleep it was, not death, to bring thee life
5 Anew, and rest to lotus-eyes for visions
6 Daring yet. The world in need awaits, O Truth!
7 No death for thee!

8
9 Resume thy march,

10 With gentle feet that would not break the
11 Peaceful rest even of the roadside dust
12 That lies so low. Yet strong and steady,
13 Blissful, bold, and free. Awakener, ever
14 Forward! Speak thy stirring words.

15
16 Thy home is gone,

17 Where loving hearts had brought thee up and
18 Watched with joy thy growth. But Fate is strong--
19 This is the law--all things come back to the source
20 They sprung, their strength to renew.

21
22 Then start afresh

23 From the land of thy birth, where vast cloud-belted
24 Snows do bless and put their strength in thee,
25 For working wonders new. The heavenly
26 River tune thy voice to her own immortal song;
27 Deodar shades give thee eternal peace.

28
29 And all above,

30 Himala's daughter Uma, gentle, pure,
31 The Mother that resides in all as Power
32 And Life, who works all works and
33 Makes of One the world, whose mercy
34 Open the gate to Truth and shows
35 The One in All, give thee untiring
36 Strength, which is Infinite Love.

37
38 They bless thee all,

1 The seers great, whom age nor dime
2 Can claim their own, the fathers of the
3 Race, who felt the heart of Truth the same,
4 And bravely taught to man ill-voiced or
5 Well. Their servant, thou hast got
6 The secret--'tis but One.

7

8 Then speak, O Love!

9 Before thy gentle voice serene, behold how
10 Visions melt and fold on fold of dreams
11 Departs to void, till Truth and Truth alone
12 In all its glory shines--

13

14 And tell the world--

15 Awake, arise, and dream no more!
16 This is the land of dreams, where Karma
17 Weaves unthreaded garlands with our thoughts
18 Of flowers sweet or noxious, and none
19 Has root or stem, being born in naught, which
20 The softest breath of Truth drives back to
21 Primal nothingness. Be bold, and face
22 The Truth! Be one with it! Let visions cease,
23 Or, if you cannot, dream but truer dreams,
24 Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.

25

26

27

28

29 *REQUIESCAT IN PACE*

30

31 Speed forth, O Soul! upon thy star-strewn path;
32 Speed, blissful one! where thought is ever free,
33 Where time and space no longer mist the view,
34 Eternal peace and blessings be with thee!

35

36 Thy service true, complete thy sacrifice,
37 Thy home the heart of love transcendent find;
38 Remembrance sweet, that kills all space and time,

1 Like altar roses fill thy place behind!
2
3 Thy bonds are broke, thy quest in bliss is found,
4 And one with That which comes as Death and Life;
5 Thou helpful one! unselfish e'er on earth,
6 Ahead! still help with love this world of strife!

7
8
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10

11 **HOLD ON YET A WHILE, BRAVE HEART**

12
13 If the sun by the cloud is hidden a bit,
14 If the welkin shows but gloom,
15 Still hold on yet a while, brave heart,
16 The victory is sure to come.

17
18 No winter was but summer came behind,
19 Each hollow crests the wave,
20 They push each other in light and shade;
21 Be steady then and brave.

22
23 The duties of life are sore indeed,
24 And its pleasures fleeting, vain,
25 The goal so shadowy seems and dim,
26 Yet plod on through the dark, brave heart,
27 With all thy might and main.

28
29 Not a work will be lost, no struggle vain,
30 Though hopes be blighted, powers gone;
31 Of thy loins shall come the heirs to all,
32 Then hold on yet a while, brave soul,
33 No good is e'er undone.

34
35 Though the good and the wise in life are few,
36 Yet theirs are the reins to lead,
37 The masses know but late the worth;

1 Heed none and gently guide.

2

3 With thee are those who see afar,
4 With thee is the Lord of might,
5 All blessings pour on thee, great soul,
6 To thee may all come right!

7

8

9

10 *NIRVANASHATKAM, OR SIX STANZAS ON NIRVANA*

11

12 I am neither the mind, nor the intellect, nor the ego, nor the
13 mind-stuff;

14 I am neither the body, nor the changes of the body;

15 I am neither the senses of hearing, taste, smell, or sight,

16 Nor am I the ether, the earth, the fire, the air;

17 I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss
18 Absolute--

19 I am He, I am He. (Shivoham, Shivoham).

20

21 I am neither the Prana, nor the five vital airs;

22 I am neither the materials of the body, nor the five sheaths;

23 Neither am I the organs of action, nor object of the senses;

24 I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss
25 Absolute--

26 I am He, I am He. (Shivoham, Shivoham).

27

28 I have neither aversion nor attachment, neither greed nor
29 delusion;

30 Neither egotism nor envy, neither Dharma nor Moksha;

31 I am neither desire nor objects of desire;

32 I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss
33 Absolute--

34 I am He, I am He. (Shivoham, Shivoham).

35

36 I am neither sin nor virtue, neither pleasure nor pain;

37 Nor temple nor worship, nor pilgrimage nor scriptures,

38 Neither the act of enjoying, the enjoyable nor the enjoyer;

1 I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss
2 Absolute--

3 I am He, I am He. (Shivoham, Shivoham).
4

5 I have neither death nor fear of death, nor caste;
6 Nor was I ever born, nor had I parents, friends, and
7 relations;

8 I have neither Guru, nor disciple;

9 I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss
10 Absolute--

11 I am He, I am He. (Shivoham, Shivoham).
12

13 I am untouched by the senses, I am neither Mukti nor
14 knowable;

15 I am without form, without limit, beyond space, beyond time;

16 I am in everything; I am the basis of the universe;
17 everywhere am I.

18 I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss
19 Absolute--

20 I am He, I am He. (Shivoham, Shivoham).
21
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23
24

25 THE SONG OF THE SANNYASIN

26

27 Wake up the note! the song that had its birth
28 Far off, where worldly taint could never reach,
29 In mountain caves and glades of forest deep,
30 Whose calm no sigh for lust or wealth or fame
31 Could ever dare to break; where rolled the stream
32 Of knowledge, truth, and bliss that follows both.
33 Sing high that note, Sannyasin bold! Say--

34 "Om Tat Sat, Om!"
35

36 Strike off thy fetters! Bonds that bind thee down,
37 Of shining gold, or darker, baser ore;
38 Love, hate--good, bad--and all the dual throng,
39 Know, slave is slave, caressed or whipped, not free;

1 For fetters, though of gold, are not less strong to bind;
2 Then off with them, Sannyasin bold! Say--
3 "Om Tat Sat, Om!"
4
5 Let darkness go; the will-o'-the-wisp that leads
6 With blinking light to pile more gloom on gloom.
7 This thirst for life, for ever quench; it drags
8 From birth to death, and death to birth, the soul.
9 He conquers all who conquers self. Know this
10 And never yield, Sannyasin bold! Say--
11 "Om Tat Sat, Om!"
12
13 "Who sows must reap," they say, "and cause must bring
14 The sure effect; good, good; bad, bad; and none
15 Escape the law. But whoso wears a form
16 Must wear the chain." Too true; but far beyond
17 Both name and form is Atman, ever free.
18 Know thou art That, Sannyasin bold! Say--
19 "Om Tat Sat, Om! "
20
21 They know not truth who dream such vacant dreams
22 As father, mother, children, wife, and friend.
23 The sexless Self! whose father He? whose child?
24 Whose friend, whose foe is He who is but One?
25 The Self is all in all, none else exists;
26 And thou art That, Sannyasin bold! Say--
27 "Om Tat Sat, Om!"
28
29 There is but One--The Free--The Knower--Self!
30 Without a name, without a form or stain.
31 In Him is Maya dreaming all this dream.
32 The witness, He appears as nature, soul.
33 Know thou art That, Sannyasin bold! Say--
34 "Om Tat Sat, Om!"
35
36 Where seekest thou? That freedom, friend, this world
37 Nor that can give. In books and temples vain

1 Thy search. Thine only is the hand that holds
2 The rope that drags thee on. Then cease lament,
3 Let go thy hold, Sannyasin bold! Say--
4 "Om Tat Sat, Om!"
5
6 Say, "Peace to all: From me no danger be
7 To aught that lives. In those that dwell on high.
8 In those that lowly creep, I am the Self in all!
9 All life both here and there, do I renounce,
10 All heavens and earths and hells, all hopes and fears."
11 Thus cut thy bonds, Sannyasin bold! Say--
12 "Om Tat Sat, Om!"
13
14 Heed then no more how body lives or goes,
15 Its task is done. Let Karma float it down;
16 Let one put garlands on, another kick
17 This frame; say naught. No praise or blame can be
18 Where praiser praised, and blamer blamed are one.
19 Thus be thou calm, Sannyasin bold! Say--
20 "Om Tat Sat, Om!"
21
22 Truth never comes where lust and fame and greed
23 Of gain reside. No man who thinks of woman
24 As his wife can ever perfect be;
25 Nor he who owns the least of things, nor he
26 Whom anger chains, can ever pass thro' Maya's gates.
27 So, give these up, Sannyasin bold! Say--
28 "Om Tat Sat, Om!"
29
30 Have thou no home. What home can hold thee, friend?
31 The sky thy roof, the grass thy bed; and food
32 What chance may bring, well cooked or ill, judge not.
33 No food or drink can taint that noble Self
34 Which knows Itself. Like rolling river free
35 Thou ever be, Sannyasin bold! Say--
36 "Om Tat Sat, Om!"
37

1 Few only know the truth. The rest will hate
2 And laugh at thee, great one; but pay no heed.
3 Go thou, the free, from place to place, and help
4 Them out of darkness, Maya's veil. Without
5 The fear of pain or search for pleasure, go
6 Beyond them both, Sannyasin bold! Say--
7 "Om Tat Sat, Om!"
8
9 Thus, day by day, till Karma's powers spent
10 Release the soul for ever. No more is birth,
11 Nor I, nor thou, nor God, nor man. The "I"
12 Has All become, the All is "I" and Bliss.
13 Know thou art That, Sannyasin bold! Say--
14 "Om Tat Sat, Om!"
15
16 *PEACE*
17
18 Behold, it comes in might,
19 The power that is not power,
20 The light that is in darkness,
21 The shade in dazzling light.

1 It is joy that never spoke,
2 And grief unfelt, profound,
3 Immortal life unlived,
4 Eternal death unmourned.
5
6 It is not joy nor sorrow,
7 But that which is between,
8 It is not night nor morrow,
9 But that which joins them in.
10
11 It is sweet rest in music;
12 And pause in sacred art;
13 The silence between speaking;
14 Between two fits of passion--
15 *It* is the calm of heart.
16
17 It is beauty never seen,
18 And love that stands alone,
19 It is song that lives un-sung,
20 And knowledge never known.
21
22 It is death between two lives,
23 And lull between two storms,
24 The void whence rose creation,
25 And that where it returns.
26
27 To it the tear-drop goes,
28 To spread the smiling form
29 It is the Goal of Life,
30 And Peace--its only home!

4 The ancient history of India is full of descriptions of the
5 gigantic energies and their multifarious workings, the boundless
6 spirit, the combination of indomitable action and reaction of the
7 various forces, and, above all, the profound thoughtfulness of a
8 godly race. If the word history is understood to mean merely
9 narratives of kings and emperors, and pictures of society--
10 tyrannised over from time to time by the evil passions, haughtiness,
11 avarice, etc., of the rulers of the time, portraying the acts resulting
12 from their good or evil propensities, and how these reacted upon
13 the society of that time--such a history India perhaps does not
14 possess. But every line of that mass of the religious literature of
15 India, her ocean of poetry, her philosophies and various scientific
16 works reveal to us--a thousand times more clearly than the
17 narratives of the life-incidents and genealogies of particular kings
18 and emperors can ever do--the exact position and every step made
19 in advance by that vast body of men who, even before the dawn of
20 civilisation, impelled by hunger and thirst, lust and greed, etc.,
21 attracted by the charm of beauty, endowed with a great and
22 indomitable mental power, and moved by various sentiments,
23 arrived through various ways and means at that stage of eminence.
24 Although the heaps of those triumphal flags which they gathered in
25 their innumerable victories over nature with which they had been
26 waging war for ages, have, of late, been torn and tattered by the
27 violent winds of adverse circumstances and become worn out
28 through age, yet they still proclaim the glory of Ancient India.

29 Whether this race slowly proceeded from Central Asia,
30 Northern Europe, or the Arctic regions, and gradually came down
31 and sanctified India by settling there at last, or whether the holy
32 land of India was their original native place, we have no proper
33 means of knowing now. Or whether a vast race living in or outside
34 India, being displaced from its original abode, in conformity with
35 natural laws, came in the course of time to colonise and settle over
36 Europe and other places--and whether these people were white or
37 black, blue-eyed or dark-eyed, golden-haired or black-haired--all
38 these matters--there is no sufficient ground to prove now, with the
39 one exception of the fact of the kinship of Sanskrit with a few
40 European languages. Similarly, it is not easy to arrive at a final
41 conclusion as to the modern Indians, whether they all are the pure
42 descendants of that race, or how much of the blood of that race is
43 flowing in their veins, or again, what races amongst them have any
44 of that even in them.

45 However, we do not, in fact, lose much by this uncertainty.

46 But there is one fact to remember. Of that ancient Indian
47 race, upon which the rays of civilisation first dawned, where deep
48 thoughtfulness first revealed itself in full glory, there are still found
49 hundreds of thousands of its children, born of its mind--the
50 inheritors of its thoughts and sentiments--ready to claim them.

1 Crossing over mountains, rivers, and oceans, setting at
2 naught, as it were, the obstacles of the distance of space and time,
3 the blood of Indian thought has flowed, and is still flowing into the
4 veins of other nations of the globe, whether in a distinct or in some
5 subtle unknown way.

6 Perhaps to us belongs the major portion of the universal
7 ancient inheritance.

8 In a small country lying in the eastern corner of the
9 Mediterranean Sea, beautiful and adorned by nature, and
10 garlanded by well-formed and beautiful-looking islands, lived a race
11 of men who were few in number, but of a very charming aspect,
12 perfectly formed, and strong in muscles and sinews, light of body,
13 yet possessing steadiness and perseverance, and who were
14 unrivalled for the creation of all earthly beauties, as well as
15 endowed with extraordinary practicality and intellect. The other
16 ancient nations used to call them Yavanas, but they called
17 themselves Greeks. This handful of a vigorous and wonderful race
18 is a unique example in the annals of man. Wherever and in
19 whatever nation there has been , or is, any advance made in earthly
20 science up to the present day--such as social, martial, political,
21 sculptural, etc.--there the shadow of ancient Greece has fallen. Let
22 us leave apart the consideration of ancient times, for even in this
23 modern age, we, the Bengalis, think ourselves proud and
24 enlightened simply by following the footmarks of these Yavana
25 Gurus for these last fifty years, illumining our homes with what
26 light of theirs is reaching us through the European literature.

27 The whole of Europe nowadays is, in every respect, the
28 disciple of ancient Greece, and her proper inheritor; so much so
29 that a wise man of England had said, "Whatever nature has not
30 created, that is the creation of the Greek mind."

31 These two gigantic rivers (Aryans and Yavanas), issuing from
32 far-away and different mountains (India and Greece), occasionally
33 come in contact with each other, and whenever such confluence
34 takes place, a tremendous intellectual or spiritual tide, rising in
35 human societies, greatly expands the range of civilisation and
36 confirms the bond of universal brotherhood among men.

37 Once in far remote antiquity, the Indian philosophy, coming
38 in contact with Greek energy, led to the rise of the Persian, the
39 Roman, and other great nations. After the invasion of Alexander the
40 Great, these two great waterfalls colliding with each other, deluged
41 nearly half of the globe with spiritual tides, such as Christianity.
42 Again, a similar commingling, resulting in the improvement and
43 prosperity of Arabia, laid the foundation of modern European
44 civilisation. And perhaps, in our own day, such a time for the
45 conjunction of these two gigantic forces has presented itself again.
46 This time their centre is India.

47 The air of India pre-eminently conduces to quietness, the
48 nature of the Yavana is the constant expression of power; profound
49 meditation characterises the one, the indomitable spirit of
50 dexterous activity, the other; one's motto is "renunciation", the
51 other's "enjoyment". One's whole energy is directed inwards, the

1 other's, outwards; one's whole learning consists in the knowledge
2 of the Self or the Subject, the other's, in the knowledge of the not-
3 Self or the object (perishable creation); one loves Moksha (spiritual
4 freedom), the other loves political independence; one is unmindful
5 of gaining prosperity in this world, the other sets his whole heart on
6 making a heaven of this world; one, aspiring after eternal bliss, is
7 indifferent to all the ephemeral pleasures of this life, and the other,
8 doubting the existence of eternal bliss, or knowing it to be far away,
9 directs his whole energy to the attainment of earthly pleasures as
10 much as possible.

11 In this age, both these types of mankind are extinct, only
12 their physical and mental children, their works and thoughts are
13 existing.

14 Europe and America are the advanced children of the
15 Yavanas, a glory to their forefathers; but the modern inhabitants of
16 the land of Bharata are not the glory of the ancient Aryas. But, as
17 fire remains intact under cover of ashes, so the ancestral fire still
18 remains latent in these modern Indians. Through the grace of the
19 Almighty Power, it is sure to manifest itself in time.

20 What will accrue when that ancestral fire manifests itself?

21 Would the sky of India again appear clouded over by waving
22 masses of smoke springing from the Vedic sacrificial fire? Or is the
23 glory of Rantideva again going to be revived in the blood of the
24 sacrificed animals? Are the old customs of Gomedha, Ashvamedha,
25 or perpetuating the lineage from a husband's brother, and other
26 usages of a like nature to come back again? Or is the deluge of a
27 Buddhistic propaganda again going to turn the whole of India into a
28 big monastery? Are the laws of Manu going to be rehabilitated as of
29 yore? Or is the discrimination of food, prescribed and forbidden,
30 varying in accordance with geographical dimensions, as it is at the
31 present day, alone going to have its all-powerful domination over
32 the length and breadth of the country? Is the caste system to
33 remain, and is it going to depend eternally upon the birthright of a
34 man, or is it going to be determined by his qualification? And again
35 in that caste system, is the discrimination of food, its touchableness
36 or untouchableness, dependent upon the purity or the impurity of
37 the man who touches it, to be observed as it is in Bengal, or will it
38 assume a form more strict as it does in Madras? Or, as in the
39 Punjab, will all such restrictions be obliterated? Are the marriages
40 of different Varnas to take place from the upper to the lower Varna
41 in the successive order, as in Manu's days, and as it is still in vogue
42 in Nepal? Or, as in Bengal and other places, are they to be kept
43 restricted to a very limited number of individuals constituting one
44 of the several communities of a certain class of the Varna? To give a
45 conclusive answer to all these questions is extremely difficult. They
46 become the more difficult of solution, considering the difference in
47 the customs prevailing in different parts of the country--nay, as we
48 find even in the same part of the country such a wide divergence of
49 customs among different castes and families.

50 Then what is to be?

51 What we should have is what we have not, perhaps what our

1 forefathers even had not--that which the Yavanas had; that,
2 impelled by the life-vibration of which, is issuing forth in rapid
3 succession from the great dynamo of Europe, the electric flow of
4 that tremendous power vivifying the whole world. We want that. We
5 want that energy, that love of independence, that spirit of self-
6 reliance, that immovable fortitude, that dexterity in action, that
7 bond of unity of purpose, that thirst for improvement. Checking a
8 little the constant looking back to the past, we want that expansive
9 vision infinitely projected forward; and we want--that intense spirit
10 of activity (Rajas) which will flow through our every vein, from head
11 to foot.

12 What can be a greater giver of peace than renunciation? A
13 little ephemeral worldly good is nothing in comparison with eternal
14 good; no doubt of that. What can bring greater strength than Sattva
15 Guna (absolute purity of mind)? It is indeed true that all other kinds
16 of knowledge are but non-knowledge in comparison with Self-
17 knowledge. But I ask: How many are there in the world fortunate
18 enough to gain that Sattva Guna? How many in this land of
19 Bharata? How many have that noble heroism which can renounce
20 all, shaking off the idea of "I and mine"? How many are blessed
21 enough to possess that far-sight of wisdom which makes the earthly
22 pleasures appear to be but vanity of vanities? Where is that broad-
23 hearted man who is apt to forget even his own body in meditating
24 over the beauty and glory of the Divine? Those who are such are
25 but a handful in comparison to the population of the whole of India;
26 and in order that these men may attain to their salvation, will the
27 millions and millions of men and women of India have to be crushed
28 under the wheel of the present-day society and religion?

29 And what good can come out of such a crushing?

30 Do you not see--taking up this plea of Sattva, the country has
31 been slowly and slowly drowned in the ocean of Tamas or dark
32 ignorance? Where the most dull want to hide their stupidity by
33 covering it with a false desire for the highest knowledge which is
34 beyond all activities, either physical or mental; where one, born and
35 bred in lifelong laziness, wants to throw the veil of renunciation
36 over his own unfitness for work; where the most diabolical try to
37 make their cruelty appear, under the cloak of austerity, as a part of
38 religion; where no one has an eye upon his own incapacity, but
39 everyone is ready to lay the whole blame on others; where
40 knowledge consists only in getting some books by heart, genius
41 consists in chewing the cud of others' thoughts, and the highest
42 glory consists in taking the name of ancestors: do we require any
43 other proof to show that that country is being day by day drowned
44 in utter Tamas?

45 Therefore Sattva or absolute purity is now far away from us.
46 Those amongst us who are not yet fit, but who hope to be fit, to
47 reach to that absolutely pure Paramahansa state--for them the
48 acquirement of Rajas or intense activity is what is most beneficial
49 now. Unless a man passes through Rajas, can he ever attain to that
50 perfect Sattvika state? How can one expect Yoga or union with God,
51 unless one has previously finished with his thirst for Bhoga or
52 enjoyment? How can renunciation come where there is no Vairagya

1 or dispassion for all the charms of enjoyment?

2 On the other hand, the quality of Rajas is apt to die down as
3 soon as it comes up, like a fire of palm leaves. The presence of
4 Sattva and the Nitya or Eternal Reality is almost in a state of
5 juxtaposition--Sattva is nearly Nitya. Whereas the nation in which
6 the quality of Rajas predominates is not so long-lived, but a nation
7 with a preponderance of Sattva is, as it were, immortal. History is a
8 witness to this fact.

9 In India, the quality of Rajas is almost absent; the same is
10 the case with Sattva in the West. It is certain, therefore, that the
11 real life of the Western world depends upon the influx, from India,
12 of the current of Sattva or transcendentalism; and it is also certain
13 that unless we overpower and submerge our Tamas by the opposite
14 tide of Rajas, we shall never gain any worldly good or welfare in
15 this life; and it is also equally certain that we shall meet many
16 formidable obstacles in the path of realisation of those noble
17 aspirations and ideals connected with our after-life.

18 The one end and aim of the *Udbodhana* is to help the union
19 and intermingling of these two forces, as far as it lies in its power.

20 True, in so doing there is a great danger--lest by this huge
21 wave of Western spirit are washed away all our most precious
22 jewels, earned through ages of hard labour; true, there is fear lest
23 falling into its strong whirlpool, even the land of Bharata forgets
24 itself so far as to be turned into a battlefield in the struggle after
25 earthly enjoyments; ay, there is fear, too, lest going to imitate the
26 impossible and impracticable foreign ways, rooting out as they do
27 our national customs and ideals, we lose all that we hold dear in
28 this life and be undone in the next!

29 To avoid these calamities we must always keep the wealth of
30 our own home before our eyes, so that every one down to the
31 masses may always know and see what his own ancestral property
32 is. We must exert ourselves to do that; and side by side, we should
33 be brave to open our doors to receive all available light from
34 outside. Let rays of light come in, in sharp-driving showers from the
35 four quarters of the earth; let the intense flood of light flow in from
36 the West--what of that? Whatever is weak and corrupt is liable to
37 die--what are we to do with it? If it goes, let it go, what harm does it
38 do to us? What is strong and invigorating is immortal. Who can
39 destroy that?

40 How many gushing springs and roaring cataracts, how many
41 icy rivulets and ever-flowing streamlets, issuing from the eternal
42 snow-capped peaks of the Himalayas, combine and flow together to
43 form the gigantic river of the gods, the Ganga, and rush
44 impetuously towards the ocean! So what a variety of thoughts and
45 ideas, how many currents of forces, issuing from innumerable
46 saintly hearts, and from brains of geniuses of various lands have
47 already enveloped India, the land of Karma, the arena for the
48 display of higher human activities! Look! how under the dominion
49 of the English, in these days of electricity, railroad, and streamboat,
50 various sentiments, manners, customs, and morals are spreading all
51 over the land with lightning speed. Nectar is coming, and along

1 with it, also poison; good is coming, as well as evil. There has been
2 enough of angry opposition and bloodshed; the power of stemming
3 this tide is not in Hindu society. Everything, from water filtered by
4 machinery and drawn from hydrants, down to sugar purified with
5 bone-ash, is being quietly and freely taken by almost every one, in
6 spite of much show of verbal protest. Slowly and slowly, by the
7 strong dint of law, many of our most cherished customs are falling
8 off day by day--we have no power to withstand that. And why is
9 there no power? Is truth really powerless? "Truth alone conquers
10 and not falsehood." --Is this Divine Vedic saying false? Or who
11 knows but that those very customs which are being swept away by
12 the deluge of the power of Western sovereignty or of Western
13 education were not real Acharas, but were Anacharas after all. This
14 also is a matter for serious consideration.

15 {Sanskrit}--"For the good of the many, as well as for the
16 happiness of the many" --in an unselfish manner, with a heart filled
17 with love and reverence the *Udbodhana* invites all wise and large-
18 hearted men who love their motherland to discuss these points and
19 solve these problems; and, being devoid of the feeling of hatred or
20 antagonism, as well as turning itself away from the infliction of
21 abusive language directed towards any individual, or society, or any
22 sect, it offers its whole self for the service of all classes.

23 To work we have the right, the result is in the hands of the
24 Lord. We only pray: "O Thou Eternal Spirit, make us spiritual; O
25 Thou Eternal Strength, make us strong; O Thou Mighty One, make
26 us mighty."

Among the Sanskrit scholars of the West, Professor Max Muller takes the lead. The Rig-Veda Samhita, the whole of which no one could even get at before, is now very neatly printed and made accessible to the public, thanks to the munificent generosity of the East India Company and to the Professor's prodigious labours extending over years. The alphabetical characters of most of the manuscripts, collected from different parts of India, are of various forms, and many words in them are inaccurate. We cannot easily comprehend how difficult it is for a foreigner, however learned he may be, to find out the accuracy or inaccuracy of these Sanskrit characters, and more especially to make out clearly the meaning of an extremely condensed and complicated commentary. In the life of Professor Max Muller, the publication of the Rig-Veda is a great event. Besides this, he has been dwelling, as it were, and spending his whole lifetime amidst ancient Sanskrit literature; but notwithstanding this, it does not imply that in the Professor's imagination India is still echoing as of old with Vedic hymns, with her sky clouded with sacrificial smoke, with many a Vasishtha, Vishvamitra, Janaka, and Yajnavalkya, with her every home blooming with a Gargi or a Maitreyi, and herself guided by the Vedic rules or canons of Grihya-Sutra.

The Professor, with ever-watchful eyes, keeps himself well-informed of what new events are occurring even in the out-of-the-way corners of modern India, half-dead as she is, trodden down by the feet of the foreigner professing an alien religion, and all but bereft of her ancient manners, rites, and customs. As the Professor's feet never touched these shores, many Anglo-Indians here show an unmixed contempt for his opinions on the customs, manners, and codes of morality of the Indian people. But they ought to know that, even after their lifelong stay, or even if they were born and brought up in this country, except any particular information they may obtain about that stratum of society with which they come in direct contact, the Anglo-Indian authorities have to remain quite ignorant in respect of other classes of people; and the more so, when, of this vast society divided into so many castes, it is very hard even among themselves for one caste to properly know the manners and peculiarities of another.

Some time ago, in a book, named, *Residence in India*, written by a well-known Anglo-Indian officer, I came across such a chapter as "Native Zenana Secrets". Perhaps because of that strong desire in every human heart for knowledge of secrets, I read the chapter, but only to find that this big Anglo-Indian author is fully bent upon satisfying the intense curiosity of his own countrymen regarding the mystery of a native's life by describing an *affaire d'amour*, said to have transpired between his sweeper, the sweeper's wife, and her paramour! And from the cordial reception given to the book by the Anglo-Indian community, it seems the

1 writer's object has been gained, and he feels himself quite satisfied
2 with his work. "God-speed to you, dear friends!"--What else shall we
3 say? Well has the Lord said in the Gita:

4 {Sanskrit}

5 --"Thinking of objects, attachment to them is formed in a
6 man. From attachment longing, and from longing anger grows."

7 Let such irrelevant things alone. To return to our subject:
8 After all, one wonders at Professor Max Muller's knowledge of the
9 social customs and codes of law, as well as the contemporaneous
10 occurrences in the various provinces of present-day India; this is
11 borne out by our own personal experiences.

12 In particular, the Professor observes with a keen eye what
13 new waves of religion are rising in different parts of India, and
14 spares no pains in letting the Western world not remain in the dark
15 about them. The Brahmo Samaj guided by Debendranath Tagore
16 and Keshab Chandra Sen, the Arya Samaj established by Swami
17 Dayananda Sarasvati, and the Theosophical movement--have all
18 come under the praise or censure of his pen. Struck by the sayings
19 and teachings of Shri Ramakrishna published in the two well-
20 established journals, the *Brahmavadin* and the *Prabuddha Bharata*,
21 and reading what the Brahmo preacher, Mr. Pratap Chandra
22 Mazumdar, wrote about Shri Ramakrishna, he was attracted by the
23 sage's life. Some time ago, a short sketch of Shri Ramakrishna's life
24 also appeared in the well-known monthly journal of England, *The*
25 *Imperial and Asiatic Quarterly Review*, contributed by Mr. C.H.
26 Tawney, M.A., the distinguished librarian of the India House.
27 Gathering a good deal of information from Madras and Calcutta,
28 the Professor discussed Shri Ramakrishna's life and his teachings in
29 a short article in the foremost monthly English journal, *The*
30 *Nineteenth Century*. There he expressed himself to the effect that
31 this new sage easily won his heart by the originality of his thoughts,
32 couched in novel language and impregnate with fresh spiritual
33 power which he infused into India when she was merely echoing
34 the thoughts of her ancient sages for several centuries past, or, as
35 in recent times, those of Western scholars. He, the Professor, had
36 read often India's religious literature and thereby well acquainted
37 himself with the life-stories of many of her ancient sages and saints;
38 but is it possible to expect such lives again in this age in this India
39 of modern times? Ramakrishna's life was a reply in the affirmative
40 to such a question. And it brought new life by sprinkling water, as it
41 were, at the root of the creeper of hope regarding India's future
42 greatness and progress, in the heart of this great-souled scholar
43 whose whole life has been dedicated to her.

44 There are certain great souls in the West who sincerely
45 desire the good of India, but we are not aware whether Europe can
46 point out another well-wisher of India who feels more for India's
47 well-being than Professor Max Muller. Not only is Max Muller a
48 well-wisher of India, but he has also a strong faith in Indian
49 philosophy and Indian religion. That Advaitism is the highest
50 discovery in the domain of religion, the Professor has many times
51 publicly admitted. That doctrine of reincarnation, which is a dread

1 to the Christian who has identified the soul with the body, he firmly
2 believes in because of his having found conclusive proof in his own
3 personal experience. And what more, perhaps, his previous birth
4 was in India; and lest by coming to India, the old frame may break
5 down under the violent rush of a suddenly aroused mass of past
6 recollections--is the fear in his mind that now stands foremost in the
7 way of his visit to this country. Still as a worldly man, whoever he
8 may be, he has to look to all sides and conduct himself accordingly.
9 When, after a complete surrender of all worldly interests, even the
10 Sannyasin, when performing any practices which he knows to be
11 purest in themselves, is seen to shiver in fear of public opinion,
12 simply because they are held with disapproval by the people among
13 whom he lives; when the consideration of gaining name and fame
14 and high position, and the fear of losing them, regulate the actions
15 of even the greatest ascetic, though he may verbally denounce such
16 consideration as most filthy and detestable--what wonder then that
17 the man of the world who is universally honoured, and is ever
18 anxious not to incur the displeasure of society, will have to be very
19 cautious in ventilating the views which he personally cherishes. It is
20 not a fact that the Professor is an utter disbeliever in such subtle
21 subjects as the mysterious psychic powers of the Yogis.

22 It is not many years since Professor Max Muller "felt called
23 upon to say a few words on certain religious movements, now going
24 on in India"--"which has often and not unjustly, been called a
25 country of philosophers"--which seemed to him "to have been very
26 much misrepresented and misunderstood at home". In order to
27 remove such misconceptions and to protest against "the wild and
28 overcharged accounts of saints and sages living and scattered
29 broadcast in Indian, American, and English papers"; and "to show
30 at the same time that behind such strange names as Indian
31 Theosophy, and Esoteric Buddhism, and all the rest, there was
32 something real, something worth knowing"--or in other words, to
33 point out to the thoughtful section of Europe that India was not a
34 land inhabited only by "quite a new race of human beings who had
35 gone through a number of the most fearful ascetic exercises", to
36 carry on a lucrative profession by thus acquiring the powers of
37 working such "very silly miracles" as flying through the air like the
38 feathered race, walking on or living fishlike under the water,
39 healing all sorts of maladies by means of incantations, and, by the
40 aid of occult arts fabricating gold, silver, or diamond from baser
41 materials, or by the power of Siddhis bestowing sturdy sons to rich
42 families--but that men, who had actually realised in their life great
43 transcendental truths, who were real knowers of Brahman, true
44 Yogis, real devotees of God, were never found wanting in India;
45 and, above all, to show that the whole Aryan population of India had
46 not as yet come down so low as to be on the same plane as the
47 brute creation, that, rejecting the latter, the living Gods in human
48 shape, they "the high and the low" were, day and night, busy licking
49 the feet of the first-mentioned performers of silly juggleries.--
50 Professor Max Muller presented Shri Ramakrishna's life to the
51 learned European public, in an article entitled "A Real Mahatman",
52 which appeared in *The Nineteenth Century* in its August number,
53 1896.

1 The learned people of Europe and America read the article
2 with great interest and many have been attracted towards its
3 subject, Shri Ramakrishna Deva, with the result that the wrong
4 ideas of the civilised West about India as a country full of naked,
5 infanticidal, ignorant, cowardly race of men who were cannibals
6 and little removed from beasts, who forcibly burnt their widows and
7 were steeped in all sorts of sins and darkness--towards the
8 formation of which ideas, the Christian missionaries and, I am as
9 much ashamed as pained to confess, some of my own countrymen
10 also have been chiefly instrumental--began to be corrected. The veil
11 of the gloom of ignorance, which was spread across the eyes of the
12 Western people by the strenuous efforts of these two bodies of men,
13 has been slowly and slowly rending asunder. "Can the country that
14 has produced a great world-teacher like Shri Bhagavan
15 Ramakrishna Deva be really full of such abominations as we have
16 been asked to believe in, or have we been all along duped by
17 interested organised bodies of mischief-makers, and kept in utter
18 obscurity and error about the real India?"--Such a question
19 naturally arises in the Western mind.

20 When Professor Max Muller, who occupies in the West the
21 first rank in the field of Indian religion, philosophy, and literature,
22 published with a devoted heart a short sketch of Shri
23 Ramakrishna's life in *The Nineteenth Century* for the benefit of
24 Europeans and Americans, it is needless to say that a bitter feeling
25 of burning rancour made its appearance amongst those two classes
26 of people referred to above.

27 By improper representation of the Hindu gods and
28 goddesses, the Christian missionaries were trying with all their
29 heart and soul to prove that really religious men could never be
30 produced from among their worshippers; but like a straw before a
31 tidal wave, that attempt was swept away; while that class of our
32 countrymen alluded to above, which set itself to devise means for
33 quenching the great fire of the rapidly spreading power of Shri
34 Ramakrishna, seeing all its efforts futile, has yielded to despair.
35 What is human will in opposition to the divine?

36 Of course from both sides, unintermittent volleys of fierce
37 attack were opened on the aged Professor's devoted head; the old
38 veteran, however, was not the one to turn his back. He had
39 triumphed many times in similar contests. This time also he has
40 passed the trial with equal ease. And to stop the empty shouts of his
41 inferior opponents, he has published, by way of a warning to them,
42 the book, *Ramakrishna: His Life and Sayings*, in which he has
43 collected more complete information and given a fuller account of
44 his life and utterances, so that the reading public may get a better
45 knowledge of this great sage and his religious ideas--the sage "who
46 has lately obtained considerable celebrity both in India and America
47 where his disciples have been actively engaged in preaching his
48 gospel and winning converts to his doctrines even among the
49 Christian audiences". The Professor adds, "This may seem very
50 strange, nay, almost incredible to us. . . . Yet every human heart has
51 its religious yearnings; it has a hunger for religion, which sooner or
52 later wants to be satisfied. Now the religion taught by the disciples

1 of Ramakrishna comes to these hungry souls without any untoward
2 authority", and is, therefore, welcomed as the "free elixir of
3 life". . . . "Hence, though there may be some exaggeration in the
4 number of those who are stated to have become converted to the
5 religion of Ramakrishna, . . . there can be no doubt that a religion
6 which can achieve such successes in our time, while it calls itself
7 with perfect truth the oldest religion and philosophy of the world,
8 viz. the Vedanta, the end or highest object of the Vedas, deserves
9 our careful attention."

10 After discussing, in the first part of the book, what is meant
11 by the Mahatman, the Four Stages of Life, Ascetic Exercises or
12 Yoga, and after making some mention about Dayananda Sarasvati,
13 Pavhari Baba, Debendranath Tagore, and Rai Shaligram Saheb
14 Bahadur, the leader of the Radhaswami sect, the Professor enters
15 on Shri Ramakrishna's life.

16 The Professor greatly fears lest the Dialogic Process--the
17 transformation produced in the description of the facts as they
18 really happened by too much favourableness or unfavourableness of
19 the narrator towards them--which is invariably at work in all history
20 as a matter of inevitable course, also influences this present sketch
21 of life. Hence his unusual carefulness about the collection of facts.
22 The present writer is an insignificant servant of Shri Ramakrishna.
23 Though the materials gathered by him for Ramakrishna's life have
24 been well-pounded in the mortar of the Professor's logic and
25 impartial judgment, still he (Max Muller) has not omitted to add
26 that there may be possible "traces of what I call the Dialogic
27 Process and the irrepressible miraculising tendencies of devoted
28 disciples" even in "his unvarnished description of his Master". And,
29 no doubt, those few harsh-sweet words which the Professor has
30 said in the course of his reply to what some people, with the
31 Brahmo-Dharma preacher, the Rev. Pratap Chandra Mazumdar, at
32 their head, wrote to him in their anxiety to make out a "not edifying
33 side" of Ramakrishna's character--demand thoughtful consideration
34 from those amongst us of Bengal who, being full of jealousy, can
35 with difficulty bear the sight of others' weal.

36 Shri Ramakrishna's life is presented in the book in very brief
37 and simple language. In this life, every word of the wary historian is
38 weighed, as it were, before being put on paper; those sparks of fire,
39 which are seen here and there to shoot forth in the article, "A Real
40 Mahatman", are this time held in with the greatest care. The
41 Professor's boat is here plying between the Scylla of the Christian
42 missionaries on the one hand, and the Charybdis of the tumultuous
43 Brahmos on the other. The article, "A Real Mahatman" brought
44 forth from both the parties many hard words and many carping
45 remarks on the Professor. It is a pleasure to observe that there is
46 neither the attempt made here to retort on them, nor is there any
47 display of meanness--as the refined writers of England are not in
48 the habit of indulging in that kind of thing--but with a sober,
49 dignified, not the least malignant, yet firm and thundering voice,
50 worthy of the aged scholar, he has removed the charges that were
51 levelled against some of the uncommon ideas of the great-souled
52 sage--swelling forth from a heart too deep for ordinary grasp.

1 And the charges are, indeed, surprising to us. We have
2 heard the great Minister of the Brahmo Samaj, the late revered
3 Acharya Shri Keshab Chandra Sen, speaking in his charming way
4 that Shri Ramakrishna's simple, sweet, colloquial language
5 breathed a superhuman purity; though in his speech could be
6 noticed some such words as we term obscene, the use of those
7 words, on account of his uncommon childlike innocence and of their
8 being perfectly devoid of the least breath of sensualism, instead of
9 being something reproachable, served rather the purpose of
10 embellishment--yet, this is one of the mighty charges!

11 Another charge brought against him is that his treatment of
12 his wife was barbarous because of his taking the vow of leading a
13 Sannyasin's life! To this the Professor has replied that he took the
14 vow of Sannyasa with his wife's assent, and that during the years of
15 his life on this earth, his wife, bearing a character worthy of her
16 husband, heartily received him as her Guru (spiritual guide) and,
17 according to his instructions, passed her days in infinite bliss and
18 peace, being engaged in the service of God as a lifelong
19 Brahmacharini. Besides, he asks, "Is love between husband and
20 wife really impossible without the procreation of children?" "We
21 must learn to believe in Hindu honesty"--in the matter that, without
22 having any physical relationship, a Brahmachari husband can live a
23 life of crystal purity, thus making his Brahmacharini wife a partner
24 in the immortal bliss of the highest spiritual realisation,
25 Brahmananda--"however incredulous we might justly be on such
26 matters in our own country". May blessings shower on the
27 Professor for such worthy remarks! Even he, born of a foreign
28 nationality and living in a foreign land, can understand the meaning
29 of our Brahmacharya as the only way to the attainment of
30 spirituality, and believes that it is not even in these days rare in
31 India, whilst the hypocritical heroes of our own household are
32 unable to see anything else than carnal relationship in the
33 matrimonial union! "As a man thinketh in his mind, so he seeth
34 outside."

35 Again another charge put forward is that "he did not show
36 sufficient moral abhorrence of prostitutes". To this the Professor's
37 rejoinder is very very sweet indeed; he says that in this charge
38 Ramakrishna "does not stand quite alone among the founders of
39 religion!" Ah! How sweet are these words--they remind one of the
40 prostitute Ambapali, the object of Lord Buddha's divine grace, and
41 of the Samaritan woman who won the grace of the Lord Jesus
42 Christ.

43 Yet again, another charge is that he did not hate those who
44 were intemperate in their habits. Heaven save the mark! One must
45 not tread even on the shadow of a man, because he took a sip or
46 two of drink--is not that the meaning? A formidable accusation
47 indeed! Why did not the Mahapurusha kick away and drive off in
48 disgust the drunkards, the prostitutes, the thieves, and all the
49 sinners of the world! And why did he not, with eyes closed, talk in a
50 set drawl after the never-to-be-varied tone of the Indian flute-
51 player, or talk in conventional language concealing his thoughts!
52 And above all, the crowning charge is why did he not "live

1 *maritalement* " all his life!

2 Unless life can be framed after the ideal of such strange
3 purity and good manners as set forth by the accusers, India is
4 doomed to go to ruin. Let her, if she has to rise by the help of such
5 ethical rules!

6 The greater portion of the book has been devoted to the
7 collection of the sayings, rather than to the life itself. That those
8 sayings have attracted the attention of many of the English-
9 speaking readers throughout the world can be easily inferred from
10 the rapid sale of the book. The sayings, falling direct from his holy
11 lips, are impregnate with the strongest spiritual force and power,
12 and therefore they will surely exert their divine influence in every
13 part of the world. "For the good of the many, for the happiness of
14 the many" great-souled men take their birth; their lives and works
15 are past the ordinary human run, and the method of their preaching
16 is equally marvelous.

17 And what are we doing? The son of a poor Brahmin, who has
18 sanctified us by his birth, raised us by his work, and has turned the
19 sympathy of the conquering race towards us by his immortal
20 sayings--what are we doing for him? Truth is not always palatable,
21 still there are times when it has to be told: some of us do
22 understand that his life and teachings are to our gain, but there the
23 matter ends. It is beyond our power even to make an attempt to put
24 those precepts into practice in our own lives, far less to consign our
25 whole body and soul to the huge waves of harmony of Jnana and
26 Bhakti that Shri Ramakrishna has raised. This play of the Lord,
27 those who have understood or are trying to understand, to them we
28 say, "What will mere understanding do? The proof of understanding
29 is in work. Will others believe you if it ends only in verbal
30 expressions of assurance or is put forward as a matter of personal
31 faith? Work argues what one feels; work out what you feel and let
32 the world see." All ideas and feelings coming out of the fullness of
33 the heart are known by their fruits--practical works.

34 Those who, knowing themselves very learned, think lightly of
35 this unlettered, poor, ordinary temple-priest, to them our
36 submission is: "The country of which one illiterate temple-priest, by
37 virtue of his own strength, has in so short a time caused the victory
38 of the ancient Sanatana Dharma of your forefathers to resound
39 even in lands far beyond the seas--of that country, you are the
40 heroes of heroes, the honoured of all, mighty, well-bred, the learned
41 of the learned--how much therefore must you be able to perform far
42 more uncommon, heroic deeds for the welfare of your own land and
43 nation, if you but will it! Arise, therefore, come forward, display the
44 play of your superior power within, manifest it, and we are standing
45 with offerings of deepest veneration in hand ready to worship you.
46 We are ignorant, poor, unknown, and insignificant beggars with only
47 the beggar's garb as a means of livelihood; whereas you are
48 supreme in riches and influence, of mighty power, born of noble
49 descent, centres of all knowledge and learning! Why not rouse
50 yourselves? Why not take the lead? Show the way, show us that
51 example of perfect renunciation for the good of the world, and we
52 will follow you like bond-slaves!"

1 On the other hand, those who are showing unjustified signs
2 of causeless, rancorous hostilities out of absolute malice and envy--
3 natural to a slavish race--at the success and the celebrity of Shri
4 Ramakrishna and his name--to them we say, "Dear friends, vain are
5 these efforts of yours! If this infinite, unbounded, religious wave
6 that has engulfed in its depths the very ends of space--on whose
7 snow-white crest shineth this divine form in the august glow of a
8 heavenly presence--if this be the effect brought about by our eager
9 endeavours in pursuit of personal name, fame, or wealth, then,
10 without your or any others' efforts, this wave shall in obedience to
11 the insuperable law of the universe, soon die in the infinite womb of
12 time, never to rise again! But if, again, this tide, in accordance with
13 the will and under the divine inspiration of the One Universal
14 Mother, has begun to deluge the world with the flood of the
15 unselfish love of a great man's heart, then, O feeble man, what
16 power dost thou possess that thou shouldst thwart the onward
17 progress of the Almighty Mother's will?"

THE PARIS CONGRESS OF THE HISTORY OF RELIGIONS

In the Paris Exhibition, the Congress of the History of Religions recently sat for several days together. At the Congress, there was no room allowed for the discussions on the doctrines and spiritual views of any religion; its purpose was only to inquire into the historic evolution of the different forms of established faiths, and along with it other accompanying facts that are incidental to it. Accordingly, the representation of the various missionary sects of different religions and their beliefs was entirely left out of account in this Congress. The Chicago Parliament of Religions was a grand affair, and the representatives of many religious sects from all parts of the world were present at it. This Congress, on the other hand, was attended only by such scholars as devote themselves to the study of the origin and the history of different religions. At the Chicago Parliament the influence of the Roman Catholics was great, and they organised it with great hopes for their sect. The Roman Catholics expected to establish their superiority over the Protestants without much opposition; by proclaiming their glory and strength and laying the bright side of their faith before the assembled Christians, Hindus, Buddhists, Mussalmans, and other representatives of the world-religions and publicly exposing their weakness, they hoped to make firm their own position. But the result proving otherwise, the Christian world has been deplorably hopeless of the reconciliation of the different religious systems; so the Roman Catholics are now particularly opposed to the repetition of any such gathering. France is a Roman Catholic country; hence in spite of the earnest wish of the authorities, no religious congress was convened on account of the vehement opposition on the part of the Roman Catholic world.

The Congress of the History of Religions at Paris was like the Congress of Orientalists which is convened from time to time and at which European scholars, versed in Sanskrit, Pali, Arabic, and other Oriental languages, meet; only the antiquarianism of Christianity was added to this Paris Congress.

From Asia only three Japanese Pandits were present at the Congress. From India there was the Swami Vivekananda.

The conviction of many of the Sanskrit scholars of the West is that the Vedic religion is the outcome of the worship of the fire, the sun, and other awe-inspiring objects of natural phenomenon.

Swami Vivekananda was invited by the Paris Congress to contradict this conviction, and he promised to read a paper on the account. But he could not keep his promise on account of ill health, and with difficulty was only able to be personally present at the Congress, where he was most warmly received by all the Western Sanskrit scholars, whose admiration for the Swami was all the

1 greater as they had already gone through many of his lectures on
2 the Vedanta.

3 At the Congress, Mr. Gustav Oppert, a German Pandit, read
4 a paper on the origin of the Shalagrama-Shila. He traced the origin
5 of the Shalagrama worship to that emblem of the female generative
6 principle. According to him, the Shiva-Linga is the phallic emblem
7 of the male and the Shalagrama of the female generative principle.
8 And thus he wanted to establish that the worship of the Shiva-Linga
9 and that of the Shalagrama--both are but the component parts of
10 the worship of Linga and Yoni! The Swami repudiated the above
11 two views and said that though he had heard of such ridiculous
12 explanations about the Shiva-Linga, the other theory of the
13 Shalagrama-Shila was quite new and strange, and seemed
14 groundless to him.

15 The Swami said that the worship of the Shiva-Linga
16 originated from the famous hymn in the Atharva-Veda Samhita sung
17 in praise of the Yupa-Stambha, the sacrificial post. In that hymn a
18 description is found of the beginningless and endless Stambha or
19 Skambha, and it is shown that the said Skambha is put in place of
20 the eternal Brahman. As afterwards the Yajna (sacrificial) fire, its
21 smoke, ashes, and flames, the Soma plant, and the ox that used to
22 carry on its back the wood for the Vedic sacrifice gave place to the
23 conception of the brightness of Shiva's body, his tawny matted-hair,
24 his blue throat, and the riding on the bull of the Shiva, and so on--
25 just so, the Yupa-Skambha gave place in time to the Shiva-Linga,
26 and was deified to the high Devahood of Shri Shankara. In the
27 Atharva-Veda Samhita, the sacrificial cakes are also extolled along
28 with the attributes of the Brahman.

29 In the *Linga Purana*, the same hymn is expanded in the
30 shape of stories, meant to establish the glory of the great Stambha
31 and the superiority of Mahadeva.

32 Again, there is another fact to be considered. The Buddhists
33 used to erect memorial topes consecrated to the memory of
34 Buddha; and the very poor, who were unable to build big
35 monuments, used to express their devotion to him by dedicating
36 miniature substitutes for them. Similar instances are still seen in
37 the case of Hindu temples in Varanasi and other sacred places of
38 India where those, who cannot afford to build temples, dedicate
39 very small temple-like constructions instead. So it might be quite
40 probable that during the period of Buddhistic ascendancy, the rich
41 Hindus, in imitation of the Buddhists, used to erect something as a
42 memorial resembling their Skambha, and the poor in a similar
43 manner copied them on a reduced scale, and afterwards the
44 miniature memorials of the poor Hindus became a new addition to
45 the Skambha.

46 One of the names of the Buddhist Stupas (memorial topes) is
47 Dhatu-garbha, that is, "metal-wombed". Within the Dhatu-garbha, in
48 small cases made of stone, shaped like the present Shalagrama,
49 used to be preserved the ashes, bones, and other remains of the
50 distinguished Buddhist Bhikshus, along with gold, silver, and other
51 metals. The Shalagrama-Shilas are natural stones resembling in

1 form these artificially-cut stone-cases of the Buddhist Dhatu-
2 garbha, and thus being first worshipped by the Buddhists, gradually
3 got into Vaishnavism, like many other forms of Buddhistic worship
4 that found their way into Hinduism. On the banks of the Narmada
5 and in Nepal, the Buddhistic influence lasted longer than in other
6 parts of India; and the remarkable coincidence that the
7 Narmadeshvara Shiva-Linga, found on the banks of the Narmada
8 and hence so called, and the Shalagrama-Shilas of Nepal are given
9 preference to by the Hindus to those found elsewhere in India is a
10 fact that ought to be considered with respect to this point of
11 contention.

12 The explanation of the Shalagrama-Shila as a phallic emblem
13 was an imaginary invention and, from the very beginning, beside
14 the mark. The explanation of the Shiva-Linga as a phallic emblem
15 was brought forward by the most thoughtless, and was forthcoming
16 in India in her most degraded times, those of the downfall of
17 Buddhism. The filthiest Tantrika literature of Buddhism of those
18 times is yet largely found and practised in Nepal and Tibet.

19 The Swami gave another lecture in which he dwelt on the
20 historic evolution of the religious ideas in India, and the historic
21 evolution of religious ideas in India, and said that the Vedas are the
22 common source of Hinduism in all its varied stages, as also of
23 Buddhism and every other religious belief in India. The seeds of the
24 multifarious growth of Indian thought on religion lie buried in the
25 Vedas. Buddhism and the rest of India's religious thought are the
26 outcome of the unfolding and expansion of those seeds, and modern
27 Hinduism also is only their developed and matured form. With the
28 expansion or the contraction of society, those seeds lie more or less
29 expanded at one place or more or less contracted at another.

30 He said a few words about the priority of Shri Krishna to
31 Buddha. He also told the Western scholars that as the histories of
32 the royal dynasties described in the *Vishnu Purana* were by
33 degrees being admitted as proofs throwing light on the ways of
34 research of the antiquarian, so, he said, the traditions of India were
35 all true, and desired that Western Sanskrit scholars, instead of
36 writing fanciful articles, should try to discover their hidden truths.

37 Professor Max Muller says in one of his books that, whatever
38 similarities there may be, unless it be demonstrated that some one
39 Greek knew Sanskrit, it cannot be concluded that ancient India
40 helped ancient Greece in any way. But it is curious to observe that
41 some Western savants, finding several terms of Indian astronomy
42 similar to those of Greek astronomy, and coming to know that the
43 Greeks founded a small kingdom on the borders of India, can
44 clearly read the help of Greece on everything Indian, on Indian
45 literature, Indian astronomy, Indian arithmetic. Not only so; one has
46 been bold enough to go so far as to declare that all Indian sciences
47 as a rule are but echoes of the Greek!

48 On a single Sanskrit Shloka {Sanskrit}--"The Yavanas are
49 Mlechchhas, in them this science is established (therefore) even
50 they deserve worship like Rishis, . . ."--how much the Westerners
51 have indulged their unrestrained imagination! But it remains to be

1 shown how the above Shloka goes to prove that the Aryas were
2 taught by the Mlechchhas. The meaning may be that the learning of
3 the Mlechchha disciples of the Aryan teachers is praised here, only
4 to encourage the Mlechchhas in their pursuit of the Aryan science.

5 Secondly, when the germ of every Aryan science is found in
6 the Vedas and every step of any of those sciences can be traced
7 with exactness from the Vedic to the present day, what is the
8 necessity for forcing the far-fetched suggestion of the Greek
9 influence on them? "What is the use of going to the hills in search of
10 honey if it is available at home?" as a Sanskrit proverb says.

11 Again, every Greek-like word of Aryan astronomy can be
12 easily derived from Sanskrit roots. The Swami could not understand
13 what right the Western scholars had to trace those words to a
14 Greek source, thus ignoring their direct etymology.

15 In the same manner, if on finding mention of the word
16 Yavanika (curtain) in the dramas of Kalidasa and other Indian poets,
17 the Yavanika (Ionian or Greek) influence on the whole of the
18 dramatic literature of the time is ascertained, then one should first
19 stop to compare whether the Aryan dramas are at all like the
20 Greek. Those who have studied the mode of action and style of the
21 dramas of both the languages must have to admit that any such
22 likeness, if found, is only a fancy of the obstinate dreamer, and has
23 never any real existence as a matter of fact. Where is that Greek
24 chorus? The Greek Yavanika is on one side of the stage, the Aryan
25 diametrically on the other. The characteristic manner of expression
26 of the Greek drama is one thing, that of the Aryan quite another.
27 There is not the least likeness between the Aryan and the Greek
28 dramas; rather the dramas of Shakespeare resemble to a great
29 extent the dramas of India. So the conclusion may also be drawn
30 that Shakespeare is indebted to Kalidasa and other ancient Indian
31 dramatists for all his writings, and that the whole Western
32 literature is only an imitation of the Indian.

33 Lastly, turning Professor Max Muller's own premises against
34 him, it may be said as well that until it is demonstrated that some
35 one Hindu knew Greek some time one ought not to talk even of
36 Greek influence.

37 Likewise, to see Greek influence in Indian sculpture is also
38 entirely unfounded.

39 The Swami also said that the worship of Shri Krishna is
40 much older than that of Buddha, and if the Gita be not of the same
41 date as the Mahabharata, it is surely much earlier and by no means
42 later. The style of language of the Gita is the same as that of the
43 Mahabharata. Most of the adjectives used in the Gita to explain
44 matters spiritual are used in the Vana and other Parvans of the
45 Mahabharata, respecting matters temporal. Such coincidence is
46 impossible without the most general and free use of those words at
47 one and the same time. Again, the line of thought in the Gita is the
48 same as in the Mahabharata; and when the Gita notices the
49 doctrines of all the religious sects of the time, why does it not ever
50 mention the name of Buddhism?

1 In spite of the most cautious efforts of the writers
2 subsequent to Buddha, reference to Buddhism is not withheld and
3 appears somewhere or other, in some shape or other, in histories,
4 stories, essays, and every book of the post-Buddhistic literature. In
5 covert or overt ways, some allusion is sure to be met with in
6 reference to Buddha and Buddhism. Can anyone show any such
7 reference in the Gita? Again, the Gita is an attempt at the
8 reconciliation of all religious creeds, none of which is slighted in it.
9 Why, it remains to be answered, is Buddhism alone denied the
10 tender touch of the Gita-writer?

11 The Gita willfully scorns none. Fear?--Of that there is a
12 conspicuous absence in it. The Lord Himself, being the interpreter
13 and the establisher of the Vedas, never hesitates to even censure
14 Vedic rash presumptuousness if required. Why then should He fear
15 Buddhism?

16 As Western scholars devote their whole life to one Greek
17 work, let them likewise devote their whole life to one Sanskrit work,
18 and much light will flow to the world thereby. The Mahabharata
19 especially is the most invaluable work in Indian history; and it is not
20 too much to say that this book has not as yet been even properly
21 read by the Westerners.

22 After the lecture, many present expressed their opinions for
23 or against the subject, and declared that they agreed with most of
24 what the Swami had said, and assured the Swami that the old days
25 of Sanskrit Antiquarianism were past and gone. The views of
26 modern Sanskrit scholars were largely the same as those of the
27 Swami's, they said. They believed also that there was much true
28 history in the Puranas and the traditions of India.

29 Lastly, the learned President, admitting all other points of
30 the Swami's lecture, disagreed on one point only, namely, on the
31 contemporaneousness of the Gita with the Mahabharata. But the
32 only reason he adduced was that the Western scholars were mostly
33 of the opinion that the Gita was not a part of the Mahabharata.

34 The substance of the lecture will be printed in French in the
35 General Report of the Congress.

KNOWLEDGE: ITS SOURCE AND ACQUIREMENT

Various have been the theories propounded as regards the primitive source of knowledge. We read in the Upanishads that Brahma, who was the first and the foremost among the Devas, held the key to all knowledge, which he revealed to his disciples and which, being handed down in succession, has been bequeathed as a legacy to the subsequent age. According to the Jains, during an indefinite period of cycle of Time, which comprises between one thousand and two thousand billions of "oceans" of years, are born some extraordinary, great, perfected beings whom they call Jinas, and through them the door to knowledge is now and then opened to human society. Likewise Buddhism believes in, and expects at regular intervals, the appearance of the Buddhas, that is, persons possessed of infinite universal wisdom. The same is the reason also of the introduction of Incarnations of God by the Pauranika Hindus who ascribe to them, along with other missions, the special function of restoring the lost spiritual knowledge by its proper adjustment to the needs of the time. Outside India, we find the great-souled Zoroaster bringing down the light of knowledge from above to the mortal world. So also did Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed, who, possessed of heavenly authority, proclaim to fallen humanity the tidings of divine wisdom in their own unique ways.

Brahma is the name of a high position among the Devas, to which every man can aspire by virtue of meritorious deeds. Only a selected few can become Jinas, while others can never attain to Jinahood; but they can only go so far as to gain the state of Mukti. The state of being a Buddha is open to one and all without distinction. Zoroaster, Moses, Jesus, and Mohammed are great personalities who incarnated themselves for the fulfilment of some special mission; so also did the Incarnations of God mentioned by the Pauranika sages. For others to look up to that seat of these divine personages with a longing eye is madness.

Adam got his knowledge through the tasting of the forbidden fruit. Noah was taught social science by the grace of Jehovah. In India, the theory is that every science has its presiding deity; their founders are either Devas or perfected beings; from the most menial arts as that of a cobbler to the most dignified office of the spiritual guide, everything depends on the kind intervention of the gods or supreme beings. "No knowledge is possible without a teacher." There is no way to the attainment of knowledge unless it is transmitted through an apostolic succession from disciple to disciple, unless it comes through the mercy of the Guru and direct from his mouth.

Then again, the Vedantic and other philosophers of the Indian schools hold that knowledge is not to be acquired from without. It is the innate nature of the human soul and the essential birthright of every man. The human soul is the repository of infinite

1 wisdom; what external agency can illuminate it? According to some
2 schools, this infinite wisdom remains always the same and is never
3 lost; and man is not ordinarily conscious of this, because a veil, so
4 to speak, has fallen over it on account of his evil deeds, but as soon
5 as the veil is removed it reveals itself. Others say that this infinite
6 wisdom, though potentially present in a human soul, has become
7 contracted through evil deeds, and it becomes expanded again by
8 the mercy of God gained by good deeds. We also read in our
9 scriptures various other methods of unfolding this inborn infinite
10 power and knowledge, such as devotion to God, performance of
11 work without attachment, practising the eightfold accessories of
12 the Yoga system, or constant dwelling on this knowledge, and so on.
13 The final conclusion, however, is this, that through the practice of
14 one or more or all of these methods together man gradually
15 becomes conscious of his inborn real nature, and the infinite power
16 and wisdom within, latent or veiled, becomes at last fully manifest.

17 On the other side, the modern philosophers have analysed
18 the human mind as the source of infinitely possible manifestations
19 and have come to the conclusion that when the individual mind on
20 the one hand, and favourable time, place, and causation on the
21 other can act and react upon one another, then highly developed
22 consciousness of knowledge is sure to follow. Nay, even the
23 unfavourableness of time and place can be successfully surmounted
24 by the vigour and firmness of the individual. The strong individual,
25 even if he is thrown amidst the worst conditions of place or time,
26 overcomes them and affirms his own strength. Not only so, all the
27 heavy burdens heaped upon the individual, the acting agent, are
28 being made lighter and lighter in the course of time, so that any
29 individual, however weak he may be in the beginning, is sure to
30 reach the goal at the end if he assiduously applies himself to gain it.
31 Look at the uncivilised and ignorant barbarians of the other day!
32 How through close and studious application they are making long
33 strides into the domains of civilisation, how even those of the lower
34 strata are making their way and are making their way and are
35 occupying with an irresistible force the most exalted positions in it!
36 The sons of cannibal parents are turning out elegant and educated
37 citizens; the descendants of the uncivilised Santals, thanks to the
38 English Government, have been nowadays meeting in successful
39 competition our Bengali students in the Indian Universities. As
40 such, the partiality of the scientific investigators of the present day
41 to the doctrine of hereditary transmission of qualities is being
42 gradually diminished.

43 There is a certain class of men whose conviction is that from
44 time eternal there is a treasure of knowledge which contains the
45 wisdom of *everything* past, present, and future. These men hold
46 that it was their own forefathers who had the sole privilege of
47 having the custody of this treasure. The ancient sages, the first
48 possessors of it, bequeathed in succession this treasure and its true
49 import to their descendants only. They are, therefore, the only
50 inheritors to it; as such, let the rest of the world worship them.

51 May we ask these men what they think should be the
52 condition of the other peoples who have not got such forefathers?

1 "Their condition is doomed", is the general answer. The more kind-
2 hearted among them is perchance pleased to rejoin. "Well, let them
3 come and serve us. As a reward for such service, they will be born
4 in our caste in the next birth. That is the only hope we can hold out
5 to them." "Well, the moderns are making many new and original
6 discoveries in the field of science and arts, which neither you
7 dreamt of , nor is there any proof that your forefathers ever had
8 knowledge of. What do you say to that?" "Why certainly our
9 forefathers knew all these things, the knowledge of which is now
10 unfortunately lost to us. Do you want a proof? I can show you one.
11 Look! Here is the Sanskrit verse. . . ." Needless to add that the
12 modern party, who believes in direct evidence only, never attaches
13 any seriousness to such replies and proofs.

14 Generally, all knowledge is divided into two classes, the
15 Apara, secular, and the Para, spiritual. One pertains to perishable
16 things, and the other to the realm of the spirit. There is, no doubt, a
17 great difference between these two classes of knowledge, and the
18 way to the attainment of the one may be entirely different from the
19 way to the attainment of the other. Nor can it be denied that no one
20 method can be pointed out as the sole and universal one which will
21 serve as the key to all and every door in the domain of knowledge.
22 But in reality all this difference is only one of degree and not of
23 kind. It is not that secular and spiritual knowledge are two opposite
24 and contradictory things; but they are the same thing--the same
25 infinite knowledge which is everywhere fully present from the
26 lowest atom to the highest Brahman--they are the same knowledge
27 in its different stages of gradual development. This one infinite
28 knowledge we call secular when it is in its lower process of
29 manifestation, and spiritual when it reaches the corresponding
30 higher phase.

31 "All knowledge is possessed exclusively by some
32 extraordinary great men, and those special personages take birth
33 by the command of God, or in conformity to a higher law of nature,
34 or in some preordained order of Karma; except through the agency
35 of these great ones, there is no other way of attaining knowledge."
36 If such a view be correct and certain, there seems to be no
37 necessity for any individual to strive hard to find any new and
38 original truth--all originality is lost to society for want of exercise
39 and encouragement; and the worst of all is that, society tries to
40 oppose and stop any attempt in the original direction, and thus the
41 faculty of the initiative dies out. If it is finally settled that the path of
42 human welfare is for ever chalked out by these omniscient men,
43 society naturally fears its own destruction if the least deviation be
44 made from the boundary line of the path, and so it tries to compel
45 all men through rigid laws and threats of punishment to follow that
46 path with unconditional obedience. If society succeeds in imposing
47 such obedience to itself by confining all men within the narrow
48 groove of these paths, then the destiny of mankind becomes no
49 better than that of a machine. If every act in a man's life has been
50 all previously determined, then what need is there for the culture of
51 the faculty of thought--where is the field for the free play of
52 independent thought and action? In course of time, for want of

1 proper use, all activity is given up, all originality is lost, a sort of
2 Tamasika dreamy lifelessness hovers over the whole nation, and
3 headlong it goes down and down. The death of such a nation is not
4 far to seek.

5 On the other hand, if the other extreme were true that the
6 society prospers the most which is not guided by the injunctions of
7 such divinely-inspired souls, then, civilisation, wisdom, and
8 prosperity--deserting the Chinese, Hindus, Egyptians, Babylonians,
9 Iranians, Greeks, Romans, and other great nations of ancient and
10 modern times, who have always followed the path laid down by
11 their sages--would have embraced the Zulus, the Kafirs, the
12 Hottentots, and the aboriginal tribes of the Andamans and the
13 Australian islands who have led a life of guideless independence.

14 Considering all these points, it must be admitted that,
15 though the presence of knowledge everywhere in every individual is
16 an eternal truism, yet the path pointed out by the great ones of the
17 earth has the glory peculiar to it, and that there is a peculiar
18 interest attached to the transmission of knowledge through the
19 succession of teachers and their disciples. Each of them has its
20 place in the development of the sum total of knowledge; and we
21 must learn to estimate them according to their respective merits.
22 But, perhaps, being carried away by their over-zealous and blind
23 devotion to their Masters, the successors and followers of these
24 great ones sacrifice truth before the altar of devotion and worship
25 to them, and misrepresent the true meaning of the purpose of those
26 great lives by insisting on personal worship, that is, they kill the
27 principle for the person.

28 This is also a fact of common experience that when man
29 himself has lost all his own strength, he naturally likes to pass his
30 days in idle remembrance of his forefathers' greatness. The devoted
31 heart gradually becomes the weakest in its constant attempt to
32 resign itself in every respect to the feet of its ancestors, and at last
33 a time comes when this weakness teaches the disabled yet proud
34 heart to make the vainglory of its ancestors' greatness as the only
35 support of its life. Even if it be true that your ancestors possessed
36 all knowledge, which has in the efflux of time been lost to you, it
37 follows that you, their descendants, must have been instrumental in
38 this disappearance of knowledge, and now it is all the same to you
39 whether you have it or not. To talk of having or losing this already
40 lost knowledge serves no useful purpose at present. You will have to
41 make new efforts, to undergo troubles over again, if you want to
42 recover it.

43 True, that spiritual illumination shines of itself in a pure
44 heart, and, as such, it is not something acquired from without; but
45 to attain this purity of heart means long struggle and constant
46 practice. It has also been found, on careful inquiry in the sphere of
47 material knowledge, that those higher truths which have now and
48 then been discovered by great scientific men have flashed like
49 sudden floods of light in their mental atmosphere, which they had
50 only to catch and formulate. But such truths never appear in the
51 mind of an uncultured and wild savage. All these go to prove that
52 hard Tapasya, or practice of austerities in the shape of devout

1 contemplation and constant study of a subject is at the root of all
2 illumination in its respective spheres.

3 What we call extraordinary, superconscious inspiration is
4 only the result of a higher development of ordinary consciousness,
5 gained by long and continued effort. The difference between the
6 ordinary and the extraordinary is merely one of degree in
7 manifestation. Conscious efforts lead the way to superconscious
8 illumination.

9 Infinite perfection is in every man, though unmanifested.
10 Every man has in him the potentiality of attaining to perfect
11 saintliness, Rishihood, or to the most exalted position of an Avatara,
12 or to the greatness of a hero in material discoveries. It is only a
13 question of time and adequate well-guided investigation, etc., to
14 have this perfection manifested. In a society where once such great
15 men were born, there the possibility of their reappearance is
16 greater. There can be no doubt that a society with the help of such
17 wise guides advances faster than the one without it. But it is
18 equally certain that such guides will rise up in the societies that are
19 now without them and will lead them to equally rapid progress in
20 the future.

1
2
3 *MODERN INDIA*

4 *(Translated from a Bengali contribution to the Udbodhana,*
5 *March 1899)*
6

7 The Vedic priests base their superior strength on the
8 knowledge of the sacrificial Mantras.²⁶ By the power of these
9 Mantras, the Devas are made to come down from their heavenly
10 abodes, accept the drink and food offerings, and grant the prayers
11 of the Yajamanas.²⁷ The kings as well as their subjects are,
12 therefore, looking up to these priests for their welfare during their
13 earthly life. Raja Soma²⁸ is worshipped by the priest and is made to
14 thrive by the power of his Mantras. As such, the Devas, whose
15 favourite food is the juice of the Soma plant offered in oblation by
16 the priest, are always kind to him and bestow his desired boons.
17 Thus strengthened by divine grace, he defies all human opposition;
18 for what can the power of mortals do against that of the gods? Even
19 the king, the centre of all earthly power, is a suppliant at his door.
20 A kind look from him is the greatest help; his mere blessing a
21 tribute to the State, pre-eminent above everything else.

22 Now commanding the king to be engaged in affairs fraught
23 with death and ruin, now standing by him as his fastest friend with
24 kind and wise counsels, now spreading the net of subtle, diplomatic
25 statesmanship in which the king is easily caught--the priest is seen,
26 oftentimes, to make the royal power totally subservient to him.
27 Above all, the worst fear is in the knowledge that the name and
28 fame of the royal forefathers and of himself and his family lie at the
29 mercy of the priest's pen. He is the historian. The king might have
30 paramount power; attaining a great glory in his reign, he might
31 prove himself as the father and mother in one to his subjects; but if
32 the priest is not appeased, his sun of glory goes down with his last
33 breath for ever; all his worth and usefulness deserving of universal
34 approbation are lost in the great womb of time, like unto the fall of
35 gentle dew on the ocean. Others who inaugurated the huge
36 sacrifices lasting over many years, the performers of the
37 Ashvamedha and so on--those who showered, like incessant rain in
38 the rainy season, countless wealth on the priests--their names,
39 thanks to the grace of priests, are emblazoned in the pages of
40 history. The name of Priyadarshi Dharmashoka,²⁹ the beloved of the

1 ²⁶ ?Vedic hymns uttered by the priests to invoke the Devas at the time of
2 sacrifice.
3

4 ²⁷ ?The men who perform sacrifices.
5

6 ²⁸ ?The name of the Soma plant as commonly found in the Vedas. The priests
7 offered to the Devas the juice of this plant at the time of sacrifice.
8

9 ²⁹ ?The name given to the great king, Asoka, after he embraced Buddhism.
10

1 gods, is nothing but a name in the priestly world, while
2 Janamejaya,³⁰ son of Parikshit, is a household word in every Hindu
3 family.

4 To protect the State, to meet the expenses of the personal
5 comforts and luxuries of himself and his long retinue, and, above
6 all, to fill to overflowing the coffers of the all-powerful priesthood
7 for its propitiation, the king is continually draining the resources of
8 his subjects, even as the sun sucks up moisture from the earth. His
9 especial prey--his milch cows--are the Vaishyas.

10 Neither under the Hindu kings, nor under the Buddhist rule,
11 do we find the common subject-people taking any part in expressing
12 their voice in the affairs of the State. True, Yudhishtira visits the
13 houses of Vaishyas and even Shudras when he is in Varanavata;
14 true, the subjects are praying for the installation of Ramachandra
15 to the regency of Ayodhya; nay, they are even criticising the
16 conduct of Sita and secretly making plans for the bringing about of
17 her exile: but as a recognised rule of the State they have no direct
18 voice in the supreme government. The power of the populace is
19 struggling to express itself in indirect and disorderly ways without
20 any method. The people have not as yet the conscious knowledge of
21 the existence of this power. There is neither the attempt on their
22 part to organise it into a united action, nor have they got the will to
23 do so; there is also a complete absence of that capacity, that skill,
24 by means of which small and incoherent centres of force are united
25 together, creating insuperable strength as their resultant.

26 Is this due to want of proper laws?--no, that is not it. There
27 are laws, there are methods, separately and distinctly assigned for
28 the guidance of different departments of government, there are
29 laws laid down in the minutest detail for everything, such as the
30 collection of revenue, the management of the army, the
31 administration of justice, punishments and rewards. But at the root
32 of all, is the injunction of the Rishi--the word of divine authority, the
33 revelation of God coming through the inspired Rishi. The laws have,
34 it can almost be said, no elasticity in them. Under the
35 circumstances, it is never possible for the people to acquire any
36 sort of education by which they can learn to combine among
37 themselves and be united for the accomplishment of any object for
38 the common good of the people, or by which they can have the
39 concerted intellect to conceive the idea of popular right in the
40 treasures collected by the king from his subjects, or even such
41 education by which they can be fired with the aspiration to gain the
42 right of representation in the control of State revenues and
43 expenditure. Why should they do such things? Is not the inspiration
44 of the Rishi responsible for their prosperity and progress?

45 Again, all those laws are in books. Between laws as codified
46 in books and their operation in practical life, there is a world of
47 difference. One Ramachandra is born after thousands of
48 Agnivarnas³¹ pass away! Many kings show us the life of

1 ³⁰ ?The performer of the great snake-sacrifice of Mahabharata.
2
3

1 ³¹ ?Agnivarna was a prince of the Solar race, who never used to come out of the
2
3

1 Chandashoka;³² Dharmashokas are rare! The number of kings like
2 Akbar, in whom the subjects find their life, is far less than that of
3 kings like Aurangzeb who live on the blood of their people!

4 Even if the kings be of as godlike nature as that of
5 Yudhishtira, Ramachandra, Dharmashoka, or Akbar, under whose
6 benign rule the people enjoyed safety and prosperity, and were
7 looked after with paternal care by their rulers, the hand of him who
8 is always fed by another gradually loses the power of taking the
9 food to his mouth. His power of self-preservation can never become
10 fully manifest who is always protected in every respect by another.
11 Even the strongest youth remains but a child if he is always looked
12 after as a child by his parents. Being always governed by kings of
13 godlike nature, to whom is left the whole duty of protecting and
14 providing for the people, they can never get any occasion for
15 understanding the principles of self-government. Such a nation,
16 being entirely dependent on the king for everything and never
17 caring to exert itself for the common good or for self-defence,
18 becomes gradually destitute of inherent energy and strength. If this
19 state of dependence and protection continues long, it becomes the
20 cause of the destruction of the nation, and its ruin is not far to seek.

21 Of course, it can be reasonably concluded that, when the
22 government of a country is guided by codes of laws enjoined by
23 Shastras which are the outcome of knowledge inspired by the
24 divine genius of great sages, such a government must lead to the
25 unbroken welfare of the rich and the poor, the wise and the
26 ignorant, the king and the subjects alike. But we have seen already
27 how far the operation of those laws was, or may be, possible in
28 practical life. The voice of the ruled in the government of their
29 land--which is the watchword of the modern Western world, and of
30 which the last expression has been echoed with a thundering voice
31 in the Declaration of the American Government, in the words, "That
32 the government of the people of this country must be by the people
33 and for the good of the people"--cannot however be said to have
34 been totally unrecognised in ancient India. The Greek travellers and
35 others saw many independent small States scattered all over this
36 country, and references are also found to this effect in many places
37 of the Buddhistic literature. And there cannot be the least doubt
38 about it that the germ of self-government was at least present in
39 the shape of the village Panchayat,³³ which is still to be found in
40 existence in many places of India. But the germ remained for ever
41 the germ; the seed though put in the ground never grew into a tree.
42 This idea of self-government never passed beyond the embryo state

1 seraglio, and died of consumption due to excessive indulgence.
2

3 ³² ?The great king Asoka was at first called Chandashoka, i.e., Fierce Asoka,
4 because of his ascending the throne by killing his brother and his other cruel
5 deeds. After nine years of reign he became a convert to Buddhism, and his
6 character underwent a complete transformation; he was thenceforth known for his
7 good deeds by the name of Dharmashoka, Virtuous Asoka.
8

9 ³³ ?Literally, "government by five", in which the village-men sit together and
10 decide, among themselves, all disputes.
11

1 of the village Panchayat system and never spread into society at
2 large.

3 In the religious communities, among Sannyasins in the
4 Buddhist monasteries, we have ample evidence to show that self-
5 government was fully developed. Even now, one wonders to see
6 how the power of the Panchayat system, of the principles of self-
7 government, is working amongst the Naga Sannyasins--what deep
8 respect the "Government by the Five" commands from them, what
9 effective individual rights each Naga can exercise within his own
10 sect, what excellent working of the power of organisation and
11 concerted action they have among themselves!

12 With the deluge which swept the land at the advent of
13 Buddhism, the priestly power fell into decay and the royal power
14 was in the ascendant. Buddhist priests are renouncers of the world,
15 living in monasteries as homeless ascetics, unconcerned with
16 secular affairs. They have neither the will nor the endeavour to
17 bring and keep the royal power under their control through the
18 threat of curses or magic arrows. Even if there were any remnant of
19 such a will, its fulfillment has now become an impossibility. For
20 Buddhism has shaken the thrones of all the oblation-eating gods
21 and brought them down from their heavenly positions. The state of
22 being a Buddha is superior to the heavenly positions of many a
23 Brahma or an Indra, who vie with each other in offering their
24 worship at the feet of the Buddha, the God-man! And to this
25 Buddhahood, every man has the privilege to attain; it is open to all
26 even in this life. From the descent of the gods, as a natural
27 consequence, the superiority of the priests who were supported by
28 them is gone.

29 Accordingly, the reins of that mighty sacrificial horse--the
30 royal power--are no longer held in the firm grasp of the Vedic
31 priest; and being now free, it can roam anywhere by its unbridled
32 will. The centre of power in this period is neither with the priests
33 chanting the Sama hymns and performing the Yajnas according to
34 the Yajur-Veda; nor is the power vested in the hands of Kshatriya
35 kings separated from each other and ruling over small independent
36 States. But the centre of power in this age is in emperors whose
37 unobstructed sway extend over vast areas bounded by the ocean,
38 covering the whole of India from one end to the other. The leaders
39 of this age are no longer Vishvamitra or Vasishtha, but emperors
40 like Chandragupta, Dharmashoka, and others. There never were
41 emperors who ascended the throne of India and led her to the
42 pinnacle of her glory such as those lords of the earth who ruled
43 over her in paramount sway during the Buddhistic period. The end
44 of this period is characterised by the appearance of Rajput power
45 on the scene and the rise of modern Hinduism. With the rise of
46 Rajput power, on the decline of Buddhism, the sceptre of the Indian
47 empire, dislodged from its paramount power, was again broken into
48 a thousand pieces and wielded by small powerless hands. At this
49 time, the Brahminical (priestly) power again succeeded in raising
50 its head, not as an adversary as before, but this time as an auxiliary
51 to the royal supremacy.

52 During this revolution, that perpetual struggle for

1 supremacy between the priestly and the royal classes, which began
2 from the Vedic times and continued through ages till it reached its
3 climax at the time of the Jain and Buddhist revolutions, has ceased
4 for ever. Now these two mighty powers are friendly to each other;
5 but neither is there any more that glorious Kshatra (warlike) valour
6 of the kings, nor that spiritual brilliance which characterised the
7 Brahmins; each has lost his former intrinsic strength. As might be
8 expected, this new union of the two forces was soon engaged in the
9 satisfaction of mutual self-interests, and became dissipated by
10 spending its vitality on extirpating their common opponents,
11 especially the Buddhists of the time, and on similar other deeds.
12 Being steeped in all the vices consequent on such a union, e.g., the
13 sucking of the blood of the masses, taking revenge on the enemy,
14 spoliation of others' property, etc., they in vain tried to imitate the
15 Rajasuya and other Vedic sacrifices of the ancient kings, and only
16 made a ridiculous farce of them. The result was that they were
17 bound hand and foot by a formidable train of sycophantic
18 attendance and its obsequious flatteries, and being entangled in an
19 interminable net of rites and ceremonies with flourishes of Mantras
20 and the like, they soon become a cheap and ready prey to the
21 Mohammedan invaders from the West.

22 That priestly power which began its strife for superiority
23 with the royal power from the Vedic times and continued it down
24 the ages, that hostility against the Kshatra power, Bhagavan Shri
25 Krishna succeeded by his superhuman genius in putting a stop to,
26 at least for the time being, during his earthly existence. That
27 Brahmanya power was almost effaced from its field of work in India
28 during the Jain and Buddhist revolutions, or, perhaps, was holding
29 its feeble stand by being subservient to the strong antagonist
30 religions. That Brahmanya power, since the appearance of Rajput
31 power, which held sway over India under the Mihira dynasty and
32 others, made its last effort to recover its lost greatness; and in its
33 effort to establish that supremacy, it sold itself at the feet of the
34 fierce hordes of barbarians newly come from Central Asia, and to
35 win their pleasure introduced in the land their hateful manners and
36 customs. Moreover, it, the Brahmanya power, solely devoting itself
37 to the easy means to dupe ignorant barbarians, brought into vogue
38 mysterious rites and ceremonies backed by its new Mantras and
39 the like; and in doing so, itself lost its former wisdom, its former
40 vigour and vitality, and its own chaste habits of long acquirement.
41 Thus is turned the whole Aryavarta into a deep and vast whirlpool
42 of the most vicious, the most horrible, the most abominable,
43 barbarous customs; and as the inevitable consequence of
44 countenancing these detestable customs and superstitions, it soon
45 lost all its own internal strength and stamina and became the
46 weakest of the weak. What wonder that it should be broken into a
47 thousand pieces and fall at the mere touch of the storm of
48 Mussulman invasions from the West! That great Brahmanya power
49 fell--who knows, if ever to rise again?

50 The resuscitation of the priestly power under the Mussalman
51 rule was, on the other hand, an utter impossibility. The Prophet
52 Mohammed himself was dead against the priestly class in any

1 shape and tried his best for the total destruction of this power by
2 formulating rules and injunctions to that effect. Under the
3 Mussalman rule, the king himself was the supreme priest; he was
4 the chief guide in religious matters; and when he became the
5 emperor, he cherished the hope of being the paramount leader in
6 all matters over the whole Mussulman world. To the Mussulman,
7 the Jews or the Christians are not objects of extreme detestation;
8 they are, at the worst, men of little faith. But not so the Hindu.
9 According to him, the Hindu is idolatrous, the hateful Kafir; hence
10 in this life he deserves to be butchered; and in the next, eternal hell
11 is in store for him. The utmost the Mussulman kings could do as a
12 favour to the priestly class--the spiritual guides of these Kafirs--was
13 to allow them somehow to pass their life silently and wait for the
14 last moment. This was again sometimes considered too much
15 kindness! If the religious ardour of any king was a little more
16 uncommon, there would immediately follow arrangements for a
17 great Yajna by way of Kafir-slaughter!

18 On one side, the royal power is now centred in kings
19 professing a different religion and given to different customs. On
20 the other, the priestly power has been entirely displaced from its
21 influential position as the controller and lawgiver of the society. The
22 Koran and its code of laws have taken the place of the Dharma
23 Shastras of Manu and others. The Sanskrit language has made
24 room for the Persian and the Arabic. The Sanskrit language has to
25 remain confined only to the purely religious writings and religious
26 matters of the conquered and detested Hindu, and, as such, has
27 since been living a precarious life at the hands of the neglected
28 priest. The priest himself, the relic of Brahmanya power, fell back
29 upon the last resource of conducting only the comparatively
30 unimportant family ceremonies, such as the matrimonial etc., and
31 that also only so long and as much as the mercy of the
32 Mohammedan rulers permitted.

33 In the Vedic and the adjoining periods, the royal power could
34 not manifest itself on account of the grinding pressure of the
35 priestly power. We have seen how, during the Buddhistic revolution,
36 resulting in the fall of the Brahminical supremacy, the royal power
37 in India reached its culminating point. In the interval between the
38 fall of the Buddhistic and the establishment of the Mohammedan
39 empire, we have seen how the royal power was trying to raise its
40 head through the Rajputs in India, and how it failed in its attempt.
41 At the root of this failure, too, could be traced the same old
42 endeavours of the Vedic priestly class to bring back and revive with
43 a new life their original (ritualistic) days.

44 Crushing the Brahminical supremacy under his feet, the
45 Mussulman king was able to restore to a considerable extent the
46 lost glories of such dynasties of emperors as the Maurya, the
47 Gupta, the Andhra, and the Kshatrapa.³⁴

48 Thus the priestly power--which sages like Kumarila,
49 Shankara, and Ramanuja tried to re-establish, which for some time

1 ³⁴ ?The Persian governors of Aryavarta and Gujarat.
2

1 was supported by the sword of the Rajput power, and which tried to
2 rebuild its structure on the fall of its Jain and Buddhist adversaries--
3 was under Mohammedan rule laid to sleep for ever, knowing no
4 awakening. In this period, the antagonism or warfare is not
5 between kings and priests, but between kings and kings. At the end
6 of this period, when Hindu power again raised its head, and, to
7 some extent, was successful in regenerating Hinduism through the
8 Mahrattas and the Sikhs, we do not find much play of the priestly
9 power with these regenerations. On the contrary, when the Sikhs
10 admitted any Brahmin into their sect, they, at first, compelled him
11 publicly to give up his previous Brahminical signs and adopt the
12 recognised signs of their own religion.

13 In this manner, after an age-long play of action and reaction
14 between these two forces, the final victory of the royal power was
15 echoed on the soil of India for several centuries, in the name of
16 foreign monarchs professing an entirely different religion from the
17 faith of the land. But at the end of this Mohammedan period,
18 another entirely new power made its appearance on the arena and
19 slowly began to assert its prowess in the affairs of the Indian world.

20 This power is so new, its nature and workings are so foreign
21 to the Indian mind, its rise so inconceivable, and its vigour so
22 insuperable that though it wields the suzerain power up till now,
23 only a handful of Indians understand what this power is.

24 We are talking of the occupation of India by England.

25 From very ancient times, the fame of India's vast wealth and
26 her rich granaries has enkindled in many powerful foreign nations
27 the desire for conquering her. She has been, in fact, again and
28 again conquered by foreign nations. Then why should we say that
29 the occupation of India by England was something new and foreign
30 to the Indian mind?

31 From time immemorial Indians have seen the mightiest royal
32 power tremble before the frown of the ascetic priest, devoid of
33 worldly desire, armed with spiritual strength--the power of Mantras
34 (sacred formulas) and religious lore--and the weapon of curses.
35 They have also seen the subject people silently obey the commands
36 of their heroic all-powerful suzerains, backed by their arms and
37 armies, like a flock of sheep before a lion. But that a handful of
38 Vaishyas (traders) who, despite their great wealth, have ever
39 crouched awestricken not only before the king but also before any
40 member of the royal family, would unite, cross for purposes of
41 business rivers and seas, would, solely by virtue of their intelligence
42 and wealth, by degrees make puppets of the long-established Hindu
43 and Mohammedan dynasties; not only so, but that they would buy
44 as well the services of the ruling powers of their own country and
45 use their valour and learning as powerful instruments for the influx
46 of their own riches--this is a spectacle entirely novel to the Indians,
47 as also the spectacle that the descendants of the mighty nobility of
48 a country, of which a proud lord, sketched by the extraordinary pen
49 of its great poet, says to a common man, "Out, dunghill! darest thou
50 brave a nobleman?" would, in no distant future, consider it the
51 zenith of human ambition to be sent to India as obedient servants of

1 a body of merchants, called The East India Company--such a sight
2 was, indeed, a novelty unseen by India before!

3 According to the prevalence, in greater or lesser degree, of
4 the three qualities of Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas in man, the four
5 castes, the Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra, are
6 everywhere present at all times, in all civilised societies. By the
7 mighty hand of time, their number and power also vary at different
8 times in regard to different countries. In some countries the
9 numerical strength or influence of one of these castes may
10 preponderate over another; at some period, one of the classes may
11 be more powerful than the rest. But from a careful study of the
12 history of the world, it appears that in conformity to the law of
13 nature the four castes, the Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra
14 do, in every society, one after another in succession, govern the
15 world.

16 Among the Chinese, the Sumerians, the Babylonians, the
17 Egyptians, the Chaldeans, the Aryas, the Iranians, the Jews, the
18 Arabs--among all these ancient nations, the supreme power of
19 guiding society is, in the first period of their history, in the hands of
20 the Brahmin or the priest. In the second period, the ruling power is
21 the Kshatriya, that is, either absolute monarchy or oligarchical
22 government by a chosen body of men. Among the modern Western
23 nations, with England at their head, this power of controlling
24 society has been, for the first time, in the hands of the Vaishyas or
25 mercantile communities, made rich through the carrying on of
26 commerce.

27 Though Troy and Carthage of ancient times and Venice and
28 similar other small commercial States of comparatively modern
29 times became highly powerful, yet, amongst them, there was not
30 the real rising of the Vaishya power in the proper sense of the term.

31 Correctly speaking, the descendants of the royal family had
32 the sole monopoly of the commerce of those old days by employing
33 the common people and their servants under them to carry on the
34 trade; and they appropriated to themselves the profits accruing
35 from it. Excepting these few men, no one was allowed to take any
36 part or voice an opinion even in the government of the country and
37 kindred affairs. In the oldest countries like Egypt, the priestly
38 power enjoyed unmolested supremacy for a short period, after
39 which it became subjugated to the royal power and lived as an
40 auxiliary to it. In China, the royal power, centralised by the genius
41 of Confucius, has been controlling and guiding the priestly power,
42 in accordance with its absolute will, for more than twenty-five
43 centuries; and during the last two centuries, the all-absorbing
44 Lamas of Tibet, though they are the spiritual guides of the royal
45 family, have been compelled to pass their days, being subject in
46 every way to the Chinese Emperor.

47 In India, the royal power succeeded in conquering the
48 priestly power and declaring its untrammelled authority long after
49 the other ancient civilised nations had done so; and therefore the
50 inauguration of the Indian Empire came about long after the
51 Chinese, Egyptian, Babylonian, and other Empires had risen. It was

1 only with the Jewish people that the royal power, though it tried
2 hard to establish its supremacy over the priestly, had to meet a
3 complete defeat in the attempt. Not even the Vaishyas attained the
4 ruling power with the Jews. On the other hand, the common subject
5 people, trying to free themselves from the shackles of priestcraft,
6 were crushed to death under the internal commotion of adverse
7 religious movements like Christianity and the external pressure of
8 the mighty Roman Empire.

9 As in the ancient days the priestly power, in spite of its long-
10 continued struggle, was subdued by the more powerful royal power,
11 so, in modern times, before the violent blow of the newly-risen
12 Vaishya power, many a kingly crown has to kiss the ground, many a
13 sceptre is for ever broken to pieces. Only those few thrones which
14 are allowed still to exercise some power in some of the civilised
15 countries and make a display of their royal pomp and grandeur are
16 all maintained solely by the vast hordes of wealth of these Vaishya
17 communities--the dealers in salt, oil, sugar, and wine--and kept up
18 as a magnificent and an imposing front, and as a means of
19 glorification to the really governing body behind, the Vaishyas.

20 That mighty newly-risen Vaishya power--at whose command,
21 electricity carries messages in an instant from one pole to another,
22 whose highway is the vast ocean, with its mountain-high waves, at
23 whose instance, commodities are being carried with the greatest
24 ease from one part of the globe to another, and at whose mandate,
25 even the greatest monarchs tremble--on the white foamy crest of
26 that huge wave the all-conquering Vaishya power, is installed the
27 majestic throne of England in all its grandeur.

28 Therefore the conquest of India by England is not a conquest
29 by Jesus or the Bible as we are often asked to believe. Neither is it
30 like the conquest of India by the Moguls and the Pathans. But
31 behind the name of the Lord Jesus, the Bible, the magnificent
32 palaces, the heavy tramp of the feet of armies consisting of
33 elephants, chariots, cavalry, and infantry, shaking the earth, the
34 sounds of war trumpets, bugles, and drums, and the splendid
35 display of the royal throne, behind all these, there is always the
36 virtual presence of England--that England whose warflag is the
37 factory chimney, whose troops are the merchant-men, whose
38 battlefields are the market-places of the world, and whose Empress
39 is the shining Goddess of Fortune herself! It is on this account I
40 have said before that it is indeed an unseen novelty, this conquest
41 of India by England. What new revolution will be effected in India
42 by her clash with the new giant power, and as the result of that
43 revolution what new transformation is in store for future India,
44 cannot be inferred from her past history.

45 I have stated previously that the four castes, Brahmin,
46 Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra do, in succession, rule the world.
47 During the period of supreme authority exercised by each of these
48 castes, some acts are accomplished which conduce to the welfare of
49 the people, while others are injurious to them.

50 The foundation of the priestly power rests on intellectual
51 strength, and not on the physical strength of arms. Therefore, with

1 the supremacy of the priestly power, there is a great prevalence of
2 intellectual and literary culture. Every human heart is always
3 anxious for communication with, and help from, the supersensuous
4 spiritual world. The entrance to that world is not possible for the
5 generality of mankind; only a few great souls who can acquire a
6 perfect control over their sense-organs and who are possessed with
7 a nature preponderating with the essence of Sattva Guna are able
8 to pierce the formidable wall of matter and come face to face, as it
9 were, with the supersensuous--it is only they who know the
10 workings of the kingdom that bring the messages from it and show
11 the way to others. These great souls are the priests, the primitive
12 guides, leaders, and movers of human societies.

13 The priest knows the gods and communicates with them; he
14 is therefore worshipped as a god. Leaving behind the thoughts of
15 the world, he has no longer to devote himself to the earning of his
16 bread by the sweat of his brow. The best and foremost parts of all
17 food and drink are due as offerings to the gods; and of these gods,
18 the visible proxies on earth are the priests. It is through their
19 mouths that they partake of the offerings. Knowingly or
20 unknowingly, society gives the priest abundant leisure, and he can
21 therefore get the opportunity of being meditative and of thinking
22 higher thoughts. Hence the development of wisdom and learning
23 originates first with the supremacy of the priestly power. There
24 stands the priest between the dreadful lion--the king--on the one
25 hand, and the terrified flock of sheep--the subject people--on the
26 other. The destructive leap of the lion is checked by the controlling
27 rod of spiritual power in the hands of the priest. The flame of the
28 despotic will of the king, maddened in the pride of his wealth and
29 men, is able to burn into ashes everything that comes in his way;
30 but it is only a word from the priest, who has neither wealth nor
31 men behind him but whose sole strength is his spiritual power, that
32 can quench the despotic royal will, as water the fire.

33 With the ascendancy of the priestly supremacy are seen the
34 first advent of civilisation, the first victory of the divine nature over
35 the animal, the first mastery of spirit over matter, and the first
36 manifestation of the divine power which is potentially present in
37 this very slave of nature, this lump of flesh, to wit, the human body.
38 The priest is the first discriminator of spirit from matter, the first to
39 help to bring this world in communion with the next, the first
40 messenger from the gods to man, and the intervening bridge that
41 connects the king with his subjects. The first offshoot of universal
42 welfare and good is nursed by his spiritual power, by his devotion to
43 learning and wisdom, by his renunciation, the watchword of his life
44 and, watered even by the flow of his own life-blood. It is therefore
45 that in every land it was he to whom the first and foremost worship
46 was offered. It is therefore that even his memory is sacred to us!

47 There are evils as well. With the growth of life is sown
48 simultaneously the seed of death. Darkness and light always go
49 together. Indeed, there are great evils which, if not checked in
50 proper time, lead to the ruin of society. The play of power through
51 gross matter is universally experienced; everyone sees, everyone
52 understands, the mighty manifestation of gross material force as

1 displayed in the play of battle-axes and swords, or in the burning
2 properties of fire and lightning. Nobody doubts these things, nor
3 can there ever be any question about their genuineness. But where
4 the repository of power and the centre of its play are wholly mental,
5 where the power is confined to certain special words, to certain
6 special modes of uttering them, to the mental repetition of certain
7 mysterious syllables, or to other similar processes and applications
8 of the mind, there light is mixed with shade, there the ebb and flow
9 naturally disturb the otherwise unshaken faith, and there even
10 when things are actually seen or directly perceived, still sometimes
11 doubts arise as to their real occurrence. Where distress, fear, anger,
12 malice, spirit of retaliation, and the like passions of man, leaving
13 the palpable force of arms, leaving the gross material methods to
14 gain the end in view which every one can understand, substitute in
15 their stead the mysterious mental processes like Stambhana,
16 Uchchatana, Vashikarana, and Marana³⁵ for their fructification--
17 there a cloud of smoky indistinctness, as it were, naturally envelops
18 the mental atmosphere of these men who often live and move in
19 such hazy worlds of obscure mysticism. No straight line of action
20 presents itself before such a mind; even if it does, the mind distorts
21 it into crookedness. The final result of all this is insincerity--that
22 very limited narrowness of the heart--and above all, the most fatal
23 is the extreme intolerance born of malicious envy at the superior
24 excellence of another.

25 The priest naturally says to himself: "Why should I part with
26 the power that has made the Devas subservient to me, has given
27 me mastery over physical and mental illnesses, and has gained for
28 me the service of ghosts, demons, and other unseen spirits? I have
29 dearly bought this power by the price of extreme renunciation. Why
30 should I give to others that to get which I had to give up my wealth,
31 name, fame, in sort, all my earthly comforts and happiness?" Again,
32 that power is entirely mental. And how many opportunities are
33 there of keeping it a perfect secret! Entangled in this wheel of
34 circumstances, human nature becomes what it inevitably would:
35 being used to practise constant self-concealment, it becomes a
36 victim of extreme selfishness and hypocrisy, and at last succumbs to
37 the poisonous consequences which they bring in their train. In time,
38 the reaction of this very desire to concealment rebounds upon
39 oneself. All knowledge, all wisdom is almost lost for want of proper
40 exercise and diffusion, and what little remains is thought to have
41 been obtained from some supernatural source; and, therefore, far
42 from making fresh efforts to go in for originality and gain
43 knowledge of new sciences, it is considered useless and futile to
44 attempt even to improve the remnants of the old by cleansing them
45 of their corruptions. Thus lost to former wisdom, the former
46 indomitable spirit of self-reliance, the priest, now glorifying himself
47 merely in the name of his forefathers, vainly struggles to preserve
48 untarnished for himself the same glory, the same privilege, the
49 same veneration, and the same supremacy as was enjoyed by his

1 ³⁵ ?Suppression of any bodily faculty, thereby causing a person's ruin,
2 removing him from a position, subduing and getting mastery over him, and killing
3 him by means of magical incantations.
4

1 great forefathers. Consequently, his violent collision with the other
2 castes.

3 According to the law of nature, wherever there is an
4 awakening of a new and stronger life, there it tries to conquer and
5 take the place of the old and the decaying. Nature favours the dying
6 out of the unfit and the survival of the fittest. The final result of
7 such conflict between the priestly and the other classes has been
8 mentioned already.

9 That renunciation, self-control, and asceticism of the priest
10 which during the period of his ascendancy were devoted to the
11 pursuance of earnest researches of truth are on the eve of his
12 decline employed anew and spent solely in the accumulation of
13 objects of self-gratification and in the extension of privileged
14 superiority over others. That power, the centralisation of which in
15 himself gave him all honour and worship, has now been dragged
16 down from its high heavenly position to the lowest abyss of hell.
17 Having lost sight of the goal, drifting aimless, the priestly power is
18 entangled, like the spider, in the web spun by itself. The chain that
19 has been forged from generation to generation with the greatest
20 care to be put on others' feet is now tightened round its own in a
21 thousand coils, and is thwarting its own movement in hundreds of
22 ways. Caught in the endless thread of the net of infinite rites,
23 ceremonies, and customs, which it spread on all sides as external
24 means for purification of the body and the mind with a view to
25 keeping society in the iron grasp of these innumerable bonds--the
26 priestly power, thus hopelessly entangled from head to foot, is now
27 asleep in despair! There is no escaping out of it now. Tear the net,
28 and the priesthood of the priest is shaken to its foundation! There is
29 implanted in every man, naturally, a strong desire for progress; and
30 those who, finding that the fulfillment of this desire is an
31 impossibility so long as one is trammelled in the shackles of
32 priesthood, rend this net and take to the profession of other castes
33 in order to earn money thereby--them, the society immediately
34 dispossesses of their priestly rights. Society has no faith in the
35 Brahminhood of the so-called Brahmins who, instead of keeping the
36 Shikha,³⁶ part their hair, who, giving up their ancient habits and
37 ancestral customs, clothe themselves in semi-European dress and
38 adopt the newly introduced usages from the West in a hybrid
39 fashion. Again, in those parts of India, wherever this new-comer,
40 the English Government, is introducing new modes of education
41 and opening up new channels for the coming in of wealth, there
42 hosts of Brahmin youths are giving up their hereditary priestly
43 profession and trying to earn their livelihood and become rich by
44 adopting the callings of other castes, with the result that the habits
45 and customs of the priestly class, handed down from their distant
46 forefathers, are scattered to the winds and are fast disappearing
47 from the land.

48 In Gujarat, each secondary sect of the Brahmins is divided
49 into two subdivisions, one being those who still stick to the priestly

1 ³⁶ ?The sacred tuft or lock of hair left on the crown of the head at
2 tonsure.
3

1 profession, while the other lives by other professions. There only
2 the first subdivisions, carrying on the priestly profession, are called
3 "Brahmanas", and though the other subdivisions are by lineage
4 descendants from Brahmin fathers, yet the former do not link
5 themselves in matrimonial relation with the latter. For example, by
6 the name of "Nagara Brahmana" are meant only those Brahmins
7 who are priests living on alms; and by the name "Nagara" only are
8 meant those Brahmins who have accepted service under the
9 Government, or those who have been carrying on the Vaishya's
10 profession. But it appears that such distinctions will not long
11 continue in these days in Gujarat. Even the sons of the "Nagara
12 Brahmanas" are nowadays getting English education, and entering
13 into Government service, or adopting some mercantile business.
14 Even orthodox Pandits of the old school, undergoing pecuniary
15 difficulties, are sending their sons to the colleges of the English
16 universities or making them choose the callings of Vaidyas,
17 Kayasthas, and other non-Brahmin castes. If the current of affairs
18 goes on running in this course, then it is a question of most serious
19 reflection, no doubt, how long more will the priestly class continue
20 on India's soil. Those who lay the fault of attempting to bring down
21 the supremacy of the priestly class at the door of any particular
22 person or body of persons other than themselves ought to know
23 that, in obedience to the inevitable law of nature, the Brahmin caste
24 is erecting with its own hands its own sepulchre; and this is what
25 ought to be. It is good and appropriate that every caste of high birth
26 and privileged nobility should make it its principal duty to raise its
27 own funeral pyre with its own hands. Accumulation of power is as
28 necessary as its diffusion, or rather more so. The accumulation of
29 blood in the heart is an indispensable condition for life; its non-
30 circulation throughout the body means death. For the welfare of
31 society, it is absolutely necessary at certain times to have all
32 knowledge and power concentrated in certain families or castes to
33 the exclusion of others, but that concentrated power is focused for
34 the time being, only to be scattered broadcast over the whole of
35 society in future. If this diffusion be withheld, the destruction of
36 that society is, without doubt, near at hand.

37 On the other side, the king is like the lion; in him are present
38 both the good and evil propensities of the lord of beasts. Never for
39 a moment his fierce nails are held back from tearing to pieces the
40 heart of innocent animals, living on herbs and grass, to allay his
41 thirst for blood when occasion arises; again, the poet says, though
42 himself stricken with old age and dying with hunger, the lion never
43 kills the weakest fox that throws itself in his arms for protection. If
44 the subject classes, for a moment, stand as impediments in the way
45 of the gratification of the senses of the royal lion, their death knell
46 is inevitably tolled; if they humbly bow down to his commands, they
47 are perfectly safe. Not only so. Not to speak of ancient days, even in
48 modern times, no society can be found in any country where the
49 effectiveness of individual self-sacrifice for the good of the many
50 and of the oneness of purpose and endeavour actuating every
51 member of the society for the common good of the whole have been
52 fully realised. Hence the necessity of the kings who are the
53 creations of the society itself. They are the centres where all the

1 forces of society, otherwise loosely scattered about, are made to
2 converge, and from which they start and course through the body
3 politic and animate society.

4 As during the Brahminical supremacy, at the first stage is
5 the awakening of the first impulse for search after knowledge, and
6 later the continual and careful fostering of the growth of that
7 impulse still in its infancy--so, during the Kshatriya supremacy, a
8 strong desire for pleasure pursuits has made its appearance at the
9 first stage, and later have sprung up inventions and developments
10 of arts and sciences as the means for its gratification. Can the king,
11 in the height of his glory, hide his proud head within the lowly
12 cottages of the poor? Or can the common good of his subjects ever
13 minister to his royal appetite with satisfaction?

14 He whose dignity bears no comparison with anyone else on
15 earth, he who is divinity residing in the temple of the human body--
16 for the common man, to cast even a mere glance at his, the king's
17 objects of pleasure is a great sin; to think of ever possessing them
18 is quite out of the question. The body of the king is not like the
19 bodies of other people, it is too sacred to be polluted by any
20 contamination; in certain countries it is even believed never to
21 come under the sway of death. A halo of equal sacredness shines
22 around the queen, so she is scrupulously guarded from the gaze of
23 the common folk, not even the sun may cast a glance on her beauty!
24 Hence the rising of magnificent palaces to take the place of
25 thatched cottages. The sweet harmonious strain of artistic music,
26 flowing as it were from heaven, silenced the disorderly jargon of
27 the rabble. Delightful gardens, pleasant groves, beautiful galleries,
28 charming paintings, exquisite sculptures, fine and costly apparel
29 began to displace by gradual steps the natural beauties of rugged
30 woods and the rough and coarse dress of the simple rustic.
31 Thousands of intelligent men left the toilsome task of the
32 ploughman and turned their attention to the new field of fine arts,
33 where they could display the finer play of their intellect in less
34 laborious and easier ways. Villages lost their importance; cities rose
35 in their stead.

36 It was in India, again, that the kings, after having enjoyed
37 for some time earthly pleasures to their full satisfaction, were
38 stricken at the latter part of their lives with heavy world-weariness,
39 as is sure to follow on extreme sense-gratification; and thus being
40 satiated with worldly pleasures, they retired at their old age into
41 secluded forests, and there began to contemplate the deep
42 problems of life. The results of such renunciation and deep
43 meditation were marked by a strong dislike for cumbrous rites and
44 ceremonials and an extreme devotion to the highest spiritual truths
45 which we find embodied in the Upanishads, the Gita, and the Jain
46 and the Buddhist scriptures. Here also was a great conflict between
47 the priestly and the royal powers. Disappearance of the elaborate
48 rites and ceremonials meant a death-blow to the priest's profession.
49 Therefore, naturally, at all times and in every country, the priests
50 gird up their loins and try their best to preserve the ancient
51 customs and usages, while on the other side stand in opposition
52 kings like Janaka, backed by Kshatriya prowess as well as spiritual

1 power. We have dealt at length already on this bitter antagonism
2 between the two parties.

3 As the priest is busy about centralising all knowledge and
4 learning at a common centre, to wit, himself, so the king is ever up
5 and doing in collecting all the earthly powers and focusing them in
6 a central point, i.e. his own self. Of course, both are beneficial to
7 society. At one time they are both needed for the common good of
8 society, but that is only at its infant stage. But if attempts be made,
9 when society has passed its infant stage and reached its vigorous
10 youthful condition, to clothe it by force with the dress which suited
11 it in its infancy and keep it bound within narrow limits, then either
12 it bursts the bonds by virtue of its own strength and tries to
13 advance, or where it fails to do so, it retraces its footsteps and by
14 slow degrees returns to its primitive uncivilised condition.

15 Kings are like parents to their subjects, and the subjects are
16 the kings' children. The subjects should, in every respect, look up to
17 the king and stick to their king with unreserved obedience, and the
18 king should rule them with impartial justice and look to their
19 welfare and bear the same affection towards them as he would
20 towards his own children. But what rule applies to individual homes
21 applies to the whole society as well, for society is only the
22 aggregate of individual homes. "When the son attains the age of
23 sixteen, the father ought to deal with him as his friend and
24 equal"³⁷--if that is the rule, does not the infant society ever attain
25 that age of sixteen? It is the evidence of history that at a certain
26 time every society attains its manhood, when a strong conflict
27 ensues between the ruling power and the common people. The life
28 of the society, its expansion and civilisation, depend on its victory or
29 defeat in this conflict.

30 Such changes, revolutionising society, have been happening
31 in India again and again, only in this country they have been
32 effected in the name of religion, for religion is the life of India,
33 religion is the language of this country, the symbol of all its
34 movements. The Charvaka, the Jain, the Buddhist, Shankara,
35 Ramanuja, Kabir, Nanak, Chaitanya, the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya
36 Samaj--of all these and similar other sects, the wave of religion,
37 foaming, thundering, surging, breaks in the front, while in the rear
38 follows the filling-up of social wants. If all desires can be
39 accomplished by the mere utterance of some meaningless syllables,
40 then who will exert himself and go through difficulties to work out
41 the fulfillment of his desires? If this malady enters into the entire
42 body of any social system, then that society becomes slothful and
43 indisposed to any exertion, and soon hastens to its ruin. Hence the
44 slashing sarcasm of the Charvakas, who believed only in the reality
45 of sense-perceptions and nothing beyond. What could have saved
46 Indian society from the ponderous burden of omnifarious ritualistic
47 ceremonialism, with its animal and other sacrifices, which all but

1 ³⁷ ?Taken from one of the well-known didactic verses of the statesman-Pandit,
2 Chanakya, which runs thus: "Let the father treat with tenderness the child till he is
3 five, let him (the father) reprove him (the child) for the next ten years; when the
4 son attains the age of sixteen, the father ought to deal with him as his friend."
5

1 crushed the very life out of it, except the Jain revolution which took
2 its strong stand exclusively on chaste morals and philosophical
3 truth? Or without the Buddhist revolution what would have
4 delivered the suffering millions of the lower classes from the violent
5 tyrannies of the influential higher castes? When, in course of time,
6 Buddhism declined and its extremely pure and moral character
7 gave place to equally bad, unclean, and immoral practices, when
8 Indian society trembled under the infernal dance of the various
9 races of barbarians who were allowed into the Buddhistic fold by
10 virtue of its universal all-embracing spirit of equality—then
11 Shankara, and later Ramanuja, appeared on the scene and tried
12 their best to bring society back to its former days of glory and re-
13 establish its lost status. Again, it is an undoubted fact that if there
14 had not been the advent of Kabir, Nanak, and Chaitanya in the
15 Mohammedan period, and the establishment of the Brahmo Samaj
16 and the Arya Samaj in our own day, then, by this time, the
17 Mohammedans and the Christians would have far outnumbered the
18 Hindus of the present day in India.

19 What better material is there than nourishing food to build
20 up the body composed of various elements, and the mind which
21 sends out infinite waves of thought? But if that food which goes to
22 sustain the body and strengthen the mind is not properly
23 assimilated, and the natural functions of the body do not work
24 properly, then that very thing becomes the root of all evil.

25 The individual's life is in the life of the whole, the
26 individual's happiness is in the happiness of the whole; apart from
27 the whole, the individual's existence is inconceivable--this is an
28 eternal truth and is the bed-rock on which the universe is built. To
29 move slowly towards the infinite whole, bearing a constant feeling
30 of intense sympathy and sameness with it, being happy with its
31 happiness and being distressed in its affliction, is the individual's
32 sole duty. Not only is it his duty, but in its transgression is his death,
33 while compliance with this great truth leads to life immortal. This is
34 the law of nature, and who can throw dust into her ever-watchful
35 eyes? None can hoodwink society and deceive it for any length of
36 time. However much there may have accumulated heaps of refuse
37 and mud on the surface of society--still, at the bottom of those
38 heaps the life-breath of society is ever to be found pulsating with
39 the vibrations of universal love and self-denying compassion for all.
40 Society is like the earth that patiently bears incessant molestation;
41 but she wakes up one day, however long that may be in coming, and
42 the force of the shaking tremors of that awakening hurls off to a
43 distance the accumulated dirt of self-seeking meanness piled up
44 during millions of patient and silent years!

45 We ignore this sublime truth; and though we suffer a
46 thousand times for our folly, yet, in our absurd foolishness, impelled
47 by the brute in us, we do not believe in it. We try to deceive, but a
48 thousand times we find we are deceived ourselves, and yet we do
49 not desist! Mad that we are, we imagine we can impose on nature!
50 With our short-sighted vision we think ministering to the self at any
51 cost is the be-all and end-all of life.

52 Wisdom, knowledge, wealth, men, strength, prowess, and

1 whatever else nature gathers and provides us with, are all only for
2 diffusion, when the moment of need is at hand. We often forget this
3 fact, put the stamp of "*mine only*" upon the entrusted deposits, and
4 *pari passu*, we sow the seed of our own ruin!

5 The king, the centre of the forces of the aggregate of his
6 subjects, soon forgets that those forces are only stored with him so
7 that he may increase and give them back a thousandfold in their
8 potency, so that they may spread over the whole community for its
9 good. Attributing all Godship to himself, in his pride, like the king
10 Vena,³⁸ he looks upon other people as wretched specimens of
11 humanity who should grovel before him; any opposition to his will,
12 whether good or bad, is a great sin on the part of his subjects.
13 Hence oppression steps into the place of protection--sucking their
14 blood in place of preservation. If the society is weak and
15 debilitated, it silently suffers all ill-treatment at the hands of the
16 king, and as the natural consequence, both the king and his people
17 go down and down and fall into the most degraded state, and thus
18 become an easy prey to any nation stronger than themselves.
19 Where the society is healthy and strong, there soon follows a fierce
20 contest between the king and his subjects, and, by its reaction and
21 convulsion, are flung away the sceptre and the crown; and the
22 throne and the royal paraphernalia become like past curiosities
23 preserved in the museum galleries.

24 As the result of this contest--as its reaction--is the
25 appearance of the mighty power of the Vaishya, before whose angry
26 glance the crowned heads, the lords of heroes, tremble like an
27 aspen leaf on their thrones--whom the poor as well as the prince
28 humbly follow in vain expectation of the golden jar in his hands,
29 that like Tantalus's fruit always recedes from the grasp.

30 The Brahmin said, "Learning is the power of all powers; that
31 learning is dependent upon me, I possess that learning, so the
32 society must follow my bidding." For some days such was the case.
33 The Kshatriya said, "But for the power of my sword, where would
34 you be, O Brahmin, with all your power of lore? You would in no
35 time be wiped off the face of the earth. It is I alone that am the
36 superior." Out flew the flaming sword from the jingling scabbard--
37 society humbly recognised it with bended head. Even the
38 worshipper of learning was the first to turn into the worshipper of
39 the king. The Vaishya is saying, "You, madmen! what you call the
40 effulgent all-pervading deity is here, in my hand, the ever-shining
41 gold, the almighty sovereign. Behold, through its grace, I am also
42 equally all-powerful. O Brahmin! even now, I shall buy through its
43 grace all your wisdom, learning, prayers, and meditation. And, O
44 great king! your sword, arms, valour, and prowess will soon be
45 employed, through the grace of this, my gold, in carrying out my

1 ³⁸ His story occurs in the *Bhagavata*. The King Vena thought himself higher
2 than Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheshvara, and declared accordingly that all worship
3 should be offered to him. The Rishis once sought him and tried by good advice to
4 make him give up such egoism, but he in return insulted them and ordered them
5 to worship him, whereupon, it is said, he was destroyed by the fire of the anger of
6 the Rishis.
7

1 desired objects. Do you see those lofty and extensive mills? Those
2 are my hives. See, how, swarms of millions of bees, the Shudras,
3 are incessantly gathering honey for those hives. Do you know for
4 whom? For me, this me, who in due course of time will squeeze out
5 every drop of it for my own use and profit."

6 As during the supremacy of the Brahmin and the Kshatriya,
7 there is a centralisation of learning and advancement of civilisation,
8 so the result of the supremacy of the Vaishya is accumulation of
9 wealth. The power of the Vaishya lies in the possession of that coin,
10 the charm of whose clinking sound works with an irresistible
11 fascination on the minds of the four castes. The Vaishya is always in
12 fear lest the Brahmin swindles him out of this, his only possession,
13 and lest the Kshatriya usurps it by virtue of his superior strength of
14 arms. For self-preservation, the Vaishyas as a body are, therefore,
15 of one mind. The Vaishya commands the money; the exorbitant
16 interest that he can exact for its use by others, as with a lash in his
17 hand, is his powerful weapon which strikes terror in the heart of all.
18 By the power of his money, he is always busy curbing the royal
19 power. That the royal power may not anyhow stand in the way of
20 the inflow of his riches, the merchant is ever watchful. But, for all
21 that, he has never the least wish that the power should pass on
22 from the kingly to the Shudra class.

23 To what country does not the merchant go? Though himself
24 ignorant, he carries on his trade and transplants the learning,
25 wisdom, art, and science of one country to another. The wisdom,
26 civilisation, and arts that accumulated in the heart of the social
27 body during the Brahmin and the Kshatriya supremacies are being
28 diffused in all directions by the arteries of commerce to the
29 different market-places of the Vaishyas. But for the rising of this
30 Vaishya power, who would have carried today the culture, learning,
31 acquirements, and articles of food and luxury of one end of the
32 world to the other?

33 And where are they through whose physical labour only are
34 possible the influence of the Brahmin, the prowess of the Kshatriya,
35 and the fortune of the Vaishya? What is their history, who, being the
36 real body of society, are designated at all times in all countries as
37 "base-born"?--for whom kind India prescribed the mild
38 punishments, "Cut out his tongue, chop off his flesh", and others of
39 like nature, for such a grave offence as any attempt on their part to
40 gain a share of the knowledge and wisdom monopolised by her
41 higher classes--those "moving corpses" of India and the "beasts of
42 burden" of other countries--the Shudras, what is their lot in life?
43 What shall I say of India? Let alone her Shudra class, her Brahmins
44 to whom belonged the acquisition of scriptural knowledge are now
45 the foreign professors, her Kshatriyas the ruling Englishmen, and
46 Vaishyas, too, the English in whose bone and marrow is the instinct
47 of trade, so that, only the Shudra-ness--the beast-of-burdenness--is
48 now left with the Indians themselves.

49 A cloud of impenetrable darkness has at present equally
50 enveloped us all. Now there is neither firmness of purpose nor
51 boldness of enterprise, neither courage of heart nor strength of
52 mind, neither aversion to maltreatments by others nor dislike for

1 slavery, neither love in the heart nor hope nor manliness; but what
2 we have in India are only deep-rooted envy and strong antipathy
3 against one another, morbid desire to ruin by hook or by crook the
4 weak, and to lick dog-like the feet of the strong. Now the highest
5 satisfaction consists in the display of wealth and power, devotion in
6 self-gratification, wisdom in the accumulation of transitory objects,
7 Yoga in hideous diabolical practices, work in the slavery of others,
8 civilisation in base imitation of foreign nations, eloquence in the use
9 of abusive language, the merit of literature in extravagant flatteries
10 of the rich or in the diffusion of ghastly obscenities! What to speak
11 separately of the distinct Shudra class of such a land, where the
12 whole population has virtually come down to the level of the
13 Shudra? The Shudras of countries other than India have become, it
14 seems, a little awake; but they are wanting in proper education and
15 have only the mutual hatred of men of their own class--a trait
16 common to Shudras. What avails it if they greatly outnumber the
17 other classes? That unity, by which ten men collect the strength of a
18 million, is yet far away from the Shudra; hence, according to the
19 law of nature, the Shudras invariably form the subject race.

20 But there is hope. In the mighty course of time, the Brahmin
21 and the other higher castes, too, are being brought down to the
22 lower status of the Shudras, and the Shudras are being raised to
23 higher ranks. Europe, once the land of Shudras enslaved by Rome,
24 is now filled with Kshatriya valour. Even before our eyes, powerful
25 China, with fast strides, is going down to Shudra-hood, while
26 insignificant Japan, rising with the sudden start of a rocket, is
27 throwing off her Shudra nature and is invading by degrees the
28 rights of the higher castes. The attaining of modern Greece and
29 Italy to Kshatriya-hood and the decline of Turkey, Spain, and other
30 countries, also, deserve consideration here.

31 Yet, a time will come when there will be the rising of the
32 Shudra class, *with their Shudra-hood*; that is to say, not like that as
33 at present when the Shudras are becoming great by acquiring the
34 characteristic qualities of the Vaishya or the Kshatriya, but a time
35 will come when the Shudras of every country, with their inborn
36 Shudra nature and habits--not becoming in essence Vaishya or
37 Kshatriya, but remaining as Shudras--will gain absolute supremacy
38 in every society. The first glow of the dawn of this new power has
39 already begun to break slowly upon the Western world, and the
40 thoughtful are at their wits' end to reflect upon the final issue of
41 this fresh phenomenon. Socialism, Anarchism, Nihilism,³⁹ and other
42 like sects are the vanguard of the social revolution that is to follow.
43 As the result of grinding pressure and tyranny, from time out of
44 mind, the Shudras, as a rule, are either meanly servile, licking dog-
45 like the feet of the higher class, or otherwise are as inhuman as
46 brute beasts. Again, at all times their hopes and aspirations are
47 baffled; hence a firmness of purpose and perseverance in action
48 they have none.

49 In spite of the spread of education in the West, there is a

1 ³⁹ Socialism took its birth in 1835 A.D. The initiator of Anarchism was Bakunin,
2 who was born in 1814 A.D. Nihilism was first inaugurated in Russia in 1862.
3

great hindrance in the way of the rising of the Shudras class, and that is the recognition of caste as determined by the inherence of more or less good or bad qualities. By this very qualitative caste system which obtained in India in ancient days, the Shudra class was kept down, bound hand and foot. In the first place, scarcely any opportunity was given to the Shudra for the accumulation of wealth or the earning of proper knowledge and education; to add to this disadvantage, if ever a man of extraordinary parts and genius were born of the Shudra class, the influential higher sections of the society forthwith showered titular honours on him and lifted him up to their own circle. His wealth and the power of his wisdom were employed for the benefit of an alien caste--and his own caste-people reaped no benefits of his attainments; and not only so, the good-for-nothing people, the scum and refuse of the higher castes, were cast off and thrown into the Shudra class to swell their number. Vasishtha, Narada, Satyakama Jabala, Vyasa, Kripa, Drona, Karna, and others of questionable parentage⁴⁰ were raised to the position of a Brahmin or a Kshatriya, in virtue of their superior learning or valour; but it remains to be seen how the prostitute, maidservant, fisherman, or the charioteer⁴¹ class was benefited by these upliftings. Again, on the other hand, the fallen from the Brahmin, the Kshatriya, or the Vaishya class were always brought down to fill the ranks of the Shudras.

In modern India, no one born of Shudra parents, be he a millionaire or a great Pandit, has ever the right to leave his own society, with the result that the power of his wealth, intellect, or wisdom, remaining confined within his own caste limits, is being employed for the betterment of his own community. This hereditary caste system of India, being thus unable to overstep its own bounds, is slowly but surely conducing to the advancement of the people moving within the same circle. The improvement of the lower classes of India will go on, in this way, so long as India will be under a government dealing with its subjects irrespective of their caste and position.

Whether the leadership of society be in the hands of those who monopolise learning or wield the power of riches or arms, the

⁴⁰ ?(1)Vasishtha's father was Brahma and mother unknown. (2) Narada's mother was a maidservant and father unknown. (3) Satyakama Jabala's mother was a maidservant, by name Jabala, and father unknown. (4) Vyasa's father was a Brahmin sage, Parashara, and mother Matsyagandha, the virgin daughter of a fisherman. (5) Kripa's father was a Brahmin sage, Sharadvan Gautama, and the mother the goddess Janapadi. (6) Drona's father was the Brahmin sage, Bharadvaja, and mother the goddess Ghrithachi. (7) Karna's mother was Kunti, who conceived during her maidenhood, and father the god Sun. For detailed information vide the accounts of their births: for (1), see chapter 174, Adiparva, Mahabharata, or in Rigveda, 7, 33, 11-13; for (2) chapter 6, Skandha 1, *Srimad Bhagavata* ; for (3) section 4, Prapathaka iv, Chhandogya Upanishad; for (4), (5), (6) and (7), chapters 105, 130, 130 and 111, respectively of the Adiparva of the Mahabharata.

⁴¹ ?In her anxiety to save her reputation, Kunti threw the newborn child, Karna, into water. A charioteer found the child in this pitiable condition and adopted him as his son.

1 source of its power is always the subject masses. By so much as the
2 class in power severs itself from this source, by so much is it sure to
3 become weak. But such is the strange irony of fate, such is the
4 queer working of Maya, that they from whom this power is directly
5 or indirectly drawn, by fair means or foul--by deceit, stratagem,
6 force, or by voluntary gift--they soon cease to be taken into account
7 by the leading class. When in course of time, the priestly power
8 totally estranged itself from the subject masses, the real dynamo of
9 its power, it was overthrown by the then kingly power taking its
10 stand on the strength of the subject people; again, the kingly power,
11 judging itself to be perfectly independent, created a gaping chasm
12 between itself and the subject people, only to be itself destroyed or
13 become a mere puppet in the hands of the Vaishyas, who now
14 succeeded in securing a relatively greater co-operation of the mass
15 of the people. The Vaishyas have now gained their end; so they no
16 longer deign to count on help from the subject people and are
17 trying their best to dissociate themselves from them; consequently,
18 here is being sown the seed of the destruction of this power as well.

19 Though themselves the reservoir of all powers, the subject
20 masses, creating an eternal distance between one another, have
21 been deprived of all their legitimate rights; and they will remain so
22 as long as this sort of relation continues.

23 A common danger, or sometimes a common cause of hatred
24 or love, is the bond that binds people together. By the same law that
25 herds beasts of prey together, men also unite into a body and form a
26 caste or a nation of their own. Zealous love for one's own people
27 and country, showing itself in bitter hatred against another--as of
28 Greece against Persia, or Rome against Carthage, of the Arab
29 against the Kafir, of Spain against the Moor, of France against
30 Spain, of England and Germany against France, and of America
31 against England--is undoubtedly one of the main causes which lead
32 to the advancement of one nation over another, by way of uniting
33 itself in hostilities against another.

34 Self-love is the first teacher of self-renunciation. For the
35 preservation of the individual's interest only one looks first to the
36 well-being of the whole. In the interest of one's own nation is one's
37 own interest; in the well-being of one's own nation is one's own
38 well-being. Without the co-operation of the many, most words can
39 by no means go on--even self-defence becomes an impossibility. The
40 joining of friendly hands in mutual help for the protection of this
41 self-interest is seen in every nation, and in every land. Of course,
42 the circumference of this self-interest varies with different people.
43 To multiply and to have the opportunity of somehow dragging on a
44 precarious existence, and over and above this, the condition that
45 the religious pursuits of the higher castes may not suffer in any
46 way, is of the highest gain and interest for Indians! For modern
47 India, there is no better hope conceivable; this is the last rung of
48 the ladder of India's life!

49 The present government of India has certain evils attendant
50 on it, and there are some very great and good parts in it as well. Of
51 highest good is this, that after the fall of the Pataliputra Empire till
52 now, India was never under the guidance of such a powerful

1 machinery of government as the British, wielding the sceptre
2 throughout the length and breadth of the land. And under this
3 Vaishya supremacy, thanks to the strenuous enterprise natural to
4 the Vaishya, as the objects of commerce are being brought from one
5 end of the world to another, so at the same time, as its natural
6 sequence, the ideas and thoughts of different countries are forcing
7 their way into the very bone and marrow of India. Of these ideas
8 and thoughts, some are really most beneficial to her, some are
9 harmful, while others disclose the ignorance and inability of the
10 foreigners to determine what is truly good for the inhabitants of
11 this country.

12 But piercing through the mass of whatever good or evil
13 there may be is seen rising the sure emblem of India's future
14 prosperity--that as the result of the action and reaction between her
15 own old national ideals on the one hand, and the newly-introduced
16 strange ideals of foreign nations on the other, she is slowly and
17 gently awakening from her long deep sleep. Mistakes she will
18 make, let her: there is no harm in that; in all our actions, errors and
19 mistakes are our only teachers. Who commits mistakes, the path of
20 truth is attainable by him only. Trees never make mistakes, nor do
21 stones fall into error; animals are hardly seen to transgress the
22 fixed laws of nature; but man is prone to err, and it is man who
23 becomes God-on-earth. If our every movement from the nursery to
24 the death-bed, if our every thought from rising at day-break till
25 retirement at midnight, be prescribed and laid down for us in
26 minutest detail by others--and if the threat of the king's sword be
27 brought into requisition to keep us within the iron grasp of those
28 prescribed rules--then, what remains for us to think independently
29 for ourselves? What makes a man a genius, a sage? Isn't it because
30 he thinks, reasons, wills? Without exercise, the power of deep
31 thinking is lost. Tamas prevails, the mind gets dull and inert, the
32 spirit is brought down to the level of matter. Yet, even now, every
33 religious preacher, every social leader is anxious to frame new laws
34 and regulations for the guidance of society! Does the country stand
35 in want of rules? Has it not enough of them? Under the oppression
36 of rules, the whole nation is verging on its ruin--who stops to
37 understand this?

38 In the case of an absolute and arbitrary monarchy, the
39 conquered race is not treated with so much contempt by the ruling
40 power. Under such an absolute government, the rights of all
41 subjects are equal, in other words, no one has any right to question
42 or control the governing authority. So there remains very little room
43 for special privileges of caste and the like. But where the monarchy
44 is controlled by the voice of the ruling race, or a republican form of
45 government rules the conquered race, there a wide distance is
46 created between the ruling and the ruled; and the most part of that
47 power, which, if employed solely for the well-being of the ruled
48 classes, might have done immense good to them within a short
49 time, is wasted by the government in its attempts and applications
50 to keep the subject race under its entire control. Under the Roman
51 Emperorship, foreign subjects were, for this very reason, happier
52 than under the Republic of Rome. For this very reason, St. Paul, the

1 Christian Apostle, though born of the conquered Jewish race,
2 obtained permission to appeal to the Roman Emperor, Caesar, to
3 judge of the charges laid against him. Because some individual
4 Englishman may call us "natives" or "niggers" and hate us as
5 uncivilised savages, we do not gain or lose by that. We, on account
6 of caste distinctions, have among ourselves far stronger feelings of
7 hatred and scorn against one another; and who can say that the
8 Brahmins, if they get some foolish unenlightened Kshatriya king on
9 their side, will not graciously try again to "cut out the Shudras'
10 tongues and chop off their limbs"? That recently in Eastern
11 Aryavarta, the different caste-people seem to develop a feeling of
12 united sympathy amidst themselves with a view to ameliorating
13 their present social condition--that in the Mahratta country, the
14 Brahmins have begun to sing paeans of praise of the "Maratha"
15 race--these, the lower castes cannot yet believe to be the outcome
16 of pure disinterestedness.

17 But gradually the idea is being formed in the minds of the
18 English public that the passing away of the Indian Empire from
19 their sway will end in imminent peril to the English nation, and be
20 their ruin. So, by any means whatsoever, the supremacy of England
21 must be maintained in India. The way to effect this, they think, is by
22 keeping uppermost in the heart of every Indian the mighty prestige
23 and glory of the British nation. It gives rise to both laughter and
24 tears simultaneously to observe how this ludicrous and pitiful
25 sentiment is gaining ground among the English, and how they are
26 steadily extending their *modus operandi* for the carrying out of this
27 sentiment into practice. It seems as if the Englishmen resident in
28 India are forgetting that so long as that fortitude, that
29 perseverance, and that intense national unity of purpose, by which
30 Englishmen have earned this Indian Empire--and that ever wide-
31 awake commercial genius aided by science, which has turned even
32 India, the mother of all riches, into the principal mart of England--
33 so long as these characteristics are not eliminated from their
34 national life, their throne in India is unshakable. So long as these
35 qualities are inherent in the British character, let thousands of such
36 Indian Empires be lost, thousands will be earned again. But if the
37 flow of the stream of those qualities be retarded, shall an Empire be
38 governed by the mere emblazoning of British prestige and glory?
39 Therefore when such remarkable traits of character are still
40 predominant in the English as a nation, it is utterly useless to spend
41 so much energy and power for the mere preservation of
42 meaningless "prestige". If that power were employed for the
43 welfare of the subject-people, that would certainly have been a
44 great gain for both the ruling and the ruled races.

45 It has been said before that India is slowly awakening
46 through her friction with the outside nations; and as the result of
47 this little awakening, is the appearance, to a certain extent, of free
48 and independent thought in modern India. On one side is modern
49 Western science, dazzling the eyes with the brilliancy of myriad
50 suns and driving in the chariot of hard and fast facts collected by
51 the application of tangible powers direct in their incision; on the
52 other are the hopeful and strengthening traditions of her ancient

1 forefathers, in the days when she was at the zenith of her glory--
2 traditions that have been brought out of the pages of her history by
3 the great sages of her own land and outside, that run for
4 numberless years and centuries through her every vein with the
5 quickening of life drawn from universal love--traditions that reveal
6 unsurpassed valour, superhuman genius, and supreme spirituality,
7 which are the envy of the gods--these inspire her with future hopes.
8 On one side, rank materialism, plenitude of fortune, accumulation
9 of gigantic power, and intense sense-pursuits have, through foreign
10 literature, caused a tremendous stir; on the other, through the
11 confounding din of all these discordant sounds, she hears, in low
12 yet unmistakable accents, the heart-rending cries of her ancient
13 gods, cutting her to the quick. There lie before her various strange
14 luxuries introduced from the West--celestial drinks, costly well-
15 served food, splendid apparel, magnificent palaces, new modes of
16 conveyance, new manners, new fashions dressed in which moves
17 about the well-educated girl in shameless freedom--all these are
18 arousing unfelt desires. Again, the scene changes, and in its place
19 appear, with stern presence, Sita, Savitri, austere religious vows,
20 fastings, the forest retreat, the matted locks and orange garb of the
21 semi-naked Sannyasin, Samadhi and the search after the Self. On
22 one side is the independence of Western societies based on self-
23 interest; on the other is the extreme self-sacrifice of the Aryan
24 society. In this violent conflict, is it strange that Indian society
25 should be tossed up and down? Of the West, the goal is individual
26 independence, the language money-making education, the means
27 politics; of India, the goal is Mukti, the language the Veda, the
28 means renunciation. For a time, Modern India thinks, as it were, I
29 am ruining this worldly life of mine in vain expectation of uncertain
30 spiritual welfare hereafter which has spread its fascination over
31 me; and again, lo! spellbound she listens--{Sanskrit}--"Here, in this
32 world of death and change, O man, where is thy happiness?"

33 On one side, new India is saying, "We should have full
34 freedom in the selection of husband and wife; because the
35 marriage, in which are involved the happiness and misery of all our
36 future life, we must have the right to determine according to our
37 own free will." On the other, old India is dictating, "Marriage is not
38 for sense-enjoyment, but to perpetuate the race. This is the Indian
39 conception of marriage. By the producing of children, you are
40 contributing to, and are responsible for, the future good or evil of
41 the society. Hence society has the right to dictate whom you shall
42 marry and whom you shall not. That form of marriage obtains in
43 society which is conducive most to its well-being; do you give up
44 your desire of individual pleasure for the good of the many."

45 On one side, new India is saying, "If we only adopt Western
46 ideas, Western language, Western food, Western dress, and Western
47 manners, we shall be as strong and powerful as the Western
48 nations"; on the other, old India is saying, "Fools! By imitation,
49 other's ideas never become one's own; nothing, unless earned, is
50 your own. Does the ass in the lion's skin become the lion?"

51 On one side, new India is saying, "What the Western nations
52 do is surely good, otherwise how did they become so great?" On the

1 other side, old India is saying, "The flash of lightning is intensely
2 bright, but only for a moment; look out, boys, it is dazzling your
3 eyes. Beware!"

4 Have we not then to learn anything from the West? Must we
5 not needs try and exert ourselves for better things? Are we perfect?
6 Is our society entirely spotless, without any flaw? There are many
7 things to learn, we must struggle for new and higher things till we
8 die--struggle is the end of human life. Shri Ramakrishna used to
9 say, "As long as I live, so long do I learn." That man or that society
10 which has nothing to learn is already in the jaws of death. Yes, learn
11 we must many things from the West: but there are fears as well.

12 A certain young man of little understanding used always to
13 blame the Hindu Shastras before Shri RamaKrishna. One day he
14 praised the Bhagavad-Gita, on which Shri Ramakrishna said,
15 "Methinks, some European Pandit has praised the Gita, and so he
16 has also followed suit."

17 O India, this is your terrible danger. The spell of imitating
18 the West is getting such a strong hold upon you that what is good or
19 what is bad is no longer decided by reason, judgment,
20 discrimination, or reference to the Shastras. Whatever ideas,
21 whatever manners the white men praise or like are good; whatever
22 things they dislike or censure are bad. Alas! what can be a more
23 tangible proof of foolishness than this?

24 The Western ladies move freely everywhere, therefore that
25 is good; they choose for themselves their husbands, therefore that
26 is the highest step of advancement; the Westerners disapprove of
27 our dress, decorations, food, and ways of living, therefore they must
28 be very bad; the Westerners condemn image-worship as sinful,
29 surely then, image-worship is the greatest sin, there is no doubt of
30 it!

31 The Westerners say that worshipping a single Deity is
32 fruitful of the highest spiritual good, therefore let us throw our gods
33 and goddesses into the river Ganga! The Westerners hold caste
34 distinctions to be obnoxious, therefore let all the different castes be
35 jumbled into one! The Westerners say that child-marriage is the
36 root of all evils, therefore that is also very bad, of a certainty it is!

37 We are not discussing here whether these customs deserve
38 continuance or rejection; but if the mere disapproval of the
39 Westerners be the measure of the abominableness of our manners
40 and customs, then it is our duty to raise our emphatic protest
41 against it.

42 The present writer has, to some extent, personal experience
43 of Western society. His conviction resulting from such experience
44 has been that there is such a wide divergence between the Western
45 society and the Indian as regards the primal course and goal of
46 each, that any sect in India, framed after the Western model, will
47 miss the aim. We have not the least sympathy with those who, never
48 having lived in Western society and, therefore, utterly ignorant of
49 the rules and prohibitions regarding the association of men and
50 women that obtain there, and which act as safeguards to preserve

1 the purity of the Western women, allow a free rein to the
2 unrestricted intermingling of men and women in our society.

3 I have observed in the West also that the children of weaker
4 nations, if born in England, give themselves out as Englishmen,
5 instead of Greek, Portuguese, Spaniard, etc., as the case may be.
6 All drift towards the strong. That the light of glory which shines in
7 the glorious may anyhow fall and reflect on one's own body, i.e. to
8 shine in the borrowed light of the great, is the one desire of the
9 weak. When I see Indians dressed in European apparel and
10 costumes, the thought comes to my mind, perhaps they feel
11 ashamed to own their nationality and kinship with the ignorant,
12 poor, illiterate, downtrodden people of India! Nourished by the
13 blood of the Hindu for the last fourteen centuries, the Parsee is no
14 longer a "native"! Before the arrogance of the casteless, who
15 pretend to be and glorify themselves in being Brahmins, the true
16 nobility of the old, heroic, high-class Brahmin melts into
17 nothingness! Again, the Westerners have now taught us that those
18 stupid, ignorant, low-caste millions of India, clad only in loin-cloths,
19 are non-Aryans. They are therefore no more our kith and kin!

20 O India! With this mere echoing of others, with this base
21 imitation of others, with this dependence on others, this slavish
22 weakness, this vile detestable cruelty--wouldst thou, with these
23 provisions only, scale the highest pinnacle of civilisation and
24 greatness? Wouldst thou attain, by means of thy disgraceful
25 cowardice, that freedom deserved only by the brave and the heroic?
26 O India! Forget not that the ideal of thy womanhood is Sita, Savitri,
27 Damayanti; forget not that the God thou worshippest is the great
28 Ascetic of ascetics, the all-renouncing Shankara, the Lord of Uma;
29 forget not that thy marriage, thy wealth, thy life are not for sense-
30 pleasure, are not for thy individual personal happiness; forget not
31 that thou art born as a sacrifice to the Mother's altar; forget not
32 that thy social order is but the reflex of the Infinite Universal
33 Motherhood; forget not that the lower classes, the ignorant, the
34 poor, the illiterate, the cobbler, the sweeper, are thy flesh and blood,
35 thy brothers. Thou brave one, be bold, take courage, be proud that
36 thou art an Indian, and proudly proclaim, "I am an Indian, every
37 Indian is my brother." Say, "The ignorant Indian, the poor and
38 destitute Indian, the Brahmin Indian, the Pariah Indian, is my
39 brother." Thou, too, clad with but a rag round thy loins proudly
40 proclaim at the top of thy voice: "The Indian is my brother, the
41 Indian is my life, India's gods and goddesses are my God. India's
42 society is the cradle of my infancy, the pleasure-garden of my youth,
43 the sacred heaven, the Varanasi of my old age." Say, brother; "The
44 soil of India is my highest heaven, the good of India is my good,"
45 and repeat and pray day and night, "O Thou Lord of Gauri, O Thou
46 Mother of the Universe, vouchsafe manliness unto me! O Thou
47 Mother of Strength, take away my weakness, take away my
48 unmanliness, and make me a Man!"

THE EDUCATION THAT INDIA NEEDS

In reply to your question about the methods of work, the most important thing I have to say is that the work should be started on a scale which would be commensurate with the results desired. I have heard much of your liberal mind, patriotism, and steady perseverance from my friend Miss Muller; and the proof of your erudition is evident. I look upon it as a great good fortune that you are desirous to know what little this insignificant life has been able to attempt; I shall state it to you here, as far as I can. But first I shall lay before you my mature convictions for your deliberations.

We have been slaves for ever, i.e. it has never been given to the masses of India to express the inner light which is their inheritance. The Occident has been rapidly advancing towards freedom for the last few centuries. In India, it was the king who used to prescribe everything from Kulinism down to what one should eat and what one should not. In Western countries, the people do everything themselves.

The king now has nothing to say in any social matter; on the other hand, the Indian people have not yet even the least faith in themselves, what to say of self-reliance. The faith in one's own Self, which is the basis of Vedanta, has not yet been even slightly carried into practice. It is for this reason that the Western method--i.e. first of all, discussion about the wished-for end, then the carrying it out by the combination of all the forces--is of no avail even now in this country; it is for this reason that we appear so greatly conservative under foreign rule. If this be true, then it is a vain attempt to do any great work by means of public discussion. "There is no chance of a headache where there is no head"--where is the public? Besides, we are so devoid of strength that our whole energy is exhausted if we undertake to discuss anything, none is left for work. It is for this reason, I suppose, we observe in Bengal almost always--"Much cry but little wool." Secondly, as I have written before, I do not expect anything from the rich people of India. It is best to work among the youth in whom lies our hope--patiently, steadily, and without noise.

Now about work. From the day when education and culture etc. began to spread gradually from patricians to plebeians, grew the distinction between the modern civilisation as of Western countries, and the ancient civilisation as of India, Egypt, Rome, etc. I see it before my eyes, a nation is advanced in proportion as education and intelligence spread among the masses. The chief cause of India's ruin has been the monopolising of the whole education and intelligence of the land, by dint of pride and royal authority, among a handful of men. If we are to rise again, we shall have to do it in the same way, i.e. by spreading education among the masses. A great fuss has been made for half a century about social reform. Travelling through various places of India these last ten years, I observed the country full of social reform associations. But I did not find one association for them by sucking whose blood

1 the people known as "gentlemen" have become and continue to be
2 gentlemen! How many sepoys were brought by the Mussulmans?
3 How many Englishmen are there? Where, except in India, can be
4 had millions of men who will cut the throats of their own fathers
5 and brothers for six rupees? Sixty millions of Mussulmans in seven
6 hundred years of Mohammedan rule, and two millions of Christians
7 in one hundred years of Christian rule--what makes it so? Why has
8 originality entirely forsaken the country? Why are our deft- fingered
9 artisans daily becoming extinct, unable to compete with the
10 Europeans? By what power again has the German labourer
11 succeeded in shaking the many-century-grounded firm footing of
12 the English labourer?

13 Education, education, and education alone! Travelling
14 through many cities of Europe and observing in them the comforts
15 and education of even the poor people, there was brought to my
16 mind the state of our own poor people, and I used to shed tears.
17 What made the difference? Education was the answer I got.
18 Through education comes faith in one's own Self, and through faith
19 in one's own Self the inherent Brahman is waking up in them, while
20 the Brahman in us is gradually becoming dormant. In New York I
21 used to observe the Irish colonists come--downtrodden, haggard-
22 looking, destitute of all possessions at home, penniless, and
23 wooden-headed--with their only belongings, a stick and a bundle of
24 rags hanging at the end of it, fright in their steps, alarm in their
25 eyes. A different spectacle in six months--the man walks upright, his
26 attire is changed! In his eyes and steps there is no more sign of
27 fright. What is the cause? Our Vedanta says that that Irishman was
28 kept surrounded by contempt in his own country--the whole of
29 nature was telling him with one voice, "Pat, you have no more hope,
30 you are born a slave and will remain so." Having been thus told
31 from his birth, Pat believed in it and hypnotised himself that he was
32 very low, and the Brahman in him shrank away. While no sooner had
33 he landed in America than he heard the shout going up on all sides,
34 "Pat, you are a man as we are. It is man who has done all, a man
35 like you and me can do everything: have courage!" Pat raised his
36 head and saw that it was so, the Brahman within woke up. Nature
37 herself spoke, as it were, "Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is
38 reached" (Katha Upanishad. I. ii.4.)

39 Likewise the education that our boys receive is very
40 negative. The schoolboy learns nothing, but has everything of his
41 own broken down--want of Shraddha is the result. The Shraddha
42 which is the keynote of the Veda and the Vedanta--the Shraddha
43 which emboldened Nachiketa to face Yama and question him,
44 through which Shraddha this world moves--the annihilation of that
45 Shraddha! {Sanskrit} --"The ignorant, the man devoid of Shraddha,
46 the doubting self runs to ruin." Therefore are we so near to
47 destruction. The remedy now is the spread of education. First of all,
48 Self-knowledge. I do not mean thereby, matted hair, staff,
49 Kamandalu, and mountain caves which the word suggests. What do
50 I mean then? Cannot the knowledge, by which is attained even
51 freedom from the bondage of worldly existence, bring ordinary
52 material prosperity? Certainly it can. Freedom, dispassion,

1 renunciation all these are the very highest ideals, but {Sanskrit}
2 --"Even a little of this Dharma saves one from the great fear (of
3 birth and death)." Dualist, qualified-monist, monist, Shaiva,
4 Vaishnava, Shakta, even the Buddhist and the Jain and others--
5 whatever sects have arisen in India--are all at one in this respect
6 that infinite power is latent in this Jivatman (individualised soul);
7 from the ant to the perfect man there is the same Atman in all, the
8 difference being only in manifestation. "As a farmer breaks the
9 obstacles (to the course of water)" (Patanjali's Yoga-Sutra,
10 Kaivalyapada, 3). That power manifests as soon as it gets the
11 opportunity and the right place and time. From the highest god to
12 the meanest grass, the same power is present in all--whether
13 manifested or not. We shall have to call forth that power by going
14 from door to door.

15 Secondly, along with this, education has to be imparted. That
16 is easy to say, but how to reduce it into practice? There are
17 thousands of unselfish, kind-hearted men in our country who have
18 renounced everything. In the same way as they travel about and
19 give religious instructions without any remuneration, so at least
20 half of them can be trained as teachers or bearers of such
21 education as we need most. For that, we want first of all a centre in
22 the capital of each Presidency, from whence to spread slowly
23 throughout the whole of India. Two centres have recently been
24 started in Madras and Calcutta; there is hope of more soon. Then,
25 the greater part of the education to the poor should be given orally,
26 time is not yet ripe for schools. Gradually in these main centres will
27 be taught agriculture, industry, etc., and workshops will be
28 established for the furtherance of arts. To sell the manufactures of
29 those workshops in Europe and America, associations will be
30 started like those already in existence. It will be necessary to start
31 centres for women, exactly like those for men. But you are aware
32 how difficult that is in our country. Again, "The snake which bites
33 must take out its own poison" --and that this is going to be is my
34 firm conviction; the money required for these works would have to
35 come from the West. And for that reason, our religion should be
36 preached in Europe and America. Modern science has undermined
37 the basis of religions like Christianity. Over and above that, luxury
38 is about to kill the religious instinct itself. Europe and America are
39 now looking towards India with expectant eyes; this is the time for
40 philanthropy, this is the time to occupy the hostile strongholds.

41 In the West, women rule; all influence and power are theirs.
42 If bold and talented women like yourself versed in Vedanta, go to
43 England to preach, I am sure that every year hundreds of men and
44 women will become blessed by adopting the religion of the land of
45 Bharata. The only woman who went over from our country was
46 Ramabai; her knowledge of English, Western science and art was
47 limited; still she surprised all. If anyone like you goes, England will
48 be stirred, what to speak of America! If an Indian woman in Indian
49 dress preach there the religion which fell from the lips of the Rishis
50 of India--I see a prophetic vision--there will rise a great wave which
51 will inundate the whole Western world. Will there be no woman in
52 the land of Maitreyi, Khana, Lilavati, Savitri and Ubhayabharati,

1 who will venture to do this? The Lord knows. England we shall
2 conquer, England we shall possess, through the power of
3 spirituality. {Sanskrit}--"There is no other way of salvation." Can
4 salvation ever come by getting up meetings and societies? Our
5 conquerors must be made Devas by the power of our spirituality. I
6 am a humble mendicant, an itinerant monk; I am helpless and
7 alone. What can I do? You have the power of wealth, intellect, and
8 education; will you forgo this opportunity? Conquest of England,
9 Europe, and America--this should be our one supreme Mantra at
10 present, in it lies the well-being of the country. Expansion is the
11 sign of life, and we must spread over the world with our spiritual
12 ideals. Alas! this frame is poor, moreover, the physique of a Bengali;
13 even under this labour a fatal disease has attacked it, but there is
14 the hope:

15 {Sanskrit}

16 --"A kindred spirit is or will be born out of the limitless time
17 and populous earth to accomplish the work" (Bhavabhuti).

18 About vegetarian diet I have to say this --first, my Master
19 was a vegetarian; but if he was given meat offered to the Goddess,
20 he used to hold it up to his head. The taking of life is undoubtedly
21 sinful; but so long as vegetable food is not made suitable to the
22 human system through progress in chemistry, there is no other
23 alternative but meat-eating. So long as man shall have to live a
24 Rajasika (active) life under circumstances like the present, there is
25 no other way except through meat-eating. It is true that the
26 Emperor Asoka saved the lives of millions of animals, by the threat
27 of the sword; but is not the slavery of a thousand years more
28 dreadful than that? Taking the life of a few goats as against the
29 inability to protect the honour of one's own wife and daughter, and
30 to save the morsels for one's children from robbing hands--which of
31 these is more sinful? Rather let those belonging to the upper ten,
32 who do not earn their livelihood by manual labour, not take meat;
33 but the forcing of vegetarianism upon those who have to earn their
34 bread by labouring day and night is one of the causes of the loss of
35 our national freedom. Japan is an example of what good and
36 nourishing food can do.

37 May the All-powerful Vishvesvari inspire your heart!

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2
3 *OUR PRESENT SOCIAL PROBLEMS*
4

5 {Sanskrit}--"The Lord whose nature is unspeakable love."
6 That this characteristic of God mentioned by Narada is manifest
7 and admitted on all hands is the firm conviction of my life. The
8 aggregate of many individuals is called Samashti (the whole), and
9 each individual is called Vyashti (a part). You and I --each is Vyashti,
10 society is Samashti. You, I, an animal, a bird, a worm, an insect, a
11 tree, a creeper, the earth, a planet, a star--each is Vyashti, while
12 this universe is Samashti, which is called Virat, Hiranyagarbha, or
13 Ishvara in Vedanta, and Brahma, Vishnu, Devi, etc., in the Puranas.
14 Whether or not Vyashti has individual freedom, and if it has, what
15 should be its measure, whether or not Vyashti should completely
16 sacrifice its own will, its own happiness for Samashti--are the
17 perennial problems before every society. Society everywhere is
18 busy finding the solution of these problems. These, like big waves,
19 are agitating modern Western society. The doctrine which demands
20 the sacrifice of individual freedom to social supremacy is called
21 socialism, while that which advocates the cause of the individual is
22 called individualism.

23 Our motherland is a glowing example of the results and
24 consequence of the eternal subjection of the individual to society
25 and forced self-sacrifice by dint of institution and discipline. In this
26 country men are born according to Shastric injunctions, they eat
27 and drink by prescribed rules throughout life, they go through
28 marriage and kindred functions in the same way; in short, they even
29 die according to Shastric injunctions. The hard discipline, with the
30 exception of one great good point, is fraught with evil. The good
31 point is that men can do one or two things well with very little
32 effort, having practised them every day through generations. The
33 delicious rice and curry which a cook of this country prepares with
34 the aid of three lumps of earth and a few sticks can be had nowhere
35 else. With the simple mechanism of an antediluvian loom, worth one
36 rupee, and the feet put in a pit, it is possible to make kincobs worth
37 twenty rupees a yard, in this country alone. A torn mat, an earthen
38 lamp, and that fed by castor oil--with the aid of materials such as
39 these, wonderful savants are produced in this country alone. An all-
40 forbearing attachment to an ugly and deformed wife, and a lifelong
41 devotion to a worthless and villainous husband are possible in this
42 country alone. Thus far the bright side.

43 But all these things are done by people guided like lifeless
44 machines. There is no mental activity, no unfoldment of the heart,
45 no vibration of life, no flux of hope; there is no strong stimulation of
46 the will, no experience of keen pleasure, nor the contact with
47 intense sorrow; there is no stir of inventive genius, no desire for
48 novelty, no appreciation of new things. Clouds never pass away
49 from this mind, the radiant picture of the morning sun never
50 charms this heart. It never even occurs to this mind if there is any
51 better state than this; where it does, it cannot convince; in the

1 event of conviction, effort is lacking; and even where there is effort,
2 lack of enthusiasm kills it out.

3 If living by rule alone ensures excellence, if it be virtue to
4 follow strictly the rules and customs handed down through
5 generations, say then, who is more virtuous than a tree, who is a
6 greater devotee, a holier saint, than a railway train? Who has ever
7 seen a piece of stone transgress a natural law? Who has ever
8 known cattle to commit sin?

9 The huge steamer, the mighty railway engine—they are non-
10 intelligent; they move, turn, and run, but they are without
11 intelligence. And yonder tiny worm which moved away from the
12 railway line to save its life, why is it intelligent? There is no
13 manifestation of will in the machine, the machine never wishes to
14 transgress law; the worm wants to oppose law--rises against law
15 whether it succeeds or not; therefore it is intelligent. Greater is the
16 happiness, higher is the Jiva, in proportion as this will is more
17 successfully manifest. The will of God is perfectly fruitful; therefore
18 He is the highest.

19 What is education? Is it book-learning? No. Is it diverse
20 knowledge? Not even that. The training by which the current and
21 expression of will are brought under control and become fruitful is
22 called education. Now consider, is that education as a result of
23 which the will, being continuously choked by force through
24 generations, is well-nigh killed out; is that education under whose
25 sway even the old ideas, let alone the new ones, are disappearing
26 one by one; is that education which is slowly making man a
27 machine? It is more blessed, in my opinion, even to go wrong,
28 impelled by one's free will and intelligence than to be good as an
29 automaton. Again, can that be called society which is formed by an
30 aggregate of men who are like lumps of clay, like lifeless machines,
31 like heaped up pebbles? How can such society fare well? Were good
32 possible, then instead of being slaves for hundreds of years, we
33 would have been the greatest nation on earth, and this soil of India,
34 instead of being a mine of stupidity, would have been the eternal
35 fountain-head of learning.

36 Is not self-sacrifice, then, a virtue? Is it not the most virtuous
37 deed to sacrifice the happiness of one, the welfare of one, for the
38 sake of the many? Exactly, but as the Bengali adage goes, "Can
39 beauty be manufactured by rubbing and scrubbing? Can love be
40 generated by effort and compulsion?" What glory is there in the
41 renunciation of an eternal beggar? What virtue is there in the sense
42 control of one devoid of sense-power? What again is the self-
43 sacrifice of one devoid of idea, devoid of heart, devoid of high
44 ambition, and devoid of the conception of what constitutes society?
45 What expression of devotedness to a husband is there by forcing a
46 widow to commit Sati? Why make people do virtuous deeds by
47 teaching superstitions? I say, liberate, undo the shackles of people
48 as much as you can. Can dirt be washed by dirt? Can bondage be
49 removed by bondage? Where is the instance? When you would be
50 able to sacrifice all desire for happiness for the sake of society, then
51 you would be the Buddha, then you would be free: that is far off.
52 Again, do you think the way to do it lies through oppression? "Oh,

1 what examples of self-denial are our widows! Oh, how sweet is
2 child-marriage! Is another such custom possible! Can there be
3 anything but love between husband and wife in such a marriage!"--
4 such is the whine going round nowadays. But as to the men, the
5 masters of the situation, there is no need of self-denial for them! Is
6 there a virtue higher than serving others? But the same does not
7 apply to Brahmins--you others do it! The truth is that in this country
8 parents and relatives can ruthlessly sacrifice the best interests of
9 their children and others for their selfish ends to save themselves
10 by compromise to society; and the teaching of generations
11 rendering the mind callous has made it perfectly easy. He, the
12 brave alone, can deny self. The coward, afraid of the lash, with one
13 hand wipes his eyes and gives with the other. Of what avail are such
14 gifts? It is a far cry to love universal. The young plant should be
15 hedged in and taken care of. One can hope gradually to attain
16 universal love if one can learn to love one object unselfishly. If
17 devotion to one particular Ishta-Deva is attained, devotion to the
18 universal Virat is gradually possible.

19 Therefore, when one has been able to deny self for an
20 individual, one should talk of self-sacrifice for the sake of society,
21 not before. It is action with desire that leads to action without
22 desire. Is the renunciation of desire possible if desire did not exist
23 in the beginning? And what could it mean? Can light have any
24 meaning if there is no darkness?

25 Worship with desire, with attachment, comes first.
26 Commence with the worship of the little, then the greater will come
27 of itself.

28 Mother, be not anxious. It is against the big tree that the
29 great wind strikes. "Poking a fire makes it burn better"; "A snake
30 struck on the head raises its hood"--and so on. When there comes
31 affliction in the heart, when the storm of sorrow blows all around,
32 and it seems light will be seen no more, when hope and courage are
33 almost gone, it is then, in the midst of this great spiritual tempest,
34 that the light of Brahman within gleams. Brought up in the lap of
35 luxury, lying on a bed of roses and never shedding a tear, who has
36 ever become great, who has ever unfolded the Brahman within?
37 Why do you fear to weep? Weep! Weeping clears the eyes and
38 brings about intuition. Then the vision of diversity--man, animal,
39 tree--slowly melting away, makes room for the infinite realisation of
40 Brahman everywhere and in every thing. Then--

41 {Sanskrit}

42 --"Verily, seeing the same God equally existent everywhere,
43 he does not injure the Self by the self, and so goes to the Supreme
44 Goal" (Gita, XIII.28).

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TO A FRIEND

*(Rendered from a Bengali poem composed by Swami
Vivekananda)*

Where darkness is interpreted as light,
Where misery passes for happiness,
Where disease is pretended to be health,
Where the new-born's cry but shows 'tis alive;
Dost thou, O wise, expect happiness here?

Where war and competition ceaseless run,
Even the father turns against the son,
Where "self", "self"--this always the only note,
Dost thou, O wise, seek for peace supreme here?

A glaring mixture of heaven and hell,
Who can fly from this Samsar⁴² of Maya?
Fastened in the neck with Karma's fetters,
Say, where can the slave escape for safety?

The paths of Yoga and of sense-enjoyment,
The life of the householder and Sannyas,
Devotion, worship, and earning riches,
Vows, Tyaga, and austerities severe,
I have seen through them all. What have I known?

--Have known there's not a jot of happiness,
Life is only a cup of Tantalus;
The nobler is your heart, know for certain,
The more must be your share of misery.

Thou large-hearted Lover unselfish, know,
There's no room in this sordid world for thee;
Can a marble figure e'er brook the blow

1
2

⁴² ?Samsara, the world.

1 That an iron mass can afford to bear?
 2
 3 Couldst thou be as one inert and abject,
 4 Honey-mouthed, but with poison in thy heart,
 5 Destitute of truth and worshipping self,
 6 Then thou wouldst have a place in this Samsar.
 7
 8 Pledging even life for gaining knowledge,
 9 I have devoted half my days on earth;
 10 For the sake of love, even as one insane,
 11 I have often clutched at shadows lifeless;
 12
 13 For religion, many creeds have I sought,
 14 Lived in mountain-caves, on cremation-grounds,
 15 By the Ganga and other sacred streams,
 16 And how many days have I passed on alms!
 17
 18 Friendless, clad in rags, with no possession,
 19 Feeding from door to door on what chance would bring.
 20 The frame broken under Tapasya's⁴³ weight;
 21 What riches, ask thou, have I earned in life?
 22
 23 Listen, friend, I will speak my heart to thee;
 24 I have found in my life this truth supreme--
 25 Buffeted by waves, in this whirl of life,
 26 There's one ferry that takes across the sea.⁴⁴
 27
 28 Formulas of worship, control of breath,
 29 Science, philosophy, systems varied,
 30 Relinquishment, possession, and the life,
 31 All these are but delusions of the mind--
 32 Love, Love--that's the one thing, the sole treasure.
 33
 34 In Jiva and Brahman, in man and God,

1 ⁴³ ?Of austerities.

2
 3 ⁴⁴ ?The sea of Samsara.
 4

1 In ghosts, and wraiths, and spirits, and so forth,
 2 In Devas, beasts, birds, insects, and in worms,
 3 This Prema⁴⁵ dwells in the heart of them all.
 4
 5 Say, who else is the highest God of gods?
 6 Say, who else moves all the universe?
 7 The mother dies for her young, robber robs--
 8 Both are but the impulse of the same Love!
 9
 10 Beyond the ken of human speech and mind,
 11 It dwells in weal and woe; 'tis that which comes
 12 As the all-powerful, all-destroyer
 13 Kali, and as the kindest mother.
 14
 15 Disease, bereavement, pinch of poverty,
 16 Dharma⁴⁶, and its opposite Adharma,⁴⁷
 17 Are but ITS worship in manifold modes;
 18 Say, what does by himself a Jiva do?
 19
 20 Deluded is he who happiness seeks,
 21 Lunatic he who misery wishes,
 22 Insane he too who fondly longs for death,
 23 Immortality--vain aspiration!
 24
 25 For, far, however far you may travel,
 26 Mounted on the brilliant mental car,
 27 'Tis the same ocean of the Samsar,
 28 Happiness and misery whirling on.
 29
 30 Listen O Vihangam,⁴⁸ bereft of wings,
 31 'Tis not the way to make good your escape;
 32 Time and again you get blows, and collapse,

1 ⁴⁵ ?Love.

2
3 ⁴⁶ ?Virtue.

4
5 ⁴⁷ ?Vice.

6
7 ⁴⁸ ?Bird, here addressed to the bound soul.
8

1 Why then attempt what is impossible?
2
3 Let go your vain reliance on knowledge,
4 Let go your prayers, offerings, and strength,
5 For Love selfless is the only resource;--
6 Lo, the insects teach, embracing the flame!
7
8 The base insect's blind, by beauty charmed,
9 Thy soul is drunken with the wine of Love;
10 O thou Lover true, cast into the fire
11 All thy dross of self, thy mean selfishness.
12
13 Say--comes happiness e'er to a beggar?
14 What good being object of charity?
15 Give away, ne'er turn to ask in return,
16 Should there be the wealth treasured in thy heart.
17
18 Ay, born heir to the Infinite thou art,
19 Within the heart is the ocean of Love,
20 "Give", "Give away"--whoever asks return,
21 His ocean dwindles down to a mere drop.
22
23 From highest Brahman to the yonder worm,
24 And to the very minutest atom,
25 Everywhere is the same God, the All-Love;
26 Friend, offer mind, soul, body, at their feet.
27
28 These are His manifold forms before thee,
29 Rejecting them, where seekest thou for God?
30 Who loves all beings without distinction,
31 He indeed is worshipping best his God.

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THE HYMN OF CREATION

(Rendered from Bengali)

One Mass, devoid of form, name, and colour,
Timeless, devoid of time past and future,
Spaceless, voiceless, boundless, devoid of all--
Where rests hushed even speech of negation.⁴⁹

From thence, down floweth the river causal,
Wearing the form of desire radiant,
Its heaving waters angrily roaring
The constant roar, "I am", "I am".

In that ocean of desire limitless,
Appear shining waves, countless, infinite,
Oh, of what power manifold they are,
Of what forms myriad, of what repose,
Of what movements varied, who can reckon?

Millions of moons, millions of suns,
Taking their birth in that very ocean,
Rushing headlong with din tumultuous,
Overspread the whole firmament, drowning
The points of heaven in light effulgent.

In it arise and reside what beings,
Quick with life, dull, and lifeless--unnumbered,
And pleasure and pain, disease, birth, and death!
Verily, the Sun is He, His the ray,
Nay, the Sun is He, and He is the ray.

1
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⁴⁹ ?"Neti, Neti", "Not this, not this." Brahman cannot be described in any positive way.

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THE HYMN OF SAMADHI
(Rendered from Bengali)

Lo! The sun is not, nor the comely moon,
All light extinct; in the great void of space
Floats shadow-like the image-universe.

In the void of mind involute, there floats
The fleeting universe, rises and floats,
Sinks again, ceaseless, in the current "I".

Slowly, slowly, the shadow-multitude
Entered the primal womb, and flowed ceaseless,
The only current, the "I am", "I am".

Lo! 'Tis stopped, ev'n that current flows no more,
Void merged into void--beyond speech and mind
Whose heart understands, he verily does.

A HYMN TO THE DIVINE MOTHER

O Thou most beautiful! Whose holy hands
Hold pleasure and hold pain! Doer of good!
Who art Thou? The water of existence
By Thee is whirled and tossed in mighty waves.
Is it, O Mother, to restore again
This universe's broken harmony
That Thou, without cessation, art at work?

Oh! May the Mother of the universe--
In whose activity no respite rests,
Incessantly distributing the fruits
Of action done, guiding unceasingly
All action yet to come--bestow Her boon
Of blessing on me, Her child, for evermore.

1 I realise, I know, that it is Thou
2 Who holdest in Thy hands dread Karma's rope.
3
4 Is it inherent nature? Something uncreate?
5 Or Destiny? Some unforeseen result?--
6 Who lacking nothing, is accountable,
7 Whose chain of will, untrammelled, grasps the laws,
8 May She, the Primal Guide, my shelter be!
9
10 Manifestations of Her glory show
11 In power of immeasurable might,
12 Throughout the universe, powers that swell
13 The sea of birth and death, forces that change
14 And break up the Unchanged and changed again.
15 Lo! Where shall we seek refuge, save in Her?
16
17 To friend and foe Thy lotus-eyes are even;
18 Ever Thine animating touch brings fruit
19 To fortunate and unfortunate alike;
20 The shade of death and immortality--
21 Both these, O mother, are Thy grace Supreme!
22 Mother Supreme! Oh, may Thy gracious face
23 Never be turned away from me, Thy child!
24
25 What Thou art, the Mother? the All. How praise?
26 My understanding is so little worth.
27 'Twere like desire to seize with hands of mine
28 The sole Supporter of the universe!
29 So, at Thy blessed feet--contemplated
30 By the Goddess of Fortune Herself--the abode
31 Of fearlessness, worshipped by service true--
32 There, at those blessed feet, I take refuge!
33
34 She who, since birth, has ever led me on
35 Through paths of trouble to perfection's goal.
36 Mother-wise, in Her own sweet playful ways,
37 She, who has always through my life inspired

1 My understanding, She, my Mother, She,
2 The All, is my resort, whether my work
3 O'erflow with full fruition or with none.
4
5
6

7 *A HYMN TO SHIVA*
8

9 Salutation to Shiva! whose glory
10 Is immeasurable, who resembles sky
11 In clearness, to whom are attributed
12 The phenomena of all creation,
13 The preservation and dissolution
14 Of the universe! May the devotion,
15 The burning devotion of this my life
16 Attach itself to Him, to Shiva, who,
17 While being Lord of all, transcends Himself.
18

19 In whom Lordship is ever established,
20 Who causes annihilation of delusion,
21 Whose most surpassing love, made manifest,
22 Has crowned Him with a name above all names,
23 The name of "Mahadeva", the Great God!
24 Whose warm embrace, of Love personified,
25 Displays, within man's heart, that all power
26 Is but a semblance and a passing show.
27

28 In which the tempest of the whole past blows,
29 Past Samskaras,⁵⁰ stirring the energies
30 With violence, like water lashed to waves;
31 In which the dual consciousness of "I" and "Thou"
32 Plays on: I salute that mind unstable,
33 Centred in Shiva, the abode of calm!
34

35 Where the ideas of parent and produced,
36 Purified thoughts and endless varied forms,

1 ⁵⁰ ?The accumulated effects of past desires and actions.
2

1 Merge in the Real one; where the existence ends
2 Of such conceptions as "within", "without"--
3 The wind of modification being stilled--
4 That Hara I worship, the suppression
5 Of movements of the mind. Shiva I hail!
6
7 From whom all gloom and darkness have dispersed;
8 That radiant Light, white, beautiful
9 As bloom of lotus white is beautiful;
10 Whose laughter loud sheds knowledge luminous;
11 Who, by undivided meditation,
12 Is realised in the self-controlled heart:
13 May that Lordly Swan of the limpid lake
14 Of my mind, guard me, prostrate before Him!
15
16 Him, the Master-remover of evil,
17 Who wipes the dark stain of this Iron Age;
18 Whom Daksha's Daughter gave Her coveted hand;
19 Who, like the charming water-lily white,
20 Is beautiful; who is ready ever
21 To part with life for others' good, whose gaze
22 Is on the humble fixed; whose neck is blue⁵¹
23 With the poison⁵² swallowed:
24 Him, we salute!

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27

28 **A HYMN TO THE DIVINITY OF SHRI**
29 **RAMAKRISHNA**

30 *(Rendered from Bengali)*

31
32
33
34

We salute Thee!
Lord! Adored of the world,
Samsara's bondage breaker, taintless Thou,

1 ⁵¹ ?Nilakantha, a name of Shiva.

2
3 ⁵² ?The all-destructive evil.
4

1 Embodiment of blessed qualities,
 2 Thou transcendest all Gunas; human form
 3 Thus bearest.
 4 Thee we salute and adore!
 5
 6 Refuge of mind and speech, Thou art beyond
 7 The reach of either. Radiance art Thou
 8 In all radiance that is. The heart's cave
 9 Is by Thy visitance resplendent made.
 10 Verily Thou art that which dispelleth
 11 The densest darkness of Tamas in man.
 12
 13 Lo! In variety of melody
 14 Forth-breaking in fine harmony most sweet,
 15 Hymns of Thy devotees, accompanied
 16 By Mridanga⁵³ playing with music's grace,
 17 Fill the air, in evening worship to Thee.
 18
 19 One glancing vision at Thine eyes divine
 20 Cleared by the collyrium of Jnana
 21 Defies delusion. O thou blotter-out
 22 Of all the taints of sin, Intelligence
 23 Pure, unmingled is Thy form. Of the world
 24 Thou art embellisher. Self-luminous
 25 Art Thou. O Ocean of feeling sublime,
 26 And of Love Divine, O God-maddened One,
 27 Devotees win Thy blessed feet and cross
 28 Safely the swelling sea of Samsara.
 29
 30 O Lord of the world, through Thy Yoga power
 31 Thou shinest as the Incarnation clear
 32 Of this our time. O thou of strict restraint,
 33 Only through Thine unstinted grace we see
 34 The mind in Samadhi completely merged;
 35 Mercy Incarnate! austere are Thy deeds.
 36

⁵³ ?A kind of drum.

1 Thou dealest to the evil of misery
 2 Destruction. Kali's⁵⁴ binding cords
 3 Are cut by Thee asunder. Thine own life
 4 Thou gavest freely, O sweet Sacrifice,
 5 O best of men! O Saviour of the world!
 6
 7 Devoid wert Thou of the idea of sex,
 8 Thought of possession charmed Thee not. To Thee
 9 Obnoxious was all pleasure. Give to us,
 10 O greatest among Tyagis,⁵⁵ love intense
 11 Unto Thy sacred feet; give, we implore!
 12
 13 Fearless art Thou, and past all gloom of doubt;
 14 Thy mind is wrapt in its own firm resolve;
 15 Thy lovers, whose devotion mounts above
 16 The realm of reason, who renounce the pride
 17 Of caste and parentage, of name and fame--
 18 Their safe refuge art Thou alone, O Lord!
 19
 20 My one true treasure is Thy blessed feet,
 21 Reaching which the whole universe itself
 22 Seems like a puddle in the hollow made
 23 By hoof of passing cow.
 24 O offering
 25 To Love! O Seer of equality
 26 In all! O verily, in Thee the pain
 27 And evil of this mortal world escapes,
 28 And vanishes, O cherished One.

32 *"AND LET SHYAMA DANCE THERE"*

33 *(Rendered from Bengali)*

34
35 Beaut'ous blossoms ravishing with perfume,

1 ⁵⁴ ?Of the Iron Age.

2
3 ⁵⁵ ?Renouncers.

1 Swarms of maddened bees buzzing all around;
 2 The silver moon--a shower of sweet smile,
 3 Which all the dwellers of heaven above
 4 Shed lavishly upon the homes of earth;
 5 The soft Malaya⁵⁶ breeze, whose magic touch
 6 Opens to view distant memory's folds;
 7 Murmuring rivers and brooks, rippling lakes
 8 With restless Bhramaras⁵⁷ wheeling over
 9 Gently waving lotuses unnumbered;
 10 Foaming flow cascades--a streaming music--
 11 To which echo mountain caves in return;
 12 Warblers, full of sweet-flowing melody,
 13 Hidden in leaves, pour hearts out--love discourse;
 14 The rising orb of day, the painter divine,
 15 With his golden brush but lightly touches
 16 The canvas earth and a wealth of colours
 17 Floods at once o'er the bosom of nature,
 18 --Truly a museum of lovely hues--
 19 Waking up a whole sea of sentiments.
 20
 21 The roll of thunder, the crashing of clouds,
 22 War of elements spreading earth and sky;
 23 Darkness vomiting forth blinding darkness,
 24 The Pralaya⁵⁸ wind angrily roaring;
 25 In quick bursts of dazzling splendour flashes
 26 Blood-red terrific lightning, dealing death;
 27 Monster waves roaring like thunder, foaming,
 28 Rush impetuous to leap mountain peaks;
 29 The earth booms furious, reels and totters,
 30 Sinks down to its ruin, hurled from its place;
 31 Piercing the ground, stream forth tremendous flames,
 32 Mighty ranges blow up into atoms.

1 ⁵⁶ ?A fabulous Sandal-wood mountain in the South. Hence, Malaya breeze
 2 means a fragrant breeze from the South.

4 ⁵⁷ ?A beetle somewhat like a bumble-bee, which lives solely on honey.

6 ⁵⁸ ?The time of cosmic destruction.

1 A lovely villa, on a lake of blue--
2 Festooned with clusters of water-lilies;
3 The heart-blood of ripe grapes capped with white foam
4 Whispering softly tells tale of passion;
5 The melody of the harp floods the ears,
6 And by its air, time, and harmony rich,
7 Enhances desire in the breast of man;
8 What stirring of emotions! How many
9 Hot sighs of Love! And warm tears coursing down!
10 The Bimba⁵⁹-red lips of the youthful fair,
11 The two blue eyes--two oceans of feelings;
12 The two hands eager to advance--love's cage--
13 In which the heart, like a bird, lies captive.
14 The martial music bursts, the trumpets blow,
15 The ground shakes under the warriors' tread;
16 The roar of cannon, the rattle of guns,
17 Volumes of smoke, the gruesome battlefield,
18 The thundering artillery vomits fire
19 In thousand directions; shells burst and strike
20 Vital parts of the body; elephants
21 And horses mounted are blown up in space;
22 The earth trembles under this infernal dance;
23 A million heroes mounted on steeds
24 Charge and capture the enemy's ordnance,
25 Piercing through the smoke and shower of shells
26 And rain of bullets; forward goes the flag,
27 The emblem of victory, of heroism
28 With the blood, yet hot, streaming down the staff,
29 Followed by the rifles, drunk with war-spirit;
30 Lo! the ensign falls, but the flag proceeds
31 Onwards on the shoulder of another;
32 Under his feet swell heaps of warriors
33 Perished in battle; but he falters not.
34 The flesh hankers for contacts of pleasure,
35 The senses for enchanting strains of song,
36 The mind hungers for peals of laughter sweet,

⁵⁹ ?A kind of fruit of a rich red colour.

1 The heart pants to reach realms beyond sorrow;
 2 Say, who cares exchange the soothing moonlight
 3 For the burning rays of the noontide sun?
 4 The wretch whose heart is like the scorching sun,
 5 --Even he fondly loves the balmy moon;
 6 Indeed, all thirst for joy. Breathes there the wretch
 7 Who hugs pain and sorrow to his bosom?
 8 Misery in his cup of happiness,
 9 Deadly venom in his drink of nectar,
 10 Poison in his throat--yet he clings to hope!
 11 Lo! how all are scared by the Terrific,
 12 None seek Elokeshi⁶⁰ whose form is Death.
 13 The deadly frightful sword, reeking with blood,
 14 They take from Her hand, and put a lute instead!
 15 Thou dreaded Kali, the All-destroyer,
 16 Thou alone art true; Thy shadow's shadow
 17 Is indeed the pleasant Vanamali.⁶¹
 18 O Terrible Mother, cut quick the core,
 19 Illusion dispel--the dream of happiness,
 20 Rend asunder the fondness for the flesh.
 21
 22 True, they garland Thee with skulls, but shrink back
 23 In fright and call Thee, "O All-merciful!"
 24 At Thy thunder peal of awful laughter,
 25 At Thy nudeness--for space is thy garment--
 26 Their hearts sink down with terror, but they say,
 27 "It is the demons that the Mother kills!"
 28 They only pretend they wish to see Thee,
 29 But when the time comes, at Thy sight they flee.
 30 Thou art Death! To each and all in the world
 31 Thou distributest the plague and disease
 32 --Vessels of venom filled by Thine own hands.
 33 O thou insane! Thou but cheatest thyself,
 34 Thou dost not turn thy head lest thou behold,

1 ⁶⁰ ?She with untied hair, a name of Kali, the Divine Mother of the Universe.

2
 3 ⁶¹ ?Literally, he who is garlanded with wild flowers. The Shepherd Krishna in His
 4 aspect of youthful sport.
 5

1 Ay, the form terrible of the Mother.
 2 Thou courtest hardship hoping happiness,
 3 Thou wearest cloak of Bhakti and worship,
 4 With mind full of achieving selfish ends.
 5 The blood from the severed head of a kid
 6 Fills thee with fear--thy heart throbs at the sight--
 7 Verily a coward! Compassionate?⁶²
 8 Bless my soul! A strange state of things indeed!
 9 To whom shall I tell the truth?--Who will see?
 10 Free thyself from the mighty attraction--
 11 The maddening wine of love, the charm of sex.
 12 Break the harp! Forward, with the ocean's cry!
 13 Drink tears, pledge even life--let the body fall.
 14 Awake, O hero! Shake off thy vain dreams,
 15 Death stands at thy head--does fear become thee?
 16 A load of misery, true though it is--
 17 This Becoming⁶³--know this to be thy God!
 18 His temple--the Shmashan⁶⁴ among corpses
 19 And funeral pyres; unending battle--
 20 That verily is His sacred worship;
 21 Constant defeat--let that not unnerve thee;
 22 Shattered be little self, hope, name, and fame;
 23 Set up a pyre of them and make thy heart
 24 A burning-ground.
 25 And let Shyama⁶⁵ dance there.

26
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 28

29 *A SONG I SING TO THEE*
 30 *(Rendered from Bengali)*

31
 32

A song I sing. A song I sing to Thee!

1 ⁶² ?The idea is that the brave alone can be compassionate, and not the coward.
 2
 3 ⁶³ ?The wheel of constant birth and death, hence the world.
 4
 5 ⁶⁴ ?The cremation-ground.
 6
 7 ⁶⁵ ?The Dark One, Kali.
 8

1 Nor care I for men's comments, good or bad.
 2 Censure or praise I hold of no account.
 3 Servant am I, true servant of Thee Both,⁶⁶
 4 Low at Thy feet, with Shakti, I salute!
 5
 6 Thou standest steadfast, ever at my back,
 7 Hence when I turn me round, I see Thy face,
 8 Thy smiling face. Therefore I sing again
 9 And yet again. Therefore I fear no fear;
 10 For birth and death lie prostrate at my feet.
 11
 12 Thy servant am I through birth after birth,
 13 Sea of mercy, inscrutable Thy ways;
 14 So is my destiny inscrutable;
 15 It is unknown; nor would I wish to know.
 16 Bhakti, Mukti, Japa, Tapas, all these,
 17 Enjoyment, worship, and devotion too--
 18 These things and all things similar to these,
 19 I have expelled at Thy supreme command.
 20 But only one desire is left in me--
 21 An intimacy with Thee, mutual!
 22 Take me, O Lord across to Thee;
 23 Let no desire's dividing line prevent.
 24
 25 The eye looks out upon the universe,
 26 Nor does it seek to look upon itself;
 27 Why should it? It sees itself in others.
 28 Thou art my eyes! Thou and Thou alone;
 29 For every living temple shrines Thy face.
 30
 31 Like to the playing of a little child
 32 Is every attitude of mine toward Thee.
 33 Even, at times, I dare be angered with Thee;
 34 Even, at times, I'd wander far away:--
 35 Yet there, in greyest gloom of darkest night,
 36 Yet there, with speechless mouth and tearful eyes,

⁶⁶ ?Purusha and Prakriti together.

1 Thou standest fronting me, and Thy sweet Face
 2 Stoops down with loving look on face of mine.
 3 Then, instantly, I turn me back to Thee,
 4 And at Thy feet I fall on bended knees.
 5 I crave no pardon at Thy gentle hands,
 6 For Thou art never angry with Thy son.
 7 Who else with all my foolish freaks would bear?
 8
 9 Thou art my Master! Thou my soul's real mate.
 10 Many a time I see Thee--I am Thee!
 11 Ay, I am Thee, and Thou, my Lord, art me!
 12 Thou art within my speech. Within my throat
 13 Art Thou, as Vinapani,⁶⁷ learned, wise.
 14 On the flow of Thy current and its force
 15 Humanity is carried as Thou wilt.
 16 The thunder of Thy Voice is borne upon the boom
 17 Of crashing waves, of over-leaping seas;
 18 The sun and moon give utterance to Thy Voice;
 19 Thy conversation, in the gentle breeze
 20 Makes itself heard in truth, in very truth,
 21 True! True! And yet, the while, these gross precepts
 22 Give not the message of the Higher Truth
 23 Known to the knower!
 24 Lo! The sun, the moon,
 25 The moving planets and the shining stars,
 26 Spheres of abode by myriads in the skies,
 27 The comet swift, the glimmering lightning-flash,
 28 The firmament, expanded, infinite--
 29 These all, observant watchful eyes behold.
 30
 31 Anger, desire, greed, Moha,⁶⁸ and the rest,⁶⁹
 32 Whence issues forth the waving of the play
 33 Of this existence; the home wherein dwells

1 ⁶⁷ ?Goddess of learning.

2
3 ⁶⁸ ?Delusion.

4
5 ⁶⁹ ?Such as pride and malice, the sixfold evil.

1 Knowledge, and non-knowledge--whose centre is
2 The feeling of small self, the "Aham!" "Aham!"
3 Full of the dual sense of pleasure and of pain,
4 Teeming with birth and life, decay and death,
5 Whose arms are "The External" and "The Internal",
6 All things that are, down to the ocean's depths,
7 Up to sun, moon, and stars in spanless space--
8 The Mind, the Buddhi, Chitta, Ahamkar,
9 The Deva, Yaksha, man and demon, all,
10 The quadruped, the bird, the worm, all insect life,
11 The atom and its compound, all that is,
12 Animate and inanimate, all, all--
13 The Internal and the External--dwell
14 In that one common plane of existence!
15 This outward presentation is of order gross,
16 As hair on human brow, Ay! very gross.

17
18 On the spurs of the massive Mount Meru⁷⁰
19 The everlasting snowy ranges lie,
20 Extending miles and miles beyond more miles.
21 Piercing through clouds into the sky above
22 Its peaks thrust up in hundreds, glorious,
23 Brilliantly glistening, countless, snowy-white:
24 Flash upon flash of vivid lightning fleet,
25 The sun, high in his northern solstice hung,
26 With force of thousand rays concentrating,
27 Pours down upon the mountain floods of heat,
28 Furious as a billion thunderbolts,
29 From peak to peak.
30 Behold! The radiant sun
31 Swoons, as it were, in each. Then melts
32 The massive mountain with its crested peaks!
33 Down, down, it falls, with a horrific crash!
34 Water with water lies commingled now,
35 And all has passed like to a passing dream.

1 ⁷⁰ ?The name of a fabulous mountain round which the planets are said to
2 revolve.
3

1
 2 When all the many movements of the mind
 3 Are, by Thy grace, made one, and unified,
 4 The light of that unfoldment is so great
 5 That, in its splendour, it surpasses far
 6 The brilliance of ten thousand rising suns.
 7 Then, sooth, the sun of Chit⁷¹ reveals itself.
 8 And melt away the sun and moon and stars,
 9 High heaven above, the nether worlds, and all!
 10 This universe seems but a tiny pool
 11 Held in a hollow caused by some cow's hoof.
 12 This is the reaching of the region which
 13 Beyond the plane of the External lies.
 14 Calmed are the clamours of the urgent flesh,
 15 The tumult of the boastful mind is hushed,
 16 Cords of the heart are loosened and set free,
 17 Unfastened are the bondages that bind,
 18 Attachment and delusion are no more!
 19 Ay! There sounds sonorous the Sound
 20 Void of vibration. Verily! Thy Voice!
 21 Hearing that Voice, Thy servant, reverently,
 22 Stands ever ready to fulfil Thy work.
 23
 24 "I exist. When, at Pralaya time
 25 This wondrous universe is swallowed up;
 26 Knowledge, the knower and the known, dissolved;
 27 The world no more distinguishable, now,
 28 No more conceivable; when sun and moon
 29 And all the outspent stars, remain no more--
 30 Then is the state of Maha-Nirvana,
 31 When action, act, and actor, are no more,
 32 When instrumentality is no more;
 33 Great darkness veils the bosom of the dark--
 34 There I am present.
 35
 36 "I am present! At Pralaya time,

⁷¹ ?Knowledge.

1 When this vast universe is swallowed up,
2 Knowledge, and knower, and the known
3 Merged into one.
4 The universe no more
5 Can be distinguished or can be conceived
6 By intellect. The sun and moon and stars are not.
7 Over the bosom of the darkness, darkness moves
8 Intense. Devoid of all the threefold bonds,
9 Remains the universe. Gunas are calmed
10 Of all distinctions. Everything deluged
11 In one homogeneous mass, subtle,
12 Pure, of atom-form, indivisible--
13 There I am present.
14
15 "Once again, I unfold Myself--that 'I';
16 Of My 'Shakti' the first great change is Om;
17 The Primal Voice rings through the void;
18 Infinite Space hears that great vibrant sound.
19 The group of Primal Causes shakes off sleep,
20 New life revives atoms interminable;
21 Cosmic existence heaves and whirls and sways,
22 Dances and gyrates, moves towards the core,
23 From distances immeasurably far.
24
25 The animate Wind arouses rings of Waves
26 Over the Ocean of great Elements;
27 Stirring, falling, surging, that vast range of Waves
28 Rushes with lightning fury. Fragments thrown
29 By force of royal resistance through the path
30 Of space, rush, endless, in the form of spheres
31 Celestial, numberless. Planets and stars
32 Speed swift; and man's abode, the earth revolves
33
34 "At the Beginning, I the Omniscient One,
35 I am! The moving and the un-moving,
36 All this Creation comes into being
37 By the unfoldment of My power supreme.

1 I play with My own Maya, My Power Divine.
2 The One, I become the many, to behold
3 My own Form.
4
5 "At the Beginning, I, the Omniscient One,
6 I am! The moving and the un-moving;
7 All this Creation comes into being
8 By the unfoldment of My power supreme.
9 Perforce of My command, the wild storm blows
10 On the face of the earth; clouds clash and roar;
11 The flash of lightning startles and rebounds;
12 Softly and gently the Malaya breeze
13 Flows in and out like calm, unruffled breath;
14 The moon's rays pour their cooling current forth;
15 The earth's bare body in fair garb is clothed,
16 Of trees and creepers multitudinous;
17 And the flower abloom lifts her happy face,
18 Washed with drops of dew, towards the sun."
19

1
2 **LETTERS**
3

4 I

5 Allahabad
6 5th January,
7

8 1890

9 {original in Bengali}

10 My Dear Fakir {Shri Yajneswar Bhattacharya},

11 . . . A word for you. Remember always, I may not see you
12 again. Be moral. Be brave. Be a heart-whole man. Strictly moral,
13 brave unto desperation. Don't bother your head with religious
14 theories. Cowards only sin, brave men never, no, not even in mind.
15 Try to love anybody and everybody. Be a *man* and try to make those
16 immediately under your care, namely Ram, Krishnamayi, and Indu,
17 brave, moral, and sympathising. No religion for you, my children,
18 but morality and bravery. No cowardice, no sin, no crime, no
19 weakness--the rest will come of itself. . . . And don't take Ram with
20 you ever or ever allow him to visit a theatre or any enervating
entertainment whatever.

21 Yours

22 affectionately,

23 Vivekananda
24
25

26 {original in Bengali}

27 My Dear Ram, Krishnamayi, and Indu,

28 Bear in mind, my children, that only cowards and those who
29 are weak commit sin and tell lies. The brave are always moral. Try
30 to be moral, try to be brave, try to be sympathising.

31 Yours,

32 Vivekananda
33
34

35 II

36 Bombay,
37 20th
38

39 September, 1892

40 Dear Panditji Maharaj {Pandit Shankarlal of Khetri},

41 Your letter has reached me duly. I do not know why I should
42 be undeservingly praised. "None is good, save One, that is, God", as
43 the Lord Jesus hath said. The rest are only tools in His hands.
"Gloria in Excelsis", "Glory unto God in the highest", and unto men

1 that deserve, but not to such an undeserving one like me. Here "the
2 servant is *not* worthy of the hire"; and a Fakir, especially, has no
3 right to any praise whatsoever, for would you praise your servant
4 for simply doing his duty? . . . My unbounded gratitude to Pandit
5 Sundarlalji, and to my Professor⁷² for this kind remembrance of me.

6 Now I will tell you something else. The Hindu mind was ever
7 deductive and never synthetic or inductive. In all our philosophies,
8 we always find hair-splitting arguments, taking for granted some
9 general proposition, but the proposition itself may be as childish as
10 possible. Nobody ever asked or searched the truth of these general
11 propositions. Therefore independent thought we have almost none
12 to speak of, and hence the dearth of those sciences which are the
13 results of observation and generalisation. And why was it thus?--
14 From two causes: The tremendous heat of the climate forcing us to
15 love rest and contemplation better than activity, and the Brahmins
16 as priests never undertaking journeys or voyages to distant lands.
17 There were voyagers and people who travelled far; but they were
18 almost always traders, i.e. people from whom priestcraft and their
19 own sole love for gain had taken away all capacity for intellectual
20 development. So their observations, instead of adding to the store
21 of human knowledge, rather degenerated it; for their observations
22 were bad and their accounts exaggerated and tortured into
23 fantastical shapes, until they passed all recognition.

24 So you see, we must travel, we must go to foreign parts. We
25 must see how the engine of society works in other countries, and
26 keep free and open communication with what is going on in the
27 minds of other nations, if we really want to be a nation again. And
28 over and above all, we must cease to tyrannise. To what a ludicrous
29 state are we brought! If a Bhangi comes to anybody as a Bhangi, he
30 would be shunned as the plague; but no sooner does he get a cupful
31 of water poured upon his head with some mutterings of prayers by
32 a Padri, and get a coat on his back, no matter how threadbare, and
33 come into the room of the most orthodox Hindu--I don't see the man
34 who then dare refuse him a chair and a hearty shake of the hands!
35 Irony can go no further. And come and see what they, the Padris,
36 are doing here in the Dakshin (south). They are converting the
37 lower classes by lakhs; and in Travancore, the most priest-ridden
38 country in India--where every bit of land is owned by the Brahmins .
39 . . . nearly one-fourth has become Christian! And I cannot blame
40 them; what part have they in David and what in Jesse? When, when,
41 O Lord, shall man be brother to man?

42 Yours,

43 Vivekananda

46 III

47 Oriental

48 Hotel

1 ⁷² ?With whom he read the Maha-Bhashya on Panini.
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Yokohama
10th July,

1893

Dear Alasinga, Balaji, G.G., Banking Corporation, and all my Madras Friends,

Excuse my not keeping you constantly informed of my movements. One is so busy every day, and especially myself who am quite new to the life of possessing things and taking care of them. That consumes so much of my energy. It is really an awful botheration.

From Bombay we reached Colombo. Our steamer remained in port for nearly the whole day, and we took the opportunity of getting off to have a look at the town. We drove through the streets, and the only thing I remember was a temple in which was a very gigantic Murti (image) of the Lord Buddha in a reclining posture, entering Nirvana. . . .

The next station was Penang, which is only a strip of land along the sea in the body of the Malaya Peninsula. The Malayas are all Mohammedans and in old days were noted pirates and quite a dread to merchantmen. But now the leviathan guns of modern turreted battleships have forced the Malayas to look about for more peaceful pursuits. On our way from Penang to Singapore, we had glimpses of Sumatra with its high mountains, and the Captain pointed out to me several places as the favourite haunts of pirates in days gone by. Singapore is the capital of the Straits Settlements. It has a fine botanical garden with the most splendid collection of palms. The beautiful fan-like palm, called the traveller's palm, grows here in abundance, and the bread-fruit tree everywhere. The celebrated mangosteen is as plentiful here as mangoes in Madras, but mango is nonpareil. The people here are not half so dark as the people of Madras, although so near the line. Singapore possesses a fine museum too.

Hong Kong next. You feel that you have reached China, the Chinese element predominates so much. All labour, all trade seems to be in their hands. And Hong Kong is real China. As soon as the steamer casts anchor, you are besieged with hundreds of Chinese boats to carry you to the land. These boats with two helms are rather peculiar. The boatman lives in the boat with his family. Almost always, the wife is at the helms, managing one with her hands and the other with one of her feet. And in ninety per cent of cases, you find a baby tied to her back, with the hands and feet of the little Chin left free. It is a quaint sight to see the little John Chinaman dangling very quietly from his mother's back, whilst she is now setting with might and main, now pushing heavy loads, or jumping with wonderful agility from boat to boat. And there is such a rush of boats and steam-launches coming and going out. Baby John is every moment put into the risk of having his little head pulverised, pigtail and all; but he does not care a fig. This busy life seems to have no charm for him, and he is quite content to learn the anatomy of a bit of rice-cake given to him from time to time by the madly busy mother. The Chinese child is quite a philosopher and

1 calmly goes to work at an age when your Indian boy can hardly
2 crawl on all fours. He has learnt the philosophy of necessity too
3 well. Their extreme poverty is one of the causes why the Chinese
4 and the Indians have remained in a state of mummified civilisation.
5 To an ordinary Hindu or Chinese, everyday necessity is too hideous
6 to allow him to think of anything else.

7 Hong Kong is a very beautiful town. It is built on the slopes of
8 hills and on the tops too, which are much cooler than the city. There
9 is an almost perpendicular tramway going to the top of the hill,
10 dragged by wire-rope and steam-power.

11 We remained three days at Hong Kong and went to see
12 Canton, which is eighty miles up a river. The river is broad enough
13 to allow the biggest steamers to pass through. A number of Chinese
14 steamers ply between Hong Kong and Canton. We took passage on
15 one of these in the evening and reached Canton early in the
16 morning. What a scene of bustle and life! What an immense number
17 of boats almost covering the waters! And not only those that are
18 carrying on the trade, but hundreds of others which serve as
19 houses to live in. And quite a lot of them so nice and big! In fact,
20 they are big houses two or three storeys high, with verandahs
21 running round and streets between, and all floating!

22 We landed on a strip of ground given by the Chinese
23 Government to foreigners to live in. Around us on both sides of the
24 river for miles and miles is the big city--a wilderness of human
25 beings, pushing, struggling, surging, roaring. But with all its
26 population, all its activity, it is the dirtiest town I saw, not in the
27 sense in which a town is called dirty in India, for as to that not a
28 speck of filth is allowed by the Chinese to go waste; but because of
29 the Chinaman, who has, it seems, taken a vow never to bathe!
30 Every house is a shop, people living only on the top floor. The
31 streets are very very narrow, so that you almost touch the shops on
32 both sides as you pass. At every ten paces you find meat-stalls, and
33 there are shops which sell cat's and dog's meat. Of course, only the
34 poorest classes of Chinamen eat dog or cat.

35 The Chinese ladies can never be seen. They have got as strict
36 a zenana as the Hindus of Northern India; only the women of the
37 labouring classes can be seen. Even amongst these, one sees now
38 and then a woman with feet smaller than those of your youngest
39 child, and of course they cannot be said to walk, but hobble.

40 I went to see several Chinese temples. The biggest in Canton
41 is dedicated to the memory of the first Buddhistic Emperor and the
42 five hundred first disciples of Buddhism. The central figure is of
43 course Buddha, and next beneath Him is seated the Emperor, and
44 ranging on both sides are the statues of the disciples, all beautifully
45 carved out of wood.

46 From Canton I returned back to Hong Kong, and from thence
47 to Japan. The first port we touched was Nagasaki. We landed for a
48 few hours and drove through the town. What a contrast! The
49 Japanese are one of the cleanliest peoples on earth. Everything is
50 neat and tidy. Their streets are nearly all broad, straight, and
51 regularly paved. Their little houses are cage-like, and their pine-

1 covered evergreen little hills form the background of almost every
2 town and village. The short-statured, fair-skinned, quaintly-dressed
3 Japs, their movements, attitudes, gestures, everything is
4 picturesque. Japan is the land of the picturesque! Almost every
5 house has a garden at the back, very nicely laid out according to
6 Japanese fashion with small shrubs, grass-plots, small artificial
7 waters, and small stone bridges.

8 From Nagasaki to Kobe. Here I gave up the steamer and took
9 the land-route to Yokohama, with a view to see the interior of Japan.

10 I have seen three big cities in the interior--Osaka, a great
11 manufacturing town, Kyoto, the former capital, and Tokyo, the
12 present capital. Tokyo is nearly twice the size of Calcutta with
13 nearly double the population.

14 No foreigner is allowed to travel in the interior without a
15 passport.

16 The Japanese seem now to have fully awakened themselves to
17 the necessity of the present times. They have now a thoroughly
18 organised army equipped with guns which one of their own officers
19 has invented and which is said to be second to none. Then, they are
20 continually increasing their navy. I have seen a tunnel nearly a mile
21 long, bored by a Japanese engineer.

22 The match factories are simply a sight to see, and they are
23 bent upon making everything they want in their own country. There
24 is a Japanese line of steamers plying between China and Japan,
25 which shortly intends running between Bombay and Yokohama.

26 I saw quite a lot of temples. In every temple there are some
27 Sanskrit Mantras written in Old Bengali characters. Only a few of
28 the priests know Sanskrit. But they are an intelligent sect. The
29 modern rage for progress has penetrated even the priesthood. I
30 cannot write what I have in my mind about the Japs in one short
31 letter. Only I want that numbers of our young men should pay a visit
32 to Japan and China every year. Especially to the Japanese, India is
33 still the dreamland of everything high and good. And you, what are
34 you? . . . talking twaddle all your lives, vain talkers, what are you?
35 Come, see these people, and then go and hide your faces in shame.
36 A race of dotards, you lose your caste if you come out! Sitting down
37 these hundreds of years with an ever-increasing load of crystallised
38 superstition on your heads, for hundreds of years spending all your
39 energy upon discussing the touchableness or untouchableness of
40 this food or that, with all humanity crushed out of you by the
41 continuous social tyranny of ages--what are you? And what are you
42 doing now? . . . promenading the seashores with books in your
43 hands--repeating undigested stray bits of European brainwork, and
44 the whole soul bent upon getting a thirty-rupee clerkship, or at best
45 becoming a lawyer--the height of young India's ambition--and every
46 student with a whole brood of hungry children cackling at his heels
47 and asking for bread! Is there not water enough in the sea to drown
48 you, books, gowns, university diplomas, and all?

49 Come, be men! Kick out the priests who are always against
50 progress, because they would never mend, their hearts would never

1 become big. They are the offspring of centuries of superstition and
2 tyranny. Root out priestcraft first. Come, be men! Come out of your
3 narrow holes and have a look abroad. See how nations are on the
4 march! Do you love man? Do you love your country? Then come, let
5 us struggle for higher and better things; look not back, no, not even
6 if you see the dearest and nearest cry. Look not back, but forward!

7 India wants the sacrifice of at least a thousand of her young
8 men--men, mind, and not brutes. The English Government has been
9 the instrument, brought over here by the Lord, to break your
10 crystallised civilisation, and Madras supplied the first men who
11 helped in giving the English a footing. How many men, unselfish,
12 thorough-going men, is Madras ready now to supply, to struggle
13 unto life and death to bring about a new state of things--sympathy
14 for the poor, and bread to their hungry mouths, enlightenment to
15 the people at large--and struggle unto death to make men of them
16 who have been brought to the level of beasts, by the tyranny of your
17 forefathers?

18 Yours etc.,

19 Vivekananda

20 PS. Calm and silent and steady work, and no newspaper humbug,
21 no name-making, you must always remember. V.

22
23
24 IV

25 Breezy

26 Meadows,

27 Metcalf,

28 Mass.

29 20th August,

30 1893

31 Dear Alasinga,

32 Received your letter yesterday. Perhaps you have by this time
33 got my letter from Japan. From Japan I reached Vancouver. The way
34 was by the Northern Pacific. It was very cold and I suffered much
35 for want of warm clothing. However, I reached Vancouver anyhow,
36 and thence went through Canada to Chicago. I remained about
37 twelve days in Chicago. And almost every day I used to go to the
38 Fair. It is a tremendous affair. One must take at least ten days to go
39 through it. The lady to whom Varada Rao introduced me and her
40 husband belong to the highest Chicago society, and they were so
41 very kind to me. I took my departure from Chicago and came to
42 Boston. Mr. Lalubhai was with me up to Boston. He was very kind to
43 me. . . .

44 The expense I am bound to run into here is awful. You
45 remember, you gave me £170 in notes and £9 in cash. It has come
46 down to £130 in all!! On an average it costs me £1 every day; a
47 cigar costs eight annas of our money. The Americans are so rich
48 that they spend money like water, and by forced legislation keep up

1 the price of everything so high that no other nation on earth can
2 approach it. Every common coolie earns nine or ten rupees a day
3 and spends as much. All those rosy ideas we had before starting
4 have melted, and I have now to fight against impossibilities. A
5 hundred times I had a mind to go out of the country and go back to
6 India. But I am determined, and I have a call from Above; I see no
7 way, but His eyes see. And I must stick to my guns, life or death. . . .

8 Just now I am living as the guest of an old lady in a village
9 near Boston. I accidentally made her acquaintance in the railway
10 train, and she invited me to come over and live with her. I have an
11 advantage in living with her, in saving for some time my
12 expenditure of £1 per day, and she has the advantage of inviting her
13 friends over here and showing them a curio from India! And all this
14 must be borne. Starvation, cold, hooting in the streets on account of
15 my quaint dress, these are what I have to fight against. But, my
16 dear boy, no great things were ever done without great labour.

17 . . . Know, then, that this is the land of Christians, and any
18 other influence than that is almost zero. Nor do I care a bit for the
19 enmity of any __ists in the world. I am here amongst the children of
20 the Son of Mary, and the Lord Jesus will help me. They like much
21 the broad views of Hinduism and my love for the Prophet of
22 Nazareth. I tell them that I preach nothing against the Great One of
23 Galilee. I only ask the Christians to take in the Great Ones of Ind
24 along with the Lord Jesus, and they appreciate it.

25 Winter is approaching and I shall have to get all sorts of
26 warm clothing, and we require more warm clothing than the
27 natives. . . . Look sharp, my boy, take courage. We are destined by
28 the Lord to do great things in India. Have faith. We will do. We, the
29 poor and the despised, who really feel, and not those. . . .

30 In Chicago, the other day, a funny thing happened. The Raja
31 of Kapurthala was here, and he was being lionised by some portion
32 of Chicago society. I once met the Raja in the Fair grounds, but he
33 was too big to speak with a poor Fakir. There was an eccentric
34 Mahratta Brahmin selling nail-made pictures in the Fair, dressed in
35 a dhoti. This fellow told the reporters all sorts of things against the
36 Raja--, that he was a man of low caste, that those Rajas were
37 nothing but slaves, and that they generally led immoral lives, etc.,
38 etc. And these truthful (?) editors, for which America is famous,
39 wanted to give to the boy's stories some weight; and so the next day
40 they wrote huge columns in their papers about the description of a
41 man of wisdom from India, meaning me--extolling me to the skies,
42 and putting all sorts of words in my mouth, which I never even
43 dreamt of, and ascribing to me all those remarks made by the
44 Mahratta Brahmin about the Raja of Kapurthala. And it was such a
45 good brushing that Chicago society gave up the Raja in hot haste. . .
46 . These newspaper editors made capital out of me to give my
47 countryman a brushing. That shows, however, that in this country
48 intellect carries more weight than all the pomp of money and title.

49 Yesterday Mrs. Johnson, the lady superintendent of the
50 women's prison, was here. They don't call it prison but reformatory
51 here. It is the grandest thing I have seen in America. How the

1 inmates are benevolently treated, how they are reformed and sent
2 back as useful members of society; how grand, how beautiful, you
3 must see to believe! And, oh, how my heart ached to think of what
4 we think of the poor, the low, in India. They have no chance, no
5 escape, no way to climb up. The poor, the low, the sinner in India
6 have no friends, no help--they cannot rise, try however they may.
7 They sink lower and lower every day, they feel the blows showered
8 upon them by a cruel society, and they do not know whence the
9 blow comes. They have forgotten that they too are men. And the
10 result is slavery. Thoughtful people within the last few years have
11 seen it, but unfortunately laid it at the door of the Hindu religion,
12 and to them, the only way of bettering is by crushing this grandest
13 religion of the world. Hear me, my friend, I have discovered the
14 secret through the grace of the Lord. Religion is not in fault. On the
15 other hand, your religion teaches you that every being is only your
16 own self multiplied. But it was the want of practical application, the
17 want of sympathy--the want of heart. The Lord once more came to
18 you as Buddha and taught you how to feel, how to sympathise with
19 the poor, the miserable, the sinner, but you heard Him not. Your
20 priest invented the horrible story that the Lord was here for
21 deluding demons with false doctrines! True indeed, but we are the
22 demons, not those that believed. And just as the Jews denied the
23 Lord Jesus and are since that day wandering over the world as
24 homeless beggars, tyrannised over by everybody, so you are the
25 bond-slaves to any nation that thinks it worth while to rule over you.
26 Ah, tyrants! you do not know that the obverse is tyranny, and the
27 reverse slavery. The slave and the tyrant are synonymous.

28 Balaji and G. G. may remember one evening at the
29 Pondicherry--we were discussing the matter of sea-voyage with a
30 Pandit, and I shall always remember his brutal gestures and his
31 Kadapi Na (never)! They do not know that India is a very small part
32 of the world, and the whole world looks down with contempt upon
33 the three hundred millions of earthworms crawling upon the fair
34 soil of India and trying to oppress each other. This state of things
35 must be removed, not by destroying religion but by following the
36 great teachings of the Hindu faith, and joining with it the wonderful
37 sympathy of that logical development of Hinduism--Buddhism.

38 A hundred thousand men and women, fired with the zeal of
39 holiness, fortified with eternal faith in the Lord, and nerved to lion's
40 courage by their sympathy for the poor and the fallen and the
41 downtrodden, will go over the length and breadth of the land,
42 preaching the gospel of salvation, the gospel of help, the gospel of
43 social raising-up--the gospel of equality.

44 No religion on earth preaches the dignity of humanity in such
45 a lofty strain as Hinduism, and no religion on earth treads upon the
46 necks of the poor and the low in such a fashion as Hinduism. The
47 Lord has shown me that religion is not in fault, but it is the
48 Pharisees and Sadducees in Hinduism, hypocrites, who invent all
49 sorts of engines of tyranny in the shape of doctrines of
50 Paramarthika and Vyavaharika.

51 Despair not; remember the Lord says in the Gita, "To work
52 you have the right, but not to the result." Gird up your loins, my boy.

1 I am called by the Lord for this. I have been dragged through a
2 whole life full of crosses and tortures, I have seen the nearest and
3 dearest die, almost of starvation; I have been ridiculed, distrusted,
4 and have suffered for my sympathy for the very men who scoff and
5 scorn. Well, my boy, this is the school of misery, which is also the
6 school for great souls and prophets for the cultivation of sympathy,
7 of patience, and, above all, of an indomitable iron will which quakes
8 not even if the universe be pulverised at our feet. I pity them. It is
9 not their fault. They are children, yea, veritable children, though
10 they be great and high in society. Their eyes see nothing beyond
11 their little horizon of a few yards--the routine-work, eating,
12 drinking, earning, and begetting, following each other in
13 mathematical precision. They know nothing beyond--happy little
14 souls! Their sleep is never disturbed, their nice little brown studies
15 of lives never rudely shocked by the wail of woe, of misery, of
16 degradation, and poverty, that has filled the Indian atmosphere--the
17 result of centuries of oppression. They little dream of the ages of
18 tyranny, mental, moral, and physical, that has reduced the image of
19 God to a mere beast of burden; the emblem of the Divine Mother, to
20 a slave to bear children; and life itself, a curse. But there are others
21 who see, feel, and shed tears of blood in their hearts, who think
22 that there is a remedy for it, and who are ready to apply this
23 remedy at any cost, even to the giving up of life. And "of such is the
24 kingdom of Heaven". Is it not then natural, my friends, that they
25 have no time to look down from their heights to the vagaries of
26 these contemptible little insects, ready every moment to spit their
27 little venoms?

28 Trust not to the so-called rich, they are more dead than alive.
29 The hope lies in you--in the meek, the lowly, but the faithful. Have
30 faith in the Lord; no policy, it is nothing. Feel for the miserable and
31 look up for help--it *shall come*. I have travelled twelve years with
32 this load in my heart and this idea in my head. I have gone from
33 door to door of the so-called rich and great. With a bleeding heart I
34 have crossed half the world to this strange land, seeking for help.
35 The Lord is great. I know He will help me. I may perish of cold or
36 hunger in this land, but I bequeath to you, young men, this
37 sympathy, this struggle for the poor, the ignorant, the oppressed.
38 Go now this minute to the temple of Parthasarathi,⁷³ and before
39 Him who was friend to the poor and lowly cowherds of Gokula, who
40 never shrank to embrace the Pariah Guhaka, who accepted the
41 invitation of a prostitute in preference to that of nobles and saved
42 her in His incarnation as Buddha--yea, down on your faces before
43 Him, and make a great sacrifice, the sacrifice of a whole life for
44 them, for whom He comes from time to time, whom He loves above
45 all, the poor, the lowly, the oppressed. Vow, then, to devote your
46 whole lives to the cause of the redemption of these three hundred
47 millions, going down and down every day.

48 It is not the work of a day, and the path is full of the most
49 deadly thorns. But Parthasarathi is ready to be our Sarathi--we
50 know that. And in His name and with eternal faith in Him, set fire to

1 ⁷³ ?Shri Krishna as Sarathi, charioteer, of Partha or Arjuna.
2

1 the mountain of misery that has been heaped upon India for ages--
2 and it shall be burned down. Come then, look it in the face,
3 brethren, it is a grand task, and we are so low. But we are the sons
4 of Light and children of God. Glory unto the Lord, we will succeed.
5 Hundreds will fall in the struggle, hundreds will be ready to take it
6 up. I may die here unsuccessful, another will take up the task. You
7 know the disease, you know the remedy, only have faith. Do not look
8 up to the so-called rich and great; do not care for the heartless
9 intellectual writers, and their cold-blooded newspaper articles.
10 Faith, sympathy--fiery faith and fiery sympathy! Life is nothing,
11 death is nothing, hunger nothing, cold nothing. Glory unto the
12 Lord--march on, the Lord is our General. Do not look back to see
13 who falls--forward--onward! Thus and thus we shall go on, brethren.
14 One falls, and another takes up the work.

15 From this village I am going to Boston tomorrow. I am going
16 to speak at a big Ladies' Club here, which is helping Ramabai. I
17 must first go and buy some clothing in Boston. If I am to live longer
18 here, my quaint dress will not do. People gather by hundreds in the
19 streets to see me. So what I want is to dress myself in a long black
20 coat, and keep a red robe and turban to wear when I lecture. This is
21 what the ladies advise me to do, and they are the rulers here, and I
22 must have their sympathy. Before you get this letter my money
23 would come down to somewhat about £70 or £60. So try your best
24 to send some money. It is necessary to remain here for some time to
25 have any influence here. I could not see the phonograph for Mr.
26 Bhattacharya as I got his letter here. If I go to Chicago again, I will
27 look for them. I do not know whether I shall go back to Chicago or
28 not. My friends there write me to represent India. And the
29 gentleman, to whom Varada Rao introduced me, is one of the
30 directors of the Fair; but then I refused as I would have to spend all
31 my little stock of money in remaining more than a month in
32 Chicago.

33 In America, there are no classes in the railway except in
34 Canada. So I have to travel first-class, as that is the only class; but I
35 do not venture in the Pullmans. They are very comfortable--you
36 sleep, eat, drink, even bathe in them, just as if you were in a hotel--
37 but they are too expensive.

38 It is very hard work getting into society and making yourself
39 heard. Now nobody is in the towns, they are all away in summer
40 places. They will all come back in winter. Therefore I must wait.
41 After such a struggle, I am not going to give up easily. Only try your
42 best to help me as much as you can; and even if you cannot, I must
43 try to the end. And even if I die of cold or disease or hunger here,
44 you take up the task. Holiness, sincerity, and faith. I have left
45 instructions with Cooks to forward any letter or money to me
46 wherever I am. Rome was not built in a day. If you can keep me
47 here for six months at least, I hope everything will come right. In
48 the meantime I am trying my best to find any plank I can float upon.
49 And if I find out any means to support myself, I shall wire to you
50 immediately.

51 First I will try in America; and if I fail, try in England; if I fail,
52 go back to India and wait for further commands from High.

1 Ramdas's father has gone to England. He is in a hurry to go home.
2 He is a very good man at heart, only the Baniya roughness on the
3 surface. It would take more than twenty days for the letter to reach.
4 Even now it is so cold in New England that every day we have fires
5 night and morning. Canada is still colder. I never saw snow on such
6 low hills as there.

7 Gradually I can make my way; but that means a longer
8 residence in this horribly expensive country. Just now the raising of
9 the Rupee in India has created a panic in this country, and lots of
10 mills have been stopped. So I cannot hope for anything just now,
11 but I must wait.

12 Just now I have been to the tailor and ordered some winter
13 clothings, and that would cost at least Rs. 300 and up. And still it
14 would not be good clothes, only decent. Ladies here are very
15 particular about a man's dress, and they are the power in this
16 country. They . . . never fail the missionaries. They are helping our
17 Ramabai every year. If you fail in keeping me here, send some
18 money to get me out of the country. In the meantime if anything
19 turns out in my favour, I will write or wire. A word costs Rs.4 in
20 cable!!

21 Yours,
22 Vivekananda

23
24
25 V

26 Chicago
27 2nd

28 November, 1893

29 Dear Alasinga,

30 I am so sorry that a moment's weakness on my part should
31 cause you so much trouble; I was out of pocket at that time. Since
32 then the Lord sent me friends. At a village near Boston I made the
33 acquaintance of Dr. Wright, Professor of Greek in the Harvard
34 University. He sympathised with me very much and urged upon me
35 the necessity of going to the Parliament of Religions, which he
36 thought would give me an introduction to the nation. As I was not
37 acquainted with anybody, the Professor undertook to arrange
38 everything for me, and eventually I came back to Chicago. Here I,
39 together with the oriental and occidental delegates to the
40 Parliament of Religions, were all lodged in the house of a
41 gentleman.

42 On the morning of the opening of the Parliament, we all
43 assembled in a building called the Art Palace, where one huge and
44 other smaller temporary halls were erected for the sittings of the
45 Parliament. Men from all nations were there. From India were
46 Mazoomdar of the Brahmo Samaj, and Nagarkar of Bombay, Mr.
47 Gandhi representing the Jains, and Mr. Chakravarti representing
48 Theosophy with Mrs. Annie Besant. Of these, Mazoomdar and I

1 were, of course, old friends, and Chakravarti knew me by name.
2 There was a grand procession, and we were all marshalled on to
3 the platform. Imagine a hall below and a huge gallery above,
4 packed with six or seven thousand men and women representing
5 the best culture of the country, and on the platform learned men of
6 all the nations of the earth. And I, who never spoke in public in my
7 life, to address this august assemblage!! It was opened in great
8 form with music and ceremony and speeches; then the delegates
9 were introduced one by one, and they stepped up and spoke. Of
10 course my heart was fluttering, and my tongue nearly dried up; I
11 was so nervous and could not venture to speak in the morning.
12 Mazoomdar made a nice speech, Chakravarti a nicer one, and they
13 were much applauded. They were all prepared and came with
14 ready-made speeches. I was a fool and had none, but bowed down
15 to Devi Sarasvati and stepped up, and Dr. Barrows introduced me. I
16 made a short speech. I addressed the assembly as "Sisters and
17 Brothers of America", a deafening applause of two minutes
18 followed, and then I proceeded; and when it was finished, I sat
19 down, almost exhausted with emotion. The next day all the papers
20 announced that my speech was the hit of the day, and I became
21 known to the whole of America. Truly has it been said by the great
22 commentator Shridhara--"{Sanskrit}--Who maketh the dumb a
23 fluent speaker." His name be praised! From that day I became a
24 celebrity, and the day I read my paper of Hinduism, the hall was
25 packed as it had never been before. I quote to you from one of the
26 papers: "Ladies, ladies, ladies packing every place--filling every
27 corner, they patiently waited and waited while the papers that
28 separated them from Vivekananda were read", etc. You would be
29 astonished if I sent over to you the newspaper cuttings, but you
30 already know that I am a hater of celebrity. Suffice it to say, that
31 whenever I went on the platform, a deafening applause would be
32 raised for me. Nearly all the papers paid high tributes to me, and
33 even the most bigoted had to admit that "This man with his
34 handsome face and magnetic presence and wonderful oratory is the
35 most prominent figure in the Parliament", etc., etc. Sufficient for
36 you to know that never before did an Oriental make such an
37 impression on American society.

38 And how to speak of their kindness? I have no more wants
39 now, I am well off, and all the money that I require to visit Europe I
40 shall get from here. . . . A boy called Narasimhacharya has cropped
41 up in our midst. He has been loafing about the city for the last three
42 years. Loafing or no loafing, I like him; but please write to me all
43 about him if you know anything. He knows you. He came in the year
44 of the Paris Exhibition to Europe. . . .

45 I am now out of want. Many of the handsomest houses in this
46 city are open to me. All the time I am living as a guest of somebody
47 or other. There is a curiosity in this nation, such as you meet with
48 nowhere else. They want to know everything, and their women--
49 they are the most advanced in the world. The average American
50 woman is far more cultivated than the average American man. The
51 men slave all their life for money, and the women snatch every
52 opportunity to improve themselves. And they are a very kind-

1 hearted, frank people. Everybody who has a fad to preach comes
2 here, and I am sorry to say that most of these are not sound. The
3 Americans have their faults too, and what nation has not? But this
4 is my summing up: Asia laid the germs of civilisation, Europe
5 developed man, and America is developing the woman and the
6 masses. It is the paradise of the woman and the labourer. Now
7 contrast the American masses and women with ours, and you get
8 the idea at once. The Americans are fast becoming liberal. Judge
9 them not by specimens of *hard-shelled Christians* (it is their own
10 phrase) that you see in India. There are those here too, but their
11 number is decreasing rapidly, and this great nation is progressing
12 fast towards that spirituality which is the standard boast of the
13 Hindu.

14 The Hindu must not give up his religion, but must keep
15 religion within its proper limits and give freedom to society to grow.
16 All the reformers in India made the serious mistake of holding
17 religion accountable for all the horrors of priestcraft and
18 degeneration and went forthwith to pull down the indestructible
19 structure, and what was the result? Failure! Beginning from
20 Buddha down to Ram Mohan Roy, everyone made the mistake of
21 holding caste to be a religious institution and tried to pull down
22 religion and caste all together, and failed. But in spite of all the
23 ravings of the priests, caste is simply a crystallised social
24 institution, which after doing its service is now filling the
25 atmosphere of India with its stench, and it can only be removed by
26 giving back to the people their lost social individuality. Every man
27 born here knows that he is a *man*. Every man born in India knows
28 that he is a slave of society. Now, freedom is the only condition of
29 growth; take that off, the result is degeneration. With the
30 introduction of modern competition, see how caste is disappearing
31 fast! No religion is now necessary to kill it. The Brahmana
32 shopkeeper, shoemaker, and wine-distiller are common in Northern
33 India. And why? Because of competition. No man is prohibited from
34 doing anything he pleases for his livelihood under the present
35 Government, and the result is neck and neck competition, and thus
36 thousands are seeking and finding the highest level they were born
37 for, instead of vegetating at the bottom.

38 I must remain in this country at least through the winter, and
39 then go to Europe. The Lord will provide everything for me. You
40 need not disturb yourself about it. I cannot express my gratitude for
41 your love.

42 Day by day I am feeling that the Lord is with me, and I am
43 trying to follow His direction. His will be done. . . . We will do great
44 things for the world, and that for the sake of doing good and not for
45 name and fame.

46 "Ours not to reason why, ours but to do and die." Be of good
47 cheer and believe that we are selected by the Lord to do great
48 things, and we will do them. Hold yourself in readiness, i.e. be pure
49 and holy, and love for love's sake. Love the poor, the miserable, the
50 down-trodden, and the Lord will bless you.

51 See the Raja of Ramnad and others from time to time and

1 urge them to sympathise with the masses of India. Tell them how
2 they are standing on the neck of the poor, and that they are not fit
3 to be called men if they do not try to raise them up. Be fearless, the
4 Lord is with you, and He will yet raise the starving and ignorant
5 millions of India. A railway porter here is better educated than
6 many of your young men and most of your princes. Every American
7 woman has far better education than can be conceived of by the
8 majority of Hindu women. Why cannot we have the same
9 education? We must.

10 Think not that you are poor; money is not power, but
11 goodness, holiness. Come and see how it is so all over the world.

12 Yours with
13 blessings,

14 Vivekananda

15 PS. By the bye, your uncle's paper was the most curious
16 phenomenon I ever saw. It was like a tradesman's catalogue, and it
17 was not thought fit to be read in the Parliament. So
18 Narasimhacharya read a few extracts from it in a side hall, and
19 nobody understood a word of it. Do not tell him of it. It is a great art
20 to press the largest amount of thought into the smallest number of
21 words. Even Manilal Dvivedi's paper had to be cut very short. More
22 than a thousand papers were read, and there was no time to give to
23 such wild perorations. I had a good long time given to me over the
24 ordinary half hour, . . . because the most popular speakers were
25 always put down last, to hold the audience. And Lord bless them,
26 what sympathy they have, and what patience! They would sit from
27 ten o'clock in the morning to ten o'clock at night-only a recess of
28 half an hour for a meal, and paper after paper read, most of them
29 very trivial, but they would wait and wait to hear their favourites.

30 Dharmapala of Ceylon was one of the favourites. But
31 unfortunately he was not a good speaker. He had only quotations
32 from Max Muller and Rhys Davids to give them. He is a very sweet
33 man, and we became very intimate during the Parliament.

34 A Christian lady from Poona, Miss Sorabji, and the Jain
35 representative, Mr. Gandhi, are going to remain longer in the
36 country and make lecture tours. I hope they will succeed. Lecturing
37 is a very profitable occupation in this country and sometimes pays
38 well.

39 Mr. Ingersoll gets five to six hundred dollars a lecture. He is
40 the most celebrated lecturer in this country. Do not publish this
41 letter. After reading, send it to the Maharaja (of Khetri). I have sent
42 him my photograph in America. V.

43
44 VI

45 C/O George W. Hale

46 Esq.

47 541 Dearborn

48 Avenue, Chicago

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28th December,

1893

{original in Bengali}

Dear Haripada {Mitra},

It is very strange that news of my Chicago lectures has appeared in the Indian papers; for whatever I do, I try my best to avoid publicity. Many things strike me here. It may be fairly said that there is no poverty in this country. I have never seen women elsewhere as cultured and educated as they are here. Well-educated men there are in our country, but you will scarcely find anywhere women like those here. It is indeed true, that "the Goddess Herself lives in the houses of virtuous men as Lakshmi". I have seen thousands of women here whose hearts are as pure and stainless as snow. Oh, how free they are! It is they who control social and civic duties. Schools and colleges are full of women, and in our country women cannot be safely allowed to walk in the streets! Their kindness to me is immeasurable. Since I came here, I have been welcomed by them to their houses. They are providing me with food, arranging for my lectures, taking me to market, and doing everything for my comfort and convenience. I shall never be able to repay in the least the deep debt of gratitude I owe to them.

Do you know who is the real "Shakti-worshipper"? It is he who knows that God is the omnipresent force in the universe and sees in women the manifestation of that Force. Many men here look upon their women in this light. Manu, again, has said that gods bless those families where women are happy and well treated. Here men treat their women as well as can be desired, and hence they are so prosperous, so learned, so free, and so energetic. But why is it that we are slavish, miserable, and dead? The answer is obvious.

And how pure and chaste are they here! Few women are married before twenty or twenty-five, and they are as free as the birds in the air. They go to market, school, and college, earn money, and do all kinds of work. Those who are well-to-do devote themselves to doing good to the poor. And what are we doing? We are very regular in marrying our girls at eleven years of age lest they should become corrupt and immoral. What does our Manu enjoin? "Daughters should be supported and educated with as much care and attention as the sons." As sons should be married after observing Brahmacharya up to the thirtieth year, so daughters also must observe Brahmacharya and be educated by their parents. But what are we actually doing? Can you better the condition of your women? Then there will be hope for your well-being. Otherwise you will remain as backward as you are now.

If anybody is born of a low caste in our country, he is gone for ever, there is no hope for him. Why? What a tyranny it is! There are possibilities, opportunities, and hope for every individual in this country. Today he is poor, tomorrow he may become rich and learned and respected. Here everyone is anxious to help the poor. In India there is a howling cry that we are very poor, but how many charitable associations are there for the well-being of the poor? How many people really weep for the sorrows and sufferings of the

1 millions of poor in India? Are we *men* ? What are we doing for their
2 livelihood, for their improvement? We do not touch them, we avoid
3 their company! Are we men? Those thousands of Brahmanas--what
4 are they doing for the low, down-trodden masses of India? "Don't
5 touch", "Don't touch", is the only phrase that plays upon their lips!
6 How mean and degraded has our eternal religion become at their
7 hands! Wherein does our religion lie now? In "Don't-touchism"
8 alone, and nowhere else!

9 I came to this country not to satisfy my curiosity, nor for name
10 or fame, but to see if I could find any means for the support of the
11 poor in India. If God helps me, you will know gradually what those
12 means are.

13 As regards spirituality, the Americans are far inferior to us,
14 but their society is far superior to ours. We will teach them our
15 spirituality and assimilate what is best in their society.

16 With love and best wishes,

17 Yours,

18 Vivekananda
19
20

21 VII

22 c/o George W. Hale
23 Esq.
24 541 Dearborn
25 Avenue, Chicago

26 24th January, 1894

27 Dear Friends {his disciples in Madras},

28 Your letters have reached me. I am surprised that so much
29 about me has reached you. The criticism you mention of the *Interior*
30 is not to be taken as the attitude of the American people. That
31 paper is almost unknown here, and belongs to what they call a
32 "blue-nose Presbyterian paper", very bigoted. Still all the "blue-
33 noses" are not ungentlemanly. The American people, and many of
34 the clergy, are very hospitable to me. That paper wanted a little
35 notoriety by attacking a man who was being lionised by society.
36 That trick is well known here, and they do not think anything of it.
37 Of course, our Indian missionaries may try to make capital out of it.
38 If they do, tell them, "Mark, Jew, a judgment has come upon you!"
39 Their old building is tottering to its foundation and must come down
40 in spite of their hysterical shrieks. I pity them--if their means of
41 living fine lives in India is cut down by the influx of oriental
42 religions here. But not one of their leading clergy is ever against
43 me. Well, when I am in the pond, I must bathe thoroughly.

44 I sent you a newspaper cutting of the short sketch of our
45 religion which I read before them. Most of my speeches are
46 extempore. I hope to put them in book form before I leave the
47 country. I do not require any help from India, I have plenty here.

Employ the money you have in printing and publishing this short speech; and translating it into the vernaculars, throw it broadcast; that will keep us before the national mind. In the meantime do not forget our plan of a central college, and the starting from it to all directions in India. Work hard. . . .

About the women of America, I cannot express my gratitude for their kindness. Lord bless them. In this country, women are the life of every movement, and represent all the culture of the nation, for men are too busy to educate themselves.

I have received Kidi's letters. With the question whether caste shall go or come I have nothing to do. My idea is to bring to the door of the meanest, the poorest, the noble ideas that the human race has developed both in and out of India, and let them think for themselves. Whether there should be caste or not, whether women should be perfectly free or not, does not concern me. "Liberty of thought and action is the only condition of life, of growth and well-being." Where it does not exist, the man, the race, the nation must go down.

Caste or no caste, creed or no creed, any man, or class, or caste, or nation, or institution which bars the power of free thought and action of an individual---even so long as that power does not injure others---is devilish and must go down.

My whole ambition in life is to set in motion a machinery which will bring noble ideas to the door of everybody, and then let men and women settle their own fate. Let them know what our forefathers as well as other nations have thought on the most momentous questions of life. Let them see specially what others are doing now, and then decide. We are to put the chemicals together, the crystallisation will be done by nature according to her laws. Work hard, be steady, and have faith in the Lord. Set to work, I am coming sooner or later. Keep the motto before you---"Elevation of the masses without injuring their religion".

Remember that the nation lives in the cottage. But, alas! nobody ever did anything for them. Our modern reformers are very busy about widow remarriage. Of course, I am a sympathiser in every reform, but the fate of a nation does not depend upon the number of husbands their widows get, but upon the *condition of the masses*. Can you raise them? Can you give them back their lost individuality without making them lose their innate spiritual nature? Can you become an occidental of occidentals in your spirit of equality, freedom, work, and energy, and at the same time a Hindu to the very backbone in religious culture and instincts? This is to be done and *we will do it*. You are all *born to do it*. Have faith in yourselves, great convictions are the mothers of great deeds. Onward for ever! Sympathy for the poor, the downtrodden, even unto death--this is our motto.

Onward, brave lads!

Yours

affectionately.

Vivekananda

1 P.S. Do not publish this letter; but there is no harm in
2 preaching the idea of elevating the masses by means of a central
3 college, and bringing education as well as religion to the door of the
4 poor by means of missionaries trained in this college. Try to interest
5 everybody.

6 I send you a few newspaper cuttings--only from the very best
7 and highest. The one by Dr. Thomas is very valuable as written by
8 one of the, if not the leading clergymen of America. The *Interior*
9 with all its fanaticism and thirst for notoriety was bound to say that
10 I was the public favourite. I cut a few lines from that magazine also.

11 V.

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14 VIII

15 New York

16 9th April,

17 1894

18 Dear Alasinga,

19 I got your last letter a few days ago. You see I am so very
20 busy here, and have to write so many letters every day, that you
21 cannot expect frequent communications from me. But I try my best
22 to keep you in touch with whatever is going on here. I will write to
23 Chicago for one of the books on the Parliament of Religions to be
24 sent over to you. But by this time you have got two of my short
25 speeches.

26 Secretary Sahab writes me that I must come back to India,
27 because that is my field. No doubt of that. But my brother, we are to
28 light a torch which will shed a lustre over all India. So let us not be
29 in a hurry; everything will come by the grace of the Lord. I have
30 lectured in many of the big towns of America, and have got enough
31 to pay my passage back after paying the awful expenses here. I
32 have made a good many friends here, some of them very influential.
33 Of course, the orthodox clergymen are against me; and seeing that
34 it is not easy to grapple with me, they try to hinder, abuse, and vilify
35 me in every way; and Mazoomdar has come to their help. He must
36 have gone mad with jealousy. He has told them that I was a big
37 fraud, and a rogue! And again in Calcutta he is telling them that I
38 am leading a most sinful life in America, specially unchaste! Lord
39 bless him! My brother, no good thing can be done without
40 obstruction. It is only those who persevere to the end that
41 succeed. . . . I believe that the Satya Yuga (Golden Age) will come
42 when there will be one caste, one Veda, and peace and harmony.
43 This idea of Satya Yuga is what would revivify India. Believe it. One
44 thing is to be done if you can do it. Can you convene a big meeting
45 in Madras, getting Ramnad or any such big fellow as the President,
46 and pass a resolution of your entire satisfaction at my
47 representation of Hinduism here, and send it to the *Chicago*
48 *Herald*, *Inter-Ocean*, and the *New York Sun*, and the *Commercial*
49 *Advertiser* of Detroit (Michigan). Chicago is in Illinois. *New York*

1 *Sun* requires no particulars. Detroit is in the State of Michigan.
2 Send copies to Dr. Barrows, Chairman of the Parliament of
3 Religions, Chicago. I have forgotten his number, but the street is
4 Indiana Avenue. One copy to Mrs. J. J. Bagley of Detroit, Washington
5 Ave.

6 Try to make this meeting as big as possible. Get hold of all
7 the big bugs who must join it for their religion and country. Try to
8 get a letter from the Mysore Maharaja and the Dewan approving
9 the meeting and its purpose--so of Khetri--in fact, as big and noisy a
10 crowd as you can.

11 The resolution would be of such a nature that the Hindu
12 community of Madras, who sent me over, expressing its entire
13 satisfaction in my work here etc.

14 Now try if it is possible. This is not much work. Get also
15 letters of sympathy from all parts you can and print them and send
16 copies to the American papers--as quickly as you can. That will go a
17 long way, my brethren. The B-S- fellows here are trying to talk all
18 sorts of nonsense. We must stop their mouths as fast as we can.

19 Up boys, and put yourselves to the task! If you can do that, I
20 am sure we will be able to do much in future. Old Hinduism for
21 ever! Down with all liars and rogues! Up, up, my boys, we are sure
22 to win!

23 As to publishing my letters, such parts as ought to be
24 published may be published for our friends till I come. When once
25 we begin to work, we shall have a tremendous "boom", but I do not
26 want to talk without working. I do not know, but G. C. Ghosh and
27 Mr. Mitra of Calcutta can get up all the sympathisers of my late
28 Gurudeva to do the same in Calcutta. If they can, so much the
29 better. Ask them, if they can, to pass the same resolutions in
30 Calcutta. There are thousands in Calcutta who sympathise with our
31 movement. However I have more faith in you than in them.

32 Nothing more to write.

33 Convey my greetings to all our friends--for whom I am always
34 praying.

35 Yours with
36 blessings,

37 Vivekananda

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40 IX

41 U.S.A.

42 20th May,

43 1894

44 My Dear Sharat {Saradananda},

45 I am in receipt of your letter and am glad to learn that Shashi
46 (Ramakrishnananda) is all right. Now I tell you a curious fact.
47 Whenever anyone of you is sick, let him himself or anyone of you

1 visualise him in your mind, and mentally say and strongly imagine
2 that he is all right. That will cure him quickly. You can do it even
3 without his knowledge, and even with thousands of miles between
4 you. Remember it and do not be ill any more. You have received the
5 money by this time. If you all like, you can give to Gopal Rs. 300--
6 from the amount I sent for the Math. I have no more to send now. I
7 have to look after Madras now.

8 I cannot understand why Sanyal is so miserable on account of
9 his daughters' marriage. After all, he is going to drag his daughters
10 through the dirty Samsara (world) which he himself wants to
11 escape! I can have but one opinion of that--condemnation! I hate
12 the very name of marriage, in regard to a boy or a girl. Do you
13 mean to say that I have to help in putting someone into bondage,
14 you fool! If my brother Mohin marries, I will throw him off. I am
15 very decided about that. . . .

16 Yours in love,

17 Vivekananda

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20 X

21 Chicago

22 28th May,

23 1894

24 Dear Alasinga,

25 I could not reply to your note earlier, because I was whirling
26 to and fro from New York to Boston, and also I awaited Narasimha's
27 letter. I do not know when I am going back to India. It is better to
28 leave everything in the hands of Him who is at my back directing
29 me. Try to work without me, as if I never existed. Do not wait for
30 anybody or anything. Do whatever you can. Build your hope on
31 none. Before writing about myself, I will tell you about Narasimha.
32 He has proved a complete failure. . . . However he wrote to me for
33 help in the last stage, and I will try to help him as much as is in my
34 power. Meanwhile you tell his people to send money as soon as they
35 can for him to go over. . . . He is in distress. Of course I will see that
36 he does not starve.

37 I have done a good deal of lecturing here. . . . The expenses
38 here are terrible; money has to fly, although I have been almost
39 always taken care of everywhere by the nicest and the highest
40 families.

41 I do not know whether I shall go away this summer or not.
42 Most probably not. In the meantime try to organise and push on our
43 plans. Believe you can do everything. Know that the Lord is with us,
44 and so, onward, brave souls!

45 I have had enough appreciation in my own country.
46 Appreciation or no appreciation, sleep not, slacken not. You must
47 remember that not a bit even of our plans has been as yet carried
48 out.

1 Act on the educated young men, bring them together, and
2 organise them. Great things can be done by great sacrifices only.
3 No selfishness, no name, no fame, yours or mine, nor my Master's
4 even! Work, work the idea, the plan, my boys, my brave, noble,
5 good souls--to the wheel, to the wheel put your shoulders! Stop not
6 to look back for name, or fame, or any such nonsense. Throw self
7 overboard and work. Remember, "The grass when made into a rope
8 by being joined together can even chain a mad elephant." The
9 Lord's blessings on you all! His power be in you all--as I believe it is
10 *already*. "Wake up, stop not until the goal is reached", say the
11 Vedas. Up, up, the long night is passing, the day is approaching, the
12 wave has risen, nothing will be able to resist its tidal fury. The
13 spirit, my boys, the spirit; the love, my children, the love; the faith,
14 the belief; and fear not! The greatest sin is fear.

15 My blessings on all. Tell all the noble souls in Madras who
16 have helped our cause that I send them my eternal love and
17 gratitude, but I beg of them not to slacken. Throw the idea
18 broadcast. Do not be proud; do not insist upon anything dogmatic;
19 do not go against anything--ours is to put chemicals together, the
20 Lord knows how and when the crystal will form. Above all, be not
21 inflated with my success or yours. Great works are to be done; what
22 is this small success in comparison with what is to come? Believe,
23 believe, the decree has gone forth, the fiat of the Lord has gone
24 forth--India must rise, the masses and the poor are to be made
25 happy. Rejoice that you are the chosen instruments in His hands.
26 The flood of spirituality has risen. I see it is rolling over the land
27 resistless, boundless, all-absorbing. Every man to the fore, every
28 good will be added to its forces, every hand will smooth its way, and
29 glory be unto the Lord! . . .

30 I do not require any help. Try to get up a fund, buy some
31 magic lanterns, maps, globes, etc., and some chemicals. Get every
32 evening a crowd of the poor and low, even the Pariahs, and lecture
33 to them about religion first, and then teach them through the magic
34 lantern and other things, astronomy, geography, etc., in the dialect
35 of the people. Train up a band of fiery young men. Put your fire in
36 them and gradually increase the organisation, letting it widen and
37 widen its circle. Do the best you can, do not wait to cross the river
38 when the water has all run down. Printing magazines, papers, etc.,
39 are good, no doubt, but actual work, my boys even if infinitesimal, is
40 better than eternal scribbling and talking. Call a meeting at
41 Bhattacharya's. Get a little money and buy those things I have just
42 now stated, hire a hut, and go to work. Magazines are *secondary*,
43 but this is primary. You must have a hold on the masses. Do not be
44 afraid of a small beginning, great things come afterwards. Be
45 courageous. Do not try to lead your brethren, but serve them. The
46 brutal mania for leading has sunk many a great ship in the waters
47 of life. Take care especially of that, i.e. be unselfish even unto
48 death, and work. I could not write all I was going to say, but the
49 Lord will give you all understanding, my brave boys. At it, my boys!
50 Glory unto the Lord! . . .

51 Yours
52 affectionately,

XI

U.S.A.

11th July,

1894

Dear Alasinga,

You must never write to me anywhere else but 541 Dearborn Ave., Chicago. Your last letter has travelled the whole country to come to me, and this was only because I am so well known. Some of the resolutions are to be sent to Dr. Barrows with a letter thanking him for his kindness to me and asking him to publish the letter in some American newspapers--as that would be the best refutation of the false charges of the missionaries that I do not represent anybody. Learn business, my boy. We will do great things yet! Last year I only sowed the seeds; this year I mean to reap. In the meanwhile, keep up as much enthusiasm as possible in India. Let Kidi go his own way. He will come out all right in time. I have taken his responsibility. He has a perfect right to his own opinion. Make him write for the paper; that will keep him in good temper! My blessings on him.

Start the journal and I will send you articles from time to time. You must send a paper and a letter to Professor J.H. Wright of Harvard University, Boston, thanking him as having been the first man who stood as my friend and asking him to publish it in the papers, thus giving the lie to the missionaries.

In the Detroit lecture I got \$900, i.e. Rs. 2,700. In other lectures, I earned in one, \$2,500, i.e. Rs. 7,500 in one hour, but got only 200 dollars! I was cheated by a roguish Lecture Bureau. I have given them up. I spent a good deal here; only about \$3,000 remains.

I shall have to print much matter next year. I am going regularly to work. . . . The sheer power of the *will* will do everything. . . . You must organise a society which should regularly meet, and write to me about it as often as you can. In fact, get up as much enthusiasm as you can. Only, *beware* of falsehood. Go to work, my boys, the fire will come to you! The faculty of organisation is entirely absent in our nature, but this has to be infused. The great secret is--absence of jealousy. Be always ready to concede to the opinions of your brethren, and try always to conciliate. That is the whole secret. Fight on bravely! Life is short! Give it up to a great cause. Why do you not write anything about Narasimha? He is almost starving. I gave him something. Then he went over to somewhere, I do not know where, and does not write. Akshaya is a good boy. I like him very much. No use quarrelling with the Theosophists. Do not go and tell them all I write to you. . . . Theosophists are our pioneers, do you know? Now Judge is a Hindu and Col. a Buddhist, and Judge is the ablest man here. Now tell the Hindu Theosophists to support Judge. Even if you can write Judge a

1 letter, thanking him as a co-religionist and for his labours in
2 presenting Hinduism before Americans; that will do his heart much
3 good. We must not join any sect, but we must sympathise and work
4 with each. . . . Work, work--conquer all by your love! . .

5 Try to expand. Remember the *only sign of life* is motion and
6 growth. You must send the passed resolution to Dr. J.H.
7 Barrows . . ., Dr. Paul Carus . . ., Senator Palmer . . ., Mrs. J. J.
8 Bagley . . ., it must come officially. . . . I write this because I do not
9 think you know the ways of foreign nations. . . . Keep on steadily. So
10 far we have done wonderful things. Onward, brave souls, we will
11 gain! Organise and found societies and go to work, that is the only
12 way.

13 At this time of the year there is not much lecturing to be done
14 here; so I will devote myself to my pen and write. I shall be hard at
15 work all the time, and then, when the cold weather comes and
16 people return to their homes, I shall begin lecturing again and at
17 the same time organise societies.

18 My love and blessings to you all. I never forget anybody,
19 though I do not write often. Then again, I am now, continuously
20 travelling, and letters have to be redirected from one place to
21 another.

22 Work hard. Be holy and pure and the fire will come.

23 Yours
24 affectionately,

Vivekananda

28 XII

29 Annisquam

30 20th August,

31 1894

32 Dear Sister {Isabelle McKindley},

33 Your very kind letter duly reached me at Annisquam. I am
34 with the Bagleys once more. They are kind as usual. Professor
35 Wright was not here. But he came day before yesterday and we
36 have very nice time together. Mr. Bradley of Evanston, whom you
37 have met at Evanston, was here. His sister-in-law had me sit for a
38 picture several days and had painted me. I had some very fine
39 boating and one evening overturned the boat and had a good
40 drenching--clothes and all.

41 I had very very nice time at Greenacre. They were all so
42 earnest and kind people. Fanny Hartley and Mrs. Mills have by this
43 time gone back home I suppose.

44 From here I think I will go back to New York. Or I may go to
45 Boston to Mrs. Ole Bull. Perhaps you have heard of Mr. Ole Bull, the
46 great violinist of this country. She is his widow. She is a very
47 spiritual lady. She lives in Cambridge and has a fine big parlour

1 made of woodwork brought all the way from India. She wants me to
2 come over to her any time and use her parlour to lecture. Boston of
3 course is the great field for everything, but the Boston people as
4 quickly take hold of anything as give it up; while the New Yorkers
5 are slow, but when they get hold of anything they do it with a
6 mortal grip.

7 I have kept pretty good health all the time and hope to do in
8 the future. I had no occasion yet to draw on my reserve, yet I am
9 rolling on pretty fair. And I have given up all money-making
10 schemes and will be quite satisfied with a bite and a shed and work
11 on.

12 I believe you are enjoying your summer retreat. Kindly
13 convey my best regards and love to Miss Howe and Mr. Frank
14 Howe.

15 Perhaps I did not tell you in my last how I slept and lived and
16 preached under the trees and for a few days at least found myself
17 once more in the atmosphere of heaven.

18 Most probably I will make New York my centre for the next
19 winter; and as soon as I fix on that, I will write to you. I am not yet
20 settled in my ideas of remaining in this country any more. I cannot
21 settle anything of that sort. I must bide my time. May the Lord bless
22 you all for ever and ever is the constant prayer of your ever
23 affectionate brother,

24 Vivekananda

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27 XIII

28 U.S.A.

29 31st August,

30 1894

31 Dear Alasinga,

32 I just now saw an editorial on me about the circular from
33 Madras in the *Boston Transcript*. Nothing has reached me yet. They
34 will reach me soon if you have sent them already. So far you have
35 done wonderfully, my boy. Do not mind what I write in some
36 moments of nervousness. One gets nervous sometimes alone in a
37 country 15,000 miles from home, having to fight every inch of
38 ground with orthodox inimical Christians. You must take those into
39 consideration, my brave boy, and work right along.

40 Perhaps you have heard from Bhattacharya that I received a
41 beautiful letter from G. G. His address was scrawled in such a
42 fashion as to become perfectly illegible to me. So I could not reply
43 to him direct. But I have done all that he desired. I have sent over
44 my photograph and written to the Raja of Mysore. Now I have sent
45 a phonograph to Khetri Raja. . . .

46 Now send always Indian newspapers about me to me over
47 here. I want to read them in the papers themselves--do you know?

1 Now lastly, you must write to me all about Mr. Charu Chandra who
2 has been so kind to me. Give him my heartfelt thanks; but (between
3 you and me) I unfortunately do not remember him. Would you give
4 me particulars?

5 The Theosophists here now like me, but they are 650 in all!
6 There are the Christian Scientists. All of them like me. They are
7 about a million. I work with both, but join none, and will with the
8 Lord's grace mould them both after the true fashion; for they are
9 after all mumbling half realised truth. Narasimha, perhaps, by the
10 time this reaches you, will get the money etc.

11 I have received a letter from *Cat*, but it requires a book to
12 answer all his queries. So I send him my blessings through you and
13 ask you to remind him that we agree to differ--and see the harmony
14 of contrary points. So it does not matter what he believes in; he
15 must act. Give my love to Balaji, G. G., Kidi, Doctor, and to all our
16 friends and all the great and patriotic souls, who were brave and
17 noble enough to sink their differences for their country's cause.

18 With a magazine or journal or organ--you become the
19 Secretary thereof. You calculate the cost of starting the magazine
20 and the work, how much the least is necessary to start it, and then
21 write to me giving name and address of the Society, and I will send
22 you money myself, and not only that, I will get others in America to
23 subscribe annually to it liberally. So ask them of Calcutta to do the
24 same. Give me Dharmapala's address. He is a great and good man.
25 He will work wonderfully with us. Now organise a little society. You
26 will have to take charge of the whole movement, not as a *leader*,
27 but as a *servant*. Do you know, the least show of leading destroys
28 everything by rousing jealousy?

29 Accede to everything. Only try to retain all of my friends
30 together. Do you see? And work slowly up. Let G. G. and others,
31 who have no immediate necessity for earning something, do as they
32 are doing, i.e. casting the idea broadcast. G. G. is doing well at
33 Mysore. That is the way. Mysore will be in time a great stronghold.

34 I am now going to write my *mems* in a book and *next* winter
35 will go about this country organising *societies* here. This is a great
36 field of work, and everything done here prepares *England*. So far
37 you have done very well indeed, my brave boy--all strength shall be
38 given to you.

39 I have now Rs. 9,000 with me, part of which I will send over
40 to you for the organisation; and I will get many people to send
41 money to you in Madras yearly, half-yearly, or monthly. You now
42 start a Society and a journal and the necessary apparatus. This
43 must be a secret amongst only a few--but at the same time try to
44 collect funds from Mysore and elsewhere to build a temple in
45 Madras which should have a library and some rooms for the office
46 and the preachers who should be Sannyasins, and for Vairagis (men
47 of renunciation) who may chance to come. Thus we shall progress
48 inch by inch. This is a great field for my work, and everything done
49 here prepares the way for my coming work in England. . . .

50 You know the greatest difficulty with me is to keep or even to

1 touch money. It is disgusting and debasing. So you must organise a
2 Society to take charge of the practical and pecuniary part of it. I
3 have friends here who take care of all my monetary concerns. Do
4 you see? It will be a wonderful relief to me to get rid of horrid
5 money affairs. So the sooner you organise yourselves and you be
6 ready as secretary and treasurer to enter into direct communication
7 with my friends and sympathisers here, the better for you and me.
8 Do that quickly, and write to me. Give the society a non-sectarian
9 name. . . . Do you write to my brethren at the Math to organise in a
10 similar fashion. . . . Great things are in store for you Alasinga. Or if
11 you think proper, you get some of the big folks to be named as
12 office-bearers of the Society, while you work in the real sense. Their
13 name will be a great thing. If your duties are too severe and do not
14 let you have any time, let G. G. do the business part, and by and by I
15 hope to make you independent of your college work so that you
16 may, without starving yourself and family, devote your whole soul to
17 the work. So work, my boys, work! The rough part of the work has
18 been smoothened and rounded; now it will roll on better and better
19 every year. And if you can simply keep it going well until I come to
20 India, the work will progress by leaps and bounds. Rejoice that you
21 have done so much. When you feel gloomy, think what has been
22 done within the last year. How, rising from nothing, we have the
23 eyes of the world fixed upon us now. Not only India, but the world
24 outside, is expecting great things of us. Missionaries or M- or
25 foolish officials--none will be able to resist truth and love and
26 sincerity. Are you sincere? unselfish even unto death? and loving?
27 Then fear not, not even death. Onward, my lads! The whole world
28 requires Light. It is expectant! India alone has that Light, not in
29 magic, mummery, and charlatanism, but in the teaching of the
30 glories of the spirit of real religion--of the highest spiritual truth.
31 That is why the Lord has preserved the race through all its
32 vicissitudes unto the present day. Now the time has come. Have
33 faith that you are all, my brave lads, born to do great things! Let not
34 the barks of puppies frighten you--no, not even the thunderbolts of
35 heaven--but stand up and work!

36
37 affectionately, Ever yours

38 Vivekananda

41 XIV

42 U.S.A.

43 21st

44 September, 1894

45 Dear Alasinga,

46 . . . I have been continuously travelling from place to place
47 and working incessantly, giving lectures, holding classes, etc.

48 I have not been able to write a line yet for my proposed book.
49 Perhaps I may be able to take it in hand later on. I have made some

1 nice friends here amongst the liberal people, and a few amongst the
2 orthodox. I hope to return soon to India--I have had enough of this
3 country, and especially as too much work is making me nervous.
4 The giving of too many public lectures and constant hurry have
5 brought on this nervousness. I do not care for this busy,
6 meaningless, money-making life. So you see, I will soon return. Of
7 course, there is a growing section with whom I am very popular,
8 and who will like to have me here all the time. But I think I have
9 had enough of newspaper blazoning and humbugging of a public
10 life. I do not care the least for it. . . .

11 There is no hope for money for our project here. It is useless
12 to hope. No large number of men in any country do good out of
13 mere sympathy. The few who really give money in the Christian
14 lands often do so through priestcraft and fear of hell. So it is as in
15 our Bengali proverb, "Kill a cow and make a pair of shoes out of the
16 leather and give them in charity to a Brahmana". So it is here, and
17 so everywhere; and then, the Westerners are miserly in comparison
18 to our race. I sincerely believe that the Asians are the most
19 charitable race in the world, only they are very poor.

20 I am going to live for a few months in New York. That city is
21 the head, hand, and purse of the country. Of course, Boston is
22 called the Brahmanical city, and here in America there are
23 hundreds of thousands that sympathise with me. . . . The New York
24 people are very open. I will see what can be done there, as I have
25 some very influential friends. After all, I am getting disgusted with
26 this lecturing business. It will take a long time for the Westerners to
27 understand the higher spirituality. Everything is f.s.d. to them. If a
28 religion brings them money or health or beauty or long life, they
29 will all flock to it, otherwise not. . . .

30 Give to Balaji, G. G., and all of our friends my best love.

31 Yours with
32 everlasting love,

33 Vivekananda

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36 XV

37 U.S.A.

38 21st

39 September, 1894

40 Dear Kidi,

41 I am very sorry to hear your determination of giving up the
42 world so soon. The fruit falls from the tree when it gets ripe. So
43 wait for the time to come. Do not hurry. Moreover, no one has the
44 right to make others miserable by his foolish acts. Wait, have
45 patience, everything will come right in time.

46 Yours with
47 blessings,

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Vivekananda

XVI

Boston
26th Sept.,

1894

Dear Sister {Isabelle McKindley},

Your letter with the India mail just to hand. A quantity of newspaper clippings were sent over to me from India. I send them back for your perusal and safe keeping.

I am busy writing letters to India last few days. I will remain a few days more in Boston.

With my love and blessings.

Yours ever

affly,

Vivekananda

XVII

U.S.A.
27th

September, 1894

Dear Alasinga,

. . . One thing I find in the books of my speeches and sayings published in Calcutta. Some of them are printed in such a way as to savour of political views; whereas I am no politician or political agitator. I care only for the Spirit--when that is right everything will be righted by itself. . . . So you must warn the Calcutta people that no political significance be ever attached falsely to any of my writings or sayings. What nonsense! . . . I heard that Rev. Kali Charan Banerji in a lecture to Christian missionaries said that I was a political delegate. If it was said publicly, then publicly ask the Babu for me to write to any of the Calcutta papers and prove it, or else take back his foolish assertion. This is their trick! I have said a few harsh words in honest criticism of Christian governments in general, but that does not mean that I care for, or have any connection with politics or that sort of thing. Those who think it very grand to print extracts from those lectures and want to prove that I am a political preacher, to them I say, "Save me from my friends." . . .

. . . Tell my friends that a uniform silence is all my answer to my detractors. If I give them tit for tat, it would bring us down to a level with them. Tell them that truth will take care of itself, and that they are not to fight anybody for me. They have much to learn yet, and they are only children. They are still full of foolish golden dreams--mere boys!

1 . . . This nonsense of public life and newspaper blazoning has
2 disgusted me thoroughly. I long to go back to the Himalayan quiet.

3 Ever yours
4 affectionately,

5 Vivekananda

8 XVIII

9 U.S.A.

10 29th

11 September, 1894

12 Dear Alasinga,

13 You all have done well, my brave unselfish children. I am so
14 proud of you. . . . Hope and do not despair. After such a start, if you
15 despair you are a fool. . . .

16 Our field is India, and the value of foreign appreciation is in
17 rousing India up. That is all. . . . We must have a strong base from
18 which to spread. . . . Do not for a moment quail. Everything will
19 come all right. It is will that moves the world.

20 You need not be sorry, my son, on account of the young men
21 becoming Christians. What else can they be under the existing
22 social bondages, especially in Madras? Liberty is the first condition
23 of growth. Your ancestors gave every liberty to the soul, and
24 religion grew. They put the body under every bondage, and society
25 did not grow. The opposite is the case in the West--every liberty to
26 society, none to religion. Now are falling off the shackles from the
27 feet of Eastern society as from those of Western religion.

28 Each again will have its type; the religious or introspective in
29 India, the scientific or out-seeing in the West. The West wants every
30 bit of spirituality through social improvement. The East wants every
31 bit of social power through spirituality. Thus it was that the modern
32 reformers saw no way to reform but by first crushing out the
33 religion of India. They tried, and they failed. Why? Because few of
34 them ever studied their own religion, and not *one* ever *underwent*
35 the training necessary to understand the *Mother of all religions*. I
36 claim that no destruction of religion is necessary to improve the
37 Hindu society, and that this state of society exists not on account of
38 religion, but because religion has not been applied to society as it
39 should have been. This I am ready to prove from our old books,
40 every word of it. This is what I teach, and this is what we must
41 struggle all our lives to carry out. But it will take time, a long time
42 to study. Have patience and work. {Sanskrit}--Save yourself by
43 yourself.

44 Yours etc.,

45 Vivekananda

46 PS. The present Hindu society is organised only for spiritual
47 men, and hopelessly crushes out everybody else. Why? Where shall

1 they go who want to enjoy the world a little with its frivolities? Just
2 as our religion takes in all, so should our society. This is to be
3 worked out by first understanding the true principles of our religion
4 and then applying them to society. This is the slow but sure work to
5 be done.

6 V.

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9 XIX

10 Washington,
11 23rd October,

12 1894

13 Dear Vehemia Chand Limbdi,

14 I am going on well in this country. By this time I have become
15 one of their own teachers. They all like me and my teachings. . . . I
16 travel all over the country from one place to another, as was my
17 habit in India, preaching and teaching. Thousands and thousands
18 have listened to me and taken my ideas in a very kindly spirit. It is
19 the most expensive country, but the Lord provides for me
20 everywhere I go.

21 With my love to you and all my friends there (Limbdi,
22 Rajputana).

23 Yours,
24 Vivekananda

25
26
27 XX

28 Washington
29 C/o Mrs. T.

30 Totten,

31 1708 W I

32 Street,

33 26th(?)

34 October, 1894

35 Dear Sister {Isabelle McKindley},

36 Excuse my long silence; but I have been regularly writing to
37 Mother Church. I am sure you are all enjoying this nice cool
38 weather. I am enjoying Baltimore and Washington very much. I will
39 go hence to Philadelphia. I thought Miss Mary was in Philadelphia,
40 and so I wanted her address. But as she is in some other place near
41 Philadelphia, I do not want to give her the trouble to come up to see
42 me, as Mother Church says.

The lady with whom I am staying is Mrs. Totten, a niece of Miss Howe. I will be her guest more than a week yet; so you may write to me to her care.

I intend going over to England this winter somewhere in January or February. A lady from London with whom one of my friends is staying has sent an invitation to me to go over as her guest; and from India they are urging me every day to come back.

How did you like Pitoo in the cartoon? Do not show it to anybody. It is too bad of our people to caricature Pitoo that way.

I long ever so much to hear from you, but take a little more care to make your letter just a bit more distinct. Do not be angry for the suggestion.

brother,

Your ever loving

Your ever loving

Vivekananda

XXI

Washington,

27th October,

1894

Dear Blessed and Beloved {Alasinga Perumal},

By this time you must have received my other letters. You must excuse me for certain harshness of tone sometimes, and you know full well how I love you. You have asked me often to send over to you all about my movements in this country and all my lecture reports. I am doing exactly here what I used to do in India. Always depending on the Lord and making no plans ahead. . . . Moreover you must remember that I have to work incessantly in this country, and that I have no time to put together my thoughts in the form of a book, so much so, that this constant rush has worn my nerves, and I am feeling it. I cannot express my obligation to you, G. G., and all my friends in Madras, for the most unselfish and heroic work you did for me. But it was not at all meant to blazon me, but to make you conscious of your own strength. I am not an organiser, my nature tends towards scholarship and meditation. I think I have worked enough, now I want rest and to teach a little to those that have come to me from my Gurudeva (venerable Guru). You have known now what you can do, for it is really you, young men of Madras, that have done all; I am only the figurehead. I am a Tyagi (detached) monk. I only want one thing. I do not believe in a God or religion which cannot wipe the widow's tears or bring a piece of bread to the orphan's mouth. However sublime be the theories, however well-spun may be the philosophy--I do not call it religion so long as it is confined to books and dogmas. The eye is in the forehead and not in the back. Move onward and carry into practice that which you are very proud to call your religion, and God bless you!

1 Look not at me, look to yourselves. I am happy to have been
2 the occasion of rousing an enthusiasm. Take advantage of it, float
3 along with it, and everything will come right. Love never fails, my
4 son; today or tomorrow or ages after, truth will conquer. Love shall
5 win the victory. Do you love your fellow men? Where should you go
6 to seek for God--are not all the poor, the miserable, the weak, Gods?
7 Why not worship them first? Why go to dig a well on the shores of
8 the Ganga? Believe in the omnipotent power of love. Who cares for
9 these tinsel puffs of name? I never keep watch of what the
10 newspapers are saying. Have you love?--You are omnipotent. Are
11 you perfectly unselfish? If so, you are irresistible. It is character
12 that pays everywhere. It is the Lord who protects His children in
13 the depths of the sea. Your country requires heroes; be heroes! God
14 bless you!

15 Everybody wants me to come over to India. They think we
16 shall be able to do more if I come over. They are mistaken, my
17 friend. The present enthusiasm is only a little patriotism, it means
18 nothing. If it is true and genuine, you will find in a short time
19 hundreds of heroes coming forward and carrying on the work.
20 Therefore know that you have really done all, and go on. Look not
21 for me. Akshoy Kumar Ghosh is in London. He sent a beautiful
22 invitation from London to come to Miss Muller's. And I hope I am
23 going in January or February next. Bhattacharya writes me to come
24 over. Here is a grand field. What have I to do with this "ism" or that
25 "ism"? I am the servant of the Lord, and where on earth is there a
26 better field than here for propagating all high ideas? Here, where if
27 one man is against me, a hundred hands are ready to help me; here,
28 where man feels for man, weeps for his fellow-men and women are
29 goddesses! Even idiots may stand up to hear themselves praised,
30 and cowards assume the attitude of the brave when everything is
31 sure to turn out well, but the true hero works in silence. How many
32 Buddhas die before one finds expression! My son, I believe in God,
33 and I believe in man. I believe in helping the miserable. I believe in
34 going even to hell to save others. Talk of the Westerners? They have
35 given me food, shelter, friendship, protection--even the most
36 orthodox Christians! What do our people do when any of their
37 priests go to India? You do not touch them even, they are
38 MLECHCHHAS! No man, no nation, my son, can hate others and
39 live; India's doom was sealed the very day they invented the word
40 MLECHCHHA and stopped from communion with others. Take care
41 how you foster that idea. It is good to talk glibly about the Vedanta,
42 but how hard to carry out even its least precepts!

43 Ever yours with
44 blessings,

45 Vivekananda

46 PS. Take care of these two things--love of power and jealousy.
47 Cultivate always "faith in yourself."

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U.S.A.
30th

November, 1894

Dear Alasinga,

I am glad to learn that the phonograph and the letter have reached you safely. You need not send any more newspaper cuttings. I have been deluged with them. Enough of that. Now go to work for the organisation. I have started one already in New York and the Vice-President will soon write to you. Keep correspondence with them. Soon I hope to get up a few in other places. We must organise our forces not to make a sect--not on religious matters, but on the secular business part of it.

A stirring propaganda must be launched out. Put your heads together and organise.

What nonsense about the miracle of Ramakrishna! . . . Miracles I do not know nor understand. Had Ramakrishna nothing to do in the world but turning wine into the Gupta's medicine? Lord save me from such Calcutta people! What materials to work with! If they can write a real life of Shri Ramakrishna with the idea of showing what he came to do and teach, let them do it, otherwise let them not distort his life and sayings. These people want to know God who see in Shri Ramakrishna nothing but jugglery! . . . Now let Kidi translate his love, his knowledge, his teachings, his eclecticism, etc. This is the theme. The life of Shri Ramakrishna was an extraordinary searchlight under whose illumination one is able to really understand the whole scope of Hindu religion. He was the object-lesson of all the theoretical knowledge given in the Shastras (scriptures). He showed by his life what the Rishis and Avatars really wanted to teach. The books were theories, he was the realisation. This man had in fifty-one years lived the five thousand years of national spiritual life and so raised himself to be an object-lesson for future generations. The Vedas can only be explained and the Shastras reconciled by his theory of Avastha or stages--that we must not only tolerate others, but positively embrace them, and that truth is the basis of all religions. Now on these lines a most impressive and beautiful life can be written. Well, everything in good time. Avoid all irregular indecent expressions about sex etc. . . ., because other nations think it the height of indecency to mention such things, and his life in English is going to be read by the whole world. I read a Bengali life sent over. It is full of such words. . . . So take care, carefully avoid such words and expressions. The Calcutta friends have not a cent worth of ability; but they have their assertions of individuality.

They are too high to listen to advice. I do not know what to do with these wonderful gentlemen. I have not got much hope in that quarter. *His will be done*. I am simply ashamed of the Bengali book. The writer perhaps thought he was a frank recorder of truth and keeping the very language of Paramahansa. But he does not remember that Ramakrishna would never use that language before ladies. And this man expects his work to be read by men and women alike! Lord, save me from fools! They, again, have their own

1 freaks; they all knew him! *Bosh and rot.* . . . Beggars taking upon
2 themselves the air of kings! Fools thinking they are all wise! Puny
3 slaves thinking that they are masters! That is their condition. I do
4 not know what to do. Lord save me. I have all hope in Madras. Push
5 on with your work; do not be governed by the Calcutta people. Keep
6 them in good humour in the hope that some one of them may turn
7 good. But push on with your work independently. "Many come to sit
8 at dinner when it is cooked." Take care and work on.

9 Yours ever with
10 blessings,

11 Vivekananda

12
13
14 XXIII

15 U.S.A.

16 30th

17 November, 1894

18 Dear Kidi,

19 . . . As to the wonderful stories published about Shri
20 Ramakrishna, I advise you to keep clear of them and the fools who
21 write them. They are true, but the fools will make a mess of the
22 whole thing, I am sure. He had a whole world of knowledge to
23 teach, why insist upon unnecessary things as miracles really are!
24 They do not prove anything. Matter does not prove Spirit. What
25 connection is there between the existence of God, Soul, or
26 immortality, and the working of miracles? . . . Preach Shri
27 Ramakrishna. Pass the Cup that has satisfied your thirst. . . . Preach
28 Bhakti. Do not disturb your head with metaphysical nonsense, and
29 do not disturb others by your bigotry. . . .

30 Yours ever with
31 blessings,

32 Vivekananda

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35 XXIV

36 U.S.A.

37 26th

38 December, 1894

39 Dear Blessed and Beloved {Alasinga Perumal},

40 . . . In reference to me every now and then attacks are made
41 in missionary papers (so I hear), but I never care to see them. If you
42 send any of those made in India, I should throw them into the
43 wastepaper basket. A little agitation was necessary for our work.
44 We have had enough. Pay no more attention to what people say
45 about me, whether good or bad. You go on with your work and
46 remember that "Never one meets with evil who tries to do good"

1 (Gita, VI. 40).

2 Every day the people here are appreciating me. And between
3 you and me, I am more of an influence here than you dream of.
4 Everything must proceed slowly. . . . I have written to you before,
5 and I write again, that I shall not pay heed to any criticism or praise
6 in the newspapers. They are consigned to the fire. Do you do the
7 same. Pay no attention whatsoever to newspaper nonsense or
8 criticism. Be sincere and do your duty. Everything will come all
9 right. Truth must triumph. . . .

10 Missionary misrepresentations should be beneath your
11 notice. . . . Perfect silence is the best refutation to them, and I wish
12 you to maintain the same. . . . Make Mr. Subrahmanya Iyer the
13 President of your Society. He is one of the sincerest and noblest
14 men I know; and in him, intellect and emotion are beautifully
15 blended. Push on in your work, without counting much on me; work
16 on your own account. . . . As for me, I do not know when I shall go
17 back; I am working here and in India as well. . . .

18 With my love to you all,

19 Yours ever with
20 blessings,

21 Vivekananda

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23

24 XXV

25 541 Dearborn

26 Avenue,

27 Chicago,

28 1894

29 Dear Alasinga,

30 Your letter just to hand. . . . I was mistaken in asking you to
31 publish the scraps I sent you. It was one of my awful mistakes. It
32 shows a moment's weakness. Money can be raised in this country
33 by lecturing for two or three years. But I have tried a little, and
34 although there is much public appreciation of my work, it is
35 thoroughly uncongenial and demoralising to me. . . .

36 I have read what you say about the Indian papers and their
37 criticisms, which are natural. Jealousy is the central vice of every
38 enslaved race. And it is jealousy and want of combination which
39 cause and perpetuate slavery. You cannot feel the truth of this
40 remark until you come out of India. The secret of Westerners'
41 success is this power of combination, the basis of which is mutual
42 trust and appreciation. The weaker and more cowardly a nation is,
43 so much the more is this sin visible. . . . But, my son, you ought not
44 to expect anything from a slavish race. The case is almost desperate
45 no doubt, but let me put the case before you all. Can you put life
46 into this dead mass--dead to almost all moral aspiration, dead to all
47 future possibilities--and always ready to spring upon those that
48 would try to do good to them? Can you take the position of a

1 physician who tries to pour medicine down the throat of a kicking
2 and refractory child? . . . An American or a European always
3 supports his countrymen in a foreign country. . . . Let me remind
4 you again, "Thou hast the right to work but not to the fruits
5 thereof." Stand firm like a rock. Truth always triumphs. Let the
6 children of Shri Ramakrishna be true to themselves and everything
7 will be all right. We may not live to see the outcome, but as sure as
8 we live, it will come sooner or later. What India wants is a new
9 electric fire to stir up a fresh vigour in the national veins. This was
10 ever, and always will be, slow work. Be content to work, and, above
11 all, be true to yourself. Be pure, staunch, and sincere to the very
12 backbone, and everything will be all right. If you have marked
13 anything in the disciples of Shri Ramakrishna, it is this--they are
14 sincere to the backbone. My task will be done, and I shall be quite
15 content to die, if I can bring up and launch one hundred such men
16 over India. He, the Lord, knows best. Let ignorant men talk
17 nonsense. We neither seek aid nor avoid it--we are the servants of
18 the Most High. The petty attempts of small men should be beneath
19 our notice. Onward! Upon ages of struggle a character is built. Be
20 not discouraged. One word of truth can never be lost; for ages it
21 may be hidden under rubbish, but it will show itself sooner or later.
22 Truth is indestructible, virtue is indestructible, purity is
23 indestructible. Give me a genuine man; I do not want masses of
24 converts. My son, hold fast! Do not care for anybody to help you. Is
25 not the Lord infinitely greater than all human help? Be holy--trust in
26 the Lord, depend on Him always, and you are on the right track;
27 nothing can prevail against you. . . .

28 Let us pray, "Lead, Kindly Light"--a beam will come through
29 the dark, and a hand will be stretched forth to lead us. I always
30 pray for you: you must pray for me. Let each one of us pray day and
31 night for the down-trodden millions in India who are held fast by
32 poverty, priestcraft, and tyranny--pray day and night for them. I
33 care more to preach religion to them than to the high and the rich. I
34 am no metaphysician, no philosopher, nay, no saint. But I am poor, I
35 love the poor. I see what they call the poor of this country, and how
36 many there are who feel for them! What an immense difference in
37 India! Who feels there for the two hundred millions of men and
38 women sunken for ever in poverty and ignorance? Where is the way
39 out? Who feels for them? They cannot find light or education. Who
40 will bring the light to them--who will travel from door to door
41 bringing education to them? Let these people be your God--think of
42 them, work for them, pray for them incessantly--the Lord will show
43 you the way. Him I call a Mahatman (great soul) whose heart bleeds
44 for the poor, otherwise he is a Duratman (wicked soul). Let us unite
45 our wills in continued prayer for their good. We may die unknown,
46 unpitied, unbewailed, without accomplishing anything--but not one
47 thought will be lost. It will take effect, sooner or later. My heart is
48 too full to express my feeling; you know it, you can imagine it. So
49 long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man
50 a traitor who, having been educated at their expense, pays not the
51 least heed to them! I call those men who strut about in their finery,
52 having got all their money by grinding the poor, wretches, so long
53 as they do not do anything for those two hundred millions who are

1 now no better than hungry savages! We are poor, my brothers, we
2 are nobodies, but such have been always the instruments of the
3 Most High. The Lord bless you all.

4 With all love,
5 Vivekananda

6
7 XXVI

8 U.S.A.
9 1894

10 Dear Dharmapala,

11 I have forgotten your address in Calcutta; so I direct this to
12 the Math. I heard about your speeches in Calcutta and how
13 wonderful was the effect produced by them. A certain retired
14 missionary here wrote me a letter addressing me as brother and
15 then hastily went to publish my short answer and make a show. But
16 you know what people here think of such gentlemen. Moreover, the
17 same missionary went privately to some of my friends to ask them
18 not to befriend me. Of course he met with universal contempt. I am
19 quite astonished at this man's behaviour--a preacher of religion to
20 take to such underhand dealings! Unfortunately too much of that in
21 every country and in every religion. Last winter I travelled a good
22 deal in this country although the weather was very severe. I
23 thought it would be dreadful, but I did not find it so after all. You
24 remember Col. Neggenson, President of the Free Religious Society.
25 He makes very kind inquiries about you. I met Dr. Carpenter of
26 Oxford (England) the other day. He delivered an address on the
27 ethics of Buddhism at Plymouth. It was very sympathetic and
28 scholarly. He made inquiries about you and your paper. Hope, your
29 noble work will succeed. You are a worthy servant of Him who came
30 Bahujana Hitaya Bahujana Sukhaya (for the good of the many, for
31 the happiness of the many).

32 . . . The Christianity that is preached in India is quite different
33 from what one sees here; you will be astonished to hear,
34 Dharmapala, that I have friends in this country amongst the clergy
35 of the Episcopal and even Presbyterian churches, who are as broad,
36 as liberal, and as sincere as you are in your own religion. The real
37 spiritual man is broad everywhere. His love forces him to be so.
38 Those to whom religion is a trade are forced to become narrow and
39 mischievous by their introduction into religion of the competitive,
40 fighting, and selfish methods of the world.

41 Yours ever in
42 brotherly love,

43 Vivekananda

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46 XXVII

47 U.S.A.

Dear Alasinga,

Listen to an old story. A lazy tramp sauntering along the road saw an old man sitting at the door of his house and stopped to inquire of him the whereabouts of a certain place. "How far is such and such a village?" he asked. The old man remained silent. The man repeated his query several times. Still there was no answer. Disgusted at this, the traveller turned to go away. The old man then stood up and said, "The village of__ is only a mile from here." "What!" said the tramp, "Why did you not speak when I asked you before?" "Because then", said the old man, "you seemed so halting and careless about proceeding, but now you are starting off in good earnest, and you have a right to an answer."

Will you remember this story, my son? Go to work, the rest will come: "Whosoever not trusting in anything else but Me, rests on Me, I supply him with everything he needs" (Gita, IX.22). This is no dream.

. . . The work should be in the line of preaching and serving, at the present time. Choose a place of meeting where you can assemble every week holding a service and reading the Upanishads with the commentaries, and so slowly go on learning and working. Everything will come to you if you put your shoulders to the wheel. . .

Now, go to work! G. G.'s nature is of the emotional type, you have a level head; so work together; plunge in; this is only the beginning. Every nation must save itself; we must not depend upon funds from America for the revival of Hinduism, for that is a delusion. To have a centre is a great thing; try to secure such a place in a large town like Madras, and go on radiating a living force in all directions. Begin slowly. Start with a few lay missionaries; gradually others will come who will devote their whole lives to the work. Do not try to be a ruler. He is the best ruler who can serve well. Be true unto death. The work we want--we do not seek wealth, name or fame. . . . Be brave. . . . Endeavour to interest the people of Madras in collecting funds for the purpose, and then make a beginning. . . . Be perfectly unselfish, and you will be sure to succeed. . . . Without losing the independence in work, show all regards to your superiors. Work in harmony. . . . My children must be ready to jump into fire, if needed, to accomplish their work. Now work, work, work! We will stop and compare notes later on. Have patience, perseverance, and purity.

I am writing no book on Hinduism just now. I am simply jotting down my thoughts. I do not know if I shall publish them. What is in books? The world is too full of foolish things already. If you could start a magazine on Vedantic lines, it would further our object. Be positive; do not criticise others. Give your message, teach what you have to teach, and there stop. The Lord knows the rest. . . .

1 Do not send me any more newspapers, as I do not notice the
2 missionary criticisms on myself; and here the public estimation of
3 me is better for that reason.

4 . . . If you are really my children, you will fear nothing, stop at
5 nothing. You will be like lions. We must rouse India and the whole
6 world. No cowardice. I will take no nay. Do you understand? Be true
7 unto death! . . . The secret of this is Guru-Bhakti--faith in the Guru
8 unto death! Have you that? I believe with all my heart that you
9 have, and you know that I have confidence in you--so go to work.
10 You must succeed. My prayers and benedictions follow every step
11 you take. Work in harmony. Be patient with everybody. Every one
12 has my love. I am watching you. Onward! Onward! This is just the
13 beginning. My little work here makes a big echo in India, do you
14 know? So I shall not return there in a hurry. My intention is to do
15 something permanent here, and with that object I am working day
16 by day. I am every day gaining the confidence of the American
17 people. . . . Expand your hearts and hopes, as wide as the world.
18 Study Sanskrit, especially the three Bhashyas (commentaries) on
19 the Vedanta. Be ready, for I have many plans for the future. Try to
20 be a magnetic speaker. Electrify the people. Everything will come to
21 you if you have faith. So tell Kidi, in fact, tell all my children there.
22 In time they will do great things at which the world will wonder.
23 Take heart and work. Show me something you have done. Show me
24 a temple, a press, a paper, a home for me. Where shall I come to if
25 you cannot make a home for me in Madras? Electrify people. Raise
26 funds and preach. Be true to your mission. Thus far you promise
27 well, so go on and do better and better still.

28 . . . Do not fight with people; do not antagonise anyone. Why
29 should we mind if Jack and John become Christians? Let them
30 follow whatever religion suits them. Why should you mix in
31 controversies? Bear with the various opinions of everybody.
32 Patience, purity, and perseverance will prevail.

33 Yours etc.,

34 Vivekananda

35
36
37 XXVIII

38 541 Dearborn

39 Avenue,

40 Chicago

41 3rd January,

42 1895

43 Dear Mrs. Bull,

44 I lectured at Brooklyn last Sunday. Mrs. Higgins gave a little
45 reception the evening I arrived, and some of the prominent
46 members of the Ethical Society including Dr. Jain [Janes] were
47 there. Some of them thought that such Oriental religious subjects
48 will not interest the Brooklyn public.

1 But the lecture, through the blessings of the Lord, proved a
2 tremendous success. About 800 of the *elite* of Brooklyn were
3 present, and the very gentlemen who thought it would not prove a
4 success are trying for organising a series in Brooklyn. The New
5 York course for me is nearly ready, but I do not wish to fix the dates
6 until Miss Thursby comes to New York. As such Miss Phillips who is
7 a friend of Miss Thursby's and who is arranging the New York
8 course for me will act with Miss Thursby in case she wants to get
9 up something in New York.

10 I owe much to the Hale family and I thought to give them a
11 little surprise by dropping in on New Year's day. I am trying to get a
12 new gown here. The old gown is here, but it is so shrunk by
13 constant washings that it is unfit to wear in public. I am almost
14 confident of finding the exact thing in Chicago.

15 I hope your father is all right by this time.

16 With my love to Miss Farmer, Mr. and Mrs. Gibbons, and the
17 rest of the holy family, I am ever yours,

18 Affectionately,

20 Vivekananda

21 PS. I saw Miss Curing at Brooklyn. She was as kind as ever.
22 Give her my love if you write her soon.

24 XXIX

25 Chicago

26 11th January,

27 1895

28 Dear G. G. {Narasimhachariar},

29 Your letter just to hand. . . . The Parliament of Religions was
30 organised with the intention of proving the superiority of the
31 Christian religion over other forms of faith, but the philosophic
32 religion of Hinduism was able to maintain its position
33 notwithstanding. Dr. Barrows and the men of that ilk are very
34 orthodox, and I do not look to them for help. . . . The Lord has sent
35 me many friends in this country, and they are always on the
36 increase. The Lord bless those who have tried to injure me. . . . I
37 have been running all the time between Boston and New York, two
38 great centres of this country, of which Boston may be called the
39 brain and New York, the purse. In both, my success is more than
40 ordinary. I am indifferent to the newspaper reports, and you must
41 not expect me to send any of them to you. A little boom was
42 necessary to begin work. We have had more than enough of that.

43 I have written to Mani Iyer, and I have given you my
44 directions already. *Now show me what you can do.* No foolish talk
45 now, but actual work; the Hindus must back their talk with real
46 work; if they cannot they do not deserve anything; that is all.
47 America is not going to give you money for your fads. And why
48 should they? As for me, I want to teach the truth; I do not care

1 whether here or elsewhere.

2 In future do not pay any heed to what people say either for or
3 against you or me. Work on, be lions; and the Lord will bless you. I
4 shall work incessantly until I die, and even after death I shall work
5 for the good of the world. Truth is infinitely more weighty than
6 untruth; so is goodness. If you possess these, they will make their
7 way by sheer gravity.

8 I have no connection with the Theosophists. And Judge will
9 help me--pooh! . . . Thousands of the best men *do* care for me; you
10 know this, and have faith in the Lord. I am slowly exercising an
11 influence in this land greater than all the newspaper blazoning of
12 me can do. The orthodox feel it, but they cannot help it. It is the
13 force of character, of purity, and of truth--of personality. So long as I
14 have these things, you can feel easy; no one will be able to injure a
15 hair of my head. If they try, they will fail, saith the Lord. . . . Enough
16 of books and theories. It is the *life* that is the highest and the only
17 way to stir the hearts of people; it carries the personal magnetism. .
18 . . The Lord is giving me a deeper and deeper insight every day.
19 Work, work, work. . . . Truce to foolish talk; talk of the Lord. Life is
20 too short to be spent in talking about frauds and cranks.

21 You must always remember that every nation must save itself;
22 so must every man; do not look to others for help. Through hard
23 work here, I shall be able now and then to send you a little money
24 for your work; but that is all. If you have to look forward to that,
25 better stop work. Know also that this is a grand field for my ideas,
26 and that I do not care whether they are Hindus or Mohammedans
27 or Christians, but those that love the Lord will always command my
28 service.

29 . . . I like to work on calmly and silently, and the Lord is
30 always with me. Follow me, if you will, by being intensely sincere,
31 perfectly unselfish, and, above all, by being perfectly pure. My
32 blessings go with you. In this short life there is no time for the
33 exchange of compliments. We can compare notes and compliment
34 each other to our hearts' content after the battle is finished. Now,
35 do not talk; work, work, work! I do not see anything permanent you
36 have done in India--I do not see any centre you have made--I do not
37 see any temple or hall you have erected--I do not see anybody
38 joining hands with you. There is too much talk, talk, talk! We are
39 great, we are great! Nonsense! We are imbeciles; that is what we
40 are! This hankering after name and fame and all other humbugs--
41 what are they to me? What do I care about them? I should like to
42 see hundreds coming to the Lord! Where are they? I want them, I
43 want to see them. You must seek them out. You only give me name
44 and fame. Have done with name and fame; to work, my brave men,
45 to work! You have not caught my fire yet--you do not understand
46 me! You run in the old ruts of sloth and enjoyments. Down with all
47 sloth, down with all enjoyments here or hereafter. Plunge into the
48 fire and bring the people towards the Lord.

49 That you may catch my fire, that you may be intensely
50 sincere, that you may die the heroes' death on the field of battle--is
51 the constant prayer of

Vivekananda

PS. Tell Alasinga, Kidi, Dr. Balaji, and all the others not to pin their faith on what Tom, Dick, and Harry say for or against us, but to concentrate all their energy on work.

XXX

U.S.A.

12th January,

1895

Dear Alasinga,

I am sorry you still continue to send me pamphlets and newspapers, which I have written you several times not to do. I have no time to peruse them and take notice of them. Please send them *no more*. I do not care a fig for what the missionaries or the Theosophists say about me. Let them do as they please. The very taking notice of them will be to give them importance. Besides, you know, the missionaries only abuse and never argue.

Now know once and for all that I do not care for name or fame, or any humbug of that type. I want to preach my ideas for the good of the world. You have done a great work; but so far as it goes, it has only given *me* name and fame. My life is more precious than spending it in getting the admiration of the world. I have no time for such foolery. What work have you done in the way of advancing the ideas and organising in India? *None, none, none* !

An organisation that will teach the Hindus mutual help and appreciation is absolutely necessary. Five thousand people attended that meeting that was held in Calcutta, and hundreds did the same in other places, to express an appreciation of my work here--well and good! But if you asked them each to give an anna, would they do it? The whole national character is one of childish dependence. They are all ready to enjoy food if it is brought to their mouth, and even some want it pushed down. . . . You do not deserve to live if you cannot help yourselves. . . .

I have given up at present my plan for the education of the masses. It will come by degrees. What I now want is a band of fiery missionaries. We must have a *College* in Madras to teach comparative religions, Sanskrit, the different schools of Vedanta, and some European languages; we must have a press, and papers printed in English and in the vernaculars. When this is done, then I shall know that you have accomplished something. Let the nation show that they are ready to *do*. If you cannot do anything of the kind in India, then let me alone. I have a message to give, let me give it to the people who appreciate it and who will work it out. What care I who takes it? "He who doeth the will of my Father," is my own. . . .

My name should not be made prominent; it is my ideas that I want to see realised. The disciples of all the prophets have always

1 inextricably mixed up the ideas of the Master with the *person*, and
2 at last killed the ideas for the *person*. The disciples of Shri
3 Ramakrishna must guard against doing the same thing. Work for
4 the *idea*, not the person. The Lord bless you.

5 Yours ever with
6 blessings,

7 Vivekananda

8
9
10 XXXI

11 Brooklyn

12 20th January,

13 1895

14 (*Written to Mrs. Ole Bull whom Swamiji called "Dhira Mata", the*
15 *"Steady Mother" on the occasion of the loss of her father*)

16 . . . I had a premonition of your father's giving up the old body
17 and it is not my custom to write to anyone when a wave of would-be
18 inharmonious Maya strikes him. But these are the great turning
19 points in life, and I know that you are unmoved. The surface of the
20 sea rises and sinks alternately, but to the observant soul--the child
21 of light--each sinking reveals more and more of the depth and of the
22 beds of pearls and coral at the bottom. Coming and going is all pure
23 delusion. The soul never comes nor goes. Where is the place to
24 which it shall go when all space is *in the soul* ? When shall be the
25 time for entering and departing when all time is *in the soul* ? The
26 earth moves, causing the illusion of the movement of the sun; but
27 the sun does not move. So Prakriti, or Maya, or Nature, is moving,
28 changing, unfolding veil after veil, turning over leaf after leaf of this
29 grand book--while the witnessing soul drinks in knowledge,
30 unmoved, unchanged. All souls that ever have been, are, or shall
31 be, are all in the present tense and--to use a material simile--are all
32 standing at one geometrical point. Because the idea of space does
33 occur in the soul, therefore all that were ours, are ours, and will *be*
34 ours, *are* always with us, *were* always with us, and *will* be always
35 with us. We are in them. They are in us. Take these cells {diagram}.
36 Though each separate, they are all nevertheless inseparably joined
37 at AB. There they are one. Each is an individual, yet all are one at
38 the axis AB. None can escape from that axis, and however broken
39 or torn the circumference, yet by standing at the axis, we may enter
40 any one of the chambers. This axis is the Lord. There we are one
41 with Him, all in all, and all in God.

42 The cloud moves across the face of the moon, creating the
43 illusion that the moon is moving. So nature, body, matter moves on,
44 creating the illusion that the soul is moving. Thus we find at last
45 that, that instinct (or inspiration?) which men of every race,
46 whether high or low, have had to feel, viz. the presence of the
47 departed about them, is true intellectually also.

48 Each soul is a star, and all stars are set in that infinite azure,
49 that eternal sky, the Lord. There is the root, the reality, the real

1 individuality of each and all. Religion began with the search after
2 some of these stars that had passed beyond our horizon, and ended
3 in finding them all in God, and ourselves in the same place. The
4 whole secret is, then, that your father has given up the old garment
5 he was wearing and is standing where he was through all eternity.
6 Will he manifest another such garment in this or any other world? I
7 sincerely pray that he may not, until he does so in full
8 consciousness. I pray that none may be dragged anywhere by the
9 unseen power of his own past action. I pray that all may be free,
10 that is to say, may know that they are free. And if they are to dream
11 again, let us pray that their dreams be all of peace and bliss. . . .

12 Yours etc.,

13 Vivekananda

14
15
16 XXXII

17 54 W. 33rd

18 Street, N.Y.,

19 1st February,

20 1895

21 Dear Sister {Mary Hale},

22 I just received your beautiful note. . . . Well, sometimes it is a
23 good discipline to be forced to work for work's sake, even to the
24 length of not being allowed to enjoy the fruits of one's labour. . . . I
25 am very glad of your criticisms and am not sorry at all. The other
26 day at Miss Thursby's I had an excited argument with a
27 Presbyterian gentleman, who, as usual, got very hot, angry, and
28 abusive. However, I was afterwards severely reprimanded by Mrs.
29 Bull for this, as such things hinder my work. So, it seems, is your
30 opinion.

31 I am glad you write about it just now, because I have been
32 giving a good deal of thought to it. In the first place, I am not at all
33 sorry for these things--perhaps that may disgust you--it may. I know
34 full well how good it is for one's worldly prospects to be *sweet*. I do
35 everything to be *sweet*, but when it comes to a horrible compromise
36 with the truth within, then I stop. I do not believe in *humility*. I
37 believe in *Samadarshitva* --same state of mind with regard to all.
38 The duty of the ordinary man is to obey the commands of his "God",
39 society; but the children of light never do so. This is an eternal law.
40 One accommodates himself to surroundings and social opinion and
41 gets all good things from society, the giver of all good to such. The
42 other stands alone and draws society up towards him. The
43 accommodating man finds a path of roses; the non-accommodating,
44 one of thorns. But the worshippers of "Vox populi" go to annihilation
45 in a moment; the children of truth *live for ever*.

46 I will compare truth to a corrosive substance of infinite
47 power. It burns its way in wherever it falls--in soft substance at
48 once, hard granite slowly, but it must. What is writ is writ. I am so,
49 so sorry, Sister, that I cannot make myself sweet and

1 accommodating to every black falsehood. But I cannot. I have
2 suffered for it all my life. But I cannot. I have essayed and essayed.
3 But I cannot. At last I have given it up. The Lord is great. He will
4 not allow me to become a hypocrite. Now let what is in come out. I
5 have not found a way that will please all, and I cannot but be what I
6 am, true to my own self. "Youth and beauty vanish, life and wealth
7 vanish, name and fame vanish, even the mountains crumble into
8 dust. Friendship and love vanish. Truth alone abides." God of Truth,
9 be Thou alone my guide! I am too old to change now into milk and
10 honey. Allow me to remain as I am. "Without fear--without
11 shopkeeping, caring neither for friend nor foe, do thou hold on to
12 Truth, Sannyasin, and from this moment give up this world and the
13 next and all that are to come--their enjoyments and their vanities.
14 Truth, be thou alone my guide." I have no desire for wealth or name
15 or fame or enjoyments, Sister--they are dust unto me. I wanted to
16 help my brethren. I have not the *tact to earn money*, bless the Lord.
17 What reason is there for me to conform to the vagaries of the world
18 around me and not obey the voice of Truth within? The mind is still
19 weak, Sister, it sometimes mechanically clutches at earthly help.
20 But I am not afraid. Fear is the greatest sin my religion teaches.

21 The last fight with the Presbyterian priest and the long fight
22 afterwards with Mrs. Bull showed me in a clear light what Manu
23 says to the Sannyasin, "Live alone, walk alone." All friendship, all
24 love, is only limitation. There never was a friendship, especially of
25 women, which was not exacting. O great sages! You were right. One
26 cannot serve the God of Truth who leans upon somebody. Be still,
27 my soul! Be alone! and the Lord is with you. Life is nothing! Death
28 is a delusion! All this is not, God alone is! Fear not, my soul! Be
29 alone. Sister, the way is long, the time is short, evening is
30 approaching. I have to go home soon. I have no time to give my
31 manners a finish. I cannot find time to deliver my message. You are
32 good, you are so kind, I will do anything for you; and do not be
33 angry, I see you all are mere children.

34 Dream no more! Oh, dream no more, my soul! In one word, I
35 have a message to give, I have no time to be sweet to the world,
36 and every attempt at sweetness makes me a hypocrite. I will die a
37 thousand deaths rather than lead a jelly-fish existence and yield to
38 every requirement of this foolish world, no matter whether it be my
39 own country or a foreign country. You are mistaken, utterly
40 mistaken, if you think I have a *work*, as Mrs. Bull thinks; I have no
41 *work* under or beyond the sun. I have a message, and I will give it
42 after my own fashion. I will neither Hinduise my message, nor
43 Christianise it, nor make it any "ise" in the world. I will only my-ise
44 it, and that is all. *Liberty*, Mukti, is all my religion, and everything
45 that tries to curb it, I will avoid by fight or flight. Pooh! I try to
46 pacify the priests!! Sister, do not take this amiss. But you are babies
47 and babies must submit to be taught. You have not yet drunk of that
48 fountain which makes "reason unreason, mortal immortal, this
49 world a zero, and of man a God". Come out if you can of this
50 network of foolishness they call this *world*. Then I will call you
51 indeed brave and free. If you cannot, cheer those that dare dash
52 this false God, society, to the ground and trample on its unmitigated

1 hypocrisy; if you cannot cheer them, pray, be silent, but do not try
2 to drag them down again into the mire with such false nonsense as
3 *compromise* and becoming nice and sweet.

4 I hate this world, this dream, this horrible nightmare, with its
5 churches and chicaneries, its books and black-guardisms, its fair
6 faces and false hearts, its howling righteousness on the surface and
7 utter hollowness beneath, and, above all, its sanctified shopkeeping.
8 What! measure my soul according to what the bond-slaves of the
9 world say? --Pooh! Sister, you do not know the Sannyasin. "He
10 stands on the heads of the Vedas!" say the Vedas, because he is free
11 from churches and sects and religions and prophets and books and
12 all of that ilk! Missionary or no missionary, let them howl and attack
13 me with all they can, I take them as Bhartrihari says, "Go thou thy
14 ways, Sannyasin! Some will say, 'Who is this mad man?' Others,
15 'Who is this Chandala?' Others will know thee to be a sage. Be glad
16 at the prattle of the worldlings." But when they attack, know that,
17 "The elephant passing through the marketplace is always beset by
18 curs, but he cares not. He goes straight on *his own way*. So it is
19 always, when a great soul appears there will be numbers to bark
20 after him."⁷⁴

21 I am living with Landsberg at 54 W. 33rd Street. He is a
22 brave and noble soul, Lord bless him. Sometimes I go to the
23 Guernseys' to sleep.

24 Lord bless you all ever and ever--and may He lead you quickly
25 out of this big humbug, the world! May you never be enchanted by
26 this old witch, the world! May Shankara help you! May Uma open
27 the door of truth for you and take away all your delusions!

28 Yours with love and
29 blessings,

30 Vivekananda

31
32 XXXIII

33 19 W., 38 St.,
34 New York,

35 1895

36 Dear Alasinga,

37 . . . Meddle not with so-called social reform, for there cannot
38 be any reform without spiritual reform first. Who told you that I
39 want social reform? Not I. Preach the Lord--say neither good nor
40 bad about the superstitions and diets. Do not lose heart, do not lose
41 faith in your Guru, do not lose faith in God. So long as you possess
42 these three, nothing can harm you, my child. I am growing stronger
43 every day. Work on, my brave boys.

44 Ever yours with
45 blessings,

1 ⁷⁴ ?Tulasidas.
2

Vivekananda

XXXIV

54 West, 33

New York

25th

February, 1895

Dear Sister {Isabelle McKindley},⁷⁵

I am sorry you had an attack of illness. I will give you an absent treatment though your confession takes half the strength out of my mind.

That you have rolled out of it is all right. All's well that ends well.

The books have arrived in good condition and many thanks for them.

Your ever
affectionate bro.,

Vivekananda

XXXV

U.S.A.

6th March,

1895

Dear Alasinga,

. . . Do not for a moment think the "Yankees" are practical in religion. In that the Hindu alone is practical, the Yankee in money-making, so that as soon as I depart, the whole thing will disappear. Therefore I want to have a solid ground under my feet before I depart. Every work should be made thorough. . . . You need not insist upon preaching Shri Ramakrishna. Propagate his ideas first, though I know the world always wants the Man first, then the idea. . . . Do not figure out big plans at first, but begin slowly, feel your ground, and proceed up and up.

. . . Work on, my brave boys. We shall see the light some day.

Harmony and peace! . . . Let things slowly grow. Rome was not built in a day. The Maharaja of Mysore is dead--one of our greatest hopes. Well! the Lord is great. He will send others to help the cause.

⁷⁵ ?Swamiji took delight in gently teasing the Hale sisters (of whom Isabelle was one) about their study and practice of Christian Science. He wrote this short note from New York, and in this he slyly poked fun at the "Scientists'" practice of never confessing to sickness.

1 Life goes on the same old ruts. Sometimes I get disgusted
2 with eternal lecturings and talkings, want to be silent for days and
3 days.

4 Hoping you the best dreams (for that is the only way to be
5 happy).

6 I remain ever your
7 loving bro.,

8 Vivekananda

11 XXXVII

12 U.S.A

13 4th April

14 1895

15 Dear Alasinga,

16 Your letter just to hand. You need not be afraid of anybody's
17 attempting to hurt me. So long as the Lord protects me I shall be
18 impregnable. Your ideas of America are very hazy. . . . This is a
19 huge country, the majority do not care much about religion. . . .
20 Christianity holds its ground as a mere patriotism, and nothing
21 more.

22 . . . Now my son, do not lose courage. . . . Send me the
23 *Vedanta-Sutras* and the Bhashyas (commentaries) of all the
24 sects. . . . I am in His hands. What is the use of going back to India?
25 India cannot further my ideas. This country takes kindly to my
26 ideas. I will go back when I get the Command. In the meanwhile, do
27 you all gently and patiently work. If anybody attacks me, simply
28 ignore his existence. . . . My idea is for you to start a Society where
29 people could be taught the Vedas and the Vedanta, with the
30 commentaries. Work on this line at present. . . . Know that every
31 time you feel weak, you not only hurt yourself but also the Cause.
32 Infinite faith and strength are the only conditions of success.

33 Be cheerful. . . . Hold on to your own idea. . . . Above all,
34 never attempt to guide or rule others, or, as the Yankees say, "boss"
35 others. Be the servant of all.

36 Ever yours with
37 blessings,

38 Vivekananda

41 XXXVIII

42 U.S.A.

43 2nd May,

44 1895

45 Dear S--,

So you have made up your mind to renounce the world. I have sympathy with your desire. There is nothing so high as renunciation of self. But you must not forget that to forgo your own favourite desire for the welfare of those that depend upon you is no small sacrifice. Follow the spotless life and teachings of Shri Ramakrishna and look after the comforts of your family. You do your own duty, and leave the rest to Him.

Love makes no distinction between man and man, between an Aryan and a Mlechchha, between a Brahmana and a Pariah, nor even between a man and a woman. Love makes the whole universe as one's own home. True progress is slow but sure. Work among those young men who can devote heart and soul to this one duty--the duty of raising the masses of India. Awake them, unite them, and inspire them with this spirit of renunciation; it depends wholly on the young people of India.

Cultivate the virtue of obedience, but you must not sacrifice your own faith. No centralisation is possible unless there is obedience to superiors. No great work can be done without this centralisation of individual forces. The Calcutta Math is the main centre; the members of all other branches must act in unity and conformity with the rules of that centre.

Give up jealousy and conceit. Learn to work unitedly for others. This is the great need of our country.

Yours with
blessings,

Yours with

Vivekananda

XXIX

U.S.A.

6th May,

1895.

Dear Alasinga,

This morning I received your last letter and that first volume of the Bhashya of Ramanujacharya. A few days ago I received another letter from you. Also I received a letter from Mr. Mani Iyer. I am doing well and going on in the same old rate. You mention about the lectures of Mr. Lund. I do not know who he is or where he is. He may be some one lecturing in Churches; for had he big platforms, we would have heard of him. Maybe, he gets them reported in some newspapers and sends them to India; and the missionaries may be making trade out of it. Well, so far I guess from the tone of your letters. It is no public affair here to call forth any defence from us; for in that case I will have to fight hundreds of them here every day. For India is now in the air, and the orthodox, including Dr. Barrows and all the rest, are struggling hard to put out the fire. In the second place, every one of these orthodox lectures against India must have a good deal of abuse hurled

1 against me. If you hear some of the filthy stories the orthodox men
2 and women invent against me, you will be astonished. Now, do you
3 mean to say that a Sannyasin should go about defending himself
4 against the brutal and cowardly attacks of these self-seeking men
5 and women? I have some very influential friends here who, now and
6 then, give them their quietus. Again, why should I waste my
7 energies defending Hinduism if the Hindus all go to sleep? What
8 are you three hundred millions of people doing there, especially
9 those that are so proud of their learning etc.? Why do you not take
10 up the fighting and leave me to teach and preach? Here am I
11 struggling day and night in the midst of stranger. . . . What help
12 does India send? Did the world ever see a nation with less
13 patriotism than the Indian? If you could send and maintain for a few
14 years a dozen well-educated strong men to preach in Europe and
15 America, you would do immense service to India, both morally and
16 politically. Every man who morally sympathises with India becomes
17 a political friend. Many of the Western people think of you as a
18 nation of half-naked savages, and therefore only fit to be whipped
19 into civilisation. If you three hundred millions become cowed by the
20 missionaries--you cowards--and dare not say a word, what can one
21 man do in a far distant land? Even what I have done, you do not
22 deserve.

23 Why do you not send your defences to the American
24 magazines? What prevents you? You race of cowards--physical,
25 moral, and spiritual! You animals fit to be treated as you are with
26 two ideas before you--lust and money--you want to prod a Sannyasin
27 to a life of constant fighting, and you are afraid of the "Saheb logs",
28 even missionaries! And you will do great things, pish! Why not some
29 of you write a beautiful defence and send it to the Arena Publishing
30 Company of Boston? The *Arena* is a magazine which will gladly
31 publish it and perhaps pay you hard money. So far it ends. Think of
32 this when you will be tempted to be a fool. Think that up to date
33 every blackguard of a Hindu that had hitherto come to Western
34 lands had too often criticised his own faith and country in order to
35 get praise or money. You know that I did not come to seek name and
36 fame; it was forced upon me. Why shall I go back to India? Who will
37 help me? . . . You are children, you prattle you do not know what.
38 Where are the men in Madras who will give up the world to preach
39 religion? Worldliness and realisation of God cannot go together. I
40 am the one man who dared defend his country, and I have given
41 them such ideas as they never expected from a Hindu. There are
42 many who are against me, but I will never be a coward like you.
43 There are also thousands in the country who are my friends, and
44 hundreds who would follow me unto death; every year they will
45 increase, and if I live and work with them, my ideals of life and
46 religion will be fulfilled. Do you see?

47 I do not hear much now about the Temple Universal that was
48 to be built in America; yet I have a firm footing in New York, the
49 very centre of American life, and so my work will go on. I am taking
50 several of my disciples to a summer retreat to finish their training
51 in Yoga and Bhakti and Jnana, and then they will be able to help
52 carry the work on. Now my boys, go to work.

1 Within a month I shall be in a position to send some money
2 for the paper. Do not go about begging from the Hindu beggars. I
3 will do it all *myself* with my own brain and strong right hand. I do
4 not want the help of any man here or in India. . . . Do not press too
5 much the Ramakrishna Avatara.

6 Now I will tell you my discovery. All of religion is contained in
7 the Vedanta, that is, in the three stages of the Vedanta philosophy,
8 the Dvaita, Vishishtadvaita and Advaita; one comes after the other.
9 These are the three stages of spiritual growth in man. Each one is
10 necessary. This is the essential of religion: the Vedanta, applied to
11 the various ethnic customs and creeds of India, is Hinduism. The
12 first stage, i.e. Dvaita, applied to the ideas of the ethnic groups of
13 Europe, is Christianity; as applied to the Semitic groups,
14 Mohammedanism. The Advaita, as applied in its Yoga-perception
15 form, is Buddhism etc. Now by religion is meant the Vedanta; the
16 applications must vary according to the different needs,
17 surroundings, and other circumstances of different nations. You will
18 find that although the philosophy is the same, the Shaktas, Shaivas,
19 etc. apply it each to their own special cult and *forms*. Now, in your
20 journal write article after article on these three systems, showing
21 their harmony as one following after the other, and at the same time
22 keeping off the ceremonial forms altogether. That is, preach the
23 philosophy, the spiritual part, and let people suit it to their own
24 forms. I wish to write a book on this subject, therefore I wanted the
25 three Bhashyas; but only one volume of the Ramanuja (Bhashya)
26 has reached me as yet.

27 The American Theosophists have seceded from the others,
28 and now they hate India. Poor things! And Sturdy of England who
29 has lately been in India and met my brother Shivananda wrote me a
30 letter wanting to know when I go over to England. I wrote him a
31 nice letter. What about Babu Akshay Kumar Ghosh? I do not hear
32 anything from him more. Give the missionaries and others their
33 dues. Get up some of our very strong men and write a nice, strong,
34 but good-toned article on the present religious revival in India and
35 send it to some American magazine. I am acquainted with only one
36 or two of them. You know I am not much of a writer. I am not in the
37 habit of going from door to door begging. I sit quiet and let things
38 come to me. . . . Now, my children, I could have made a grand
39 success in the way of organising here, if I were a worldly hypocrite.
40 Alas! That is all of religion here; money and name=priest, money
41 and lust=layman. I am to create a new order of humanity here who
42 are sincere believers in God and care nothing for the world. This
43 must be slow, very slow. In the meantime you go on with your work,
44 and I shall steer my boat straight ahead. The journal must not be
45 flippant but steady, calm, and high-toned. . . . Get hold of a band of
46 fine, steady writers. . . . Be perfectly unselfish, be steady and work
47 on. We will do great things; do not fear. . . . One thing more. Be the
48 servant of all, and do not try in the least to govern others. That will
49 excite jealousy and destroy everything. . . . Go on. You have worked
50 wonderfully well. We do not wait for help, we will work it out, my
51 boy, be self-reliant, faithful and patient. Do not antagonise my other
52 friends, live in harmony with all. My eternal love to all.

1 proverb says, that "a pestle must pound even if it goes to heaven". I
2 have to work hard all the same. I am going to Chicago in the
3 beginning of August. When are you starting?

4 All our friends here send their respects to you. Hoping you all
5 bliss and joy and health, and ever praying for the same.

6 I remain, yours
7 affectionately,

8 Vivekananda

9
10
11 XLII

12 19 W. 38th St.,
13 New York,

14 22nd June, 1895

15 Dear Kidi,

16 I will write you a whole letter instead of a line. I am glad you
17 are progressing. You are mistaken in thinking that I am not going to
18 return to India; I am coming soon. I am not giving to failures, and
19 here I have planted a seed, and it is going to become a tree, and it
20 must. Only I am afraid it will hurt its growth if I give it up too
21 soon. . . .

22 Work on, my boy. Rome was not built in a day. I am guided by
23 the Lord, so everything will come all right in the end.

24 With my love ever and ever to you,

25 Yours
26 sincerely,

27 Vivekananda

28
29
30 XLIII

31 U.S.A.

32 1st July, 1895

33 Dear Alasinga,

34 I received your missionary book and the Ramnad photos. I
35 have written to the Raja as well as the Dewan at Mysore. The
36 missionary pamphlet must have reached here long ago, as the
37 Ramabai circle controversy with Dr. Janes savoured of it, it seems.
38 Now you need not be afraid of anything. There is one misstatement
39 in that pamphlet. I never went to a big hotel in this country, and
40 very few times to any other. At Baltimore, the small hotels, being
41 ignorant, would not take in a black man, thinking him a negro. So
42 my host, Dr. Vrooman, had to take me to a larger one, because they
43 knew the difference between a negro and a foreigner. Let me tell
44 you, Alasinga, that you have to defend yourselves. Why do you

1 behave like babies? If anybody attacks your religion, why cannot
2 you defend it? As for me, you need not be afraid, I have more
3 friends than enemies here, and in this country one-third are
4 Christians, and only a small number of the educated care about the
5 missionaries. Again, the very fact of the missionaries being against
6 anything makes the educated like it. They are less of a power here
7 now and are becoming less so every day. If their attacks pain you,
8 why do you behave like a petulant child and refer to me? . . .
9 Cowardice is no virtue.

10 Here I have already got a respectable following. Next year I
11 will organise it on a working basis, and then the work will be
12 carried on. And when I am off to India, I have friends who will back
13 me here and help me in India too; so you need not fear. So long as
14 you shriek at the missionary attempts and jump without being able
15 to do anything, I laugh at you; you are little dollies, that is what you
16 are. . . . What can Swami do for old babies!!

17 I know, my son, I shall have to come and manufacture men
18 out of you. I know that India is only inhabited by women and
19 eunuchs. So do not fret. I will have to get means to work there. I do
20 not put myself in the hands of imbeciles. You need not worry, do
21 what little you can. I have to work alone from top to bottom. . . .
22 "This Atman (Self) is not to be reached by cowards." You need not
23 be afraid for me. The Lord is with me, you defend yourselves only
24 and show me you can do that; and I will be satisfied. Don't bother
25 me any more with what any one says about me. I am not waiting to
26 hear any fool's judgment of me. You babies, great results are
27 attained only by great patience, great courage, and great
28 attempts. . . . Kidi's mind is taking periodic somersaults, I am
29 afraid. . . .

30 The brave alone do great things, not the cowards.

31 Know once for all, you faithless ones, that I am in the hands
32 of the Lord. So long as I am pure and His servant, not a hair of my
33 head will be touched. . . . Do something for the nation, then the
34 nation will be with you. Be brave, be brave! Man dies but once. My
35 disciples must not be cowards.

36 Ever yours
37 with love,

Vivekananda

XLIV

Thousand

Island Park

29th (July?),

1895

{to Mrs. William Sturges}

47 A glorious time to you, dear Mother, and I am sure this letter
48 will find you in all health. Many thanks for the \$50 you sent; it went

1 a long way.

2 We have had such a nice time here. Two ladies came up all
3 the way from Detroit to be with us here. They are so pure and good.
4 I am going from the Thousand Island to Detroit and thence to
5 Chicago.

6 Our class in New York is going on, and they have carried it
7 bravely on, although I was not there.

8 By the by, the two ladies who have come from Detroit were in
9 the class, and unfortunately were mighty frightened with imps and
10 other persons of that ilk. They have been taught to put a little salt,
11 just a little, in burning alcohol, and if there is a black precipitate,
12 that must be the impurities showing the presence of the imps.
13 However, these two ladies had too much fright from the imps. It is
14 said that these imps are everywhere filling the whole universe.
15 Father Leggett must be awfully downcast at your absence, as I did
16 not hear from him up to date. Well, it is better to let grief have its
17 way. So I do not bother him any more.

18 Aunt Joe Joe must have had a terrible time at sea. All is well
19 that ends well.

20 The babies⁷⁶ must be enjoying their stay in Germany very
21 much. My shiploads of love to them.

22 We all here send you love, and I wish you a life that will be
23 like a torch to generations to come.

24 Your son,
25 Vivekananda

26

27

28 XLV

29 c/o Miss

30 Dutcher,

31 Thousand

32 Island Park,

33 July, 1895

34 Dear Mother {Mrs. Betty Sturges},

35 I am sure you are in New York by this time, and that it is not
36 very hot there now.

37 We are having great times here. Marie Louise arrived
38 yesterday. So we are exactly seven now including all that have come
39 yet.

40 All the sleep of the world has come upon me. I sleep at least
41 two hours during the day and sleep through the whole night as a
42 piece of log. This is a reaction, I think, from the sleeplessness of
43 New York. I am also writing and reading a little, and have a class

1 ⁷⁶ ?Hollister and Alberta--then at school in Germany.

1 every morning after breakfast. The meals are being conducted on
2 the strictest vegetarian principles, and I am fasting a good deal.

3 I am determined that several pounds of my fat shall be off
4 before I leave. This is a Methodist place, and they will have their
5 camp meeting in August. It is a very beautiful spot, but I am afraid
6 it becomes too crowded during the season.

7 Miss Joe Joe's fly-bite has been cured completely by this time,
8 I am sure. Where is . . . Mother? Kindly give her my best regards
9 when you write her next.

10 I will always look back upon the delightful time I had at
11 Percy, and always thank Mr. Leggett for that treat. I shall be able to
12 go to Europe with him. When you meet him next, kindly give him my
13 eternal love and gratitude. The world is always bettered by the love
14 of the likes of him.

15 Are you with your friend, Mrs. Dora (long German name)?
16 She is a noble soul, a genuine Mahatma (great soul). Kindly give
17 her my love and regards.

18 I am in a sort of sleepy, lazy, happy state now and do not
19 seem to dislike it. Marie Louise brought a little tortoise from New
20 York, her pet. Now, arriving here, the pet found himself surrounded
21 with his natural element. So by dint of persistent tumbling and
22 crawling, he has left the love and fondlings of Marie Louise far, far
23 behind. She was a little sorry at first, but we preached liberty with
24 such a vigour that she had to come round quick.

25 May the Lord bless you and yours for ever and ever is the
26 constant prayer of

27 Vivekananda

28 PS. Joe Joe did not send the birch bark book. Mrs. Bull was
29 very glad to have the one I had sent her.

30 I had a large number of very beautiful letters from India.
31 Everything is all right there. Send my love to the babies on the
32 other side--the real "innocents abroad".

33 V.

34
35
36 XLVI

37 c/o Miss
38 Dutcher
39 Thousand Island
40 Park, N.Y.

41 7th July, 1895

42 Dear Friend {Mr. F. Leggett},

43 I see you are enjoying New York very much, so excuse my
44 breaking into your reverie with a letter.

45 I had two beautiful letters from Miss MacLeod and Mrs.

1 Sturges. Also they sent over two pretty birch bark books. I have
2 filled them with Sanskrit texts and translations, and they go by
3 today's post.

4 Mrs. Dora⁷⁷ is giving, I hear, some startling performances in
5 the Mahatma line.

6 Since leaving Percy⁷⁸ I have invitations to come over to
7 London from unexpected quarters, and that I look forward to with
8 great expectations.

9 I do not want to lose this opportunity of working in London.
10 And so your invitation, coupled with the London one, is, I know, a
11 divine call for further work.

12 I shall be here all this month and only have to go to Chicago
13 for a few days sometime in August.

14 Don't fret, Father Leggett, this is the best time for
15 expectation--when sure in love.

16 Lord bless you ever and ever, and may all happiness be yours
17 for ever, as you richly deserve it.

18 Ever yours in love and
19 affection,

20 Vivekananda

21
22
23 XLVII

24 U.S.A.

25 9th July, 1895

26 {to the Maharaja of Khetri}

27 . . . About my coming to India, the matter stands thus. I am,
28 as your Highness well knows, a man of dogged perseverance. I
29 have planted a seed in this country; it is already a plant, and I
30 expect it to be a tree very soon. I have got a few hundred followers.
31 I shall make several Sannyasins, and then I go to India, leaving the
32 work to them. The more the Christian priests oppose me, the more I
33 am determined to leave a permanent mark on their country. . . . I
34 have already some friends in London. I am going there by the end
35 of August. . . . This winter anyway has to be spent partly in London
36 and partly in New York, and then I shall be free to go to India.
37 There will be enough men to carry on the work here after this
38 winter if the Lord is kind. Each work has to pass through these
39 stages--ridicule, opposition, and then acceptance. Each man who
40 thinks ahead of his time is sure to be misunderstood. So opposition

1 ⁷⁷ ?Mrs. Dora Rosthlesberger, an occultist who had introduced Miss
2 MacLeod and Mrs. Sturges to Swami Vivekananda.

3
4 ⁷⁸ ?Mr. Leggett's camp in New Hampshire. From here Swami
5 Vivekananda went to Thousand Island Park.
6

1 and persecution are welcome, only I have to be steady and pure and
2 must have immense faith in God, and all these will vanish. . . .

3 Vivekananda

6 XLVII

7 c/o Miss
8 Dutcher,
9 Thousand Island
10 Park, N.Y.

11 31st July, 1895

12 Dear Friend {Francis Leggett},

13 I wrote you before this a letter, but as I am afraid it was not
14 posted carefully, I write another.

15 I shall be in time before the 14th. I shall have to come to New
16 York before the 11th anyway. So there will be time enough to get
17 ready.

18 I shall go with you to Paris, for my principal object in going
19 with you is to see *you married*. When you go away for a trip, I go to
20 London. That is all.

21 It is unnecessary to repeat my everlasting love and blessings
22 for you and yours.

23 Ever your
24 son,

25 Vivekananda

28 IL

29 U.S.A.

30 August, 1895

31 {to Alasinga}

32 By the time this reaches you, dear Alasinga, I shall be in
33 Paris. . . . I have done a good deal of work this year and hope to do
34 a good deal more in the next. Don't bother about the missionaries.
35 It is quite natural that they should cry. Who does not when his
36 bread is dwindling away? The missionary funds have got a big gap
37 the last two years, and it is on the increase. However, I wish the
38 missionaries all success. So long as you have love for God and Guru
39 and faith in truth, nothing can hurt you, my son. But the loss of any
40 of these is dangerous. You have remarked well; my ideas are going
41 to work in the West better than in India. . . . I have done more for
42 India than India ever did for me. . . . I believe in truth, the Lord
43 sends me workers by the scores wherever I go--and they are not
44 like the . . . disciples either--they are ready to give up their lives for

1 their Guru. Truth is my God, the universe my country. I do not
2 believe in duty. Duty is the curse of the Samsari (householder), not
3 for the Sannyasin. Duty is humbug. I am free, my bonds are cut;
4 what care I where this body goes or does not go? You have helped
5 me well right along. The Lord will reward you. I sought praise
6 neither from India nor from America, nor do I seek such bubbles. I
7 have a truth to teach, I, the child of God. And He that gave me the
8 truth will send me fellow workers from the earth's bravest and best.
9 You Hindus will see in a few years what the Lord does in the West.
10 You are like the Jews of old--dogs in the manger, who neither eat
11 nor allow others to eat. You have no religion, your God is the
12 kitchen, your Bible the cooking pots. . . . You are a few brave
13 lads. . . . Hold on, boys, no cowards among my children. . . . Are
14 great things ever done smoothly? Time, patience, and indomitable
15 will must show. I could have told you many things that would have
16 made your heart leap, but I will not. I want iron wills and hearts
17 that do not know how to quake. Hold on. The Lord bless you.

18 Ever yours with
19 blessings,

20 Vivekananda

21
22
23 L

24 Thousand

25 Island Park

26 August, 1895

27 Dear Mrs. Bull,

28 . . . Now here is another letter from Mr. Sturdy. I send it over
29 to you. See how things are being prepared ahead. Don't you think
30 this coupled with Mr. Leggett's invitation as a divine call? I think so
31 and am following it. I am going by the end of August with Mr.
32 Leggett to Paris, and then I go to London.

33 What little can be done for my brethren and my work is all
34 the help I want from you now. I have done my duty to my people
35 fairly well. Now for the world that gave me this body--the country
36 that gave me the ideas, the humanity which allows me to be one of
37 them!

38 The older I grow, the more I see behind the idea of the
39 Hindus that *man* is the greatest of all beings. So say the
40 Mohammedans too. The angels were asked by Allah to bow down to
41 Adam. Iblis did not, and therefore he became Satan. This earth is
42 higher than all heavens; this is the greatest school in the universe;
43 and the Mars or Jupiter people cannot be higher than we, because
44 they cannot communicate with us. The only so-called higher beings
45 are the departed, and these are nothing but men who have taken
46 another body. This is finer, it is true, but still a *man-body*, with
47 hands and feet, and so on. And they live on this earth in another
48 Akasha, without being absolutely invisible. They also think, and
49 have consciousness, and everything else like us. So they also are

1 men, so are the Devas, the angels. But man alone becomes *God* ;
2 and they all have to become men again in order to become God. . . .

3 Yours etc.,

4 Vivekananda

7 LI

8 Hotel

9 Continental

10 3 Rue

11 Castiglione, Paris

12 26th August,

13 1895

14 Dear Friend {Mr. E.T. Sturdy},

15 I arrived here day before yesterday. I came over to this
16 country as the guest of an American friend who is going to be
17 married here next week.

18 I shall have to stop here with him till that time; and after that
19 I shall be free to come to London.

20 Eagerly anticipating the joy of meeting you,

21 Ever yours in

22 Sat,

23 Vivekananda

26 LII

27 Paris

28 9th

29 September, 1895

30 Dear Alasinga,

31 . . . I am surprised you take so seriously the missionaries'
32 nonsense. If the people in India want me to keep strictly to my
33 Hindu diet, please tell them to send me a cook and money enough
34 to keep him. This silly *bossism* without a mite of real help makes
35 me laugh. On the other hand, if the missionaries tell you that I have
36 ever broken the two great vows of the Sannyasin--chastity and
37 poverty--tell them that they are *big liars*. Please write to the
38 missionary Hume asking him categorically to write you what
39 misdemeanour he saw in me, or give you the names of his
40 informants, and whether the information was *first-hand or not*, that
41 will settle the question and expose the whole thing. . . .

42 As for me, mind you, I stand at nobody's dictation. I know my
43 mission in life, and no chauvinism about me; I belong as much to
44 India as to the world, no humbug about that. I have helped you all I

1 could. You must now help yourselves. What country has any special
2 claim on me? Am I any nation's slave? Don't talk any more silly
3 nonsense, you faithless atheists.

4 I have worked hard and sent all the money I got to Calcutta
5 and Madras, and then after doing all this, stand their silly dictation!
6 Are you not ashamed? What do I owe to them? Do I care a fig for
7 their praise or fear their blame? I am a singular man, my son, not
8 even you can understand me yet. Do your work; if you cannot, stop;
9 but do not try to "boss" me with your nonsense. I see a greater
10 Power than man, or God, or devil at my back. I require nobody's
11 help. I have been all my life helping others. . . . They cannot raise a
12 few rupees to help the work of the greatest man their country every
13 produced--Ramakrishna Paramahansa; and they talk nonsense and
14 want to dictate to the man for whom they did nothing, and who did
15 everything he could for them! Such is the ungrateful world!

16 Do you mean to say I am born to live and die one of those
17 caste-ridden, superstitious, merciless, hypocritical, atheistic
18 *cowards* that you find only amongst the educated Hindus? I hate
19 cowardice; I will have nothing to do with cowards or political
20 nonsense. I do not believe in any politics. God and truth are the only
21 politics in the world, everything else is trash.

22 I am going to London tomorrow. . . .

23 Yours with
24 blessings,

Vivekananda

28 LIII

29 London

30 24th October,

31 1895

32 Dear Alasinga,

33 . . . I have already delivered my first address, and you may
34 see how well it has been received by the notice in the *Standard*.
35 The *Standard* is one of the most influential conservative papers. I
36 am going to be in London for a month, then I go off to America and
37 shall come back again next summer. So far you see the seed is well
38 sown in England. . . .

39 Take courage and work on. Patience and steady work--this is
40 the only way. Go on; remember--patience and purity and courage
41 and steady work. . . . So long as you are pure, and true to your
42 principles, you will never fail--Mother will never leave you, and all
43 blessings will be yours.

44 Yours with
45 love,

Vivekananda

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LIV

London

18th

November, 1895

Dear Alasinga,

. . . In England my work is really splendid, I am astonished myself at it. The English people do not talk much in the newspapers, but they work silently. I am sure of more work in England than in America. Bands and bands come, and I have no room for so many; so they squat on the floor, ladies and all. I tell them to imagine that they are under the sky of India, under a spreading banyan, and they like the idea. I shall have to go away next week, and they are so sorry. Some think my work here will be hurt a little if I go away so soon. I do not think so. I do not depend on men or things. The Lord alone I depend upon--and He works through me.

. . . Please everybody without becoming a hypocrite and without being a coward. Hold on to your own ideas with strength and purity, and whatever obstructions may now be in your way, the world is bound to listen to you in the long run. . . .

I have no time even to die, as the Bengalis say. I work, work, work, and earn my own bread and help my country, and this all alone, and then get only criticism from friends and foes for all that! Well, you are but children, I shall have to bear everything. I have sent for a Sannyasin from Calcutta and shall leave him to work in London. I want one more for America--I want my *own man*. Guru-Bhakti is the foundation of all spiritual development.

. . . I am really tired from incessant work. Any other Hindu would have died if he had to work as hard as I have to. . . . I want to go to India for a long rest. . . .

Ever yours with love and
blessings,

Vivekananda

LV

228 W. 39th St.

New York,

20th December,

1895

Dear Alasinga,

. . . Have patience and be faithful unto death. Do not fight among yourselves. Be perfectly pure in money dealings. . . . We will do great things yet. . . . So long as you have faith and honesty and

1 devotion, everything will prosper.

2 . . . In translating the Suktas, pay particular attention to the
3 Bhashyakaras (commentators), and pay no attention whatever to
4 the orientalist. They do not understand a single thing about our
5 Shastras (scriptures). It is not given to dry philologists to
6 understand philosophy or religion. . . . For instance the word Anid-
7 avatam in the Rig Veda was translated--"He lived without
8 breathing". Now, here the reference is really to the chief Prana, and
9 Avatam has the root meaning for unmoved, that is, without
10 vibration. It describes the state in which the universal cosmic
11 energy, or Prana, remains before the Kalpa (cycle of creation)
12 begins: vide--the Bhashyakaras. Explain according to *our* sages and
13 not according to the so-called European scholars. What do they
14 know?

15 . . . Be bold and fearless, and the road will be clear. . . . Mind,
16 you have nothing whatsoever to do with the Theosophists. If you all
17 stand by me and do not lose patience, I assure you, we shall do
18 great work yet. The great work will be in England, my boy, by and
19 by. I feel you sometimes get disheartened, and I am afraid you get
20 temptations to play in the hands of the Theosophists. Mind you, the
21 Guru-Bhakta will conquer the world--this is the one evidence of
22 history. . . . It is faith that makes a lion of a man. You must always
23 remember how much work I have to do. Sometimes I have to
24 deliver two or three lectures a day--and thus I make my way against
25 all odds--hard work; any weaker man would die.

26 . . . Hold on with faith and strength; be true, be honest, be
27 pure, and don't quarrel among yourselves. Jealousy is the bane of
28 our race.

29 With love to you and all our friends there,

30 Yours,

31 Vivekananda

32
33
34 LVI

35 228 W. 39th

36 Street,

37 New York,

38 10th

39 February, 1896

40 Dear Sister {Mary Hale},

1 I was astonished at learning that you have not received my
2 letter yet. I wrote immediately after the receipt of yours and also
3 sent you some booklets of three lectures I delivered in New York.
4 These Sunday public lectures are now taken down in shorthand and
5 printed. Three of them made two little pamphlets, several copies of
6 which I have forwarded to you. I shall be in New York two weeks
7 more, and then I go to Detroit to come back to Boston for a week or
8 two.

9 My health is very much broken down this year by constant
10 work. I am very nervous. I have not slept a single night soundly this
11 winter. I am sure I am working too much, yet a big work awaits me
12 in England.

13 I will have to go through it, and then I hope to reach India
14 and have a rest all the rest of my life. I have tried at least to do my
15 best for the world, leaving the result to the Lord. Now I am longing
16 for rest. Hope I will get some, and the Indian people will give me
17 up. How I would like to become dumb for some years and not talk
18 at all! I was not made for these struggles and fights of the world. I
19 am naturally dreamy and restful. I am a born idealist, can only live
20 in a world of dreams; the very touch of fact disturbs my visions and
21 makes me unhappy. Thy will be done!

22 I am ever grateful to you four sisters; to you I owe everything
23 I have in this country. May you be ever blessed and happy.
24 Wherever I be, you will always be remembered with the deepest
25 gratitude and sincerest love. The whole life is a succession of
26 dreams. My ambition is to be a conscious dreamer, that is all. My
27 love to all--to Sister Josephine.

28 Ever your affectionate
29 brother,

30 Vivekananda

31
32
33 LVII

34 228 W. 39th Street,
35 New York,

36 13th February, 1896

37 Blessed and Beloved {E.T. Sturdy},

38 About the Sannyasin coming over from India, I am sure he
39 will help you in the translation work, also in other work. Later on,
40 when I come, I may send him over to America. Today another
41 Sannyasin has been added to the list. This time it is a man who is a
42 genuine American and a religious teacher of some standing in the
43 country. He was Dr. Street. He is now Yogananda, as his leaning is
44 all towards Yoga.

45 I have been sending regular reports to the *Brahmavadin*
46 from here. They will be published soon. It takes such a long time for
47 things to reach India! Things are growing nobly in America. As
48 there was no hocus-pocus from the beginning, the Vedanta is

1 drawing the attention of the highest classes in American society.
2 Sarah Bernhardt, the French actress, has been playing "Iziel" here.
3 It is a sort of Frenchified life of Buddha, where a courtesan "Iziel"
4 wants to seduce the Buddha, under the banyan--and the Buddha
5 preaches to her the vanity of the world, whilst she is sitting all the
6 time in Buddha's lap. However, all is well that ends well--the
7 courtesan fails. Madame Bernhardt acts the courtesan. I went to
8 see the Buddha business--and Madame spying me in the audience
9 wanted to have an interview with me. A swell family of my
10 acquaintance arranged the affair. There were besides Madame M.
11 Morrel, the celebrated singer, also the great electrician Tesla.
12 Madame is a very scholarly lady and has studied up the
13 metaphysics a good deal. M. Morrel was being interested, but Mr.
14 Tesla was charmed to hear about the Vedantic Prana and Akasha
15 and the Kalpas, which according to him are the only theories
16 modern science can entertain. Now both Akasha and Prana again
17 are produced from the cosmic Mahat, the Universal Mind, the
18 Brahma or Ishvara. Mr. Tesla thinks he can demonstrate
19 mathematically that force and matter are reducible to potential
20 energy. I am to go and see him next week, to get this new
21 mathematical demonstration.

22 In that case, the Vedantic cosmology will be placed on the
23 surest of foundations. I am working a good deal now upon the
24 cosmology and eschatology⁷⁹ of the Vedanta. I clearly see their
25 perfect unison with modern science, and the elucidation of the one
26 will be followed by that of the other. I intend to write a book later
27 on in the form of questions and answers.⁸⁰ The first chapter will be
28 on cosmology showing the harmony between Vedantic theories and
29 modern science.

30 {chart showing relationship between energy and Prana}

31 The eschatology will be explained from the Advaitic
32 standpoint only. That is to say, the dualist claims that the soul after
33 death passes on to the Solar sphere, thence to the Lunar sphere,
34 thence to the Electric sphere. Thence he is accompanied by a
35 Purusha to Brahmaloaka. (Thence, says the Advaitist, he goes to
36 Nirvana.)

37 Now on the Advaitic side, it is held that the soul neither
38 comes nor goes, and that all these spheres or layers of the universe
39 are only so many varying products of Akasha and Prana. That is to
40 say, the lowest or most condensed is the Solar sphere, consisting of
41 the visible universe, in which Prana appears as physical force, and
42 Akasha as sensible matter. The next is called the Lunar sphere,
43 which surrounds the Solar sphere. This is not the moon at all, but
44 the habitation of the gods, that is to say, Prana appears in it as
45 psychic forces, and Akasha as Tanmatras or fine particles. Beyond

1 ⁷⁹ ?That is, doctrine of the last things--death, judgment, etc.
2

3 ⁸⁰ ?This was never done. But from his lectures in London in 1896, it
4 is easy to see that his mind was still working on these ideas. (See
5 also Vol. VIII, pp. 277-78, 363).
6

1 this is the Electric sphere, that is to say, a condition in which the
2 Prana is almost inseparable from Akasha, and you can hardly tell
3 whether Electricity is force or matter. Next is the Brahmalo-
4 ka, where there is neither Prana nor Akasha, but both are merged in
5 the *mind-stuff*, the primal energy. And here--there being neither
6 Prana nor Akasha--the Jiva contemplates the whole universe as
7 Samashti or the sum total of Mahat or mind. This appears as a
8 Purusha, an abstract universal *soul*, yet not the Absolute, for still
9 there is multiplicity. From this the Jiva finds at last that Unity which
10 is the end. Advaitism says that these are the visions which rise in
11 succession before the Jiva, who himself neither goes nor comes, and
12 that in the same way this present vision has been projected. The
13 projection (Srishti) and dissolution must take place in the same
14 order, only one means going backward, and the other coming out.

15 Now as each individual can only see *his own* universe, that
16 universe is created with his bondage and goes away with his
17 liberation, although it remains for others who are in bondage. Now
18 name and form constitute the universe. A wave in the ocean is a
19 wave, only in so far as it is bound by name and form. If the wave
20 subsides, it is the ocean, but those name and form have
21 immediately vanished for ever. So though the name and form of
22 wave could never be without *water* that was fashioned into the
23 wave by them, yet the name and form themselves were not the
24 wave. They die as soon as ever it returns to water. But other names
25 and forms live in relation to other waves. This name-and-form is
26 called Maya, and the water is Brahman. The wave was nothing but
27 water all the time, yet as a *wave* it had the name and form. Again
28 this name and form cannot remain for one moment separated from
29 the wave, although the wave as water can remain eternally
30 separate from name and form. But because the name and form can
31 never be *separated*, they can never be said to *exist*. Yet they are not
32 *zero*. This is called Maya.

33 I want to work all this out carefully, but you will see at a
34 glance that I am on the right track. It will take more study in
35 physiology, on the relations between the higher and lower centres,
36 to fill out the psychology of mind, Chitta (mind-stuff), and Buddhi
37 (intellect), and so on. But I have clear light now, free of all hocus-
38 pocus. I want to give them dry, hard reason, softened in the
39 sweetest syrup of love and made spicy with intense work, and
40 cooked in the kitchen of Yoga, so that even a baby can easily digest
41 it.

42 Yours etc.,

43 Vivekananda

44
45
46 LVIII

47 U.S.A.

48 17th

49 February, 1896

1 Dear Alasinga,

2 . . . I have used some very harsh words in my letters, which
3 you ought to excuse, as you know, I get nervous at times. The work
4 is terribly hard; and the more it is growing, the harder it is
5 becoming. I need a long rest very badly. Yet a great work is before
6 me in England.

7 Have patience, my son--it will grow beyond all your
8 expectations. . . . Every work has got to pass through hundreds of
9 difficulties before succeeding. Those that persevere will see the
10 light, sooner or later.

11 I have succeeded now in rousing the very heart of the
12 American civilisation, New York, but it has been a terrific struggle. .
13 . . I have spent nearly all I had on this New York work and in
14 England. Now things are in such a shape that they will go on. Just
15 as I am writing to you, every one of my bones is paining after last
16 afternoon's long Sunday public lecture. Then you see, to put the
17 Hindu ideas into English and then make out of dry philosophy and
18 intricate mythology and queer startling psychology, a religion which
19 shall be easy, simple, popular, and at the same time meet the
20 requirements of the highest minds--is a task only those can
21 understand who have attempted it. The dry, abstract Advaita must
22 become living--poetic--in everyday life; out of hopelessly intricate
23 mythology must come concrete moral forms; and out of bewildering
24 Yogi-ism must come the most scientific and practical psychology--
25 and all this must be put in a form so that a child may grasp it. That
26 is my life's work. The Lord only knows how far I shall succeed. "To
27 work we have the right, not to the fruits thereof." It is hard work,
28 my boy, hard work! To keep one's self steady in the midst of this
29 whirl of Kama-Kanchana (lust and gold) and hold on to one's own
30 ideals, until disciples are moulded to conceive of the ideas of
31 realisation and perfect renunciation, is indeed difficult work, my
32 boy. Thank God, already there is great success. I cannot blame the
33 missionaries and others for not understanding me--they hardly ever
34 saw a man who did not care in the least about women and money.
35 At first they could not believe it to be possible; how could they? You
36 must not think that the Western nations have the same ideas of
37 chastity and purity as the Indians. Their equivalents are virtue and
38 courage. . . . People are now flocking to me. Hundreds have now
39 become convinced that there are men who can really control their
40 bodily desires; and reverence and respect for these principles are
41 growing. All things come to him who waits. May you be blessed for
42 ever and ever!

43 Yours with
44 love,

Vivekananda

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23rd March,

1896

Dear Alasinga,

. . . One of my new Sannyasins is indeed a woman. . . . The others are men. I am going to make some more in England and take them over to India with me. These "white" faces will have more influence in India than the Hindus; moreover, they are vigorous, the Hindus are *dead*. The only hope of India is from the masses. The upper classes are physically and morally dead. . . .

My success is due to my popular style--the greatness of a teacher consists in the simplicity of his language.

. . . I am going to England next month. I am afraid I have worked too much; my nerves are almost shattered by this long-continued work. I don't want you to sympathise, but only I write this so that you may not expect much from me now. Work on, the best way you can. I have very little hope of being able to do great things now. I am glad, however, that a good deal of literature has been created by taking down stenographic notes of my lectures. Four books are ready. . . . Well, I am satisfied that I have tried my best to do good, and shall have a clear conscience when I retire from work and sit down in a cave.

With love and
blessings to all,

Vivekananda

LX

U.S.A.

March, 1896

Dear Alasinga,

. . . Push on with the work. I will do all I can. . . . If it pleases the Lord, yellow-garbed Sannyasins will be common here and in England. Work on, my children.

Mind, so long as you have faith in your Guru, nothing will be able to obstruct your way. That translation of the three Bhashyas (commentaries) will be a great thing in the eyes of the Westerners.

. . . Wait, my child, wait and work on. Patience, patience. . . . I will burst on the public again in good time. . . .

Yours with
love,

Vivekananda

LXI

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New York,
14th April,

1896

Dear Dr. Nanjunda Rao,

I received your note this morning. As I am sailing for England tomorrow, I can only write a few hearty lines. I have every sympathy with your proposed magazine for boys, and will do my best to help it on. You ought to make it independent, following the same lines as the *Brahmavadin*, only making the style and matter much more popular. As for example, there is a great chance, much more than you ever dream of, for those wonderful stories scattered all over the Sanskrit literature, to be re-written and made popular. That should be the one great feature of your journal. I will write stories, as many as I can, when time permits. Avoid all attempts to make the journal scholarly--the *Brahmavadin* stands for that--and it will slowly make its way all over the world, I am sure. Use the simplest language possible, and you will succeed. The main feature should be the teaching of *principles* through stories. Don't make it metaphysical at all. As to the business part, keep it wholly in your hands. "Too many cooks spoil the broth." In India the one thing we lack is the power of combination, organisation, the first secret of which is obedience.

I have also promised to help starting a magazine in Bengali in Calcutta. Only the first year I used to charge for my lectures. The last two years, my work was entirely free of all charges. As such, I have almost no money to send you or the Calcutta people. But I will get people to help you with funds very soon. Go on bravely. Do not expect success in a day or a year. Always hold on to the highest. Be steady. Avoid jealousy and selfishness. Be obedient and eternally faithful to the cause of truth, humanity, and your country, and you will move the world. Remember it is the *person*, the life, which is the secret of power--nothing else. Keep this letter and read the last lines whenever you feel worried or jealous. Jealousy is the bane of all slaves. It is the bane of our nation. Avoid that always. All blessings attend you and all success.

Yours

affectionately,

Vivekananda

LXII

England,
14th July,

1896

Dear Dr. Nanjunda Rao,

The numbers of *Prabuddha Bharata* have been received and distributed too to the class. It is very satisfactory. It will have a great sale, no doubt, in India. In America I may get also a number

1 of subscribers. I have already arranged for advertising it in America
2 and Goodyear has done it already. But here in England the progress
3 will be slower indeed. The great drawback here is--they all want to
4 start papers of their own; and it is right that it should be so, seeing
5 that, after all, no foreigner will ever write the English language as
6 well as the native Englishman, and the ideas, when put in good
7 English, will spread farther than in Hindu English. Then again it is
8 much more difficult to write a story in a foreign language than an
9 essay. I am trying my best to get you subscribers here. But you
10 must not depend on any *foreign help*. Nations, like individuals, must
11 help themselves. This is real patriotism. If a nation cannot do that,
12 its time has not yet come. It must wait. It is from Madras that the
13 new light *must* spread all over India. With this end you must work.
14 One point I will remark however. The cover is simply barbarous. It
15 is awful and hideous. If it is possible, change it. Make it symbolical
16 and simple, without human figures at all. The banyan tree does not
17 mean awakening, nor does the hill, nor the saint, nor the European
18 couple. The lotus is a symbol of regeneration.

19 We are awfully behindhand in art especially in that of
20 painting. For instance, make a small scene of spring re-awakening
21 in a forest, showing how the leaves and buds are coming again.
22 Slowly go on, there are hundreds of ideas to be put forward. You
23 see the symbol I made for the *Raja-Yoga*, printed by Longman
24 Green and Co. You can get it at Bombay. It consists of my lectures
25 on Raja-Yoga in New York.

26 I am going to Switzerland next Sunday, and shall return to
27 London in the autumn, and take up the work again. . . . I want rest
28 very badly, you know.

29 Yours with all
30 blessings etc.,

Vivekananda

LXIII

35 Switzerland,
36 6th August,
37 1896

38 Dear Alasinga,

39 I learnt from your letter the bad financial state the
40 *Brahmavadin* is in. I will try to help you when I go back to London.
41 You must not lower the tone. Keep up the paper. Very soon I will be
42 able to help you in such a manner as to make you free of this
43 nonsense teacher business. Do not be afraid. Great things are going
44 to be done, my child. Take heart. The *Brahmavadin* is a jewel--it
45 must not perish. Of course, such a paper has to be kept up by
46 private help always, and *we will do it*. Hold on a few months more.

47 Max Muller's article of Shri Ramakrishna has been published
48 in the *Nineteenth Century*. I will send you a copy as soon as I get it.

1 He writes me very nice letters and wants material for a big work on
2 Ramakrishna's life. Write to Calcutta to send all the material they
3 can to Max Muller.

4 I have received the communication to the American paper
5 before. You must not publish it in India. Enough of this newspaper
6 blazoning, I am tired of it anyhow. Let us go our own way, and let
7 fools talk. Nothing can resist truth.

8 I am, as you see, now in Switzerland and am always on the
9 move. I cannot and must not do anything in the way of writing, nor
10 much reading either. There is a big London work waiting for me
11 from next month. In winter I am going back to India and will try to
12 set things on their feet there.

13 My love to all. Work on, brave hearts, fail not--no saying nay;
14 work on--the Lord is behind the work. Mahashakti is with you.

15 Yours with love and
16 blessings,

Vivekananda

PS. Do not be afraid, money and everything will come soon.

V.

LXIV

Switzerland,
8th August,

1896

Dear Alasinga,

Since writing to you a few days ago I have found my way to
let you know that I am in a position to do this for the *Brahmavadin*.
I will give you Rs. 100 a month for a year or two, i.e. £60 or £70 a
year, i.e. as much as would cover Rs. 100 a month. That will set you
free to work for the *Brahmavadin* and make it a better success. Mr.
Mani Iyer and a few friends can help in raising fund that would
cover the printing etc. What is the income from subscription? Can
these be employed to pay the contributors and get a fine series of
articles? It is not necessary that everybody should understand all
that is written in the *Brahmavadin*, but that they must subscribe
from patriotism and good Karma--the Hindus I mean.

Several things are necessary. First there should be strict
integrity. Not that I even hint that any of you would digress from it,
but the Hindus have a peculiar slovenliness in business matters, not
being sufficiently methodical and strict in keeping accounts etc.

Secondly, entire devotion to the cause, knowing that your
SALVATION depends upon making the *Brahmavadin* a success. Let
this paper be your Ishtadevata, and then you will see how success
comes. I have already sent for Abhedananda from India. I hope
there will be no delay with him as it was with the other Swami. On

1 receipt of this letter you send me a clear account of all the income
2 and the expenses of the *Brahmavadin* so that I may judge from it
3 what best can be done. Remember that perfect purity,
4 disinterestedness, and obedience to the Guru are the secret of all
5 success. . . .

6 A big foreign circulation of a religious paper is impossible. It
7 must be supported by the Hindus if they have any sense of virtue or
8 gratitude left to them.

9 By the by, Mrs. Annie Besant invited me to speak at her
10 Lodge, on Bhakti. I lectured there one night. Col. Olcott also was
11 there. I did it to show my sympathy for all sects. . . . Our
12 countrymen must remember that in things of the Spirit we are the
13 teachers, and not foreigners--but in things of the world we ought to
14 learn from them.

15 I have read Max Muller's article, which is a good one,
16 considering that when he wrote it, six months ago, he had no
17 material except Mazoomdar's leaflet. Now he writes me a long and
18 nice letter offering to write a book on Shri Ramakrishna. I have
19 already supplied him with much material, but a good deal more is
20 needed from India.

21 Work on! Hold on! Be brave! Dare anything and everything!

22 . . . It is all misery, this Samsara, don't you see!

23 Yours with blessings
24 and love,

25 Vivekananda

26
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28 LXV

29 Lucerne,
30 23rd August,

31 1896

32 Blessed and Beloved {E.T. Sturdy},

33 Today I received a letter from India written by Abhedananda
34 that in all probability he had started on the 11th August by the
35 B.I.S.N., "S.S. Mombassa". He could not get an earlier steamer; else
36 he would have started earlier. In all probability he would be able to
37 secure a passage on the Mombassa. The Mombassa will reach
38 London about the 15th of September. As you already know, Miss
39 Muller changed the date of my visiting Deussen to the 19th
40 September. I shall not be in London to receive Abhedananda. He is
41 also coming without any warm clothing; but I am afraid by that time
42 it will begin to cool in England, and he will require at least some
43 underwear and an overcoat. You know all about these things much
44 better than I. So kindly keep a look out for this Mombassa. I expect
45 also another letter from him.

46 I am suffering from a very bad cold indeed. I hope by this
47 time Mohin's money from the Raja has arrived to your care. If so, I

1 do not want the money I gave him back. You may give him the
2 whole of it.

3 I had some letters from Goodwin and Saradananda. They are
4 doing well. Also one from Mrs. Bull regretting that you and I could
5 not be corresponding members of some Society, she is founding at
6 Cambridge. I do remember to have written to her about your and
7 my non-acquiescence in this membership. I have not yet been able
8 to write even a line. I had not a moment's time even to read,
9 climbing up hill and going down dale all the time. We will have to
10 begin the march again in a few days. Kindly give my love to Mohin
11 and Fox when you see them next.

12 With love to all our friends,

13 Yours ever,

14 Vivekananda

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16
17 LXVI

18 Switzerland

19 26th August,

20 1896

21 Dear Nanjunda Rao,

22 I have just now got your letter. I am on the move. I have been
23 doing a great deal of mountain-climbing and glacier-crossing in the
24 Alps. Now I am going to Germany. I have an invitation from Prof.
25 Deussen to visit him at Kiel. From thence I go back to England.
26 Possibly I will return to India this winter.

27 What I objected to in the design for the *Prabuddha Bharata*
28 was not only its tawdriness, but the crowding in of a number of
29 figures without any purpose. A design should be simple, symbolical,
30 and condensed. I will try to make a design for *Prabuddha Bharata*
31 in London and send it over to you. . . .

32 The work is going on beautifully, I am very glad to say. . . . I
33 will give you one advice however. All combined efforts in India sink
34 under the weight of one iniquity--we have not yet developed strict
35 business principles. Business is business, in the highest sense, and
36 no friendship--or as the Hindu proverb says "eye-shame"--should be
37 there. One should keep the clearest account of everything in one's
38 charge--and never, never apply the funds intended for one thing to
39 any other use whatsoever--even if one starves the next moment.
40 This is business integrity. Next, energy unfailing. Whatever you do
41 let that be your worship for the time. Let this paper be your God for
42 the time, and you will succeed.

43 When you have succeeded in this paper, start vernacular ones
44 on the same lines in Tamil, Telugu, Canarese, etc. We must reach
45 the masses. The Madrasis are good, energetic, and all that, but the
46 land of Shankaracharya has lost the spirit of renunciation, it seems.

47 My children must plunge into the breach, must renounce the

1 world--then the firm foundation will be laid.

2 Go on bravely--never mind about designs and other details at
3 present--"With the horse will come the reins". Work unto death--I
4 am with you, and when I am gone, my spirit will work with you. This
5 life comes and goes--wealth, fame, enjoyments are only of a few
6 days. It is better, far better to die on the field of duty, preaching the
7 truth, than to die like a worldly worm. Advance!

8 Yours with all love and
9 blessings,

10 Vivekananda

11

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13 LXVII

14 c/o Miss H. Muller,
15 Airlie Lodge,
16 Ridgeway Gardens

17 Wimbledon, England

18 22nd September,

19 1896

20 Dear Alasinga,

21 I am sure you have got the article on Ramakrishna, I sent
22 you, by Max Muller. Do not be sorry, he does not mention me there
23 at all, as it was written six months before he knew me. And then
24 who cares whom he mentions, if he is right in the main point. I had
25 a beautiful time with Prof. Deussen in Germany. Later, he and I
26 came together to London, and we have already become great
27 friends.

28 I am soon sending you an article on him. Only pray do not put
29 that old-fashioned "Dear Sir" before my articles. Have you seen the
30 Raja-Yoga book yet? I will try to send you a design for the coming
31 year. I send you a *Daily News* article on a book of travel written by
32 the Czar of Russia. The paragraph in which he speaks of India as
33 the land of spirituality and wisdom, you ought to quote in your
34 paper and send the article to the *Indian Mirror*.

35 You are very welcome to publish the Jnana-Yoga lectures, as
36 well as Dr. (Nanjunda Rao) in his *Awakened India* --only the simpler
37 ones. They have to be very carefully gone through and all
38 repetitions and contradictions taken out. I am sure I will now have
39 more time to write. Work on with energy.

40 With love to all,

41 Yours,

42 Vivekananda

43 PS. I have marked the passage to be quoted, the rest of
44 course is useless for a paper.

45 I do not think it would be good just now to make the paper a

1 monthly one yet, unless you are sure of giving a good bulk. As it is
2 now, the bulk and the matter are all very poor. There is yet a vast
3 untrodden field, namely--the writing of the lives and works of
4 Tulasidasa, Kabir, Nanak, and of the saints of Southern India. They
5 should be written in a thorough-going, scholarly style, and not in a
6 slipshod, slovenly way. In fact, the ideal of the paper, apart from the
7 preaching of Vedanta, should be to make it a magazine of Indian
8 research and scholarship, of course, bearing on religion. You must
9 approach the best writers and get carefully-written articles from
10 their pen. Work on with all energy.

11 Yours with
12 love,

Vivekananda

LXVIII

17 14 Grey Coat
18 Gardens
19 Westminster,
20 London
21 1896

22 Dear Alasinga,

23 I have returned about three weeks from Switzerland but
24 could not write you further before. I have sent you by last mail a
25 paper of Paul Deussen of Kiel. Sturdy's plan about the magazine is
26 still hanging fire. As you see, I have left the St. George's Road
27 place. We have a lecture hall at 39 Victoria Street. C/o E. T. Sturdy
28 will always reach me for a year to come. The rooms at Grey Coat
29 Gardens are only lodgings for self and the other Swami taken for
30 three months only. The work in London is growing apace, the
31 classes are becoming bigger as they go on. I have no doubt this will
32 go on increasing at this rate and the English people are steady and
33 loyal. Of course, as soon as I leave, most of this fabric will tumble
34 down. Something will happen. Some strong man will arise to take it
35 up. The Lord knows what is good. In America there is room for
36 twenty preachers on the Vedanta and Yoga. Where to get these
37 preachers and where also the money to bring them? Half the
38 United States can be conquered in ten years, given a number of
39 strong and genuine men. Where are they? We are all boobies over
40 there! Selfish cowards, with our nonsense of lip-patriotism,
41 orthodoxy, and boasted religious feeling! The Madras have more
42 of go and steadiness, but every fool is married. Marriage!
43 Marriage! Marriage! . . . Then the way our boys are married
44 nowadays! . . . It is very good to aspire to be a non-attached
45 householder; but what we want in Madras is not that just now--but
46 non-marriage. . . .

47 My child, what I want is muscles of iron and nerves of steel,
48 inside which dwells a mind of the same material as that of which
49 the thunderbolt is made. Strength, manhood, Kshatra-Virya +

1 Brahma-Teja. Our beautiful hopeful boys--they have everything, only
2 if they are not slaughtered by the millions at the altar of this
3 brutality they call marriage. O Lord, hear my wails! Madras will
4 then awake when at least one hundred of its very heart's blood, in
5 the form of its educated young men, will stand aside from the
6 world, gird their loins, and be ready to fight the battle of truth,
7 marching on from country to country. One blow struck outside of
8 India is equal to a hundred thousand struck within. Well, all will
9 come if the Lord wills it.

10 Miss Muller was the person who offered that money I
11 promised. I have told her about your new proposal. She is thinking
12 about it. In the meanwhile I think it is better to give her some work.
13 She has consented to be the agent for the *Brahmavadin* and
14 *Awakened India*. Will you write to her about it? Her address is
15 Airlie Lodge, Ridgeway Gardens, Wimbledon, England. I was living
16 with her over there for the last few weeks. But the London work
17 cannot go on without my living in London. As such I have changed
18 quarters. I am sorry it has chagrined Miss Muller a bit. Cannot
19 help. Her full name is Miss Henrietta Muller. Max Muller is getting
20 very friendly. I am soon going to deliver two lectures at Oxford.

21 I am busy writing something big on the Vedanta philosophy. I
22 am busy collecting passages from the various Vedas bearing on the
23 Vedanta in its threefold aspect. You can help me by getting
24 someone to collect passages bearing on, first the Advaitic idea, then
25 the Vishishtadvaitic, and the Dvaitic from the Samhitas, the
26 Brahmanas, the Upanishads, and the Puranas. They should be
27 classified and very legibly written with the name and chapter of the
28 book, in each case. It would be a pity to leave the West without
29 leaving something of the philosophy in book form.

30 There was a book published in Mysore in Tamil characters,
31 comprising all the one hundred and eight Upanishads; I saw it in
32 Professor Deussen's library. Is there a reprint of the same in
33 Devanagari? If so, send me a copy. If not, send me the Tamil edition,
34 and also write on a sheet the Tamil letters and compounds, and all
35 juxtaposed with its Nagari equivalents, so that I may learn the
36 Tamil letters.

37 Mr. Satyanathan, whom I met in London the other day, said
38 that there has been a friendly review of my Raja-Yoga book in the
39 *Madras Mail*, the chief Anglo-Indian paper in Madras. The leading
40 physiologist in America, I hear, has been charmed with my
41 speculations. At the same time, there have been some in England,
42 who ridiculed my ideas. Good! My speculations of course are
43 awfully bold; a good deal of them will ever remain meaningless; but
44 there are hints in it which the physiologists had better taken up
45 earlier. Nevertheless, I am quite satisfied with the result. "Let them
46 talk badly of me if they please, but let them talk", is my motto.

47 In England, of course, they are gentlemen and never talk the
48 rot I had in America. Then again the English missionaries you see
49 over there are nearly all of them from the dissenters. They are not
50 from the gentleman class in England. The gentlemen here, who are
51 religious, all belong to the English Church. The dissenters have

1 very little voice in England and no education. I never hear of those
2 people here against whom you time to time warn me. They are
3 unknown here and dare not talk nonsense. I hope Ram K. Naidu is
4 already in Madras, and you are enjoying good health.

5 Persevere on, my brave lads. We have only just begun. Never
6 despond! Never say enough! . . . As soon as a man comes over to
7 the West and sees different nations, his eyes open. This way I get
8 strong workers--not by talking, but by practically showing what we
9 have in India and what we have not. I wish at least that a million
10 Hindus had travelled all over the world!

11 Yours ever
12 with love,

Vivekananda

LXIX

16 c/o E. T. Sturdy,
17 Esq.,
18 39 Victoria
19 Street, London,
20 28th October,
21 1896

22 Dear Alasinga,

23 . . . I am not yet sure what month I shall reach India. I will
24 write later about it. The new Swami⁸¹ delivered his maiden speech
25 yesterday at a friendly society's meeting. It was good and I liked it;
26 he has the making of a good speaker in him, I am sure.

27 . . . You have not yet brought out the-- . . . Again, books must
28 be cheap for India to have a large sale; the types must be bigger to
29 satisfy the public. . . . You can very well get out a cheap edition of--if
30 you like. I have not reserved any copyright on it purposely. You have
31 missed a good opportunity by not getting out the --book earlier, but
32 we Hindus are so slow that when we have done a work, the
33 opportunity has already passed away, and thus we are the losers.
34 Your--book came out after a year's talk! Did you think the Western
35 people would wait for it till Doomsday? You have lost three-fourths
36 of the sale by this delay. . . . That Haramohan is a fool, slower than
37 you, and his printing is diabolical. There is no use in publishing
38 books that way; it is cheating the public, and should not be done. I
39 shall most probably return to India accompanied by Mr. and Mrs.
40 Sevier, Miss Muller, and Mr. Goodwin. Mr. and Mrs. Sevier are
41 probably going to settle in Almora at least for some time, and
42 Goodwin is going to become a Sannyasin. He of course will travel
43 with me. It is he to whom we owe all our books. He took shorthand
44 notes of my lectures, which enabled the books to be published. . . .
45 All these lectures were delivered on the spur of the moment,
46 without the least preparation, and as such, they should be carefully

⁸¹ ?Swami Abhedananda.

1 revised and edited. . . . Goodwin will have to live with me. . . . He is
2 a strict vegetarian.

3 Yours with
4 love,

5 Vivekananda

6 PS. I have sent a little note to the *Indian Mirror* today about
7 Dr. Barrows and how he should be welcomed. You also write some
8 good words of welcome for him in the *Brahmavadin*. All here send
9 love.

10 V.

11
12
13 LXX

14 London,

15 28th October,

16 1896

17 (On the eve of the lecture-tour of Dr. Barrows in India at the
18 end of 1896, Swami Vivekananda in a letter to the *Indian Mirror*,
19 Calcutta, introduced the distinguished visitor to his countrymen and
20 advised them to give him a fitting reception. He wrote among other
21 things as follows:)

22 Dr. Barrows was the ablest lieutenant Mr. C. Boney could
23 have selected to carry out successfully his great plan of the
24 Congresses at the World's Fair, and it is now a matter of history
25 how one of these Congresses scored a unique distinction under the
26 leadership of Dr. Barrows.

27 It was the great courage, untiring industry, unruffled
28 patience, and never-failing courtesy of Dr. Barrows that made the
29 Parliament a grand success.

30 India, its people, and their thoughts have been brought more
31 prominently before the world than ever before by that wonderful
32 gathering at Chicago, and that national benefit we certainly owe to
33 Dr. Barrows more than to any other man at that meeting.

Moreover, he comes to us in the sacred name of religion, in the name of one of the great teachers of mankind, and I am sure, his exposition of the system of the Prophet of Nazareth would be extremely liberal and elevating. The Christ-power this man intends to bring to India is not that of the intolerant, dominant superior, with heart full of contempt for everything else but its own self, but that of a brother who craves for a brother's place as a co-worker of the various powers already working in India. Above all, we must remember that gratitude and hospitality are the peculiar characteristics of Indian humanity; and as such, I would beg my countrymen to behave in such a manner that this stranger from the other side of the globe may find that in the midst of all our misery, our poverty, and degradation, the heart beats as warm as of yore, when the "wealth of Ind" was the proverb of nations and India was the land of the "Aryas".

LXXI

14 Grey Coat
Gardens,
Westminster,
S.W.,
11th
November, 1896
Dear Alasinga,

I shall most probably start on the 16th of December, or may be a day or two later. I go from here to Italy, and after seeing a few places there, join the steamer at Naples. Miss Muller, Mr. and Mrs. Sevier, and a young man called Goodwin are accompanying me. The Seviere are going to settle at Almora. So is Miss Muller. Sevier was an officer in the Indian army for 5 years. So he knows India a good deal. Miss Muller was a Theosophist who adopted Akshay. Goodwin is an Englishman, through whose shorthand notes it has been possible for the pamphlets to be published.

I arrive at Madras first from Colombo. The other people go their way to Almora. I go from thence direct to Calcutta. I will write you the exact information when I start.

Yours affly.,

Vivekananda

PS. The first edition of *Raja-Yoga* is sold out, and a second is in the press. India and America are the biggest buyers.

V.

LXXII

39 Victoria

1 Street

2 London, S.W.

3 20th

4 November, 1896

5 Dear Alasinga,

6 I am leaving England on the 16th of December for Italy, and
7 shall catch the North German Lloyd S.S. Prinz Regent Luitpold at
8 Naples. The steamer is due at Colombo on the 14th of January next.

9 I intend to see a little of Ceylon, and shall then go to Madras.
10 I am being accompanied by three English friends--Capt. and Mrs.
11 Sevier and Mr. Goodwin. Mr. Sevier and his wife are going to start a
12 place near Almora in the Himalayas which I intend to make my
13 Himalayan Centre, as well as a place for Western disciples to live as
14 Brahmacharins and Sannyasins. Goodwin is an unmarried young
15 man who is going to travel and live with me; he is like a Sannyasin.

16 I am very desirous to reach Calcutta before the birthday
17 festival of Sri Ramakrishna. . . . My present plan of work is to start
18 two centres, one in Calcutta and the other in Madras, in which to
19 train up young preachers. I have funds enough to start the one in
20 Calcutta, which being the scene of Shri Ramakrishna's life-work,
21 demands my first attention. As for the Madras one, I expect to get
22 funds in India.

23 We will begin work with these three centres; and later on, we
24 will get to Bombay and Allahabad. And from these points, if the
25 Lord is pleased, we will invade not only India, but send over bands
26 of preachers to every country in the world. That should be our first
27 duty. Work on with a heart. 39 Victoria will be the London
28 headquarters for some time to come, as the work will be carried on
29 there. Sturdy had a big box of *Brahmavadin* I did not know before.
30 He is now canvassing subscribers for it.

31 Now we have got one Indian magazine in English fixed. We
32 can start some in the vernaculars also. Miss M. Noble of Wimbledon
33 is a great worker. She will also canvass for both the Madras papers.
34 She will write you. These things will grow slowly but surely. Papers
35 of this kind are supported by a small circle of followers. Now they
36 cannot be expected to do too many things at a time--they have to
37 buy the books, find the money for the work in England, subscribers
38 for the paper here, and then subscribe to Indian papers. It is too
39 much. It is more like trading than teaching. Therefore you must
40 wait, and yet I am sure there will be a few subscribers here. Again,
41 there must be work for the people here to do when I am gone, else
42 the whole thing will go to pieces. Therefore there must be a paper
43 here, also in America by and by. The Indian papers are to be
44 supported by the Indians. To make a paper equally acceptable to all
45 nationalities means a staff of writers from all nations; and that
46 means at least a hundred thousand rupees a year.

47 You must not forget that my interests are *international* and
48 not Indian alone. I am in good health; so is Abhedananda.

49 With all love and

1 blessings,

Vivekananda

LXXIII

London,

13th

December, 1896

Dear Madam {An American lady},

We have only to grasp the idea of gradation of morality and everything becomes clear.

Renunciation--non-resistance--non-destructiveness--are the ideals to be attained through less and less worldliness, less and less resistance, less and less destructiveness. Keep the ideal in view and work towards it. None can live in the world without resistance, without destruction, without desire. The world has not come to that state yet when the ideal can be realised in society.

The progress of the world through all its evils is making it fit for the ideals, slowly but surely. The majority will have to go on with this slow growth--the exceptional ones will have to get out to realise the idea in the present state of things.

Doing the duty of the time is the best way, and if it is done only as a duty, it does not make us attached.

Music is the highest art and, to those who understand, is the highest worship.

We must try our best to destroy ignorance and evil. Only we have to learn that evil is destroyed by the growth of good.

Yours

faithfully,

Vivekananda

LXXIV

Rose Bank
The Maharaja of

Burdwan's House

Darjeeling,
6th April, 1897

Honoured Madam {Shrimati Sarala Ghoshal--Editor of *Bharati* },

I feel obliged for the *Bharati* sent by you, and consider myself fortunate that the cause, to which my humble life has been dedicated, has been able to win the approbation of highly talented ladies like you.

In this battle of life, men are rare who encourage the initiator of new thought, not to speak of women who would offer him

1 encouragement, particularly in our unfortunate land. It is therefore
2 that the approbation of an educated Bengali lady is more valuable
3 than the loud applause of all the men of India.

4 May the Lord grant that many women like you be born in this
5 country, and devote their lives to the betterment of their
6 motherland!

7 I have something to say in regard to the article you have
8 written about me in the *Bharati*. It is this. It has been for the good
9 of India that religious preaching in the West has been and will be
10 done. It has ever been my conviction that we shall not be able to
11 rise unless the Western people come to our help. In this country no
12 appreciation of merit can yet be found, no financial strength, and
13 what is most lamentable of all, there is not a bit of practicality.

14 There are many things to be done, but means are wanting in
15 this country. We have brains, but no hands.

16 We have the doctrine of Vedanta, but we have not the power
17 to reduce it into practice. In our books there is the doctrine of
18 universal equality, but in work we make great distinctions. It was in
19 India that unselfish and disinterested work of the most exalted type
20 was preached; but in practice we are awfully cruel, awfully
21 heartless--unable to think of anything besides our own mass-of-flesh
22 bodies.

23 Yet it is only through the present state of things that it is
24 possible to proceed to work. There is no other way. Every one has
25 the power to judge of good and evil, but he is the hero who
26 undaunted by the waves of Samsara--which is full of errors,
27 delusions, and miseries--with one hand wipes the tears, and with
28 the other, unshaken, shows the path of deliverance. On the one
29 hand there is the conservative society, like a mass of inert matter;
30 on the other, the restless, impatient, fire-darting reformer; the way
31 to good lies between the two. I heard in Japan that it was the belief
32 of the girls of that country that their dolls would be animated if they
33 were loved with all their heart. The Japanese girl never breaks her
34 doll. O you of great fortune! I too believe that India will awake
35 again if anyone could love with all his heart the people of the
36 country--bereft of the grace of affluence, of blasted fortune, their
37 discretion totally lost, downtrodden, ever-starved, quarrelsome, and
38 envious. Then only will India awake, when hundreds of large-
39 hearted men and women, giving up all desires of enjoying the
40 luxuries of life, will long and exert themselves to their utmost for
41 the well-being of the millions of their countrymen who are gradually
42 sinking lower and lower in the vortex of destitution and ignorance. I
43 have experienced even in my insignificant life that good motives,
44 sincerity, and infinite love can conquer the world. One single soul
45 possessed of these virtues can destroy the dark designs of millions
46 of hypocrites and brutes.

47 My going to the West again is yet uncertain; if I go, know that
48 too will be for India. Where is the strength of men in this country?
49 Where is the strength of money? Many men and women of the West
50 are ready to do good to India by serving even the lowest Chandalas,
51 in the Indian way, and through the Indian religion. How many such

1 are there in this country? And financial strength! To meet the
2 expenses of my reception, the people of Calcutta made me deliver a
3 lecture and sold tickets! . . . I do not blame nor censure anybody for
4 this, I only want to show that our well-being is impossible without
5 men and money coming from the West.

6 Ever grateful and ever praying to the Lord for your welfare,

7 Vivekananda

8
9
10 LXXV

11 Almora,

12 29th May,

13 1897

14 My Dear Doctor Shashi {Bhushan Ghosh},

15 Your letter and the two bottles containing the medicines were
16 duly received. I have begun from last evening a trial of your
17 medicines. Hope the combination will have a better effect than the
18 one alone.

19 I began to take a lot of exercise on horseback, both morning
20 and evening. Since that I am very much better indeed. I was so
21 much better the first week of my gymnastics that I have scarcely
22 felt so well since I was a boy and used to have *kusti* (wrestling)
23 exercises. I really began to feel that it was a pleasure to have a
24 body. Every movement made me conscious of strength--every
25 movement of the muscles was pleasurable. That exhilarating feeling
26 has subsided somewhat, yet I feel very strong. In a trial of strength
27 I could make both G. G. and Niranjana go down before me in a
28 minute. In Darjeeling I always felt that I was not the same man.
29 Here I feel that I have no disease whatsoever, but there is one
30 marked change. I never in my life could sleep as soon as I got into
31 bed. I must toss for at least two hours. Only from Madras to
32 Darjeeling (during the first month) I would sleep as soon as my
33 head touched the pillow. That ready disposition to sleep is gone now
34 entirely, and my old tossing habit and feeling hot after the evening
35 meal have come back. I do not feel any heat after the day meal.
36 There being an orchard here, I began to take more fruit than usual
37 as soon as I came. But the only fruit to be got here now is the
38 apricot. I am trying to get more varieties from Naini Tal. There has
39 not been any thirst even though the days are fearfully hot. . . . On
40 the whole my own feeling is one of revival of great strength and
41 cheerfulness, and a feeling of exuberant health, only I am afraid I
42 am getting fat on too much milk diet. Don't you listen to what Yogen
43 writes. He is a hypochondriac himself and wants to make everybody
44 so. I ate one-sixteenth of a *barphi* (sweetmeat) in Lucknow, and that
45 according to Yogen was what put me out of sorts in Almora! Yogen
46 is expected here in a few days. I am going to take him in hand. By
47 the by, I am very susceptible to malarious influences. The first
48 week's indisposition at Almora might have been caused to a certain
49 extent by my passage through the *Terai*. Anyhow I feel very, very

1 strong now. You ought to see me, Doctor, when I sit meditating in
2 front of the beautiful snow peaks and repeat from the Upanishads:
3 "{Sanskrit}--He has neither disease, nor decay, nor death; for,
4 verily, he has obtained a body full of the fire of Yoga."

5 I am very glad to learn of the success of the meetings of the
6 Ramakrishna Mission at Calcutta. All blessings attend those that
7 help in the great work. . . .

8 With all love,

9 Yours in the
10 Lord,
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Yours in the
Vivekananda

LXXVI

Almora

1st June,

1897

Dear Mr.--

The objections you show about the Vedas would be valid if the word Vedas meant Samhitas. The word Vedas includes the three parts, the Samhitas, the Brahmanas, and the Upanishads, according to the universally received opinion in India. Of these, the first two portions, as being the ceremonial parts, have been nearly put out of sight; the Upanishads have alone been taken up by all our philosophers and founders of sects.

The idea that the Samhitas are the only Vedas is very recent and has been started by the late Swami Dayananda. This opinion has not got any hold on the orthodox population.

The reason of this opinion was that Swami Dayananda thought he could find a consistent theory of the whole, based on a new interpretation of the Samhitas, but the difficulties remained the same, only they fell back on the Brahmanas. And in spite of the theories of interpretation and interpolation a good deal still remains.

Now if it is possible to build a consistent religion on the Samhitas, it is a thousand times more sure that a very consistent and harmonious faith can be based upon the Upanishads, and moreover, here one has not to go against the already received national opinion. Here all the Acharyas (Teachers) of the past would side with you, and you have a vast scope for new progress.

The Gita no doubt has already become the Bible of Hinduism, and it fully deserves to be so; but the personality of Krishna has become so covered with haze that it is impossible today to draw any life-giving inspiration from that *life*. Moreover, the present age requires new modes of thought and new life.

Hoping this will help you in thinking along these lines.

1 I am yours with
2 blessings,
3 Vivekananda
4

5
6 LXXVII

7 {Sanskrit letter}

8 {Sanskrit letter continued}

9
10 Translation {of above letter to Sharat Chandra Chakravarty,
11 a disciple of Swamiji}:

12
13 Almora,

14 3rd July, 1897

15 Constant salutation be to Shri Ramakrishna, the Free, the
16 Ishvara, the Shiva-form, by whose power we and the whole world
17 are blessed!

18 Mayest thou live long, O Sharat Chandra!

19 Those writers of Shastra who do not tend towards work say
20 that all-powerful destiny prevails; but others who are workers
21 consider the will of man as superior. Knowing that the quarrel
22 between those who believe in the human will as the remover of
23 misery and others who rely on destiny is due to indiscrimination--try
24 to ascend the highest peak of knowledge.

25 It has been said that adversity is the touchstone of true
26 knowledge, and this may be said a hundred times with regard to the
27 truth: "Thou art That." This truly diagnoses the Vairagya
28 (dispassion) disease. Blessed is the life of one who has developed
29 this symptom. In spite of your dislike I repeat the old saying: "Wait
30 for a short time." You are tired with rowing; rest on your oars. The
31 momentum will take the boat to the other side. This has been said
32 in the Gita (IV.38), "In good time, having reached perfection in
33 Yoga, one realises That in one's own heart;" and in the Upanishad,
34 "Neither by rituals, nor by progeny, nor by riches, but by
35 renunciation alone a few (rare) people attained immortality"
36 (Kaivalya, 2). Here, by the word renunciation Vairagya is referred
37 to. It may be of two kinds, with or without purpose. If the latter,
38 none but worm-eaten brains will try for it. But if the other is
39 referred to, then renunciation would mean the withdrawal of the
40 mind from other things and concentrating it on God or Atman. The
41 Lord of all cannot be any particular individual. He must be the sum
42 total. One possessing Vairagya does not understand by Atman the
43 individual ego but the All-pervading Lord, residing as the Self and
44 Internal Ruler in all. He is perceivable by all as the sum total. This
45 being so, as Jiva and Ishvara are in essence the same, serving the
46 Jivas and loving God must mean one and the same thing. Here is a
47 peculiarity: when you serve a Jiva with the idea that he is a Jiva, it is

1 Daya (compassion) and not Prema (love); but when you serve him
2 with the idea that he is the Self, that is Prema. That the Atman is
3 the one objective of love is known from Shruti, Smriti, and direct
4 perception. Bhagavan Chaitanya was right, therefore, when he said,
5 "Love to God and compassion to the Jivas". This conclusion of the
6 Bhagavan, intimating differentiation between Jiva and Ishvara, was
7 right, as He was a dualist. But for us, Advaitists, this notion of Jiva
8 as distinct from God is the cause of bondage. Our principle,
9 therefore, should be love, and not compassion. The application of
10 the word compassion even to Jiva seems to me to be rash and vain.
11 For us, it is not to pity but to serve. Ours is not the feeling of
12 compassion but of love, and the feeling of Self in all.

13 For thy good, O Sharman, may thine be Vairagya, the feeling
14 of which is love, which unifies all inequalities, cures the disease of
15 Samsara, removes the threefold misery inevitable in this
16 phenomenal world, reveals the true nature of all things, destroys
17 the darkness of Maya, and which brings out the Selfhood of
18 everything from Brahma to the blade of grass!

19 This is the constant prayer of

20 Vivekananda
21 Ever bound to
22 thee in love.

23
24
25 LXXVIII

26 Almora

27 9th July, 1897

28 Dear Sister {Mary Hale},

29 I am very sorry to read between the lines the desponding
30 tone of your letter, and I understand the cause; thank you for your
31 warning, I understand your motive perfectly. I had arranged to go
32 with Ajit Singh to England; but the doctors not allowing, it fell
33 through. I shall be so happy to learn that Harriet has met him. He
34 will be only too glad to meet any of you.

35 I had also a lot of cuttings from different American papers
36 fearfully criticising my utterances about American women and
37 furnishing me with the strange news that I had been outcasted! As
38 if I had any caste to lose, being a Sannyasin!

39 Not only no caste has been lost, but it has considerably
40 shattered the opposition to sea voyage--my going to the West. If I
41 should have to be outcasted, it would be with half the ruling princes
42 of India and almost all of educated India. On the other hand, a
43 leading Raja of the caste to which I belonged before my entering
44 the order got up a banquet in my honour, at which were most of the
45 *big bugs* of that caste. The Sannyasins, on the other hand, may not
46 dine with any one in India, as it would be beneath the dignity of
47 gods to dine with mere mortals. They are regarded as Narayanas,
48 while the others are mere men. And dear Mary, these feet have

1 been washed and wiped and worshipped by the descendants of
2 kings, and there has been a progress through the country which
3 none ever commanded in India.

4 It will suffice to say that the police were necessary to keep
5 order if I ventured out into the street! That is outcasting indeed! Of
6 course, that took the starch out of the missionaries, and who are
7 they here?--Nobodies. We are in blissful ignorance of their
8 existence all the time. I had in a lecture said something about the
9 missionaries and the origin of that species except the English
10 Church gentlemen, and in that connection had to refer to the very
11 churchy women of America and their power of inventing scandals.
12 This the missionaries are parading as an attack on American
13 women *en masse* to undo my work there, as they well know that
14 anything said against themselves will rather please the U.S. people.
15 My dear Mary, supposing I had said all sorts of fearful things
16 against the "Yanks"--would that be paying off a millionth part of
17 what they say of our *mothers* and *sisters* ? "Neptune's waters"
18 would be perfectly useless to wash off the hatred the Christian
19 "Yanks" of both sexes bear to us "heathens of India"--and what harm
20 have we done them? Let the "Yanks" learn to be patient under
21 criticism and then criticise others. It is a well-known psychological
22 fact that those who are ever ready to abuse others cannot bear the
23 slightest touch of criticism from others. Then again, what do I owe
24 them? Except your family, Mrs. Bull, the Leggetts, and a few other
25 kind persons, who else has been kind to me? Who came forward to
26 help me work out my ideas? I had to work till I am at death's door
27 and had to spend nearly the whole of that energy in America, so
28 that the Americans may learn to be broader and more spiritual. In
29 England I worked only six months. There was not a breath of
30 scandal save one, and that was the working of an American woman,
31 which greatly relieved my English friends--not only no attacks but
32 many of the best English Church clergymen became my firm
33 friends, and without asking I got much help for my work, and I am
34 sure to get much more. There is a society watching my work and
35 getting help for it, and four respectable persons followed me to
36 India to help my work, and dozens were ready, and the next time I
37 go, hundreds will be.

1 Dear, dear Mary, do not be afraid for me. . . . The world is
2 big, very big, and there must be some place for me even if the
3 "Yankees" rage. Anyhow, I am quite satisfied with my work. I never
4 planned anything. I have taken things as they came. Only one idea
5 was burning in my brain--to start the machine for elevating the
6 Indian masses--and that I have succeeded in doing to a certain
7 extent. It would have made your heart glad to see how my boys are
8 working in the midst of famine and disease and misery--nursing by
9 the mat-bed of the cholera-stricken Pariah and feeding the starving
10 Chandala--and the Lord sends help to me and to them all. "What are
11 men?" He is with me, the Beloved, He was when I was in America,
12 in England, when I was roaming about unknown from place to place
13 in India. What do I care about what they talk--the babies, they do
14 not know any better. What! I, who have realised the Spirit and the
15 vanity of all earthly nonsense, to be swerved from my path by
16 babies' prattle! Do I look like that?

17 I had to talk a lot about myself because I owed that to you. I
18 feel my task is done--at most three or four years more of life are
19 left. I have lost all wish for my salvation. I never wanted earthly
20 enjoyments. I must see my machine in strong working order, and
21 then knowing sure that I have put in a lever for the good of
22 humanity, in India at least, which no power can drive back, I will
23 sleep, without caring what will be next; and may I be born again
24 and again, and suffer thousands of miseries so that I may worship
25 the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, the sum total of
26 all souls--and above all, my God the wicked, my God the miserable,
27 my God the poor of all races, of all species, is the special object of
28 my worship.

29 "He who is in you and is outside of you, who works through
30 every hand, who walks through every foot, whose body you are,
31 Him worship, and break all other idols.

32 "He who is the high and the low, the saint and the sinner, the
33 god and the worm, Him worship, the visible, the knowable, the real,
34 the omnipresent, break all other idols.

35 "In whom there is neither past life nor future birth, nor death
36 nor going or coming, in whom we always have been and always will
37 be one, Him worship, break all other idols.

38 "Ay, fools, neglecting the living Gods and His infinite
39 reflection with which the world is full, and running after imaginary
40 shadows! Him worship, the only visible, and break all other idols."

41 My time is short. I have got to unbreast whatever I have to
42 say, without caring if it smarts some or irritates others. Therefore,
43 my dear Mary, do not be frightened at whatever drops from my lips,
44 for the power behind me is not Vivekananda but He the Lord, and
45 He knows best. If I have to please the world, that will be injuring
46 the world; the voice of the majority is wrong, seeing that they
47 govern and make the sad state of the world. Every new thought
48 must create opposition--in the civilised a polite sneer, in the vulgar
49 savage howls and filthy scandals.

50 Even these earthworms must stand erect, even children must

1 see light. The Americans are drunk with new wine. A hundred
2 waves of prosperity have come and gone over my country. We have
3 learned the lesson which no child can yet understand. It is vanity.
4 This hideous world is Maya. Renounce and be happy. Give up the
5 idea of sex and possessions. There is no other bond. Marriage and
6 sex and money are the only living devils. All earthly love proceeds
7 from the body. No sex, no possessions; as these fall off, the eyes
8 open to spiritual vision. The soul regains its own infinite power.
9 How I wish I were in England to see Harriet. I have one wish left--
10 to see you four sisters before I die, and that must happen.

11 Yours ever
12 affly.,

13 Vivekananda

14

15

16 LXXIX

17 Almora,
18 28th July,
19 1897

20 My dear Mother {Mrs. Leggett},

21 Many many thanks for your beautiful and kind letter. I wish I
22 were in London to be able to accept the invitation with the Raja of
23 Khetri. I had a great many dinners to attend in London last season.
24 But it was fated not to be, and my health did not permit my going
25 over with the Raja.

26 So Alberta is once more at home in America. I owe her a debt
27 of gratitude for all she did for me in Rome. How is Holli? To both of
28 them my love, and kiss the new baby for me, my youngest sister.

29 I have been taking some rest in the Himalayas for nine
30 months. Now I am going down to the plains to be harnessed once
31 more for work.

32 To Frankincense and Joe Joe and Mabel my love, and so to
33 you eternally.

34 Yours ever in
35 the Lord,

36 Vivekananda

37

38

39 LXXX

40 The Math,
41 Belur,

42 11th August,
43 1897

44 Dear Joe {Miss MacLeod},

1 . . . Well, the work of the Mother will not suffer; because it
2 has been built and up to date maintained upon truth, sincerity, and
3 purity. Absolute sincerity has been its watchword.

4 Yours with all
5 love,

6 Vivekananda

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8
9 LXXXI

10 Murree,
11 11th October,
12 1897

13 My dear Jagamohanlal,

14 . . . Leave words when you start for Bombay to somebody to
15 take care of three Sannyasins I am sending to Jaipur. Give them
16 food and good lodging. They will be there till I come. They are
17 fellows--innocent, not learned. They belong to me, and one is my
18 Gurubhai (brother-disciple). If they like, take them to Khetri where
19 I will come soon. I am travelling now quietly. I will not even lecture
20 much this year. I have no more faith in all this noise and humbug
21 which brings no practical good. I must make a silent attempt to
22 start my institution in Calcutta; for that I am going to visit different
23 centres quietly to collect funds.

24 Yours with
25 blessings,

26 Vivekananda

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28
29 LXXXII

30 Dehra Dun,
31 24th
32 November, 1897

33 My dear M. {Mahendra Nath Gupta},

34 Many many thanks for your second leaflet (leaves from the
35 *Gospel*). It is indeed wonderful. The move is quite original, and
36 never was the life of a great Teacher brought before the public
37 untarnished by the writer's mind, as you are presenting this one.
38 The language also is beyond all praise, so fresh, so pointed, and
39 withal so plain and easy.

40 I cannot express in adequate terms how I have enjoyed the
41 leaflets. I am really in a transport when I read them. Strange, isn't
42 it? Our Teacher and Lord was so original, and each one of us will
43 have to be original or nothing. I now understand why none of us
44 attempted his life before. It has been reserved for you, this great
45 work. He is with you evidently.

1 With all love and Namaskara,

2 Vivekananda

3 PS. The Socratic dialogues are Plato all over; you are entirely
4 hidden. Moreover, the dramatic part is infinitely beautiful.
5 Everybody likes it here and in the West.

6

7

8 LXXXIII

9 Almora,

10 9th June,

11 1898

12 Your Highness {Maharaja of Khetri},

13 Very sorry to learn that you are not in perfect health. Sure
14 you will be in a few days.

15 I am starting for Kashmir on Saturday next. I have your letter
16 of introduction to the Resident, but better still if you kindly drop a
17 line to the Resident telling him that you have already given an
18 introduction to me.

19 Will you kindly ask Jagamohan to write to the Dewan of
20 Kishangarh reminding him of his promise to supply me with copies
21 of Nimbarka Bhashya on the *Vyasa-Sutras* and other Bhashyas
22 (commentaries) through his Pandits.

23 With all love and blessings,

24 Yours,

25 Vivekananda

26 PS. Poor Goodwin is dead. Jagamohan knows him well. I want a
27 couple of tiger skins, if I can, to be sent to the Math as presents to
28 two European friends. These seem to be most gratifying presents to
29 Westerners.

30

31

32 LXXXIV

33 c/o Risibar

34 Mookerjee,

35 Chief Judge,
36 Kashmir,

37 17th

38 September, 1898

39 Your Highness {Majaraja of Khetri},

40 I have been very ill here for two weeks. Now getting better. I
41 am in want of funds. Though the American friends are doing
42 everything they can to help me, I feel shame to beg from them all
43 the time, especially as illness makes one incur contingent expenses.
44 I have no shame to beg of one person in the world and that is

1 yourself.

2 Whether you give or refuse, it is the same to me. If possible
3 send some money kindly. How are you? I am going down by the
4 middle of October.

5 Very glad to learn from Jagamohan the complete recovery of
6 the Kumar (Prince) Saheb. Things are going on well with me;
7 hoping it is the same with you.

8 Ever yours in
9 the Lord,

10 Vivekananda

11

12

13 LXXXV

14 Lahore,

15 16th October,

16 1898

17 Your Highness {Maharaja of Khetri},

18 The letter that followed my wire gave the desired
19 information; therefore I did not wire back about my health in reply
20 to yours.

21 This year I suffered much in Kashmir and am now recovered
22 and going to Calcutta direct today. For the last ten years or so I
23 have not seen the Puja of Shri Durga in Bengal which is the great
24 affair there. I hope this year to be present.

25 The Western friends will come to see Jaipur in a week or two.
26 If Jagamohan be there, kindly instruct him to pay some attention to
27 them and show them over the city and the old arts.

28 I leave instructions with my brother Saradananda to write to
29 Munshiji before they start for Jaipur.

30 How are you and the Prince? Ever as usual praying for your
31 welfare,

32 I remain yours
33 affectionately,

34 Vivekananda

35 PS. My future address is Math, Belur, Howrah Dist., Bengal.

36

37

38 LXXXVI

39 Math, Belur,

40 Howrah Dist.,

41 Bengal,

42 26th October,

43 1898

1 Your Highness {Maharaja of Khetri},

2 I am very very anxious about your health. I had a great desire
3 to look in on my way down, but my health failed completely, and I
4 had to run down in all haste. There is some disturbance with my
5 heart, I am afraid.

6 However I am very anxious to know about your health. If you
7 like I will come over to Khetri to see you. I am praying day and
8 night for your welfare. Do not lose heart if anything befalls, the
9 "Mother" is your protection. Write me all about yourself. . . . How is
10 the Kumar Saheb?

11 With all love and everlasting blessings,

12 Ever yours in
13 the Lord,

14 Vivekananda

15

16

17 LXXXVII

18 The Math,
19 Belur,

20 Howrah Dist.,
21 November

22 (?), 1898

23 Your Highness {Maharaja of Khetri},

24 Very glad to learn that you and the Kumar are enjoying good
25 health. As for me, my heart has become very weak. Change, I do
26 not think, will do me any good, as for the last 14 years I do not
27 remember to have stopped at one place for 3 months at a stretch.
28 On the other hand if by some chance I can live for months in one
29 place, I hope it will do me good. I do not mind this. However, I feel
30 that my work in this life is done. Through good and evil, pain and
31 pleasure, my life-boat has been dragged on. The one great lesson I
32 was taught is that life is misery, nothing but misery. Mother knows
33 what is best. Each one of us is in the hands of Karma; it works itself
34 out--and no nay. There is only one element in life which is worth
35 having at any cost, and it is love. Love immense and infinite, broad
36 as the sky and deep as the ocean--this is the one great gain in life.
37 Blessed is he who gets it.

38 Ever yours in
39 the Lord,

40 Vivekananda

41

42

43 LXXXVIII

44 Math, Belur,
45 15th

1 December, 1898

2 Your Highness {Maharaja of Khetri},

3 Your very kind letter received with the order of 500 on Mr.
4 Dulichand. I am a little better now. Don't know whether this
5 improvement will continue or not.

6 Are you to be in Calcutta this winter, as I hear? Many Rajas
7 are coming to pay their respects to the new Viceroy. The Maharaja
8 of Sikar is here, I learn from the papers already.

9 Ever praying for you and yours,

10 Yours in the
11 Lord,

12 Vivekananda

13

14

15 LXXXIX

16 Deoghar,

17 Vaidyanath

18 3rd January,

19 1899.

20 {original in Bengali}

21 Dear Mother {Shrimati Mrinalini Bose},

22 Some very important questions have been raised in your
23 letter. It is not possible to answer them fully in a short note, still I
24 reply to them as briefly as possible.

25 (1) Rishi, Muni, or God--none has power to force an
26 institution on society. When the needs of the times press hard on it,
27 society adopts certain customs for self-preservation. Rishis have
28 only recorded those customs. As a man often resorts even to such
29 means as are good for immediate self-protection but which are very
30 injurious in the future, similarly society also not unfrequently saves
31 itself for the time being, but these immediate means which
32 contributed to its preservation turn out to be terrible in the long
33 run.

34 For example, take the prohibition of widow-marriage in our
35 country. Don't think that Rishis or wicked men introduced the law
36 pertaining to it. Notwithstanding the desire of men to keep women
37 completely under their control, they never could succeed in
38 introducing those laws without betaking themselves to the aid of a
39 social necessity of the time. Of this custom two points should be
40 specially observed:

41 (a) Widow-marriage takes place among the lower classes.

42 (b) Among the higher classes the number of women is greater
43 than that of men.

44 Now, if it be the rule to marry every girl, it is difficult enough
45 to get one husband apiece; then how to get, in succession, two or

1 three for each? Therefore has society put one party under
2 disadvantage, i.e. it does not let her have a second husband, who
3 has had one; if it did, one maid would have to go without a husband.
4 On the other hand, widow-marriage obtains in communities having
5 a greater number of men than women, as in their case the objection
6 stated above does not exist. It is becoming more and more difficult
7 in the West, too, for unmarried girls to get husbands.

8 Similar is the case with the caste system and other social
9 customs.

10 So, if it be necessary to change any social custom the
11 *necessity* underlying it should be found out first of all, and by
12 altering it, the custom will die of itself. Otherwise no good will be
13 done by condemnation or praise.

14 (2) Now the question is: Is it for the good of the public at
15 large that social rules are framed or society is formed? Many reply
16 to this in the affirmative; some, again, may hold that it is not so.
17 Some men, being comparatively powerful, slowly bring all others
18 under their control and by stratagem, force, or adroitness gain their
19 own objects. If this be true, what can be the meaning of the
20 statement that there is danger in giving liberty to the ignorant?
21 What, again, is the meaning of liberty?

22 Liberty does not certainly mean the absence of obstacles in
23 the path of misappropriation of wealth etc. by you and me, but it is
24 our natural right to be allowed to use our own body, intelligence, or
25 wealth according to our will, without doing any harm to others; and
26 all the members of a society ought to have the same opportunity for
27 obtaining wealth, education, or knowledge. The second question is:
28 Those who say that if the ignorant and the poor be given liberty, i.e.
29 full right to their body, wealth, etc., and if their children have the
30 same opportunity to better their condition and acquire knowledge
31 as those of the rich and the highly situated, they would become
32 perverse--do they say this for the good of society or blinded by their
33 selfishness? In England too I have heard, "Who will serve us if the
34 lower classes get education?"

35 For the luxury of a handful of the rich, let millions of men and
36 women remain submerged in the hell of want and abysmal depth of
37 ignorance, for if they get wealth and education, society will be
38 upset!

39 Who constitute society? The millions--or you, I, and a few
40 others of the upper classes?

41 Again, even if the latter be true, what ground is there for our
42 vanity that we lead others? Are we omniscient?

43 "{Sanskrit}"--One should raise the self by the self." Let each
44 one work out one's own salvation. Freedom in all matters, i.e.
45 advance towards Mukti is the worthiest gain of man. To advance
46 oneself towards freedom--physical, mental, and spiritual--and help
47 others to do so, is the supreme prize of man. Those social rules
48 which stand in the way of the unfoldment of this freedom are
49 injurious, and steps should be taken to destroy them speedily. Those
50 institutions should be encouraged by which men advance in the

1 path of freedom.

2 That in this life we feel a deep love at first sight towards a
3 particular person who may not be endowed with extraordinary
4 qualities, is explained by the thinkers of our country as due to the
5 associations of a past incarnation.

6 Your question regarding the will is very interesting: it is the
7 subject to know. The essence of all religions is the annihilation of
8 desire, along with which comes, of a certainty, the annihilation of
9 the will as well, for desire is only the name of a particular mode of
10 the will. Why, again, is this world? Or why are these manifestations
11 of the will? Some religions hold that the evil will should be
12 destroyed and not the good. The denial of desire here would be
13 compensated by enjoyments hereafter. This reply does not of course
14 satisfy the wise. The Buddhists, on the other hand, say that desire is
15 the cause of misery, its annihilation is quite desirable. But like
16 killing a man in the effort to kill the mosquito on his cheek, they
17 have gone to the length of annihilating their own selves in their
18 efforts to destroy misery according to the Buddhistic doctrine.

19 The fact is, what we call will is an inferior modification of
20 something higher. Desirelessness means the disappearance of the
21 inferior modification in the form of will and the appearance of that
22 superior state. That state is beyond the range of mind and intellect.
23 But though the look of the gold mohur is quite different from that of
24 the rupee and the pice, yet as we know for certain that the gold
25 mohur is greater than either, so, that highest state--Mukti, or
26 Nirvana, call it what you like--though out of the reach of the mind
27 and intellect, is greater than the will and all other powers. It is no
28 power, but power is its modification, therefore it is higher. Now you
29 will see that the result of the proper exercise of the will, first with
30 motive for an object and then without motive, is that the will-power
31 will attain a much higher state.

32 In the preliminary state, the form of the Guru is to be
33 meditated upon by the disciple. Gradually it is to be merged in the
34 Ishta. By Ishta is meant the object of love and devotion. . . . It is
35 very difficult to superimpose divinity on man, but one is sure to
36 succeed by repeated efforts. God is in every man, whether man
37 knows it or not; your loving devotion is bound to call up the divinity
38 in him.

39 Ever your well-
40 wisher,

41 Vivekananda

42

43

44 XC

45 The Math,

46 Belur

47 Howrah,

48 Bengal

2nd February,

1899

My dear Joe {Miss MacLeod},

You must have reached N. Y. by this time and are in the midst of your own after a long absence. Fortune has favoured you at every step of this journey--even the sea was smooth and calm, and the ship nearly empty of undesirable company. Well, with me it is doing otherwise. I am almost desperate I could not accompany you. Neither did the change at Vaidyanath do me any good. I nearly died there, was suffocating for eight days and nights!! I was brought back to Calcutta more dead than alive, and here I am struggling to get back to life again.

Dr. Sarkar is treating me now.

I am not so despondent now as I was. I am reconciled to my fate. This year seems to be very hard for us. Yogananda, who used to live in Mother's house, is suffering for the last month and every day is at death's door. Mother knows best. I am roused to work again, though not personally but am sending the boys all over India to make a stir once more. Above all, as you know, the chief difficulty is of funds. Now that you are in America, Joe, try to raise some funds for our work over here.

I hope to rally again by March, and by April I start for Europe. Again Mother knows best.

I have suffered mentally and physically all my life, but Mother's kindness has been immense. The joy and blessings I had infinitely more than I deserve. And I am struggling not to fail Mother, but that she will always find me fighting, and my last breath will be on the battlefield.

My best love and blessings for you ever and ever.

Ever yours in
the Truth,

Vivekananda

XCI

The Math,
Alambazar(?),
14th June,

1899

My dear Friend {Raja of Khetri},

I want your Highness in that fashion as I am here, you need most of friendship and love just now.

I wrote you a letter a few weeks ago but could not get news of yours. Hope you are in splendid health now. I am starting for England again on the 20th this month.

1 I hope also to benefit somewhat by this sea-voyage.
2 May you be protected from all dangers and may all blessings
3 ever attend you!

4 I am yours in
5 the Lord,

6 Vivekananda

7 PS. To Jagamohan my love and good-bye.

8

9

10 XCII

11 Ridgely,
12 2nd

13 September, 1899

14 Dear--,

15 . . . Life is a series of fights and disillusionments. . . . The
16 secret of life is not enjoyment, but education through experience.
17 But, alas, we are called off the moment we begin really to learn.
18 That seems to be a potent argument for a future existence. . . .
19 Everywhere it is better to have a whirlwind come over the work.
20 That clears the atmosphere and gives us a true insight into the
21 nature of things. It is begun anew, but on adamantine foundations. .
22 . .

23 Yours with best
24 wishes,

25 Vivekananda

26

27

28 XCIII

29 Math, Belur
30 26th

31 December, 1900

32 {original in Bengali}

33 Dear Shashi {Swami Ramakrishnananda},

34 I got all the news from your letter. If your health is bad, then
35 certainly you should not come here; and also I am going to
36 Mayavati tomorrow. It is absolutely necessary that I should go there
37 once.

38 If Alasinga comes here, he will have to await my return. I do
39 not know what those here are deciding about Kanai. I shall return
40 shortly from Almora, and then I may be able to visit Madras. From
41 Vaniyambadi I have received a letter. Write to the people there
42 conveying my love and blessings, and tell them that on my way to
43 Madras I shall surely visit them. Give my love to all. Don't work too
44 hard. All is well here.

1
2 affectionately,
3
4
5
6 XCIV
7 Prabuddha
8 Bharata Office
9 Advaita
10 Ashrama
11 Mayavati (via
12 Almora)
13 Kumaon,
14 Himalayas,
15 6th January,
16 1901

17 My dear Mother {Mrs. Bull},

18 I send you forthwith a translation of the *Nasadiya* Hymn sent
19 by Dr. Bose through you. I have tried to make it as literal as
20 possible.

21 I hope Dr. Bose has recovered his health perfectly by this
22 time.

23 Mrs. Sevier is a strong woman, and has borne her loss quietly
24 and bravely. She is coming over to England in April, and I am going
25 over with her.

26 I ought to come to England as early as I can this summer; and
27 as she must go to attend to her husband's affairs, I accompany her.

28 This place is very, very beautiful, and they have made it
29 simply exquisite. It is a huge place several acres in area, and is very
30 well kept. I hope Mrs. Sevier will be in a position to keep it up in
31 the future. She wishes it ever so much, of course.

32 My last letter from Joe informed me that she was going up
33 the . . . with Mme Calve.

34 I am very glad to learn that Margot is leaving her lore for
35 future use. Her book has been very much appreciated here, but the
36 publishers do not seem to make any effort at sale.

37 The first day's touch of Calcutta brought the asthma back;
38 and every night I used to get a fit during the two weeks I was there.
39 I am, however, very well in the Himalayas.

40 It is snowing heavily here, and I was caught in a blizzard on
41 the way; but it is not very cold, and all this exposure to the snows
42 for two days on my way here seems to have done me a world of
43 good.

44 Today I walked over the snow uphill about a mile, seeing Mrs.
45 Sevier's lands; she has made beautiful roads all over. Plenty of

1 gardens, fields, orchards, and large forests, all in her land. The
2 living houses are so simple, so clean, and so pretty, and above all so
3 suited for the purpose.

4 Are you going to America soon? If not, I hope to see you in
5 London in three months.

6 Kindly give my best wishes to Miss Olcock and kindly convey
7 my undying love to Miss Muller the next time you see her; so to
8 Sturdy. I have seen my mother, my cousin, and all my people in
9 Calcutta.

10 Kindly send the remittance you send my cousin to me--*in my*
11 *name* so that I shall cash the cheque and give her the money.
12 Saradananda and Brahmananda and the rest were well in the Math
13 when I last left them.

14 All here send love.

15 Ever your
16 loving son,

Vivekananda

18 PS. Kali has taken two sacrifices; the cause has already two
19 European martyrs. Now, it is going to rise up splendidly.

V.

21 My love to Alberta and Mrs. Vaughan.

22 The snow is lying all round six inches deep, the sun is bright
23 and glorious, and now in the middle of the day we are sitting
24 outside, reading. And the snow all about us! The winter here is very
25 mild in spite of the snow. The air is dry and balmy, and the water
26 beyond all praise.

V.

30 XCV

31 Mayavati
32 Himalayas,
33 15th January,

34 1901

35 My dear Sturdy,

36 I learn from Saradananda that you have sent over Rs. 1,529-
37 5-5 to the Math being the money that was in hand for work in
38 England. I am sure it will be rightly used.

39 Capt. Sevier passed away about three months ago. They have
40 made a fine place here in the mountains and Mrs. Sevier means to
41 keep it up. I am on a visit to her, and I may possibly come over to
42 England with her.

43 I wrote you a letter from Paris. I am afraid you did not get it.

44 So sorry to learn the passing away of Mrs. Sturdy. She has

1 been a very good wife and good mother, and it is not ordinarily one
2 meets with such in this life.

3 This life is full of shocks, but the effects pass away anyhow,
4 that is the hope.

5 It is not because of your free expression of opinion in your
6 last letter to me that I stopped writing. I only let the wave pass, as
7 is my wont. Letters would only have made a wave of a little bubble.

8 Kindly tender my regards and love to Mrs. Johnson and other
9 friends if you meet them.

10 And I am ever yours in
11 the Truth,

Vivekananda

12
13
14
15 XCVI

16 The Math,
17 Belur,
18 Howrah Dist.,
19 Bengal,
20 26th January,
21 1901

22 My dear Mother {Mrs. Ole Bull},

23 Many thanks for your very encouraging words. I needed them
24 very much just now. The gloom has not lifted with the advent of the
25 new century, it is visibly thickening. I went to see Mrs. Sevier at
26 Mayavati. On my way I learnt of the sudden death of the Raja of
27 Khetri. It appears he was restoring some old architectural
28 monument at Agra, at his own expense, and was up some tower on
29 inspection. Part of the tower came down, and he was instantly
30 killed.

31 The three cheques have arrived. They will reach my cousin
32 when next I see her.

33 Joe is here, but I have not seen her yet.

34 The moment I touch Bengal, especially the Math, the
35 asthmatic fits return! The moment I leave, I recover!

36 I am going to take my mother on pilgrimage next week. It
37 may take months to make the complete round of pilgrimages. This
38 is the one great wish of a Hindu widow. I have brought only misery
39 to my people all my life. I am trying at least to fulfil this one wish of
40 hers.

41 I am so glad to learn all that about Margot; everybody here is
42 eager to welcome her back.

43 I hope Dr. Bose has completely recovered by this time.

1 I had a beautiful letter also from Mrs. Hammond. She is a
2 great soul.

3 However, I am very calm and self-possessed this time and find
4 everything better than I ever expected.

5 With all love.

6 Ever your
7 son,

8 Vivekananda

10
11 XCVII

12 Math, Belur

13 My dear Shashi {Swami Ramakrishnananda},

14 I am going with my mother to Rameswaram, that is all. I don't
15 know whether I shall go to Madras at all. If I go, it will be strictly
16 private. My body and mind are completely worked out; I cannot
17 stand a single person. I do not want anybody. I have neither the
18 strength nor the money, nor the will to take up anybody with me.
19 Bhaktas (devotees) of Guru Maharaj or not, it does not matter. It
20 was very foolish of you even to ask such a question. Let me tell you
21 again, I am more dead than alive, and strictly refuse to see anybody.
22 If you cannot manage this, I don't go to Madras. I have to become a
23 bit selfish to save my body.

24 Let Yogin-Ma and others go their own way. I shall not take up
25 any company in my present state of health.

26 Yours in love,
27 Vivekananda

28
29
30 XCVIII

31 The Math,
32 Belur,

33 Howrah Dist.,
34 Bengal,
35 2nd February,

36 1901

37 My dear Mother {Mrs. Ole Bull},

38 Several days ago I received your letter and a cheque of Rs.
39 150 included. I will tear up this one, as the three previous cheques I
40 have handed over to my cousin.

1 Joe is here, and I have seen her twice; she is busy visiting.
2 Mrs. Sevier is expected here soon--*en route* to England. I expected
3 to go to England with her, but as it now turns out, I must go on a
4 long pilgrimage with my mother.

5 My health suffers the moment I touch Bengal; anyhow, I don't
6 much mind it now; I am going on well and so do things about me.

7 Glad to learn about Margot's success, but, says Joe, it is not
8 financially paying; there is the rub. Mere continuance is of little
9 value, and it is a far cry from London to Calcutta. Well, Mother
10 knows. Everybody is praising Margot's *Kali the Mother*; but alas!
11 they can't get a book to buy; the booksellers are too indifferent to
12 promote the sale of the book.

13 That this new century may find you and yours in splendid
14 health and equipment for a yet greater future is and always has
15 been the prayer of your son

16 Vivekananda

17
18
19 IC

20 Belur Math

21 Dist. Howrah,

22 14th

23 February, 1901

24 My dear Joe {Miss Josephine MacLeod},

25 I am ever so glad to hear that Bois is coming to Calcutta.
26 Send him immediately to the Math. I will be here. If possible I will
27 keep him here for a few days and then let him go again to Nepal.

28 Yours etc.,

29 Vivekananda

30
31 C

32 The Math,

33 Belur

34 Howrah,

35 Bengal

36 17th

37 February, 1901

38 Dear Joe {Miss MacLeod},

39 Just now received your nice long letter. I am so glad that you
40 met and approve Miss Cornelia Sorabji. I knew her father at Poona,
41 also a younger sister who was in America. Perhaps her mother will
42 remember me as the Sannyasin who used to live with the Thakore
43 Sahib of Limbdi at Poona.

44 I hope you will go to Baroda and see the Maharani.

1 I am much better and hope to continue so for some time. I
2 have just now a beautiful letter from Mrs. Sevier in which she
3 writes a whole lot of beautiful things about you.

4 I am so glad you saw Mr. Tata and find him so strong and
5 good.

6 I will of course accept an invitation if I am strong enough to
7 go to Bombay.

8 Do wire the name of the steamer you leave by for Colombo.
9 With all love,

10 affectionately,
11

Yours

12 Vivekananda
13
14

15 CI

16 Dacca,
17 29th March,
18

19 1901

My dear Mother {Mrs. Bull},

20 By this time you must have received my other note from
21 Dacca. Saradananda has been suffering badly from fever in
22 Calcutta, which has become simply a hell of demons this year. He
23 has recovered and is now in the Math which, thank God, is one of
24 the healthiest places in our Bengal.

25 I do not know what conversation took place between you and
26 my mother; I was not present. I suppose it was only an eager desire
27 on her part to see Margot, nothing else.

28 My advice to Margot would be to mature her plans in
29 England and work them out a good length before she comes back.
30 Good solid work must wait.

31 Saradananda expects to go to Darjeeling to Mrs. Banerji, who
32 has been in Calcutta for a few days, as soon as he is strong enough.

33 I have no news yet of Joe from Japan. Mrs. Sevier expects to
34 sail soon. My mother, aunt, and cousin came over five days ago to
35 Dacca, as there was a great sacred bath in the Brahmaputra river.
36 Whenever a particular conjunction of planets takes place, which is
37 very rare, a huge concourse of people gather on the river on a
38 particular spot. This year there has been more than a hundred
39 thousand people; for miles the river was covered with boats.

40 The river, though nearly a mile broad at the place, was one
41 mass of mud! But it was firm enough, so we had our bath and Puja
42 (worship), and all that.

43 I am rather enjoying Dacca. I am going to take my mother
44 and the other ladies to Chandranath, a holy place at the
45 easternmost corner of Bengal.

1 I am rather well and hope you and your daughter and Margot
2 are also enjoying splendid health.

3 With everlasting love,

4 Ever your
5 son,

6 Vivekananda

7 PS. My cousin and mother send you and Margot their love.

8 PS. I do not know the date.

9 V.

10
11
12 CII

13 The Math,

14 15th May,

15 1901

16 My dear Swarup{ananda},

17 Your letter from Naini Tal is quite exciting. I have just
18 returned from my tour through East Bengal and Assam. As usual I
19 am quite tired and broken down.

20 If some real good comes out of a visit to H. H. of Baroda I am
21 ready to come over, otherwise I don't want to undergo the expense
22 and exertion of the long journey. Think it well over and make
23 inquiries, and write me if you still think it would be best for the
24 Cause for me to come to see H. H. . . .

25 Yours with love and
26 blessings,

27 Vivekananda

28
29
30 CIII

31 The Math,

32 Belur,

33 Howrah Dist.,

34 Bengal, India,

35 18th May,

36 1901

37 My dear Mary {Hale},

38 Sometimes it is hard work to be tied to the shoestrings of a
39 great name. And that was just what happened to my letter. You
40 wrote on the 22nd January, 1901. You tied me to the latchet of a
41 great name, Miss MacLeod. Consequently the letter has been
42 following her up and down the world. Now it reached me yesterday
43 from Japan, where Miss MacLeod is at present. Well, this,

1 therefore, is the solution of the sphinx's riddle. "Thou shalt not join
2 a great name with a small one."

3 So, Mary, you have been enjoying Florence and Italy, and I do
4 not know where you be by this time. So, fat old "laidy", I throw this
5 letter to the mercy of Monroe & Co., 7 rue Scribe.

6 Now, old "laidy"--so you have been dreaming away in
7 Florence and the Italian lakes. Good; your poet objects to its being
8 empty though.

9 Well, devoted sister, how about myself? I came to India last
10 fall, suffered all through winter, and went this summer touring
11 through Eastern Bengal and Assam--through a land of giant rivers
12 and hills and malaria--and after hard work of two months had a
13 collapse, and am now back to Calcutta slowly recovering from the
14 effects of it.

15 The Raja of Khetri died from a fall a few months ago. So you
16 see things are all gloomy with me just now, and my own health is
17 wretched. Yet I am sure to bob up soon and am waiting for the next
18 turn.

19 I wish I were in Europe, just to have a long chat with you, and
20 then return as quick to India; for, after all, I feel a sort of quiet
21 nowadays, and have done with three-fourths of my restlessness.

22 My love to Harriet Woolley, to Isabel, to Harriet McKindley;
23 and to mother my eternal love and gratitude. Tell mother, the subtle
24 Hindu's gratitude runs through generations.

25 Ever yours in
26 the Lord,

Vivekananda

27 PS. Write a line when you feel like it.

V.

32 CIV

33 Math, Belur,
34 Dist.,
35 Howrah,

36 3rd June,
37 1901

38 {original in Bengali}

39 My dear Shashi {Swami Ramakrishnananda},

40 Reading your letter I felt like laughing, and also rather sorry.
41 The cause of the laughter is that you had a dream through
42 indigestion and made yourself miserable, taking it to be real. The
43 cause of my sorrow is that it is clear from this that your health is
44 not good, and that your nerves require rest very badly.

45 Never have I laid a curse on you, and why should I do so

1 now? All your life you have known my love for you, and today are
2 you doubting it? True, my temper was ever bad, and nowadays
3 owing to illness it occasionally becomes terrible--but know this for
4 certain that my love can never cease.

5 My health nowadays is becoming a little better. Have the
6 rains started in Madras? When the rains begin a little in the South,
7 I may go to Madras via Bombay and Poona. With the onset of the
8 rains the terrible heat of the South will perhaps subside.

9 My great love to you and all others. Yesterday Sharat
10 returned to the Math from Darjeeling--his health is much better
11 than it was before. I have come here after a tour of East Bengal and
12 Assam. All work has its ups and down, its periods of intensity and
13 slackness. Again it will rise up. What fear? . . .

14 Whatever that may be, I say that you stop your work for some
15 time and come straight back to the Math. After you have taken a
16 month's rest here, you and I together will make a grand tour via
17 Gujarat, Bombay, Poona, Hyderabad, Mysore to Madras. Would not
18 that be grand? If you cannot do this, stop your lectures in Madras
19 for a month. Take a little good food and sleep well. Within two or
20 three months I shall go there. In any case, reply immediately as to
21 what you decide to do.

22 Yours with
23 blessings,

24 Vivekananda

25
26
27 CV

28 The Math,
29 Belur
30 Howrah Dist.,
31 14th June,
32 1901

33 Dear Joe {Miss MacLeod},

34 I am so glad you are enjoying Japan--especially Japanese art.
35 You are perfectly correct in saying that we will have to learn many
36 things from Japan. The help that Japan will give us will be with
37 great sympathy and respect, whereas that from the West
38 unsympathetic and destructive. Certainly it is very desirable to
39 establish a connection between India and Japan.

40 As for me, I was thrown *hors de combat* in Assam. The
41 climate of the Math is just reviving me a bit. At Shillong--the hill
42 sanatorium of Assam--I had fever, asthma, increase of albumen, and
43 my body swelled to almost twice its normal size. These symptoms
44 subsided, however, as soon as I reached the Math. It is dreadfully
45 hot this year; but a bit of rain has commenced, and I hope we will
46 soon have the monsoon in full force. I have no plans just now,
47 except that the Bombay Presidency wants me so badly that I think

1 of going there soon. We are thinking of starting touring through
2 Bombay in a week or so.

3 The 300 dollars you speak of sent by Lady Betty have not
4 reached me yet, nor have I any intimation of its arrival from
5 General Patterson.

6 He, poor man, was rather miserable, after his wife and
7 children sailed for Europe and asked me to come and see him, but
8 unfortunately I was so ill, and am so afraid of going into the City
9 that I must wait till the rains have set in.

10 Now, Joe dear, if I am to go to Japan, this time it is necessary
11 that I take Saradananda with me to carry on the work. Also I must
12 have the promised letter to Li Huang Chang from Mr. Maxim; but
13 Mother knows the rest. I am still undecided.

14 So you went to Alanquinan to see the foreteller? Did he
15 convince you of his powers? What did he say? Write particular *s'il*
16 *vous plait*.

17 Jules Bois went as far as Lahore, being prevented from
18 entering Nepal. I learn from the papers that he could not bear the
19 heat and fell ill; then he took ship *et bon voyage*. He did not write
20 me a single line since we met in the Math. You also are determined
21 to drag Mrs. Bull down to Japan from Norway all the way--*bien*,
22 *Mademoiselle, vous etes une puissante magicienne, sans doute*.⁸²
23 Well, Joe, keep health and spirits up; the Alanquinan man's words
24 come out true most of them; and *glorie et honneur* await you--and
25 Mukti. The natural ambition of woman is through marriage to climb
26 up, leaning upon a man; but those days are gone. You shall be great
27 without the help of any man, just as you are, plain, dear Joe--our
28 Joe, everlasting Joe. . . .

29 We have seen enough of this life to care for any of its
30 bubbles, have we not Joe? For months I have been practising to
31 drive away all sentiments; therefore I stop here, and good-bye just
32 now. It is ordained by Mother we work together; it has been already
33 for the good of many; it shall be for the good of many more; so let it
34 be. It is useless planning, useless high flights; Mother will find Her
35 own way; . . . rest assured.

36 Ever yours with love and heart's
37 blessings,

38 Vivekananda

39 PS. Just now came a cheque for Rs. 300 from Mr. Okakura,
40 and the invitation. It is very tempting, but Mother knows all the
41 same.

42 V.

43
44
45 CVI

1 ⁸² ?Well, Miss, you are undoubtedly a powerful magician.
2

1 The Math,
2 Belur
3 18th June,
4 1901

5 Dear Joe,

6 I enclose with yours an acknowledgement of Mr. Okakura's
7 money--of course I am up to all your tricks.

8 However, I am really trying to come, but you know--one
9 month to go--one to come--and a few days' stay! Never mind, I am
10 trying my best. Only my terribly poor health, some legal affairs,
11 etc., etc., may make a little delay.

12 With
13 everlasting love,

14 Vivekananda

15

16

17 CVII

18 The Math,
19 Belur

20 Howrah

21 Bengal, India

22 1901

23 Dear Joe,

24 I can't even in imagination pay the immense debt of gratitude
25 I owe you. Wherever you are you never forget my welfare; and,
26 there, you are the only one that bears all my burdens, all my brutal
27 outbursts.

28 Your Japanese friend has been very kind, but my health is so
29 poor that I am rather afraid I have not much time to spare for
30 Japan. I will drag myself through the Bombay Presidency even if
31 only to say, "How do you do?" to all kind friends.

32 Then two months will be consumed in coming and going, and
33 only one month to stay; that is not much of a chance for work, is it?

34 So kindly pay the money your Japanese friend has sent for my
35 passage. I shall give it back to you when you come to India in
36 November.

37 I have had a terrible collapse in Assam from which I am
38 slowly recovering. The Bombay people have waited and waited till
39 they are sick--must see them this time.

40 If in spite of all this you wish me to come, I shall start the
41 minute you write.

1 I had a letter from Mrs. Leggett from London asking whether
2 the £300 have reached me safe. They have, and I had written a
3 week or so before to her the acknowledgment, c/o Monroe & Co.,
4 Paris, as per her previous instructions.

5 Her last letter came to me with the envelope ripped up in a
6 most barefaced manner! The post offices in India don't even try to
7 do the opening of my mail decently.

8 Ever yours
9 with love,

Vivekananda

CVIII

The Math

5th July, 1901

16 My Dear Mary {Hale},

17 I am very thankful for your very long and nice letter,
18 especially as I needed just such a one to cheer me up a bit. My
19 health has been and is very bad. I recover for a few days only; then
20 comes the inevitable collapse. Well, this is the nature of the disease
21 anyway.

22 I have been touring of late in Eastern Bengal and Assam.
23 Assam is, next to Kashmir, the most beautiful country in India, but
24 very unhealthy. The huge Brahmaputra winding in and out of
25 mountains and hills, studded with islands, is of course worth one's
26 while to see.

27 My country is, as you know, the land of waters. But never did
28 I realise before what that meant. The rivers of East Bengal are
29 oceans of rolling fresh water, not rivers, and so long that steamers
30 work on them for weeks. Miss MacLeod is in Japan. She is of course
31 charmed with the country and asked me to come over, but my
32 health not permitting such a long voyage, I desisted. I have seen
33 Japan before.

34 So you are enjoying Venice. The old man must be delicious;
35 only Venice was the home of old Shylock, was it not?

36 Sam is with you this year--I am so glad! He must be enjoying
37 the good things of Europe after his dreary experience in the North.
38 I have not made any interesting friends of late, and the old ones
39 that you knew of, have nearly all passed away, even the Raja of
40 Khetri. He died of a fall from a high tower at Secundra, the tomb of
41 Emperor Akbar. He was repairing this old grand piece of
42 architecture at his own expense at Agra, and one day while on
43 inspection, he missed his footing, and it was a sheer fall of several
44 hundred feet. Thus we sometimes come to grief on account of our
45 zeal for antiquity. Take care, Mary, don't be too zealous for your
46 piece of Indian antiquity.

47 In the Mission Seal, the snake represents mysticism; the sun

1 knowledge; the worked up waters activity; the lotus love; the swan
2 the soul in the midst of all.

3 With love to Sam and to mother.

4 Ever with
5 love,

6 Vivekananda

7 PS. My letter had to be short; I am out of sorts all the time; it
8 is the body!

11 CIX

12 The Math,
13 Belur

14 6th July, 1901

15 Dear Christine,

16 Things come to me by fits--today I am in a fit of writing. The
17 first thing to do is, therefore, to pen a few lines to you. I am known
18 to be nervous, I worry much; but it seems, dear Christine, you are
19 not far behind in that trick. One of our poets says, "Even the
20 mountains will fly, the fire will be cold, yet the heart of the great
21 will never change." I am small, very, but I know you are great, and
22 my faith is always in your true heart. *I worry about everything*
23 *except you.* I have dedicated you to the Mother. She is your shield,
24 your guide. No harm can reach you--nothing hold you down a
25 minute. I know it.

26 Ever yours in
27 the Lord,

28 Vivekananda

31 CX

32 The Math,
33 Belur

34 Howrah Dist.

35 Bengal

36 27th August,

37 1901

38 My dear Mary {Hale},

39 I would that my health were what you expected--at least to
40 write you a long letter. It is getting worse, in fact, every day, and so
41 many complications and botherations without that. I have ceased to
42 notice it at all.

43 I wish you all joy in your lovely Swiss chalet--splendid health,
44 good appetite, and a light study of Swiss or other antiquities just to

1 liven things up a bit. I am so glad you are breathing the free air of
2 the mountains, but sorry that Sam is not in the best of health. Well,
3 there is no anxiety about it, he has naturally such a fine physique. . .
4 .

5 "Women's moods and man's luck--the gods themselves do not
6 know, what to speak of man?" My instincts may be very feminine,
7 but what I am exercised with just this moment is, that you get a
8 little bit of manliness about you. Oh! Mary, your brain, health,
9 beauty, everything is going to waste just for lack of that one
10 essential--assertion of individuality. Your haughtiness, spirit, etc.
11 are all nonsense, only mockery; you are at best a boarding-school
12 girl, no backbone! no backbone!

13 Alas! this lifelong leading-string business! This is very harsh,
14 very brutal; but I can't help it. I love you, Mary, sincerely,
15 genuinely; I can't cheat you with namby-pamby sugar candies. Nor
16 do they ever come to me.

17 Then again, I am a dying man; I have no time to fool in. Wake
18 up, girl. I expect now from you letters of the right slashing order;
19 give it right straight; I need a good deal of rousing.

20 I did not hear anything of the MacVeaghs when they were
21 here. I have not had any direct message from Mrs. Bull or Nivedita,
22 but I hear regularly from Mrs. Sevier, and they are all in Norway as
23 guests of Mrs. Bull.

24 I don't know when Nivedita comes to India or if she ever
25 comes back.

26 I am in a sense a retired man; I don't keep much note of what
27 is going on about the Movement; then the Movement is getting
28 bigger, and it is impossible for one man to know all about it
29 minutely.

30 I now do nothing, except trying to eat and sleep and nurse my
31 body the rest of the time. Good-bye, dear Mary; hope we shall meet
32 again somewhere in this life, but, meeting or not meeting, I remain,

33 Ever your loving
34 brother,

35 Vivekananda

36
37
38 CXI

39 The Math,
40 Belur

41 Howrah

42 29th August,

43 1901

44 Blessed and Beloved {Shri M. N. Banerji},

45 I am getting better, though still very weak. . . . The present
46 disturbance is simply nervous. Anyhow I am getting better every

1 day.

2 I am so much beholden to mother⁸³ for her kind proposal,
3 only I am told by everybody in the Math that Nilambar Babu's place
4 and the whole of the village of Belur at that becomes very
5 malarious this month and the next. Then the rent is so extravagant.
6 I would therefore advise mother to take a little house in Calcutta if
7 she decides to come. I may in all probability go and live there, as it
8 is not good for me to catch malaria over and above the present
9 prostration. I have not asked the opinion of Saradananda or
10 Brahmananda yet. Both are in Calcutta. Calcutta is healthier these
11 two months and very much less expensive.

12 After all, let her do as she is guided by the Lord. We can only
13 suggest and may be entirely wrong.

14 If she selects Nilambar's house for residence, do first arrange
15 the rent etc. beforehand. "Mother" knows best. That is all I know
16 too.

17 With all love and blessings,

18 Ever yours in
19 the Lord,

20 Vivekananda

21

22

23 CXII

24 The Math,

25 Belur

26 Howrah Dist.,

27 7th

28 September, 1901

29 Blessed and Beloved {Shri M. N. Banerji},

30 I had to consult Brahmananda and others, and they were
31 everyone in Calcutta, hence the delay in replying to your last.

32 The idea of taking a house for a whole year must be worked
33 out with deliberation. As on the one hand there is some risk of
34 catching malaria in Belur this month, in Calcutta on the other hand
35 there is the danger of plague. Then again one is sure to avoid fever
36 if one takes good care not to go into the interior of this village, the
37 immediate bank of the river being entirely free from fever. Plague
38 has not come to the river yet, and all the available places in this
39 village are filled with Marwaris during the plague season.

40 Then again you ought to mention the maximum rent you can
41 pay, and we seek the house accordingly. The quarter in the city is
42 another suggestion. For myself, I have almost become a foreigner to
43 Calcutta. But others will soon find a house after your mind. The
44 sooner you decide these two points: (1) Whether mother stays at

1 ⁸³ ?Holy Mother--Shri Sarada Devi.

1 Belur or Calcutta, (2) If Calcutta, what rent and quarter, the better,
2 as it can be done in a trice after receiving your reply.

3 Yours with love and
4 blessings,

5 Vivekananda

6
7
8 PS. We are all right here. Moti has returned after his week's
9 stay in Calcutta. It is raining here day and night last three days.
10 Two of our cows have calved.

11 V.

12
13
14 CXIII

15 The Math,
16 Belur
17 Howrah
18 8th

19 November, 1901

20 My dear Joe {Miss MacLeod},

21 By this time you must have received the letter explaining the
22 word abatement. I did not write the letter nor send the wire. I was
23 too ill at the time to do either. I have been ever since my trip to East
24 Bengal almost bedridden. Now I am worse than ever with the
25 additional disadvantage of impaired eyesight. I would not write
26 these things, but some people require details, it seems.

27 Well, I am so glad that you are coming over with your
28 Japanese friends--they will have every attention in my power. I will
29 most possibly be in Madras. I have been thinking of leaving
30 Calcutta next week and working my way gradually to the South.

31 I do not know whether it will be possible to see the Orissan
32 temples in company with your Japanese friends. I do not know
33 whether I shall be allowed inside myself--owing to my eating
34 "Mlechchha" food. Lord Curzon was not allowed inside.

35 However, your friends are welcome to what I can do always.
36 Miss Muller is in Calcutta. Of course she has not visited us.

37 Yours with all
38 love,

39 Vivekananda

40
41
42 CXIV

43 Gopal Lal Villa,

1 Benares (Varanasi)

2 Cantonment

3 9th February, 1902

4 My dear Swarup{ananda},

5 . . . In answer to Charu's letter, tell him to study the *Brahma-*
6 *Sutras* himself. What does he mean by the *Brahma-Sutras*
7 containing references to Buddhism? He means the Bhashyas, of
8 course, or rather ought to mean, and Shankara was only the last
9 Bhashyakara (commentator). There are references, though in
10 Buddhistic literature, to Vedanta, and the Mahayana school of
11 Buddhism is even Advaitistic. Why does Amara Singha, a Buddhist,
12 give as one of the names of Buddha--Advayavadi? Charu writes, the
13 word Brahman does not occur in the Upanishads! *Quelle betise* !

14 I hold the Mahayana to be the older of the two schools of
15 Buddhism.

16 The theory of Maya is as old as the Rik-Samhita. The
17 Shvetashvatara Upanishad contains the word "Maya" which is
18 developed out of Prakriti. I hold that Upanishad to be at least older
19 than Buddhism.

20 I have had much light of late about Buddhism, and I am ready
21 to prove:

22 (1) That Shiva-worship, in various forms, antedated the
23 Buddhists, that the Buddhists tried to get hold of the sacred places
24 of the Shaivas but, failing in that, made new places in the precincts
25 just as you find now at Bodh-Gaya and Sarnath (Varanasi).

26 (2) The story in the Agni Purana about Gayasura does not
27 refer to Buddha at all--as Dr. Rajendralal will have it--but simply to
28 a pre-existing story.

29 (3) That Buddha went to live on Gayashirsha mountain proves
30 the pre-existence of the place.

31 (4) Gaya was a place of ancestor-worship already, and the
32 footprint-worship the Buddhists copied from the Hindus.

33 (5) About Varanasi, even the oldest records go to prove it as
34 the great place of Shiva-worship; etc., etc.

35 Many are the new facts I have gathered in Bodh-Gaya and
36 from Buddhist literature. Tell Charu to read for himself, and not be
37 swayed by foolish opinions.

38 I am rather well here, in Varanasi, and if I go on improving in
39 this way, it will be a great gain.

40 A total revolution has occurred in my mind about the relation
41 of Buddhism and Neo-Hinduism. I may not live to work out the
42 glimpses, but I shall leave the lines of work indicated, and you and
43 your brethren will have to work it out.

44 Yours with all blessings
45 and love,

46 Vivekananda

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CXV

Gopal Lal Villa
Benares (Varanasi)

Cantonment

10th February, 1902

{to Mrs. Ole Bull}

Welcome to India once more, dear mother and daughter. A copy of a Madras journal that I received through the kindness of Joe delighted me exceedingly, as the reception Nivedita had in Madras was for the good of both Nivedita and Madras. Her speech was indeed beautiful.

I hope you are resting well after your long journey, and so is Nivedita. I wish it so much that you should go for a few hours to a few villages west of Calcutta to see the old Bengali structures made of wood, bamboo, cane, mica, and grass.

These are the bungalows, most artistic. Alas! the name is travestied nowadays by every pigsty appropriating the name.

In old days a man who built a palace still built a bungalow for the reception of guests. The art is dying out. I wish I could build the whole of Nivedita's School in that style. Yet it is good to see a few that yet remained, at least one.

Brahmananda will arrange for it, and you have only to take a journey of a few hours.

Mr. Okakura has started on his short tour. He intends to visit Agra, Gwalior, Ajanta, Ellora, Chittore, Udaipur, Jaipur, and Delhi.

A very well-educated rich young man of Varanasi, with whose father we had a long-standing friendship, came back to this city yesterday. He is especially interested in art, and spending purposely a lot of money in his attempts to revive dying Indian arts. He came to see me only a few hours after Mr. Okakura left. He is just the man to show him artistic India (i.e. what little is left), and I am sure he will be much benefited by Okakura's suggestions. Okakura just found a common terracotta water-vessel here used by the servants. The shape and the embossed work on it simply charmed him, but as it is common earthenware and would not bear the journey, he left a request with me to have it reproduced in brass. I was at my wit's end as to what to do. My young friend comes a few hours after, and not only undertakes to have it done, but offers to show a few hundreds of embossed designs in terracotta infinitely superior to the one Okakura fancied.

He also offers to show us old painting in that wonderful old style. Only one family is left in Varanasi who can paint after the old style yet. One of them has painted a whole hunting scene on a pea, perfect in detail and action!

I hope Okakura will come to this city on his return and be this

gentleman's guest and see a bit of what is left.

Niranjana has gone with Mr. Okakura, and as he is a Japanese, they don't object to his going into any temple. It seems that the Tibetans and the other Northern Buddhists have been coming here to worship Shiva all along.

They allowed him to touch the sign of Shiva and worship. Mrs. Annie Besant tried once, but, poor woman, although she bared her feet, put on a Sari, and humiliated herself to the dust before the priests, she was not admitted even into the compound of the temple. The Buddhists are not considered non-Hindus in any of our great temples. My plans are not settled; I may shift from this place very soon.

Shivananda and the boys send you all their welcome, regards, and love.

I am, as ever, your most affectionate son

Vivekananda

CXVI

Benares

(Varanasi)

12 February,

1902

{To Sister Nivedita}

May all powers come unto you! May Mother Herself be your hands and mind! It is immense power--irresistible--that I pray for you, and, if possible, along with it infinite peace. . . .

If there was any truth in Shri Ramakrishna, may He take you into His leading, even as He did me, nay, a thousand times more!

Vivekananda

CXVII

Gopal Lal Villa

Benares (Varanasi)

Cantonment

12th February, 1902

{original in Bengali}

My dear Rakhal {Swami Brahmananda},

I was glad to get all the detailed news from your letter. Regarding Nivedita's School, I have written to her what I have to say. My opinion is that she should do what she considers to be best.

Don't ask my opinion on any other matter either. That makes

me lose my temper. Just do that work for me--that is all. Send money, for at present only a few rupees are left.

Kanai (Nirbhayananda) lives on Madhukari,⁸⁴ does his Japa at the bathing ghat, and comes and sleeps here at night; Nyeda does a poor man's work and comes and sleeps here at night. "Uncle"⁸⁵ and Niranjan have gone to Agra. I may get their letter today.

Continue doing your work as the Lord guides. Why bother about the opinion of this man and that? My love to all.

Yours
affectionately,
Vivekananda

CXVIII

Gopal Lal Villa
Benares (Varanasi)
Cantonment

18th February, 1902

{original in Bengali}

My dear Rakhal,

You must have received by this time my letter of yesterday containing an acknowledgement of the money.

The main object of this letter is to write about--. You should go and meet him as soon as you get this letter. . . . Get a competent doctor and have the disease diagnosed properly. Now where is Vishnu Mohini, the eldest daughter of Ram Babu?⁸⁶ She has recently been widowed. . . .

Anxiety is worse than the disease. Give a little money--whatever is needed. If in this hell of a world one can bring a little joy and peace even for a day into the heart of a single person, that much alone is true; this I have learnt after suffering all my life; all else is mere moonshine. . . .

Reply very soon. "Uncle" and Niranjan have written a letter from Gwalior. . . . Here it is now becoming hot gradually. This place was cooler than Bodh-Gaya. . . . I was very pleased to hear that the Saraswati-Puja was celebrated by Nivedita with great success. If she wants to open the School soon, let her do so. Readings from the sacred books, worship, study--see that all these are being

⁸⁴ ?Cooked food obtained by begging from several houses.

⁸⁵ ?Mr. Okakura was endearingly so called. "Kura" approximating to "Khurha" in Bengali which means uncle; Swamiji out of fun calls him uncle.

⁸⁶ ?Ram Chandra Datta, a disciple of Shri Ramakrishna.

1 maintained. My love to all.

2
3 affectionately,

4 Yours
Vivekananda

5

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7 CXIX

8 Gopal Lal Villa
9 Benares (Varanasi)

10 Cantonment

11 21st February, 1902

12 {original in Bengali}

13 My dear Rakhal {Swami Brahmananda},

14 I received a letter from you just now. If mother and
15 grandmother desire to come, send them over. It is better to get
16 away from Calcutta now when the season of plague is on. There is
17 wide-spread plague in Allahabad; I do not know if it will spread to
18 Varanasi this time. . . . Tell Mrs. Bull from me that a tour to Ellora
19 and other places involves a difficult journey, and it is now very hot.
20 Her body is so tired that it is not proper to go on a tour at present.
21 It is several days since I received a letter from "Uncle". The last
22 news was that he had gone to Ajanta. Mahant also has not replied,
23 perhaps he will do so with the reply to Raja Pyari Mohan's
24 letter. . . .

25 Write me in detail about the matter of the Nepal Minister.
26 Give my special love and blessings to Mrs. Bull, Miss MacLeod, and
27 all others. My love and greetings to you, Baburam,⁸⁷ and all others.
28 Has Gopal Dada⁸⁸ got the letter? Kindly look after the goat a bit.

29 Yours
30 affectionately,

31 Vivekananda

32 PS. All the boys here send you their respectful salutations.

33

34

35 CXX

36 Gopal Lal Villa
37 Benares (Varanasi)

38 Cantonment

39 24th February, 1902

1 ⁸⁷ ?Swami Premananda.

2

3 ⁸⁸ ?Swami Advaitananda.

4

1 {original in Bengali}

2 {to Swami Brahmananda}

3 This morning I got a small American parcel sent by you. I
4 have received no letter, neither the registered one you refer to nor
5 any other. Whether the Nepalese gentleman came and what
6 happened--I have not been able to know anything at all about it. To
7 write a simple letter so much trouble and so much delay! . . . Now I
8 shall be relieved if I get the accounts. That also I get who knows
9 after how many months! . . .

10 Yours

11 affectionately,

12 Vivekananda

13

14

15 CXXI

16 The Math

17 21st April,

18 1902

19 Dear Joe,

20 It seems the plan of going to Japan seems to have come to
21 nought. Mrs. Bull is gone, you are going. I am not sufficiently
22 acquainted with the Japanese.

23 Sadananda has accompanied the Japanese to Nepal along
24 with Kanai. Christine could not start earlier, as Margot could not go
25 till the end of this month.

26 I am getting on splendidly, they say, but yet very weak and no
27 water to drink. Anyhow the chemical analysis shows a great
28 improvement. The swelling about the feet and the complaints have
29 all disappeared.

30 Give my infinite love to Lady Betty and Mr. Leggett, to
31 Alberta and Holly--the baby has my blessings from before birth and
32 will have for ever.

33 How did you like Mayavati? Write me a line about it.

34 With

35 everlasting love,

36 Vivekananda

37

38

39 CXXII

40 The Math

41 Belur,

42 Howrah

1 15th May,
2 1902
3 Dear Joe,
4 I send you the letter to Madame Calve.. . .
5 I am somewhat better, but of course far from what I
6 expected. A great idea of quiet has come upon me. I am going to
7 retire for good--no more work for me. If possible, I will revert to my
8 old days of begging.
9 All blessings attend you, Joe; you have been a good angel to
10 me.
11 With
12 everlasting love,
13 Vivekananda
14
15

16 CXXIII
17 The Math
18 14th June,
19 1902
20 Dear Dhira Mata {Mrs. Ole Bull},
21 . . . In my opinion, a race must first cultivate a great respect
22 for motherhood, through the sanctification and inviolability of
23 marriage, before it can attain to the ideal of perfect chastity. The
24 Roman Catholics and the Hindus, holding marriage sacred and
25 inviolate, have produced great chaste men and women of immense
26 power. To the Arab, marriage is a contract or a forceful possession,
27 to be dissolved at will, and we do not find there the development of
28 the idea of the virgin or the Brahmacharin. Modern Buddhism--
29 having fallen among races who had not yet come up to the evolution
30 of marriage--has made a travesty of monasticism. So until there is
31 developed in Japan a great and sacred ideal about marriage (apart
32 from mutual attraction and love), I do not see how there can be
33 great monks and nuns. As you have come to see that the glory of
34 life is chastity, so my eyes also have been opened to the necessity of
35 this great sanctification for the vast majority, in order that a few
36 lifelong chaste powers may be produced. . . .
37 I wanted to write many things, but the flesh is weak. . . .
38 "Whosoever worships me, for whatsoever desire, I meet him with
39 that." . . .
40 Vivekananda

INTERVIEWS

MIRACLES

(*The Memphis Commercial*, 15th January, 1894)

Asked by the reporter for his impressions of America, he said:

"I have a good impression of this country especially of the American women. I have especially remarked on the absence of poverty in America."

The conversation afterward turned to the subject of religions. Swami Vive Kananda expressed the opinion that the World's Parliament of Religions had been beneficial in that it had done much toward broadening ideas.

"What", asked the reporter, "is the generally accepted view held by those of your faith as to the fate after death of one holding the Christian religion?"

"We believe that if he is a good man he will be saved. Even an atheist, if he is a good man, we believe must be saved. That is our religion. We believe all religions are good, only those who hold them must not quarrel."

Swami Vive Kananda was questioned concerning the truthfulness of the marvelous stories of the performance of wonderful feats of conjuring, levitation, suspended animation, and the like in India. Vive Kananda said:

"We do not believe in miracles at all but that apparently strange things may be accomplished under the operation of natural laws. There is a vast amount of literature in India on these subjects, and the people there have made a study of these things.

"Thought-reading and foretelling of events are successfully practised by the Hathayogis.

"As to levitation, I have never seen anyone overcome gravitation and rise by will into the air, but I have seen many who were trying to do so. They read books published on the subject and spend years trying to accomplish the feat. Some of them in their efforts nearly starve themselves and become so thin that if one presses his finger upon their stomachs he can actually feel the spine.

"Some of these Hathayogis live to a great age."

The subject of suspended animation was broached and the Hindu monk told the *Commercial* reporter that he himself had known a man who went into a sealed cave, which was then closed up with a trap door, and remained there for many years without food. There was a decided stir of interest among those who heard this assertion. Vive Kananda entertained not the slightest doubt of the genuineness of this case. He says that in the case of suspended animation, growth is for the time arrested. He says the case of the

1 man in India who was buried with a crop of barley raised over his
2 grave and who was finally taken out still alive is perfectly well
3 authenticated. He thinks the studies which enabled persons to
4 accomplish that feat were suggested by the hibernating animals.

5 Vive Kananda said that he had never seen the feat which
6 some writers have claimed has been accomplished in India, of
7 throwing a rope into the air and the thrower climbing up the rope
8 and disappearing out of sight in the distant heights.

9 A lady present when the reporter was interviewing the monk
10 said some one had asked her if he, Vive Kananda, could perform
11 wonderful tricks, and if he had been buried alive as a part of his
12 installation in the Brotherhood. The answer to both questions was a
13 positive negative. "What have those things to do with religion?" he
14 asked. "Do they make a man purer? The Satan of your Bible is
15 powerful, but differs from God in not being pure."

16 Speaking of the sect of Hathayoga, Vive Kananda said there
17 was one thing, whether a coincidence or not, connected with the
18 initiation of their disciples, which was suggestive of the one
19 passage in the life of Christ. They make their disciples live alone for
20 just forty days.

23 **AN INDIAN YOGI IN LONDON**

24 (*The Westminster Gazette, 23rd October, 1895*)

25 Indian philosophy has in recent years had a deep and
26 growing fascination for many minds, though up to the present time
27 its exponents in this country have been entirely Western in their
28 thought and training, with the result that very little is really known
29 of the deeper mysteries of the Vedanta wisdom, and that little only
30 by a select few. Not many have the courage or the intuition to seek
31 in heavy translations, made greatly in the interests of philologists,
32 for that sublime knowledge which they really reveal to an able
33 exponent brought up in all the traditions of the East.

34 It was therefore with interest and not without some curiosity,
35 writes a correspondent, that I proceeded to interview an exponent
36 entirely novel to Western people, in the person of the Swami
37 Vivekananda, an actual Indian Yogi, who has boldly undertaken to
38 visit the Western world to expound the traditional teaching which
39 has been handed down by ascetics and Yogis through many ages,
40 and who in pursuance of this object, delivered a lecture last night in
41 the Princes' Hall.

42 The Swami Vivekananda is a striking figure with his turban
43 (or mitre-shaped black cloth cap) and his calm but kindly features.

1 On my inquiring as to the significance, if any, of his name, the
2 Swami said: "Of the name by which I am now known (Swami
3 Vivekananda), the first word is descriptive of a Sannyasin, or one
4 who formally renounces the world, and the second is the title I
5 assumed--as is customary with all Sannyasins--on my renunciation
6 of the world; it signifies, literally, 'the bliss of discrimination'."

7 "And what induced you to forsake the ordinary course of the
8 world, Swami?" I asked.

9 "I had a deep interest in religion and philosophy from my
10 childhood," he replied, "and our books teach renunciation as the
11 highest ideal to which man can aspire. It only needed the meeting
12 with a great Teacher--Ramakrishna Paramahansa--to kindle in me
13 the final determination to follow the path he himself had trod, as in
14 him I found my highest ideal realised."

15 "Then did he found a sect, which you now represent?"

16 "No", replied the Swami quickly. "No, his whole life was spent
17 in breaking down the barriers of sectarianism and dogma. He
18 formed no sect. Quite the reverse. He advocated and strove to
19 establish absolute freedom of thought. He was a great Yogi."

20 "Then you are connected with no society or sect in this
21 country? Neither Theosophical nor Christian Scientist, nor any
22 other?"

23 "None whatever!" said the Swami in clear and impressive
24 tones. (His face lights up like that of a child, it is so simple,
25 straightforward and honest.) "My teaching is my own interpretation
26 of our ancient books, in the light which my Master shed upon them.
27 I claim no supernatural authority. Whatever in my teaching may
28 appeal to the highest intelligence and be accepted by thinking men,
29 the adoption of that will be my reward." "All religions", he
30 continued, "have for their object the teaching either of devotion,
31 knowledge, or Yoga, in a concrete form. Now, the philosophy of
32 Vedanta is the abstract science which embraces all these methods,
33 and this it is that I teach, leaving each one to apply it to his own
34 concrete form. I refer each individual to his own experiences, and
35 where reference is made to books, the latter are procurable, and
36 may be studied by each one for himself. Above all, I teach no
37 authority proceeding from hidden beings speaking through visible
38 agents, any more than I claim learning from hidden books or
39 manuscripts. I am the exponent of no occult societies, nor do I
40 believe that good can come of such bodies. Truth stands on its own
41 authority, and truth can bear the light of day."

42 "Then you do not propose to form any society, Swami?" I
43 suggested.

44 "None; no society whatever. I teach only the Self, hidden in
45 the heart of every individual and common to all. A handful of strong
46 men knowing that Self and living in Its light would revolutionise the
47 world, even today, as has been the case by single strong men
48 before, each in his day."

1 "Have you just arrived from India?" I inquired--for the Swami
2 is suggestive of Eastern suns.

3 "No," he replied, "I represented the Hindu religion at the
4 Parliament of Religions held at Chicago in 1893. Since then I have
5 been travelling and lecturing in the United States. The American
6 people have proved most interested audiences and sympathetic
7 friends, and my work there has so taken root that I must shortly
8 return to that country."

9 "And what is your attitude towards the Western religions,
10 Swami?"

11 "I propound a philosophy which can serve as a basis to every
12 possible religious system in the world, and my attitude towards all
13 of them is one of extreme sympathy--my teaching is antagonistic to
14 none. I direct my attention to the individual, to make him strong, to
15 teach him that he himself is divine, and I call upon men to make
16 themselves conscious of this divinity within. That is really the ideal--
17 conscious or unconscious--of every religion."

18 "And what shape will your activities take in this country?"

19 "My hope is to imbue individuals with the teachings to which
20 I have referred, and to encourage them to express these to others
21 in their own way; let them modify them as they will; I do not teach
22 them as dogmas; truth at length must inevitably prevail.

23 "The actual machinery through which I work is in the hands
24 of one or two friends. On October 22, they have arranged to me to
25 deliver an address to a British audience at Princes' Hall, Piccadilly,
26 at 8-30 p.m. The event is being advertised. The subject will be on
27 the key of my philosophy--'Self-Knowledge'. Afterwards I am
28 prepared to follow any course that opens--to attend meetings in
29 people's drawing-rooms or elsewhere, to answer letters, or discuss
30 personally. In a mercenary age I may venture to remark that none
31 of my activities are undertaken for a pecuniary reward."

32 I then took my leave from one of the most original of men that
33 I have had the honour of meeting.

36 **INDIA'S MISSION**

37 (*Sunday Times, London, 1896*)

38 English people are well acquainted with the fact that they
39 send missionaries to India's "coral strands". Indeed, so thoroughly
40 do they obey the behest, "Go ye forth into all the world and preach
41 the Gospel", that none of the chief British sects are behindhand in
42 obedience to the call to spread Christ's teaching. People are not so
43 well aware that India also sends missionaries to England.

1 By accident, if the term may be allowed, I fell across the
2 Swami Vivekananda in his temporary home at 63 St. George's Road,
3 S.W., and as he did not object to discuss the nature of his work and
4 visit to England, I sought him there and began our talk with an
5 expression of surprise at his assent to my request.

6 "I got thoroughly used to the interviewer in America. Because
7 it is not the fashion in my country, that is no reason why I should
8 not use means existing in any country I visit, for spreading what I
9 desire to be known! There I was representative of the Hindu
10 religion at the World's Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893.
11 The Raja of Mysore and some other friends sent me there. I think I
12 may lay claim to having had some success in America. I had many
13 invitations to other great American cities besides Chicago; my visit
14 was a very long one, for, with the exception of a visit to England last
15 summer, repeated as you see this year, I remained about three
16 years in America. The American civilisation is, in my opinion, a very
17 great one. I find the American mind peculiarly susceptible to new
18 ideas; nothing is rejected because it is new. It is examined on its
19 own merits, and stands or falls by these alone."

20 "Whereas in England--you mean to imply something?"

21 "Yes, in England, civilisation is older, it has gathered many
22 accretions as the centuries have rolled on. In particular, you have
23 many prejudices that need to be broken through, and whoever
24 deals with you in ideas must lay this to his account."

25 "So they say. I gather that you did not found anything like a
26 church or a new religion in America."

27 "That is true. It is contrary to our principles to multiply
28 organisations, since, in all conscience, there are enough of them.
29 And when organisations are created, they need individuals to look
30 after them. Now, those who have made Sannyasa--that is,
31 renunciation of all worldly position, property, and name--whose aim
32 is to seek spiritual knowledge, cannot undertake this work, which
33 is, besides, in other hands."

34 "Is your teaching a system of comparative religion?"

1 "It might convey a more definite idea to call it the kernel of all
2 forms of religion, stripping from them the non-essential, and laying
3 stress on that which is the real basis. I am a disciple of
4 Ramakrishna Paramahansa, a perfect Sannyasin whose influence
5 and ideas I fell under. This great Sannyasin never assumed the
6 negative or critical attitude towards other religions, but showed
7 their positive side--how they could be carried into life and practised.
8 To fight, to assume the antagonistic attitude, is the exact contrary of
9 his teaching, which dwells on the truth that the world is moved by
10 love. You know that the Hindu religion never persecutes. It is the
11 land where all sects may live in peace and amity. The
12 Mohammedans brought murder and slaughter in their train, but
13 until their arrival peace prevailed. Thus the Jains, who do not
14 believe in a God and who regard such belief as a delusion, were
15 tolerated, and still are there today. India sets the example of real
16 strength, that is meekness. Dash, pluck, fight, all these things are
17 weakness."

18 "It sounds very like Tolstoy's doctrine; it may do for
19 individuals, though personally I doubt it. But how will it answer for
20 nations?"

21 "Admirably for them also. It was India's Karma, her fate, to
22 be conquered, and in her turn, to conquer her conqueror. She has
23 already done so with her Mohammedan victors: Educated
24 Mohammedans are Sufis, scarcely to be distinguished from Hindus.
25 Hindu thought has permeated their civilisation; they assumed the
26 position of learners. The great Akbar, the Mogul Emperor, was
27 practically a Hindu. And England will be conquered in her turn.
28 Today she has the sword, but it is worse than useless in the world of
29 ideas. You know what Schopenhauer said of Indian thought. He
30 foretold that its influence would be as momentous in Europe, when
31 it became well known, as the revival of Greek and Latin culture
32 after the Dark Ages."

33 "Excuse me saying that there do not seem many signs of it
34 just now."

35 "Perhaps not", said the Swami, gravely. "I dare say a good
36 many people saw no signs of the old Renaissance and did not know
37 it was there, even after it had come. But there is a great movement,
38 which can be discerned by those who know the signs of the times.
39 Oriental research has of recent years made great progress. At
40 present it is in the hands of scholars, and it seems dry and heavy in
41 the work they have achieved. But gradually the light of
42 comprehension will break."

43 "And India is to be the great conqueror of the future? Yet she
44 does not send out many missionaries to preach her ideas. I presume
45 she will wait until the world comes to her feet?"

46 "India was once a great missionary power. Hundreds of years
47 before England was converted to Christianity, Buddha sent out
48 missionaries to convert the world of Asia to his doctrine. The world
49 of thought is being converted. We are only at the beginning as yet.
50 The number of those who decline to adopt any special form of
51 religion is greatly increasing, and this movement is among the

1 educated classes. In a recent American census, a large number of
2 persons declined to class themselves as belonging to any form of
3 religion. All religions are different expressions of the same truth; all
4 march on or die out. They are the radii of the same truth, the
5 expression that variety of minds requires."

6 "Now we are getting near it. What is that central truth?"

7 "The Divine within; every being, however degraded, is the
8 expression of the Divine. The Divinity becomes covered, hidden
9 from view. I call to mind an incident of the Indian Mutiny. A Swami,
10 who for years had fulfilled a vow of eternal silence, was stabbed by
11 a Mohammedan. They dragged the murderer before his victim and
12 cried out, 'Speak the word, Swami, and he shall die.' After many
13 years of silence, he broke it to say with his last breath: 'My
14 children, you are all mistaken. That man is God Himself.' The great
15 lesson is, that unity is behind all. Call it God, Love, Spirit, Allah,
16 Jehovah--it is the same unity that animates all life from the lowest
17 animal to the noblest man. Picture to yourself an ocean ice-bound,
18 pierced with many different holes. Each of these is a soul, a man,
19 emancipated according to his degree of intelligence, essaying to
20 break through the ice."

21 "I think I see one difference between the wisdom of the East
22 and that of the West. You aim at producing very perfect individuals
23 by Sannyasa, concentration, and so forth. Now the ideal of the West
24 seems to be the perfecting of the social state; and so we work at
25 political and social questions, since we think that the permanence
26 of our civilisation depends upon the well-being of the people."

27 "But the basis of all systems, social or political," said the
28 Swami with great earnestness, "rests upon the goodness of men.
29 No nation is great or good because Parliament enacts this or that,
30 but because its men are great and good. I have visited China which
31 had the most admirable organisation of all nations. Yet today China
32 is like a disorganised mob, because her men are not equal to the
33 system contrived in the olden days. Religion goes to the root of the
34 matter. If it is right, all is right."

35 "It sounds just a little vague and remote from practical life,
36 that the Divine is within everything but covered. One can't be
37 looking for it all the time."

38 "People often work for the same ends but fail to recognise the
39 fact. One must admit that law, government, politics are phases not
40 final in any way. There is a goal beyond them where law is not
41 needed. And by the way, the very word Sannyasin means the divine
42 outlaw, one might say, divine nihilist, but that miscomprehension
43 pursues those that use such a word. All great Masters teach the
44 same thing. Christ saw that the basis is not law, that morality and
45 purity are the only strength. As for your statement that the East
46 aims at higher self-development and the West at the perfecting of
47 the social state, you do not of course forget that there is an
48 apparent Self and a real Self."

49 "The inference, of course, being that we work for the
50 apparent, you for the real?"

1 "The mind works through various stages to attain its fuller
2 development. First, it lays hold of the concrete, and only gradually
3 deals with abstractions. Look, too, how the idea of universal
4 brotherhood is reached. First it is grasped as brotherhood within a
5 sect--hard, narrow, and exclusive. Step by step we reach broad
6 generalisations and the world of abstract ideas."

7 "So you think that those sects, of which we English are so
8 fond, will die out. You know what the Frenchman said, 'England, the
9 land of a thousand sects and but one sauce'."

10 "I am sure that they are bound to disappear. Their existence
11 is founded on non-essentials; the essential part of them will remain
12 and be built up into another edifice. You know the old saying that it
13 is good to be born in a church, but not to die in it."

14 "Perhaps you will say how your work is progressing in
15 England?"

16 "Slowly, for the reasons I have already named. When you deal
17 with roots and foundations, all real progress must be slow. Of
18 course, I need not say that these ideas are bound to spread by one
19 means or another, and to many of us the right moment for their
20 dissemination seems now to have come."

21 Then I listened to an explanation of how the work is carried
22 on. Like many an old doctrine, this new one is offered without
23 money and without price, depending entirely upon the voluntary
24 efforts of those who embrace it.

25 The Swami is a picturesque figure in his Eastern dress. His
26 simple and cordial manner, savouring of anything but the popular
27 idea of asceticism, an unusual command of English and great
28 conversational powers add not a little to an interesting personality. .
29 . . His vow of Sannyasa implies renunciation of position, property,
30 and name, as well as the persistent search for spiritual knowledge.

33 **INDIA AND ENGLAND**

34 (*India, London, 1896*)

35 During the London season, Swami Vivekananda has been
36 teaching and lecturing to considerable numbers of people who have
37 been attracted by his doctrine and philosophy. Most English people
38 fancy that England has the practical monopoly of missionary
39 enterprise, almost unbroken save for a small effort on the part of
40 France. I therefore sought the Swami in his temporary home in
41 South Belgravia to enquire what message India could possibly send
42 to England, apart from the remonstrances she has too often had to
43 make on the subject of home charges, judicial and executive
44 functions combined in one person, the settlement of expenses
45 connected with Sudanese and other expeditions.

46 "It is no new thing", said the Swami composedly, "that India
47 should send forth missionaries. She used to do so under the
48 Emperor Asoka, in the days when the Buddhist faith was young,

1 when she had something to teach the surrounding nation."

2 "Well, might one ask why she ever ceased doing so, and why
3 she has now begun again?"

4 "She ceased because she grew selfish, forgot the principle
5 that nations and individuals alike subsist and prosper by a system of
6 give and take. Her mission to the world has always been the same.
7 It is spiritual, the realm of introspective thought has been hers
8 through all the ages; abstract science, metaphysics, logic, are her
9 special domain. In reality, my mission to England is an outcome of
10 England's to India. It has been hers to conquer, to govern, to use
11 her knowledge of physical science to her advantage and ours. In
12 trying to sum up India's contribution to the world, I am reminded of
13 a Sanskrit and an English idiom. When you say a man dies, your
14 phrase is, 'He gave up the ghost', whereas we say, 'He gave up the
15 body'. Similarly, you more than imply that the body is the chief part
16 of man by saying it possesses a soul. Whereas we say a man is a
17 soul and possesses a body. These are but small ripples on the
18 surface, yet they show the current of your national thought. I
19 should like to remind you how Schopenhauer predicted that the
20 influence of Indian philosophy upon Europe would be as momentous
21 when it became well known as was the revival of Greek and Latin
22 learning at the close of the Dark Ages. Oriental research is making
23 great progress; a new world of ideas is opening to the seeker after
24 truth."

25 "And is India finally to conquer her conquerors?"

26 "Yes, in the world of ideas. England has the sword, the
27 material world, as our Mohammedan conquerors had before her.
28 Yet Akbar the Great became practically a Hindu; educated
29 Mohammedans, the Sufis, are hardly to be distinguished from the
30 Hindus; they do not eat beef, and in other ways conform to our
31 usages. Their thought has become permeated by ours."

32 "So, that is the fate you foresee for the lordly Sahib? Just at
33 this moment he seems to be a long way off it."

34 "No, it is not so remote as you imply. In the world of religious
35 ideas, the Hindu and the Englishman have much in common, and
36 there is proof of the same thing among other religious communities.
37 Where the English ruler or civil servant has had any knowledge of
38 India's literature, especially her philosophy, there exists the ground
39 of a common sympathy, a territory constantly widening. It is not too
40 much to say that only ignorance is the cause of that exclusive--
41 sometimes even contemptuous--attitude assumed by some."

42 "Yes, it is the measure of folly. Will you say why you went to
43 America rather than to England on your mission?"

44 "That was a mere accident--a result of the World's Parliament
45 of Religions being held in Chicago at the time of the World's Fair,
46 instead of in London, as it ought to have been. The Raja of Mysore
47 and some other friends sent me to America as the Hindu
48 representative. I stayed there three years, with the exception of last
49 summer and this summer, when I came to lecture in London. The
50 Americans are a great people, with a future before them. I admire

1 them very much, and found many kind friends among them. They
2 are less prejudiced than the English, more ready to weigh and
3 examine a new idea, to value it in spite of its newness. They are
4 most hospitable too; far less time is lost in showing one's
5 credentials, as it were. You travel in America, as I did, from city to
6 city, always lecturing among friends. I saw Boston, New York,
7 Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, Des Moines, Memphis, and
8 numbers of other places."

9 "And leaving disciples in each of them?"

10 "Yes, disciples, but not organisations. That is no part of my
11 work. Of these there are enough in all conscience. Organisations
12 need men to manage them; they must seek power, money, influence.
13 Often they struggle for domination, and even fight."

14 "Could the gist of this mission of yours be summed up in a
15 few words? Is it comparative religion you want to preach?"

16 "It is really the philosophy of religion, the kernel of all its
17 outward forms. All forms of religion have an essential and a non-
18 essential part. If we strip from them the latter, there remains the
19 real basis of all religion, which all forms of religion possess in
20 common. Unity is behind them all. We may call it God, Allah,
21 Jehovah, the Spirit, Love; it is the same unity that animates all life,
22 from its lowest form to its noblest manifestation in man. It is on this
23 unity that we need to lay stress, whereas in the West, and indeed
24 everywhere, it is on the non-essential that men are apt to lay stress.
25 They will fight and kill each other for these forms, to make their
26 fellows conform. Seeing that the essential is love of God and love of
27 man, this is curious, to say the least."

28 "I suppose a Hindu could never persecute."

29 "He never yet has done so; he is the most tolerant of all the
30 races of men. Considering how profoundly religious he is, one might
31 have thought that he would persecute those who believe in no God.
32 The Jains regard such belief as sheer delusion, yet no Jain has even
33 been persecuted. In India the Mohammedans were the first who
34 ever took the sword."

35 "What progress does the doctrine of essential unity make in
36 England? Here we have a thousand sects."

37 "They must gradually disappear as liberty and knowledge
38 increase. They are founded on the non-essential, which by the
39 nature of things cannot survive. The sects have served their
40 purpose, which was that of an exclusive brotherhood on lines
41 comprehended by those within it. Gradually we reach the idea of
42 universal brotherhood by flinging down the walls of partition which
43 separate such aggregations of individuals. In England the work
44 proceeds slowly, possibly because the time is not yet ripe for it; but
45 all the same, it makes progress. Let me call your attention to the
46 similar work that England is engaged upon in India. Modern caste
47 distinction is a barrier to India's progress. It narrows, restricts,
48 separates. It will crumble before the advance of ideas.

49 "Yet some Englishmen, and they are not the least sympathetic

1 to India nor the most ignorant of her history, regard caste as in the
2 main beneficent. One may easily be too much Europeanised. You
3 yourself condemn many of our ideals as materialistic."

4 "True. No reasonable person aims at assimilating India to
5 England; the body is made by the thought that lies behind it. The
6 body politic is thus the expression of national thought, and in India,
7 of thousands of years of thought. To Europeanise India is therefore
8 an impossible and foolish task: the elements of progress were
9 always actively present in India. As soon as a peaceful government
10 was there, these have always shown themselves. From the time of
11 the Upanishads down to the present day, nearly all our great
12 Teachers have wanted to break through the barriers of caste, i.e.
13 caste in its degenerate state, not the original system. What little
14 good you see in the present caste clings to it from the original
15 caste, which was the most glorious social institution. Buddha tried
16 to re-establish caste in its original form. At every period of India's
17 awakening, there have always been great efforts made to break
18 down caste. But it must always be *we* who build up a new India as
19 an effect and continuation of her past, assimilating helpful foreign
20 ideas wherever they may be found. Never can it be *they*; growth
21 must proceed from within. All that England can do is to help India
22 to work out her own salvation. All progress at dictation of another,
23 whose hand is at India's throat, is valueless in my opinion. The
24 highest work can only degenerate when slave-labour produces it."

25 "Have you given any attention to the Indian National
26 Congress movement?"

27 "I cannot claim to have given much; my work is in another
28 part of the field. But I regard the movement as significant, and
29 heartily wish it success. A nation is being made out of India's
30 different races. I sometimes think they are no less various than the
31 different peoples of Europe. In the past, Europe has struggled for
32 Indian trade, a trade which has played a tremendous part in the
33 civilisation of the world; its acquisition might almost be called a
34 turning-point in the history of humanity. We see the Dutch,
35 Portuguese, French, and English contending for it in succession.
36 The discovery of America may be traced to the indemnification the
37 Venetians sought in the far distant West for the loss they suffered in
38 the East."

39 "Where will it end?"

40 "It will certainly end in the working out of India's
41 homogeneity, in her acquiring what we may call democratic ideas.
42 Intelligence must not remain the monopoly of the cultured few; it
43 will be disseminated from higher to lower classes. Education is
44 coming, and compulsory education will follow. The immense power
45 of our people for work must be utilised. India's potentialities are
46 great and will be called forth."

47 "Has any nation ever been great without being a great
48 military power?"

49 "Yes," said the Swami without a moment's hesitation, "China
50 has. Amongst other countries, I have travelled in China and Japan.

1 Today, China is like a disorganised mob; but in the heyday of her
2 greatness she possessed the most admirable organisation any
3 nation has yet known. Many of the devices and methods we term
4 modern were practised by the Chinese for hundreds and even
5 thousands of years. Take competitive examination as an
6 illustration."

7 "Why did she become disorganised?"

8 "Because she could not produce men equal to the system. You
9 have the saying that men cannot be made virtuous by an Act of
10 Parliament; the Chinese experienced it before you. And that is why
11 religion is of deeper importance than politics, since it goes to the
12 root, and deals with the essential of conduct."

13 "Is India conscious of the awakening that you allude to?"

14 "Perfectly conscious. The world perhaps sees it chiefly in the
15 Congress movement and in the field of social reform; but the
16 awakening is quite as real in religion, though it works more
17 silently."

18 "The West and East have such different ideals of life. Ours
19 seems to be the perfecting of the social state. Whilst we are busy
20 seeing to these matters, Orientals are meditating on abstractions.
21 Here has Parliament been discussing the payment of the Indian
22 army in the Sudan. All the respectable section of the Conservative
23 press has made a loud outcry against the unjust decision of the
24 Government, whereas you probably think the whole affair not worth
25 attention."

26 "But you are quite wrong", said the Swami, taking the paper
27 and running his eyes over extracts from the Conservative Journals.
28 "My sympathies in this matter are naturally with my country. Yet it
29 reminds one of the old Sanskrit proverb: 'You have sold the
30 elephant, why quarrel over the goad?' India always pays. The
31 quarrels of politicians are very curious. It will take ages to bring
32 religion into politics."

33 "One ought to make the effort very soon all the same."

34 "Yes, it is worth one's while to plant an idea in the heart of
35 this great London, surely the greatest governing machine that has
36 ever been set in motion. I often watch it working, the power and
37 perfection with which the minutest vein is reached, its wonderful
38 system of circulation and distribution. It helps one to realise how
39 great is the Empire and how great its task. And with all the rest, it
40 distributes thought. It would be worth a man's while to place some
41 ideas in the heart of this great machine, so that they might circulate
42 to the remotest part."

43 The Swami is a man of distinguished appearance. Tall, broad,
44 with fine features enhanced by his picturesque Eastern dress, his
45 personality is very striking. By birth, he is a Bengali, and by
46 education, a graduate of the Calcutta University. His gifts as an
47 orator are high. He can speak for an hour and a half without a note
48 or the slightest pause for a word.

49 C.S.B

INDIAN MISSIONARY'S MISSION TO ENGLAND

(The Echo, London, 1896)

. . . I presume that in his own country the Swami would live under a tree, or at most in the precincts of a temple, his head shaved, dressed in the costume of his country. But these things are not done in London, so that I found the Swami located much like other people, and, save that he wears a long coat of a dark orange shade, dressed like other mortals likewise. He laughingly related that his dress, especially when he wears a turban, does not commend itself to the London street arab, whose observations are scarcely worth repeating. I began by asking the Indian Yogi to spell his name very slowly. . . .

"Do you think that nowadays people are laying much stress on the non-essential?"

"I think so among the backward nations, and among the less cultured portion of the civilised people of the West. Your question implies that among the cultured and the wealthy, matters are on a different footing. So they are; the wealthy are either immersed in the enjoyment of wealth or grubbing for more. They, and a large section of the busy people, say of religion that it is rot, stuff, nonsense, and they honestly think so. The only religion that is fashionable is patriotism and Mrs. Grundy. People merely go to church when they are marrying or burying somebody."

"Will your message take them oftener to church?"

"I scarcely think it will. Since I have nothing whatever to do with ritual or dogma; my mission is to show that religion is everything and in everything. . . . And what can we say of the system here in England? Everything goes to show that Socialism or some form of rule by the people, call it what you will, is coming on the boards. The people will certainly want the satisfaction of their material needs, less work, no oppression, no war, more food. What guarantee have we that this or any civilisation will last, unless it is based on religion, on the goodness of man? Depend on it, religion goes to the root of the matter. If it is right, all is right."

"It must be difficult to get the essential, the metaphysical, part of religion into the minds of the people. It is remote from their thoughts and manner of life."

"In all religions we travel from a lesser to a higher truth, never from error to truth. There is a Oneness behind all creation, but minds are very various. 'That which exists is One, sages call It variously.' What I mean is that one progresses from a smaller to a greater truth. The worst religions are only bad readings of the truth. One gets to understand bit by bit. Even devil-worship is but a perverted reading of the ever-true and immutable Brahman. Other phases have more or less of the truth in them. No form of religion possesses it entirely."

1 "May one ask if you originated this religion you have come to
2 preach to England?"

3 "Certainly not. I am a pupil of a great Indian sage,
4 Ramakrishna Paramahansa. He was not what one might call a very
5 learned man, as some of our sages are, but a very holy one, deeply
6 imbued with the spirit of the Vedanta philosophy. When I say
7 philosophy, I hardly know whether I ought not to say religion, for it
8 is really both. You must read Professor Max Muller's account of my
9 Master in a recent number of the *Nineteenth Century*. Ramakrishna
10 was born in the Hooghly district in 1836 and died in 1886. He
11 produced a deep effect on the life of Keshab Chandra Sen and
12 others. By discipline of the body and subduing of the mind he
13 obtained a wonderful insight into the spiritual world. His face was
14 distinguished by a childlike tenderness, profound humility, and
15 remarkable sweetness of expression. No one could look upon it
16 unmoved."

17 "Then your teaching is derived from the Vedas?"

18 "Yes, Vedanta means the end of the Vedas, the third section
19 or Upanishads, containing the ripened ideas which we find more as
20 germs in the earlier portion. The most ancient portion of the Vedas
21 is the Samhita, which is in very archaic Sanskrit, only to be
22 understood by the aid of a very old dictionary, the Nirukta of
23 Yaska."

24 "I fear that we English have rather the idea that India has
25 much to learn from us; the average man is pretty ignorant as to
26 what may be learnt from India."

27 "That is so, but the world of scholars know well how much is
28 to be learnt and how important the lesson. You would not find Max
29 Muller, Monier Williams, Sir William Hunter, or German Oriental
30 scholars making light of Indian abstract science."

31 . . . The Swami gives his lecture at 39 Victoria Street. All are
32 made welcome, and as in ancient apostolic times, the new teaching
33 is without money and without price. The Indian missionary is a man
34 of exceptionally fine physique; his command of English can only be
35 described as perfect.

36 C.S.B

37 38 39 **WITH THE SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AT MADURA**

40 (*The Hindu, Madras, February, 1897*)

41 Q.--The theory that the universe is false seems to be
42 understood in the following senses: (a) the sense in which the
43 duration of perishing forms and names is infinitesimally small with
44 reference to eternity; (b) the sense in which the period between any
45 two Pralayas (involution of the universe) is infinitesimally small with
46 reference to eternity; (c) the sense in which the universe is
47 ultimately false though it has an apparent reality at present,
48 depending upon one sort of consciousness, in the same way as the

1 idea of silver superimposed on a shell or that of a serpent on a rope,
2 is true for the time being, and, in effect, is dependent upon a
3 particular condition of mind; (d) the sense in which the universe is a
4 phantom just like the son of a barren woman or like the horns of a
5 hare.

6 In which of these senses is the theory understood in the
7 Advaita philosophy?

8 A.--There are many classes of Advaitists and each has
9 understood the theory in one or the other sense. Shankara taught
10 the theory in the sense (c), and it is his teaching that the universe,
11 as it appears, is real for all purposes for every one in his present
12 consciousness, but it vanishes when the consciousness assumes a
13 higher form. You see the trunk of a tree standing before you, and
14 you mistake it for a ghost. The idea of a ghost is for the time being
15 real, for it works on your mind and produces the same result upon it
16 as if it were a ghost. As soon as you discover it to be a stump, the
17 idea of the ghost disappears. The idea of a stump and that of the
18 ghost cannot co-exist, and when one is present, the other is absent.

19 Q.--Is not the sense (d) also adopted in some of the writings of
20 Shankara?

21 A.--No. Some other men who, by mistake, carried Shankara's
22 notion to an extreme have adopted the sense (d) in their writing.
23 the senses (a) and (b) are peculiar to the writings of some other
24 classes of Advaita philosophers but never received Shankara's
25 sanction.

26 Q.--What is the cause of the apparent reality?

27 A.--What is the cause of your mistaking a stump for a ghost?
28 The universe is the same, in fact, but it is your mind that creates
29 various conditions for it.

30 Q.--What is the true meaning of the statement that the Vedas
31 are beginningless and eternal? Does it refer to the Vedic utterances
32 or the statements contained in the Vedas? If it refers to the truth
33 involved in such statements, are not the sciences, such as Logic,
34 Geometry, Chemistry, etc., equally beginningless and eternal, for
35 they contain an everlasting truth?

36 A.--There was a time when the Vedas themselves were
37 considered eternal in the sense in which the divine truths contained
38 therein were changeless and permanent and were only revealed to
39 man. At a subsequent time, it appears that the utterance of the
40 Vedic hymns with the knowledge of its meaning was important, and
41 it was held that the hymns themselves must have had a divine
42 origin. At a still later period the meaning of the hymns showed that
43 many of them could not be of divine origin, because they inculcated
44 upon mankind performance of various unholy acts, such as
45 torturing animals, and we can also find many ridiculous stories in
46 the Vedas. The correct meaning of the statement "The Vedas are
47 beginningless and eternal" is that the law or truth revealed by them
48 to man is permanent and changeless. Logic, Geometry, Chemistry,
49 etc., reveal also a law or truth which is permanent and changeless,
50 and in that sense they are also beginningless and eternal. But no

1 truth or law is absent from the Vedas, and I ask any one of you to
2 point out to me any truth which is not treated of in them.

3 Q.--What is the notion of Mukti, according to the Advaita
4 philosophy, or in other words, is it a conscious state? Is there any
5 difference between the Mukti of the Advaitism and the Buddhistic
6 Nirvana?

7 A.--There is a consciousness in Mukti, which we call
8 superconsciousness. It differs from your present consciousness. It is
9 illogical to say that there is no consciousness in Mukti. The
10 consciousness is of three sorts--the dull, mediocre, and intense--as
11 is the case of light. When vibration is intense, the brilliancy is so
12 very powerful as to dazzle the sight itself and in effect is as
13 ineffectual as the dullest of lights. The Buddhistic Nirvana must
14 have the same degree of consciousness whatever the Buddhists
15 may say. Our definition of Mukti is affirmative in its nature, while
16 the Buddhistic Nirvana has a negative definition.

17 Q.--Why should the unconditioned Brahman choose to assume
18 a condition for the purpose of manifestation of the world's creation?

19 A.--The question itself is most illogical. Brahman is
20 *Avangmanasogocharam*, meaning that which is incapable of being
21 grasped by word and mind. Whatever lies beyond the region of
22 space, time and causation cannot be conceived by the human mind,
23 and the function of logic and enquiry lies only within the region of
24 space, time, and causation. While that is so, it is a vain attempt to
25 question about what lies beyond the possibilities of human
26 conception.

27 Q.--Here and there attempts are made to import into the
28 Puranas hidden ideas which are said to have been allegorically
29 represented. Sometimes it is said that the Puranas need not contain
30 any historical truth, but are mere representations of the highest
31 ideals illustrated with fictitious characters. Take for instance,
32 Vishnupurana, Ramayana, or Bharata. Do they contain historical
33 veracity or are they mere allegorical representations of
34 metaphysical truths, or are they representations of the highest
35 ideals for the conduct of humanity, or are they mere epic poems
36 such as those of Homer?

37 A.--Some historical truth is the nucleus of every Purana. The
38 object of the Puranas is to teach mankind the sublime truth in
39 various forms; and even if they do not contain any historical truth,
40 they form a great authority for us in respect of the highest truth
41 which they inculcate. Take the Ramayana, for illustration, and for
42 viewing it as an authority on building character, it is not even
43 necessary that one like Rama should have ever lived. The sublimity
44 of the law propounded by Ramayana or Bharata does not depend
45 upon the truth of any personality like Rama or Krishna, and one can
46 even hold that such personages never lived, and at the same time
47 take those writings as high authorities in respect of the grand ideas
48 which they place before mankind. Our philosophy does not depend
49 upon any personality for its truth. Thus Krishna did not teach
50 anything new or original to the world, nor does Ramayana profess
51 anything which is not contained in the Scriptures. It is to be noted

1 that Christianity cannot stand without Christ, Mohammedanism
2 without Mohammed, and Buddhism without Buddha, but Hinduism
3 stands independent of any man, and for the purpose of estimating
4 the philosophical truth contained in any Purana, we need not
5 consider the question whether the personages treated of therein
6 were really material men or were fictitious characters. The object
7 of the Puranas was the education of mankind, and the sages who
8 constructed them contrived to find some historical personages and
9 to superimpose upon them all the best or worst qualities just as
10 they wanted to, and laid down the rules of morals for the conduct of
11 mankind. Is it necessary that a demon with ten heads
12 (Dashamukha) should have actually lived as stated in the
13 Ramayana? It is the representation of some truth which deserves to
14 be studied, apart from the question whether Dashamukha was a
15 real or fictitious character. You can now depict Krishna in a still
16 more attractive manner, and the description depends upon the
17 sublimity of your ideal, but there stands the grand philosophy
18 contained in the Puranas.

19 Q.--Is it possible for a man, if he were an adept, to remember
20 the events connected with his past incarnations? The physiological
21 brain, which he owned in his previous incarnation, and in which the
22 impressions of his experience were stored, is no longer present. In
23 this birth he is endowed with a new physiological brain, and while
24 that is so, how is it possible for the present brain to get at the
25 impressions received by another apparatus which is not existence
26 at present?

27 *Swami*--What do you mean by an adept?

28 *Correspondent*--One that has developed the hidden powers of
29 his nature.

30 *Swami*--I cannot understand how the hidden powers can be
31 developed. I know what you mean, but I should always desire that
32 the expressions used are precise and accurate. You may say that
33 the powers hidden are uncovered. It is possible for those that have
34 uncovered the hidden powers of their nature to remember the
35 incidents connected with their past incarnations, for their present
36 brain had its Bija (seed) in the Sukshma man after death.

37 Q.--Does the spirit of Hinduism permit the proselytism of
38 strangers into it? And can a Brahmin listen to the exposition of
39 philosophy made by a Chandala?

40 A.--Proselytism is tolerated by Hinduism. Any man, whether
41 he be a Shudra or Chandala, can expound philosophy even to a
42 Brahmin. The truth can be learnt from the lowest individual, no
43 matter to what caste or creed he belongs.

44 Here the Swami quoted Sanskrit verses of high authority in
45 support of his position.

46 The discourse ended, as the time appointed in the
47 programme for his visiting the Temple had already arrived. He
48 accordingly took leave of the gentlemen present and proceeded to
49 visit the Temple.

THE ABROAD AND THE PROBLEMS AT HOME

(The Hindu, Madras, February, 1897)

Our representative met the Swami Vivekananda in the train at the Chingleput Station and travelled with him to Madras. The following is the report of the interview:

"What made you go to America, Swamiji?"

"Rather a serious question to answer in brief. I can only answer it partly now. Because I travelled all over India, I wanted to go over to other countries. I went to America by the Far East."

"What did you see in Japan, and is there any chance of India following in the progressive steps of Japan?"

"None whatever, until all the three hundred millions of India combine together as a whole nation. The world has never seen such a patriotic and artistic race as the Japanese, and one special feature about them is this that while in Europe and elsewhere Art generally goes with dirt, Japanese Art is Art *plus* absolute cleanliness. I would wish that every one of our young men could visit Japan once at least in his lifetime. It is very easy to go there. The Japanese think that everything Hindu is great and believe that India is a holy land. Japanese Buddhism is entirely different from what you see in Ceylon. It is the same as Vedanta. It is positive and theistic Buddhism, not the negative atheistic Buddhism of Ceylon."

"What is the key to Japan's sudden greatness?"

"The faith of the Japanese in themselves, and their love for their country. When you have men who are ready to sacrifice their everything for their country, sincere to the backbone--when such men arise, India will become great in every respect. It is the men that make the country! What is there in the country? If you catch the social morality and the political morality of the Japanese, you will be as great as they are. The Japanese are ready to sacrifice everything for their country, and they have become a great people. But you are not; you cannot be, you sacrifice everything only for your own families and possessions."

"Is it your wish that India should become like Japan?"

"Decidedly not. India should continue to be what she is. How could India ever become like Japan, or any nation for the matter of that? In each nation, as in music, there is a main note, a central theme, upon which all others turn. Each nation has a theme: everything else is secondary. India's theme is religion. Social reform and everything else are secondary. Therefore India cannot be like Japan. It is said that when 'the heart breaks', then the flow of thought comes. India's heart must break, and the flow of spirituality will come out. India is India. We are not like the Japanese, we are Hindus. India's very atmosphere is soothing. I have been working incessantly here, and amidst this work I am getting rest. It is only from spiritual work that we can get rest in India. If your work is

1 material here, you die of--diabetes!"

2 "So much for Japan. What was your first experience of
3 America, Swamiji?"

4 "From first to last it was very good. With the exception of the
5 missionaries and 'Church-women' the Americans are most
6 hospitable, kind-hearted, generous, and good-natured."

7 "Who are these 'Church-women' that you speak of, Swamiji?"

8 "When a woman tries her best to find a husband, she goes to
9 all the fashionable seaside resorts and tries all sorts of tricks to
10 catch a man. When she fails in her attempts, she becomes, what
11 they call in America, an 'old maid', and joins the Church. Some of
12 them become very 'Churchy'. These 'Church-women' are awful
13 fanatics. They are under the thumb of the priests there. Between
14 them and the priests they make hell of earth and make a mess of
15 religion. With the exception of these, the Americans are a very good
16 people. They loved me, and I love them a great deal. I felt as if I
17 was one of them."

18 "What is your idea about the results of the Parliament of
19 Religions?"

20 "The Parliament of Religions, as it seems to me, was intended
21 for a 'heathen show' before the world: but it turned out that the
22 heathens had the upper hand and made it a Christian show all
23 around. So the Parliament of Religions was a failure from the
24 Christian standpoint, seeing that the Roman Catholics, who were
25 the organisers of that Parliament, are, when there is talk of another
26 Parliament at Paris, now steadily opposing it. But the Chicago
27 Parliament was a tremendous success for India and Indian thought.
28 It helped on the tide of Vedanta, which is flooding the world. The
29 American people--of course, *minus* the fanatical priests and
30 Church-women--are very glad of the results of the Parliament."

31 "What prospects have you, Swamiji, for the spread of your
32 mission in England?"

33 "There is every prospect. Before many years elapse a vast
34 majority of the English people will be Vedantins. There is a greater
35 prospect of this in England than there is in America. You see,
36 Americans make a fanfaronade of everything, which is not the case
37 with Englishmen. Even Christians cannot understand their New
38 Testament, without understanding the Vedanta. The Vedanta is the
39 rationale of all religions. Without the Vedanta every religion is
40 superstition; with it everything becomes religion."

41 "What is the special trait you noticed in the English
42 character?"

43 "The Englishman goes to practical work as soon as he
44 believes in something. He has tremendous energy for practical
45 work. There is in the whole world no human being superior to the
46 English gentleman or lady. That is really the reason of my faith in
47 them. John Bull is rather a thick-headed gentleman to deal with.
48 You must push and push an idea till it reaches his brain, but once
49 there, it does not get out. In England, there was not one missionary

1 or anybody who said anything against me; not one who tried to
2 make a scandal about me. To my astonishment, many of my friends
3 belong to the Church of England. I learn, these missionaries do not
4 come from the higher classes in England. Caste is as rigorous there
5 as it is here, and the English churchmen belong to the class of
6 gentlemen. They may differ in opinion from you, but that is no bar
7 to their being friends with you; therefore, I would give a word of
8 advice to my countrymen, which is, not to take notice of the
9 vituperative missionaries, now that I have known that they are. We
10 have 'sized' them, as the Americans say. Non-recognition is the only
11 attitude to assume towards them."

12 "Will you kindly enlighten me, Swamiji, on the Social Reform
13 movements in America and England?"

14 "Yes. All the social upheavalists, at least the leaders of them,
15 are trying to find that all their communistic or equalising theories
16 must have a spiritual basis, and that spiritual basis is in the Vedanta
17 only. I have been told by several leaders, who used to attend my
18 lectures, that they required the Vedanta as the basis of the new
19 order of things."

20 "What are your views with regard to the Indian masses?"

21 "Oh, we are awfully poor, and our masses are very ignorant
22 about secular things. Our masses are very good because poverty
23 here is not a crime. Our masses are not violent. Many times I was
24 near being mobbed in America and England, only on account of my
25 dress. But I never heard of such a thing in India as a man being
26 mobbed because of peculiar dress. In every other respect, our
27 masses are much more civilised than the European masses."

28 "What will you propose for the improvement of our masses?"

29 "We have to give them secular education. We have to follow
30 the plan laid down by our ancestors, that is, to bring all the ideals
31 slowly down among the masses. Raise them slowly up, raise them to
32 equality. Impart even secular knowledge through religion."

33 "But do you think, Swamiji, it is a task that can be easily
34 accomplished?"

35 "It will, of course, have gradually to be worked out. But if
36 there are enough self-sacrificing young fellows, who, I hope, will
37 work with me, it can be done tomorrow. It all depends upon the zeal
38 and the self-sacrifice brought to the task."

39 "But if the present degraded condition is due to their past
40 Karma, Swamiji, how do you think they could get out of it easily,
41 and how do you propose to help them?"

42 The Swamiji readily answered: "Karma is the eternal
43 assertion of human freedom. If we can bring ourselves down by our
44 Karma, surely it is in our power to raise ourselves by it. The
45 masses, besides, have not brought themselves down altogether by
46 their own Karma. So we should give them better environments to
47 work in. I do not propose any levelling of castes. Caste is a very
48 good thing. Caste is the plan we want to follow. What caste really is,
49 not one in a million understands. There is no country in the world

1 without caste. In India, from caste we reach to the point where
2 there is no caste. Caste is based throughout on that principle. The
3 plan in India is to make everybody a Brahmin, the Brahmin being
4 the ideal of humanity. If you read the history of India you will find
5 that attempts have always been made to raise the lower classes.
6 Many are the classes that have been raised. Many more will follow
7 till the whole will become Brahmin. That is the plan. We have only
8 to raise them without bringing down anybody. And this has mostly
9 to be done by the Brahmins themselves, because it is the duty of
10 every aristocracy to dig its own grave; and the sooner it does so,
11 the better for all. No time should be lost. Indian caste is better than
12 the caste which prevails in Europe or America. I do not say it is
13 absolutely good. Where would you be if there were no caste? Where
14 would be your learning and other things, if there were no caste?
15 There would be nothing left for the Europeans to study if caste had
16 never existed! The Mohammedans would have smashed everything
17 to pieces. Where do you find the Indian society standing still? It is
18 always on the move. Sometimes, as in the times of foreign
19 invasions, the movement has been slow, at other times quicker. This
20 is what I say to my countrymen. I do not condemn them. I look into
21 their past. I find that under the circumstances no nation could do
22 more glorious work. I tell them that they have done well. I only ask
23 them to do better.

24 "What are your views, Swamiji, in regard to the relation of
25 caste to rituals?"

26 "Caste is continually changing, rituals are continually
27 changing, so are forms. It is the substance, the principle, that does
28 not change. It is in the Vedas that we have to study our religion.
29 With the exception of the Vedas every book must change. The
30 authority of the Vedas is for all time to come; the authority of every
31 one of our other books is for the time being. For instance, one
32 Smriti is powerful for one age, another for another age. Great
33 prophets are always coming and pointing the way to work. Some
34 prophets worked for the lower classes, others like Madhva gave to
35 women the right to study the Vedas. Caste should not go; but should
36 only be readjusted occasionally. Within the old structure is to be
37 found life enough for the building of two hundred thousand new
38 ones. It is sheer nonsense to desire the abolition of caste. The new
39 method is--evolution of the old."

40 "Do not Hindus stand in need of social reform?"

41 "We do stand in need of social reform At times great men
42 would evolve new ideas of progress, and kings would give them the
43 sanction of law. Thus social improvements had been in the past
44 made in India, and in modern times to effect such progressive
45 reforms, we will have first to build up such an authoritative power.
46 Kings having gone, the power is the people's. We have, therefore, to
47 wait till the people are educated, till they understand their needs
48 and are ready and able to solve their problems. The tyranny of the
49 minority is the worst tyranny in the world. Therefore, instead of
50 frittering away our energies on ideal reforms, which will never
51 become practical, we had better go to the root of the evil and make
52 a legislative body, that is to say, educate our people, so that they

1 may be able to solve their own problems. Until that is done all these
2 ideal reforms will remain ideals only. The new order of things is the
3 salvation of the people by the people, and it takes time to make it
4 workable, especially in India, which has always in the past been
5 governed by kings."

6 "Do you think Hindu society can successfully adopt European
7 social laws?"

8 "No, not wholly. I would say, the combination of the Greek
9 mind represented by the external European energy added to the
10 Hindu spirituality would be an ideal society for India. For instance,
11 it is absolutely necessary for you, instead of frittering away your
12 energy and often talking of idle nonsense, to learn from the
13 Englishman the idea of prompt obedience to leaders, the absence of
14 jealousy, the indomitable perseverance and the undying faith in
15 himself. As soon as he selects a leader for a work, the Englishman
16 sticks to him through thick and thin and obeys him. Here in India,
17 everybody wants to become a leader, and there is nobody to obey.
18 Everyone should learn to obey before he can command. There is no
19 end to our jealousies; and the more important the Hindu, the more
20 jealous he is. Until this absence of jealousy and obedience to
21 leaders are learnt by the Hindu, there will be no power or
22 organisation. We shall have to remain the hopelessly confused mob
23 that we are now, hoping and doing nothing. India has to learn from
24 Europe the conquest of external nature, and Europe has to learn
25 from India the conquest of internal nature. Then there will be
26 neither Hindus nor Europeans--there will be the ideal humanity
27 which has conquered both the natures, the external and the
28 internal. We have developed one phase of humanity, and they
29 another. It is the union of the two that is wanted. The word freedom
30 which is the watchword of our religion really means freedom
31 physically, mentally, and spiritually."

32 "What relation, Swamiji, does ritual bear to religion?"

33 "Rituals are the kindergarten of religion. They are absolutely
34 necessary for the world as it is now; only we shall have to give
35 people newer and fresher rituals. A party of thinkers must
36 undertake to do this. Old rituals must be rejected and new ones
37 substituted."

38 "Then you advocate the abolition of rituals, don't you?"

39 "No, my watchword is construction, not destruction. Out of
40 the existing rituals, new ones will have to be evolved. There is
41 infinite power of development in everything; that is my belief. One
42 atom has the power of the whole universe at its back. All along, in
43 the history of the Hindu race, there never was any attempt at
44 destruction, only construction. One sect wanted to destroy, and they
45 were thrown out of India: They were the Buddhists. We have had a
46 host of reformers--Shankara, Ramanuja, Madhva, and Chaitanya.
47 These were great reformers, who always were constructive and
48 built according to the circumstances of their time. This is our
49 peculiar method of work. All the modern reformers take to
50 European destructive reformation, which will never do good to
51 anyone and never did. Only once was a modern reformer mostly

1 constructive, and that one was Raja Ram Mohan Ray. The progress
2 of the Hindu race has been towards the realisation of the Vedantic
3 ideals. All history of Indian life is the struggle for the realisation of
4 the ideal of the Vedanta through good or bad fortune. Whenever
5 there was any reforming sect or religion which rejected the
6 Vedantic ideal, it was smashed into nothing."

7 "What is your programme of work here?"

8 "I want to start two institutions, one in Madras and one in
9 Calcutta, to carry out my plan; and that plan briefly is to bring the
10 Vedantic ideals into the everyday practical life of the saint or the
11 sinner, of the sage or the ignoramus, of the Brahmin or the Pariah."

12 Our representative here put to him a few questions relative to
13 Indian politics; but before the Swami could attempt anything like an
14 answer, the train steamed up to the Egmore platform, and the only
15 hurried remark that fell from the Swami was that he was dead
16 against all political entanglements of Indian and European
17 problems. The interview then terminated.

18 19 THE MISSIONARY WORK OF THE FIRST HINDU SANNYASIN TO THE 20 WEST AND HIS PLAN OF REGENERATION OF INDIA

21 (*Madras Times, February, 1897*)

22 For the past few weeks, the Hindu public of Madras have
23 been most eagerly expecting the arrival of Swami Vivekananda, the
24 great Hindu monk of world-wide fame. At the present moment his
25 name is on everybody's lips. In the school, in the college, in the
26 High Court, on the marina, and in the streets and bazaars of
27 Madras, hundreds of inquisitive spirits may be seen asking when
28 the Swami will be coming. Large numbers of students from the
29 mofussil, who have come up for the University examinations are
30 staying here, awaiting the Swami, and increasing their hostelry
31 bills, despite the urgent call of their parents to return home
32 immediately. In a few days the Swami will be in our midst. From the
33 nature of the receptions received elsewhere in this Presidency, from
34 the preparations being made here, from the triumphal arches
35 erected at Castle Kernan, where the "Prophet" is to be lodged at
36 the cost of the Hindu public, and from the interest taken in the
37 movement by the leading Hindu gentlemen of this city, like the
38 Hon'ble Mr. Justice Subramaniya Iyer, there is no doubt that the
39 Swami will have a grand reception. It was Madras that first
40 recognised the superior merits of the Swami and equipped him for
41 Chicago. Madras will now have again the honour of welcoming the
42 undoubtedly great man who has done so much to raise the prestige
43 of his motherland. Four years ago, when the Swami arrived here, he
44 was practically an obscure individual. In an unknown bungalow at
45 St. Thome he spent nearly two months, all along holding
46 conversations of religious topics and teaching and instructing all
47 comers who cared to listen to him. Even then a few educated young
48 men with "a keener eye" predicted that there was something in the
49 man, "a power", that would lift him above all others, that would pre-
50 eminently enable him to be the leader of men. These young men,

1 who were then despised as "misguided enthusiasts", "dreamy
2 revivalists", have now the supreme satisfaction of seeing their
3 Swami, as they love to call him, return to them with a great
4 European and American fame. The mission of the Swami is
5 essentially spiritual. He firmly believes that India, the motherland
6 of spirituality, has a great future before her. He is sanguine that the
7 West will more and more come to appreciate what he regards as
8 the sublime truths of Vedanta. His great motto is "Help, and not
9 Fight", "Assimilation, and not Destruction", "Harmony and Peace,
10 and not Dissension". Whatever difference of opinion followers of
11 other creeds may have with him, few will venture to deny that the
12 Swami has done yeoman's service to his country in opening the
13 eyes of the Western world to "the good in the Hindu". He will
14 always be remembered as the first Hindu Sannyasin who dared to
15 cross the sea to carry to the West the message of what he believes
16 in as a religious peace.

17 A representative of our paper interviewed the Swami
18 Vivekananda, with a view to eliciting from him an account of the
19 success of his mission in the West. The Swami very courteously
20 received our representative and motioned him to a chair by his side.
21 The Swami was dressed in yellow robes, was calm, serene, and
22 dignified, and appeared inclined to answer any questions that might
23 be put to him. We have given the Swami's words as taken down in
24 shorthand by our representative.

25 "May I know a few particulars about your early life?" asked
26 our representative.

27 The Swami said: "Even while I was a student at Calcutta, I
28 was of a religious temperament. I was critical even at that time of
29 my life, mere words would not satisfy me. Subsequently I met
30 Ramakrishna Paramahansa, with whom I lived for a long time and
31 under whom I studied. After the death of my father I gave myself up
32 to travelling in India and started a little monastery in Calcutta.
33 During my travels, I came to Madras, where I received help from
34 the Maharaja of Mysore and the Raja of Ramnad."

35 "What made Your Holiness carry the mission of Hinduism to
36 Western countries?"

37 "I wanted to get experience. My idea as to the keynote of our
38 national downfall is that we do not mix with other nations--that is
39 the one and the sole cause. We never had opportunity to compare
40 notes. We were Kupa-Mandukas (frogs in a well)."

41 "You have done a good deal of travelling in the West?"

42 "I have visited a good deal of Europe, including Germany and
43 France, but England and America were the chief centres of my
44 work. At first I found myself in a critical position, owing to the
45 hostile attitude assumed against the people of this country by those
46 who went there from India. I believe the Indian nation is by far the
47 most moral and religious nation in the whole world, and it would be
48 a blasphemy to compare the Hindus with any other nation. At first,
49 many fell foul of me, manufactured huge lies against me by saying
50 that I was a fraud, that I had a harem of wives and half a regiment

1 of children. But my experience of these missionaries opened my
2 eyes as to what they are capable of doing in the name of religion.
3 Missionaries were nowhere in England. None came to fight me. Mr.
4 Lund went over to America to abuse me behind my back, but people
5 would not listen to him. I was very popular with them. When I came
6 back to England, I thought this missionary would be at me, but the
7 *Truth* silenced him. In England the social status is stricter than
8 caste is in India. The English Church people are all gentlemen born,
9 which many of the missionaries are not. They greatly sympathised
10 with me. I think that about thirty English Church clergymen agree
11 entirely with me on all points of religious discussion. I was
12 agreeably surprised to find that the English clergymen, though they
13 differed from me, did not abuse me behind my back and stab me in
14 the dark. There is the benefit of caste and hereditary culture."

15 "What has been the measure of your success in the West?"

16 "A great number of people sympathised with me in America--
17 much more than in England. Vituperation by the low-caste
18 missionaries made my cause succeed better. I had no money, the
19 people of India having given me my bare passage-money, which was
20 spent in a very short time. I had to live just as here on the charity of
21 individuals. The Americans are very hospitable people. In America
22 one-third of the people are Christians, but the rest have no religion,
23 that is they do not belong to any of the sects, but amongst them are
24 to be found the most spiritual persons. I think the work in England
25 is sound. If I die tomorrow and cannot send any more Sannyasins,
26 still the English work will go on. The Englishman is a very good
27 man. He is taught from his childhood to suppress all his feelings.
28 He is thick-headed, and is not so quick as the Frenchman or the
29 American. He is immensely practical. The American people are too
30 young to understand renunciation.

31 England has enjoyed wealth and luxury for ages. Many
32 people there are ready for renunciation. When I first lectured in
33 England I had a little class of twenty or thirty, which was kept going
34 when I left, and when I went back from America I could get an
35 audience of one thousand. In America I could get a much bigger
36 one, as I spent three years in America and only one year in
37 England. I have two Sannyasins--one in England and one in
38 America, and I intend sending Sannyasins to other countries.

39 "English people are tremendous workers. Give them an idea,
40 and you may be sure that that idea is not going to be lost, provided
41 they catch it. People here have given up the Vedas, and all your
42 philosophy is in the kitchen. The religion of India at present is
43 'Don't-touchism'--that is a religion which the English people will
44 never accept. The thoughts of our forefathers and the wonderful
45 life-giving principles that they discovered, every nation will take.
46 The biggest guns of the English Church told me that I was putting
47 Vedantism into the Bible. The present Hinduism is a degradation.
48 There is no book on philosophy, written today, in which something
49 of our Vedantism is not touched upon--even the works of Herbert
50 Spencer contain it. The philosophy of the age is Advaitism,
51 everybody talks of it; only in Europe, they try to be original. They
52 talk of Hindus with contempt, but at the same time swallow the

1 truths given out by the Hindus. Professor Max Muller is a perfect
2 Vedantist, and has done splendid work in Vedantism. He believes in
3 re-incarnation."

4 "What do you intend doing for the regeneration of India?"

5 "I consider that the great national sin is the neglect of the
6 masses, and that is one of the causes of our downfall. No amount of
7 politics would be of any avail until the masses in India are once
8 more well educated, well fed, and well cared for. They pay for our
9 education, they build our temples, but in return they get kicks. They
10 are practically our slaves. If we want to regenerate India, we must
11 work for them. I want to start two central institutions at first--one at
12 Madras and the other at Calcutta--for training young men as
13 preachers. I have funds for starting the Calcutta one. English
14 people will find funds for my purpose.

15 "My faith is in the younger generation, the modern
16 generation, out of them will come my workers. They will work out
17 the whole problem, like lions. I have formulated the idea and have
18 given my life to it. If I do not achieve success, some better one will
19 come after me to work it out, and I shall be content to struggle. The
20 one problem you have is to give to the masses their rights. You have
21 the greatest religion which the world ever saw, and you feed the
22 masses with stuff and nonsense. You have the perennial fountain
23 flowing, and you give them ditch-water. Your Madras graduate
24 would not touch a low-caste man, but is ready to get out of him the
25 money for his education. I want to start at first these two
26 institutions for educating missionaries to be both spiritual and
27 secular instructors to our masses. They will spread from centre to
28 centre, until we have covered the whole of India. The great thing is
29 to have faith in oneself, even before faith in God; but the difficulty
30 seems to be that we are losing faith in ourselves day by day. That is
31 my objection against the reformers. The orthodox have more faith
32 and more strength in themselves, in spite of their crudeness; but
33 the reformers simply play into the hands of Europeans and pander
34 to their vanity. Our masses are gods as compared with those of
35 other countries. This is the only country where poverty is not a
36 crime. They are mentally and physically handsome; but we hated
37 and hated them till they have lost faith in themselves. They think
38 they are born slaves. Give them their rights, and let them stand on
39 their rights. This is the glory of the American civilisation. Compare
40 the Irishman with knees bent, half-starved, with a little stick and
41 bundle of clothes, just arrived from the ship, with what he is, after a
42 few months' stay in America. He walks boldly and bravely. He has
43 come from a country where he was a slave to a country where he is
44 a brother.

45 "Believe that the soul is immortal, infinite and all-powerful.
46 My idea of education is personal contact with the teacher--
47 Gurugriha-Vasa. Without the personal life of a teacher there would
48 be no education. Take your Universities. What have they done
49 during the fifty years of their existence? They have not produced
50 one original man. They are merely an examining body. The idea of
51 the sacrifice for the common weal is not yet developed in our
52 nation."

1 "What do you think of Mrs. Besant and Theosophy?"

2 "Mrs. Besant is a very good woman. I lectured at her Lodge
3 in London. I do not know personally much about her. Her
4 knowledge of our religion is very limited; she picks up scraps here
5 and there; she never had time to study it thoroughly. That she is one
6 of the most sincere of women, her greatest enemy will concede. She
7 is considered the best speaker in England. She is a Sannyasini. But
8 I do not believe in Mahatmas and Kuthumis. Let her give up her
9 connection with the Theosophical Society, stand on her own footing,
10 and preach what she thinks right."

11 Speaking of social reforms, the Swami expressed himself
12 about widow-marriage thus: "I have yet to see a nation whose fate
13 is determined by the number of husbands their widows get."

14 Knowing as he did that several persons were waiting
15 downstairs to have an interview with the Swami, our representative
16 withdrew, thanking the Swami for the kindness with which he had
17 consented to the journalistic torture.

18 The Swami, it may be remarked, is accompanied by Mr. and
19 Mrs. J. H. Sevier, Mr. T. G. Harrison, a Buddhist gentleman of
20 Colombo, and Mr. J. J. Goodwin. It appears that Mr. and Mrs. Sevier
21 accompany the Swami with a view to settling in the Himalayas,
22 where they intend building a residence for the Western disciples of
23 the Swami, who may have an inclination to reside in India. For
24 twenty years, Mr. and Mrs. Sevier had followed no particular
25 religion, finding satisfaction in none of those that were preached;
26 but on listening to a course of lectures by the Swami, they
27 professed to have found a religion that satisfied their heart and
28 intellect. Since then they have accompanied the Swami through
29 Switzerland, Germany, and Italy, and now to India. Mr. Goodwin, a
30 journalist in England, became a disciple of the Swami fourteen
31 months ago, when he first met him at New York. He gave up his
32 journalism and devotes himself to attending the Swami and taking
33 down his lectures in shorthand. He is in every sense a true
34 "disciple", saying that he hopes to be with the Swami till his death.

35

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37

38 REAWAKENING OF HINDUISM ON A 39 NATIONAL BASIS

40 (*Prabuddha Bharata*, September, 1898)

41 In an interview which a representative of *Prabuddha Bharata*
42 had recently with the Swami Vivekananda, that great Teacher was
43 asked: "What do you consider the distinguishing feature of your
44 movement, Swamiji?"

1 "Aggression," said the Swami promptly, "aggression in a
2 religious sense only. Other sects and parties have carried
3 spirituality all over India, but since the days of Buddha we have
4 been the first to break bounds and try to flood the world with
5 missionary zeal."

6 And what do you consider to be the function of your
7 movement as regards India?"

8 "To find the common bases of Hinduism and awaken the
9 national consciousness to them. At present there are three parties
10 in India included under the term 'Hindu'--the orthodox, the
11 reforming sects of the Mohammedan period, and the reforming
12 sects of the present time. Hindus from North to South are only
13 agreed on one point, viz. on not eating beef."

14 "Not a common love for the Vedas?"

15 "Certainly not. That is just what we want to re-awaken. India
16 has not yet assimilated the work of Buddha. She is hypnotised by
17 his voice, not made alive by it."

18 "In what way do you see this importance of Buddhism in India
19 today?"

20 "It is obvious and overwhelming. You see India never loses
21 anything; only she takes time to turn everything into bone and
22 muscle. Buddha dealt a blow at animal sacrifice from which India
23 has never recovered; and Buddha said, 'Kill no cows', and cow-
24 killing is an impossibility with us."

25 "With which of the three parties you name do you identify
26 yourself, Swamiji?"

27 "With all of them. We are orthodox Hindus," said the Swami,
28 "but", he added suddenly with great earnestness and emphasis, "we
29 refuse entirely to identify ourselves with 'Don't-touchism'. That is
30 not Hinduism: it is in none of our books; it is an unorthodox
31 superstition which has interfered with national efficiency all along
32 the line."

33 "Then what you really desire is national efficiency?"

34 "Certainly. Can you adduce any reason why India should lie in
35 the ebb-tide of the Aryan nations? Is she inferior in intellect? Is she
36 inferior in dexterity? Can you look at her art, at her mathematics, at
37 her philosophy, and answer 'yes'? All that is needed is that she
38 should de-hypnotise herself and wake up from her age-long sleep to
39 take her true rank in the hierarchy of nations."

40 "But India has always had her deep inner life. Are you not
41 afraid, Swamiji, that in attempting to make her active you may take
42 from her, her one great treasure?"

1 "Not at all. The history of the past has gone to develop the
2 inner life of India and the activity (i.e. the outer life) of the West.
3 Hitherto these have been divergent. The time has now come for
4 them to unite. Ramakrishna Paramahansa was alive to the depths
5 of being, yet on the outer plane who was more active? This is the
6 secret. Let your life be as deep as the ocean, but let it also be as
7 wide as the sky.

8 "It is a curious thing", continued the Swami, "that the inner
9 life is often most profoundly developed where the outer conditions
10 are most cramping and limiting. But this is an accidental--not an
11 essential--association, and if we set ourselves right here in India,
12 the world will be 'rightened'. For are we not all one?"

13 "Your last remarks, Swamiji, raise another question. In what
14 sense is Shri Ramakrishna a part of this awakened Hinduism?"

15 "That is not for me to determine", said the Swami. "I have
16 never preached personalities. My own life is guided by the
17 enthusiasm of this great soul; but others will decide for themselves
18 how far they share in this attitude. Inspiration is not filtered out to
19 the world through one channel, however great. Each generation
20 should be inspired afresh. Are we not all God?"

21 "Thank you. I have only one question more to ask you. You
22 have defined the attitude and function of your movement with
23 regard to your own people. Could you in the same way characterise
24 your methods of action as a whole?"

25 "Our method", said the Swami, "is very easily described. It
26 simply consists in reasserting the national life. Buddha preached
27 *renunciation*. India heard, and yet in six centuries she reached her
28 greatest height. The secret lies there. The national ideals of India
29 are RENUNCIATION and SERVICE. Intensify her in those channels,
30 and the rest will take care of itself. The banner of the spiritual
31 cannot be raised too high in this country. In it alone is salvation.

32
33
34 *ON INDIAN WOMEN--THEIR PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE*

35 *(Prabuddha Bharata, December, 1898)*

36 It was early one Sunday morning, writes our representative,
37 in a beautiful Himalayan valley, that I was at last able to carry out
38 the order of the Editor, and call on the Swami Vivekananda, to
39 ascertain something of his views on the position and prospects of
40 Indian women.

41 "Let us go for a walk", said the Swami, when I had announced
42 my errand, and we set out at once amongst some of the most lovely
43 scenery in the world.

44 By sunny and shady ways we went, through quiet villages,
45 amongst playing children and across the golden cornfields. Here
46 the tall trees seemed to pierce the blue above, and there a group of
47 peasant girls stooped, sickle in hand, to cut and carry off the plume-
48 tipped stalks of maize-straw for the winter stores. Now the road led

1 into an apple orchard, where great heaps of crimson fruit lay under
2 the trees for sorting, and again we were out in the open, facing the
3 snows that rose in august beauty above the white clouds against
4 the sky.

5 At last my companion broke the silence. "The Aryan and
6 Semitic ideal of woman", he said, "have always been diametrically
7 opposed. Amongst the Semites the presence of woman is
8 considered dangerous to devotion, and she may not perform any
9 religious function, even such as the killing of a bird for food:
10 according to the Aryan a man cannot perform a religious action
11 without a wife."

12 "But Swamiji!" said I--startled at an assertion so sweeping
13 and so unexpected--"is Hinduism not an Aryan faith?"

14 "Modern Hinduism", said the Swami quietly, "is largely
15 Pauranika, that is, post-Buddhistic in origin. Dayananda Saraswati
16 pointed out that though a wife is absolutely necessary in the
17 Sacrifice of the domestic fire, which is a Vedic rite, she may not
18 touch the Shalagrama Shila, or the household idol, because that
19 dates from the later period of the Puranas."

20 "And so you consider the inequality of woman amongst us as
21 entirely due to the influence of Buddhism?"

22 "Where it exists, certainly," said the Swami, "but we should
23 not allow the sudden influx of European criticism and our
24 consequent sense of contrast to make us acquiesce too readily in
25 this notion of the inequality of our women. Circumstances have
26 forced upon us, for many centuries, the woman's need of
27 protection. This, and not her inferiority, is the true reading of our
28 customs."

29 "Are you then entirely satisfied with the position of women
30 amongst us, Swamiji?"

31 "By no means," said the Swami, but our right of interference
32 is limited entirely to giving education. Women must be put in a
33 position to solve their own problems in their own way. No one can
34 or ought to do this for them. And our Indian women are as capable
35 of doing it as any in the world."

36 "How do you account for the evil influence which you
37 attribute to Buddhism?"

38 "It came only with the decay of the faith", said the Swami.
39 "Every movement triumphs by dint of some unusual characteristic,
40 and when it falls, that point of pride becomes its chief element of
41 weakness. The Lord Buddha--greatest of men--was a marvellous
42 organiser and carried the world by this means. But his religion was
43 the religion of a monastic order. It had, therefore, the evil effect of
44 making the very robe of the monk honoured. He also introduced for
45 the first time the community life of religious houses and thereby
46 necessarily made women inferior to men, since the great abbesses
47 could take no important step without the advice of certain abbots. It
48 ensured its immediate object, the solidarity of the faith, you see,
49 only its far-reaching effects are to be deplored."

1 "But Sannyasa is recognised in the Vedas!"

2 "Of course it is, but without making any distinction between
3 men and women. Do you remember how Yajnavalkya was
4 questioned at the Court of King Janaka? His principal examiner was
5 Vachaknavi, the maiden orator--Brahmavadini, as the word of the
6 day was. 'Like two shining arrows in the hand of the skilled archer',
7 she says, 'are my questions.' Her sex is not even commented upon.
8 Again, could anything be more complete than the equality of boys
9 and girls in our old forest universities? Read our Sanskrit dramas--
10 read the story of Shakuntala, and see if Tennyson's 'Princess' has
11 anything to teach us!"

12 "You have a wonderful way of revealing the glories of our
13 past, Swamiji!"

14 "Perhaps, because I have seen both sides of the world," said
15 the Swami gently, "and I know that the race that produced Sita--
16 even if it only dreamt of her--has a reverence for woman that is
17 unmatched on the earth. There is many a burden bound with legal
18 tightness on the shoulders of Western women that is utterly
19 unknown to ours. We have our wrongs and our exceptions certainly,
20 but so have they. We must never forget that all over the globe the
21 general effort is to express love and tenderness and uprightness,
22 and that national customs are only the nearest vehicles of this
23 expression. With regard to the domestic virtues I have no hesitation
24 in saying that our Indian methods have in many ways the advantage
25 over all others."

26 "Then have our women any problems at all, Swamiji?"

27 "Of course, they have many and grave problems, but none
28 that are not to be solved by that magic word 'education'. The true
29 education, however, is not yet conceived of amongst us."

30 "And how would you define that?"

31 "I never define anything", said the Swami, smiling. "Still, it
32 may be described as a development of faculty, not an accumulation
33 of words, or as a training of individuals to will rightly and efficiently.
34 So shall we bring to the need of India great fearless women--women
35 worthy to continue the traditions of Sanghamitta, Lila, Ahalya Bai,
36 and Mira Bai--women fit to be mothers of heroes, because they are
37 pure and selfless, strong with the strength that comes of touching
38 the feet of God."

39 "So you consider that there should be a religious element in
40 education, Swamiji?"

41 "I look upon religion as the innermost core of education", said
42 the Swami solemnly. "Mind, I do not mean my own, or any one
43 else's opinion about religion. I think the teacher should take the
44 pupil's starting-point in this, as in other respects, and enable her to
45 develop along her own line of least resistance."

46 "But surely the religious exaltation of Brahmacharya, by
47 taking the highest place from the mother and wife and giving it to
48 those who evade those relations, is a direct blow dealt at woman?"

49 "You should remember," said the Swami, "that if religion

1 exalts Brahmacharya for woman, it does exactly the same for man.
2 Moreover, your question shows a certain confusion in your own
3 mind. Hinduism indicates one duty, only one, for the human soul. It
4 is to seek to realise the permanent amidst the evanescent. No one
5 presumes to point out any one way in which this may be done.
6 Marriage or non-marriage, good or evil, learning or ignorance, any
7 of these is justified, if it leads to the goal. In this respect lies the
8 great contrast between it and Buddhism, for the latter's
9 outstanding direction is to realise the impermanence of the
10 external, which, broadly speaking, can only be done in one way. Do
11 you recall the story of the young Yogi in the Mahabharata who
12 prided himself on his psychic powers by burning the bodies of a
13 crow and crane by his intense will, produced by anger? Do you
14 remember that the young saint went into the town and found first a
15 wife nursing her sick husband and then the butcher Dharma-
16 Vyadha, both of whom had obtained enlightenment in the path of
17 common faithfulness and duty?"

18 "And so what would you say, Swamiji, to the women of this
19 country?"

20 "Why, to the women of this country," said the Swami, "I would
21 say exactly what I say to the men. Believe in India and in our Indian
22 faith. Be strong and hopeful and unashamed, and remember that
23 with something to take, Hindus have immeasurably more to give
24 than any other people in the world."

25 26 27 **ON THE BOUNDS OF HINDUISM**

28 *(Prabuddha Bharata, April, 1899)*

29 Having been directed by the Editor, writes our
30 representative, to interview Swami Vivekananda on the question of
31 converts to Hinduism, I found an opportunity one evening on the
32 roof of a Ganga houseboat. It was after nightfall, and we had
33 stopped at the embankment of the Ramakrishna Math, and there
34 the Swami came down to speak with me.

35 Time and place were alike delightful. Overhead the stars, and
36 around--the rolling Ganga; and on one side stood the dimly lighted
37 building, with its background of palms and lofty shade-trees.

38 "I want to see you, Swami", I began, "on this matter of
39 receiving back into Hinduism those who have been perverted from
40 it. Is it your opinion that they should be received?"

41 "Certainly," said the Swami, "they can and ought to be taken."

42 He sat gravely for a moment, thinking, and then resumed.
43 "Besides," he said, "we shall otherwise decrease in numbers. When
44 the Mohammedans first came, we are said--I think on the authority
45 of Ferishta, the oldest Mohammedan historian--to have been six
46 hundred millions of Hindus. Now we are about two hundred
47 millions. And then every man going out of the Hindu pale is not only
48 a man less, but an enemy the more.

1 "Again, the vast majority of Hindu perverts to Islam and
2 Christianity are perverts by the sword, or the descendants of these.
3 It would be obviously unfair to subject these to disabilities of any
4 kind. As to the case of born aliens, did you say? Why, born aliens
5 have been converted in the past by crowds, and the process is still
6 going on.

7 "In my own opinion, this statement not only applies to
8 aboriginal tribes, to outlying nations, and to almost all our
9 conquerors before the Mohammedan conquest, but also to all those
10 castes who find a special origin in the Puranas. I hold that they
11 have been aliens thus adopted.

12 "Ceremonies of expiation are no doubt suitable in the case of
13 willing converts, returning to the Mother-Church, as it were; but on
14 those who were alienated by conquest--as in Kashmir and Nepal--or
15 on strangers wishing to join us, no penance should be imposed."

16 "But of what caste would these people be, Swamiji?" I
17 ventured to ask. "They must have some, or they can never be
18 assimilated into the great body of Hindus. Where shall we look for
19 their rightful place?"

20 "Returning converts", said the Swami quietly, "will gain their
21 own castes, of course. And new people will make theirs. You will
22 remember," he added, "that this has already been done in the case
23 of Vaishnavism. Converts from different castes and aliens were all
24 able to combine under that flag and form a caste by themselves--
25 and a very respectable one too. From Ramanuja down to Chaitanya
26 of Bengal, all great Vaishnava Teachers have done the same."

27 "And where should these new people expect to marry?"

28 "Amongst themselves, as they do now", said the Swami
29 quietly."

30 "Then as to names," I enquired, "I suppose aliens and
31 perverts who have adopted non-Hindu names should be named
32 newly. Would you give them caste-names, or what?"

33 "Certainly," said the Swami, thoughtfully, "there is a great
34 deal in a name!" and on this question he would say no more.

35 But my next enquiry drew blood. "Would you leave these new-
36 comers, Swamiji, to choose their own form of religious belief out of
37 many-visaged Hinduism, or would you chalk out a religion for
38 them?"

39 "Can you ask that?" he said. "They will choose for themselves.
40 For unless a man chooses for himself, the very spirit of Hinduism is
41 destroyed. The essence of our Faith consists simply in this freedom
42 of the Ishta."

43 I thought the utterance a weighty one, for the man before me
44 has spent more years than any one else living, I fancy, in studying
45 the common bases of Hinduism in a scientific and sympathetic
46 spirit--and the freedom of the Ishta is obviously a principle big
47 enough to accommodate the world.

48 But the talk passed to other matters, and then with a cordial

1 good night this great teacher of religion lifted his lantern and went
2 back into the monastery, while I, by the pathless paths of the
3 Ganga, in and out amongst her crafts of many sizes, made the best
4 of my way back to my Calcutta home.

NOTES FROM LECTURES AND DISCOURSES

ON KARMA-YOGA

Isolation of the soul from all objects, mental and physical, is the goal; when that is attained, the soul will find that it was alone all the time, and it required no one to make it happy. As long as we require someone else to make us happy, we are slaves. When the Purusha finds that It is free, and does not require anything to complete Itself, that this nature is quite unnecessary, then freedom (Kaivalya) is attained.

Men run after a few dollars and do not think anything of cheating a fellow-being to get those dollars; but if they would restrain themselves, in a few years they would develop such characters as would bring them millions of dollars--if they wanted them. Then their will would govern the universe. But we are all such fools!

What is the use of talking of one's mistakes to the world? They cannot thereby be undone. For what one has done one must suffer; one must try and do better. The world sympathises only with the strong and the powerful.

It is only work that is done as a free-will offering to humanity and to nature that does not bring with it any binding attachment.

Duty of any kind is not to be slighted. A man who does the lower work is not, for that reason only, a lower man than he who does the higher work; a man should not be judged by the nature of his duties, but by the manner in which he does them. His manner of doing them and his power to do them are indeed the test of a man. A shoemaker who can turn out a strong, nice pair of shoes in the shortest possible time is a better man, according to his profession and his work, than a professor who talks nonsense every day of his life.

Every duty is holy, and devotion to duty is the highest form of the worship of God; it is certainly a source of great help in enlightening and emancipating the deluded and ignorance-encumbered souls of the Baddhas--the bound ones.

By doing well the duty which is nearest to us, the duty which is in our hands now, we make ourselves stronger; and improving our strength in this manner step by step, we may even reach a state in which it shall be our privilege to do the most coveted and honoured duties in life and in society.

Nature's justice is uniformly stern and unrelenting.

The most practical man would call life neither good nor evil.

Every successful man must have behind him somewhere tremendous integrity, tremendous sincerity, and that is the cause of his signal success in life. He may not have been perfectly unselfish;

1 yet he was tending towards it. If he had been perfectly unselfish,
2 his would have been as great a success as that of the Buddha or of
3 the Christ. The degree of unselfishness marks the degree of success
4 everywhere.

5 The great leaders of mankind belong to higher fields than the
6 field of platform work.

7 However we may try, there cannot be any action which is
8 perfectly pure or any which is perfectly impure, taking purity or
9 impurity in the sense of injury or non-injury. We cannot breathe or
10 live without injuring others, and every morsel of food we eat is
11 taken from another's mouth; our very lives are crowding out some
12 other lives. It may be those of men, or animals, or small fungi, but
13 someone somewhere we have to crowd out. That being the case, it
14 naturally follows that perfection can never be attained by work. We
15 may work through all eternity, but there will be no way out of this
16 intricate maze: we may work on and on and on, but there will be no
17 end.

18 The man who works through freedom and love cares nothing
19 for results. But the slave wants his whipping; the servant wants his
20 pay. So with all life; take for instance the public life. The public
21 speaker wants a little applause or a little hissing and hooting. If you
22 keep him in a corner without it, you kill him, for he requires it. This
23 is working through slavery. To expect something in return, under
24 such conditions, becomes second nature. Next comes the work of
25 the servant, who requires some pay; I give this, and you give me
26 that. Nothing is easier to say, "I work for work's sake", but nothing
27 is so difficult to attain. I would go twenty miles on my hands and
28 knees to look on the face of the man who can work for work's sake.
29 There is a motive somewhere. If it is not money, it is power. If it is
30 not power, it is gain. Somehow, somewhere, there is a motive
31 power. You are my friend, and I want to work for you and with you.
32 This is all very well, and every moment I may make protestation of
33 my sincerity. But take care, you must be sure to agree with me! If
34 you do not, I shall no longer take care of you or live for you! This
35 kind of work for a motive brings misery. That work alone brings
36 unattachment and bliss, wherein we work as masters of our own
37 minds.

38 The great lesson to learn is that I am not the standard by
39 which the whole universe is to be judged; each man is to be judged
40 by his own idea, each race by its own standard and ideal, each
41 custom of each country by its own reasoning and conditions.
42 American customs are the result of the environment in which the
43 Americans live, and Indian customs are the result of the
44 environment in which the Indians are; and so of China, Japan,
45 England, and every other country.

46 We all find ourselves in the position for which we are fit, each
47 ball finds its own hole; and if one has some capacity above another,
48 the world will find that out too, in this universal adjusting that goes
49 on. So it is no use to grumble. There may be a rich man who is
50 wicked, yet there must be in that man certain qualities that made
51 him rich; and if any other man has the same qualities, he will also

1 become rich. What is the use of fighting and complaining? That will
2 not help us to better things. He who grumbles at the little thing that
3 has fallen to his lot to do will grumble at everything. Always
4 grumbling, he will lead a miserable life, and everything will be a
5 failure. But that man who does his duty as he goes, putting his
6 shoulder to the wheel, will see the light, and higher and higher
7 duties will fall to his share.

11 **ON FANATICISM**

13 There are fanatics of various kinds. Some people are wine
14 fanatics and cigar fanatics. Some think that if men gave up smoking
15 cigars, the world would arrive at the millennium. Women are
16 generally amongst these fanatics. There was a young lady here one
17 day, in this class. She was one of a number of ladies in Chicago who
18 have built a house where they take in the working people and give
19 them music and gymnastics. One day this young lady was talking
20 about the evils of the world and said she knew the remedy. I asked,
21 "How do you know?" and she answered, "Have you seen Hull
22 House?" In her opinion, this Hull House is the one panacea for all
23 the evils that flesh is heir to. This will grow upon her. I am sorry for
24 her. There are some fanatics in India who think that if a woman
25 could marry again when her husband died, it would cure all evil.
26 This is fanaticism.

27 When I was a boy I thought that fanaticism was a great
28 element in work, but now, as I grow older, I find out that it is not.

29 There may be a woman who would steal and make no
30 objection to taking someone else's bag and going away with it. But
31 perhaps that woman does not smoke. She becomes a smoke fanatic,
32 and as soon as she finds a man smoking, she strongly disapproves
33 of him, because he smokes a cigar. There may be a man who goes
34 about cheating people; there is no trusting him; no woman is safe
35 with him. But perhaps this scoundrel does not drink wine. If so, he
36 sees nothing good in anyone who drinks wine. All these wicked
37 things that he himself does are of no consideration. This is only
38 natural human selfishness and one-sidedness.

39 You must also remember that the world has God to govern it,
40 and He has not left it to our charity. The Lord God is its Governor
41 and Maintainer, and in spite of these wine fanatics and cigar
42 fanatics, and all sorts of marriage fanatics, it would go on. If all
43 these persons were to die, it would go on none the worse.

44 Do you not remember in your own history how the
45 "Mayflower" people came out here, and began to call themselves
46 Puritans? They were very pure and good as far as they went, until
47 they began to persecute other people; and throughout the history of
48 mankind it has been the same. Even those that run away from
49 persecution indulge in persecuting others as soon as a favourable

1 opportunity to do so occurs.

2 In ninety cases out of a hundred, fanatics must have bad
3 livers, or they are dyspeptics, or are in some way diseased. By
4 degrees even physicians will find out that fanaticism is a kind of
5 disease. I have seen plenty of it. The Lord save me from it!

6 My experience comes to this, that it is rather wise to avoid all
7 sorts of fanatical reforms. This world is slowly going on; let it go
8 slowly. Why are you in a hurry?

9 Sleep well and keep your nerves in good order; eat right food,
10 and have sympathy with the world. Fanatics only make hatred. Do
11 you mean to say that the temperance fanatic loves these poor
12 people who become drunkards? A fanatic is a fanatic simply
13 because he expects to get something for himself in return. As soon
14 as the battle is over, he goes for the spoil. When you come out of
15 the company of fanatics you may learn how really to love and
16 sympathise. And the more you attain of love and sympathy, the less
17 will be your power to condemn these poor creatures; rather you will
18 sympathise with their faults. It will become possible for you to
19 sympathise with the drunkard and to know that he is also a man
20 like yourself. You will then try to understand the many
21 circumstances that are dragging him down, and feel that if you had
22 been in his place you would perhaps have committed suicide. I
23 remember a woman whose husband was a great drunkard, and she
24 complained to me of his becoming so. I replied, "Madam, if there
25 were twenty millions of wives like yourself, all husbands would
26 become drunkards." I am convinced that a large number of
27 drunkards are manufactured by their wives. My business is to tell
28 the truth and not to flatter anyone. These unruly women from
29 whose minds the words *bear* and *forbear* are gone for ever, and
30 whose false ideas of independence lead them to think that men
31 should be at their feet, and who begin to howl as soon as men dare
32 to say anything to them which they do not like--such women are
33 becoming the bane of the world, and it is a wonder that they do not
34 drive half the men in it to commit suicide. In this way things should
35 not go on. Life is not so easy as they believe it to be; it is a more
36 serious business!

37 A man must not only have faith but intellectual faith too. To
38 make a man take up everything and believe it, would be to make
39 him a lunatic. I once had a book sent me, which said I must believe
40 everything told in it. It said there was no soul, but that there were
41 gods and goddesses in heaven, and a thread of light going from
42 each of our heads to heaven! How did the writer know all these
43 things? She had been inspired, and wanted me to believe it too; and
44 because I refused, she said, "You must be a very bad man; there is
45 no hope for you!" This is fanaticism.

46

47

48

WORK IS WORSHIP

The highest man *cannot* work, for there is no binding element, no attachment, no ignorance in him. A ship is said to have passed over a mountain of magnet ore, and all the bolts and bars were drawn out, and it went to pieces. It is in ignorance that struggle remains, because we are all really atheists. Real theists cannot work. We are atheists more or less. We do not see God or believe in Him. He is G-O-D to us, and nothing more. There are moments when we think He is near, but then we fall down again. When you see Him, who struggles for whom? Help the Lord! There is a proverb in our language, "Shall we teach the Architect of the universe how to build?" So those are the highest of mankind who do not work. The next time you see these silly phrases about the world and how we must all help God and do this or that for Him, remember this. Do not think such thoughts; they are too selfish. All the work you do is subjective, is done for your own benefit. God has not fallen into a ditch for you and me to help Him out by building a hospital or something of that sort. He *allows* you to work. He allows you to exercise your muscles in this great gymnasium, not in order to help Him but that you may help yourself. Do you think even an ant will die for want of your help? Most arrant blasphemy! The world does not need you at all. The world goes on, you are like a drop in the ocean. A leaf does not move, the wind does not blow without Him. Blessed are we that we are given the privilege of working for Him, not of helping Him. Cut out this word "help" from your mind. You cannot help; it is blaspheming. You are here yourself at His pleasure. Do you mean to say, you help Him? You worship. When you give a morsel of food to the dog, you worship the dog as God. God is in that dog. He is the dog. He is all and in all. We are allowed to worship Him. Stand in that reverent attitude to the whole universe, and then will come perfect non-attachment. This should be your duty. This is the proper attitude of work. This is the secret taught by Karma-Yoga.

WORK WITHOUT MOTIVE

At the forty-second meeting of the Ramakrishna Mission held at the premises No. 57 Ramkanta Bose Street, Baghbazar, Calcutta, on the 20th March, 1898, Swami Vivekananda gave an address on "Work without Motive", and spoke to the following effect:

When the Gita was first preached, there was then going on a great controversy between two sects. One party considered the Vedic Yajnas and animal sacrifices and such like Karmas to constitute the whole of religion. The other preached that the killing of numberless horses and cattle cannot be called religion. The people belonging to the latter party were mostly Sannyasins and

1 followers of Jnana. They believed that the giving up of all work and
2 the gaining of the knowledge of the Self was the only path to
3 Moksha. By the preaching of His great doctrine of work without
4 motive, the Author of the Gita set at rest the disputes of these two
5 antagonistic sects.

6 Many are of opinion that the Gita was not written at the time
7 of the Mahabharata, but was subsequently added to it. This is not
8 correct. The special teachings of the Gita are to be found in every
9 part of the Mahabharata, and if the Gita is to be expunged, as
10 forming no part of it, every other portion of it which embodies the
11 same teachings should be similarly treated.

12 Now, what is the meaning of working without motive?
13 Nowadays many understand it in the sense that one is to work in
14 such a way that neither pleasure nor pain touches his mind. If this
15 be its real meaning, then the animals might be said to work without
16 motive. Some animals devour their own offspring, and they do not
17 feel any pangs at all in doing so. Robbers ruin other people by
18 robbing them of their possessions; but if they feel quite callous to
19 pleasure or pain, then they also would be working without motive.
20 If the meaning of it be such, then one who has a stony heart, the
21 worst of criminals, might be considered to be working without
22 motive. The walls have no feelings of pleasure or pain, neither has a
23 stone, and it cannot be said that they are working without motive.
24 In the above sense the doctrine is a potent instrument in the hands
25 of the wicked. They would go on doing wicked deeds, and would
26 pronounce themselves as working without a motive. If such be the
27 significance of working without a motive, then a fearful doctrine
28 has been put forth by the preaching of the Gita. Certainly this is not
29 the meaning. Furthermore, if we look into the lives of those who
30 were connected with the preaching of the Gita, we should find them
31 living quite a different life. Arjuna killed Bhishma and Drona in
32 battle, but withal, he sacrificed all his self-interest and desires and
33 his lower self millions of times.

34 Gita teaches Karma-Yoga. We should work through Yoga
35 (concentration). In such concentration in action (Karma-Yoga), there
36 is no consciousness of the lower ego present. The consciousness
37 that I am doing this and that is never present when one works
38 through Yoga. The Western people do not understand this. They say
39 that if there be no consciousness of ego, if this ego is gone, how
40 then can a man work? But when one works with concentration,
41 losing all consciousness of oneself the work that is done will be
42 infinitely better, and this every one may have experienced in his
43 own life. We perform many works subconsciously, such as the
44 digestion of food etc., many others consciously, and others again by
45 becoming immersed in Samadhi as it were, when there is no
46 consciousness of the smaller ego. If the painter, losing the
47 consciousness of his ego, becomes completely immersed in his
48 painting, he will be able to produce masterpieces. The good cook
49 concentrates his whole self on the food-material he handles; he
50 loses all other consciousness for the time being. But they are only
51 able to do perfectly a single work in this way, to which they are
52 habituated. The Gita teaches that all works should be done thus. He

1 who is one with the Lord through Yoga performs all his works by
2 becoming immersed in concentration, and does not seek any
3 personal benefit. Such a performance of work brings only good to
4 the world, no evil can come out of it. Those who work thus never do
5 anything for themselves.

6 The result of every work is mixed with good and evil. There is
7 no good work that has not a touch of evil in it. Like smoke round the
8 fire, some evil always clings to work. We should engage in such
9 works as bring the largest amount of good and the smallest
10 measure of evil. Arjuna killed Bhishma and Drona; if this had not
11 been done Duryodhana could not have been conquered, the force of
12 evil would have triumphed over the force of good, and thus a great
13 calamity would have fallen on the country. The government of the
14 country would have been usurped by a body of proud unrighteous
15 kings, to the great misfortune of the people. Similarly, Shri Krishna
16 killed Kamsa, Jarasandha, and others who were tyrants, but not a
17 single one of his deeds was done for himself. Every one of them was
18 for the good of others. We are reading the Gita by candle-light, but
19 numbers of insects are being burnt to death. Thus it is seen that
20 some evil clings to work. Those who work without any
21 consciousness of their lower ego are not affected with evil, for they
22 work for the good of the world. To work without motive, to work
23 unattached, brings the highest bliss and freedom. This secret of
24 Karma-Yoga is taught by the Lord Shri Krishna in the Gita.

25 26 27 28 **SADHANAS OR PREPARATIONS FOR HIGHER** 29 **LIFE**

30
31 If atavism gains, you go down; if evolution gains, you go on.
32 Therefore, we must not allow atavism to take place. Here, in my
33 own body, is the first work of the study. We are too busy trying to
34 mend the ways of our neighbours, that is the difficulty. We must
35 begin with our own bodies. The heart, the liver, etc., are all
36 atavistic; bring them back into consciousness, control them, so that
37 they will obey your commands and act up to your wishes. There was
38 a time when we had control of the liver; we could shake the whole
39 skin, as can the cow. I have seen many people bring the control
40 back by sheer hard practice. Once an impress is made, it is there.
41 Bring back all the submerged activities--the vast ocean of action.
42 This is the first part of the great study, and it is absolutely
43 necessary for our social well-being. On the other hand, only the
44 consciousness need not be studied all the time.

45 Then there is the other part of the study, not so necessary in
46 our social life, which tends to liberation. Its direct action is to free
47 the soul, to take the torch into the gloom, to clean out what is
48 behind, to shake it up or even defy it, and to make us march onward
49 piercing the gloom. That is the goal--the superconscious. Then

1 when that state is reached, this very man becomes divine, becomes
2 free. And to the mind thus trained to transcend all, gradually this
3 universe will begin to give up its secrets; the book of nature will be
4 read chapter after chapter, till the goal is attained, and we pass
5 from this valley of life and death to that One, where death and life
6 do not exist, and we know the Real and become the Real.

7 The first thing necessary is a quiet and peaceable life. If I
8 have to go about the world the whole day to make a living, it is hard
9 for me to attain to anything very high in this life. Perhaps in another
10 life I shall be born under more propitious circumstances. But if I am
11 earnest enough, these very circumstances will change even in this
12 birth. Was there anything you did not get which you really wanted?
13 It could not be. For it is the want that creates the body. It is the
14 light that has bored the holes, as it were, in your head, called the
15 eyes. If the light had not existed, you would have had no eyes. It is
16 sound that had made the ears. The object of perception existed
17 first, before you make the organ. In a few hundred thousand years
18 or earlier, we may have other organs to perceive electricity and
19 other things. There is no desire for a peaceful mind. Desire will not
20 come unless there is something outside to fulfill it. The outside
21 something just bores a hole in the body, as it were, and tries to get
22 into the mind. So, when the desire will arise to have a peaceful,
23 quiet life, that *shall come* where everything shall be propitious for
24 the development of the mind--you may take that as my experience.
25 It may come after thousands of lives, but it must come. Hold on to
26 that, the desire. You cannot have the strong desire if its object was
27 not outside for you already. Of course, you must understand, there
28 is a difference between desire and desire. The master said, "My
29 child, if you desire after God, God shall come to you." The disciple
30 did not understand his master fully. One day both went to bathe in a
31 river, and the master said, "Plunge in", and the boy did so. In a
32 moment the master was upon him, holding him down. He would not
33 let the boy come up. When the boy struggled and was exhausted, he
34 let him go. "Yes, my child, how did you feel there?" "Oh, the desire
35 for a breath of air!" "Do you have that kind of desire for God?" "No,
36 sir." "Have that kind of desire for God, and you shall have God."

37 That, without which we cannot live, must come to us. If it did
38 not come to us, life could not go on.

39 If you want to be a Yogi, you must be free and place yourself
40 in circumstances where you are alone and free from all anxiety. He
41 who desires for a comfortable and nice life and at the same time
42 wants to realise the Self is like the fool who, wanting to cross the
43 river, caught hold of a crocodile mistaking it for a log of wood.
44 "Seek you first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all
45 these things shall be added unto you." Unto him comes everything
46 who does not care for anything. Fortune is like a flirt; she cares not
47 for him who wants her, but she is at the feet of him who does not
48 care for her. Money comes and showers itself upon one who does
49 not care for it; so does fame come in abundance until it is a trouble
50 and a burden. They always come to the Master. The slave never
51 gets anything. The Master is he who can live in spite of them,
52 whose life does not depend upon the little, foolish things of the

1 world. Live for an ideal, and that one ideal alone. Let it be so great,
2 so strong, that there may be nothing else left in the mind; no place
3 for anything else, no time for anything else.

4 How some people give all their energies, time, brain, body,
5 and everything, to become rich! They have no time for breakfast!
6 Early in the morning they are out and at work! They die in the
7 attempt--ninety per cent of them--and the rest when they make
8 money, cannot enjoy it. That is grand! I do not say it is bad to try to
9 be rich. It is marvellous, wonderful. Why, what does it show? It
10 shows that one can have the same amount of energy and struggle
11 for freedom as one has for money. We know we have to give up
12 money and all other things when we die, and yet, see the amount of
13 energy we can put forth for them. But we, the same human beings,
14 should we not put forth a thousandfold more strength and energy to
15 acquire that which never fades, but which remains to us for ever?
16 For this is the one great friend, our own good deeds, our own
17 spiritual excellence, that follows us beyond the grave. Everything
18 else is left behind here with the body.

19 That is the one great first step--the real desire for the ideal.
20 Everything comes easy after that. That the Indian mind found out;
21 there, in India, men go to any length to find truth. But here, in the
22 West, the difficulty is that everything is made so easy. It is not truth,
23 but development, that is the great aim. The struggle is the great
24 lesson. Mind you, the great benefit in this life is struggle. It is
25 through that we pass. If there is any road to Heaven, it is through
26 Hell. Through Hell to Heaven is always the way. When the soul has
27 wrestled with circumstance and has met death, a thousand times
28 death on the way, but nothing daunted has struggled forward again
29 and again and yet again--then the soul comes out as a giant and
30 laughs at the ideal he has been struggling for, because he finds how
31 much greater is he than the ideal. I am the end, my own Self, and
32 nothing else, for what is there to compare to my own Self? Can a
33 bag of gold be the ideal of my Soul? Certainly not! My Soul is the
34 highest ideal that I can have. Realising my own real nature is the
35 one goal of my life.

36 There is nothing that is absolutely evil. The devil has a place
37 here as well as God, else he would not be here. Just as I told you, it
38 is through Hell that we pass to Heaven. Our mistakes have places
39 here. Go on! Do not look back if you think you have done something
40 that is not right. Now, do you believe you could be what you are
41 today, had you not made those mistakes before? Bless your
42 mistakes, then. They have been angels unawares. Blessed be
43 torture! Blessed be happiness! Do not care what be your lot. Hold
44 on to the ideal. March on! Do not look back upon little mistakes and
45 things. In this battlefield of ours, the dust of mistakes must be
46 raised. Those who are so thin-skinned that they cannot bear the
47 dust, let them get out of the ranks.

48 So, then, this tremendous determination to struggle, a
49 hundredfold more determination than that which you put forth to
50 gain anything which belongs to this life, is the first great
51 preparation.

1 And then along with it, there must be meditation. Meditation
2 is the one thing. Meditate! The greatest thing is meditation. It is the
3 nearest approach to spiritual life--the mind meditating. It is the one
4 moment in our daily life that we are not at all material--the Soul
5 thinking of Itself, free from all matter--this marvellous touch of the
6 Soul!

7 The body is our enemy, and yet is our friend. Which of you
8 can bear the sight of misery? And which of you cannot do so when
9 you see it only as a painting? Because it is unreal, we do not
10 identify ourselves with it; we know it is only a painting; it cannot
11 bless us, it cannot hurt us. The most terrible misery painted upon a
12 piece of canvas, we may even enjoy; we praise the technique of the
13 artist, we wonder at his marvellous genius, even though the scene
14 he paints is most horrible. That is the secret; that non-attachment.
15 Be the Witness.

16 No breathing, no physical training of Yoga, nothing is of any
17 use until you reach to the idea, "I am the Witness." Say, when the
18 tyrant hand is on your neck, "I am the Witness! I am the Witness!"
19 Say, "I am the Spirit! Nothing external can touch me." When evil
20 thoughts arise, repeat that, give that sledge-hammer blow on their
21 heads, "I am the Spirit! I am the Witness, the Ever-Blessed! I have
22 no reason to do, no reason to suffer, I have finished with everything,
23 I am the Witness. I am in my picture gallery--this universe is my
24 museum, I am looking at these successive paintings. They are all
25 beautiful. Whether good or evil. I see the marvellous skill, but it is
26 all one. Infinite flames of the Great Painter!" Really speaking, there
27 is naught--neither volition, nor desire. He is all. He--She--the
28 Mother, is playing, and we are like dolls, Her helpers in this play.
29 Here, She puts one now in the garb of a beggar, another moment in
30 the garb of a king, the next moment in the garb of a saint, and
31 again in the garb of a devil. We are putting on different garbs to
32 help the Mother Spirit in Her play.

33 When the baby is at play, she will not come even if called by
34 her mother. But when she finishes her play, she will rush to her
35 mother, and will have no play. So there come moments in our life,
36 when we feel our play is finished, and we want to rush to the
37 Mother. Then all our toil here will be of no value; men, women, and
38 children--wealth, name, and fame, joys and glories of life--
39 punishments and successes--will be no more, and the whole life will
40 seem like a show. We shall see only the infinite rhythm going on,
41 endless and purposeless, going we do not know where. Only this
42 much shall we say; our play is done.

43 44 45 46 **THE COSMOS AND THE SELF**

47
48 Everything in nature rises from some fine seed-forms,
49 becomes grosser and grosser, exists for a certain time, and again

1 goes back to the original fine form. Our earth, for instance, has
2 come out of a nebulous form which, becoming colder and colder,
3 turned into this crystallised planet upon which we live, and in the
4 future it will again go to pieces and return to its rudimentary
5 nebulous form. This is happening in the universe, and has been
6 through time immemorial. This is the whole history of man, the
7 whole history of nature, the whole history of life.

8 Every evolution is preceded by an involution. The whole of
9 the tree is present in the seed, its cause. The whole of the human
10 being is present in that one protoplasm. The whole of this universe
11 is present in the cosmic fine universe. Everything is present in its
12 cause, in its fine form. This evolution, or gradual unfolding of
13 grosser and grosser forms, is true, but each case has been
14 preceded by an involution. The whole of this universe must have
15 been involute before it came out, and has unfolded itself in all these
16 various forms to be involved again once more. Take, for instance,
17 the life of a little plant. We find two things that make the plant a
18 unity by itself-its growth and development, its decay and death.
19 These make one unity the plant life. So, taking that plant life as only
20 one link in the chain of life, we may take the whole series as one
21 life, beginning in the protoplasm and ending in the most perfect
22 man. Man is one link, and the various beasts, the lower animals,
23 and plants are other links. Now go back to the source, the finest
24 particles from which they started, and take the whole series as but
25 one life, and you will find that every evolution here is the evolution
26 of something which existed previously.

27 Where it begins, there it ends. What is the end of this
28 universe? Intelligence, is it not? The last to come in the order of
29 creation, according to the evolutionists, was intelligence. That
30 being so, it must be the cause, the beginning of creation also. At the
31 beginning that intelligence remains involved, and in the end it gets
32 evolved. The sum total of the intelligence displayed in the universe
33 must therefore be the involved universal intelligence unfolding
34 itself, and this universal intelligence is what we call God, from
35 whom we come and to whom we return, as the scriptures say. Call it
36 by any other name, you cannot deny that in the beginning there is
37 that infinite cosmic intelligence.

38 What makes a compound? A compound is that in which the
39 causes have combined and become the effect. So these compound
40 things can be only within the circle of the law of causation; so far as
41 the rules of cause and effect go, so far can we have compounds and
42 combinations. Beyond that it is impossible to talk of combinations,
43 because no law holds good therein. Law holds good only in that
44 universe which we see, feel, hear, imagine, dream, and beyond that
45 we cannot place any idea of law. That is our universe which we
46 sense or imagine, and we sense what is within our direct
47 perception, and we imagine what is in our mind. What is beyond the
48 body is beyond the senses, and what is beyond the mind is beyond
49 the imagination, and therefore is beyond our universe, and
50 therefore beyond the law of causation. The Self of man being
51 beyond the law of causation is not a compound, is not the effect of
52 any cause, and therefore is ever free and is the ruler of everything

1 that is within law. Not being a compound, it will never die, because
2 death means going back to the component parts, destruction means
3 going back to the cause. Because it cannot die, it cannot live; for
4 both life and death are modes of manifestation of the same thing.
5 So the Soul is beyond life and death. You were never born, and you
6 will never die. Birth and death belong to the body only.

7 The doctrine of monism holds that this universe is all that
8 exists; gross or fine, it is all here; the effect and the cause are both
9 here; the explanation is here. What is known as the particular is
10 simply repetition in a minute form of the universal. We get our idea
11 of the universe from the study of our own Souls, and what is true
12 there also holds good in the outside universe. The ideas of heaven
13 and all these various places, even if they be true, are in the
14 universe. They altogether make this Unity. The first idea, therefore,
15 is that of a Whole, a Unit, composed of various minute particles,
16 and each one of us is a part, as it were, of this Unit. As manifested
17 beings we appear separate, but as a reality we are one. The more
18 we think ourselves separate from this Whole, the more miserable
19 we become. So, Advaita is the basis of ethics.

20 21 22 23 **WHO IS A REAL GURU?** 24

25 A real Guru is one who is born from time to time as a
26 repository of spiritual force which he transmits to future
27 generations through successive links of Guru and Shishya
28 (disciple). The current of this spirit-force changes its course from
29 time to time, just as a mighty stream of water opens up a new
30 channel and leaves the old one for good. Thus it is seen that old
31 sects of religion grow lifeless in the course of time, and new sects
32 arise with the fire of life in them. Men who are truly wise commit
33 themselves to the mercy of that particular sect through which the
34 current of life flows. Old forms of religion are like the skeletons of
35 once mighty animals, preserved in museums. They should be
36 regarded with due honour. They cannot satisfy the true cravings of
37 the soul for the Highest, just as a dead mango-tree cannot satisfy
38 the cravings of a man for luscious mangoes.

39 The one thing necessary is to be stripped of our vanities--the
40 sense that we possess any spiritual wisdom--and to surrender
41 ourselves completely to the guidance of our Guru. The Guru only
42 knows what will lead us towards perfection. We are quite blind to it.
43 We do not know anything. This sort of humility will open the door of
44 our heart for spiritual truths. Truth will never come into our minds
45 so long as there will remain the faintest shadow of Ahamkara
46 (egotism). All of you should try to root out this devil from your
47 heart. Complete self-surrender is the only way to spiritual
48 illumination.

ON ART

The secret of Greek Art is its imitation of nature even to the minutest details; whereas the secret of Indian Art is to represent the ideal. The energy of the Greek painter is spent in perhaps painting a piece of flesh, and he is so successful that a dog is deluded into taking it to be a real bit of meat and so goes to bite it. Now, what glory is there in merely imitating nature? Why not place an actual bit of flesh before the dog?

The Indian tendency, on the other hand, to represent the ideal, the supersensual, has become degraded into painting grotesque images. Now, true Art can be compared to a lily which springs from the ground, takes its nourishment from the ground, is in touch with the ground, and yet is quite high above it. So Art must be in touch with nature--and wherever that touch is gone, Art degenerates--yet it must be above nature.

Art is--representing the beautiful. There must be Art in everything.

The difference between architecture and building is that the former expresses an idea, while the latter is merely a structure built on economical principles. The value of matter depends solely on its capacities of expressing *ideas*.

The artistic faculty was highly developed in our Lord, Shri Ramakrishna, and he used to say that without this faculty none can be truly spiritual.

ON LANGUAGE

Simplicity is the secret. My ideal of language is my Master's language, most colloquial and yet most expressive. It must express the thought which is intended to be conveyed.

The attempt to make the Bengali language perfect in so short a time will make it cut and dried. Properly speaking, it has no verbs. Michael Madhusudan Dutt attempted to remedy this in poetry. The greatest poet in Bengal was Kavikankana. The best prose in Sanskrit is Patanjali's *Mahabhashya*. There the language is vigorous. The language of *Hitopadesha* is not bad, but the language of *Kadambari* is an example of degradation.

The Bengali language must be modelled not after the Sanskrit, but rather after the Pali, which has a strong resemblance to it. In coining or translating technical terms in Bengali, one must, however, use all Sanskrit words for them, and an attempt should be

1 made to coin new words. For this purpose, if a collection is made
2 from a Sanskrit dictionary of all those technical terms, then it will
3 help greatly the constitution of the Bengali language.

7 **THE SANNYASIN**

9 In explanation of the term Sannyasin, the Swami in the
10 course of one of his lectures in Boston said:

11 When a man has fulfilled the duties and obligations of that
12 stage of life in which he is born, and his aspirations lead him to
13 seek a spiritual life and to abandon altogether the worldly pursuits
14 of possession, fame, or power, when, by the growth of insight into
15 the nature of the world, he sees its impermanence, its strife, its
16 misery, and the paltry nature of its prizes, and turns away from all
17 these--then he seeks the True, the Eternal Love, the Refuge. He
18 makes complete renunciation (Sannyasa) of all worldly position,
19 property, and name, and wanders forth into the world to live a life
20 of self-sacrifice and to persistently seek spiritual knowledge,
21 striving to excel in love and compassion and to acquire lasting
22 insight. Gaining these pearls of wisdom by years of meditation,
23 discipline, and inquiry, he in his turn becomes a teacher and hands
24 on to disciples, lay or professed, who may seek them from him, all
25 that he can of wisdom and beneficence.

26 A Sannyasin cannot belong to any religion, for his is a life of
27 independent thought, which draws from all religions; his is a life of
28 realisation, not merely of theory or belief, much less of dogma.

32 **THE SANNYASIN AND THE HOUSEHOLDER**

34 The men of the world should have no voice in the affairs of
35 the Sannyasins. The Sannyasin should have nothing to do with the
36 rich, his duty is with the poor. He should treat the poor with loving
37 care and serve them joyfully with all his might. To pay respects to
38 the rich and hang on them for support has been the bane of all the
39 Sannyasin communities of our country. A true Sannyasin should
40 scrupulously avoid that. Such conduct becomes a public woman
41 rather than one who professes to have renounced the world. How
42 should a man immersed in Kama-Kanchana (lust and greed) become
43 a devotee of one whose central ideal is the renunciation of Kama-
44 Kanchana? Shri Ramakrishna wept and prayed to the Divine
45 Mother to send him such a one to talk with as would not have in
46 him the slightest tinge of Kama-Kanchana; for he would say, "My
47 lips burn when I talk with the worldly-minded." He also used to say

1 that he could not even bear the touch of the worldly-minded and the
2 impure. That King of Sannyasins (Shri Ramakrishna) can never be
3 preached by men of the world. The latter can never be perfectly
4 sincere; for he cannot but have some selfish motives to serve. If
5 Bhagavan (God) incarnates Himself as a householder, I can never
6 believe Him to be sincere. When a householder takes the position of
7 the leader of a religious sect, he begins to serve his own interests in
8 the name of principle, hiding the former in the garb of the latter,
9 and the result is the sect becomes rotten to the core. All religious
10 movements headed by householders have shared the same fate.
11 Without renunciation religion can never stand.

12 Here Swamiji was asked--What are we Sannyasins to
13 understand by renunciation of Kanchana (wealth)? He answered as
14 follows:

15 With a view to certain ends we have to adopt certain means.
16 These means vary according to the conditions of time, place,
17 individual, etc.; but the end always remains unaltered. In the case
18 of the Sannyasin, the end is the liberation of the Self and doing
19 good to humanity--{Sanskrit}; and of the ways to attain it, the
20 renunciation of Kama-Kanchana is the most important. Remember,
21 renunciation consists in the total absence of all selfish motives and
22 not in mere abstinence from external contact, such as avoiding to
23 touch one's money kept with another but at the same time enjoying
24 all its benefits. Would that be renunciation? For accomplishing the
25 two above-mentioned ends, the begging excursion would be a great
26 help to a Sannyasin at a time when the householders strictly obeyed
27 the injunctions of Manu and other law-givers, by setting apart every
28 day a portion of their meal for ascetic guests. Nowadays things
29 have changed considerably, especially, as in Bengal, where no
30 Madhukari⁸⁹ system prevails. Here it would be mere waste of
31 energy to try to live on Madhukari, and you would profit nothing by
32 it. The injunction of Bhiksha (begging) is a means to serve the
33 above two ends, which will not be served by that way now. It does
34 not, therefore, go against the principle of renunciation under such
35 circumstances if a Sannyasin provides for mere necessities of life
36 and devotes all his energy to the accomplishment of his ends for
37 which he took Sannyasa. Attaching too much importance ignorantly
38 to the means brings confusion. The end should never be lost sight
39 of.

43 THE EVILS OF ADHIKARIVADA

44 In one of his question classes the talk drifted on to the

1 ⁸⁹ Literally, 'bee-like'. The system of begging one's food
2 piecemeal from several houses, so as not to tax the householder, as
3 a bee gathers honey from different flowers.
4

1 Adhikarivada, or the doctrine of special rights and privileges, and
2 Swamiji in pointing out vehemently the evils that have resulted
3 from it spoke to the following effect:

4 With all my respects for the Rishis of yore, I cannot but
5 denounce their method in instructing the people. They always
6 enjoined upon them to do certain things but took care never to
7 explain to them the reason for it. This method was pernicious to the
8 very core; and instead of enabling men to attain the end, it laid
9 upon their shoulders a mass of meaningless nonsense. Their excuse
10 for keeping the end hidden from view was that the people could not
11 have understood their real meaning even if they had presented it to
12 them, not being worthy recipients. The Adhikarivada is the outcome
13 of pure selfishness. They knew that by this enlightenment on their
14 special subject they would lose their superior position of instructors
15 to the people. Hence their endeavour to support this theory. If you
16 consider a man too weak to receive these lessons, you should try
17 the more to teach and educate him; you should give him the
18 advantage of more teaching, instead of less, to train up his intellect,
19 so as to enable him to comprehend the more subtle problems.
20 These advocates of Adhikarivada ignored the tremendous fact of
21 the infinite possibilities of the human soul. Their contention is that
22 the knowledge of the highest spiritual truths will bring about
23 confusion in the understanding of the weak-minded men, and so the
24 Shloka goes:

25 "{Sanskrit}"

26 --"One should not unsettle the understanding of the ignorant,
27 attached to action (by teaching them Jnana): the wise man, himself
28 steadily acting, should engage the ignorant in all work" (Gita, III.
29 26).

30 I cannot believe in the self-contradictory statement that light
31 brings greater darkness. It is like losing life in the ocean of
32 Sachchidananda, in the ocean of Absolute Existence and
33 Immortality. How absurd! Knowledge means freedom from the
34 errors which ignorance leads to. Knowledge paving the way to
35 error! Enlightenment leading to confusion! Is it possible? men are
36 not bold enough to speak out broad truths, for fear of losing the
37 respect of the people. They try to make a compromise between the
38 real, eternal truths and the nonsensical prejudices of the people,
39 and thus set up the doctrine that Lokacharas (customs of the
40 people) and Deshacharas (customs of the country) must be adhered
41 to. No compromise! No whitewashing! No covering of corpses
42 beneath flowers! Throw away such texts as, "{Sanskrit}"--Yet the
43 customs of the people have to be followed." Nonsense! The result of
44 this sort of compromise is that the grand truths are soon buried
45 under heaps of rubbish, and the latter are eagerly held as real
46 truths. Even the grand truths of the Gita, so boldly preached by Shri
47 Krishna, received the gloss of compromise in the hands of future
48 generations of disciples, and the result is that the grandest
49 scripture of the world is now made to yield many things which lead
50 men astray.

51 This attempt at compromise proceeds from arrant downright

1 cowardice. Be bold! My children should be brave, above all. Not the
2 least compromise on any account. Preach the highest truths
3 broadcast. Do not fear losing your respect or causing unhappy
4 friction. Rest assured that if you serve truth in spite of temptations
5 to forsake it, you will attain a heavenly strength in the face of which
6 men will quail to speak before you things which you do not believe
7 to be true. People will be convinced of what you will say to them if
8 you can strictly serve truth for fourteen years continually, without
9 swerving from it. Thus you will confer the greatest blessing on the
10 masses, unshackle their bondages, and uplift the whole nation.

11 12 13 14 **ON BHAKTI-YOGA**

15
16 The dualist thinks you cannot be moral unless you have a God
17 with a rod in His hand, ready to punish you. How is that? Suppose a
18 horse had to give us a lecture on morality, one of those very
19 wretched cab-horses who move only with the whip, to which he has
20 become accustomed. He begins to speak about human beings and
21 says that they must be very immoral. Why? "Because I know they
22 are not whipped regularly." The fear of the whip only makes one
23 more immoral.

24 You all say there is a God and that He is an omnipresent
25 Being. Close your eyes and think what He is. What do you find?
26 Either you are thinking, in bringing the idea of omnipresence in
27 your mind, of the sea, or the blue sky, or an expanse of meadow, or
28 such things as you have seen in your life. If that is so, you do not
29 mean anything by omnipresent God; it has no meaning at all to you.
30 So with every other attribute of God. What idea have we of
31 omnipotence or omniscience? We have none. Religion is realising,
32 and I shall call you a worshipper of God when you have become
33 able to realise the Idea. Before that it is the spelling of words and
34 no more. It is this power of realisation that makes religion; no
35 amount of doctrines or philosophies, or ethical books, that you may
36 have stuffed into your brain, will matter much--only what you *are*
37 and what you have *realised*.

38 The Personal God is the same Absolute looked at through the
39 haze of Maya. When we approach Him with the five senses, we can
40 see Him only as the Personal God. The idea is that the Self cannot
41 be objectified. How can the Knower know Itself? But It can cast a
42 shadow, as it were, if that can be called objectification. So the
43 highest form of that shadow, that attempt at objectifying Itself, is
44 the Personal God. The Self is the eternal subject, and we are
45 struggling all the time to objectify that Self. And out of that struggle
46 has come this phenomenal universe and what we call matter, and so
47 on. But these are very weak attempts, and the highest
48 objectification of the Self possible to us is the Personal God. This
49 objectification is an attempt to reveal our own nature. According to
50 the Sankhya, nature is showing all these experiences to the soul,

1 and when it has got real experience it will know its own nature.
2 According to the Advaita Vedantist, the soul is struggling to reveal
3 itself. After long struggle, it finds that the subject must always
4 remain the subject; and then begins non-attachment, and it
5 becomes free.

6 When a man has reached that perfect state, he is of the same
7 nature as the Personal God. "I and my Father are one." He knows
8 that he is one with Brahman, the Absolute, and projects himself as
9 the Personal God does. He plays--as even the mightiest of kings may
10 sometimes play with dolls.

11 Some imaginations help to break the bondage of the rest. The
12 whole universe is imagination, but one set of imaginations will cure
13 another set. Those that tell us that there is sin and sorrow and
14 death in the world are terrible. But the other set--thou art holy,
15 there is God, there is no pain--these are good, and help to break the
16 bondage of the others. The highest imagination that can break all
17 the links of the chain is that of the Personal God.

18 To go and say, "Lord, take care of this thing and give me that;
19 Lord, I give you my little prayer and you give me this thing of daily
20 necessity; Lord, cure my headache", and all that--these are not
21 Bhakti. They are the lowest states of religion. They are the lowest
22 form of Karma. If a man uses all his mental energy in seeking to
23 satisfy his body and its wants, show me the difference between him
24 and an animal. Bhakti is a higher thing, higher than even desiring
25 heaven. The idea of heaven is of a place of intensified enjoyment.
26 How can that be God?

27 Only the fools rush after sense-enjoyments. It is easy to live in
28 the senses. It is easier to run in the old groove, eating and drinking;
29 but what these modern philosophers want to tell you is to take
30 these comfortable ideas and put the stamp of religion on them.
31 Such a doctrine is dangerous. Death lies in the senses. Life on the
32 plane of the Spirit is the only life, life on any other plane is mere
33 death; the whole of this life can be only described as a gymnasium.
34 We must go beyond it to enjoy real life.

35 As long as *touch-me-not-ism* is your creed and the kitchen-
36 pot your deity, you cannot rise spiritually. All the petty differences
37 between religion and religion are mere word-struggles, nonsense.
38 Everyone thinks, "This is my original idea", and wants to have
39 things his own way. That is how struggles come.

40 In criticising another, we always foolishly take one especially
41 brilliant point as the whole of our life and compare that with the
42 dark ones in the life of another. Thus we make mistakes in judging
43 individuals.

44 Through fanaticism and bigotry a religion can be propagated
45 very quickly, no doubt, but the preaching of that religion is firm-
46 based on solid ground, which gives everyone liberty to his opinions
47 and thus uplifts him to a higher path, though this process is slow.

48 First deluge the land (India) with spiritual ideas, then other
49 ideas will follow. The gift of spirituality and spiritual knowledge is
50 the highest, for it saves from many and many a birth; the next gift is

1 secular knowledge, as it opens the eyes of human beings towards
2 that spiritual knowledge; the next is the saving of life; and the
3 fourth is the gift of food.

4 Even if the body goes in practicing Sadhanas (austerities for
5 realisation), let it go; what of that? Realisation will come in the
6 fullness of time, by living constantly in the company of Sadhus (holy
7 men). A time comes when one understands that to serve a man
8 even by preparing a Chhilam (earthen pipe) of tobacco is far
9 greater than millions of meditations. He who can properly prepare
10 a Chhilam of tobacco can also properly meditate.

11 Gods are nothing but highly developed dead men. We can get
12 help from them.

13 Anyone and everyone cannot be an Acharya (teacher of
14 mankind); but many may become Mukta (liberated). The whole
15 world seems like a dream to the liberated, but the Acharya has to
16 take up his stand between the two states. He must have the
17 knowledge that the world is true, or else why should he teach?
18 Again, if he has not realised the world as a dream, then he is no
19 better than an ordinary man, and what could he teach? The Guru
20 has to bear the disciple's burden of sin; and that is the reason why
21 diseases and other ailments appear even in the bodies of powerful
22 Acharyas. But if he be imperfect, they attack his mind also, and he
23 falls. So it is a difficult thing to be an Acharya.

24 It is easier to become a Jivanmukta (free in this very life) than
25 to be an Acharya. For the former knows the world as a dream and
26 has no concern with it; but an Acharya knows it as a dream and yet
27 has to remain in it and work. It is not possible for everyone to be an
28 Acharya. He is an Acharya through whom the divine power acts.
29 The body in which one becomes an Acharya is very different from
30 that of any other man. There is a science for keeping that body in a
31 perfect state. His is the most delicate organism, very susceptible,
32 capable of feeling intense joy and intense suffering. He is abnormal.

33 In every sphere of life we find that it is the person within that
34 triumphs, and that personality is the secret of all success.

35 Nowhere is seen such sublime unfoldment of feeling as in
36 Bhagavan Shri Krishna Chaitanya, the Prophet of Nadia.

37 Shri Ramakrishna is a force. You should not think that his
38 doctrine is this or that. But he is a power, living even now in his
39 disciples and working in the world. I saw him growing in his ideas.
40 He is still growing. Shri Ramakrishna was both a Jivanmukta and an
41 Acharya.

45 **ISHVARA AND BRAHMAN**

46
47 In reply to a question as to the exact position of Ishvara in
48 Vedantic Philosophy, the Swami Vivekananda, while in Europe,

gave the following definition:

"Ishvara is the sum total of individuals, yet He is an Individual, as the human body is a unit, of which each cell is an individual. Samashti or collected equals God; Vyashti or analysed equals the Jiva. The existence of Ishvara, therefore, depends on that of Jiva, as the body on the cell, and vice versa. Thus, Jiva and Ishvara are coexistent beings; when one exists, the other must. Also, because, except on our earth, in all the higher spheres, the amount of good being vastly in excess of the amount of evil, the sum total (Ishvara) may be said to be all-good. Omnipotence and omniscience are obvious qualities and need no argument to prove from the very fact of totality. Brahman is beyond both these and is not a conditioned state; it is the only Unit not composed of many units, the principle which runs through all from a cell to God, without which nothing can exist; and whatever is real is that principle, or Brahman. When I think I am Brahman, I alone exist; so with others. Therefore, each one is the whole of that principle."

ON JNANA-YOGA

All souls are playing, some consciously, some unconsciously. Religion is learning to play consciously.

The same law which holds good in our worldly life also holds good in our religious life and in the life of the cosmos. It is one, it is universal. It is not that religion is guided by one law and the world by another. The flesh and the devil are but degrees of difference from God Himself.

Theologians, philosophers, and scientists in the West are ransacking everything to get a proof that they live afterwards! What a storm in a tea-cup! There are much higher things to think of. What silly superstition is this, that you ever die! It requires no priests or spirits or ghosts to tell us that we shall not die. It is the most self-evident of all truths. No man can imagine his own annihilation. The idea of immortality is inherent in man.

Wherever there is life, with it there is death. Life is the shadow of death, and death, the shadow of life. The line of demarcation is too fine to determine, too difficult to grasp, and most difficult to hold on to.

I do not believe in eternal progress, that we are growing on ever and ever in a straight line. It is too nonsensical to believe. There is no motion in a straight line. A straight line infinitely projected becomes a circle. The force sent out will complete the circle and return to its starting place.

There is no progress in a straight line. Every soul moves in a circle, as it were, and will have to complete it; and no soul can go so low but that there will come a time when it will have to go upwards.

1 It may start straight down, but it has to take the upward curve to
2 complete the circuit. We are all projected from a common centre,
3 which is God, and will come back after completing the circuit to the
4 centre from which we started.

5 Each soul is a circle. The centre is where the body is, and the
6 activity is manifested there. You are omnipresent, though you have
7 the consciousness of being concentrated in only one point. That
8 point has taken up particles of matter and formed them into a
9 machine to express itself. That through which it expresses itself is
10 called the body. You are everywhere. When one body or machine
11 fails you, the centre moves on and takes up other particles of
12 matter, finer or grosser, and works through them. Here is man. And
13 what is God? God is a circle with circumference nowhere and
14 centre everywhere. Every point in that circle is living, conscious,
15 active, and equally working. With our limited souls only one point is
16 conscious, and that point moves forward and backward.

17 The soul is a circle whose circumference is nowhere
18 (limitless), but whose centre is in some body. Death is but a change
19 of centre. God is a circle whose circumference is nowhere, and
20 whose centre is everywhere. When we can get out of the limited
21 centre of body, we shall realise God, our true Self.

22 A tremendous stream is flowing towards the ocean, carrying
23 little bits of paper and straw hither and thither on it. They may
24 struggle to go back, but in the long run they must flow down to the
25 ocean. So you and I and all nature are like these little straws
26 carried in mad currents towards that ocean of Life, Perfection, and
27 God. We may struggle to go back, or float against the current and
28 play all sorts of pranks, but in the long run we must go and join this
29 great ocean of Life and Bliss.

30 Jnana (knowledge) is "creedlessness"; but that does not mean
31 that it despises creeds. It only means that a stage above and
32 beyond creeds has been gained. The Jnani (true philosopher) strives
33 to destroy nothing but to help all. All rivers roll their waters into the
34 sea and become one. So all creeds should lead to Jnana and become
35 one. Jnana teaches that the world should be renounced but not on
36 that account abandoned. To live in the world and not to be of it is
37 the true test of renunciation.

38 I cannot see how it can be otherwise than that all knowledge
39 is stored up in us from the beginning. If you and I are little waves in
40 the ocean, then that ocean is the background.

41 There is really no difference between matter, mind, and
42 Spirit. They are only different phases of experiencing the One. This
43 very world is seen by the five senses as matter, by the very wicked
44 as hell, by the good as heaven, and by the perfect as God.

45 We cannot bring it to sense demonstration that Brahman is
46 the only real thing; but we can point out that this is the only
47 conclusion that one can come to. For instance, there must be this
48 oneness in everything, even in common things. There is the human
49 generalisation, for example. We say that all the variety is created by
50 name and form; yet when we want to grasp and separate it, it is

1 nowhere. We can never see name or form or causes standing by
2 themselves. So this phenomenon is Maya--something which
3 depends on the noumenon and apart from it has no existence. Take
4 a wave in the ocean. That wave exists so long as that quantity of
5 water remains in a wave form; but as soon as it goes down and
6 becomes the ocean, the wave ceases to exist. But the whole mass of
7 water does not depend so much on its form. The ocean remains,
8 while the wave form becomes absolute zero.

9 The real is one. It is the mind which makes it appear as many.
10 When we perceive the diversity, the unity has gone; and as soon as
11 we perceive the unity, the diversity has vanished. Just as in
12 everyday life, when you perceive the unity, you do not perceive the
13 diversity. At the beginning you start with unity. It is a curious fact
14 that a Chinaman will not know the difference in appearance
15 between one American and another; and you will not know the
16 difference between different Chinamen.

17 It can be shown that it is the mind which makes things
18 knowable. It is only things which have certain peculiarities that
19 bring themselves within the range of the known and knowable. That
20 which has no qualities is unknowable. For instance, there is some
21 external world, X, unknown and unknowable. When I look at it, it is
22 X plus mind. When I want to know the world, my mind contributes
23 three quarters of it. The internal world is Y plus mind, and the
24 external world X plus mind. All differentiation in either the external
25 or internal world is created by the mind, and that which exists is
26 unknown and unknowable. It is beyond the range of knowledge, and
27 that which is beyond the range of knowledge can have no
28 differentiation. Therefore this X outside is the same as the Y inside,
29 and therefore the real is one.

30 God does not reason. Why should you reason if you know? It
31 is a sign of weakness that we have to go on crawling like worms to
32 get a few facts, and then the whole thing tumbles down again. The
33 Spirit is reflected in mind and in everything. It is the light of the
34 Spirit that makes the mind sentient. Everything is an expression of
35 the Spirit; the minds are so many mirrors. What you call love, fear,
36 hatred, virtue, and vice are all reflections of the Spirit. When the
37 reflector is base, the reflection is bad.

38 The real Existence is without manifestation. We cannot
39 conceive It, because we should have to conceive through the mind,
40 which is itself a manifestation. Its glory is that It is inconceivable.
41 We must remember that in life the lowest and highest vibrations of
42 light we do not see, but they are the opposite poles of existence.
43 There are certain things which we do not know now, but which we
44 can know. It is due to our ignorance that we do not know them.
45 There are certain things which we can never know, because they
46 are much higher than the highest vibrations of knowledge. But we
47 are the Eternal all the time, although we cannot know it. Knowledge
48 will be impossible there. The very fact of the limitations of the
49 conception is the basis for its existence. For instance, there is
50 nothing so certain in me as my Self; and yet I can only conceive of it
51 as a body and mind, as happy or unhappy, as a man or a woman. At
52 the same time, I try to conceive of it as it really is and find that

1 there is no other way of doing it but by dragging it down; yet I am
2 sure of that reality. "No one, O beloved, loves the husband for the
3 husband's sake, but because the Self is there. It is in and through
4 the Self that she loves the husband. No one, O beloved, loves the
5 wife for the wife's sake, but in and through the Self." And that
6 Reality is the only thing we know, because in and through It we
7 know everything else; and yet we cannot conceive of It. How can
8 we know the knower? If we knew It, It would not be the knower, but
9 the known; It would be objectified.

10 The man of highest realisation exclaims, "I am the King of
11 kings; there is no king higher than I, I am the God of gods; there is
12 no God higher than I! I alone exist, One without a second." This
13 monistic idea of the Vedanta seems to many, of course, very
14 terrible, but that is on account of superstition.

15 We are the Self, eternally at rest and at peace. We must not
16 weep; there is no weeping for the Soul. We in our imagination think
17 that God is weeping on His throne out of sympathy. Such a God
18 would not be worth attaining. Why should God weep at all? To weep
19 is a sign of weakness, of bondage.

20 Seek the Highest, always the Highest, for in the Highest is
21 eternal bliss. If I am to hunt, I will hunt the lion. If I am to rob, I will
22 rob the treasury of the king. Seek the Highest.

23 Oh, One that cannot be confined or described! One that can
24 be perceived in our heart of hearts! One beyond all compare,
25 beyond limit, unchangeable like the blue sky! Oh, learn the All, holy
26 one! Seek for nothing else!

27 Where changes of nature cannot reach, thought beyond all
28 thought, Unchangeable, Immovable; whom all books declare, all
29 sages worship; Oh, holy one, seek for nothing else!

30 Beyond compare, Infinite Oneness! No comparison is
31 possible. Water above, water below, water on the right, water on
32 the left; no wave on that water, no ripple, all silence; all eternal
33 bliss. Such will come to thy heart. Seek for nothing else!

34 Why weepest thou, brother? There is neither death nor
35 disease for thee. Why weepest thou, brother? There is neither
36 misery nor misfortune for thee. Why weepest thou, brother?
37 Neither change nor death was predicated of thee. Thou art
38 Existence Absolute.

39 I know what God is--I cannot speak Him to you. I know not
40 what God is--how can I speak Him to you? But seest thou not, my
41 brother, that thou art He, thou art He? Why go seeking God here
42 and there? Seek not, and that is God. Be your own Self.

43 Thou art our Father, our Mother, our dear Friend. Thou
44 bearest the burden of the world. Help us to bear the burden of our
45 lives. Thou art our Friend, our Lover, our Husband, Thou art
46 ourselves!

47

48

THE CAUSE OF ILLUSION

The question--what is the cause of Maya (illusion)?--has been asked for the last three thousand years; and the only answer is: when the world is able to formulate a logical question, we shall answer it. The question is contradictory. Our position is that the Absolute has become this relative only apparently, that the Unconditioned has become the conditioned only in Maya. By the very admission of the Unconditioned, we admit that the Absolute cannot be acted upon by anything else. It is uncaused, which means that nothing outside Itself can act upon It. First of all, if It is unconditioned, It cannot have been acted upon by anything else. In the Unconditioned there cannot be time, space, or causation. That granted your question will be: "What caused that which cannot be caused by anything to be changed into this?" Your question is only possible in the conditioned. But you take it out of the conditioned, and want to ask it in the Unconditioned. Only when the Unconditioned becomes conditioned, and space, time, and causation come in, can the question be asked. We can only say ignorance makes the illusion. The question is impossible. Nothing can have worked on the Absolute. There was no cause. Not that we do not know, or that we are ignorant; but It is above knowledge, and cannot be brought down to the plane of knowledge. We can use the words, "I do not know" in two senses. In one way, they mean that we are lower than knowledge, and in the other way, that the thing is above knowledge. The X-rays have become known now. The very causes of these are disputed, but we are sure that we shall know them. Here we can say we do not know about the X-rays. But about the Absolute we cannot know. In the case of the X-rays we do not know, although they are within the range of knowledge; only we do not know them yet. But, in the other case, It is so much beyond knowledge that It ceases to be a matter of knowing. "By what means can the Knower be known?" You are always yourself and cannot objectify yourself. This was one of the arguments used by our philosophers to prove immortality. If I try to think I am lying dead, what have I to imagine? That I am standing and looking down at myself, at some dead body. So that I cannot objectify myself.

EVOLUTION

In the matter of the projection of Akasha and Prana into manifested form and the return to fine state, there is a good deal of similarity between Indian thought and modern science. The moderns have their evolution, and so have the Yogis. But I think that the Yogis' explanation of evolution is the better one. "The change of one species into another is attained by the infilling of nature." The basic idea is that we are changing from one species to

1 another, and that man is the highest species. Patanjali explains this
2 "infilling of nature" by the simile of peasants irrigating fields. Our
3 education and progression simply mean taking away the obstacles,
4 and by its own nature the divinity will manifest itself. This does
5 away with all the struggle for existence. The miserable experiences
6 of life are simply in the way, and can be eliminated entirely. They
7 are not necessary for evolution. Even if they did not exist, we
8 should progress. It is in the very nature of things to manifest
9 themselves. The momentum is not from outside, but comes from
10 inside. Each soul is the sum total of the universal experiences
11 already coiled up there; and of all these experiences, only those will
12 come out which find suitable circumstances.

13 So the external things can only give us the environments.
14 These competitions and struggles and evils that we see are not the
15 effect of the involution or the cause, but they are in the way. If they
16 did not exist, still man would go on and evolve as God, because it is
17 the very nature of that God to come out and manifest Himself. To
18 my mind this seems very hopeful, instead of that horrible idea of
19 competition. The more I study history, the more I find that idea to
20 be wrong. Some say that if man did not fight with man, he would
21 not progress. I also used to think so; but I find now that every war
22 has thrown back human progress by fifty years instead of hurrying
23 it forwards. The day will come when men will study history from a
24 different light and find that competition is neither the cause nor the
25 effect, simply a thing on the way, not necessary to evolution at all.

26 The theory of Patanjali is the only theory I think a rational
27 man can accept. How much evil the modern system causes! Every
28 wicked man has a license to be wicked under it. I have seen in this
29 country (America) physicists who say that all criminals ought to be
30 exterminated and that that is the only way in which criminality can
31 be eliminated from society. These environments can hinder, but they
32 are not necessary to progress. The most horrible thing about
33 competition is that one may conquer the environments, but that
34 where one may conquer, thousands are crowded out. So it is evil at
35 best. That cannot be good which helps only one and hinders the
36 majority. Patanjali says that these struggles remain only through
37 our ignorance, and are not necessary, and are not part of the
38 evolution of man. It is just our impatience which creates them. We
39 have not the patience to go and work our way out. For instance,
40 there is a fire in a theatre, and only a few escape. The rest in trying
41 to rush out crush one another down. That crush was not necessary
42 for the salvation of the building nor of the two or three who
43 escaped. If all had gone out slowly, not one would have been hurt.
44 That is the case in life. The doors are open for us, and we can all
45 get out without the competition and struggle; and yet we struggle.
46 The struggle we create through our own ignorance, through
47 impatience; we are in too great a hurry. The highest manifestation
48 of strength is to keep ourselves calm and on our own feet.

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51

1 **BUDDHISM AND VEDANTA**

2
3 The Vedanta philosophy is the foundation of Buddhism and
4 everything else in India; but what we call the Advaita philosophy of
5 the modern school has a great many conclusions of the Buddhists.
6 Of course, the Hindus will not admit that--that is the orthodox
7 Hindus, because to them the Buddhists are heretics. But there is a
8 conscious attempt to stretch out the whole doctrine to include the
9 heretics also.

10 The Vedanta has no quarrel with Buddhism. The idea of the
11 Vedanta is to harmonise all. With the Northern Buddhists we have
12 no quarrel at all. But the Burmese and Siamese and all the
13 Southern Buddhists say that there is a phenomenal world, and ask
14 what right we have to create a noumenal world behind this. The
15 answer of the Vedanta is that this is a false statement. The Vedanta
16 never contended that there was a noumenal and a phenomenal
17 world. There is one. Seen through the senses it is phenomenal, but
18 it is really the noumenal all the time. The man who sees the rope
19 does not see the snake. It is either the rope or the snake, but never
20 the two. So the Buddhistic statement of our position, that we
21 believe there are two worlds, is entirely false. They have the right
22 to say it is the phenomenal if they like, but no right to contend that
23 other men have not the right to say it is the noumenal.

24 Buddhism does not want to have anything except phenomena.
25 In phenomena alone is desire. It is desire that is creating all this.
26 Modern Vedantists do not hold this at all. We say there is something
27 which has become the will. Will is a manufactured something, a
28 compound, not a "simple". There cannot be any will without
29 external object. We see that the very position that will created this
30 universe is impossible. How could it? Have you ever known will
31 without an external stimulus? Desire cannot arise without stimulus,
32 or in modern philosophic language, of nerve stimulus. Will is a sort
33 of reaction of the brain, what the Sankhya philosophers call Buddhi.
34 This reaction must be preceded by action, and action presupposes
35 an external universe. When there is no external universe, naturally
36 there will be no will; and yet, according to your theory, it is will that
37 created the universe. Who creates the will? Will is coexistent with
38 the universe. Will is one phenomenon caused by the same impulse
39 which created the universe. But philosophy must not stop there.
40 Will is entirely personal; therefore we cannot go with Schopenhauer
41 at all. Will is a compound--a mixture of the internal and the
42 external. Suppose a man were born without any senses, he would
43 have no will at all. Will requires something from outside, and the
44 brain will get some energy from inside; therefore will is a
45 compound, as much a compound as the wall or anything else. We do
46 not agree with the will-theory of these German philosophers at all.
47 Will itself is phenomenal and cannot be the Absolute. It is one of the
48 many projections. There is something which is not will, but is
49 manifesting itself as will. That I can understand.

50 But that will is manifesting itself as everything else, I do not
51 understand, seeing that we cannot have any conception of will, as

1 separate from the universe. When that something which is freedom
2 becomes will, it is caused by time, space, and causation. Take
3 Kant's analysis. Will is within time, space, and causation. Then how
4 can it be the Absolute? One cannot will without willing in time.

5 If we can stop all thought, then we know that we are beyond
6 thought. We come to this by negation. When every phenomenon has
7 been negated, whatever remains, that is It. That cannot be
8 expressed, cannot be manifested, because the manifestation will be,
9 again, will.

10 11 12 13 **ON THE VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY**

14
15 The Vedantist says that a man is neither born nor dies nor
16 goes to heaven, and that reincarnation is really a myth with regard
17 to the soul. The example is given of a book being turned over. It is
18 the book that evolves, not the man. Every soul is omnipresent, so
19 where can it come or go? These births and deaths are changes in
20 nature which we are mistaking for changes in us.

21 Reincarnation is the evolution of nature and the
22 manifestation of the God within.

23 The Vedanta says that each life is built upon the past, and
24 that when we can look back over the whole past we are free. The
25 desire to be free will take the form of a religious disposition from
26 childhood. A few years will, as it were, make all truth clear to one.
27 After leaving this life, and while waiting for the next, a man is still
28 in the phenomenal.

29 We would describe the soul in these words: This soul the
30 sword cannot cut, nor the spear pierce; the fire cannot burn nor
31 water melt it; indestructible, omnipresent is this soul. Therefore
32 weep not for it.

33 If it has been very bad, we believe that it will become good in
34 the time to come. The fundamental principle is that there is eternal
35 freedom for every one. Every one must come to it. We have to
36 struggle, impelled by our desire to be free. Every other desire but
37 that to be free is illusive. Every good action, the Vedantist says, is a
38 manifestation of that freedom.

39 I do not believe that there will come a time when all the evil
40 in the world will vanish. How could that be? This stream goes on.
41 Masses of water go out at one end, but masses are coming in at the
42 other end.

43 The Vedanta says that you are pure and perfect, and that
44 there is a state beyond good and evil, and that is your own nature.
45 It is higher even than good. Good is only a lesser differentiation
46 than evil.

47 We have no theory of evil. We call it ignorance.

1 So far as it goes, all dealing with other people, all ethics, is in
2 the phenomenal world. As a most complete statement of truth, we
3 would not think of applying such things as ignorance to God. Of
4 Him we say that He is Existence, Knowledge, and Bliss Absolute.
5 Every effort of thought and speech will make the Absolute
6 phenomenal and break Its character.

7 There is one thing to be remembered: that the assertion--I am
8 God--cannot be made with regard to the sense-world. If you say in
9 the sense-world that you are God, what is to prevent your doing
10 wrong? So the affirmation of your divinity applies only to the
11 noumenal. If I am God, I am beyond the tendencies of the senses
12 and will not do evil. Morality of course is not the goal of man, but
13 the means through which this freedom is attained. The Vedanta
14 says that Yoga is one way that makes men realise this divinity. The
15 Vedanta says this is done by the realisation of the freedom within
16 and that everything will give way to that. Morality and ethics will all
17 range themselves in their proper places.

18 All the criticism against the Advaita philosophy can be
19 summed up in this, that it does not conduce to sense-enjoyment;
20 and we are glad to admit that.

21 The Vedanta system begins with tremendous pessimism, and
22 ends with real optimism. We deny the sense-optimism but assert the
23 real optimism of the Supersensuous. That real happiness is not in
24 the senses but above the senses; and it is in every man. The sort of
25 optimism which we see in the world is what will lead to ruin
26 through the senses.

27 Abnegation has the greatest importance in our philosophy.
28 Negation implies affirmation of the Real Self. The Vedanta is
29 pessimistic so far as it negatives the world of the senses, but it is
30 optimistic in its assertion of the real world.

31 The Vedanta recognises the reasoning power of man a good
32 deal, although it says there is something higher than intellect; but
33 the road lies through intellect.

34 We need reason to drive out all the old superstitions; and
35 what remains is Vedantism. There is a beautiful Sanskrit poem in
36 which the sage says to himself: "Why weepest thou, my friend?
37 There is no fear nor death for thee. Why weepest thou? There is no
38 misery for thee, for thou art like the infinite blue sky, unchangeable
39 in thy nature. Clouds of all colours come before it, play for a
40 moment, and pass away; it is the same sky. Thou hast only to drive
41 away the clouds."

42 We have to open the gates and clear the way. The water will
43 rush in and fill in by its own nature, because it is there already.

44 Man is a good deal conscious, partly unconscious, and there
45 is a possibility of getting beyond consciousness. It is only when we
46 become *men* that we can go beyond all reason. The words *higher*
47 or *lower* can be used only in the phenomenal world. To say them of
48 the noumenal world is simply contradictory, because there is no
49 differentiation there. Man-manifestation is the highest in the
50 phenomenal world. The Vedantist says he is higher than the Devas.

1 The gods will all have to die and will become men again, and in the
2 man-body alone they will become perfect.

3 It is true that we create a system, but we have to admit that it
4 is not perfect, because the reality must be beyond all systems. We
5 are ready to compare it with other systems and are ready to show
6 that this is the only rational system that can be; but it is not perfect,
7 because reason is not perfect. It is, however, the only possible
8 rational system that the human mind can conceive.

9 It is true to a certain extent that a system must disseminate
10 itself to be strong. No system has disseminated itself so much as
11 the Vedanta. It is the personal contact that teaches even now. A
12 mass of reading does not make men; those who were real men were
13 made so by personal contact. It is true that there are very few of
14 these real men, but they will increase. Yet you cannot believe that
15 there will come a day when we shall all be philosophers. We do not
16 believe that there will come a time when there will be all happiness
17 and no unhappiness.

18 Now and then we know a moment of supreme bliss, when we
19 ask nothing, give nothing, know nothing but bliss. Then it passes,
20 and we again see the panorama of the universe moving before us;
21 and we know that it is but a mosaic work set upon God, who is the
22 background of all things.

23 The Vedanta teaches that Nirvana can be attained here and
24 now, that we do not have to wait for death to reach it. Nirvana is
25 the realisation of the Self; and after having once known that, if only
26 for an instant, never again can one be deluded by the mirage of
27 personality. Having eyes, we must see the apparent, but all the time
28 we know what it is; we have found out its true nature. It is the
29 screen that hides the Self, which is unchanging.

30 The screen opens, and we find the Self behind it. All change
31 is in the screen. In the saint the screen is thin, and the reality can
32 almost shine through. In the sinner the screen is thick, and we are
33 liable to lose sight of the truth that the Atman is there, as well as
34 behind the saint's screen. When the screen is wholly removed, we
35 find it really never existed--that we were the Atman and nothing
36 else, even the screen is forgotten.

37 The two phases of this distinction in life are--first, that the
38 man who knows the real Self, will not be affected by anything;
39 secondly, that that man alone can do good to the world. That man
40 alone will have seen the real motive of doing good to others,
41 because there is only one, it cannot be called egoistic, because that
42 would be differentiation. It is the only selflessness. It is the
43 perception of the universal, not of the individual. Every case of love
44 and sympathy is an assertion of this universal. "Not I, but thou."
45 Help another because you are in him and he is in you, is the
46 philosophical way of putting it. The real Vedantist alone will give up
47 his life for a fellow-man without any compunction, because he
48 knows he will not die. As long as there is one insect left in the
49 world, he is living; as long as one mouth eats, he eats. So he goes
50 on doing good to others; and is never hindered by the modern ideas
51 of caring for the body. When a man reaches this point of

1 abnegation, he goes beyond the moral struggle, beyond everything.
2 He sees in the most learned priest, in the cow, in the dog, in the
3 most miserable places, neither the learned man, nor the cow, nor
4 the dog, nor the miserable place, but the same divinity manifesting
5 itself in them all. He alone is the happy man; and the man who has
6 acquired that sameness has, even in this life, conquered all
7 existence. God is pure; therefore such a man is said to be living in
8 God. Jesus says, "Before Abraham was, I am." That means that
9 Jesus and others like him are free spirits; and Jesus of Nazareth
10 took human form, not by the compulsion of his past actions, but just
11 to do good to mankind. It is not that when a man becomes free, he
12 will stop and become a dead lump; but he will be more active than
13 any other being, because every other being acts only under
14 compulsion, he alone through freedom.

15 If we are inseparable from God, have we no individuality? Oh,
16 yes: that is God. Our individuality is God. This is not the
17 individuality you have now; you are coming towards that.
18 Individuality means what cannot be divided. How can you call this
19 individuality? One hour you are thinking one way, and the next hour
20 another way, and two hours after, another way. Individuality is that
21 which changes not--is beyond all things, changeless. It would be
22 tremendously dangerous for this state to remain in eternity,
23 because then the thief would always remain a thief and the
24 blackguard a blackguard. If a baby died, he would have to remain a
25 baby. The real individuality is that which never changes and will
26 never change; and that is the God within us.

27 Vedantism is an expansive ocean on the surface of which a
28 man-of-war could be near a catamaran. So in the Vedantic ocean a
29 real Yogi can be by the side of an idolater or even an atheist. What
30 is more, in the Vedantic ocean, the Hindu, Mohammedan, Christian,
31 and Parsee are all one, all children of the Almighty God.

32 33 34 **LAW AND FREEDOM**

35
36 The struggle never had meaning for the man who is free. But
37 for us it has a meaning, because it is name-and-form that creates
38 the world.

39 We have a place for struggle in the Vedanta, but not for fear.
40 All fears will vanish when you begin to assert your own nature. If
41 you think that you are bound, bound you will remain. If you think
42 you are free, free you will be.

43 That sort of freedom which we can feel when we are yet in
44 the phenomenal is a glimpse of the real but not yet the real.

45 I disagree with the idea that freedom is obedience to the laws
46 of nature. I do not understand what it means. According to the
47 history of human progress, it is disobedience to nature that has
48 constituted that progress. It may be said that the conquest of lower
49 laws was through the higher. But even there, the conquering mind

1 was only trying to be free; and as soon as it found that the struggle
2 was also through law, it wanted to conquer that also. So the ideal
3 was freedom in every case. The trees never disobey law. I never
4 saw a cow steal. An oyster never told a lie. Yet they are not greater
5 than man. This life is a tremendous assertion of freedom; and this
6 obedience to law, carried far enough, would make us simply
7 matter--either in society, or in politics, or in religion. Too many laws
8 are a sure sign of death. Wherever in any society there are too
9 many laws, it is a sure sign that that society will soon die. If you
10 study the characteristics of India, you will find that no nation
11 possesses so many laws as the Hindus, and national death is the
12 result. But the Hindus had one peculiar idea--they never made any
13 doctrines or dogmas in religion; and the latter has had the greatest
14 growth. Eternal law cannot be freedom, because to say that the
15 eternal is inside law is to limit it.

16 There is no purpose in view with God, because if there were
17 some purpose, He would be nothing better than a man. Why should
18 He need any purpose? If He had any, He would be bound by it.
19 There would be something besides Him which was greater. For
20 instance, the carpet-weaver makes a piece of carpet. The idea was
21 outside of him, something greater. Now where is the idea to which
22 God would adjust Himself? Just as the greatest emperors
23 sometimes play with dolls, so He is playing with this nature; and
24 what we call law is this. We call it law, because we can see only
25 little bits which run smoothly. All our ideas of law are within the
26 little bit. It is nonsense to say that law is infinite, that throughout all
27 time stones will fall. If all reason be based upon experience, who
28 was there to see if stones fell five millions of years ago? So law is
29 not constitutional in man. It is a scientific assertion as to man that
30 where we begin, there we end. As a matter of fact, we get gradually
31 outside of law, until we get out altogether, but with the added
32 experience of a whole life. In God and freedom we began, and
33 freedom and God will be the end. These laws are in the middle state
34 through which we have to pass. Our Vedanta is the assertion of
35 freedom always. The very idea of law will frighten the Vedantist;
36 and eternal law is a very dreadful thing for him, because there
37 would be no escape. If there is to be an eternal law binding him all
38 the time, where is the difference between him and a blade of grass?
39 We do not believe in that abstract idea of law.

40 We say that it is freedom that we are to seek, and that that
41 freedom is God. It is the same happiness as in everything else; but
42 when man seeks it in something which is finite, he gets only a spark
43 of it. The thief when he steals gets the same happiness as the man
44 who finds it in God; but the thief gets only a little spark with a mass
45 of misery. The real happiness is God. Love is God, freedom is God;
46 and everything that is bondage is not God.

47 Man has freedom already, but he will have to discover it. He
48 has it, but every moment forgets it. That discovering, consciously or
49 unconsciously, is the whole life of every one. But the difference
50 between the sage and the ignorant man is that one does it
51 consciously and the other unconsciously. Every one is struggling for
52 freedom--from the atom to the star. The ignorant man is satisfied if

1 he can get freedom within a certain limit--if he can get rid of the
2 bondage of hunger or of being thirsty. But that sage feels that there
3 is a stronger bondage which has to be thrown off. He would not
4 consider the freedom of the Red Indian as freedom at all.

5 According to our philosophers, freedom is the goal.
6 Knowledge cannot be the goal, because knowledge is a compound.
7 It is a compound of power and freedom, and it is freedom alone that
8 is desirable. That is what men struggle after. Simply the possession
9 of power would not be knowledge. For instance, a scientist can
10 send an electric shock to a distance of some miles; but nature can
11 send it to an unlimited distance. Why do we not build statues to
12 nature then? It is not law that we want but ability to break law. We
13 want to be outlaws. If you are bound by laws, you will be a lump of
14 clay. Whether you are beyond law or not is not the question; but the
15 thought that we are beyond law--upon that is based the whole
16 history of humanity. For instance, a man lives in a forest, and never
17 has had any education or knowledge. He sees a stone falling down--
18 a natural phenomenon happening--and he thinks it is freedom. He
19 thinks it has a soul, and the central idea in that is freedom. But as
20 soon as he knows that it must fall, he calls it nature--dead,
21 mechanical action. I may or may not go into the street. In that is my
22 glory as a man. If I am sure that I must go there, I give myself up
23 and become a machine. Nature with its infinite power is only a
24 machine; freedom alone constitutes sentient life.

25 The Vedanta says that the idea of the man in the forest is the
26 right one; his glimpse is right, but the explanation is wrong. He
27 holds to this nature as freedom and not as governed by law. Only
28 after all this human experience we will come back to think the
29 same, but in a more philosophical sense. For instance, I want to go
30 out into the street. I get the impulse of my will, and then I stop; and
31 in the time that intervenes between the will and going into the
32 street, I am working uniformly. Uniformity of action is what we call
33 law. This uniformity of my actions, I find, is broken into very short
34 periods, and so I do not call my actions under law. I work through
35 freedom. I walk for five minutes; but before those five minutes of
36 walking, which are uniform, there was the action of the will, which
37 gave the impulse to walk. Therefore man says he is free, because all
38 his actions can be cut up into small periods; and although there is
39 sameness in the small periods, beyond the period there is not the
40 same sameness. In this perception of non-uniformity is the idea of
41 freedom. In nature we see only very large periods of uniformity; but
42 the beginning and end must be free impulses. The impulse of
43 freedom was given just at the beginning, and that has rolled on; but
44 this, compared with our periods, is much longer. We find by analysis
45 on philosophic grounds that we are not free. But there will remain
46 this factor, this consciousness that I am free. What we have to
47 explain is, how that comes. We will find that we have these two
48 impulses in us. Our reason tells us that all our actions are caused,
49 and at the same time, with every impulse we are asserting our
50 freedom. The solution of the Vedanta is that there is freedom
51 inside--that the soul is really free--but that that soul's actions are
52 percolating through body and mind, which are not free.

1 As soon as we react, we become slaves. A man blames me,
2 and I immediately react in the form of anger. A little vibration which
3 he created made me a slave. So we have to demonstrate our
4 freedom. They alone are the sages who see in the highest, most
5 learned man, or the lowest animal, or the worst and most wicked of
6 mankind, neither a man nor a sage nor an animal, but the same God
7 in all of them. Even in this life they have conquered relativity, and
8 have taken a firm stand upon this equality. God is pure, the same to
9 all. Therefore such a sage would be a living God. This is the goal
10 towards which we are going; and every form of worship, every
11 action of mankind, is a method of attaining to it. The man who
12 wants money is striving for freedom--to get rid of the bondage of
13 poverty. Every action of man is worship, because the idea is to
14 attain to freedom, and all action, directly or indirectly, tends to that.
15 Only, those actions that deter are to be avoided. The whole universe
16 is worshipping, consciously or unconsciously; only it does not know
17 that even while it is cursing, it is in another form worshipping the
18 same God it is cursing, because those who are cursing are also
19 struggling for freedom. They never think that in reacting from a
20 thing they are making themselves slaves to it. It is hard to kick
21 against the pricks.

22 If we could get rid of the belief in our limitations, it would be
23 possible for us to do everything just now. It is only a question of
24 time. If that is so, add power, and so diminish time. Remember the
25 case of the professor who learnt the secret of the development of
26 marble and who made marble in twelve years, while it took nature
27 centuries.

28 29 30 **THE GOAL AND METHODS OF REALISATION**

31
32 The greatest misfortune to befall the world would be if all
33 mankind were to recognise and accept but one religion, one
34 universal form of worship, one standard of morality. This would be
35 the death-blow to all religious and spiritual progress. Instead of
36 trying to hasten this disastrous event by inducing persons, through
37 good or evil methods, to conform to our own highest ideal of truth,
38 we ought rather to endeavour to remove all obstacles which
39 prevent men from developing in accordance with their own highest
40 ideals, and thus make their attempt vain to establish one universal
41 religion.

42 The ultimate goal of all mankind, the aim and end of all
43 religions, is but one--re-union with God, or, what amounts to the
44 same, with the divinity which is every man's true nature. But while
45 the aim is one, the method of attaining may vary with the different
46 temperaments of men.

47 Both the goal and the methods employed for reaching it are
48 called Yoga, a word derived from the same Sanskrit root as the
49 English "yoke", meaning "to join", to join us to our reality, God.
50 There are various such Yogas, or methods of union--but the chief

ones are--Karma-Yoga, Bhakti-Yoga, Raja-Yoga, and Jnana-Yoga.

Every man must develop according to his own nature. As every science has its methods, so has every religion. The methods of attaining the end of religion are called Yoga by us, and the different forms of Yoga that we teach, are adapted to the different natures and temperaments of men. We classify them in the following way, under four heads:

(1) Karma-Yoga--The manner in which a man realises his own divinity through works and duty.

(2) Bhakti-Yoga--The realisation of the divinity through devotion to, and love of, a Personal God.

(3) Raja-Yoga--The realisation of the divinity through the control of mind.

(4) Jnana-Yoga--The realisation of a man's own divinity through knowledge.

These are all different roads leading to the same centre--God. Indeed, the varieties of religious belief are an advantage, since all faiths are good, so far as they encourage man to lead a religious life. The more sects there are, the more opportunities there are for making successful appeals to the divine instinct in all men.

WORLD-WIDE UNITY

Speaking of the world-wide unity, before the Oak Beach Christian Unity, Swami Vivekananda said:

All religions are, at the bottom, alike. This is so, although the Christian Church, like the Pharisee in the parable, thanks God that it alone is right and thinks that all other religions are wrong and in need of Christian light. Christianity must become tolerant before the world will be willing to unite with the Christian Church in a common charity. God has not left Himself without a witness in any heart, and men, especially men who follow Jesus Christ, should be willing to admit this. In fact, Jesus Christ was willing to admit every good man to the family of God. It is not the man who believes a certain something, but the man who does the will of the Father in heaven, who is right. On this basis--being right and doing right--the whole world can unite.

THE AIM OF RAJA-YOGA

Yoga has essentially to do with the meditative side of religion, rather than the ethical side, though, of necessity, a little of the

1 latter has to be considered. Men and women are growing to desire
2 more than mere revelation, so called. They want facts in their own
3 consciousness. Only through experience can there be any reality in
4 religion. Spiritual facts are to be gathered mostly from the
5 superconscious state of mind. Let us put ourselves into the same
6 condition as did those who claim to have had special experiences;
7 then if we have similar experiences, they become facts for us. We
8 can see all that another has seen; a thing that happened once can
9 happen again, nay, *must*, under the same circumstances. Raja-Yoga
10 teaches us how to reach the superconscious state. All the great
11 religions recognise this state in some form; but in India, special
12 attention is paid to this side of religion. In the beginning, some
13 mechanical means may help us to acquire this state; but mechanical
14 means alone can never accomplish much. Certain positions, certain
15 modes of breathing, help to harmonise and concentrate the mind,
16 but with these must go purity and strong desire for God, or
17 realisation. The attempt to sit down and fix the mind on one idea
18 and hold it there will prove to most people that there is some need
19 for help to enable them to do this successfully. The mind has to be
20 gradually and systematically brought under control. The will has to
21 be strengthened by slow, continuous, and persevering drill. This is
22 no child's play, no fad to be tried one day and discarded the next. It
23 is a life's work; and the end to be attained is well worth all that it
24 can cost us to reach it; being nothing less than the realisation of our
25 absolute oneness with the Divine. Surely, with this end in view, and
26 with the knowledge that we can certainly succeed, no price can be
27 too great to pay.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

I

A DISCUSSION⁹⁰

Q.--I should like to know something about the present activity of philosophic thought in India. To what extent are these questions discussed?

A.--As I have said, the majority of the Indian people are practically dualists, and the minority are monists. The main subject of discussion is Maya and Jiva. When I came to this country, I found that the labourers were informed of the present condition of politics; but when I asked them, "What is religion, and what are the doctrines of this and that particular sect?" they said, "We do not know; we go to church." In India if I go to a peasant and ask him, "Who governs you?" he says, "I do not know; I pay my taxes." But if I ask him what is his religion, he says, "I am a dualist", and is ready to give you the details about Maya and Jiva. He cannot read or write, but he has learned all this from the monks and is very fond of discussing it. After the day's work, the peasants sit under a tree and discuss these questions.

Q.--What does orthodoxy mean with the Hindus?

A.--In modern times it simply means obeying certain caste laws as to eating, drinking, and marriage. After that the Hindu can believe in any system he likes. There was never an organised church in India; so there was never a body of men to formulate doctrines of orthodoxy. In a general way, we say that those who believe in the Vedas are orthodox; but in reality we find that many of the dualistic sects believe more in the Puranas than in the Vedas alone.

Q.--What influence had your Hindu philosophy on the Stoic philosophy of the Greeks?

A.--It is very probable that it had some influence on it through the Alexandrians. There is some suspicion of Pythagoras' being influenced by the Sankhya thought. Anyway, we think the Sankhya philosophy is the first attempt to harmonise the philosophy of the Vedas through reason. We find Kapila mentioned even in the Vedas: "{Sanskrit}--He who (supports through knowledge) the first-born sage Kapila."

Q.--What is the antagonism of this thought with Western science?

A.--No antagonism at all. We are in harmony with it. Our theory of

⁹⁰ ?This discussion followed the lecture on the Vedanta Philosophy delivered by the Swami at the Graduate Philosophical Society of Harvard University, U.S.A., on March 25, 1896. (Vol. I, pp. 357 ff.).

1 evolution and of Akasha and Prana is exactly what your modern
2 philosophies have. Your belief in evolution is among our Yogis and
3 in the Sankhya philosophy. For instance, Patanjali speaks of one
4 species being changed into another by the infilling of
5 nature--"{Sanskrit}"; only he differs from you in the explanation.
6 His explanation of this evolution is spiritual. He says that just as
7 when a farmer wants to water his field from the canals that pass
8 near, he has only to lift up his gate--"{Sanskrit}"--so each man is the
9 Infinite already, only these bars and bolts and different
10 circumstances shut him in; but as soon as they are removed, he
11 rushes out and expresses himself. In the animal, the man was held
12 in abeyance; but as soon as good circumstances came, he was
13 manifested as man. And again, as soon as fitting circumstances
14 came, the God in man manifested itself. So we have very little to
15 quarrel with in the new theories. For instance, the theory of the
16 Sankhya as to perception is very little different from modern
17 physiology.

18 Q.--But your method is different?

19 A.--Yes. We claim that concentrating the powers of the mind is the
20 only way to knowledge. In external science, concentration of mind
21 is--putting it on something external; and in internal science, it is--
22 drawing towards one's Self. We call this concentration of mind
23 Yoga.

24 Q.--In the state of concentration does the truth of these principles
25 become evident?

26 A.--The Yogis claim a good deal. They claim that by concentration of
27 the mind every truth in the universe becomes evident to the mind,
28 both external and internal truth.

29 Q.--What does the Advaitist think of cosmology?

30 A.--The Advaitist would say that all this cosmology and everything
31 else are only in Maya, in the phenomenal world. In truth they do not
32 exist. But as long as we are bound, we have to see these visions.
33 Within these visions things come in a certain regular order. Beyond
34 them there is no law and order, but freedom.

35 Q.--Is the Advaita antagonistic to dualism?

36 A.--The Upanishads not being in a systematised form, it was easy
37 for philosophers to take up texts when they liked to form a system.
38 The Upanishads had always to be taken, else there would be no
39 basis. Yet we find all the different schools of thought in the
40 Upanishads. Our solution is that the Advaita is not antagonistic to
41 the Dvaita (dualism). We say the latter is only one of three steps.
42 Religion always takes three steps. The first is dualism. Then man
43 gets to a higher state, partial non-dualism. And at last he finds he is
44 one with the universe. Therefore the three do not contradict but
45 fulfil.

46 Q.--Why does Maya or ignorance exist?

47 A.--"Why" cannot be asked beyond the limit of causation. It can only
48 be asked within Maya. We say we will answer the question when it
49 is logically formulated. Before that we have no right to answer.

1 Q.--Does the Personal God belong to Maya?

2 A.--Yes; but the Personal God is the same Absolute seen through
3 Maya. That Absolute under the control of nature is what is called
4 the human soul; and that which is controlling nature is Ishvara, or
5 the Personal God. If a man starts from here to see the sun, he will
6 see at first a little sun; but as he proceeds he will see it bigger and
7 bigger, until he reaches the real one. At each stage of his progress
8 he was seeing apparently a different sun; yet we are sure it was the
9 same sun he was seeing. So all these things are but visions of the
10 Absolute, and as such they are true. Not one is a false vision, but
11 we can only say they were lower stages.

12 Q.--What is the special process by which one will come to know the
13 Absolute?

14 A.--We say there are two processes. One is the positive, and the
15 other, the negative. The positive is that through which the whole
16 universe is going--that of love. If this circle of love is increased
17 indefinitely, we reach the one universal love. The other is the "Neti",
18 "Neti"--"not this", "not this"--stopping every wave in the mind which
19 tries to draw it out; and at last the mind dies, as it were, and the
20 Real discloses Itself. We call that Samadhi, or superconsciousness.

21 Q.--That would be, then, merging the subject in the object!

22 A.--Merging the object in the subject, not merging the subject in the
23 object. Really this world dies, and I remain. I am the only one that
24 remains.

25 Q.--Some of our philosophers in Germany have thought that the
26 whole doctrine of Bhakti (Love for the Divine) in India was very
27 likely the result of occidental influence.

28 A.--I do not take any stock in that--the assumption was ephemeral.
29 The Bhakti of India is not like the Western Bhakti. The central idea
30 of ours is that there is no thought of fear. It is always, love God.
31 There is no worship through fear, but always through love, from
32 beginning to end. In the second place, the assumption is quite
33 unnecessary. Bhakti is spoken of in the oldest of the Upanishads,
34 which is much older than the Christian Bible. The germs of Bhakti
35 are even in the Samhita (the Vedic hymns). The word Bhakti is not a
36 Western word. It was suggested by the word Shraddha.

37 Q.--What is the Indian idea of the Christian faith?

38 A.--That is very good. The Vedanta will take in every one. We have a
39 peculiar idea in India. Suppose I had a child. I should not teach him
40 any religion; I should teach him breathings--the practice of
41 concentrating the mind, and just one line of prayer--not prayer in
42 your sense, but simply something like this, "I meditate on Him who
43 is the Creator of this universe: may He enlighten my mind!" That
44 way he would be educated, and then go about hearing different
45 philosophers and teachers. He would select one who, he thought,
46 would suit him best; and this man would become his Guru or
47 teacher, and he would become a Shishya or disciple. He would say
48 to that man, "This form of philosophy which you preach is the best;
49 so teach me." Our fundamental idea is that your doctrine cannot be

1 mine, or mine yours. Each one must have his own way. My daughter
2 may have one method, and my son another, and I again another. So
3 each one has an Ishta or chosen way, and we keep it to ourselves. It
4 is between me and my teacher, because we do not want to create a
5 fight. It will not help any one to tell it to others, because each one
6 will have to find his own way. So only general philosophy and
7 general methods can be taught universally. For instance, giving a
8 ludicrous example, it may help me to stand on one leg. It would be
9 ludicrous to you if I said every one must do that, but it may suit me.
10 It is quite possible for me to be a dualist and for my wife to be a
11 monist, and so on. One of my sons may worship Christ or Buddha or
12 Mohammed, so long as he obeys the caste laws. That is his own
13 Ishta.

14 Q.--Do all Hindus believe in caste?

15 A.--They are forced to. They may not believe, but they have to obey.

16 Q.--Are these exercises in breathing and concentration universally
17 practised?

18 A.--Yes; only some practise only a little, just to satisfy the
19 requirements of their religion. The temples in India are not like the
20 churches here. They may all vanish tomorrow, and will not be
21 missed. A temple is built by a man who wants to go to heaven, or to
22 get a son, or something of that sort. So he builds a large temple and
23 employs a few priests to hold services there. I need not go there at
24 all, because all my worship is in the home. In every house is a
25 special room set apart, which is called the chapel. The first duty of
26 the child, after his initiation, is to take a bath, and then to worship;
27 and his worship consists of this breathing and meditating and
28 repeating of a certain name. And another thing is to hold the body
29 straight. We believe that the mind has every power over the body to
30 keep it healthy. After one has done this, then another comes and
31 takes his seat, and each one does it in silence. Sometimes there are
32 three or four in the same room, but each one may have a different
33 method. This worship is repeated at least twice a day.

34 Q.--This state of oneness that you speak of, is it an ideal or
35 something actually attained?

36 A.--We say it is within actuality; we say we realise that state. If it
37 were only in talk, it would be nothing. The Vedas teach three things:
38 this Self is first to be heard, then to be reasoned, and then to be
39 meditated upon. When a man first hears it, he must reason on it, so
40 that he does not believe it ignorantly, but knowingly; and after
41 reasoning what it is, he must meditate upon it, and then realise it.
42 And that is religion. Belief is no part of religion. We say religion is a
43 superconscious state.

44 Q.--If you ever reach that state of superconsciousness, can you ever
45 tell about it?

46 A.--No; but we know it by its fruits. An idiot, when he goes to sleep,
47 comes out of sleep an idiot or even worse. But another man goes
48 into the state of meditation, and when he comes out he is a
49 philosopher, a sage, a great man. That shows the difference
50 between these two states.

1 Q.--I should like to ask, in continuation of Professor __'s question,
2 whether you know of any people who have made any study of the
3 principles of self-hypnotism, which they undoubtedly practised to a
4 great extent in ancient India, and what has been recently stated
5 and practised in that thing. Of course you do not have it so much in
6 modern India.

7 A.--What you call hypnotism in the West is only a part of the real
8 thing. The Hindus call it self-hypnotisation. They say you are
9 hypnotised already, and that you should get out of it and de-
10 hypnotise yourself. "There the sun cannot illumine, nor the moon, nor
11 the stars; the flash of lightning cannot illumine that; what to speak of
12 this mortal fire! That shining, everything else shines" (Katha
13 Upanishad, II.ii.15). That is not hypnotisation, but de-hypnotisation.
14 We say that every other religion that preaches these things as real
15 is practising a form of hypnotism. It is the Advaitist alone that does
16 not care to be hypnotised. His is the only system that more or less
17 understands that hypnotism comes with every form of dualism. But
18 the Advaitist says, throw away even the Vedas, throw away even the
19 Personal God, throw away even the universe, throw away even your
20 own body and mind, and let nothing remain, in order to get rid of
21 hypnotism perfectly. "From where the mind comes back with
22 speech, being unable to reach, knowing the Bliss of Brahman, no
23 more is fear." That is de-hypnotisation. "I have neither vice nor
24 virtue, nor misery nor happiness; I care neither for the Vedas nor
25 sacrifices nor ceremonies; I am neither food nor eating nor eater,
26 for I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute; I
27 am He, I am He." We know all about hypnotism. We have a
28 psychology which the West is just beginning to know, but not yet
29 adequately, I am sorry to say.

30 Q.--What do you call the astral body?

31 A.--The astral body is what we call the Linga Sharira. When this
32 body dies, how can it come to take another body? Force cannot
33 remain without matter. So a little part of the fine matter remains,
34 through which the internal organs make another body--for each one
35 is making his own body; it is the mind that makes the body. If I
36 become a sage, my brain gets changed into a sage's brain; and the
37 Yogis say that even in this life a Yogi can change his body into a
38 god-body.

39 The Yogis show many wonderful things. One ounce of practice is
40 worth a thousand pounds of theory. So I have no right to say that
41 because I have not seen this or that thing done, it is false. Their
42 books say that with practice you can get all sorts of results that are
43 most wonderful. Small results can be obtained in a short time by
44 regular practice, so that one may know that there is no humbug
45 about it, no charlatanism. And these Yogis explain the very
46 wonderful things mentioned in all scriptures in a scientific way. The
47 question is, how these records of miracles entered into every
48 nation. The man, who says that they are all false and need no
49 explanation, is not rational. You have no right to deny them until
50 you can prove them false. You must prove that they are without any
51 foundation, and only then have you the right to stand up and deny
52 them. But you have not done that. On the other hand, the Yogis say

1 they are not miracles, and they claim that they can do them even
2 today. Many wonderful things are done in India today. But none of
3 them are done by miracles. There are many books on the subject.
4 Again, if nothing else has been done in that line except a scientific
5 approach towards psychology, that credit must be given to the
6 Yogis.

7 Q.--Can you say in the concrete what the manifestations are which
8 the Yogi can show?

9 A.--The Yogi wants no faith or belief in his science but that which is
10 given to any other science, just enough gentlemanly faith to come
11 and make the experiment. The ideal of the Yogi is tremendous. I
12 have seen the lower things that can be done by the power of the
13 mind, and therefore, I have no right to disbelieve that the highest
14 things can be done. The ideal of the Yogi is eternal peace and love
15 through omniscience and omnipotence. I know a Yogi who was
16 bitten by a cobra, and who fell down on the ground. In the evening
17 he revived again, and when asked what happened, he said: "A
18 messenger came from my Beloved." All hatred and anger and
19 jealousy have been burnt out of this man. Nothing can make him
20 react; he is infinite love all the time, and he is omnipotent in his
21 power of love. That is the real Yogi. And this manifesting different
22 things is accidental on the way. That is not what he wants to attain.
23 The Yogi says, every man is a slave except the Yogi. He is a slave of
24 food, to air, to his wife, to his children, to a dollar, slave to a nation,
25 slave to name and fame, and to a thousand things in this world. The
26 man who is not controlled by any one of these bondages is alone a
27 real man, a real Yogi. "They have conquered relative existence in
28 this life who are firm-fixed in sameness. God is pure and the same
29 to all. Therefore such are said to be living in God" (Gita, V.19).

30 Q.--Do the Yogis attach any importance to caste?

31 A.--No; caste is only the training school for undeveloped minds.

32 Q.--Is there no connection between this idea of superconsciousness
33 and the heat of India?

34 A.--I do not think so; because all this philosophy was thought out
35 fifteen thousand feet above the level of the sea, among the
36 Himalayas, in an almost Arctic temperature.

37 Q.--Is it practicable to attain success in a cold climate?

38 A.--It is practicable, and the only thing that is practicable in this
39 world. We say you are a born Vedantist, each one of you. You are
40 declaring your oneness with everything each moment you live.
41 Every time that your heart goes out towards the world, you are a
42 true Vedantist, only you do not know it. You are moral without
43 knowing why; and the Vedanta is the philosophy which analysed
44 and taught man to be moral consciously. It is the essence of all
45 religions.

46 Q.--Should you say that there is an unsocial principle in our Western
47 people, which makes us so pluralistic, and that Eastern people are
48 more sympathetic than we are?

49 A.--I think the Western people are more cruel, and the Eastern

1 people have more mercy towards all beings. But that is simply
2 because your civilisation is very much more recent. It takes time to
3 make a thing come under the influence of mercy. You have a great
4 deal of power, and the power of control of the mind has especially
5 been very little practised. It will take time to make you gentle and
6 good. This feeling tingles in every drop of blood in India. If I go to
7 the villages to teach the people politics, they will not understand;
8 but if I go to teach them Vedanta, they will say, "Now, Swami, you
9 are all right". That Vairagya, non-attachment, is everywhere in
10 India, even today. We are very much degenerated now; but kings
11 will give up their thrones and go about the country without
12 anything.

13 In some places the common village-girl with her spinning-wheel
14 says, "Do not talk to me of dualism; my spinning-wheel says 'Soham,
15 Soham'--'I am He, I am He.'" Go and talk to these people, and ask
16 them why it is that they speak so and yet kneel before that stone.
17 They will say that with you religion means dogma, but with them
18 realisation. "I will be a Vedantist", one of them will say, "only when
19 all this has vanished, and I have seen the reality. Until then there is
20 no difference between me and the ignorant. So I am using these
21 stones and am going to temples, and so on, to come to realisation. I
22 have heard, but I want to see and realise." "Different methods of
23 speech, different manners of explaining the meaning of the
24 scriptures--these are only for the enjoyment of the learned, not for
25 freedom" (Shankara). It is realisation which leads us to that
26 freedom.

27 Q.--Is this spiritual freedom among the people consistent with
28 attention to caste?

29 A.--Certainly not. They say there should be no caste. Even those
30 who are in caste say it is not a very perfect institution. But they say,
31 when you find us another and a better one, we will give it up. They
32 say, what will you give us instead? Where is there no caste? In your
33 nation you are struggling all the time to make a caste. As soon as a
34 man gets a bag of dollars, he says, "I am one of the Four Hundred."
35 We alone have succeeded in making a permanent caste. Other
36 nations are struggling and do not succeed. We have superstitions
37 and evils enough. Would taking the superstitions and evils from
38 your country mend matters? It is owing to caste that three hundred
39 millions of people can find a piece of bread to eat yet. It is an
40 imperfect institution, no doubt. But if it had not been for caste, you
41 would have had no Sanskrit books to study. This caste made walls,
42 around which all sorts of invasions rolled and surged, but found it
43 impossible to break through. That necessity has not gone yet; so
44 caste remains. The caste we have now is not that of seven hundred
45 years ago. Every blow has riveted it. Do you realise that India is the
46 only country that never went outside of itself to conquer? The great
47 emperor Asoka insisted that none of his descendants should go to
48 conquer. If people want to send us teachers, let them help, but not
49 injure. Why should all these people come to conquer the Hindus?
50 Did they do any injury to any nation? What little good they could do,
51 they did for the world. They taught it science, philosophy, religion,
52 and civilised the savage hordes of the earth. And this is the return--

1 only murder and tyranny, and calling them heathen rascals. Look at
2 the books written on India by Western people and at the stories of
3 many travellers who go there; in retaliation for what injuries are
4 these hurled at them?

5 Q.--What is the Vedantic idea of civilisation?

6 A.--You are philosophers, and you do not think that a bag of gold
7 makes the difference between man and man. What is the value of
8 all these machines and sciences? They have only one result: they
9 spread knowledge. You have not solved the problem of want, but
10 only made it keener. Machines do not solve the poverty question;
11 they simply make men struggle the more. Competition gets keener.
12 What value has nature in itself? Why do you go and build a
13 monument to a man who sends electricity through a wire? Does not
14 nature do that millions of times over? Is not everything already
15 existing in nature? What is the value of your getting it? It is already
16 there. The only value is that it makes this development. This
17 universe is simply a gymnasium in which the soul is taking exercise;
18 and after these exercises we become gods. So the value of
19 everything is to be decided by how far it is a manifestation of God.
20 Civilisation is the manifestation of that divinity in man.

21 Q.--Have the Buddhists any caste laws?

22 A.--The Buddhists never had much caste, and there are very few
23 Buddhists in India. Buddha was a social reformer. Yet in Buddhistic
24 countries I find that there have been strong attempts to
25 manufacture caste, only they have failed. The Buddhists' caste is
26 practically nothing, but they take pride in it in their own minds.

27 Buddha was one of the Sannyasins of the Vedanta. He started a new
28 sect, just as others are started even today. The ideas which now are
29 called Buddhism were not his. They were much more ancient. He
30 was a great man who gave the ideas power. The unique element in
31 Buddhism was its social element. Brahmins and Kshatriyas have
32 always been our teachers, and most of the Upanishads were written
33 by Kshatriyas, while the ritualistic portions of the Vedas came from
34 the Brahmins. Most of our great teachers throughout India have
35 been Kshatriyas, and were always universal in their teachings;
36 whilst the Brahmana prophets with two exceptions were very
37 exclusive. Rama, Krishna, and Buddha--worshipped as Incarnations
38 of God--were Kshatriyas.

39 Q.--Are sects, ceremonies, and scriptures helps to realisation?

40 A.--When a man realises, he gives up everything. The various sects
41 and ceremonies and books, so far as they are the means of arriving
42 at that point, are all right. But when they fail in that, we must
43 change them. "The knowing one must not despise the condition of
44 those who are ignorant, nor should the knowing one destroy the
45 faith of the ignorant in their own particular method, but by proper
46 action lead them and show them the path to come to where he
47 stands" (Gita, III.26).

48 Q.--How does the Vedanta explain individuality and ethics?

49 A.--The real individual is the Absolute; this personalisation is

1 through Maya. It is only apparent; in reality it is always the
2 Absolute. In reality there is one, but in Maya it is appearing as
3 many. In Maya there is this variation. Yet even in this Maya there is
4 always the tendency to get back to the One, as expressed in all
5 ethics and all morality of every nation, because it is the
6 constitutional necessity of the soul. It is finding its oneness; and this
7 struggle to find this oneness is what we call ethics and morality.
8 Therefore we must always practise them.

9 Q.--Is not the greater part of ethics taken up with the relation
10 between individuals?

11 A.--That is all it is. The Absolute does not come within Maya.

12 Q.--You say the individual is the Absolute, and I was going to ask you
13 whether the individual has knowledge.

14 A.--The state of manifestation is individuality, and the light in that
15 state is what we call knowledge. To use, therefore, this term
16 *knowledge* for the light of the Absolute is not precise, as the
17 absolute state transcends relative knowledge.

18 Q.--Does it include it?

19 A.--Yes, in this sense. Just as a piece of gold can be changed into all
20 sorts of coins, so with this. The state can be broken up into all sorts
21 of knowledge. It is the state of superconsciousness, and includes
22 both consciousness and unconsciousness. The man who attains that
23 state has all that we call knowledge. When he wants to realise that
24 consciousness of knowledge, he has to go a step lower. Knowledge
25 is a lower state; it is only in Maya that we can have knowledge.

27 II

28 (*At the Twentieth Century Club of Boston, U.S.A.*)

29
30 Q.--Did Vedanta exert any influence over Mohammedanism?

31 A.--This Vedantic spirit of religious liberality has very much affected
32 Mohammedanism. Mohammedanism in India is quite a different
33 thing from that in any other country. It is only when Mohammedans
34 come from other countries and preach to their co-religionists in
35 India about living with men who are not of their faith that a
36 Mohammedan mob is aroused and fights.

37 Q.--Does Vedanta recognise caste?

38 A.--The caste system is opposed to the religion of the Vedanta.
39 Caste is a social custom, and all our great preachers have tried to
40 break it down. From Buddhism downwards, every sect has
41 preached against caste, and every time it has only riveted the
42 chains. Caste is simply the outgrowth of the political institutions of
43 India; it is a hereditary trade guild. Trade competition with Europe
44 has broken caste more than any teaching.

45 Q.--What is the peculiarity of the Vedas?

46 A.--One peculiarity of the Vedas is that they are the only scriptures

1 that again and again declare that you must go beyond them. The
2 Vedas say that they were written just for the child mind; and when
3 you have grown, you must go beyond them.

4 Q.--Do you hold the individual soul to be eternally real?

5 A.--The individual soul consists of a man's thoughts, and they are
6 changing every moment. Therefore, it cannot be eternally real. It is
7 real only in the phenomenal. The individual soul consists of memory
8 and thought; how can that be real?

9 Q.--Why did Buddhism as a religion decline in India?

10 A.--Buddhism did not really decline in India; it was only a gigantic
11 social movement. Before Buddha great numbers of animals were
12 killed for sacrifice and other reasons, and people drank wine and
13 ate meat in large quantities. Since Buddha's teaching drunkenness
14 has almost disappeared, and the killing of animals has almost gone.

15
16
17 III

18 (*At the Brooklyn Ethical Society, Brooklyn, U.S.A.*)
19

20 Q.--How can you reconcile your optimistic views with the existence
21 of evil, with the universal prevalence of sorrow and pain?

22 A.--I can only answer the question if the existence of evil be first
23 proved; but this the Vedantic religion does not admit. Eternal pain
24 unmixed with pleasure would be a positive evil; but temporal pain
25 and sorrow, if they have contributed an element of tenderness and
26 nobility tending towards eternal bliss, are not evils: on the contrary,
27 they may be supreme good. We cannot assert that anything is evil
28 until we have traced its sequence into the realm of eternity.

29 Devil worship is not a part of the Hindu religion. The human race is
30 in the process of development; all have not reached the same
31 altitude. Therefore some are nobler and purer in their earthly lives
32 than others. Every one has an opportunity within the limits of the
33 sphere of his present development of making himself better. We
34 cannot unmake ourselves; we cannot destroy or impair the vital
35 force within us, but we have the freedom to give it different
36 directions.

37 Q.--Is not the reality of cosmic matter simply the imagining of our
38 own minds?

39 A.--In my opinion the external world is certainly an entity and has
40 an existence outside of our mental conceptions. All creation is
41 moving onwards and upwards, obedient to the great law of spirit
42 evolution, which is different from the evolution of matter. The latter
43 is symbolical of, but does not explain, the process of the former. We
44 are not individuals now, in our present earthly environment. We
45 shall not have reached individuality until we shall have ascended to
46 the higher state, when the divine spirit within us will have a perfect
47 medium for the expression of its attributes.

1 Q.--What is your explanation of the problem presented to Christ, as
2 to whether it was the infant itself or its parents that had sinned,
3 that it was born blind?

4 A.--While the question of sin does not enter into the problem, I am
5 convinced that the blindness was due to some act on the part of the
6 spirit of the child in a previous incarnation. In my opinion such
7 problems are only explicable on the hypothesis of a prior earthly
8 existence.

9 Q.--Do our spirits pass at death into a state of happiness?

10 A.--Death is only a change of condition: time and space are in you,
11 you are not in time and space. It is enough to know that as we make
12 our lives purer and nobler, either in the seen or the unseen world,
13 the nearer we approach God, who is the centre of all spiritual
14 beauty and eternal joy.

15 Q.--What is the Hindu theory of the transmigration of souls?

16 A.--It is on the same basis as the theory of conservation is to the
17 scientist. This theory was first produced by a philosopher of my
18 country. The ancient sages did not believe in a creation. A creation
19 implies producing something out of nothing. That is impossible.
20 There was no beginning of creation as there was no beginning of
21 time. God and creation are as two lines without end, without
22 beginning, and parallel. Our theory of creation is--"It is, it was, and
23 is to be". All punishment is but reaction. People of the West should
24 learn one thing from India and that is toleration. All the religions
25 are good, since the essentials are the same.

26 Q.--Why are the women of India not much elevated?

27 A.--It is in a great degree owing to the barbarous invaders through
28 different ages; it is partly due to the people of India themselves.

29 When it was pointed out to Swamiji in America that Hinduism is not
30 a proselytising religion, he replied:

31 "I have a message to the West as Buddha had a message to the
32 East."

33 Q.--Do you intend to introduce the practices and rituals of the Hindu
34 religion into this country (America)?

35 A.--I am preaching simply philosophy.

36 Q.--Do you not think if the fear of future hell-fire were taken from
37 man there would be no controlling him?

38 A.--No! On the contrary, I think he is made far better through love
39 and hope than through fear.

40
41 IV

42 (*Selections from the Math Diary*)

43
44 Q.--Whom can we call a Guru?

45 A.--He who can tell your past and future is your Guru.

1 Q.--How can one have Bhakti?

2 A.--There is Bhakti within you, only a veil of lust-and-wealth covers
3 it, and as soon as that is removed Bhakti will manifest by itself.

4 Q.--What is the true meaning of the assertion that we should depend
5 on ourselves?

6 A.--Here self means the eternal Self. But even dependence on the
7 non-eternal self may lead gradually to the right goal, as the
8 individual self is really the eternal Self under delusion.

9 Q.--If unity is the only reality, how could duality which is perceived
10 by all every moment have arisen?

11 A.--Perception is never dual; it is only the representation of
12 perception that involves duality. If perception were dual, the known
13 could have existed independently of the knower, and vice versa.

14 Q.--How is harmonious development of character to be best
15 effected?

16 A.--By association with persons whose character has been so
17 developed.

18 Q.--What should be our attitude to the Vedas?

19 A.--The Vedas, i.e. only those portions of them which agree with
20 reason, are to be accepted as authority. Other Shastras, such as the
21 Puranas etc., are only to be accepted so far as they do not go
22 against the Vedas. All the religious thoughts that have come
23 subsequent to the Vedas, in the world, in whatever part of it, have
24 been derived from the Vedas.

25 Q.--Is the division of time into four Yugas astronomical or arbitrary
26 calculation?

27 A.--There is no mention of such divisions in the Vedas. They are
28 arbitrary assumptions of Pauranika times.

29 Q.--Is the relation between concepts and words necessary and
30 immutable, or accidental and conventional?

31 A.--The point is exceedingly debatable. It seems that there is a
32 necessary relation, but not absolutely so, as appears from the
33 diversity of language. There may be some subtle relation which we
34 are not yet able to detect.

35 Q.--What should be the principle to be followed in working within
36 India?

37 A.--First of all, men should be taught to be practical and physically
38 strong. A dozen of such lions will conquer the world, and not
39 millions of sheep can do so. Secondly, men should not be taught to
40 imitate a personal ideal, however great.

41 Then Swamiji went on to speak of the corruptions of some of the
42 Hindu symbols. He distinguished between the path of knowledge
43 and the path of devotion. The former belonged properly to the
44 Aryas, and therefore was so strict in the selection of Adhikaris
45 (qualified aspirants), and the latter coming from the South, or non-
46 Aryan sources, made no such distinction.

1 Q.--What part will the Ramakrishna Mission take in the
2 regenerating work of India?

3 A.--From this Math will go out men of character who will deluge the
4 world with spirituality. This will be followed by revivals in other
5 lines. Thus Brahmins, Kshatriyas, and Vaishyas will be produced.
6 The Shudra caste will exist no longer--their work being done by
7 machinery. The present want of India is the Kshatriya force.

8 Q.--Is retrograde reincarnation from the human stage possible?

9 A.--Yes. Reincarnation depends on Karma. If a man accumulates
10 Karma akin to the beastly nature, he will be drawn thereto.

11 In one of the question-classes (1898) Swamiji traced image-worship
12 to Buddhistic sources. First, there was the Chaitya; second, the
13 Stupa; and then came the temple of Buddha. Along with it arose the
14 temples of the Hindu deities.

15 Q.--Does the Kundalini really exist in the physical body?

16 A.--Shri Ramakrishna used to say that the so-called lotuses of the
17 Yogi do not really exist in the human body, but that they are created
18 within oneself by Yoga powers.

19 Q.--Can a man attain Mukti by image-worship?

20 A.--Image-worship cannot directly give Mukti; it may be an indirect
21 cause, a help on the way. Image-worship should not be condemned,
22 for, with many, it prepares the mind for the realisation of the
23 Advaita which alone makes man perfect.

24 Q.--What should be our highest ideal of character?

25 A.--Renunciation.

26 Q.--How did Buddhism leave the legacy of corruption in India?

27 A.--The Bauddhas tried to make everyone in India a monk or a nun.
28 We cannot expect that from everyone. This led to gradual relaxation
29 among monks and nuns. It was also caused by their imitating
30 Tibetan and other barbarous customs in the name of religion. They
31 went to preach in those places and assimilated their corruptions,
32 and then introduced them into India.

33 Q.--Is Maya without beginning and end?

34 A.--Maya is eternal both ways, taken universally, as genus; but it is
35 non-eternal individually.

36 Q.--Brahman and Maya cannot be cognised simultaneously. How
37 could the absolute reality of either be proved as arising out of the
38 one or the other?

39 A.--It could be proved only by realisation. When one realises
40 Brahman, for him Maya exists no longer, just as once the identity of
41 the rope is found out, the illusion of the serpent comes no more.

42 Q.--What is Maya?

43 A.--There is only one thing, call it by any name--matter, or spirit. It is
44 difficult or rather impossible to think the one independent of the
45 other. This is Maya, or ignorance.

1 Q.--What is Mukti (liberation)?

2 A.--Mukti means entire freedom--freedom from the bondages of
3 good and evil. A golden chain is as much a chain as an iron one.
4 Shri Ramakrishna used to say that, to pick out one thorn which has
5 stuck into the foot, another thorn is requisitioned, and when the
6 thorn is taken out, both are thrown away. So the bad tendencies are
7 to be counteracted by the good ones, but after that, the good
8 tendencies have also to be conquered.

9 Q.--Can salvation (Mukti) be obtained without the grace of God?

10 A.--Salvation has nothing to do with God. Freedom already *is*.

11 Q.--What is the proof of the self in us not being the product of the
12 body etc.?

13 A.--The "ego" like its correlative "non-ego", is the product of the
14 body, mind etc. The only proof of the existence of the real Self is
15 realisation.

16 Q.--Who is a true Jnani, and who is a true Bhakta?

17 A.--The true Jnani is he who has the deepest love within his heart
18 and at the same time is a practical seer of Advaita in his outward
19 relations. And the true Bhakta (lover) is he who, realising his own
20 soul as identified with the universal Soul, and thus possessed of the
21 true Jnana within, feels for and loves everyone. Of Jnana and Bhakti
22 he who advocates one and denounces the other cannot be either a
23 Jnani or a Bhakta, but he is a thief and a cheat.

24 Q.--Why should a man serve Ishvara?

25 A.--If you once admit that there is such a thing as Ishvara (God), you
26 have numberless occasions to serve Him. Service of the Lord
27 means, according to all the scriptural authorities, remembrance
28 (Smarana). If you believe in the existence of God, you will be
29 reminded of Him at every step of your life.

30 Q.--Is Mayavada different from Advaitavada?

31 A.--No. They are identical. There is absolutely no other explanation
32 of Advaitavada except Mayavada.

33 Q.--How is it possible for God who is infinite to be limited in the
34 form of a man (as an Avatara)?

35 A.--It is true that God is infinite, but not in the sense in which you
36 comprehend it. You have confounded your idea of infinity with the
37 materialistic idea of vastness. When you say that God cannot take
38 the form of a man, you understand that a very, very large substance
39 or form (as if material in nature), cannot be compressed into a very,
40 very small compass. God's infinitude refers to the unlimitedness of
41 a purely spiritual entity, and as such, does not suffer in the least by
42 expressing itself in a human form.

43 Q.--Some say, "First of all become a Siddha (one who has realised
44 the Truth), and then you have the right to Karma, or work for
45 others", while others say that one should work for others even from
46 the beginning. How can both these views be reconciled?

47 A.--You are confusing one thing with the other. Karma means either

1 service to humanity or preaching. To real preaching, no doubt, none
2 has the right except the Siddha Purusha, i.e. one who has realised
3 the Truth. But to service every one has the right, and not only so,
4 but every one is under obligation to serve others, so long as he is
5 accepting service from others.

6
7
8 V

9 **YOGA, VAIRAGYA, TAPASYA, LOVE**

10
11 Q.--Does Yoga serve to keep the body in its full health and vitality?

12 A.--It does. It staves off disease. As objectification of one's own body
13 is difficult, it is very effective in regard to others. Fruit and milk are
14 the best food for Yogis.

15 Q.--Is the attainment of bliss synchronous with that of Vairagya?

16 A.--The first step in Vairagya is very painful. When perfected, it
17 yields supreme bliss.

18 Q.--What is Tapasya?

19 A.--Tapasya is threefold--of the body, of speech, and of mind. The
20 first is service of others; the second, truthfulness; and third, control
21 and concentration.

22 Q.--Why do we not see that the same consciousness pervades the
23 ant as well as the perfected sage?

24 A.--Realising the unity of this manifestation is a question of time
25 only.

26 Q.--Is preaching possible without gaining perfection?

27 A.--No. May the Lord grant that all the Sannyasin

1 disciples of my Master and of myself be perfected, so that they may
2 be fit for missionary work!

3 Q.--Is the divine majesty expressed in the Universal Form of Shri
4 Krishna in the Gita superior to the expression of love unattended
5 with other attributes, embodied in the form of Shri Krishna, for
6 instance, in His relation with the Gopis?

7 A.--The feeling of love, unattended with the idea of divinity, in
8 respect to the person loved, is assuredly inferior to the expression
9 of divine majesty. If it were not so, all lovers of the flesh would have
10 obtained freedom.

11 12 VI

13 *IN ANSWER TO NIVEDITA*

14
15 Q.--I cannot remember what parts Prithvi Rai and Chand disguised
16 themselves to play, when they determined to attend the Svayamvara
17 at Kanauj.

18 A.--Both went as minstrels.

19 Q.--Also did Prithvi Rai determine to marry Samyukta partly
20 because she was the daughter of his rival and partly for the fame of
21 her great beauty? Did he then send a woman-servant to obtain the
22 post of her maid? And did this old nurse set herself to make the
23 princess fall in love with Prithvi Rai?

24 A.--They had fallen in love with each other, hearing deeds and
25 beauty and seeing portraits. Falling in love through portraits is an
26 old Indian game.

27 Q.--How did Krishna come to be brought up amongst the
28 shepherds?

29 A.--His father had to flee with the baby to save it from the tyrant
30 Kamsa, who ordered all the babes (male) from that year to be
31 killed, as (through prophecy)

1 he was afraid one of them would be Krishna and dethrone him. He
2 kept Krishna's father and mother in prison (who were his cousins)
3 for fear of that prophecy.

4 Q.--How did this part of his life terminate?

5 A.--He came with his brother Baladeva and Nanda, his foster-father,
6 invited by the tyrant to a festival. (The tyrant had plotted his
7 destruction.) He killed the tyrant and instead of taking the throne
8 placed the nearest heir on it. Himself he never took any fruit of
9 action.

10 Q.--Can you give me any dramatic incident of this period?

11 A.--This period is full of miracles. He as a baby was once naughty
12 and the cowherd-mother tried to tie him with her churning string
13 and found she could not bind him with all the strings she had. Then
14 her eyes opened and she saw that she was going to bind him who
15 had the whole universe in his body. She began to pray and tremble.
16 Immediately the Lord touched her with his Maya and she saw only
17 the child.

18 Brahma, the chief of gods, disbelieving that the Lord had become a
19 cowherd, stole one day all the cows and cowherd boys and put them
20 to sleep in a cave. When he came back, he found the same boys and
21 cows round Krishna. Again he stole the new lot and hid them away.
22 He came back and saw there the same again. Then his eyes opened
23 and began to see numerous worlds and heavens and Brahmas by
24 the thousands, one greater than the preceding, in the body of the
25 Lord.

26 He danced on the serpent Kaliya who had been poisoning the water
27 of the Yamuna, and he held up the mount Govardhana in defiance of
28 Indra whose worship he had forbidden and who in revenge wanted
29 to kill all the people of Vraja by deluge of rain. They were all
30 sheltered by Krishna under the hill Govardhana which he upheld
31 with a finger on their head.

32 He from his childhood was against snake-worship

1 and Indra-worship. Indra-worship is a Vedic ritual. Throughout the
2 Gita he is not favourable to Vedic ritual.

3 This is the period of his love to Gopis. He was eleven years of age.

4
5 VII

6 *GURU, AVATARA, YOGA, JAPA, SEVA*
7

8 Q.--How can Vedanta be realised?

9 A.--By "hearing, reflection, and meditation". Hearing must take
10 place from a Sad-guru. Even if one is not a regular disciple, but is a
11 fit aspirant and hears the Sad-guru's words, he is liberated.

12 Q.--Who is a Sad-guru?

13 A.--A Sad-guru is one on whom the spiritual power has descended
14 by Guru-parampara, or an unbroken chain of discipleship. To play
15 the role of a spiritual teacher is a very difficult thing. One has to
16 take on oneself the sins of others. There is every chance of a fall in
17 less advanced men. If merely physical pain ensues, then he should
18 consider himself fortunate.

19 Q.--Cannot the spiritual teacher make the aspirant fit?

20 A.--An Avatara can. Not an ordinary Guru.

21 Q.--Is there no easy way to liberation?

22 A.--"There is no royal road to Geometry"--except for those who have
23 been fortunate enough to come in contact with an Avatara.
24 Paramahansa Deva used to say, "One who is having his last birth
25 shall somehow or other see me."

26 Q.--Is not Yoga an easy path to that?

27 A.--(Jokingly) You have said well, I see!--Yoga an easy path! If your
28 mind be not pure and you try to follow Yoga, you will perhaps attain
29 some supernatural power, but that will be a hindrance. Therefore
30 purity of mind is the first thing necessary.

31 Q.--How can this be attained?

32 A.--By good work. Good work is of two kinds, positive and negative.
33 "Do not steal"--that is a negative mandate, and "Do good to others"--
34 is a positive one.

35 Q.--Should not doing good to others be performed in a higher stage,
36 for if performed in a lower stage, it may bind one to the world?

37 A.--It should be performed in the first stage. One who has any
38 desire at first gets deluded and becomes bound, but not others.
39 Gradually it will become very natural.

40 Q.--Sir, last night you said, "In you is everything." Now, if I want to
41 be like Vishnu, shall I have to meditate on the form also, or only on
42 the idea?

43 A.--According to capacity one may follow either way.

44 Q.--What is the means of realisation?

1 A.--The Guru is the means of realisation. "There is no knowledge
2 without a teacher."

3 Q.--Some say that there is no necessity of practising meditation in a
4 worship-room. How far is it true?

5 A.--Those who have already realised the Lord's presence may not
6 require it, but for others it is necessary. One, however, should go
7 beyond the form and meditate on the impersonal aspect of God, for
8 no form can grant liberation. You may get worldly prosperity from
9 the sight of the form. One who ministers to his mother succeeds in
10 this world; one who worships his father goes to heaven; but the
11 worshipper of a Sadhu (holy man) gets knowledge and devotion.

12 Q.--What is the meaning of "{Sanskrit}" etc.--"Even a moment's
13 association with the holy ones serves to take one beyond this
14 relative existence"?

15 A.--A fit person coming in contact with a true Sadhu attains to
16 liberation. True Sadhus are very rare, but their influence is such
17 that a great writer has said, "Hypocrisy is the tribute which vice
18 pays to virtue." But Avatars are Kapalamochanas, that is, they can
19 alter the doom of people. They can stir the whole world. The least
20 dangerous and best form of worship is worshipping man. One who
21 has got the idea of Brahman in a man has realised it in the whole
22 universe. Monasticism and the householder's life are both good,
23 according to different circumstances. Knowledge is the only thing
24 necessary.

25 Q.--Where should one meditate--inside the body or outside it?
26 Should the mind be withdrawn inside or held outside?

27 A.--We should try to meditate inside. As for the mind being here or
28 there, it will take a long time before we reach the mental plane.
29 Now our struggle is with the body. When one acquires a perfect
30 steadiness in posture, then and then alone one begins to struggle
31 with the mind. Asana (posture) being conquered, one's limbs
32 remain motionless, and one can sit as long as one pleases.

33 Q.--Sometimes one gets tired of Japa (repetition of the Mantra).
34 Should one continue it or read some good book instead?

35 A.--One gets tired of Japa for two reasons. Sometimes one's brain is
36 fatigued, sometimes it is the result of idleness. If the former, then
37 one should give up Japa for the time being, for persistence in it at
38 the time results in seeing hallucinations, or in lunacy etc. But if the
39 latter, the mind should be forced to continue Japa.

40 Q.--Sometimes sitting at Japa one gets joy at first, but then one
41 seems to be disinclined to continue the Japa owing to that joy.
42 Should it be continued then?

43 A.--Yes, that joy is a hindrance to spiritual practice, its name being
44 Rasasvadana (tasting of the sweetness). One must rise above that.

45 Q.--Is it good to practise Japa for a long time, though the mind may
46 be wandering?

47 A.--Yes. As some people break a wild horse by always keeping his
48 seat on his back.

1 Q.--You have written in your *Bhakti-Yoga* that if a weak-bodied man
2 tries to practise Yoga, a tremendous reaction comes. Then what to
3 do?

4 A.--What fear if you die in the attempt to realise the Self! Man is not
5 afraid of dying for the sake of learning and many other things, and
6 why should you fear to die for religion?

7 Q.--Can Jiva-seva (service to beings) alone give Mukti?

8 A.--Jiva-seva can give Mukti not directly but indirectly, through the
9 purification of the mind. But if you wish to do a thing properly, you
10 must, for the time being, think that that is all-sufficient. The danger
11 in any sect is want of zeal. There must be constancy (Nishtha), or
12 there will be no growth. At present it has become necessary to lay
13 stress on Karma.

14 Q.--What should be our motive in work--compassion, or any other
15 motive?

16 A.--Doing good to others out of compassion is good, but the Seva
17 (service) of all beings in the spirit of the Lord is better.

18 Q.--What is the efficacy of prayer?

19 A.--By prayer one's subtle powers are easily roused, and if
20 consciously done, all desires may be fulfilled by it; but done
21 unconsciously, one perhaps in ten is fulfilled. Such prayer, however,
22 is selfish and should therefore be discarded.

23 Q.--How to recognise God when He has assumed a human form?

24 A.--One who can alter the doom of people is the Lord. No Sadhu,
25 however advanced, can claim this unique position. I do not see
26 anyone who realises Ramakrishna as God. We sometimes feel it
27 hazily, that is all. To realise Him as God and yet be attached to the
28 world is inconsistent.

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CONVERSATIONS AND DIALOGUES

I

[Shri Surendra Nath Das Gupta]

One day, with some of my young friends belonging to different colleges, I went to the Belur Math to see Swamiji. We sat round him; talks on various subjects were going on. No sooner was any question put to him than he gave the most conclusive answer to it. Suddenly he exclaimed, pointing to us, "You are all studying different schools of European philosophy and metaphysics and learning new facts about nationalities and countries; can you tell me what is the grandest of all the truths in life?"

We began to think, but could not make out what he wanted us to say. As none put forth any reply, he exclaimed in his inspiring language:

"Look here--we shall all die! Bear this in mind always, and then the spirit within will wake up. Then only, meanness will vanish from you, practicality in work will come, you will get new vigour in mind and body, and those who come in contact with you will also feel that they have really got something uplifting from you."

Then the following conversation took place between him and myself:

Myself: But, Swamiji, will not the spirit break down at the thought of death and the heart be overpowered by despondency?

Swamiji: Quite so. At first, the heart will break down, and despondency and gloomy thoughts will occupy your mind. But persist, let days pass like that--and then? Then you will see that new strength has come into the heart, that the constant thought of death is giving you a new life and is making you more and more thoughtful by bringing every moment before your mind's eye the truth of the saying, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!" Wait! Let days, months, and years pass, and you will feel that the spirit within is waking up with the strength of a lion, that the little power within has transformed itself into a mighty power! Think of death always, and you will realise the truth of every word I say. What more shall I say in words!

One of my friends praised Swamiji in a low voice.

Swamiji: Do not praise me. Praise and censure have no value in this world of ours. They only rock a man as if in a swing. Praise I have had enough of; showers of censure I have also had to bear; but what avails thinking of them! Let everyone go on doing his own duty unconcerned. When the last moment arrives, praise and blame will be the same to you, to me, and to others. We are here to work, and will have to leave all when the call comes.

Myself: How little we are, Swamiji!

Swamiji: True! You have well said! Think of this infinite universe

1 with its millions and millions of solar systems, and think with what
2 an infinite, incomprehensible power they are impelled, running as if
3 to touch the Feet of the One Unknown--and how little we are!
4 Where then is room here to allow ourselves to indulge in vileness
5 and mean-mindedness? What should we gain here by fostering
6 mutual enmity and party-spirit? Take my advice: Set yourselves
7 wholly to the service of others, when you come from your colleges.
8 Believe me, far greater happiness would then be yours than if you
9 had had a whole treasury full of money and other valuables at your
10 command. As you go on your way, serving others, you will advance
11 accordingly in the path of knowledge.

12 Myself: But we are so very poor, Swamiji!

13 Swamiji: Leave aside your thoughts of poverty! In what respect are
14 you poor? Do you feel regret because you have not a coach and pair
15 or a retinue of servants at your beck and call? What of that? You
16 little know how nothing would be impossible for you in life if you
17 labour day and night for others with your heart's blood! And lo and
18 behold! the other side of the hallowed river of life stands revealed
19 before your eyes--the screen of Death has vanished, and you are the
20 inheritors of the wondrous realm of immortality!

21 Myself: Oh, how we enjoy sitting before you, Swamiji, and hearing
22 your life-giving words!

23 Swamiji: You see, in my travels throughout India all these years, I
24 have come across many a great soul, many a heart overflowing with
25 loving kindness, sitting at whose feet I used to feel a mighty current
26 of strength coursing into my heart, and the few words I speak to
27 you are only through the force of that current gained by coming in
28 contact with them! Do not think I am myself something great!

29 Myself: But we look upon you, Swamiji, as one who has realised
30 God!

31 No sooner did I say these words than those fascinating eyes of his
32 were filled with tears (Oh, how vividly I see that scene before my
33 eyes even now), and he with a heart overflowing with love, softly
34 and gently spoke: "At those Blessed Feet is the perfection of
35 Knowledge sought by the Jnanis! At those Blessed Feet also is the
36 fulfilment of Love sought by the Lovers! Oh, say, where else will
37 men and women go for refuge but to those Blessed Feet!"

38 After a while he again said, "Alas! what folly for men in this world
39 to spend their days fighting and quarrelling with one another as
40 they do! But how long can they go on in that way? In the evening of
41 life⁹¹ they must all come home, to the arms of the Mother."

1 ⁹¹ ?At the end of one's whole course of transmigratory existence.
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[*Shri Surendra Nath Sen--from private diary*]

Saturday, the 22nd January, 1898.

Early in the morning I came to Swamiji who was then staying in the house of Balaram Babu at 57 Ramkanta Bose Street, Calcutta. The room was packed full with listeners. Swamiji was saying, "We want Shraddha, we want faith in our own selves. Strength is life, weakness is death. 'We are the Atman, deathless and free; pure, pure by nature. Can we ever commit any sin? Impossible!'--such a faith is needed. Such a faith makes men of us, makes gods of us. It is by losing this idea of Shraddha that the country has gone to ruin."

Question: How did we come to lose this Shraddha?

Swamiji: We have had a negative education all along from our boyhood. We have only learnt that we are nobodies. Seldom are we given to understand that great men were ever born in our country. Nothing positive has been taught to us. We do not even know how to use our hands and feet! We master all the facts and figures concerning the ancestors of the English, but we are sadly unmindful about our own. We have learnt only weakness. Being a conquered race, we have brought ourselves to believe that we are weak and have no independence in anything. So, how can it be but that the Shraddha is lost? The idea of true Shraddha must be brought back once more to us, the faith in our own selves must be reawakened, and, then only, all the problems which face our country will gradually be solved by ourselves.

1 Q. How can that ever be? How will Shraddha alone remedy the
2 innumerable evils with which our society is beset? Besides, there
3 are so many crying evils in the country, to remove which the Indian
4 National Congress and other patriotic associations are carrying on
5 a strenuous agitation and petitioning the British government. How
6 better can their wants be made known? What has Shraddha to do
7 with the matter?

8 Swamiji: Tell me, whose wants are those--yours or the ruler's? If
9 yours, will the ruler supply them for you, or will you have to do that
10 for yourselves?

11 Q. But it is the ruler's duty to see to the wants of the subject people.
12 Whom should we look up to for everything, if not to the king?

13 Swamiji: Never are the wants of a beggar fulfilled. Suppose the
14 government gives you all you need, where are the men who are
15 able to keep up the things demanded? So *make men* first. *Men* we
16 want, and how can men be made unless Shraddha is there?

17 Q. But such is not the view of the majority, sir.

18 Swamiji: What you call majority is mainly composed of fools and
19 men of common intellect. Men who have brains to think for
20 themselves are few, everywhere. These few men with brains are the
21 real leaders in everything and in every department of work; the
22 majority are guided by them as with a string, and that is good, for
23 everything goes all right when they follow in the footsteps of these
24 leaders. Those are only fools who think themselves too high to bend
25 their heads to anyone, and they bring on their own ruin by acting on
26 their own judgment. You talk of social reform? But what do you do?
27 All that you mean by your social reform is either widow remarriage,
28 or female emancipation, or something of that sort. Do you not? And
29 these again are directed within the confines of a few of the castes
30 only. Such a scheme of reform may do good to a few no doubt, but
31 of what

1 avail is that to the whole nation? Is that reform or only a form of
2 selfishness--somehow to cleanse your own room and keep it tidy
3 and let others go from bad to worse!

4 Q. Then, you mean to say that there is no need of social reform at
5 all?

6 Swamiji: Who says so? Of course there is need of it. Most of what
7 you talk of as social reform does not touch the poor masses; they
8 have already those things--the widow remarriage, female
9 emancipation, etc.--which you cry for. For this reason they will not
10 think of those things as reforms at all. What I mean to say is that
11 want of Shraddha has brought in all the evils among us, and is
12 bringing in more and more. My method of treatment is to take out
13 by the roots the very causes of the disease and not to keep them
14 merely suppressed. Reforms we should have in many ways; who
15 will be so foolish as to deny it? There is, for example, a good reason
16 for inter-marriage in India, in the absence of which the race is
17 becoming physically weaker day by day.

18 Since it was a day of a solar eclipse, the gentleman who was asking
19 these questions saluted Swamiji and left saying, "I must go now for
20 a bath in the Ganga. I shall, however, come another day."

III

24 [*Shri Surendra Nath Sen--from private diary*]

25 Sunday, the 23rd January, 1898.

27 It was evening and the occasion of the weekly meeting of the
28 Ramakrishna Mission, at the house of Balaram Babu of Baghbazar.
29 Swami Turiyananda, Swami Yogananda, Swami Premananda, and
30 others had come from the Math. Swamiji was seated in the
31 verandah to the east, which was now full of people, as were the
32 northern and the southern sections of the verandah. But such used
33 to be the case every day when Swamiji stayed in Calcutta.

34 Many of the people who came to the meeting had heard that
35 Swamiji could sing well, and so were desirous of hearing him.
36 Knowing this, Master Mahashaya (M.) whispered to a few
37 gentlemen near him to request Swamiji to sing; but he saw through
38 their intention and playfully asked, "Master Mahashaya, what are
39 you talking about among yourselves in whispers? Do speak out." At
40 the request of Master Mahashaya, Swamiji now began in his
41 charming voice the song--"Keep with loving care the darling Mother
42 Shyama in thy heart. . . ." It seemed as if a Vina was playing. At its
43 close, he said to Master Mahashaya, "Well, are you now satisfied?
44 But no more singing! Otherwise, being in the swing of it, I shall be
45 carried away by its intoxication. Moreover, my voice is now spoilt by
46 frequent lecturing in the West. My voice trembles a great deal. . . ."

47 Swamiji then asked one of his Brahmacharin disciples to
48 speak on the real nature of Mukti. So, the Brahmacharin stood up

1 and spoke at some length. A few others followed him. Swamiji then
2 invited discussion on the subject of the discourse, and called upon
3 one of his householder disciples to lead it; but as the latter tried to
4 advocate the Advaita and Jnana and assign a lower place to dualism
5 and Bhakti, he met with a protest from one of the audience. As each
6 of the two opponents tried to establish his own view-point, a lively
7 word-fight ensued. Swamiji watched them for a while but, seeing
8 that they were getting excited, silenced them with the following
9 words:

10 Why do you get excited in argument and spoil everything?
11 Listen! Shri Ramakrishna used to say that pure knowledge and
12 pure Bhakti are one and the same. According to the doctrine of
13 Bhakti, God is held to be "All-Love". One cannot even say, "I love
14 Him", for the reason that He is All-Love. There is no love outside of
15 Himself; the love that is in the heart with which you love Him is
16 even He Himself. In a similar way, whatever attractions or
17 inclinations one feels drawn by, are all He Himself. The thief steals,
18 the harlot sells her body to prostitution, the mother loves her child--
19 in each of these too is He! One world system attracts another--there
20 also is He. Everywhere is He. According to the doctrine of Jnana
21 also, He is realised by one everywhere. Here lies the reconciliation
22 of Jnana and Bhakti. When one is immersed in the highest ecstasy
23 of divine vision (Bhava), or is in the state of Samadhi, then alone
24 the idea of duality ceases, and the distinction between the devotee
25 and his God vanishes. In the scriptures on Bhakti, five different
26 paths of relationship are mentioned, by any of which one can attain
27 to God; but another one can very well be added to them, viz. the
28 path of meditation on the non-separateness, or oneness with God.
29 Thus the Bhakta can call the Advaitins Bhaktas as well, but of the
30 non-differentiating type. As long as one is within the region of
31 Maya, so long the idea of duality will no doubt remain. Space-time-
32 causation, or name-and-form, is what is called Maya. When one
33 goes beyond this Maya, then only the Oneness is realised, and then
34 man is neither a dualist nor an Advaitist--to him all is One. All this
35 difference that you notice between a Bhakta and a Jnani is in the
36 preparatory stage--one sees God outside, and the other sees Him
37 within. But there is another point: Shri Ramakrishna used to say
38 that there is another stage of Bhakti which is called the Supreme
39 Devotion (Parabhakti), i.e. to love Him after becoming established
40 in the consciousness of Advaita and after having attained Mukti. It
41 may seem paradoxical, and the question may be raised here why
42 such a one who has already attained Mukti should be desirous of
43 retaining the spirit of Bhakti? The answer is: The Mukta or the Free
44 is beyond all law; no law applies in his case, and hence no question
45 can be asked regarding him. Even becoming Mukta, some, out of
46 their own free will, retain Bhakti to taste of its sweetness.

47 Q. God may be in the love of the mother for her child; but, sir, this
48 idea is really perplexing that God is even in the thieves and the
49 harlots in the form of their natural inclinations to sin! It follows
50 then that God is as responsible for the sin as for all the virtue in this
51 world.

52 Swamiji: That consciousness comes in a stage of highest realisation,

1 when one sees that whatever is of the nature of love or attraction is
2 God. But one has to reach that state to see and realise that idea for
3 oneself in actual life.

4 Q. But still one has to admit that God is also in the sin!

5 Swamiji: You see, there are, in reality, no such different things as
6 good and evil. They are mere conventional terms. The same thing
7 we call bad, and again another time we call good, according to the
8 way we make use of it. Take for example this lamplight; because of
9 its burning, we are able to see and do various works of utility; this
10 is one mode of using the light. Again, if you put your fingers in it,
11 they will be burnt; that is another mode of using the same light. So
12 we should know that a thing becomes good or bad according to the
13 way we use it. Similarly with virtue and vice. Broadly speaking, the
14 proper use of any of the faculties of our mind and body is termed
15 virtue, and its improper application or waste is called vice.

16 Thus questions after questions were put and answered.
17 Someone remarked, "The theory that God is even there, where one
18 heavenly body attracts another, may or may not be true as a fact,
19 but there is no denying the exquisite poetry the idea conveys."

20 Swamiji: No, my dear sir, that is not poetry. One can see for oneself
21 its truth when one attains knowledge.

22 From what Swamiji further said on this point, I understood
23 him to mean that matter and spirit, though to all appearances they
24 seem to be two distinct things, are really two different forms of one
25 substance; and similarly, all the different forces that are known to
26 us, whether in the material or in the internal world, are but varying
27 forms of the manifestation of one Force. We call a thing matter,
28 where that spirit force is manifested less; and living, where it shows
29 itself more; but there is nothing which is absolutely matter at all
30 times and in all conditions. The same Force which presents itself in
31 the material world as attraction or gravitation is felt in its finer and
32 subtler state as love and the like in the higher spiritual stages of
33 realisation.

34 Q. Why should there be even this difference relating to individual
35 use? Why should there be at all this tendency in man to make bad
36 or improper use of any of his faculties?

37 Swamiji: That tendency comes as a result of one's own past actions
38 (Karma); everything one has is of his own doing. Hence it follows
39 that it is solely in the hands of every individual to control his
40 tendencies and to guide them properly.

41 Q. Even if everything is the result of our Karma, still it must have
42 had a beginning, and why should our tendencies have been good or
43 bad at the beginning?

44 Swamiji: How do you know that there is a beginning? The Srishti
45 (creation) is without beginning--this is the doctrine of the Vedas. So
46 long as there is God, there is creation as well.

47 Q. Well, sir, why is this Maya here, and whence has it come?

48 Swamiji: It is a mistake to ask "why" with respect to God; we can
49 only do so regarding one who has wants or imperfections. How can

1 there be any "why" concerning Him who has no wants and who is
2 the One Whole? No such question as "Whence has Maya come?"
3 can be asked. Time-space-causation is what is called Maya. You, I,
4 and everyone else are within this Maya; and you are asking about
5 what is beyond Maya! How can you do so while living within Maya?

6 Again many questions followed. The conversation turned on
7 the philosophies of Mill, Hamilton, Herbert Spencer, etc., and
8 Swamiji dwelt on them to the satisfaction of all. Everyone wondered
9 at the vastness of his Western philosophical scholarship and the
10 promptness of his replies.

11 The meeting dispersed after a short conversation on
12 miscellaneous subjects.

13 14 IV 15

16 *[Shri Surendra Nath Sen--from private diary]*

17 Monday, the 24th January, 1898.
18

19 The same gentleman who was asking questions of Swamiji on
20 Saturday last came again. He raised again the topic of
21 intermarriage and enquired, "How should intermarriage be
22 introduced between different nationalities?"

23 Swamiji: I do not advise our intermarriage with nations professing
24 an alien religion. At least for the present, that will, of a certainty,
25 slacken the ties of society and be a cause of manifold mischief. It is
26 the intermarriage between people of the same religion that I
27 advocate.

28 Q. Even then, it will involve much perplexity. Suppose I have a
29 daughter who is born and brought up in Bengal, and I marry her to
30 a Marathi or a Madrasi. Neither will the girl understand her
31 husband's language nor the husband the girl's. Again, the
32 difference in their individual habits and customs is so great. Such
33 are a few of the troubles in the case of the married couple. Then as
34 regards society, it will make confusion worse confounded.

35 Swamiji: The time is yet very long in coming when marriages of that
36 kind will be widely possible. Besides, it is not judicious now to go in
37 for that all of a sudden. One of the secrets of work is to go along the
38 line of least resistance. So, first of all, let there be marriages within
39 the sphere of one's own caste-people. Take for instance, the
40 Kayasthas of Bengal. They have several subdivisions amongst them,
41 such as, the Uttar-rarhi, Dakshin-rarhi, Bangaja, etc., and they do
42 not intermarry with each other. Now, let there be intermarriages
43 between the Uttar-rarhis and the Dakshin-rarhis, and if that is not
44 possible at present, let it be between the Bangajas and the Dakshin-
45 rarhis. Thus we are to build up that which is already existing, and
46 which is in our hands to reduce into practice--reform does not mean
47 wholesale breaking down.

48 Q. Very well, let it be as you say: but what corresponding good can

1 come of it?

2 Swamiji: Don't you see how in our society, marriage, being
3 restricted for several hundreds of years within the same
4 subdivisions of each caste, has come to such a pass nowadays as
5 virtually to mean marital alliance between cousins and near
6 relations; and how for this very reason the race is getting
7 deteriorated physically, and consequently all sorts of disease and
8 other evils are finding a ready entrance into it? The blood having
9 had to circulate within the narrow circle of a limited number of
10 individuals has become vitiated; so the new-born children inherit
11 from their very birth the constitutional diseases of their fathers.
12 Thus, born with poor blood, their bodies have very little power to
13 resist the microbes of any disease, which are ever ready to prey
14 upon them. It is only by widening the circle of marriage that we can
15 infuse a new and a different kind of blood into our progeny, so that
16 they may be saved from the clutches of many of our present-day
17 diseases and other consequent evils.

18 Q. May I ask you, sir, what is your opinion about early marriage?

19 Swamiji: Amongst the educated classes in Bengal, the custom of
20 marrying their boys too early is dying out gradually. The girls are
21 also given in marriage a year or two older than before, but that has
22 been under compulsion--from pecuniary want. Whatever might be
23 the reason for it, the age of marrying girls should be raised still
24 higher. But what will the poor father do? As soon as the girl grows
25 up a little, every one of the female sex, beginning with the mother
26 down to the relatives and neighbours even, will begin to cry out
27 that he must find a bridegroom for her, and will not leave him in
28 peace until he does so! And, about your religious hypocrites, the
29 less said the better. In these days no one hears them, but still they
30 will take up the role of leaders themselves. The rulers passed the
31 Age of Consent Bill prohibiting a man under the threat of penalty to
32 live with a girl of twelve years, and at once all these so-called
33 leaders of your religion raised a tremendous hue and cry against it,
34 sounding the alarm, "Alas, our religion is lost!" As if religion
35 consisted in making a girl a mother at the age of twelve or thirteen!
36 So the rulers also naturally think, "Goodness gracious! What a
37 religion is theirs! And these people lead political agitations and
38 demand political rights!"

39 Q. Then, in your opinion, both men and women should be married at
40 an advanced age?

41 Swamiji: Certainly. But education should be imparted along with it,
42 otherwise irregularity and corruption will ensue. By education I do
43 not mean the present system, but something in the line of positive
44 teaching. Mere book-learning won't do. We want that education by
45 which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the
46 intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own
47 feet.

48 Q. We have to reform our women in many ways.

49 Swamiji: With such an education women will solve their own
50 problems. They have all the time been trained in helplessness,

1 servile dependence on others, and so they are good only to weep
2 their eyes out at the slightest approach of a mishap or danger.
3 Along with other things they should acquire the spirit of valour and
4 heroism. In the present day it has become necessary for them also
5 to learn self-defence. See how grand was the Queen of Jhansi!

6 Q. What you advise is quite a new departure, and it will, I am afraid,
7 take a very long time yet to train our women in that way.

8 Swamiji: Anyhow, we have to try our best. We have not only to teach
9 them but to teach ourselves also. Mere begetting children does not
10 make a father; a great many responsibilities have to be taken upon
11 one's shoulders as well. To make a beginning in women's education:
12 our Hindu women easily understand what chastity means, because
13 it is their heritage. Now, first of all, intensify that ideal within them
14 above everything else, so that they may develop a strong character
15 by the force of which, in every stage of their life, whether married,
16 or single if they prefer to remain so, they will not be in the least
17 afraid even to give up their lives rather than flinch an inch from
18 their chastity. Is it little heroism to be able to sacrifice one's life for
19 the sake of one's ideal, whatever that ideal may be? Studying the
20 present needs of the age, it seems imperative to train some women
21 up in the ideal of renunciation, so that they will take up the vow of
22 lifelong virginity, fired with the strength of that virtue of chastity
23 which is innate in their life-blood from hoary antiquity. Along with
24 that they should be taught sciences and other things which would
25 be of benefit, not only to them but to others as well, and knowing
26 this they would easily learn these things and feel pleasure in doing
27 so. Our motherland requires for her well-being some of her children
28 to become such pure-souled Brahmacharins and Brahmacharinis.

29 Q. In what way will that conduce to her well-being?

30 Swamiji: By their example and through their endeavours to hold the
31 national ideal before the eyes of the people, a revolution in
32 thoughts and aspirations will take place. How do matters stand
33 now? Somehow, the parents must dispose of a girl in marriage, if
34 she be nine or ten years of age! And what a rejoicing of the whole
35 family if a child is born to her at the age of thirteen! If the trend of
36 such ideas is reversed, then only there is some hope for the ancient
37 Shraddha to return. And what to talk of those who will practise
38 Brahmacharya as defined above--think how much faith in
39 themselves will be theirs! And what a power for good they will be!

40 The questioner now saluted Swamiji and was ready to take
41 leave. Swamiji asked him to come now and then. "Certainly, sir,"
42 replied the gentleman, "I feel so much benefited. I have heard from
43 you many new things, which I have not been told anywhere before."
44 I also went home as it was about time for dinner.

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48 *[Shri Surendra Nath Sen--from private diary]*

49 Monday, the 24th January, 1898.

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In the afternoon I came again to Swamiji and saw quite a good gathering round him. The topic was the Madhura-Bhava or the way of worshipping God as husband, as in vogue with some followers of Shri Chaitanya. His occasional *bons mots* were raising laughter, when someone remarked, "What is there to make so much fun of about the Lord's doings? Do you think that he was not a great saint, and that he did not do everything for the good of humanity?"

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Swamiji: Who is that? Should I poke fun at *you* then, my dear sir! You only see the fun of it, do you? And you, sir, do not see the lifelong struggle through which I have passed to mould this life after his burning ideal of renunciation of wealth and lust, and my endeavours to infuse that ideal into the people at large! Shri Chaitanya was a man of tremendous renunciation and had nothing to do with woman and carnal appetites. But, in later times, his disciples admitted women into their order, mixed indiscriminately with them in his name, and made an awful mess of the whole thing. And the ideal of love which the Lord exemplified in his life was perfectly selfless and bereft of any vestige of lust; that sexless love can never be the property of the masses. But the subsequent Vaishnava Gurus, instead of laying particular stress first on the aspect of renunciation in the Master's life, bestowed all their zeal on preaching and infusing his ideal of love among the masses, and the consequence was that the common people could not grasp and assimilate that high ideal of divine love, and naturally made of it the worst form of love between man and woman.

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Q. But, sir, he preached the name of the Lord Hari to all, even to the Chandalas; so why should not the common masses have a right to it?

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Swamiji: I am talking not of his preaching, but of his great ideal of love--the Radha-prema,⁹² with which he used to remain intoxicated day and night, losing his individuality in Radha.

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Q. Why may not that be made the common property of all?

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Swamiji: Look at this nation and see what has been the outcome of such an attempt. Through the preaching of that love broadcast, the whole nation has become effeminate--a race of women! The whole of Orissa has been turned into a land of cowards; and Bengal, running after the Radha-prema, these past four hundred years, has almost lost all sense of manliness! The people are very good only at crying and weeping; that has become their national trait. Look at their literature, the sure index of a nation's thoughts and ideas. Why, the refrain of the Bengali literature for these four hundred years is strung to that same tune of moaning and crying. It has failed to give birth to any poetry which breathes a true heroic spirit!

45

Q. Who are then truly entitled to possess that Prema (love)?

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Swamiji: There can be no love so long as there is lust--even a speck of it, as it were, in the heart. None but men of great renunciation,

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⁹² ?The divine love which Radha had towards Shri Krishna.

1 none but mighty giants among men, have a right to that Love
2 Divine. If that highest ideal of love is held out to the masses, it will
3 indirectly tend to stimulate its worldly prototype which dominates
4 the heart of man--for, meditating on love to God by thinking of
5 oneself as His wife or beloved, one would very likely be thinking
6 most of the time of one's own wife--the result is too obvious to point
7 out.

8 Q. Then is it impossible for householders to realise God through
9 that path of love, worshipping God as one's husband or lover and
10 considering oneself as His spouse?

11 Swamiji: With a few exceptions; for ordinary householders it is
12 impossible no doubt. And why lay so much stress on this delicate
13 path, above all others? Are there no other relationships by which to
14 worship God, except this Madhura idea of love? Why not follow the
15 four other paths, and take the name of the Lord with all your heart?
16 Let the heart be opened first, and all else will follow of itself. But
17 know this for certain, that Prema cannot come while there is lust.
18 Why not try first to get rid of carnal desires? You will say, "How is
19 that possible? I am a householder." Nonsense! Because one is a
20 householder, does it mean that one should be a personification of
21 incontinence, or that one has to live in marital relations all one's
22 life? And, after all, how unbecoming of a man to make of himself a
23 woman, so that he may practise this Madhura love!

24 Q. True, sir. Singing God's name in a party (Namakirtana) is an
25 excellent help and gives one a joyous feeling. So say our scriptures,
26 and so did Shri Chaitanya Deva also preach to the masses. When
27 the Khole (drum) is played upon, it makes the heart leap with such
28 a transport that one feels inclined to dance.

29 Swamiji: That is all right, but don't think that Kirtana means
30 dancing only. It means singing the glories of God, in whatever way
31 that suits you. That vehement stirring up of feeling and that
32 dancing of the Vaishnavas are good and very catching no doubt; but
33 there is also a danger in practising them, from which you must save
34 yourself. The danger lies here--in the reaction. On the one hand, the
35 feelings are at once roused to the highest pitch, tears flow from the
36 eyes, the head reels as it were under intoxication--on the other
37 hand, as soon as the Sankirtan stops, that mass of feeling sinks
38 down as precipitately as it rose. The higher the wave rises on the
39 ocean, the lower it falls, with equal force. It is very difficult at that
40 stage to contain oneself against the shock of reaction; unless one
41 has proper discrimination, one is likely to succumb to the lower
42 propensities of lust etc. I have noticed the same thing in America
43 also. Many would go to church, pray with much devotion, sing with
44 great feeling, and even burst into tears when hearing the sermons;
45 but after coming out of church, they would have a great reaction
46 and succumb to carnal tendencies.

47 Q. Then, sir, do instruct us which of the ideas preached by Shri
48 Chaitanya we should take up as well suited to us, so that we may
49 not fall into errors.

50 Swamiji: Worship God with Bhakti tempered with Jnana. Keep the
51 spirit of discrimination along with Bhakti. Besides this, gather from

1 Shri Chaitanya, his heart, his loving kindness to all beings, his
2 burning passion for God, and make his renunciation the ideal of
3 your life.

4 The questioner now addressed the Swamiji with folded hands, "I
5 beg your pardon, sir. Now I come to see you are right. Seeing you
6 criticise in a playful mood the Madhura love of the Vaishnavas, I
7 could not at first understand the drift of your remarks; hence I took
8 exception to them."

9 Swamiji: Well, look here, if we are to criticise at all, it is better to
10 criticise God or God-men. If you abuse me I shall very likely get
11 angry with you, and if I abuse you, you will try to retaliate. Isn't it
12 so? But God or God-men will never return evil for evil.

13 The gentleman now left, after bowing down at the feet of
14 Swamiji. I have already said that such a gathering was an everyday
15 occurrence when Swamiji used to stay in Calcutta. From early in
16 the morning till eight or nine at night, men would flock to him at
17 every hour of the day. This naturally occasioned much irregularity
18 in the time of his taking his meals; so, many desiring to put a stop
19 to this state of things, strongly advised Swamiji not to receive
20 visitors except at appointed hours. But the loving heart of Swamiji,
21 ever ready to go to any length to help others, was so melted with
22 compassion at the sight of such a thirst for religion in the people,
23 that in spite of ill health, he did not comply with any request of the
24 kind. His only reply was, "They take so much trouble to come
25 walking all the way from their homes, and can I, for the
26 consideration of risking my health a little, sit here and not speak a
27 few words to them?"

28 At about 4 p.m. the general conversation came to a close, and
29 the gathering dispersed, except for a few gentlemen with whom
30 Swamiji continued his talk on different subjects, such as England
31 and America, and so on. In the course of conversation he said:

32 "I had a curious dream on my return voyage from England.
33 While our ship was passing through the Mediterranean Sea, in my
34 sleep, a very old and venerable-looking person, Rishi-like in
35 appearance, stood before me and said, 'Do ye come and effect our
36 restoration. I am one of that ancient order of Theraputtas
37 (Theraputae) which had its origin in the teachings of the Indian
38 rishis. The truths and ideals preached by us have been given out by
39 Christians as taught by Jesus; but for the matter of that, there was
40 no such personality by the name of Jesus ever born. Various
41 evidences testifying to this fact will be brought to light by
42 excavating here.' 'By excavating which place can those proofs and
43 relics you speak of be found?' I asked. The hoary-headed one,
44 pointing to a locality in the vicinity of Turkey, said, 'See here.'
45 Immediately after, I woke up, and at once rushed to the upper deck
46 and asked the Captain, 'What neighbourhood is the ship in just
47 now?' 'Look yonder', the Captain replied, 'there is Turkey and the
48 Island of Crete.'"

49 Was it but a dream, or is there anything in the above vision?
50 Who knows!

[Shri Priya Nath Sinha]

Our house was very close to Swamiji's, and since we were boys of the same section of the town, I often used to play with him. From my boyhood I had a special attraction for him, and I had a sincere belief that he would become a great man. When he became a Sannyasin we thought that the promise of a brilliant career for such a man was all in vain.

Afterwards, when he went to America, I read in newspaper reports of his lectures at the Chicago Parliament of Religions and others delivered in various places of America, and I thought that fire can never remain hidden under a cloth; the fire that was within Swamiji had now burst into a flame; the bud after so many years had blossomed.

After a time I came to know that he had returned to India, and had been delivering fiery lectures at Madras. I read them and wondered that such sublime truths existed in the Hindu religion and that they could be explained so lucidly. What an extraordinary power he had! Was he a man or a god?

A great enthusiasm prevailed when Swamiji came to Calcutta, and we followed him to the Sil's garden-house, on the Ganga, at Cossipore. A few days later, at the residence of Raja Radhakanta Dev, the "Calcutta boy" delivered an inspiring lecture to a huge concourse of people in reply to an address of welcome, and Calcutta heard him for the first time and was lost in admiration. But these are facts known to all.

After his coming to Calcutta, I was very anxious to see him once alone and be able to talk freely with him as in our boyhood. But there was always a gathering of eager inquirers about him, and conversations were going on without a break; so I did not get an opportunity for some time, until one day when we went out for a walk in the garden on the Ganga side. He at once began to talk, as of old, to me, the playmate of his boyhood. No sooner had a few words passed between us than repeated calls came, informing him that many gentlemen had come to see him. He became a little impatient at last and told the messenger, "Give me a little respite, my son; let me speak a few words with this companion of my boyhood; let me stay in the open air for a while. Go and give a welcome to those who have come, ask them to sit down, offer them tobacco, and request them to wait a little."

When we were alone again, I asked him, "Well, Swamiji, you are a Sadhu (holy man). Money was raised by subscription for your reception here, and I thought, in view of the famine in this country, that you would wire, before arriving in Calcutta, saying, 'Don't spend a single pice on my reception, rather contribute the whole

1 sum to the famine relief fund'; but I found that you did nothing of
2 the kind. How was that?"

3 Swamiji: Why, I wished rather that a great enthusiasm should
4 be stirred up. Don't you see, without some such thing how would
5 the people be drawn towards Shri Ramakrishna and be fired in his
6 name? Was this ovation done for me personally, or was not his name
7 glorified by this? See how much thirst has been created in the
8 minds of men to know about him! Now they will come to know of
9 him gradually, and will not that be conducive to the good of the
10 country? If the people do not know him who came for the welfare of
11 the country, how can good befall them? When they know what he
12 really was, then *men*-real men-will be made; and when there will
13 be such *men*, how long will it take to drive away famines etc. from
14 the land? So I say that I rather desired that there should be some
15 bustle and stir in Calcutta, so that the public might be inclined to
16 believe in the mission of Shri Ramakrishna; otherwise what was the
17 use of making so much fuss for my sake? What do I care for it?
18 Have I become any greater now than when I used to play with you
19 at your house? I am the same now as I was before. Tell me, do you
20 find any change in me?

21 Though I said, "No, I do not find much change to speak of",
22 yet in my mind I thought, "You have now, indeed, become a god."

23 Swamiji continued: "Famine has come to be a constant
24 quantity in our country, and now it is, as it were, a sort of blight
25 upon us. Do you find in any other country such frequent ravages of
26 famine? No, because there are *men* in other countries, while in
27 ours, men have become akin to dead matter, quite inert. Let the
28 people first learn to renounce their selfish nature by studying Shri
29 Ramakrishna, by knowing him as he really was, and then will
30 proceed from them real efforts trying to stop the frequently
31 recurring famines. By and by I shall make efforts in that direction
32 too; you will see."

33 Myself: That will be good. Then you are going to deliver many
34 lectures here, I presume; otherwise, how will his name be
35 preached?

36 Swamiji: What nonsense! Nothing of the kind! Has anything
37 been left undone by which his name can be known? Enough has
38 been done in that line. Lectures won't do any good in this country.
39 Our educated countrymen would hear them and, at best, would
40 cheer and clap their hands, saying, "Well done"; that is all. Then
41 they would go home and digest, as we say everything they had
42 heard, with their meal! What good will hammering do on a piece of
43 rusty old iron? It will only crumble into pieces. First, it should be
44 made red-hot, and then it can be moulded into any shape by
45 hammering. Nothing will avail in our country without setting a
46 glowing and living example before the people. What we want are
47 some young men who will renounce everything and sacrifice their
48 lives for the country's sake. We should first form their lives and then
49 some real work can be expected.

50 Myself: Well, Swamiji, it has always puzzled me that, while
51 men of our country, unable to understand their own religion, were

1 embracing alien religions, such as Christianity, Mohammedanism,
2 etc., you, instead of doing anything for them, went over to England
3 and America to preach Hinduism.

4 Swamiji: Don't you see that circumstances have changed
5 now? Have the men of our country the power left in them to take up
6 and practise true religion? What they have is only pride in
7 themselves that they are very Sattvika. Time was when they were
8 Sattvika, no doubt, but now they have fallen very low. The fall from
9 Sattva brings one down headlong into Tamas! That is what has
10 happened to them. Do you think that a man who does not exert
11 himself at all, who only takes the name of Hari, shutting himself up
12 in a room, who remains quiet and indifferent even when seeing a
13 huge amount of wrong and violence done to others before his very
14 eyes, possesses the quality of Sattva? Nothing of the kind, he is only
15 enshrouded in dark Tamas. How can the people of a country
16 practise religion who do not get even sufficient food to appease
17 their hunger? How can renunciation come to the people of a
18 country in whose minds the desires for Bhoga (enjoyment) have not
19 been in the least satisfied? For this reason, find out, first of all, the
20 ways and means by which men may get enough to eat and have
21 enough luxuries to enable them to enjoy life a little; and then
22 gradually, true Vairagya (dispassion) will come, and they will be fit
23 and ready to realise religion in life. The people of England and
24 America, how full of Rajas they are! They have become satiated
25 with all sorts of worldly enjoyment. Moreover, Christianity, being a
26 religion of faith and superstition, occupies the same rank as our
27 religion of the Puranas. With the spread of education and culture,
28 the people of the West can no more find peace in that. Their present
29 condition is such that, giving them one lift will make them reach the
30 Sattva. Then again, in these days, would you accept the words of a
31 Sannyasin clad in rags, in the same degree as you would the words
32 of a white-face (Westerner) who might come and speak to you on
33 your own religion?

34 Myself: Just so, Swamiji! Mr. N. N. Ghosh also speaks exactly
35 to the same effect.

36 Swamiji: Yes, when my Western disciples after acquiring
37 proper training and illumination will come in numbers here and ask
38 you, "What are you all doing? Why are you of so little faith? How
39 are your rites and religion, manners, customs, and morals in any
40 way inferior? We even regard your religion to be the highest!"--then
41 you will see that lots of our big and influential folk will hear them.
42 Thus they will be able to do immense good to this country. Do not
43 think for a moment that they will come to take up the position of
44 teachers of religion to you. They will, no doubt, be your Guru
45 regarding practical sciences etc., for the improvement of material
46 conditions, and the people of our country will be their Guru in
47 everything pertaining to religion. This relation of Guru and disciple
48 in the domain of religion will for ever exist between India and the
49 rest of the world.

50 Myself: How can that be, Swamiji? Considering the feeling of
51 hatred with which they look upon us, it does not seem probable that
52 they will ever do good to us, purely from an unselfish motive.

1 Swamiji: They find many reasons to hate us, and so they may
2 justify themselves in doing so. In the first place, we are a conquered
3 race, and moreover there is nowhere in the world such a nation of
4 mendicants as we are! The masses who comprise the lowest castes,
5 through ages of constant tyranny of the higher castes and by being
6 treated by them with blows and kicks at every step they took, have
7 totally lost their manliness and become like professional beggars;
8 and those who are removed one stage higher than these, having
9 read a few pages of English, hang about the thresholds of public
10 offices with petitions in their hands. In the case of a post of twenty
11 or thirty rupees falling vacant, five hundred B.A.s and M.A.s will
12 apply for it! And, dear me! how curiously worded these petitions
13 are! "I have nothing to eat at home, sir, my wife and children are
14 starving; I most humbly implore you, sir, to give me some means to
15 provide for myself and my family, or we shall die of starvation!"
16 Even when they enter into service, they cast all self-respect to the
17 winds, and servitude in its worst form is what they practise. Such is
18 the condition, then, of the masses. The highly-educated, prominent
19 men among you form themselves into societies and clamour at the
20 top of their voices: "Alas, India is going to ruin, day by day! O
21 English rulers, admit our countrymen to the higher offices of the
22 State, relieve us from famines" and so on, thus rending the air, day
23 and night, with the eternal cry of "Give" and "Give"! The burden of
24 all their speech is, "Give to us, give more to us, O Englishmen!"
25 Dear me! what more will they give to you? They have given
26 railways, telegraphs, well-ordered administration to the country--
27 have almost entirely suppressed robbers, have given education in
28 science--what more will they give? What does anyone give to others
29 with perfect unselfishness? Well, they have given you so much; let
30 me ask, what have you given to them in return?

31 Myself: What have we to give, Swamiji? We pay taxes.

32 Swamiji: Do you, really? Do you give taxes to them of your
33 own will, or do they exact them by compulsion because they keep
34 peace in the country? Tell me plainly, what do you give them in
35 return for all that they have done for you? You also have something
36 to give them that they have not. You go to England, but that is also
37 in the garb of a beggar--praying for education. Some go, and what
38 they do there at the most is, perchance, to applaud the Westerner's
39 religion in some speeches and then come back. What an
40 achievement, indeed! Why, have you nothing to give them? An
41 inestimable treasure you have, which you can give--give them your
42 religion, give them your philosophy! Study the history of the whole
43 world, and you will see that every high ideal you meet with
44 anywhere had its origin in India. From time immemorial India has
45 been the mine of precious ideas to human society; giving birth to
46 high ideas herself, she has freely distributed them broadcast over
47 the whole world. The English are in India today, to gather those
48 higher ideals, to acquire a knowledge of the Vedanta, to penetrate
49 into the deep mysteries of that eternal religion which is yours. Give
50 those invaluable gems in exchange for what you receive from them.
51 The Lord took me to their country to remove this opprobrium of the
52 beggar that is attributed by them to us. It is not right to go to

1 England for the purpose of begging only. Why should they always
2 give us alms? Does anyone do so for ever? It is not the law of nature
3 to be always taking gifts with outstretched hands like beggars. To
4 give and take is the law of nature. Any individual or class or nation
5 that does not obey this law never prospers in life. We also must
6 follow that law. That is why I went to America. So great is now the
7 thirst for religion in the people there that there is room enough
8 even if thousands of men like me go. They have been for a long time
9 giving you of what wealth they possess, and now is the time for you
10 to share your priceless treasure with them. And you will see how
11 their feelings of hatred will be quickly replaced by those of faith,
12 devotion, and reverence towards you, and how they will do good to
13 your country even unasked. They are a nation of heroes--never do
14 they forget any good done to them.

15 Myself: Well, Swamiji, in your lectures in the West you have
16 frequently and eloquently dwelt on our characteristic talents and
17 virtues, and many convincing proofs you have put forward to show
18 our whole-souled love of religion; but now you say that we have
19 become full of Tamas; and at the same time you are accrediting us
20 as the teachers of the eternal religion of the Rishis to the world!
21 How is that?

22 Swamiji: Do you mean to say that I should go about from
23 country to country, expatiating on your failings before the public?
24 Should I not rather hold up before them the characteristic virtues
25 that mark you as a nation? It is always good to tell a man his
26 defects in a direct way and in a friendly spirit to make him
27 convinced of them, so that he may correct himself--but you should
28 trumpet forth his virtues before others. Shri Ramakrishna used to
29 say that if you repeatedly tell a bad man that he is good, he turns in
30 time to be good; similarly, a good man becomes bad if he is
31 incessantly called so. There, in the West, I have said enough to the
32 people of their shortcomings. Mind, up to my time, all who went
33 over to the West from our country have sung paeans to them in
34 praise of their virtues and have trumpeted out only our blemishes to
35 their ears. Consequently, it is no wonder that they have learnt to
36 hate us. For this reason I have laid before them your virtues, and
37 pointed out to them their vices, just as I am now telling you of your
38 weaknesses and their good points. However full of Tamas you may
39 have become, something of the nature of the ancient Rishis,
40 however little it may be, is undoubtedly in you still--at least the
41 framework of it. But that does not show that one should be in a
42 hurry to take up at once the role of a teacher of religion and go over
43 to the West to preach it. First of all, one must completely mould
44 one's religious life in solitude, must be perfect in renunciation and
45 must preserve Brahmacharya without a break. The Tamas has
46 entered into you--what of that? Cannot the Tamas be destroyed? It
47 can be done in less than no time! It was for the destruction of this
48 Tamas that Bhagavan Shri Ramakrishna came to us.

49 Myself: But who can aspire to be like you, Swamiji?

50 Swamiji: Do you think that there will be no more
51 Vivekanandas after I die! That batch of young men who came and
52 played music before me a little while ago, whom you all despise for

1 being addicted to intoxicating drugs and look upon as worthless
2 fellows, if the Lord wishes, each and everyone of them may become
3 a Vivekananda! There will be no lack of Vivekanandas, if the world
4 needs them--thousands and millions of Vivekanandas will appear--
5 from where, who knows!

6 Know for certain that the work done by me is not the work of
7 Vivekananda, it is His work--the Lord's own work! If one governor-
8 general retires, another is sure to be sent in his place by the
9 Emperor. Enveloped in Tamas however much you may be, know all
10 that will clear away if you take refuge in Him by being sincere to
11 the core of your heart. The time is opportune now, as the physician
12 of the world-disease has come. Taking His name, if you set yourself
13 to work, He will accomplish everything Himself through you. Tamas
14 itself will be transformed into the highest Sattva!

15 Myself: Whatever you may say, I cannot bring myself to
16 believe in these words. Who can come by that oratorical power of
17 expounding philosophy which you have?

18 Swamiji: You don't know! That power may come to all. That
19 power comes to him who observes unbroken Brahmacharya for a
20 period of twelve years, with the sole object of realising God. I have
21 practised that kind of Brahmacharya myself, and so a screen has
22 been removed, as it were, from my brain. For that reason, I need
23 not any more think over or prepare myself for any lectures on such
24 a subtle subject as philosophy. Suppose I have to lecture tomorrow;
25 all that I shall speak about will pass tonight before my eyes like so
26 many pictures; and the next day I put into words during my lecture
27 all those things that I saw. So you will understand now that it is not
28 any power which is exclusively my own. Whoever will practise
29 unbroken Brahmacharya for twelve years will surely have it. If you
30 do so, you too will get it. Our Shastras do not say that only such and
31 such a person will get it and not others!

32 Myself: Do you remember, Swamiji, one day, before you took
33 Sannyasa, we were sitting in the house of --, and you were trying to
34 explain the mystery of Samadhi to us. And when I called in question
35 the truth of your words, saying that Samadhi was not possible in
36 this Kali Yuga, you emphatically demanded: "Do you want to see
37 Samadhi or to have it yourself? I get Samadhi myself, and I can
38 make you have it!" No sooner had you finished saying so than a
39 stranger came up and we did not pursue that subject any further.

40 Swamiji: Yes, I remember the occasion.

41 Later, on my pressing him to make me get Samadhi, he said,
42 "You see, having continually lectured and worked hard for several
43 years, the quality of Rajas has become too predominant in me.
44 Hence that power is lying covered, as it were, in me now. If I leave
45 all work and go to the Himalayas and meditate in solitude for some
46 time, then that power will again come out in me."

1
2 [Shri Priya Nath Sinha]
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4 A day or two later, as I was coming out of my house intending
5 to pay a visit to Swamiji, I met two of my friends who expressed a
6 wish to accompany me, for they wanted to ask Swamiji something
7 about Pranayama. I had heard that one should not visit a temple or
8 a Sannyasin without taking something as an offering; so we took
9 some fruits and sweets with us and placed them before him.
10 Swamiji took them in his hands, raised them to his head, and bowed
11 to us before even we made our obeisance to him. One of the two
12 friends with me had been a fellow-student of his. Swamiji
13 recognised him at once and asked about his health and welfare.
14 Then he made us sit down by him. There were many others there
15 who had come to see and hear him. After replying to a few
16 questions put by some of the gentlemen, Swamiji, in the course of
17 his conversation, began to speak about Pranayama. First of all, he
18 explained through modern science the origin of matter from the
19 mind, and then went on to show what Pranayama is. All three of us
20 had carefully read beforehand his book called *Raja-Yoga*. But from
21 what we heard from him that day about Pranayama, it seemed to
22 me that very little of the knowledge that was in him had been
23 recorded in that book. I understand also that what he said was not
24 mere book-learning, for who could explain so lucidly and
25 elaborately all the intricate problems of religion, even with the help
26 of science, without himself realising the Truth?

27 His conversation on Pranayama went on from half past three
28 o'clock till half past seven in the evening. When the meeting
29 dissolved and we came away, my companions asked me how
30 Swamiji could have known the questions that were in their hearts,
31 and whether I had communicated to him their desire for asking
32 those questions.

33 A few days after this occasion, I saw Swamiji in the house of
34 the late Priya Nath Mukherjee at Baghbazar. There were present
35 Swami Brahmananda, Swami Yogananda, Mr. G. C. Ghosh, Atul
36 Babu, and one or two other friends. I said, "Well, Swamiji, the two
37 gentlemen who went to see you the other day wanted to ask you
38 some questions about Pranayama, which had been raised in their
39 minds by reading your book on Raja-Yoga some time before you
40 returned to this country, and they had then told me of them. But
41 that day, before they asked you anything, you yourself raised those
42 doubts that had occurred to them and solved them! They were very
43 much surprised and inquired of me if I had let you know their
44 doubts beforehand." Swamiji replied: "Similar occurrences having
45 come to pass many times in the West, people often used to ask me,
46 'How could you know the questions that were agitating our minds?'
47 This knowledge does not happen to me so often, but with Shri
48 Ramakrishna it was almost always there."

49 In this connection Atul Babu asked him: "You have said in
50 *Raja-Yoga* that one can come to know all about one's previous
51 births. Do you know them yourself?"

1 Swamiji: Yes, I do.

2 Atul Babu: What do you know? Have you any objection to tell?

3 Swamiji: I can know them--I do know them--but I prefer not to
4 say anything in detail.

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6

7

VIII

8

9

[Shri Priya Nath Sinha]

10

11 It was an evening in July 1898, at the Math, in Nilambar
12 Mukerjee's garden-house, Belur. Swamiji with all his disciples had
13 been meditating, and at the close of the meditation came out and
14 sat in one of the rooms. As it was raining hard and a cold wind was
15 blowing, he shut the door and began to sing to the accompaniment
16 of Tanpura. The singing being over, a long conversation on music
17 followed. Swami Shivananda asked him, "What is Western music
18 like?"

19 Swamiji: Oh, it is very good; there is in it a perfection of
20 harmony, which we have not attained. Only, to our untrained ears, it
21 does not sound well, hence we do not like it, and think that the
22 singers howl like jackals. I also had the same sort of impression, but
23 when I began to listen to the music with attention and study it
24 minutely, I came more and more to understand it, and I was lost in
25 admiration. Such is the case with every art. In glancing at a highly
26 finished painting we cannot understand where its beauty lies.
27 Moreover, unless the eye is, to a certain extent, trained, one cannot
28 appreciate the subtle touches and blendings, the inner genius of a
29 work of art. What real music we have lies in Kirtana and Dhrupada;
30 the rest has been spoiled by being modulated according to the
31 Islamic methods. Do you think that singing the short and light airs
32 of Tappa songs in a nasal voice and flitting like lightning from one
33 note to another by fits and starts are the best things in the world of
34 music? Not so. Unless each note is given full play in every scale, all
35 the science of music is marred. In painting, by keeping in touch
36 with nature, you can make it as artistic as you like; there is no harm
37 in doing that, and the result will be nothing but good. Similarly, in
38 music, you can display any amount of skill by keeping to science,
39 and it will be pleasing to the ear. The Mohammedans took up the
40 different Ragas and Raginis after coming into India. But they put
41 such a stamp of their own colouring on the art of Tappa songs that
42 all the science in music was destroyed.

43 Q. Why, Maharaj (sir)? Who has not a liking for music in
44 Tappa?

45 Swamiji: The chirping of crickets sounds very good to some.
46 The Santals think their music also to be the best of all. You do not
47 seem to understand that when one note comes upon another in
48 such quick succession, it not only robs music of all grace, but, on

1 the other hand, creates discordance rather. Do not the permutation
2 and combination of the seven keynotes form one or other of the
3 different melodies of music, known as Ragas and Raginis? Now, in
4 Tappa, if one slurs over a whole melody (Raga) and creates a new
5 tune, and over and above that, if the voice is raised to the highest
6 pitch by tremulous modulation, say, how can the Raga be kept
7 intact? Again, the poetry of music is completely destroyed if there
8 be in it such profuse use of light and short strains just for effect. To
9 sing by keeping to the idea, meant to be conveyed by a song, totally
10 disappeared from our country when Tappas came into vogue.
11 Nowadays, it seems, the true art is reviving a little with the
12 improvement in theatres; but, on the other hand, all regard for
13 Ragas and Raginis is being more and more flung to the winds.

14 Accordingly, to those who are past masters in the art of
15 singing Dhrupada, it is painful to hear Tappas. But in our music the
16 cadence, or a duly regulated rise and fall of voice or sound, is very
17 good. The French detected and appreciated this trait first, and tried
18 to adapt and introduce it in their music. After their doing this, the
19 whole of Europe has now thoroughly mastered it.

20 Q. Maharaj, their music seems to be pre-eminently martial,
21 whereas that element appears to be altogether absent in ours.

22 Swamiji: Oh, no, we have it also. In martial music, harmony is
23 greatly needed. We sadly lack harmony, hence it does not show
24 itself so much. Our music had been improving steadily. But when
25 the Mohammedans came, they took possession of it in such a way
26 that the tree of music could grow no further. The music of the
27 Westerners is much advanced. They have the sentiment of pathos
28 as well as of heroism in their music, which is as it should be. But
29 our antique musical instrument made from the gourd has been
30 improved no further.

31 Q. Which of the Ragas and Raginis are martial in tune?

32 Swamiji: Every Raga may be made martial if it is set in
33 harmony and the instruments are tuned accordingly. Some of the
34 Raginis can also become martial.

35 The conversation was then closed, as it was time for supper.
36 After supper, Swamiji enquired as to the sleeping arrangements for
37 the guests who had come from Calcutta to the Math to pass the
38 night, and he then retired to his bedroom.

IX

43 *[Shri Priya Nath Sinha]*

45 It was about two years after the new Math had been
46 constructed and while all the Swamis were living there that I came
47 one morning to pay a visit to my Guru. Seeing me, Swamiji smiled
48 and after inquiring of my welfare etc., said, "You are going to stay

1 today, are you not?"

2 "Certainly", I said, and after various inquiries I asked, "Well,
3 Maharaj, what is your idea of educating our boys?"

4 Swamiji: Guru-griha-vasa--living with the Guru.

5 Q. How?

6 Swamiji: In the same way as of old. But with this education
7 has to be combined modern Western science. Both these are
8 necessary.

9 Q. Why, what is the defect in the present university system?

10 Swamiji: It is almost wholly one of defects. Why, it is nothing
11 but a perfect machine for turning out clerks. I would even thank my
12 stars if that were all. But no! See how men are becoming destitute
13 of Shraddha and faith.

14 They assert that the Gita is only an interpolation, and that the
15 Vedas are but rustic songs! They like to master every detail
16 concerning things and nations outside of India, but if you ask them,
17 they do not know even the names of their own forefathers up to the
18 seventh generation, not to speak of the fourteenth!

19 Q. But what does that matter? What if they do not know the
20 names of their forefathers?

21 Swamiji: Don't think so. A nation that has no history of its
22 own has nothing in this world. Do you believe that one who has
23 such faith and pride as to feel, "I come of noble descent", can ever
24 turn out to be bad? How could that be? That faith in himself would
25 curb his actions and feelings, so much so that he would rather die
26 than commit wrong. So a national history keeps a nation well-
27 restrained and does not allow it to sink so low. Oh, I know you will
28 say, "But we have not such a history!" No, there is not any,
29 according to those who think like you. Neither is there any,
30 according to your big university scholars; and so also think those
31 who, having travelled through the West in one great rush, come
32 back dressed in European style and assert, "We have nothing, we
33 are barbarians." Of course, we have no history exactly like that of
34 other countries. Suppose we take rice, and the Englishmen do not.
35 Would you for that reason imagine that they all die of starvation,
36 and are going to be exterminated? They live quite well on what they
37 can easily procure or produce in their own country and what is
38 suited to them. Similarly, we have our own history exactly as it
39 ought to have been for us. Will that history be made extinct by
40 shutting your eyes and crying, "Alas! we have no history!" Those
41 who have eyes to see, find a luminous history there, and on the
42 strength of that they know the nation is still alive. But that history
43 has to be rewritten. It should be restated and suited to the
44 understanding and ways of thinking which our men have acquired
45 in the present age through Western education.

46 Q. How has that to be done?

47 Swamiji: That is too big a subject for a talk now. However, to
48 bring that about, the old institution of "living with the Guru" and
49 similar systems of imparting education are needed. What we want

1 are Western science coupled with Vedanta, Brahmacharya as the
2 guiding motto, and also Shraddha and faith in one's own self.
3 Another thing that we want is the abolition of that system which
4 aims at educating our boys in the same manner as that of the man
5 who battered his ass, being advised that it could thereby be turned
6 into a horse.

7 Q. What do you mean by that?

8 Swamiji: You see, no one can teach anybody. The teacher
9 spoils everything by thinking that he is teaching. Thus Vedanta says
10 that within man is all knowledge--even in a boy it is so--and it
11 requires only an awakening, and that much is the work of a teacher.
12 We have to do only so much for the boys that they may learn to
13 apply their own intellect to the proper use of their hands, legs, ears,
14 eyes, etc., and finally everything will become easy. But the root is
15 religion. Religion is as the rice, and everything else, like the
16 curries. Taking only curries causes indigestion, and so is the case
17 with taking rice alone. Our pedagogues are making parrots of our
18 boys and ruining their brains by cramming a lot of subjects into
19 them. Looking from one standpoint, you should rather be grateful to
20 the Viceroy⁹³ for his proposal of reforming the university system,
21 which means practically abolishing higher education; the country
22 will, at least, feel some relief by having breathing time. Goodness
23 gracious! what a fuss and fury about graduating, and after a few
24 days all cools down! And after all that, what is it they learn but that
25 what religion and customs we have are all bad, and what the
26 Westerners have are all good! At last, they cannot keep the wolf
27 from the door! What does it matter if this higher education remains
28 or goes? It would be better if the people got a little technical
29 education, so that they might find work and earn their bread,
30 instead of dawdling about and crying for service.

31 Q. Yes, the Marwaris are wiser, since they do not accept
32 service and most of them engage themselves in some trade.

33 Swamiji: Nonsense! They are on the way to bringing ruin on
34 the country. They have little understanding of their own interests.
35 You are much better, because you have more of an eye towards
36 manufactures. If the money that they lay out in their business and
37 with which they make only a small percentage of profit were
38 utilised in conducting a few factories and workshops, instead of
39 filling the pockets of Europeans by letting them reap the benefit of
40 most of the transactions, then it would not only conduce to the well-
41 being of the country but bring by far the greater amount of profit to
42 them, as well. It is only the Kabulis who do not care for service--the
43 spirit of independence is in their very bone and marrow. Propose to
44 anyone of them to take service, and you will see what follows!

45 Q. Well, Maharaj, in case higher education is abolished, will
46 not the men become as stupid as cows, as they were before?

1 ⁹³ ?Lord Curzon, who took steps to raise the standard of university
2 education so high as to make it very expensive and hence almost
3 inaccessible to boys of the middle classes.
4

1 Swamiji: What nonsense! Can ever a lion become a jackal?
2 What do you mean? Is it ever possible for the sons of the land that
3 has nourished the whole world with knowledge from time
4 immemorial to turn as stupid as cows, because of the abolition of
5 higher education by Lord Curzon?

6 Q. But think what our people were before the advent of the
7 English, and what they are now.

8 Swamiji: Does higher education mean mere study of material
9 sciences and turning out things of everyday use by machinery? The
10 use of higher education is to find out how to solve the problems of
11 life, and this is what is engaging the profound thought of the
12 modern civilised world, but it was solved in our country thousands
13 of years ago.

14 Q. But your Vedanta also was about to disappear?

15 Swamiji: It might be so. In the efflux of time the light of
16 Vedanta now and then seems as if about to be extinguished, and
17 when that happens, the Lord has to incarnate Himself in the human
18 body; He then infuses such life and strength into religion that it
19 goes on again for some time with irresistible vigour. That life and
20 strength has come into it again.

21 Q. What proof is there, Maharaj, that India has freely
22 contributed her knowledge to the rest of the world?

23 Swamiji: History itself bears testimony to the fact. All the
24 soul-elevating ideas and the different branches of knowledge that
25 exist in the world are found on proper investigation to have their
26 roots in India.

27 Aglow with enthusiasm, Swamiji dwelt at length on this topic.
28 His health was very bad at the time, and moreover owing to the
29 intense heat of summer, he was feeling thirsty and drinking water
30 too often. At last he said, "Dear Singhi, get a glass of iced water for
31 me please, I shall explain everything to you clearly." After drinking
32 the iced water he began afresh.

33 Swamiji: What we need, you know, is to study, independent of
34 foreign control, different branches of the knowledge that is our
35 own, and with it the English language and Western science; we
36 need technical education and all else that may develop industries so
37 that men, instead of seeking for service, may earn enough to
38 provide for themselves, and save something against a rainy day.

39 Q. What were you going to say the other day about the *tol*
40 (Sanskrit boarding school) system?

41 Swamiji: Haven't you read the stories from the Upanishads? I
42 will tell you one. Satyakama went to live the life of a Brahmacharin
43 with his Guru. The Guru gave into his charge some cows and sent
44 him away to the forest with them. Many months passed by, and
45 when Satyakama saw that the number of cows was doubled he
46 thought of returning to his Guru. On his way back, one of the bulls,
47 the fire, and some other animals gave him instructions about the
48 Highest Brahman. When the disciple came back, the Guru at once
49 saw by a mere glance at his face that the disciple had learnt the

1 knowledge of the Supreme Brahman.⁹⁴ Now, the moral this story is
2 meant to teach is that true education is gained by constant living in
3 communion with nature.

4 Knowledge should be acquired in that way, otherwise by
5 educating yourself in the *tol* of a Pandit you will be only a human
6 ape all your life. One should live from his very boyhood with one
7 whose character is like a blazing fire and should have before him a
8 living example of the highest teaching. Mere reading that it is a sin
9 to tell a lie will be of no use. Every boy should be trained to practise
10 absolute Brahmacharya, and then, and then only, faith--Shraddha--
11 will come. Otherwise, why will not one who has no Shraddha speak
12 an untruth? In our country, the imparting of knowledge has always
13 been through men of renunciation. Later, the Pandits, by
14 monopolising all knowledge and restricting it to the *tols*, have only
15 brought the country to the brink of ruin. India had all good
16 prospects so long as Tyagis (men of renunciation) used to impart
17 knowledge.

18 Q. What do you mean, Maharaj? There are no Sannyasins in
19 other countries, but see how by dint of their knowledge India is laid
20 prostrate at their feet!

21 Swamiji: Don't talk nonsense, my dear, hear what I say. India
22 will have to carry others' shoes for ever on her head if the charge of
23 imparting knowledge to her sons does not again fall upon the
24 shoulders of Tyagis. Don't you know how an illiterate boy, possessed
25 of renunciation, turned the heads of your great old Pandits? Once at
26 the Dakshineswar Temple the Brahmana who was in charge of the
27 worship of Vishnu broke a leg of the image. Pandits were brought
28 together at a meeting to give their opinions, and they, after
29 consulting old books and manuscripts, declared that the worship of
30 this broken image could not be sanctioned according to the
31 Shastras and a new image would have to be consecrated. There
32 was, consequently, a great stir. Shri Ramakrishna was called at last.
33 He heard and asked, "Does a wife forsake her husband in case he
34 becomes lame?" What followed? The Pandits were struck dumb, all
35 their Shastric commentaries and erudition could not withstand the
36 force of this simple statement. If what you say was true, why should
37 Shri Ramakrishna come down to this earth, and why should he
38 discourage mere book-learning so much? That new life-force which
39 he brought with him has to be instilled into learning and education,
40 and then the real work will be done.

41 Q. But that is easier said than done.

42 Swamiji: Had it been easy, it would not have been necessary
43 for him to come. What you have to do now is to establish a Math in
44 every town and in every village. Can you do that? Do something at
45 least. Start a big Math in the heart of Calcutta. A well-educated
46 Sadhu should be at the head of that centre and under him there
47 should be departments for teaching practical science and arts, with
48 a specialist Sannyasin in charge of each of these departments.

1 ⁹⁴ ?Chhandogya, IV. ix. 2.
2

1 Q. Where will you get such Sadhus?

2 Swamiji: We shall have to manufacture them. Therefore, I
3 always say that some young men with burning patriotism and
4 renunciation are needed. None can master a thing perfectly in so
5 short a time as the Tyagis will.

6 After a short silence Swamiji said, "Singhi, there are so many
7 things left to be done for our country that thousands like you and
8 me are needed. What will mere talk do? See to what a miserable
9 condition the country is reduced; now do something! We haven't
10 even got a single book well suited for the little boys.

11 Q. Why, there are so many books of Ishwar Chandra
12 Vidyasagar for the boys!

13 No sooner had I said this than he laughed out and said: Yes,
14 there you read "Ishvar Nirakar Chaitanya Svarup"--(God is without
15 form and of the essence of pure knowledge); "Subal ati subodh
16 balak"--(Subal is a very good boy), and so on. That won't do. We
17 must compose some books in Bengali as also in English with short
18 stories from the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, the Upanishads, etc.,
19 in very easy and simple language, and these are to be given to our
20 little boys to read.

21 It was about eleven o'clock by this time. The sky became
22 suddenly overcast, and a cool breeze began to blow. Swamiji was
23 greatly delighted at the prospect of rain. He got up and said, "Let
24 us, Singhi, have a stroll by the side of the Ganga." We did so, and he
25 recited many stanzas from the *Meghaduta* of Kalidasa, but the one
26 undercurrent of thought that was all the time running through his
27 mind was the good of India. He exclaimed, "Look here, Singhi, can
28 you do one thing? Can you put a stop to the marriage of our boys
29 for some time?

30 I said, "Well, Maharaj, how can we think of that when the
31 Babus are trying, on the other hand, all sorts of means to make
32 marriage cheaper?"

33 Swamiji: Don't trouble your head on that score; who can stem
34 the tide of time! All such agitations will end in empty sound, that is
35 all. The dearer the marriages become, the better for the country.
36 What a hurry-scurry of passing examinations and marrying right
37 off! It seems as if no one was to be left a bachelor, but it is just the
38 same thing again, next year!

39 After a short silence, Swamiji again said, "if I can get some
40 unmarried graduates, I may try to send them over to Japan and
41 make arrangements for their technical education there, so that
42 when they come back, they may turn their knowledge to the best
43 account for India. What a good thing that would be!

44 Q. Why, Maharaj, is it better for us to go to Japan than to
45 England?

46 Swamiji: Certainly! In my opinion, if all our rich and educated
47 men once go and see Japan, their eyes will be opened.

48 Q. How?

1 Swamiji: There, in Japan, you find a fine assimilation of
2 knowledge, and not its indigestion, as we have here. They have
3 taken everything from the Europeans, but they remain Japanese all
4 the same, and have not turned European; while in our country, the
5 terrible mania of becoming Westernised has seized upon us like a
6 plague.

7 I said: "Maharaj, I have seen some Japanese paintings; one
8 cannot but marvel at their art. Its inspiration seems to be
9 something which is their own and beyond imitation."

10 Swamiji: Quite so. They are great as a nation because of their
11 art. Don't you see they are Asians, as we are? And though we have
12 lost almost everything, yet what we still have is wonderful. The very
13 soul of the Asian is interwoven with art. The Asian never uses a
14 thing unless there be art in it. Don't you know that art is, with us, a
15 part of religion? How greatly is a lady admired, among us, who can
16 nicely paint the floors and walls, on auspicious occasions, with the
17 paste of rice powder? How great an artist was Shri Ramakrishna
18 himself!

19 Q. The English art is also good, is it not?

20 Swamiji: What a stupid fool you are! But what is the use of
21 blaming you when that seems to be the prevailing way of thinking!
22 Alas, to such a state is our country reduced! The people will look
23 upon their own gold as brass, while the brass of the foreigner is
24 gold to them! This is, indeed, the magic wrought by modern
25 education! Know that since the time the Europeans have come into
26 contact with Asia, they are trying to infuse art into their own life.

27 Myself: If others hear you talk like this, Maharaj, they will
28 think that you take a pessimistic view of things.

29 Swamiji: Naturally! What else can they think who move in a
30 rut! How I wish I could show you everything through my eyes! Look
31 at their buildings--how commonplace, how meaningless, they are!
32 Look at those big government buildings; can you, just by seeing
33 their outside, make out any meaning for which each of them
34 stands? No, because they are all so unsymbolical. Take again the
35 dress of Westerners: their stiff coats and straight pants, fitting
36 almost tightly to the body, are, in our estimation, hardly decent. Is it
37 not so? And, oh, what beauty, indeed, in that! Now, go all over our
38 motherland and see if you cannot read aright, from their very
39 appearance, the meaning for which our buildings stand, and how
40 much art there is in them! The glass is their drinking vessel, and
41 ours is the metal Ghati (pitcher-shaped); which of the two is
42 artistic? Have you seen the farmers' homes in our villages?

43 Myself: Yes, I have, of course.

44 Swamiji: What have you seen of them?

45 I did not know what to say. However, I replied, "Maharaj, they
46 are faultlessly neat and clean, the yards and floors being daily well
47 plastered over".

48 Swamiji: Have you seen their granaries for keeping paddy?
49 What an art is there in them! What a variety of paintings even on

1 their mud walls! And then, if you go and see how the lower classes
2 live in the West, you would at once mark the difference. Their ideal
3 is utility, ours art. The Westerner looks for utility in everything,
4 whereas with us art is everywhere. With the Western education,
5 those beautiful Ghaties of ours have been discarded, and enamel
6 glasses have usurped their place in our homes! Thus the ideal of
7 utility has been imbibed by us to such an extent as to make it look
8 little short of the ridiculous. Now what we need is the combination
9 of art and utility. Japan has done that very quickly, and so she has
10 advanced by giant strides. Now, in their turn, the Japanese are
11 going to teach the Westerners.

12 Q. Maharaj, which nation in the world dresses best?

13 Swamiji: The Aryans do; even the Europeans admit that. How
14 picturesquely their dresses hang in folds! The royal costumes of
15 most nations are, to some extent, a sort of imitation of the Aryans'--
16 the same attempt is made there to keep them in folds, and those
17 costumes bear a marked difference to their national style.

18 By the by, Singhi, leave off that wretched habit of wearing
19 those European shirts.

20 Q. Why, Maharaj?

21 Swamiji: For the reason that they are used by the Westerners
22 only as underwear. They never like to see them worn outside. How
23 mistaken of the Bengalis to do so! As if one should wear anything
24 and everything, as if there was no unwritten law about dress, as if
25 there was no ancestral style to follow! Our people are outcasted by
26 taking the food touched by the lower classes; it would have been
27 very well if the same law applied to their wearing any irregular
28 style of dress. Why can't you adapt your dress in some way to our
29 own style? What sense is there in your adopting European shirts
30 and coats?

31 It began to rain now, and the dinner-bell also rang. So we
32 went in to partake of the Prasada (consecrated food) with others.
33 During the meal, Swamiji said, addressing me: "Concentrated food
34 should be taken. To fill the stomach with a large quantity of rice is
35 the root of laziness." A little while after he said again, "Look at the
36 Japanese, they take rice with the soup of split peas, twice or thrice
37 a day. But even the strongly built take a little at a time, though the
38 number of meals may be more. Those who are well-to-do among
39 them take meat daily. While we stuff ourselves twice a day up to the
40 throat, as it were, and the whole of our energy is exhausted in
41 digesting such a quantity of rice!"

42 Q. Is it feasible for us Bengalis, poor as we are, to take meat?

43 Swamiji: Why not? You can afford to have it in small
44 quantities. Half a pound a day is quite enough. The real evil is
45 idleness, which is the principal cause of our poverty. Suppose the
46 head of a firm gets displeased with someone and decreases his pay;
47 or out of three or four bread-winning sons in a family one suddenly
48 dies; what do they do? Why, they at once curtail the quantity of milk
49 for the children, or live on one meal a day, having a little popped
50 rice or so at night!

1 Q. But what else can they do under the circumstances?

2 Swamiji: Why can't they exert themselves and earn more to
3 keep up their standard of food? But no! They must go to their local
4 Addas (rendezvous) and idle hours away! Oh, if they only knew how
5 they wasted their time!

6

7 X

8

9 *[Shri Priya Nath Sinha]*

10

11 Once I went to see Swamiji while he was staying in Calcutta
12 at the house of the late Balaram Basu. After a long conversation
13 about Japan and America, I asked him, "Well, Swamiji, how many
14 disciples have you in the West?"

15 Swamiji: A good many.

16 Q. Two or three thousands?

17 Swamiji: Maybe more than that.

18 Q. Are they all initiated by you with Mantras?

19 Swamiji: Yes.

20 Q. Did you give them permission to utter Pranava (Om)?

21 Swamiji: Yes.

22 Q. How did you, Maharaj? They say that the Shudras have no right
23 to Pranava, and none has except the Brahmins. Moreover, the
24 Westerners are Mlechchhas, not even Shudras.

25 Swamiji: How do you know that those whom I have initiated are not
26 Brahmins?

27 Myself: Where could you get Brahmins outside India, in the lands of
28 the Yavanas and Mlechchhas?

29 Swamiji: My disciples are all Brahmins! I quite admit the truth of
30 the words that none except the Brahmins has the right to Pranava.
31 But the son of a Brahmin is not necessarily always a Brahmin;
32 though there is every possibility of his being one, he may not
33 become so. Did you not hear that the nephew of Aghore Chakravarti
34 of Baghbazar became a sweeper and actually used to do all the
35 menial services of his adopted caste? Was he not the son of a
36 Brahmin?

1 The Brahmin caste and the Brahmanya qualities are two distinct
2 things. In India, one is held to be a Brahmin by one's caste, but in
3 the West, one should be known as such by one's Brahmanya
4 qualities. As there are three Gunas--Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas--so
5 there are Gunas which show a man to be a Brahmin, Kshatriya,
6 Vaishya, or Shudra. The qualities of being a Brahmin or a Kshatriya
7 are dying out from the country; but in the West they have now
8 attained to Kshatriyahood, from which the next step is
9 Brahminhood; and many there are who have qualified themselves
10 for that.

11 Q. Then you call those Brahmins who are Sattvika by nature.

12 Swamiji: Quite so. As there are Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas--one or
13 other of these Gunas more or less--in every man, so the qualities
14 which make a Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, or Shudra are inherent
15 in every man, more or less. But at times one or other of these
16 qualities predominates in him in varying degrees, and it is
17 manifested accordingly. Take a man in his different pursuits, for
18 example: when he is engaged in serving another for pay, he is in
19 Shudrahood; when he is busy transacting some piece of business
20 for profit, on his own account, he is a Vaishya; when he fights to
21 right wrongs, then the qualities of a Kshatriya come out in him; and
22 when he meditates on God or passes his time in conversation about
23 Him, then he is a Brahmin. Naturally, it is quite possible for one to
24 be changed from one caste into another. Otherwise, how did
25 Vishvamitra become a Brahmin and Parashurama a Kshatriya?

26 Q. What you say seems to be quite right, but why then do not our
27 Pandits and family-Gurus teach us the same thing?

28 Swamiji: That is one of the great evils of our country. But let the
29 matter rest now.

30 Swamiji here spoke highly of the Westerners' spirit of practicality,
31 and how, when they take up religion also, that spirit shows itself.

32 Myself: True, Maharaj, I have heard that their spiritual and psychic
33 powers are very quickly developed when they practise religion. The
34 other day Swami Saradananda showed me a letter written by one of
35 his Western disciples, describing the spiritual powers highly
36 developed in the writer through the Sadhanas practised for only
37 four months.

38 Swamiji: So you see! Now you understand whether there are
39 Brahmins in the West or not. You have Brahmins here also, but they
40 are bringing the country down to the verge of ruin by their awful
41 tyranny, and consequently what they have naturally is vanishing
42 away by degrees. The Guru initiates his disciple with a Mantra, but
43 that has come to be a trade with him. And then, how wonderful is
44 the relation nowadays between a Guru and his disciple! Perchance,
45 the Guru has nothing to eat at home, and his wife brings the matter
46 to his notice and says, "Pray, go once again to your disciples, dear.
47 Will your playing at dice all day long save us from hunger?" The
48 Brahmin in reply says, "Very well, remind me of it tomorrow
49 morning. I have come to hear that my disciple so-and-so is having a
50 run of luck, and, moreover, I have not been to him for a long time."

1 This is what your Kula-Guru system has come to in Bengal!
2 Priestcraft in the West is not so degenerated, as yet; it is on the
3 whole better than your kind!

7 XI

9 (*From the Diary of a disciple* ⁹⁵)

11 Disciple: How is it, Swamiji, that you do not lecture in this country?
12 You have stirred Europe and America with your lectures, but
13 coming back here you have kept silence.

14 Swamiji: In this country, the ground should be prepared first; then if
15 the seed is sown, the plant will come out best. The ground in the
16 West, in Europe and America is very fertile and fit for sowing seeds.
17 There, they have reached the climax of Bhoga (enjoyment). Being
18 satiated with Bhoga to the full, their minds are not getting peace
19 now even in those enjoyments, and they feel as if they wanted
20 something else. In this country you have neither Bhoga nor Yoga
21 (renunciation). When one is satiated with Bhoga, then it is that one
22 will listen to and understand the teachings on Yoga. What good will
23 lectures do in a country like India which has become the birthplace
24 of disease, sorrow, and affliction, and where men are emaciated
25 through starvation, and weak in mind?

26 Disciple: How is that? Do you not say that ours is the land of
27 religion and that here the people understand religion as they do
28 nowhere else? Why then will not this country be animated by your
29 inspiring eloquence and reap to the full the fruits thereof?

30 Swamiji: Now understand what religion means. The first thing
31 required is the worship of the Kurma (tortoise) Incarnation, and the
32 belly-god is this Kurma, as it were. Until you pacify this, no one will
33 welcome your words about religion. India is restless with the
34 thought of how to face this spectre of hunger. The draining of the
35 best resources of the country by the foreigners, the unrestricted
36 exports of merchandise, and, above all, the abominable jealousy
37 natural to slaves are eating into the vitals of India. First of all, you
38 must remove this evil of hunger and starvation, this constant
39 anxiety for bare existence, from those to whom you want to preach
40 religion; otherwise, lectures and such things will be of no benefit.

41 Disciple: What should we do then to remove that evil?

42 Swamiji: First, some young men full of the spirit of renunciation are
43 needed--those who will be ready to sacrifice their lives for others,
44 instead of devoting themselves to their own happiness. With this

1 ⁹⁵ ?The disciple in this and the following conversations is Sharat
2 Chandra Chakravarty.
3

1 object in view I shall establish a Math to train young Sannyasins,
2 who will go from door to door and make the people realise their
3 pitiable condition by means of facts and reasoning, and instruct
4 them in the ways and means for their welfare, and at the same time
5 will explain to them as clearly as possible, in very simple and easy
6 language, the higher truths of religion. The masses in our country
7 are like the sleeping Leviathan. The education imparted by the
8 present university system reaches one or two per cent of the
9 masses only. And even those who get that do not succeed in their
10 endeavours of doing any good to their country. But it is not their
11 fault, poor fellows! As soon as they come out of their college, they
12 find themselves fathers of several children! Somehow or other they
13 manage to secure the position of a clerk, or at the most, a deputy
14 magistrate. This is the finale of education! With the burden of a
15 family on their backs, they find no time to do anything great or
16 think anything high. They do not find means enough to fulfil their
17 personal wants and interests; so what can be expected of them in
18 the way of doing anything for others?

19 Disciple: Is there then no way out for us?

20 Swamiji: Certainly there is. This is the land of Religion Eternal. The
21 country has fallen, no doubt, but will as surely rise again, and that
22 upheaval will astound the world. The lower the hollows the billows
23 make, the higher and with greater force will they rise again.

24 Disciple: How will India rise again?

25 Swamiji: Do you not see? The dawn has already appeared in the
26 eastern sky, and there is little delay in the sun's rising. You all set
27 your shoulders to the wheel! What is there in making the world all
28 in all, and thinking of "My Samsara (family and property), my
29 Samsara"? Your duty at present is to go from one part of the
30 country to another, from village to village, and make the people
31 understand that mere sitting idly won't do any more. Make them
32 understand their real condition and say, "O ye brothers, arise!
33 Awake! How much longer would you remain asleep!" Go and advise
34 them how to improve their own condition, and make them
35 comprehend the sublime truths of the Shastras (scriptures), by
36 presenting them in a lucid and popular way. So long the Brahmins
37 have monopolised religion; but since they cannot hold their ground
38 against the strong tide of time, go and take steps so that one and all
39 in the land may get that religion. Impress upon their minds that
40 they have the same right to religion as the Brahmins. Initiate all,
41 even down to the Chandalas (people of the lowest castes), in these
42 fiery Mantras. Also instruct them, in simple words, about the
43 necessities of life, and in trade, commerce, agriculture, etc. If you
44 cannot do this, then fie upon your education and culture, and fie
45 upon your studying the Vedas and Vedanta!

46 Disciple: But where is that strength in us? I should have felt myself
47 blessed if I had a hundredth part of your powers, Swamiji.

48 Swamiji: How foolish! Power and things like that will come by
49 themselves. Put yourself to work, and you will find such tremendous
50 power coming to you that you will find it hard to bear. Even the
51 least work done for others awakens the power within; even thinking

1 the least good of others gradually instils into the heart the strength
2 of a lion. I love you all ever so much, but I wish you all to die
3 working for others--I should rather be glad to see you do that!

4 Disciple: What will become of those, then, who depend on me?

5 Swamiji: If you are ready to sacrifice your life for others, God will
6 certainly provide some means for them. Have you not read in the
7 Gita (VI. 40) the words of Shri Krishna, "{Sanskrit}--Never does a
8 doer of good, O my beloved, come to grief"?

9 Disciple: I see, sir.

10 Swamiji: The essential thing is renunciation. Without renunciation
11 none can pour out his whole heart in working for others. The man
12 of renunciation sees all with an equal eye and devotes himself to
13 the service of all. Does not our Vedanta also teach us to see all with
14 an equal eye? Why then do you cherish the idea that the wife and
15 children are your own, more than others? At your very threshold,
16 Narayana Himself in the form of a poor beggar is dying of
17 starvation! Instead of giving him anything, would you only satisfy
18 the appetites of your wife and children with delicacies? Why, that is
19 beastly!

20 Disciple: To work for others requires a good deal of money at times,
21 and where shall I get that?

22 Swamiji: Why not do as much as lies within your power? Even if you
23 cannot give to others for want of money, surely you can at least
24 breathe into their ears some good words or impart some good
25 instruction, can't you? Or does that also require money?

26 Disciple: Yes, sir, that I can do.

27 Swamiji: But saying, "I can", won't do. Show me through action
28 what you can do, and then only I shall know that your coming to me
29 is turned to some good account. Get up, and put your shoulders to
30 the wheel--how long is this life for? As you have come into this
31 world, leave some mark behind. Otherwise, where is the difference
32 between you and the trees and stones? They, too, come into
33 existence, decay and die. If you like to be born and to die like them,
34 you are at liberty to do so. Show me by your actions that your
35 reading the Vedanta has been fruitful of the highest good. Go and
36 tell all, "In every one of you lies that Eternal Power", and try to
37 wake It up. What will you do with individual salvation? That is sheer
38 selfishness. Throw aside your meditation, throw away your
39 salvation and such things! Put your whole heart and soul in the
40 work to which I have consecrated myself.

41 With bated breath the disciple heard these inspiring words, and
42 Swamiji went on with his usual fire and eloquence.

43 Swamiji: First of all, make the soil ready, and thousands of
44 Vivekanandas will in time be born into this world to deliver lectures
45 on religion. You needn't worry yourself about that! Don't you see
46 why I am starting orphanages, famine-relief works, etc.? Don't you
47 see how Sister Nivedita, a British lady, has learnt to serve Indians
48 so well, by doing even menial work for them? And can't you, being
49 Indians, similarly serve your own fellow-countrymen? Go, all of you,

1 wherever there is an outbreak of plague or famine, or wherever the
2 people are in distress, and mitigate their sufferings. At the most you
3 may die in the attempt--what of that? How many like you are being
4 born and dying like worms every day? What difference does that
5 make to the world at large? Die you must, but have a great ideal to
6 die for, and it is better to die with a great ideal in life. Preach this
7 ideal from door to door, and you will yourselves be benefited by it at
8 the same time that you are doing good to your country. On you lie
9 the future hopes of our country. I feel extreme pain to see you
10 leading a life of inaction. Set yourselves to work--to work! Do not
11 tarry--the time of death is approaching day by day! Do not sit idle,
12 thinking that everything will be done in time, later on! Mind--
13 nothing will be done that way!

XII

18 Disciple: Pray, Swamiji, how can Jnana and Bhakti be reconciled?
19 We see the followers of the path of devotion (Bhaktas) close their
20 ears at the name of Shankara, and again, the followers of the path
21 of knowledge (Jnanis) call the Bhaktas fanatics, seeing them weep
22 in torrents, or sing and dance in ecstasy, in the name of the Lord.

23 Swamiji: The thing is, all this conflict is in the preliminary
24 (preparatory) stages of Jnana and Bhakti. Have you not heard Shri
25 Ramakrishna's story about Shiva's demons and Rama's monkeys?⁹⁶

26 Disciple: Yes, sir, I have.

27 Swamiji: But there is no difference between the supreme Bhakti
28 and the supreme Jnana. The supreme Bhakti is to realise God as the
29 form of Prema (love) itself. If you see the loving form of God
30 manifest everywhere and in everything, how can you hate or injure
31 others? That realisation of love can never come so long as there is
32 the least desire in the heart, or what Shri Ramakrishna used to say,
33 attachment for Kama-Kanchana (sense-pleasure and wealth). In the
34 perfect realisation of love, even the consciousness of one's own
35 body does not exist. Also, the supreme Jnana is to realise the
36 oneness everywhere, to see one's own self as the Self in everything.
37 That too cannot come so long as there is the least consciousness of
38 the ego (Aham).

39 Disciple: Then what you call love is the same as supreme
40 knowledge?

41 Swamiji: Exactly so. Realisation of love comes to none unless one
42 becomes a perfect Jnani. Does not the Vedanta say that Brahman is
43 Sat-Chit-Ananda--the absolute Existence-Knowledge-Bliss?

1 ⁹⁶ ?There was once a fight between Shiva and Rama. Shiva was
2 the Guru of Rama, and Rama was the Guru of Shiva. They fought
3 but became friendly again. But there was no end to the quarrels and
4 wranglings between the demons of Shiva and the monkeys of
5 Rama!
6

1 Disciple: Yes, sir.

2 Swamiji: The phrase Sat-Chit-Ananda means--Sat, i.e. existence,
3 Chit, i.e. consciousness or knowledge, and Ananda, i.e. bliss which
4 is the same as love. There is no controversy between the Bhakta
5 and the Jnani regarding the Sat aspect of Brahman. Only, the Jnanis
6 lay greater stress on His aspect of Chit or knowledge, while the
7 Bhaktas keep the aspect of Ananda or love more in view. But no
8 sooner is the essence of Chit realised than the essence of Ananda is
9 also realised. Because what is Chit is verily the same as Ananda.

10 Disciple: Why then is so much sectarianism prevalent in India? And
11 why is there so much controversy between the scriptures on Bhakti
12 and Jnana?

13 Swamiji: The thing is, all this waging of war and controversy is
14 concerning the preliminary ideals, i.e. those ideals which men take
15 up to attain the real Jnana or real Bhakti. But which do you think is
16 the higher--the end or the means? Surely, the means can never be
17 higher than the end, because the means to realise the same end
18 must be numerous, as they vary according to the temperament or
19 mental capacities of individual followers. The counting of beads,
20 meditation, worship, offering oblations in the sacred fire--all these
21 and such other things are the limbs of religion; they are but the
22 means; and to attain to supreme devotion (Para-Bhakti) or to the
23 highest realisation of Brahman is the pre-eminent end. If you look a
24 little deeper, you will understand what they are fighting about. One
25 says, "If you pray to God facing the East, then you will reach Him."
26 "No," says another, "you will have to sit facing the West, and then
27 only you will see Him." Perhaps someone realised God in
28 meditation, ages ago, by sitting with his face to the East, and his
29 disciples at once began to preach this attitude, asserting that none
30 can ever see God unless he assumes this position. Another party
31 comes forward and inquires, "How is that? Such and such a person
32 realised God while facing the West, and we have seen this
33 ourselves." In this way all these sects have originated. Someone
34 might have attained supreme devotion by repeating the name of the
35 Lord as Hari, and at once it entered into the composition of the
36 Shastra as:

37 {Sanskrit}

38 --"The name of the Lord Hari, the name of the Lord Hari, the name
39 of the Lord Hari alone. Verily, there is no other, no other, no other
40 path than this in the age of Kali."

41 Someone, again, let us suppose, might have attained perfection
42 with the name of Allah, and immediately another creed originated
43 by him began to spread, and so on. But we have to see what is the
44 end to which all these forms of worship and other religious
45 practices are intended to lead. The end is Shraddha. We have not
46 any synonym in our Bengali language to express the Sanskrit word
47 Shraddha. The (Katha) Upanishad says that Shraddha entered into
48 the heart of Nachiketa. Even with the word Ekagrata (one-
49 pointedness) we cannot express the whole significance of the word
50 Shraddha. If you meditate on any truth with steadfast devotion and
51 concentration, you will see that the mind is more and more tending

1 onwards to Oneness, i.e. taking you towards the realisation of the
2 absolute Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. The scriptures on Bhakti or
3 Jnana give special advice to men to take up in life the one or the
4 other of such Nishthas (scrupulous persistence) and make it their
5 own. With the lapse of ages, these great truths become distorted
6 and gradually transform themselves into Deshacharas or the
7 prevailing customs of a country. It has happened, not only in India,
8 but in every nation and every society in the world. And the common
9 people, lacking in discriminating, make these the bone of
10 contention and fight among themselves. They have lost sight of the
11 end, and hence sectarianism, quarrels, and fights continue.

12 Disciple: What then is the saving means, Swamiji?

13 Swamiji: That true Shraddha, as of old, has to be brought back
14 again. The weeds have to be taken up by the roots. In every faith
15 and in every path, there are, no doubt, truths which transcend time
16 and space, but a good deal of rubbish has accumulated over them.
17 This has to be cleared away, and the true eternal principles have to
18 be held before the people; and then only, our religion and our
19 country will be really benefited.

20 Disciple: How will that be effected?

21 Swamiji: Why, first of all, we have to introduce the worship of the
22 great saints. Those great-souled ones who have realised the eternal
23 truths are to be presented before the people as the ideals to be
24 followed; as in the case of India--Shri Ramachandra, Shri Krishna,
25 Mahavira, and Shri Ramakrishna, among others. Can you bring in
26 the worship of Shri Ramachandra and Mahavira in this country?
27 Keep aside for the present the Vrindavan aspect of Shri Krishna,
28 and spread far and wide the worship of Shri Krishna roaring the
29 Gita out, with the voice of a lion. And bring into daily use the
30 worship of Shakti--the divine Mother, the source of all power.

31 Disciple: Is the divine play of Shri Krishna with the Gopis of
32 Vrindavan not good, then?

33 Swamiji: Under the present circumstances, that worship is of no
34 good to you. Playing on the flute and so on will not regenerate the
35 country. We now mostly need the idea of a hero with the
36 tremendous spirit of Rajas thrilling through his veins from head to
37 foot--the hero who will dare and die to know the Truth--the hero
38 whose armour is renunciation, whose sword is wisdom. We want
39 now the spirit of the brave warrior in the battlefield of life, and not
40 of the wooing lover who looks upon life as a pleasure-garden!

41 Disciple: Is then the path of love, as depicted in the ideal of the
42 Gopis, false?

43 Swamiji: Who says so? Not I! That is a very superior form of
44 worship (Sadhana). In this age of tremendous attachment to sense-
45 pleasure and wealth, very few are able even to comprehend those
46 higher ideals.

47 Disciple: Then are not those who are worshipping God as husband
48 or lover (Madhura) following the proper path?

49 Swamiji: I dare say not. There may be a few honourable exceptions

1 among them, but know, that the greater part of them are possessed
2 of dark Tamasika nature. Most of them are full of morbidity and
3 affected with exceptional weakness. The country must be raised.
4 The worship of Mahavira must be introduced; the Shakti-puja must
5 form a part of our daily practice; Shri Ramachandra must be
6 worshipped in every home. Therein lies your welfare, therein lies
7 the good of the country--there is no other way.

8 Disciple: But I have heard that Bhagavan Shri Ramakrishna used to
9 sing the name of God very much?

10 Swamiji: Quite so, but his was a different case. What comparison
11 can there be between him and ordinary men? He practised in his
12 life all the different ideals of religion to show that each of them
13 leads but to the One Truth. Shall you or I ever be able to do all that
14 he has done? None of us has understood him fully. So, I do not
15 venture to speak about him anywhere and everywhere. He only
16 knows what he himself really was; his frame was a human one only,
17 but everything else about him was entirely different from others.

18 Disciple: Do you, may I ask, believe him to be an Avatara
19 (Incarnation of God)?

20 Swamiji: Tell me first--what do you mean by an Avatara?

21 Disciple: Why, I mean one like Shri Ramachandra, Shri Krishna,
22 Shri Gauranga, Buddha, Jesus, and others.

23 Swamiji: I know Bhagavan Shri Ramakrishna to be even greater
24 than those you have just named. What to speak of believing, which
25 is a petty thing--I *know* ! Let us, however, drop the subject now;
26 more of it another time.

27 After a pause Swamiji continued: To re-establish the Dharma, there
28 come Mahapurushas (great teachers of humanity), suited to the
29 needs of the times and society. Call them what you will--either
30 Mahapurushas or Avataras--it matters little. They reveal, each in his
31 own life, the ideal. Then, by degrees, shapes are moulded in their
32 matrices--MEN are made! Gradually, sects arise and spread. As
33 time goes on, these sects degenerate, and similar reformers come
34 again. This has been the law flowing in uninterrupted succession,
35 like a current, down the ages.

36 Disciple: Why do you not preach Shri Ramakrishna as an Avatara?
37 You have, indeed, power, eloquence, and everything else needed to
38 do it.

39 Swamiji: Truly, I tell you, I have understood him very little. He
40 appears to me to have been so great that, whenever I have to speak
41 anything of him, I am afraid lest I ignore or explain away the truth,
42 lest my little power does not suffice, lest in trying to extol him I
43 present his picture by painting him according to my lights and
44 belittle him thereby!

45 Disciple: But many are now preaching him as an Avatara.

46 Swamiji: Let them do so if they like. They are doing it in the light in
47 which they have understood him. You too can go and do the same, if
48 you have understood him.

1 Disciple: I cannot even grasp you, what to say of Shri Ramakrishna!
2 I should consider myself blessed in this life if I get a little of your
3 grace.

4
5
6
7 XIII
8

9 Disciple: Pray, Swamiji, if the One Brahman is the only Reality, why
10 then exists all this differentiation in the world?

11 Swamiji: Are you not considering this question from the point of
12 view of phenomenal existence? Looking from the phenomenal side
13 of existence, one can, through reasoning and discrimination,
14 gradually arrive at the very root of Unity. But if you were firmly
15 established in that Unity, how from that standpoint, tell me, could
16 you see this differentiation?

17 Disciple: True, if I had existed in the Unity, how should I be able to
18 raise this question of "why"? As I put this question, it is already
19 taken for granted that I do so by seeing this diversity.

20 Swamiji: Very well. To enquire about the root of Oneness through
21 the diversity of phenomenal existence is named by the Shastras as
22 Vyatireki reasoning, or the process of arguing by the indirect
23 method, that is, Adhyaropa and Apavada, first taking for granted
24 something that is non-existent or unreal as existing or real, and
25 then showing through the course of reasoning that that is not a
26 substance existing or real. You are talking of the process of arriving
27 at the truth through assuming that which is not-true as true--are
28 you not?

29 Disciple: To my mind, the state of the existing or the seen seems to
30 be self-evident, and hence true, and that which is opposite to it
31 seems, on the other hand, to be unreal.

32 Swamiji: But the Vedas say, "One only without a second". And if in
33 reality there is the One only that exists--the Brahman--then, your
34 differentiation is false. You believe in the Vedas, I suppose?

35 Disciple: Oh, yes, for myself I hold the Vedas as the highest
36 authority; but if, in argument, one does not accept them to be so,
37 one must, in that case, have to be refuted by other means.

38 Swamiji: That also can be done. Look here, a time comes when
39 what you call differentiation vanishes, and we cannot perceive it at
40 all. I have experienced that state in my own life.

41 Disciple: When have you done so?

42 Swamiji: One day in the temple-garden at Dakshineswar Shri
43 Ramakrishna touched me over the heart, and first of all I began to
44 see that the houses--rooms, doors, windows, verandahs--the trees,
45 the sun, the moon--all were flying off, shattering to pieces as it
46 were--reduced to atoms and molecules--and ultimately became
47 merged in the Akasha. Gradually again, the Akasha also vanished,

1 and after that, my consciousness of the ego with it; what happened
2 next I do not recollect. I was at first frightened. Coming back from
3 that state, again I began to see the houses, doors, windows,
4 verandahs, and other things. On another occasion, I had exactly the
5 same realisation by the side of a lake in America.

6 Disciple: Might not this state as well be brought about by a
7 derangement of the brain? And I do not understand what happiness
8 there can be in realising such a state.

9 Swamiji: A derangement of the brain! How can you call it so, when
10 it comes neither as the result of delirium from any disease, nor of
11 intoxication from drinking, nor as an illusion produced by various
12 sorts of queer breathing exercises--but when it comes to a normal
13 man in full possession of his health and wits? Then again, this
14 experience is in perfect harmony with the Vedas. It also coincides
15 with the words of realisation of the inspired Rishis and Acharyas of
16 old. Do you take me, at last, to be a crack-brained man? (smiling).

17 Disciple: Oh, no, I did not mean that of course. When there are to
18 be found hundreds of illustrations about such realisation of Oneness
19 in the Shastras, and when you say that it can be as directly realised
20 as a fruit in the palm of one's hand, and when it has been your own
21 personal experience in life, perfectly coinciding with the words of
22 the Vedas and other Shastras--how dare I say that it is false? Shri
23 Shankaracharya also realising that state has said, "Where is the
24 universe vanished?" and so on.

25 Swamiji: Know--this knowledge of Oneness is what the Shastras
26 speak of as realisation of the Brahman, by knowing which, one gets
27 rid of fear, and the shackles of birth and death break for ever.
28 Having once realised that Supreme Bliss, one is no more
29 overwhelmed by pleasure and pain of this world. Men being
30 fettered by base lust-and-wealth cannot enjoy that Bliss of
31 Brahman.

32 Disciple: If it is so, and if we are really of the essence of the
33 Supreme Brahman, then why do we not exert ourselves to gain that
34 Bliss? Why do we again and again run into the jaws of death, being
35 decoyed by this worthless snare of lust-and-wealth?

36 Swamiji: You speak as if man does not desire to have that Bliss!
37 Ponder over it, and you will see that whatever anyone is doing, he is
38 doing in the hope of gaining that Supreme Bliss. Only, not everyone
39 is conscious of it and so cannot understand it. That Supreme Bliss
40 fully exists in all, from Brahma down to the blade of grass. You are
41 also that undivided Brahman. This very moment you can realise if
42 you think yourself truly and absolutely to be so. It is all mere want
43 of direct perception. That you have taken service and work so hard
44 for the sake of your wife also shows that the aim is ultimately to
45 attain to that Supreme Bliss of Brahman. Being again and again
46 entangled in the intricate maze of delusion and hard hit by sorrows
47 and afflictions, the eye will turn of itself to one's own real nature,
48 the Inner Self. It is owing to the presence of this desire for bliss in
49 the heart, that man, getting hard shocks one after another, turns his
50 eye inwards--to his own Self. A time is sure to come to everyone,
51 without exception, when he will do so--to one it may be in this life,

1 to another, after thousands of incarnations.

2 Disciple: It all depends upon the blessings of the Guru and the
3 grace of the Lord!

4 Swamiji: The wind of grace of the Lord is blowing on, for ever and
5 ever. Do you spread your sail. Whenever you do anything, do it with
6 your whole heart concentrated on it. Think day and night, "I am of
7 the essence of that Supreme Existence-Knowledge-Bliss--what fear
8 and anxiety have I? This body, mind, and intellect are all transient,
9 and That which is beyond these is myself."

10 Disciple: Thoughts like these come only for a while now and then,
11 but quickly vanish, and I think all sorts of trash and nonsense.

12 Swamiji: It happens like that in the initial stage, but gradually it is
13 overcome. But from the beginning, intensity of desire in the mind is
14 needed. Think always, "I am ever-pure, ever-knowing, and ever-
15 free; how can I do anything evil? Can I ever be befooled like
16 ordinary men with the insignificant charms of lust and wealth?"
17 Strengthen the mind with such thoughts. This will surely bring real
18 good.

19 Disciple: Once in a while strength of mind comes. But then again I
20 think that if I would appear at the Deputy Magistrateship
21 Examination, wealth and name and fame would come and I should
22 live well and happy.

23 Swamiji: Whenever such thoughts come in the mind, discriminate
24 within yourself between the real and the unreal. Have you not read
25 the Vedanta? Even when you sleep, keep the sword of
26 discrimination at the head of your bed, so that covetousness cannot
27 approach you even in dream. Practising such strength, renunciation
28 will gradually come, and then you will see--the portals of heaven are
29 wide open to you.

30 Disciple: If it is so, Swamiji, how is it then that the texts on Bhakti
31 say that too much of renunciation kills the feelings that make for
32 tenderness?

33 Swamiji: Throw away, I say, texts which teach things like that!
34 Without renunciation, without burning dispassion for sense-objects,
35 without turning away from wealth and lust as from filthy
36 abomination--"{Sanskrit}--never can one attain salvation even in
37 hundreds of Brahma's cycles". Repeating the names of the Lord,
38 meditation, worship, offering libations in sacred fire, penance--all
39 these are for bringing forth renunciation. One who has not gained
40 renunciation, know his efforts to be like unto those of the man who
41 is pulling at the oars all the while that the boat is at anchor.
42 "{Sanskrit}--Neither by progeny nor by wealth, but by renunciation
43 alone some (rare ones) attained immortality" (Kaivalya Upanishad,
44 3).

45 Disciple: Will mere renouncing of wealth and lust accomplish
46 everything?

47 Swamiji: There are other hindrances on the path even after
48 renouncing those two; then, for example, comes name and fame.
49 Very few men, unless of exceptional strength, can keep their

1 balance under that. People shower honours upon them, and various
2 enjoyments creep in by degrees. It is owing to this that three-
3 fourths of the Tyagis are debarred from further progress! For
4 establishing this Math and other things, who knows but that I may
5 have to come back again!

6 Disciple: If you say things like that, then we are undone!

7 Swamiji: What fear? "{Sanskrit}--Be fearless, be fearless, be
8 fearless!" You have seen Nag Mahashaya--how even while living the
9 life of a householder, he is more than a Sannyasin! This is very
10 uncommon; I have rarely seen one like him. If anyone wants to be a
11 householder, let him be like Nag Mahashaya. He shines like a
12 brilliant luminary in the spiritual firmament of East Bengal. Ask the
13 people of that part of the country to visit him often; that will do
14 much good to them.

15 Disciple: Nag Mahashaya, it seems, is the living personification of
16 humility in the play of Shri Ramakrishna's divine drama on earth.

17 Swamiji: Decidedly so, without a shadow of doubt! I have a wish to
18 go and see him once. Will you go with me? I love to see fields
19 flooded over with water in the rains. Will you write to him?

20 Disciple: Certainly I will. He is always mad with joy when he hears
21 about you, and says that East Bengal will be sanctified into a place
22 of pilgrimage by the dust of your feet.

23 Swamiji: Do you know, Shri Ramakrishna used to speak of Nag
24 Mahashaya as a "flaming fire"?

25 Disciple: Yes, so I have heard.

26 At the request of Swamiji, the disciple partook of some Prasada
27 (consecrated food), and left for Calcutta late in the evening; he was
28 deeply thinking over the message of fearlessness that he had heard
29 from the lips of the inspired teacher--"I am free!" "I am free!"

XIV

34 Disciple: Shri Ramakrishna used to say, Swamiji, that a man cannot
35 progress far towards religious realisation unless he first
36 relinquishes Kama-Kanchana (lust and greed). If so, what will
37 become of householders? For their whole minds are set on these
38 two things.

39 Swamiji: It is true that the mind can never turn to God until the
40 desire for lust and wealth has gone from it, be the man a
41 householder or a Sannyasin. Know this for a fact, that as long as the
42 mind is caught in these, so long true devotion, firmness, and
43 Shraddha (faith) can never come.

44 Disciple: Where will the householders be, then? What way are they
45 to follow?

46 Swamiji: To satisfy our smaller desires and have done with them for

1 ever, and to relinquish the greater ones by discrimination--that is
2 the way. Without renunciation God can never be realised--
3 {Sanskrit}--even if Brahma himself enjoined otherwise!

4 Disciple: But does renunciation of everything come as soon as one
5 becomes a monk?

6 Swamiji: Sannyasins are at least struggling to make themselves
7 ready for renunciation, whereas householders are in this matter
8 like boatmen who work at their oars while the boat lies at anchor. Is
9 the desire for enjoyment ever appeased? "{Sanskrit}--It increases
10 ever and ever" (Bhagavata, IX xix. 14).

11 Disciple: Why? May not world-weariness come, after enjoying the
12 objects of the senses over and over for a long time?

13 Swamiji: To how many does that come? The mind becomes
14 tarnished by constant contact with the objects of the senses and
15 receives a permanent moulding and impress from them.
16 Renunciation, and renunciation alone, is the real secret, the
17 Mulamantra, of all Realisation.

18 Disciple: But there are such injunctions of the seers in the
19 scriptures as these: "{Sanskrit}--To restrain the five senses while
20 living with one's wife and children is Tapas." "{Sanskrit}--For him
21 whose desires are under control, living in the midst of his family is
22 the same as retiring into a forest for Tapasya."

23 Swamiji: Blessed indeed are those who can renounce Kama-
24 Kanchana, living in their homes with their family! But how many
25 can do that?

26 Disciple: But then, what about the Sannyasins? Are they all able to
27 relinquish lust and love for riches fully?

28 Swamiji: As I said just now, Sannyasins are on the path of
29 renunciation, they have taken the field, at least, to fight for the
30 goal; but householders, on the other hand, having no knowledge as
31 yet of the danger that comes through lust and greed, do not even
32 attempt to realise the Self; that they must struggle to get rid of
33 these is an idea that has not yet entered their minds.

34 Disciple: But many of them are struggling for it.

35 Swamiji: Oh, yes, and those who are doing so will surely renounce
36 by degrees; their inordinate attachment for Kama-Kanchana will
37 diminish gradually. But for those who procrastinate, saying, "Oh,
38 not so soon! I shall do it when the time comes", Self-realisation is
39 very far off. "Let me realise the Truth this moment! In this very
40 life!"--these are the words of a hero. Such heroes are ever ready to
41 renounce the very next moment, and to such the scripture says,
42 "{Sanskrit}--The moment you feel disgust for the vanities of the
43 world, leave it all and take to the life of a monk."⁹⁷

44 Disciple: But was not Shri Ramakrishna wont to say, "All these
45 attachments vanish through the grace of God when one prays to
46 Him?"

1 ⁹⁷ ?Jabala Upanishad, 3.
2

1 Swamiji: Yes, it is so, no doubt, through His mercy, but one needs to
2 be pure first before one can receive this mercy--pure in thought,
3 word, and deed; then it is that His grace descends on one.

4 Disciple: But of what necessity is grace to him who can control
5 himself in thought, word, and deed? For then he would be able to
6 develop himself in the path of spirituality by means of his own
7 exertions!

8 Swamiji: The Lord is very merciful to him whom He sees struggling
9 heart and soul for Realisation. But remain idle, without any
10 struggle, and you will see that His grace will never come.

11 Disciple: Everyone longs to be good, yet the mind, for some
12 inscrutable reasons, turns to evil! Does not everyone wish to be
13 good--to be perfect--to realise God?

14 Swamiji: Know them to be already struggling who desire this. God
15 bestows His mercy when this struggle is maintained.

16 Disciple: In the history of the Incarnations, we find many persons
17 who, we should say, had led very dissipated lives and yet were able
18 to realise God without much trouble and without performing any
19 Sadhana or devotion. How is this accounted for?

20 Swamiji: Yes, but a great restlessness must already have come upon
21 them; long enjoyment of the objects of the senses must already
22 have created in them deep disgust. Want of peace must have been
23 consuming their very hearts. So deeply they had already felt this
24 void in their hearts that life even for a moment had seemed
25 unbearable to them unless they could gain that peace which follows
26 in the train of the Lord's mercy. So God was kind to them. This
27 development took place in them direct from Tamas to Sattva.

28 Disciple: Then, whatever was the path, they may be said to have
29 realised God truly in that way?

30 Swamiji: Yes, why not? But is it not better to enter into a mansion
31 by the main entrance than by its doorway of dishonour?

32 Disciple: No doubt that is true. Yet, the point is established that
33 through mercy alone one can realise God.

34 Swamiji: Oh, yes, that one can, but few indeed are there who do so!

35 Disciple: It appears to me that those who seek to realise God by
36 restraining their senses and renouncing lust and wealth hold to the
37 (free-will) theory of self-exertion and self-help; and that those who
38 take the name of the Lord and depend on Him are made free by the
39 Lord Himself of all worldly attachments, and led by Him to the
40 supreme stage of realisation.

41 Swamiji: True, those are the two different standpoints, the former
42 held by the Jnanis, and the latter by the Bhaktas. But the ideal of
43 renunciation is the keynote of both.

44 Disciple: No doubt about that! But Shri Girish Chandra Ghosh⁹⁸

1 ⁹⁸ ?The great Bengali actor-dramatist, a staunch devotee of Shri
2 Ramakrishna.
3

1 once said to me that there could be no condition in God's mercy;
2 there could be no law for it! If there were, then it could no longer
3 be termed mercy. The realm of grace or mercy must transcend all
4 law.

5 Swamiji: But there must be some higher law at work in the sphere
6 alluded to by G. C. of which we are ignorant. Those are words,
7 indeed, for the last stage of development, which alone is beyond
8 time, space, and causation. But, when we get there, who will be
9 merciful, and to whom, where there is no law of causation? There
10 the worshipper and the worshipped, the meditator and the object of
11 meditation, the knower and the known, all become one--call that
12 Grace or Brahman, if you will. It is all one uniform homogeneous
13 entity!

14 Disciple: Hearing these words from you, Swamiji, I have come to
15 understand the essence of all philosophy and religion (Vedas and
16 Vedanta); it seems as if I had hitherto been living in the midst of
17 high-sounding words without any meaning.

XV

22 Disciple: Pray, Swamiji, do tell me if there is any relation between
23 the discrimination of food taken and the development of spirituality
24 in man.

25 Swamiji: Yes, there is, more or less.

26 Disciple: Is it proper or necessary to take fish and meat?

27 Swamiji: Ay, take them, my boy! And if there be any harm in doing
28 so, I will take care of that. Look at the masses of our country! What
29 a look of sadness on their faces and want of courage and
30 enthusiasm in their hearts, with large stomachs and no strength in
31 their hands and feet--a set of cowards frightened at every trifle!

32 Disciple: Does the taking of fish and meat give strength? Why do
33 Buddhism and Vaishnavism preach "{Sanskrit}--Non-killing is the
34 highest virtue"?

35 Swamiji: Buddhism and Vaishnavism are not two different things.
36 During the decline of Buddhism in India, Hinduism took from her a
37 few cardinal tenets of conduct and made them her own, and these
38 have now come to be known as Vaishnavism. The Buddhist tenet,
39 "Non-killing is supreme virtue", is very good, but in trying to
40 enforce it upon all by legislation without paying any heed to the
41 capacities of the people at large, Buddhism has brought ruin upon
42 India. I have come across many a "religious heron"⁹⁹ in India, who

⁹⁹ ?Meaning, religious hypocrite. The heron, so the story goes,
gave it out to the fishes that he had forsaken his old habit of
catching fish and turned highly religious. So he took his stand on the
brink of the water and feigned to be meditating, while in reality he
was always watching his opportunity to catch the unwary fish.

1 fed ants with sugar, and at the same time would not hesitate to
2 bring ruin on his own brother for the sake of "filthy lucre"!

3 Disciple: But in the Vedas as well as in the laws of Manu, there are
4 injunctions to take fish and meat.

5 Swamiji: Ay, and injunctions to abstain from killing as well. For the
6 Vedas enjoin: "{Sanskrit}—Cause no injury to any being"; Manu
7 also says, "{Sanskrit}--Cessation of desire brings great results."
8 Killing and non-killing have both been enjoined, according to the
9 individual capacity, or fitness and adaptability of those who will
10 observe the one practice or the other.

11 Disciple: It is the fashion here nowadays to give up fish and meat as
12 soon as one takes to religion, and to many it is more sinful not to do
13 so than to commit such great sins as adultery. How, do you think,
14 such notions came into existence?

15 Swamiji: What's the use of your knowing how they came, when you
16 see clearly, do you not, that such notions are working ruin to our
17 country and our society? Just see--the people of East Bengal eat
18 much fish, meat, and turtle, and they are much healthier than those
19 of this part of Bengal. Even the rich men of East Bengal have not
20 yet taken to Loochis or Chapatis at night, and they do not suffer
21 from acidity and dyspepsia like us. I have heard that in the villages
22 of East Bengal the people have not the slightest idea of what
23 dyspepsia means!

24 Disciple: Quite so, Swamiji. We never complain of dyspepsia in our
25 part of the country. I first heard of it after coming to these parts. We
26 take fish with rice, mornings and evenings.

27 Swamiji: Yes, take as much of that as you can, without fearing
28 criticism. The country has been flooded with dyspeptic Babajis
29 living on vegetables only. That is no sign of Sattva, but of deep
30 Tamas--the shadow of death. Brightness in the face, undaunted
31 enthusiasm in the heart, and tremendous activity--these result from
32 Sattva; whereas idleness, lethargy, inordinate attachment, and
33 sleep are the signs of Tamas.

34 Disciple: But do not fish and meat increase Rajas in man?

35 Swamiji: That is what I want you to have. Rajas is badly needed just
36 now! More than ninety per cent of those whom you now take to be
37 men with the Sattva quality are only steeped in the deepest Tamas.
38 Enough if you find one-sixteenth of them to be really Sattvika! What
39 we want now is an immense awakening of Rajasika energy, for the
40 whole country is wrapped in the shroud of Tamas. The people of
41 this land must be fed and clothed--must be awakened--must be
42 made more fully active. Otherwise they will become inert, as inert
43 as trees and stones. So, I say, eat large quantities of fish and meat,
44 my boy!

45 Disciple: Does a liking for fish and meat remain when one has fully
46 developed the Sattva quality?

47 Swamiji: No, it does not. All liking for fish and meat disappears
48 when pure Sattva is highly developed, and these are the signs of its
49 manifestation in a soul: sacrifice of everything for others, perfect

1 non-attachment to lust and wealth, want of pride and egotism. The
2 desire for animal food goes when these things are seen in a man.
3 And where such indications are absent, and yet you find men siding
4 with the non-killing party, know it for a certainty that here there is
5 either hypocrisy or a show of religion. When you yourself come to
6 that stage of pure Sattva, give up fish and meat, by all means.

7 Disciple: In the Chhandogya Upanishad (VII. xxvi. 2) there is this
8 passage, "{Sanskrit}--Through pure food the Sattva quality in a
9 man becomes pure."

10 Swamiji: Yes, I know. Shankaracharya has said that the word Ahara
11 there means "objects of the senses", whereas Shri Ramanuja has
12 taken the meaning of Ahara to be "food". In my opinion we should
13 take that meaning of the word which reconciles both these points of
14 view. Are we to pass our lives discussing all the time about the
15 purity and impurity of food only, or are we to practise the
16 restraining of our senses? Surely, the restraining of the senses is
17 the main object; and the discrimination of good and bad, pure and
18 impure foods, only helps one, to a certain extent, in gaining that
19 end. There are, according to our scriptures, three things which
20 make food impure: (1) Jati-dosha or natural defects of a certain
21 class of food, like onions, garlic, etc.; (2) Nimitta-dosha or defects
22 arising from the presence of external impurities in it, such as dead
23 insects, dust, etc. that attach to sweetmeats bought from shops; (3)
24 Ashraya-dosha or defects that arise by the food coming from evil
25 sources, as when it has been touched and handled by wicked
26 persons. Special care should be taken to avoid the first and second
27 classes of defects. But in this country men pay no regard just to
28 these two, and go on fighting for the third alone, the very one that
29 none but a Yogi could really discriminate! The country from end to
30 end is being bored to extinction by the cry, "Don't touch", "Don't
31 touch", of the non-touchism party. In that exclusive circle of theirs,
32 too, there is no discrimination of good and bad men, for their food
33 may be taken from the hands of anyone who wears a thread round
34 his neck and calls himself a Brahmin! Shri Ramakrishna was quite
35 unable to take food in this indiscriminate way from the hands of any
36 and all. It happened many a time that he would not accept food
37 touched by a certain person or persons, and on rigorous
38 investigation it would turn out that these had some particular stain
39 to hide. Your religion seems nowadays to be confined to the
40 cooking-pot alone. You put on one side the sublime truths of religion
41 and fight, as they say, for the skin of the fruit and not for the fruit
42 itself!

43 Disciple: Do you mean, then, that we should eat the food handled by
44 anyone and everyone?

45 Swamiji: Why so? Look here. You being a Brahmin of a certain
46 class, say, of the Bhattacharya class, why should you not eat rice
47 cooked by Brahmins of all classes? Why should you, who belong to
48 the Rarhi section, object to taking rice cooked by a Brahmin of the
49 Barendra section, or why should a Barendra object to taking your
50 rice? Again, why should not the other subcastes in the west and
51 south of India, e.g. the Marathi, Telangi, Kanouji, do the same? Do
52 you not see that hundreds of Brahmins and Kayasthas in Bengal

1 now go secretly to eat dainties in public restaurants, and when they
2 come out of those places pose as leaders of society and frame rules
3 to support don't-touchism. Must our society really be guided by
4 laws dictated by such hypocrites? No, I say. On the contrary we
5 must turn them out. The laws laid down by the great Rishis of old
6 must be brought back and be made to rule supreme once more.
7 Then alone can national well-being be ours.

8 Disciple: Then do not the laws laid down by the Rishis rule and
9 guide our present society?

10 Swamiji: Vain delusion! Where indeed is that the case nowadays?
11 Nowhere have I found the laws of the Rishis current in India, even
12 when during my travels I searched carefully and thoroughly. The
13 blind and not unoften meaningless customs sanctioned by the
14 people, local prejudices and ideas, and the usages and ceremonials
15 prevalent amongst women, are what really govern society
16 everywhere! How many care to read the Shastras or to lead society
17 according to their ordinances after careful study?

18 Disciple: What are we to do, then?

19 Swamiji: We must revive the old laws of the Rishis. We must initiate
20 the whole people into the codes of our old Manu and Yajnavalkya,
21 with a few modifications here and there to adjust them to the
22 changed circumstances of the time. Do you not see that nowhere in
23 India now are the original four castes (Chaturvarnya) to be found?
24 We have to redivide the whole Hindu population, grouping it under
25 the four main castes, of Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and
26 Shudras, as of old. The numberless modern subdivisions of the
27 Brahmins that split them up into so many castes, as it were, have to
28 be abolished and a single Brahmin caste to be made by uniting
29 them all. Each of the three remaining castes also will have to be
30 brought similarly into single groups, as was the case in Vedic times.
31 Without this will the Motherland be really benefited by your simply
32 crying as you do nowadays, "We won't touch you!"; "We won't take
33 him back into our caste!"; Never, my boy!

SAYINGS AND UTTERANCES

1. Man is born to conquer nature and not to follow it.
2. When you think you are a body, you are apart from the universe; when you think you are a soul, you are a spark from the great Eternal Fire; when you think you are the Atman (Self), you are All.
3. The will is not free--it is a phenomenon bound by cause and effect--but there is something behind the will which is free.
4. Strength is in goodness, in purity.
5. The universe is--objectified God.
6. You cannot believe in God until you believe in yourself.
7. The root of evil is in the illusion that we are bodies. This, if any, is the original sin.
8. One party says thought is caused by matter, and the other says matter is caused by thought. Both statements are wrong; matter and thought are coexistent. There is a third something of which both matter and thought are products.
9. As particles of matter combine in space, so mind-waves combine in time.
10. To define God is--grinding the already ground; for He is the only being we know.
11. Religion is the idea which is raising the brute unto man, and man unto God.
12. External nature is only internal nature writ large.
13. The motive is the measure of your work. What motive can be higher than that you are God, and that the lowest man is also God?
14. The observer in the psychic world needs to be very strong and scientifically trained.
15. To believe that mind is all, that thought is all is only a higher materialism.
16. This world is the great gymnasium where we come to make ourselves strong.
17. You cannot teach a child any more than you can grow a plant. All you can do is on the negative side--you can only help. It is a manifestation from within; it develops its own nature--you can only take away obstructions.
18. As soon as you make a sect, you protest against universal brotherhood. Those who really feel universal brotherhood do not talk much, but their very actions speak aloud.
19. Truth can be stated in a thousand different ways, yet each

1 one can be true.

2 20. You have to grow from inside out. None can teach you,
3 none can make you spiritual. There is no other teacher but your
4 own soul.

5 21. If in an infinite chain a few links can be explained, by the
6 same method all can be explained.

7 22. That man has reached immortality who is disturbed by
8 nothing material.

9 23. Everything can be sacrificed for truth, but truth cannot be
10 sacrificed for anything.

11 24. The search for truth is the expression of strength--not the
12 groping of a weak, blind man.

13 25. God has become man; man will become God again.

14 26. It is child's talk that a man dies and goes to heaven. We
15 never come nor go. We are where we are. All the souls that have
16 been, are, and will be, are on one geometrical point.

17 27. He whose book of the heart has been opened needs no
18 other books. Their only value is to create desire in us. They are
19 merely the experiences of others.

20 28. Have charity towards all beings. Pity those who are in
21 distress. Love all creatures. Do not be jealous of anyone. Look not
22 to the faults of others.

23 29. Man never dies, nor is he ever born; bodies die, but he
24 never dies.

25 30. No one is born into a religion, but each one is born for a
26 religion.

27 31. There is really but one Self in the universe, all else is but
28 Its manifestations.

29 32. All the worshippers are divided into the common masses
30 and the brave few.

31 33. If it is impossible to attain perfection here and now, there
32 is no proof that we can attain perfection in any other life.

33 34. If I know one lump of clay perfectly, I know all the clay
34 there is. This is the knowledge of principles, but their adaptations
35 are various. When you know yourself you know all.

1 35. Personally I take as much of the Vedas as agrees with
2 reason. Parts of the Vedas are apparently contradictory. They are
3 not considered as inspired in the Western sense of the word, but as
4 the sum total of the knowledge of God, omniscience. This
5 knowledge comes out at the beginning of a cycle and manifests
6 itself; and when the cycle ends, it goes down into minute form.
7 When the cycle is projected again, that knowledge is projected
8 again with it. So far the theory is all right. But that only these books
9 which are called the Vedas are His knowledge is mere sophistry.
10 Manu says in one place that that part of the Vedas which agrees
11 with reason is the Vedas, and nothing else. Many of our
12 philosophers have taken this view.

13 36. Of all the scriptures of the world it is the Vedas alone that
14 declare that even the study of the Vedas is secondary. The real
15 study is "that by which we *realise* the Unchangeable". And that is
16 neither reading, nor believing, nor reasoning, but superconscious
17 perception, or Samadhi.

18 37. We have been low animals once. We think they are
19 something different from us. I hear, Western people say, "The world
20 was created for us." If tigers could write books, they would say,
21 man was created for them and that man is a most sinful animal,
22 because he does not allow him (the tiger) to catch him easily. The
23 worm that crawls under your feet today is a God to be.

24 38. "I should very much like our women to have your
25 intellectuality, but not if it must be at the cost of purity", said Swami
26 Vivekananda in New York. "I admire you for all that you know, but I
27 dislike the way that you cover what is bad with roses and call it
28 good. Intellectuality is not the highest good. Morality and
29 spirituality are the things for which we strive. Our women are not
30 so learned, but they are more pure.

31 "To all women every man save her husband should be as her
32 son. To all men every woman save his own wife should be as his
33 mother. When I look about me and see what you call gallantry, my
34 soul is filled with disgust. Not until you learn to ignore the question
35 of sex and to meet on a ground of common humanity will your
36 women really develop. Until then they are playthings, nothing more.
37 All this is the cause of divorce. Your men bow low and offer a chair,
38 but in another breath they offer compliments. They say, 'Oh,
39 madam, how beautiful are your eyes!' What right have they to do
40 this? How dare a man venture so far, and how can you women
41 permit it? Such things develop the less noble side of humanity. They
42 do not tend to nobler ideals.

43 "We should not think that we are men and women, but only
44 that we are human beings, born to cherish and to help one another.
45 No sooner are a young man and a young woman left alone than he
46 pays compliments to her, and perhaps before he takes a wife, he
47 has courted two hundred women. Bah! If I belonged to the
48 marrying set, I could find a woman to love without all that!

49 "When I was in India and saw these things from the outside, I
50 was told it was all right, it was mere pleasantry, and I believed it.
51 But I have travelled since then, and I know it is not right. It is

1 wrong, only you of the West shut your eyes and call it good. The
2 trouble with the nations of the West is that they are young, foolish,
3 fickle, and wealthy. What mischief can come of one of these
4 qualities; but when all three, all four, are combined, beware!"

5 But severe as the Swami was upon all, Boston received the
6 hardest blow:

7 "Of all, Boston is the worst. There the women are all faddists,
8 all fickle, merely bent on following something new and strange."

9 39. "Where is the spirituality one would expect in a country",
10 he said in America, "that is so boastful of its civilisation?"

11 40. "Here" and "hereafter" are words to frighten children. It
12 is all "here". To live and move in God, even here, even in this body,
13 all self should go out, all superstition should be banished. Such
14 persons live in India. Where are such in this country (America)?
15 Your preachers speak against dreamers. The people of this country
16 would be better off if there were more dreamers. There is a good
17 deal of difference between dreaming and the brag of the nineteenth
18 century. The whole world is full of God and not of sin. Let us help
19 one another, let us love one another.

20 41. Let me die a true Sannyasin as my Master did, heedless
21 of money, of women, and of fame! And of these the most insidious is
22 the love of fame!

23 42. I have never spoken of revenge, I have always spoken of
24 strength. Do we dream of revenging ourselves on this drop of sea-
25 spray? But it is a great thing to a mosquito!

26 43. "This is a great land," said Swamiji on one occasion in
27 America, "but I would not like to live here. Americans think too
28 much of money. They give it preference over anything else. Your
29 people have much to learn. When your nation is as old as ours, you
30 will be wiser."

31 44. It may be that I shall find it good to get outside of my
32 body--to cast it off like a disused garment. But I shall not cease to
33 work! I shall inspire men everywhere, until the world shall know
34 that it is one with God.

35 45. All that I am, all that the world itself will some day be, is
36 owing to my Master, Shri Ramakrishna, who incarnated and
37 experienced and taught this wonderful unity which underlies
38 everything, having discovered it alike in Hinduism, in Islam, and in
39 Christianity.

40 46. Give the organ of taste a free rein, and the other organs
41 will also run on unbridled.

42 47. Jnana, Bhakti, Yoga and Karma--these are the four paths
43 which lead to salvation. One must follow the path for which one is
44 best suited; but in this age special stress should be laid on Karma-
45 Yoga.

46 48. Religion is not a thing of imagination but of direct
47 perception. He who has seen even a single spirit is greater than
48 many a book-learned Pandit.

1 49. Once Swamiji was praising someone very much; at this,
2 one sitting near by said to him, "But he does not believe in you."
3 Hearing this, Swamiji at once replied: "Is there any legal affidavit
4 that he should have to do so? He is doing good work, and so he is
5 worthy of praise."

6 50. In the domain of true religion, book-learning has no right
7 to enter.

8 51. The downfall of a religious sect begins from the day that
9 the worship of the rich enters into it.

10 52. If you want to do anything evil, do it before the eyes of
11 your superiors.

12 53. By the grace of the Guru, a disciple becomes a Pandit
13 (scholar) even without reading books.

14 54. There is no sin nor virtue: there is only ignorance. By
15 realisation of non-duality this ignorance is dispelled.

16 55. Religious movements come in groups. Each one of them
17 tries to rear itself above the rest. But as a rule only one of them
18 really grows in strength, and this, in the long run, swallows up all
19 the contemporary movements.

20 56. When Swamiji was at Ramnad, he said in the course of a
21 conversation that Shri Rama was the Paramatman and that Sita was
22 the Jivatman, and each man's or woman's body was the Lanka
23 (Ceylon). The Jivatman which was enclosed in the body, or captured
24 in the island of Lanka, always desired to be in affinity with the
25 Paramatman, or Shri Rama. But the Rakshasas would not allow it,
26 and Rakshasas represented certain traits of character. For instance,
27 Vibhishana represented Sattva Guna; Ravana, Rajas; and
28 Kumbhakarna, Tamas. Sattva Guna means goodness; Rajas means
29 lust and passions, and Tamas darkness, stupor, avarice, malice, and
30 its concomitants. These Gunas keep back Sita, or Jivatman, which is
31 in the body, or Lanka, from joining Paramatman, or Rama. Sita, thus
32 imprisoned and trying to unite with her Lord, receives a visit from
33 Hanuman, the Guru or divine teacher, who shows her the Lord's
34 ring, which is Brahma-Jnana, the supreme wisdom that destroys all
35 illusions; and thus Sita finds the way to be at one with Shri Rama,
36 or, in other words, the Jivatman finds itself one with the
37 Paramatman.

38 57. A true Christian is a true Hindu, and a true Hindu is a
39 true Christian.

40 58. All healthy social changes are the manifestations of the
41 spiritual forces working within, and if these are strong and well
42 adjusted, society will arrange itself accordingly. Each individual has
43 to work out his own salvation; there is no other way, and so also
44 with nations. Again, the great institutions of every nation are the
45 conditions of its very existence and cannot be transformed by the
46 mould of any other race. Until higher institutions have been
47 evolved, any attempt to break the old ones will be disastrous.
48 Growth is always gradual.

49 It is very easy to point out the defects of institutions, all being

1 more or less imperfect, but he is the real benefactor of humanity
2 who helps the individual to overcome his imperfections under
3 whatever institutions he may live. The individuals being raised, the
4 nation and its institutions are bound to rise. Bad customs and laws
5 are ignored by the virtuous, and unwritten but mightier laws of
6 love, sympathy, and integrity take their place. Happy is the nation
7 which can rise to the necessity of but few law books, and needs no
8 longer to bother its head about this or that institution. Good men
9 rise beyond all laws, and will help their fellows to rise under
10 whatever conditions they live.

11 The salvation of India, therefore, depends on the strength of
12 the individual, and the realisation by each man of the divinity
13 within.

14 59. Spirituality can never be attained until materiality is
15 gone.

16 60. The first discourse in the Gita can be taken allegorically.

17 61. "Swami, you have no idea of time", remarked an impatient
18 American devotee, afraid of missing a steamer. "No," retorted
19 Swamiji calmly, "you live in time; we live in eternity!"

20 62. We are always letting sentiment usurp the place of duty
21 and flatter ourselves that we are acting in response to true love.

22 63. We must get beyond emotionalism if we want the power
23 to renounce. Emotion belongs to the animals. They are creatures of
24 emotion entirely.

25 64. It is not sacrifice of a high order to die for one's young.
26 The animals do that, and just as readily as any human mother ever
27 did. It is no sign of real love to do that; it is merely blind emotion.

28 65. We are for ever trying to make our weakness look like
29 strength, our sentiment like love, our cowardice like courage, and
30 so on.

31 66. Say to your soul in regard to vanities, weakness, etc.,
32 "This does not befit thee. This does not befit thee."

33 67. Never loved a husband the wife for the wife's sake or the
34 wife the husband for the husband's sake. It is God in the wife the
35 husband loves, and God in the husband the wife loves. It is God in
36 every one that draws us to the one we love, God in everything and
37 in everybody that makes us love. God is the only love.

38 68. Oh, if only you knew yourselves! You are souls; you are
39 Gods. If ever I feel like blaspheming, it is when I call you man.

40 69. In everyone is God, the Atman; all else is but dream, an
41 illusion.

42 70. If I do not find bliss in the life of the Spirit, shall I seek
43 satisfaction in the life of the senses? If I cannot get nectar; shall I
44 fall back upon ditch water? The bird called Chataka drinks from the
45 clouds only, ever calling as it soars, "Pure water! Pure water!" And
46 no storms or tempests make it falter on wing or descend to drink
47 from the earth.

1 71. Any sect that may help you to realise God is welcome.
2 Religion is the realising of God.

3 72. An atheist can be charitable but not religious. But the
4 religious man must be charitable.

5 73. Everyone makes shipwreck on the rock of would-be
6 Guruism, except those souls that were born to be Gurus.

7 74. Man is a compound of animality, humanity, and divinity.

8 75. The term "social progress" has as much mean ing as "hot
9 ice" or "dark light". There is no such thing, *ultimately*, as "social
10 progress"!

11 76. Things are not bettered, but we are bettered, by making
12 changes in them.

13 77. Let me help my fellow men; that is all I seek.

14 78. "No", said the Swami, very softly, in answer to a question
15 in New York, "I do not believe in the occult. If a thing be unreal, it is
16 not. What is unreal does not exist. Strange things are natural
17 phenomena. I know them to be matters of science. Then they are
18 not occult to me. I do not believe in occult societies. They do no
19 good, and can never do good."

20 79. There are four general types of men--the rational, the
21 emotional, the mystical, and the worker. For each of these we must
22 provide suitable forms of worship. There comes the rational man,
23 who says, "I care not for this form of worship. Give me the
24 philosophical, the rational--that I can appreciate." So for the
25 rational man is the rational philosophic worship.

26 There comes the worker. He says, "I care not for the worship
27 of the philosopher. Give me work to do for my fellow men." So for
28 him is provided work as the path of worship. As for the mystical and
29 the emotional, we have their respective modes of devotion. All these
30 men have, in religion, the elements of their faith.

31 80. I stand for truth. Truth will never ally itself with
32 falsehood. Even if all the world should be against me, Truth must
33 prevail in the end.

34 81. Wherever you see the most humanitarian ideas fall into
35 the hands of the multitude, the first result you notice is
36 degradation. It is learning and intellect that help to keep things
37 safe. It is the cultured among a community that are the real
38 custodians of religion and philosophy in their purest form. It is that
39 form which serves as the index for the intellectual and social
40 condition of a community.

41 82. "I do not come", said Swamiji on one occasion in America,
42 "to convert you to a new belief. I want you to keep your own belief; I
43 want to make the Methodist a better Methodist; the Presbyterian a
44 better Presbyterian; the Unitarian a better Unitarian. I want to
45 teach you to live the truth, to reveal the light within your own soul."

46 83. Happiness presents itself before man, wearing the crown
47 of sorrow on its head. He who welcomes it must also welcome
48 sorrow.

1 84. He is free, he is great, who turns his back upon the world,
2 who has renounced everything, who has controlled his passion, and
3 who thirsts for peace. One may gain political and social
4 independence, but if one is a slave to his passions and desires, one
5 cannot feel the pure joy of real freedom.

6 85. Doing good to others is virtue (Dharma); injuring others is
7 sin. Strength and manliness are virtue; weakness and cowardice
8 are sin. Independence is virtue; dependence is sin. Loving others is
9 virtue; hating others is sin. Faith in God and in one's own Self is
10 virtue; doubt is sin. Knowledge of oneness is virtue; seeing diversity
11 is sin. The different scriptures only show the means of attaining
12 virtue.

13 86. When, by reasoning, Truth is comprehended by the
14 intellect, then it is realised in the heart, the fountain-head of
15 feeling. Thus the head and the heart become illumined at the same
16 moment; and then only, as says the Upanishad, "The knot of the
17 heart is rent asunder, and all doubts cease" (Munkdaka Upanishad,
18 II.ii.8).

19 When in ancient times this knowledge (Jnana) and this feeling
20 (Bhava) thus blossomed forth simultaneously in the heart of the
21 Rishi, then the Highest Truth become poetic, and then the Vedas
22 and other scriptures were composed. It is for this reason that one
23 finds, in study ing them, that the two parallel lines of Bhava and
24 Jnana have at last met, as it were, in the plane of the Vedas and
25 become combined and inseparable.

26 87. The scriptures of different religions point out different
27 means to attain the ideals of universal love, freedom, manliness,
28 and selfless benevolence. Every religious sect is generally at
29 variance as to its idea of what is virtue and what is vice, and fights
30 with others over the means of attaining virtue and eschewing vice,
31 instead of aiming at realising the end. Every means is helpful more
32 or less, and the Gita (XVIII. 48) says, "Every undertaking is
33 attended with defects as fire with smoke"; so the means will no
34 doubt appear more or less defective. But as we are to attain the
35 highest virtue through the means laid down in our respective
36 scriptures, we should try our best to follow them. Moreover, they
37 should be tempered with reason and discrimination. Thus, as we
38 progress, the riddle of virtue and vice will be solved by itself.

39 88. How many in our country truly understand the Shastras
40 nowadays? They have only learnt such words as Brahman, Maya,
41 Prakriti, and so on, and confuse their heads with them. Setting
42 aside the real meaning and purpose of the Shastras, they fight over
43 the words only. If the Shastras cannot help all men in all conditions
44 at all times, of what use, then, are such Shastras? If the Shastras
45 show the way to the Sannyasins only and not to the householders,
46 then what need has a householder for such one-sided Shastras? If
47 the Shastras can only help men when they give up all work and
48 retire into the forests, and cannot show the way of lighting the lamp
49 of hope in the hearts of men of the workaday world--in the midst of
50 their daily toil, disease, misery, and poverty, in the despondency of
51 the penitent, in the self-reproach of the downtrodden, in the terror

1 of the battlefield, in lust, anger and pleasure, in the joy of victory, in
2 the darkness of defeat, and finally, in the dreaded night of death--
3 then weak humanity has no need of such Shastras, and such
4 Shastras will be no Shastras at all!

5 89. Through Bhoga (enjoyment) Yoga will come in time. But
6 alas, such is the lot of my countrymen that, not to speak of
7 possessing Yoga, they cannot even have a little Bhoga! Suffering all
8 sorts of indignities they can with the utmost difficulty only meet the
9 barest needs of the body--and even that everyone cannot do! It is
10 strange that such a state of affairs does not disturb our sleep and
11 rouse us to our immediate duties.

12 90. Agitate ever so much for your rights and privileges, but
13 remember that so long as we do not truly elevate ourselves by
14 rousing intensely the feeling of self-respect in the nation, so long
15 our hope of gaining rights and privileges is like the day-dream of
16 Alnascar.

17 91. When a genius of a man with some special great power is
18 born, all the best and the most creative faculties of his whole
19 heredity are drawn towards the making up of his personality and
20 squeezed dry, as it were. It is for this reason that we find that all
21 those who are subsequently born in such a family are either idiots
22 or men of very ordinary calibre, and that in time such a family in
23 many cases becomes extinct.

24 92. If you cannot attain salvation in this life, what proof is
25 there that you can attain it in the life or lives to come?

26 93. While visiting the Taj at Agra he remarked: "If you
27 squeeze a bit of this marble, it will drip drops of royal love and its
28 sorrow." Further he observed, "It takes really six months to study a
29 square inch of its interior works of beauty."

30 94. When the real history of India will be unearthed, it will be
31 proved that, as in matters of religion, so in fine arts, India is the
32 primal Guru of the whole world.

33 95. Speaking of architecture he said: "People say Calcutta is a
34 city of palaces, but the houses look much like so many boxes placed
35 one upon the other! They convey no idea whatever. In Rajputana
36 you can still find much pure Hindu architecture. If you look at a
37 Dharmashala, you will feel as if it calls you with open arms to take
38 shelter within and partake of its unqualified hospitableness. If you
39 look at a temple, you are sure to find a Divine Presence in and
40 about it. If you look about a rural cottage, you will at once be able
41 to comprehend the special meanings of its different portions, and
42 that the whole structure bears evidence to the predominant nature
43 and ideal of the owner thereof. This sort of expressive architecture I
44 have seen nowhere else except in Italy."

REASON, FAITH AND LOVE

[Swamiji had made the home of the Hale family his headquarters during almost all of 1894 before the pivot of his activities moved eastward to the Atlantic Coast. It was on George W. Hale's letter paper and thus, presumably, during one of his stays in the latter's home, that Swamiji jotted down in pencil a series of notes on the subjects of reason, faith, and love, which have recently come to light. Unfortunately the date of the manuscript cannot be accurately determined.]

Reason--has its limits--its base--
its degeneration. The walls round it--
Agnosticism. Atheism. But must not stop
The beyond is acting upon influencing us every
moment--the sky the stars acting upon us--even
those not seen. Therefore must go beyond--reason
alone can't go--finite cannot get at the infinite.

Faith its degeneration when alone--bigotry
fanaticism--sectarianism. Narrowing
finite therefore cannot get to the infinite
Sometimes gain in intensity but loses in
extensity--and in bigots & fanatics become
worship of his own pride & vanity

Is there no other way--there is Love
it never degenerates--peaceful softening
ever widening--the universe is too small
for its expansiveness.

We cannot define it we can only trace
it through its development and describe its
surroundings

It is at first--what the gravitation
is to the external world--a tendency to unification
forms and conventionalities are its death.
Worship through forms--methods--services
forms--up to then no love.

When love comes method dies.
Human language and human forms

1 God as father, God as mother, God as
2 the lover--Surata-varadhanam etc. Solomon's Song of
3 Songs--Dependence and independence
4 Love Love--
5 Love the chaste wife--Anasuya Sita--
6 not as hard dry duty but as ever pleasing
7 love--Sita worship--
8 The madness of Love--God intoxicated man
9 The allegory of Radha--misunderstood
10 The restriction more increase--
11 Lust is the death of love
12 Self is the death of love
13 individual to general
14 Concrete to abstract--to absolute
15 The praying Mohammedan and the girl
16 The Sympathy--Kabir--
17 The Christian nun from whose hands blood came
18 The Mohammedan Saint
19 Every particle seeking its own complement
20 When it finds that it is at rest
21 Every man seeking--happiness--& stability
22 The search is real but the objects are themselves
23 but happiness is coming to them momentary at least
24 through the search of these objects.
25 The only object unchangeable and the only
26 complement of character and aspirations of the human
27 Soul is God.
28 Love is struggle of a human Soul to find its
29 complement its stable equilibrium its infinite rest
30
31
32

33 **SIX SANSKRIT MOTTOES**

34
35 1. Ajaramaravat prajnah vidyam
36 artham cha chintayet
37 Grihita iva kesheshu mrityuna

1 dharmam acharet

2 When in search of knowledge or prosperity think that you
3 would never have death or disease, and when worshipping God
4 think that death's hand is in your hair.

5

6 2. Eka eva suhrid dharma

7 nidhanepyanuyati yah

8 Virtue is the only friend which follows us even beyond the
9 grave.

10 Everything else ends with death.

11 Vivekananda

12 3. One infinite pure and holy--beyond

13 thought beyond qualities I bow down

14 to thee

15 Swami Vivekananda

16 4. Samata sarva-bhuteshu etanmuktasya

17 lakshanam.

18 Equality in all beings is the sign of the free

19 Vivekananda

20 5. Thou art the only treasure in this world

21 Vivekananda

22 6. Thou art the father the lord the

23 mother the husband and love

24 Swami Vivekananda

25

26

27 **THE MESSAGE OF DIVINE WISDOM**

28 [The following three chapters were discovered among Swami
29 Vivekananda's papers. He evidently intended to write a book and
30 jotted down some points for the work.]

31

32 I

33 **BONDAGE**

34

35 1. Desire is infinite, its fulfilment limited. Desire is unlimited
36 in everyone; the power of fulfilment varies. Thus some are more
37 successful than others in life.

38 2. This limitation is the bondage we are struggling against all
39 our lives.

40 3. We desire only the pleasurable, not the painful.

1 4. The objects of desire are all complex--pleasure-giving and
2 pain-bringing mixed up.

3 5. We do not or cannot see the painful parts in objects, we are
4 charmed with only the pleasurable portion; and, thus grasping the
5 pleasurable, we unwittingly draw in the painful.

6 6. At times we vainly hope that in our case only the
7 pleasurable will come, leaving the painful aside, which never
8 happens.

9 7. Our desires also are constantly changing--what we would
10 prize today we would reject tomorrow. The pleasure of the present
11 will be the pain of the future, the loved hated, and so on.

12 8. We vainly hope that in the future life we shall be able to
13 gather in only the pleasurable, to the exclusion of the painful.

14 9. The future is only the extension of the present. Such a
15 thing cannot be!

16 10. Whosoever seeks pleasure in objects will get it, but he
17 must take the pain with it.

18 11. All objective pleasure in the long run must bring pain,
19 because of the fact of change or death.

20 12. Death is the goal of all objects, change is the nature of all
21 objective things.

22 13. As desire increases, so increases the power of pleasure,
23 so the power of pain.

24 14. The finer the organism, the higher the culture--the
25 greater is the power to enjoy pleasure and the sharper are the
26 pangs of pain.

27 15. Mental pleasures are greatly superior to physical joys.
28 Mental pains are more poignant than physical tortures.

29 16. The power of thought, of looking far away into the future,
30 and the power of memory, or recalling the past to the present, make
31 us live in heaven; they make us live in hell also.

32 17. The man who can collect the largest amount of
33 pleasurable objects around him is as a rule too unimaginative to
34 enjoy them. The man of great imagination is thwarted by the
35 intensity of his feeling of loss, or fear of loss, or perception of
36 defects.

37 18. We are struggling hard to conquer pain, succeeding in the
38 attempt, and yet creating new pains at the same time.

39 19. We achieve success, and we are overthrown by failure;
40 we pursue pleasure and we are pursued by pain.

41 20. We say we do, we are made to do. We say we work, we
42 are made to labour. We say we live, we are made to die every
43 moment. We are in the crowd, we cannot stop, must go on--it
44 deserves no cheering. Had it not been so, no amount of cheering
45 would make us undertake all this pain and misery for a grain of
46 pleasure--which, alas, in most cases is only a hope!

1 21. Our pessimism is a dread reality, our optimism is a faint
2 cheering, making the best of a bad job.

3
4 II

5 **THE LAW**

6
7 1. The law is never separate from the phenomena, the
8 principle from the person.

9 2. The law is the method of action or poise of every single
10 phenomenon within its scope.

11 3. We get our knowledge of law from the massing and
12 welding of changes that occur. We never see law beyond these
13 changes. The idea of law as something separate from phenomena is
14 a mental abstraction, a convenient use of words and nothing more.
15 Law is a part of every change within its range, a manner which
16 resides in the things governed by the law. The power resides in the
17 things, is a part of our idea of that thing--its action upon something
18 else is in a certain manner--this is our law.

19 4. Law is in the actual state of things--it is in how they act
20 towards each other, and not in how they should. It might have been
21 better if fire did not burn or water wet; but that they do--this is the
22 law; and if it is a true law, a fire that does not burn or water that
23 does not wet is neither fire nor water.

24 5. Spiritual laws, ethical laws, social laws, national laws--are
25 laws if they are parts of existing spiritual and human units and the
26 unfailing experience of the action of every unit said to be bound by
27 such laws.

28 6. We, by turn, are made by law and make it. A generalisation
29 of what man does invariably in certain circumstances is a law with
30 regard to man in that particular aspect. It is the invariable,
31 universal human action that is law for man--and which no individual
32 can escape--and yet the summation of the action of each individual
33 is the universal Law. The sum total, or the universal, or the infinite
34 is fashioning the individual, while the individual is keeping by its
35 action the Law alive. Law in this sense is another name for the
36 universal. The universal is dependent upon the individual, the
37 individual dependent upon the universal. It is an infinite made up of
38 finite parts, an infinite of number, though involving the difficulty of
39 assuming an infinity summed up of finites--yet for all practical
40 purposes, it is a fact before us. And as the law, or whole, or the
41 infinite cannot be destroyed--and the destruction of a part of an
42 infinite is an impossibility, as we cannot either add anything to or
43 subtract anything from the infinite--each part persists for ever.

1 7. Laws regarding the materials of which the body of man is
2 composed have been found out, and also the persistence of these
3 materials through time has been shown. The elements which
4 composed the body of a man a hundred thousand years ago have
5 been proved to be still existing in some place or other. The thoughts
6 which have been projected also are living in other minds.

7 8. But the difficulty is to find a law about the man beyond the
8 body.

9 9. The spiritual and ethical laws are not the method of action
10 of every human being. The systems of ethics of morality, even of
11 national laws, are honoured more in the breach than in the
12 observance. If they were laws how could they be broken?

13 10. No man is able to go against the law of nature. How is it
14 that we always complain of his breaking the moral laws, national
15 laws?

16 11. The national laws at best are the embodied will of a
17 majority of the nation--always a state of things wished for, not
18 actually existing.

19 12. The ideal law may be that no man should covet the
20 belongings of others, but the actual law is that a very large number
21 do.

22 13. Thus the word law used in regard to laws of nature has a
23 very different interpretation when applied to ethics and human
24 actions generally.

25 14. Analysing the ethical laws of the world and comparing
26 them with the actual state of things, two laws stand out supreme.
27 The one, that of repelling everything from us--separating ourselves
28 from everyone--which leads to self-aggrandisement even at the cost
29 of everyone else's happiness. The other, that of self-sacrifice--of
30 taking no thought of ourselves--only of others. Both spring from the
31 search for happiness--one, of finding happiness in injuring others
32 and the ability of feeling that happiness in our own senses. The
33 other, of finding happiness in doing good to others--the ability of
34 feeling happy, as it were, through the senses of others. The great
35 and good of the world are those who have the latter power
36 predominating. Yet both these are working side by side conjointly;
37 in almost everyone they are found in mixture, one or the other
38 predominating. The thief steals, perhaps, for someone he loves.

40 II

41 **THE ABSOLUTE AND THE ATTAINMENT OF** 42 **FREEDOM**

43
44 1. Om Tat Sat--that Being--Knowing--Bliss.

45 (a) The only real Existence, which alone is--everything else
46 exists inasmuch as it reflects that real Existence.

47 (b) It is the only Knower--the only Self-luminous--the Light of

1 consciousness. Everything else shines by light borrowed from It.
2 Everything else knows inasmuch as it reflects Its knowing.
3 (c) It is the only Blessedness--as in It there is no want. It
4 comprehends all--is the essence of all.
5 It is Sat-Chit-Ananda.

1 (d) It has no parts, no attributes, neither pleasure nor pain,
2 nor is it matter nor mind. It is the Supreme, Infinite, Impersonal
3 Self in everything, the Infinite Ego of the Universe.

4 (e) It is the Reality in me, in thee, and in everything--
5 therefore,

6 "*That thou art*"--Tattvamasi.

7 2. The same Impersonal is conceived by the mind as the
8 Creator, the Ruler, and the Dissolver of this universe, its material as
9 well as its efficient cause, the Supreme Ruler--the Living, the
10 Loving, the Beautiful, in the highest sense.

11 (a) The Absolute Being is manifested in Its highest in Isvara,
12 or the Supreme Ruler, as the highest and omnipotent Life or
13 Energy.

14 (b) The Absolute Knowledge is manifesting Itself in Its
15 highest as Infinite Love, in the Supreme Lord.

16 (c) The Absolute Bliss is manifested as the Infinite Beautiful,
17 in the Supreme Lord. He is the greatest attraction of the soul.

18 Satyam-Shivam-Sundaram.

19 The Absolute or Brahman, the Sat-Chit-Ananda, is Impersonal
20 and the real Infinite.

21 Every existence from the highest to the lowest, all manifest
22 according to their degree as--energy (in the higher life), attraction
23 (in the higher love), and struggle for equilibrium (in the higher
24 happiness). This highest Energy-Love-Beauty is a person, an
25 individual, the Infinite Mother of this universe--the God of gods--the
26 Lord of lords, omnipresent yet separate from the universe--the Soul
27 of souls, yet separate from every soul--the Mother of this universe,
28 because She has produced it--its Ruler, because She guides it with
29 the greatest love and in the long run brings everything back to
30 Herself. Through Her command the sun and moon shine, the clouds
31 rain, and death stalks upon the earth.

32 She is the power of all causation. She energises every cause
33 unmistakably to produce the effect. Her will is the only law, and as
34 She cannot make a mistake, nature's laws--Her will--can never be
35 changed. She is the life of the Law of Karma or causation. She is
36 the fructifier of every action. Under Her guidance we are
37 manufacturing our lives through our deeds or Karma.

38 Freedom is the motive of the universe, freedom its goal. The
39 laws of nature are the methods through which we are struggling to
40 reach that freedom, under the guidance of Mother. This universal
41 struggle for freedom attains its highest expression in man in the
42 conscious desire to be free.

43 This freedom is attained by the threefold means of--work,
44 worship, and knowledge.

45 (a) Work--constant, unceasing effort to help others and love
46 others.

47 (b) Worship--consists in prayer, praise, and meditation.

1 (c) Knowledge--that follows meditation.

3 **THE BELUR MATH: AN APPEAL**

5 The success which attended the labours of the disciples of
6 Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa in diffusing the principles of Hindu
7 religion and obtaining some respect for our much abused faith in
8 the West, gave rise to the hope of training a number of young
9 Sannyasins to carry on the propaganda, both in and out of India.
10 And an attempt is being made to educate a number of young men
11 according to the Vedic principle of students living in touch with the
12 Guru.

13 A Math has already been started on the Ganga near Calcutta,
14 through the kindness of some European and American friends.

15 The work, to produce any visible results in a short time,
16 requires funds and hence this appeal to those who are in sympathy
17 with our efforts.

18 It is intended to extend the operation of the Math, by
19 educating in the Math as many young men as the funds can afford,
20 in both Western science and Indian spirituality, so that in addition to
21 the advantages of a University education, they will acquire a manly
22 discipline by living in contact with their teachers.

23 The central Math near Calcutta will gradually start branches
24 in other parts of the country as men become ready and the means
25 are forthcoming.

26 It is a work which will take time to bring forth any permanent
27 result and requires a great deal of sacrifice on the part of our young
28 men and on those who have the means of helping this work.

29 We believe the men are ready, and our appeal therefore is to
30 those who really love their religion and their country and have the
31 means to show their sympathy practically by helping the cause.

32
33 Vivekananda

35 **THE ADVAITA ASHRAMA, HIMALAYAS**

36
37 In Whom is the Universe, Who is in the Universe, Who is the
38 Universe; in Whom is the Soul, Who is in the Soul, Who is the Soul
39 of Man; knowing Him--and therefore the Universe--as our Self,
40 alone extinguishes all fear, brings an end to misery and leads to
41 Infinite Freedom. Wherever there has been expansion in love or
42 progress in well-being, of individuals or numbers, it has been
43 through the perception, realisation, and the practicalisation of the
44 Eternal Truth--THE ONENESS OF ALL BEINGS. "Dependence is
45 misery. Independence is happiness." The Advaita is the only system
46 which gives unto man complete possession of himself, takes off all

1 dependence and its associated superstitions, thus making us brave
2 to suffer, brave to do, and in the long run attain to Absolute
3 Freedom.

4 Hitherto it has not been possible to preach this Noble Truth
5 entirely free from the settings of dualistic weakness; this alone, we
6 are convinced, explains why it has not been more operative and
7 useful to mankind at large.

8 To give this ONE TRUTH a freer and fuller scope in elevating
9 the lives of individuals and leavening the mass of mankind, we start
10 this Advaita Ashrama on the Himalayan heights, the land of its first
11 expiration.

12 Here it is hoped to keep Advaita free from all superstitions
13 and weakening contaminations. Here will be taught and practised
14 nothing but the Doctrine of Unity, pure and simple; and though in
15 entire sympathy with all other systems, this Ashrama is dedicated
16 to Advaita and Advaita alone.

17 18 19 **THE RAMAKRISHNA HOME OF SERVICE** 20 **VARANASI: AN APPEAL**

21
22 Dear__

23 We beg your acceptance of the past year's Report of the
24 Ramakrishna Home of Service, Varanasi, embodying a short
25 statement of our humble efforts towards the amelioration, however
26 little, of the miserable state into which a good many of our fellow-
27 beings, generally old men and women, are cast in this city.

28 In these days of intellectual awakening and steadily asserting
29 public opinion, the holy places of the Hindus, their condition, and
30 method of work have not escaped the keen eye of criticism; and this
31 city, being the holy of holies to all Hindus, has not failed to attract
32 its full share of censure.

33 In other sacred places people go to purify themselves from
34 sin, and their connection with these places is casual, and of a few
35 days' duration. In this, the most ancient and living centre of Aryan
36 religious activity, there come men and women, and as a rule, old
37 and decrepit, waiting to pass unto Eternal Freedom, through the
38 greatest of all sanctifications, death under the shadow of the temple
39 of the Lord of the universe.

40 And then there are those who have renounced everything for
41 the good of the world and have for ever lost the helping hands of
42 their own flesh and blood and childhood's associations.

43 They too are overtaken by the common lot of humanity,
44 physical evil in the form of disease.

45 It may be true that some blame attaches to the management
46 of the place. It may be true that the priests deserve a good part of

1 the sweeping criticism generally heaped upon them; yet we must
2 not forget the great truth--like people, like priests. If the people
3 stand by with folded hands and watch the swift current of misery
4 rushing past their doors, dragging men, women and children, the
5 Sannyasin and the householder into one common whirlpool of
6 helpless suffering, and make not the least effort to save any from
7 the current, only waxing eloquent at the misdoings of the priests of
8 the holy places, not one particle of suffering can ever be lessened,
9 not one ever be helped.

10 Do we want to keep up the faith of our forefathers in the
11 efficacy of the Eternal City of Shiva towards salvation?

12 If we do, we ought to be glad to see the number of those
13 increase from year to year who come here to die.

14 And blessed be the name of the Lord that the poor have this
15 eager desire for salvation, the same as ever.

16 The poor who come here to die have voluntarily cut
17 themselves off from any help they could have received in the places
18 of their birth, and when disease overtakes them, their condition we
19 leave to your imagination and to your conscience as a Hindu to feel
20 and to rectify.

21 Brother, does it not make you pause and think of the
22 marvellous attraction of this wonderful place of preparation for final
23 rest? Does it not strike you with a mysterious sense of awe--this
24 age-old and never-ending stream of pilgrims marching to salvation
25 through death?

26 If it does--come and lend us a helping hand.

27 Never mind if your contribution is only a mite, your help only
28 a little; blades of grass united into a rope will hold in confinement
29 the maddest of elephants--says the old proverb.

30 Ever yours in the Lord of the universe,

31 Vivekananda

32 33 34 **WHO KNOWS HOW MOTHER PLAYS!**

35
36 Perchance a prophet thou--
37 Who knows? Who dares touch
38 The depths where Mother hides
39 Her silent failless bolts!

40
41 Perchance the child had glimpse
42 Of shades, behind the scenes,
43 With eager eyes and strained,
44 Quivering forms--ready
45 To jump in front and be
46 Events, resistless, strong.

1 Who knows but Mother, how,
2 And where, and when, they come?

3
4 Perchance the shining sage
5 Saw more than he could tell;
6 Who knows, what soul, and when,
7 The Mother makes Her throne?

8
9 What law would freedom bind?
10 What merit guide Her will,
11 Whose freak is greatest order,
12 Whose will resistless law?

13
14 To child may glories ope
15 Which father never dreamt;
16 May thousandfold in daughter
17 Her powers Mother store.

20 **TO THE FOURTH OF JULY**

21 [It is well known that Swami Vivekananda's death (or
22 resurrection, as some of us would prefer to call it!) took place on
23 the 4th of July, 1902. On the 4th of July, 1898, he was travelling with
24 some American disciples in Kashmir, and as part of a domestic
25 conspiracy for the celebration of the day--the anniversary of the
26 American Declaration of Independence--he prepared the following
27 poem, to be read aloud at the early breakfast. The poem itself fell to
28 the keeping of Dhira Mata.]

29
30 Behold, the dark clouds melt away,
31 That gathered thick at night, and hung
32 So like a gloomy pall above the earth!
33 Before thy magic touch, the world
34 Awakes. The birds in chorus sing.
35 The flowers raise their star-like crowns--
36 Dew-set, and wave thee welcome fair.
37 The lakes are opening wide in love
38 Their hundred thousand lotus-eyes
39 To welcome thee, with all their depth.
40 All hail to thee, thou Lord of Light!
41 A welcome new to thee, today,
42 O Sun! Today thou sheddest *Liberty* !

43
44 Bethink thee how the world did wait,
45 And search for thee, through time and clime.
46 Some gave up home and love of friends,
47 And went in quest of thee, self-banished,

1 Through dreary oceans, through primeval forests,
2 Each step a struggle for their life or death;
3 Then came the day when work bore fruit,
4 And worship, love, and sacrifice,
5 Fulfilled, accepted, and complete.
6 Then thou, propitious, rose to shed
7 The light of *Freedom* on mankind.

8
9 Move on, O Lord, in thy resistless path!
10 Till thy high noon o'erspreads the world.
11 Till every land reflects thy light,
12 Till men and women, with uplifted head,
13 Behold their shackles broken, and
14 Know, in springing joy, their life renewed!

17 THE EAST AND THE WEST

19 INTRODUCTION

20
21 Vast and deep rivers--swelling and impetuous--charming
22 pleasure-gardens by the river banks, putting to shame the celestial
23 Nandana-Kanana; amidst these pleasure-gardens rise, towering to
24 the sky, beautiful marble palaces, decorated with the most exquisite
25 workmanship of fine art; on the sides, in front, and behind, clusters
26 of huts, with crumbling mud-walls and dilapidated roofs, the
27 bamboos of which, forming their skeletons, as it were, are exposed
28 to view; moving about here and there emaciated figures of young
29 and old in tattered rags, whose faces bear deep-cut lines of the
30 despair and poverty of hundreds of years; cows, bullocks, buffaloes
31 everywhere--ay, the same melancholy look in their eyes, the same
32 feeble physique; on the wayside refuse and dirt: This is our present-
33 day India!

34 Worn-out huts by the very side of palaces, piles of refuse in
35 the near proximity of temples, the Sannyasin clad with only a little
36 loin-cloth, walking by the gorgeously dressed, the pitiful gaze of
37 lustreless eyes of the hunger-stricken at the well-fed and the amply-
38 provided: This is our native land!

39 Devastation by violent plague and cholera; malaria eating
40 into the very vitals of the nation; starvation and semi-starvation as
41 second nature; death-like famine often dancing its tragic dance; the
42 Kurukshetra (battlefield) of malady and misery, the huge cremation
43 ground, strewn with the dead bones of lost hope, activity, joy, and
44 courage; and in the midst of that, sitting in august silence, the Yogi,
45 absorbed in deep communion with the Spirit, with no other goal in
46 life than Moksha: This is what meets the eye of the European
47 traveller in India.

1 A conglomeration of three hundred million souls, resembling
2 men only in appearance, crushed out of life by being downtrodden
3 by their own people and foreign nations, by people professing their
4 own religion and by others of foreign faiths; patient in labour and
5 suffering and devoid of initiative like the slave; without any hope,
6 without any past, without any future; desirous only of maintaining
7 the present life anyhow, however precarious; of malicious nature
8 befitting a slave, to whom the prosperity of their fellow-men is
9 unbearable; bereft of Shraddha, like one with whom all hope is
10 dead, faithless; whose weapon of defence is base trickery,
11 treachery, and slyness like that of a fox; the embodiment of
12 selfishness; licking the dust of the feet of the strong, withal dealing
13 a death-blow to those who are comparatively weak; full of ugly,
14 diabolical superstitions which come naturally to those who are
15 weak and hopeless of the future; without any standard of morality
16 as their backbone; three hundred millions of souls such as these are
17 swarming on the body of India like so many worms on a rotten,
18 stinking carcass: This is the picture concerning us, which naturally
19 presents itself to the English official!

20 Maddened with the wine of newly acquired powers; devoid of
21 discrimination between right and wrong; fierce like wild beasts,
22 henpecked, lustful; drenched in liquor, having no idea of chastity or
23 purity, nor of cleanly ways and habits; believing in matter only, with
24 a civilisation resting on matter and its various applications;
25 addicted to the aggrandisement of self by exploiting others'
26 countries, others' wealth, by force, trick, and treachery; having no
27 faith in the life hereafter, whose Atman (Self) is the body, whose
28 whole life is only in the senses and creature comforts: Thus, to the
29 Indian, the Westerner is the veriest demon (Asura).

30 These are the views of observers on both sides--views born of
31 mutual indiscrimination and superficial knowledge or ignorance.
32 The foreigners, the Europeans, come to India, live in palatial
33 buildings in the perfectly clean and healthy quarters of our towns
34 and compare our "native" quarters with their neat and beautifully
35 laid-out cities at home; the Indians with whom they come in contact
36 are only of one class--those who hold some sort of employment
37 under them. And, indeed, distress and poverty are nowhere else to
38 be met with as in India; besides that, there is no gainsaying that
39 dirt and filth are everywhere. To the European mind, it is
40 inconceivable that anything good can possibly be amidst such dirt,
41 such slavery, and such degradation.

42 We, on the other hand, see that the Europeans eat without
43 discrimination whatever they get, have no idea of cleanliness as we
44 have, do not observe caste distinctions, freely mix with women,
45 drink wine, and shamelessly dance at a ball, men and women held
46 in each other's arms: and we ask ourselves in amazement, what
47 good can there be in such a nation?

48 Both these views are derived from without, and do not look
49 within and below the surface. We do not allow foreigners to mix in
50 our society, and we call them Mlechchhas; they also in their turn
51 hate us as slaves and call us "niggers". In both of these views there
52 must be some truth, though neither of the parties has seen the real

1 thing behind the other.

1 With every man, there is an idea; the external man is only the
2 outward manifestation, the mere language of this idea within.
3 Likewise, every nation has a corresponding national idea. This idea
4 is working for the world and is necessary for its preservation. The
5 day when the necessity of an idea as an element for the
6 preservation of the world is over, that very day the receptacle of
7 that idea, whether it be an individual or a nation, will meet
8 destruction. The reason that we Indians are still living, in spite of so
9 much misery, distress, poverty, and oppression from within and
10 without is that we have a national idea, which is yet necessary for
11 the preservation of the world. The Europeans too have a national
12 idea of their own, without which the world will not go on; therefore
13 they are so strong. Does a man live a moment, if he loses all his
14 strength? A nation is the sum total of so many individual men; will a
15 nation live if it has utterly lost all its strength and activity? Why did
16 not this Hindu race die out, in the face of so many troubles and
17 tumults of a thousand years? If our customs and manners are so
18 very bad, how is it that we have not been effaced from the face of
19 the earth by this time? Have the various foreign conquerors spared
20 any pains to crush us out? Why, then, were not the Hindus blotted
21 out of existence, as happened with men in other countries which
22 are uncivilised? Why has not India depopulated and turned into a
23 wilderness? Why, then foreigners would have lost no time to come
24 and settle in India, and till her fertile lands in the same way as they
25 did and are still doing in America, Australia, and Africa! Well, then,
26 my foreigner, you are not so strong as you think yourself to be; it is
27 a vain imagination. First understand that India has strength as well,
28 has a substantial reality of her own yet. Furthermore, understand
29 that India is still living, because she has her own quota yet to give
30 to the general store of the world's civilisation. And you too
31 understand this full well, I mean those of our countrymen who have
32 become thoroughly Europeanised both in external habits and in
33 ways of thought and ideas, and who are continually crying their
34 eyes out and praying to the European to save them--"We are
35 degraded, we have come down to the level of brutes; O ye
36 European people, you are our saviours, have pity on us and raise us
37 from this fallen state!" And you too understand this, who are
38 singing *Te Deums* and raising a hue and cry that Jesus is come to
39 India, and are seeing the fulfillment of the divine decree in the
40 fullness of time. Oh, dear! No! neither Jesus is come nor Jehovah;
41 nor will they come; they are now busy in saving their own hearths
42 and homes and have no time to come to our country. Here is the
43 selfsame Old Shiva seated as before, the bloody Mother Kali
44 worshipped with the selfsame paraphernalia, the pastoral Shepherd
45 of Love, Shri Krishna, playing on His flute. Once this Old Shiva,
46 rising on His bull and taboring on His Damaru travelled from India,
47 on the one side, to Sumatra, Borneo, Celebes, Australia, as far as
48 the shores of America, and on the other side, this Old Shiva
49 battened His bull in Tibet, China, Japan, and as far up as Siberia,
50 and is still doing the same. The Mother Kali is still exacting Her
51 worship even in China and Japan: it is She whom the Christians
52 metamorphosed into the Virgin Mary, and worship as the mother of
53 Jesus the Christ. Behold the Himalayas! There to the north is

1 Kailas, the main abode of the Old Shiva. That throne the ten-
2 headed, twenty-armed, mighty Ravana could not shake--now for the
3 missionaries to attempt the task?--Bless my soul! Here in India will
4 ever be the Old Shiva taboring on his Damaru, the Mother Kali
5 worshipped with animal sacrifice, and the lovable Shri Krishna
6 playing on His flute. Firm as the Himalayas they are; and no
7 attempts of anyone, Christian or other missionaries, will ever be
8 able to remove them. If you cannot bear them--avaunt! For a
9 handful of you, shall a whole nation be wearied out of all patience
10 and bored to death? Why don't you make your way somewhere else
11 where you may find fields to graze upon freely--the wide world is
12 open to you! But no, that they won't do. Where is that strength to do
13 it? They would eat the salt of that Old Shiva and play Him false,
14 slander Him, and sing the glory of a foreign Saviour--dear me! To
15 such of our countrymen who go whimpering before foreigners--"We
16 are very low, we are mean, we are degraded, everything we have is
17 diabolical"--to them we say: "Yes, that may be the truth, forsooth,
18 because you profess to be truthful and we have no reason to
19 disbelieve you; but why do you include the whole nation in that *We*
20 ? Pray, sirs, what sort of good manner is that?"

21 First, we have to understand that there are not any good
22 qualities which are the privileged monopoly of one nation only. Of
23 course, as with individuals, so with nations, there may be a
24 prevalence of certain good qualities, more or less in one nation than
25 in another.

26 With us, the prominent idea is Mukti; with the Westerners, it
27 is Dharma. What we desire is Mukti; what they want is Dharma.
28 Here the word "Dharma" is used in the sense of the Mimamsakas.
29 What is Dharma? Dharma is that which makes man seek for
30 happiness in this world or the next. Dharma is established on work;
31 Dharma is impelling man day and night to run after and work for
32 happiness.

33 What is Mukti? That which teaches that even the happiness of
34 this life is slavery, and the same is the happiness of the life to come,
35 because neither this world nor the next is beyond the laws of
36 nature; only, the slavery of this world is to that of the next as an
37 iron chain is to a golden one. Again, happiness, wherever it may be,
38 being within the laws of nature, is subject to death and will not last
39 *ad infinitum* . Therefore man must aspire to become Mukta, he must
40 go beyond the bondage of the body; slavery will not do. This
41 Moksha-path is only in India and nowhere else. Hence is true the
42 oft-repeated saying that Mukta souls are only in India and in no
43 other country. But it is equally true that in future they will be in
44 other countries as well; that is well and good, and a thing of great
45 pleasure to us. There was a time in India when Dharma was
46 compatible with Mukti. There were worshippers of Dharma, such as
47 Yudhishtira, Arjuna, Duryodhana, Bhishma, and Karna, side by
48 side with the aspirants of Mukti, such as Vyasa, Shuka, and Janaka.
49 On the advent of Buddhism, Dharma was entirely neglected, and
50 the path of Moksha alone became predominant. Hence, we read in
51 the Agni Purana, in the language of similes, that the demon

1 Gayasura--that is, Buddha¹⁰⁰--tried to destroy the world by showing
2 the path of Moksha to all; and therefore the Devas held a council
3 and by stratagem set him at rest for ever. However, the central fact
4 is that the fall of our country, of which we hear so much spoken, is
5 due to the utter want of this Dharma. If the whole nation practises
6 and follows the path of Moksha, that is well and good; but is that
7 possible? Without enjoyment, renunciation can never come; first
8 enjoy and then you can renounce. Otherwise, if the whole nation, all
9 of a sudden, takes up Sannyasa, it does not gain what it desires, but
10 it loses what it had into the bargain--the bird in the hand is fled, nor
11 is that in the bush caught. When, in the heyday of Buddhistic
12 supremacy, thousands of Sannyasins lived in every monastery, then
13 it was that the country was just on the verge of its ruin! The
14 Bauddhas, the Christians, the Mussulmans, and the Jains prescribe,
15 in their folly, the same law and the same rule for all. That is a great
16 mistake; education, habits, customs, laws, and rules should be
17 different for different men and nations, in conformity with their
18 difference of temperament. What will it avail, if one tries to make
19 them all uniform by compulsion? The Bauddhas declared, "Nothing
20 is more desirable in life than Moksha; whoever you are, come one
21 and all to take it." I ask, "Is that ever possible?" "You are a
22 householder, you must not concern yourself much with things of
23 that sort; you do your Svadharma (natural duty)"--thus say the
24 Hindu scriptures. Exactly so! He who cannot leap one foot, is going
25 to jump across the ocean to Lanka in one bound! Is it reason? You
26 cannot feed your own family or dole out food to two of your fellow-
27 men, you cannot do even an ordinary piece of work for the common
28 good, in harmony with others--and you are running after Mukti! The
29 Hindu scriptures say, "No doubt, Moksha is far superior to Dharma;
30 but Dharma should be finished first of all". The Bauddhas were
31 confounded just there and brought about all sorts of mischief. Non-
32 injury is right; "Resist not evil" is a great thing--these are indeed
33 grand principles; but the scriptures say, "Thou art a householder; if
34 anyone smites thee on thy cheek, and thou dost not return him an
35 eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, thou wilt verily be a sinner."
36 Many say, "When one has come to kill you, there is no sin in killing
37 him, even though he be a Brahmin" (Manu, VIII. 350). This is very
38 true, and this is a thing which should not be forgotten. Heroes only
39 enjoy the world. Show your heroism; apply, according to
40 circumstances, the fourfold political maxims of conciliation, bribery,
41 sowing dissensions, and open war, to win over your adversary and
42 enjoy the world--then you will be Dharmika (righteous). Otherwise,
43 you live a disgraceful life if you pocket your insults when you are
44 kicked and trodden down by anyone who takes it into his head to do
45 so; your life is a veritable hell here, and so is the life hereafter. This
46 is what the Shastras say. Do your Svadharma--this is truth, the truth
47 of truths. This is my advice to you, my beloved co-religionists. Of
48 course, do not do any wrong, do not injure or tyrannise over
49 anyone, but try to do good to others as much as you can. But

1 ¹⁰⁰ ?Swamiji afterwards changed this view with reference to
2 Buddha, as is evident from the letter dated Varanasi, the 9th
3 February, 1902, in this volume.
4

1 passively to submit to wrong done by others is a sin--with the
2 householder. He must try to pay them back in their own coin then
3 and there. The householder must earn money with great effort and
4 enthusiasm, and by that must support and bring comforts to his
5 own family and to others, and perform good works as far as
6 possible. If you cannot do that, how do you profess to be a man? You
7 are not a householder even--what to talk of Moksha for you!!

8 We have said before that Dharma is based on work. The
9 nature of the Dharmika is constant performance of action with
10 efficiency. Why, even the opinion of some Mimamsakas is that those
11 parts of the Vedas which do not enjoin work are not, properly
12 speaking, Vedas at all. One of the aphorisms of Jaimini runs thus:
13 "{Sanskrit}--The purpose of the Vedas being work, those parts of
14 the Vedas that do not deal with work miss the mark."

15 "By constant repetition of the syllable Om and by meditating
16 on its meaning, everything can be obtained"; "All sins are washed
17 away by uttering the name of the Lord"; "He gets all, who resigns
18 himself to the Will of God"--yes, these words of the Shastras and the
19 sages are, no doubt, true. But, do you see, thousands of us are, for
20 our whole life, meditating on Om, are getting ecstatic in devotion in
21 the name of the Lord, and are crying, "Thy Will be done, I am fully
22 resigned to Thee!"--and what are they actually getting in return?
23 Absolutely nothing! How do you account for this? The reason lies
24 here, and it must be fully understood. Whose meditation is real and
25 effective? Who can really resign himself to the Will of God? Who can
26 utter with power irresistible, like that of a thunderbolt, the name of
27 the Lord? It is he who has earned Chitta-shuddhi, that is, whose
28 mind has been purified by work, or in other words, he who is the
29 Dharmika.

30 Every individual is a centre for the manifestation of a certain
31 force. This force has been stored up as the resultant of our previous
32 works, and each one of us is born with this force at his back. So
33 long as this force has not worked itself out, who can possibly
34 remain quiet and give up work? Until then, he will have to enjoy or
35 suffer according to the fruition of his good or bad work and will be
36 irresistibly impelled to do work. Since enjoyment and work cannot
37 be given up till then, is it not better to do good rather than bad
38 works--to enjoy happiness rather than suffer misery? Shri
39 Ramprasad¹⁰¹ used to say, "They speak of two works, 'good' and
40 'bad'; of them, it is better to do the good."

41 Now what is that good which is to be pursued? The good for
42 him who desires Moksha is one, and the good for him who wants
43 Dharma is another. This is the great truth which the Lord Shri
44 Krishna, the revealer of the Gita, has tried therein to explain, and
45 upon this great truth is established the Varnashrama¹⁰² system and

1 ¹⁰¹ ?A Bengali saint, devotee of Kali, and an inspired poet who
2 composed songs in praise of the Deity, expressing the highest
3 truths of religion in the simplest words.

4
5 ¹⁰² ?Four castes and four stages of life.
6

1 the doctrine of Svadharma etc. of the Hindu religion.
2 {Sanskrit} (Gita, XII.13.)
3 --"He who has no enemy, and is friendly and compassionate
4 towards all, who is free from the feelings of 'me and mine', even-
5 minded in pain and pleasure, and forbearing"--these and other
6 epithets of like nature are for him whose one goal in life is Moksha.
7 {Sanskrit} (Gita, II.3.)
8 --"Yield not to unmanliness, O son of Pritha! Ill doth it befit
9 thee. Cast off this mean faint-heartedness and arise, O scorcher of
10 thine enemies."
11 {Sanskrit} (Gita, XI. 33.)
12 --"Therefore do thou arise and acquire fame. After conquering
13 thy enemies, enjoy unrivalled dominion; verily, by Myself have they
14 been already slain; be thou merely the instrument, O Savyasachin
15 (Arjuna)."

1 In these and similar passages in the Gita the Lord is showing
2 the way to Dharma. Of course, work is always mixed with good and
3 evil, and to work, one has to incur sin, more or less. But what of
4 that? Let it be so. Is not something better than nothing? Is not
5 insufficient food better than going without any? Is not doing work,
6 though mixed with good and evil, better than doing nothing and
7 passing an idle and inactive life, and being like stones? The cow
8 never tells a lie, and the stone never steals, but, nevertheless, the
9 cow remains a cow and the stone a stone. Man steals and man tells
10 lies, and again it is man that becomes a god. With the prevalence of
11 the Sattvika essence, man becomes inactive and rests always in a
12 state of deep Dhyana or contemplation; with the prevalence of the
13 Rajas, he does bad as well as good works; and with the prevalence
14 of the Tamas again, he becomes inactive and inert. Now, tell me,
15 looking from outside, how are we to understand, whether you are in
16 a state wherein the Sattva or the Tamas prevails? Whether we are
17 in a state of Sattvika calmness, beyond all pleasure and pain, and
18 past all work and activity, or whether we are in the lowest Tamasika
19 state, lifeless, passive, dull as dead matter, and doing no work,
20 because there is no power in us to do it, and are, thus, silently and
21 by degrees, getting rotten and corrupted within--I seriously ask you
22 this question and demand an answer. Ask your own mind, and you
23 shall know what the reality is. But, what need to wait for the
24 answer? The tree is known by its fruit. The Sattva prevailing, the
25 man is inactive, he is calm, to be sure; but that inactivity is the
26 outcome of the centralisation of great powers, that calmness is the
27 mother of tremendous energy. That highly Sattvika man, that great
28 soul, has no longer to work as we do with hands and feet--by his
29 mere willing only, all his works are immediately accomplished to
30 perfection. That man of predominating Sattva is the Brahmin, the
31 worshipped of all. Has he to go about from door to door, begging
32 others to worship him? The Almighty Mother of the universe writes
33 with Her own hand, in golden letters on his forehead, "Worship ye
34 all, this great one, this son of Mine", and the world reads and
35 listens to it and humbly bows down its head before him in
36 obedience. That man is really--

37 {Sanskrit} (Gita, XII. 13)

38 --"He who has no enemy, and is friendly and compassionate
39 towards all, who is free from the feelings of 'me and mine', even-
40 minded in pain and pleasure, and forbearing." And mark you, those
41 things which you see in pusillanimous, effeminate folk who speak in
42 a nasal tone chewing every syllable, whose voice is as thin as of one
43 who has been starving for a week, who are like a tattered wet rag,
44 who never protest or are moved even if kicked by anybody--those
45 are the signs of the lowest Tamas, those are the signs of death, not
46 of Sattva--all corruption and stench. It is because Arjuna was going
47 to fall into the ranks of these men that the Lord is explaining
48 matters to him so elaborately in the Gita. Is that not the fact? Listen
49 to the very first words that came out of the mouth of the Lord,
50 "{Sanskrit}--Yield not to unmanliness, O Partha! Ill doth it befit
51 thee!" and then later, "{Sanskrit}--Therefore do thou arise and
52 acquire fame." Coming under the influence of the Jains, Buddhas,

1 and others, we have joined the lines of those Tamasika people.
2 During these last thousand years, the whole country is filling the air
3 with the name of the Lord and is sending its prayers to Him; and
4 the Lord is never lending His ears to them. And why should He?
5 When even man never hears the cries of the fool, do you think God
6 will? Now the only way out is to listen to the words of the Lord in
7 the Gita, "{Sanskrit}--Yield not to unmanliness, O Partha!"
8 "{Sanskrit}--Therefore do thou arise and acquire fame."

9 Now let us go on with our subject-matter--the East and the
10 West. First see the irony of it. Jesus Christ, the God of the
11 Europeans, has taught: Have no enemy, bless them that curse you;
12 whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other
13 also; stop all your work and be ready for the next world; the end of
14 the world is near at hand. And our Lord in the Gita is saying:
15 Always work with great enthusiasm, destroy your enemies and
16 enjoy the world. But, after all, it turned out to be exactly the
17 reverse of what Christ or Krishna implied. The Europeans never
18 took the words of Jesus Christ seriously. Always of active habits,
19 being possessed of a tremendous Rajasika nature, they are
20 gathering with great enterprise and youthful ardour the comforts
21 and luxuries of the different countries of the world and enjoying
22 them to their hearts' content. And we are sitting in a corner, with
23 our bag and baggage, pondering on death day and night, and
24 singing, "{Sanskrit}--Very tremulous and unsteady is the water on
25 the lotus-leaf; so is the life of man frail and transient"--with the
26 result that it is making our blood run cold and our flesh creep with
27 the fear of Yama, the god of death; and Yama, too, alas, has taken
28 us at our word, as it were--plague and all sorts of maladies have
29 entered into our country! Who are following the teachings of the
30 Gita?--the Europeans. And who are acting according to the will of
31 Jesus Christ?--The descendants of Shri Krishna! This must be well
32 understood. The Vedas were the first to find and proclaim the way
33 to Moksha, and from that one source, the Vedas, was taken
34 whatever any great Teacher, say, Buddha or Christ, afterwards
35 taught. Now, they were Sannyasins, and therefore they "had no
36 enemy and were friendly and compassionate towards all". That was
37 well and good for them. But why this attempt to compel the whole
38 world to follow the same path to Moksha? "Can beauty be
39 manufactured by rubbing and scrubbing? Can anybody's love be
40 won by threats or force?" What does Buddha or Christ prescribe for
41 the man who neither wants Moksha nor is fit to receive it?--
42 Nothing! Either you must have Moksha or you are doomed to
43 destruction--these are the only two ways held forth by them, and
44 there is no middle course. You are tied hand and foot in the matter
45 of trying for anything other than Moksha. There is no way shown
46 how you may enjoy the world a little for a time; not only all
47 openings to that are hermetically sealed to you, but, in addition,
48 there are obstructions put at every step. It is only the Vedic religion
49 which considers ways and means and lays down rules for the
50 fourfold attainment of man, comprising Dharma, Artha, Kama, and
51 Moksha. Buddha ruined us, and so did Christ ruin Greece and
52 Rome! Then, in due course of time, fortunately, the Europeans
53 became Protestants, shook off the teachings of Christ as

1 represented by Papal authority, and heaved a sigh of relief. In India,
2 Kumarila again brought into currency the Karma-Marga, the way of
3 Karma only, and Shankara and Ramanuja firmly re-established the
4 Eternal Vedic religion, harmonising and balancing in due
5 proportions Dharma, Artha, Kama, and Moksha. Thus the nation
6 was brought to the way of regaining its lost life; but India has three
7 hundred million souls to wake, and hence the delay. To revive three
8 hundred millions--can it be done in a day?

9 The aims of the Buddhistic and the Vedic religions are the
10 same, but the means adopted by the Buddhistic are not right. If the
11 Buddhistic means were correct, then why have we been thus
12 hopelessly lost and ruined? It will not do to say that the efflux of
13 time has naturally wrought this. Can time work, transgressing the
14 laws of cause and effect?

15 Therefore, though the aims are the same, the Bauddhas for
16 want of right means have degraded India. Perhaps my Bauddha
17 brothers will be offended at this remark, and fret and fume; but
18 there's no help for it; the truth ought to be told, and I do not care
19 for the result. The right and correct means is that of the Vedas--the
20 Jati Dharma, that is, the Dharma enjoined according to the different
21 castes--the Svadharma, that is, one's own Dharma, or set of duties
22 prescribed for man according to his capacity and position--which is
23 the very basis of Vedic religion and Vedic society. Again, perhaps, I
24 am offending many of my friends, who are saying, I suppose, that I
25 am flattering my own countrymen. Here let me ask them once for
26 all: What do I gain by such flattery? Do they support me with any
27 money or means? On the contrary, they try their best to get
28 possession of money which I secure by begging from outside of
29 India for feeding the famine-stricken and the helpless; and if they
30 do not get it, they abuse and slander! Such then, O my educated
31 countrymen, are the people of my country. I know them too well to
32 expect anything from them by flattery. I know they have to be
33 treated like the insane; and anyone who administers medicine to a
34 madman must be ready to be rewarded with kicks and bites; but he
35 is the true friend who forces the medicine down the throats of such
36 and bears with them in patience.

37 Now, this Jati Dharma, this Svadharma, is the path of welfare
38 of all societies in every land, the ladder to ultimate freedom. With
39 the decay of this Jati Dharma, this Svadharma, has come the
40 downfall of our land. But the Jati Dharma or Svadharma as
41 commonly understood at present by the higher castes is rather a
42 new evil, which has to be guarded against. They think they know
43 everything of Jati Dharma, but really they know nothing of it.
44 Regarding their own village customs as the eternal customs laid
45 down by the Vedas, and appropriating to themselves all privileges,
46 they are going to their doom! I am not talking of caste as
47 determined by qualitative distinction, but of the hereditary caste
48 system. I admit that the qualitative caste system is the primary one;
49 but the pity is qualities yield to birth in two or three generations.
50 Thus the vital point of our national life has been touched; otherwise,
51 why should we sink to this degraded state? Read in the Gita,
52 "{Sanskrit}"--I should then be the cause of the admixture of races,

1 and I should thus ruin these beings." How came this terrible Varna-
2 Samkarya--this confounding mixture of all castes--and
3 disappearance of all qualitative distinctions? Why has the white
4 complexion of our forefathers now become black? Why did the
5 Sattvaguna give place to the prevailing Tamas with a sprinkling, as
6 it were, of Rajas in it? That is a long story to tell, and I reserve my
7 answer for some future occasion. For the present, try to understand
8 this, that if the Jati Dharma be rightly and truly preserved, the
9 nation shall never fall. If this is true, then what was it that brought
10 our downfall? That we have fallen is the sure sign that the basis of
11 the Jati Dharma has been tampered with. Therefore, what you call
12 the Jati Dharma is quite contrary to what we have in fact. First,
13 read your own Shastras through and through, and you will easily
14 see that what the Shastras define as caste--Dharma, has
15 disappeared almost everywhere from the land. Now try to bring
16 back the true Jati Dharma, and then it will be a real and sure boon
17 to the country. What I have learnt and understood, I am telling you
18 plainly. I have not been imported from some foreign land to come
19 and save you, that I should countenance all your foolish customs
20 and give scientific explanations for them; it does not cost our
21 foreign friends anything, they can well afford to do so. You cheer
22 them up and heap applause upon them, and that is the acme of
23 their ambition. But if dirt and dust be flung at your faces, it falls on
24 mine too! Don't you see that?

25 I have said elsewhere that every nation has a national
26 purpose of its own. Either in obedience to the Law of nature, or by
27 virtue of the superior genius of the great ones, the social manners
28 and customs of every nation are being moulded into shape, so as to
29 bring that purpose to fruition. In the life of every nation, besides
30 that purpose and those manners and customs that are essentially
31 necessary to effect that purpose, all others are superfluous. It does
32 not matter much whether those superfluous customs and manners
33 grow or disappear; but a nation is sure to die when the main
34 purpose of its life is hurt.

35 When we were children, we heard the story of a certain
36 ogress who had her soul living in a small bird, and unless the bird
37 was killed, the ogress would never die. The life of a nation is also
38 like that. Again another thing you will observe, that a nation will
39 never greatly grudge if it be deprived of these rights which have
40 not much to do with its national purpose, nay, even if all of such are
41 wrested from it; but when the slightest blow is given to that
42 purpose on which rests its national life, that moment it reacts with
43 tremendous power.

44 Take for instance the case of the three living nations, of
45 whose history you know more or less, viz. the French, the English,
46 and the Hindu. Political independence is the backbone of the
47 French character. French subjects bear calmly all oppressions.
48 Burden them with heavy taxes, they will not raise the least voice
49 against them; compel the whole nation to join the army, they never
50 complain; but the instant anyone meddles with that political
51 independence, the whole nation will rise as one man and madly
52 react. No one man shall be allowed to usurp authority over us;

1 whether learned or ignorant, rich or poor, of noble birth or of the
2 lower classes, we have equal share in the Government of our
3 country, and in the independent control of our society--this is the
4 root-principle of the French character. He must suffer who will try
5 to interfere with this freedom.

6 In the English character, the "give and take" policy, the
7 business principle of the trader, is principally inherent. To the
8 English, just and equitable distribution of wealth is of essential
9 interest. The Englishman humbly submits to the king and to the
10 privileges of the nobility; only if he has to pay a farthing from his
11 pocket, he must demand an account of it. There is the king; that is
12 all right; he is ready to obey and honour him; but if the king wants
13 money, the Englishman says: All right, but first let me understand
14 why it is needed, what good it will bring; next, I must have my say
15 in the matter of how it is to be spent, and then I shall part with it.
16 The king, once trying to exact money from the English people by
17 force, brought about a great revolution. They killed the king.

18 The Hindu says that political and social independence are
19 well and good, but the real thing is spiritual independence--Mukti.
20 This is our national purpose; whether you take the Vaidika, the
21 Jaina, or the Bauddha, the Advaita, the Vishishtadvaita, or the
22 Dvaita--there, they are all of one mind. Leave that point untouched
23 and do whatever you like, the Hindu is quite unconcerned and
24 keeps silence; but if you run foul of him there, beware, you court
25 your ruin. Rob him of everything he has, kick him, call him a
26 "nigger" or any such name, he does not care much; only keep that
27 one gate of religion free and unmolested. Look here, how in the
28 modern period the Pathan dynasties were coming and going, but
29 could not get a firm hold of their Indian Empire, because they were
30 all along attacking the Hindu's religion. And see, how firmly based,
31 how tremendously strong was the Mogul Empire. Why? Because the
32 Moguls left that point untouched. In fact, Hindus were the real prop
33 of the Mogul Empire; do you not know that Jahangir, Shahjanhan,
34 and Dara Shikoh were all born of Hindu mothers? Now then
35 observe--as soon as the ill-fated Aurangzeb again touched that
36 point, the vast Mogul Empire vanished in an instant like a dream.
37 Why is it that the English throne is so firmly established in India?
38 Because it never touches the religion of the land in any way. The
39 sapient Christian missionaries tried to tamper a little with this
40 point, and the result was the Mutiny of 1857. So long as the English
41 understand this thoroughly and act accordingly, their throne in
42 India will remain unsullied and unshaken. The wise and far-seeing
43 among the English also comprehend this and admit it--read Lord
44 Roberts's *Forty-one Years in India*.¹⁰³

45 Now you understand clearly where the soul of this ogress is--
46 it is in religion. Because no one was able to destroy that, therefore
47 the Hindu nation is still living, having survived so many troubles
48 and tribulations. Well, one Indian scholar asks, "What is the use of
49 keeping the soul of the nation in religion? Why not keep it in social
50 or political independence, as is the case with other nations?" It is

103 ? *Vide* 30th and 31st Chapters.

1 very easy to talk like that. If it be granted, for the sake of argument,
2 that religion and spiritual independence, and soul, God, and Mukti
3 are all false, even then see how the matter stands. As the same fire
4 is manifesting itself in different forms, so the same one great Force
5 is manifesting itself as political independence with the French, as
6 mercantile genius and expansion of the sphere of equity with the
7 English, and as the the desire for Mukti or spiritual independence
8 with the Hindu. Be it noted that by the impelling of this great Force,
9 has been moulded the French and the English character, through
10 several centuries of vicissitudes of fortune; and also by the
11 inspiration of that great Force, with the rolling of thousands of
12 centuries, has been the present evolution of the Hindu national
13 character. I ask in all seriousness--which is easier, to give up our
14 national character evolved out of thousands of centuries, or your
15 grafted foreign character of a few hundred years? Why do not the
16 English forget their warlike habits and give up fighting and
17 bloodshed, and sit calm and quiet concentrating their whole energy
18 on making religion the sole aim of their life?

19 The fact is, that the river has come down a thousand miles
20 from its source in the mountains; does it, or can it go back to its
21 source? If it ever tries to trace back its course, it will simply dry up
22 by being dissipated in all directions. Anyhow the river is sure to fall
23 into the ocean, sooner or later, either by passing through open and
24 beautiful plains or struggling through grimy soil. If our national life
25 of these ten thousand years has been a mistake, then there is no
26 help for it; and if we try now to form a new character, the inevitable
27 result will be that we shall die.

28 But, excuse me if I say that it is sheer ignorance and want of
29 proper understanding to think like that, namely, that our national
30 ideal has been a mistake. First go to other countries and study
31 carefully their manners and conditions with your own eyes--not with
32 others'--and reflect on them with a thoughtful brain, if you have it;
33 then read your own scriptures, your ancient literature, travel
34 throughout India, and mark the people of her different parts and
35 their ways and habits with the wide-awake eye of an intelligent and
36 keen observer--not with a fool's eye--and you will see as clear as
37 noonday that the nation is still living intact and its life is surely
38 pulsating. You will find there also that, hidden under the ashes of
39 apparent death, the fire of our national life is yet smouldering and
40 that the life of this nation is religion, its language religion, and its
41 idea religion; and your politics, society, municipality, plague-
42 prevention work, and famine-relief work--all these things will be
43 done as they have been done all along here, viz. only through
44 religion; otherwise all your frantic yelling and bewailing will end in
45 nothing, my friend!

46 Besides, in every country, the means is the same after all,
47 that is, whatever only a handful of powerful men dictate becomes
48 the *fait accompli*; the rest of the men only follow like a flock of
49 sheep, that's all. I have seen your Parliament, your Senate, your
50 vote, majority, ballot; it is the same thing everywhere, my friend.
51 The powerful men in every country are moving society whatever
52 way they like, and the rest are only like a flock of sheep. Now the

1 question is this, who are these men of power in India?--they who
2 are giants in religion. It is they who lead our society; and it is they
3 again who change our social laws and usages when necessity
4 demands; and we listen to them silently and do what they
5 command. The only difference with ours is, that we have not that
6 superfluous fuss and bustle of the majority, the vote, ballot, and
7 similar concomitant tugs-of-war as in other countries. That is all.

8 Of course we do not get that education which the common
9 people in the West do, by the system of vote and ballot etc., but, on
10 the other hand, we have not also amongst us that class of people
11 who, in the name of politics, rob others and fatten themselves by
12 sucking the very life-blood of the masses in all European countries.
13 If you ever saw, my friend, that shocking sight behind the scene of
14 acting of these politicians--that revelry of bribery, that robbery in
15 broad daylight, that dance of the Devil in man, which are practised
16 on such occasions--you would be hopeless about man! "Milk goes
17 abegging from door to door, while the grog-shop is crowded; the
18 chaste woman seldom gets the wherewithal to hide her modesty,
19 while the woman of the town flutters about in all her jewelry!" They
20 that have money have kept the government of the land under their
21 thumb, are robbing the people and sending them as soldiers to fight
22 and be slain on foreign shores, so that, in case of victory; their
23 coffers may be full of gold bought by the blood of the subject-people
24 on the field of battle. And the subject-people? Well, theirs is only to
25 shed their blood. This is politics! Don't be startled, my friend; don't
26 be lost in its mazes.

27 First of all, try to understand this: Does man make laws, or do
28 laws make man? Does man make money, or does money make man?
29 Does man make name and fame, or name and fame make man?

30 Be a man first, my friend, and you will see how all those
31 things and the rest will follow of themselves after you. Give up that
32 hateful malice, that dog-like bickering and barking at one another,
33 and take your stand on good purpose, right means, righteous
34 courage, and be brave. When you are born a man, leave some
35 indelible mark behind you. "When you first came to this world, O
36 Tulsi,¹⁰⁴ the world rejoiced and you cried; now live your life in doing
37 such acts that when you will leave this world, the world will cry for
38 you and you will leave it laughing." If you can do that, then you are
39 a man; otherwise, what good are you?

40 Next, you must understand this, my friend, that we have
41 many things to learn from other nations. The man who says he has
42 nothing more to learn is already at his last grasp. The nation that
43 says it knows everything is on the very brink of destruction! "As
44 long as I live, so long do I learn." But one point to note here is that
45 when we take anything from others, we must mould it after our own
46 way. We shall add to our stock what others have to teach, but we
47 must always be careful to keep intact what is essentially our own.
48 For instance, suppose I want to have my dinner cooked in the

1 ¹⁰⁴ ?A poet and a devotee--the author of the *Ramcharitmanasa*.
2 Here the poet is addressing himself.
3

1 European fashion. When taking food, the Europeans sit on chairs,
2 and we are accustomed to squat on the floor. To imitate the
3 Europeans, if I order my dinner to be served on a table and have to
4 sit on a chair more than an hour, my feet will be in a fair way of
5 going to Yama's door, as they say, and I shall writhe in torture; what
6 do you say to that? So I must squat on the floor in my own style,
7 while having their dishes. Similarly, whenever we learn anything
8 from others, we must mould it after our own fashion, always
9 preserving in full our characteristic nationality. Let me ask, "Does
10 man wear clothes or do clothes make the man?" The man of genius
11 in any dress commands respect; but nobody cares for fools like me,
12 though carrying, like the washerman's ass, a load of clothes on my
13 back.

14 15 16 **CUSTOMS: EASTERN AND WESTERN** 17

18 The foregoing, by way of an introduction, has come to be
19 rather long; but after all this talk it will be easier for us to compare
20 the two nations. They are good, and we are also good. "You can
21 neither praise the one nor blame the other; both the scales are
22 equal." Of course, there are gradations and varieties of good, this is
23 all.

24 According to us, there are three things in the make-up of
25 man. There is the body, there is the mind, and there is the soul.
26 First let us consider the body, which is the most external thing
27 about man.

28 First, see how various are the differences with respect to the
29 body. How many varieties of nose, face, hair, height, complexion,
30 breadth, etc., there are!

31 The modern ethnologists hold that variety of complexion is
32 due to intermixture of blood. Though the hot or cold climate of the
33 place to a certain extent affects the complexion, no doubt, yet the
34 main cause of its change is heredity. Even in the coldest parts of the
35 world, people with dark complexions are seen, and again in the
36 hottest countries white men are seen to live. The complexion of the
37 aboriginal tribes of Canada, in America, and of the Eskimos of the
38 Northern Polar regions, is not white. While islands, such as Borneo,
39 Celebes, etc., situated in the equatorial regions are peopled by
40 white aborigines.

41 According to the Hindu Shastras, the three Hindu castes,
42 Brahmana, Kshatriya, and Vaishya, and the several nations outside
43 India, to wit, Cheen, Hun, Darad, Pahlava, Yavana, and Khash are
44 all Aryas. This Cheen of our Shastras is not the modern Chinaman.
45 Besides, in those days, the Chinamen did not call themselves Cheen
46 at all. There was a distinct, powerful nation, called Cheen, living in
47 the north-eastern parts of Kashmir, and the Darads lived where are
48 now seen the hill-tribes between India and Afghanistan. Some
49 remnants of the ancient Cheen are yet to be found in very small

1 numbers, and Daradisthan is yet in existence. In the *Rajatarangini*,
2 the history of Kashmir, references are often made to the supremacy
3 of the powerful Darad-Raj. An ancient tribe of Huns reigned for a
4 long period in the north-western parts of India. The Tibetans now
5 call themselves Hun, but this Hun is perhaps "Hune". The fact is,
6 that the Huns referred to in Manu are not the modern Tibetans, but
7 it is quite probable that the modern Tibetans are the product of a
8 mixture of the ancient Aryan Huns and some other Mogul tribes
9 that came to Tibet from Central Asia. According to Prjevalski and
10 the Duc d' Orleans, the Russian and French travellers, there are
11 still found in some parts of Tibet tribes with faces and eyes of the
12 Aryan type. "Yavana" was the name given to the Greeks. There has
13 been much dispute about the origin of this name. Some say that the
14 name Yavana was first used to designate a tribe of Greeks
15 inhabiting the place called "Ionia", and hence, in the Pali writs of
16 the Emperor Asoka, the Greeks are named "Yonas", and afterwards
17 from this "Yona" the Sanskrit word Yavana, was derived. Again,
18 according to some of our Indian antiquarians, the word Yavana does
19 not stand for the Greeks. But all these views are wrong. The
20 original word is Yavana itself; for not only the Hindus but the
21 ancient Egyptians and the Babylonians as well called the Greeks by
22 that name. By the word Pahlava is meant the ancient Parsees,
23 speaking the Pahlavi tongue. Even now, Khash denotes the semi-
24 civilised Aryan tribes living in mountainous regions and in the
25 Himalayas, and the word is still used in this sense. In that sense,
26 the present Europeans are the descendants of the Khash; in other
27 words, those Aryan tribes that were uncivilised in ancient days are
28 all Khash.

29 In the opinion of modern savants, the Aryans had reddish-
30 white complexion, black or red hair, straight noses, well-drawn
31 eyes, etc.; and the formation of the skull varied a little according to
32 the colour of the hair. Where the complexion is dark, there the
33 change has come to pass owing to the mixture of the pure Aryan
34 blood with black races. They hold that there are still some tribes to
35 the west of the Himalayan borders who are of pure Aryan blood,
36 and that the rest are all of mixed blood; otherwise, how could they
37 be dark? But the European Pundits ought to know by this time that,
38 in the southern parts of India, many children are born with red hair,
39 which after two or three years changes into black, and that in the
40 Himalayas many have red hair and blue or grey eyes.

41 Let the Pundits fight among themselves; it is the Hindus who
42 have all along called themselves Aryas. Whether of pure or mixed
43 blood, the Hindus are Aryas; there it rests. If the Europeans do not
44 like us, Aryas, because we are dark, let them take another name for
45 themselves--what is that to us?

46 Whether black or white, it does not matter; but of all the
47 nations of the world, the Hindus are the handsomest and finest in
48 feature. I am not bragging nor saying anything in exaggeration
49 because they belong to my own nationality, but this fact is known all
50 over the world. Where else can one find a higher percentage of fine-
51 featured men and women than in India? Besides, it has to be taken
52 into consideration how much more is required in our country to

1 make us look handsome than in other countries, because our bodies
2 are so much more exposed. In other countries, the attempt is
3 always to make ugly persons appear beautiful under cover of
4 elaborate dresses and clothes.

5 Of course, in point of health, the Westerners are far superior
6 to us. In the West, men of forty years and women of fifty years are
7 still young. This is, no doubt, because they take good food, dress
8 well and live in a good climate, and above all, the secret is that they
9 do not marry at an early age. Ask those few strong tribes among
10 ourselves and see what their marriageable age is. Ask the hill
11 tribes, such as, the Goorkhas, the Punjabis, the Jats, and the Afridis,
12 what their marriageable age is. Then read your own Shastras--thirty
13 is the age fixed for the Brahmana, twenty-five for the Kshatriya, and
14 twenty for the Vaishya. In point of longevity and physical and
15 mental strength, there is a great difference between the Westerners
16 and ourselves. As soon as we attain to forty, our hope and physical
17 and mental strength are on the decline. While, at that age, full of
18 youthful vigour and hope, they have only made a start.

19 We are vegetarians--most of our diseases are of the stomach;
20 our old men and women generally die of stomach complaints. They
21 of the West take meat--most of their diseases are of the heart; their
22 old men and women generally die of heart or lung diseases. A
23 learned doctor of the West observes that the people who have
24 chronic stomach complaints generally tend to a melancholy and
25 renouncing nature, and the people suffering from complaints of the
26 heart and the upper parts of the body have always hope and faith to
27 the last; the cholera patient is from the very beginning afraid of
28 death, while the consumptive patient hopes to the last moment that
29 he will recover. "Is it owing to this," my doctor friend may with good
30 reasoning ask, "that the Indians always talk and think of death and
31 renunciation?" As yet I have not been able to find a satisfactory
32 answer to this; but the question seems to have an air of truth about
33 it, and demands serious consideration.

34 In our country, people suffer little from diseases of the teeth
35 and hair; in the West, few people have natural, healthy teeth, and
36 baldness is met with everywhere. Our women bore their noses and
37 ears for wearing ornaments; in the West, among the higher classes,
38 the women do not do those things much, nowadays; but by
39 squeezing the waist, making the spine crooked, and thus displacing
40 the liver and spleen and disfiguring the form, they suffer the
41 torment of death to make themselves shapely in appearance and
42 added to that is the burden of dress, over which they have to show
43 their features to the best advantages. Their Western dress is,
44 however, more suited for work. With the exception of the dress worn
45 in society by the ladies of the wealthy classes, the dress of the
46 women in general is ugly. The Sari of our women, and the Choga,
47 Chapkan, and turban of our men defy comparison as regards beauty
48 in dress. The tight dresses cannot approach in beauty the loose
49 ones that fall in natural folds. But all our dresses being flowing, and
50 in folds, are not suited for doing work; in doing work, they are
51 spoiled and done for. There is such a thing as fashion in the West.
52 Their fashion is in dress, ours in ornaments, though nowadays it is

1 entering a little into clothes also. Paris is the centre of fashion for
2 ladies' dress and London for men's. The actresses of Paris often set
3 the fashions. What new fashion of dress a distinguished actress of
4 the time would wear, the fashionable world would greedily imitate.
5 The big firms of dressmakers set the fashions nowadays. We can
6 form no idea of the millions of pounds that are spent every year in
7 the making of dress in the West. The dress-making business has
8 become a regular science. What colour of dress will suit with the
9 complexion of the girl and the colour of her hair, what special
10 feature of her body should be disguised, and what displayed to the
11 best advantage--these and many other like important points, the
12 dressmakers have seriously to consider. Again, the dress that ladies
13 of very high position wear, others have to wear also, otherwise they
14 lose their caste! This is FASHION.

15 Then again, this fashion is changing every day, so to say; it is
16 sure to change four times with the four seasons of the year, and,
17 besides, many other times as well. The rich people have their
18 dresses made after the latest fashion by expert firms; those who
19 belong to the middle classes have them often done at home by
20 women-tailors, or do them themselves. If the new fashion
21 approaches very near to their last one, then they just change or
22 adjust their clothes accordingly; otherwise, they buy new ones. The
23 wealthy classes give away their dresses which have gone out of
24 fashion to their dependants and servants.

25 The ladies' maids and valets sell them, and those are
26 exported to the various colonies established by the Europeans in
27 Africa, Asia, and Australia, and there they are used again. The
28 dresses of those who are immensely rich are all ordered from Paris;
29 the less wealthy have them copied in their own country by their
30 own dressmakers. But the ladies' hats must be of French make. As
31 a matter of fact, the dress of the English and the German women is
32 not good; they do not generally follow the Paris fashions--except, of
33 course, a few of the rich and the higher classes. So, the women of
34 other countries indulge in jokes at their expense. But men in
35 England mostly dress very well. The American men and women,
36 without distinction, wear very fashionable dress. Though the
37 American Government imposes heavy duties on all dresses
38 imported from London or Paris, to keep out foreign goods from the
39 country--yet, all the same, the women order their dress from Paris,
40 and men, from London. Thousands of men and women are
41 employed in daily introducing into the market woollen and silk
42 fabrics of various kinds and colours, and thousands, again, are
43 manufacturing all sorts of dresses out of them. Unless the dress is
44 exactly up to date, ladies and gentlemen cannot walk in the street
45 without being remarked upon by the fashionable. Though we have
46 not all this botheration of the fashion in dress in our country, we
47 have, instead, a fashion in ornaments, to a certain extent. The
48 merchants dealing in silk, woollen, and other materials in the West
49 have their watchful eyes always fixed on the way the fashion
50 changes, and what sort of things people have begun to like; or they
51 hit upon a new fashion, out of their own brain, and try to draw the
52 attention of the people thereto. When once a merchant succeeds in

1 gaining the eyes of the people to the fashion brought into the
2 market by him, he is a made man for life. At the time of the
3 Emperor Napoleon III of France, his wife, the Empress Eugenie,
4 was the universally recognised avatar of fashion of the West. The
5 shawls of Kashmir were her special favourites, and therefore
6 shawls worth millions of rupees used to be exported every year, in
7 her time, from Kashmir to Europe. With the fall of Napoleon III, the
8 fashion has changed, and Kashmir shawls no longer sell. And as for
9 the merchants of our country, they always walk in the old rut. They
10 could not opportunely hit upon any new style to catch the fancy of
11 the West under the altered circumstances, and so the market was
12 lost to them. Kashmir received a severe shock and her big and rich
13 merchants all of a sudden failed.

14 This world, if you have the eyes to see, is yours--if not, it is
15 mine; do you think that anyone waits for another? The Westerners
16 are devising new means and methods to attract the luxuries and the
17 comforts of different parts of the world. They watch the situation
18 with ten eyes and work with two hundred hands, as it were; while
19 we will never do what the authors of Shastras have not written in
20 books, and thus we are moving in the same old groove, and there is
21 no attempt to seek anything original and new; and the capacity to
22 do that is lost to us now. The whole nation is rending the skies with
23 the cry for food and dying of starvation. Whose fault is it? Ours!
24 What means are we taking in hand to find a way out of the pitiable
25 situation? Zero! Only making great noise by our big and empty talk!
26 That is all that we are doing. Why not come out of your narrow
27 corner and see, with your eyes open, how the world is moving
28 onwards? Then the mind will open and the power of thinking and of
29 timely action will come of itself. You certainly know the story of the
30 Devas and the Asuras. The Devas have faith in their soul, in God,
31 and in the after-life, while the Asuras give importance to this life,
32 and devote themselves to enjoying this world and trying to have
33 bodily comforts in every possible way. We do not mean to discuss
34 here whether the Devas are better than the Asuras, or the Asuras
35 than the Devas, but, reading their descriptions in the Puranas, the
36 Asuras seem to be, truth to tell, more like MEN, and far more manly
37 than the Devas; the Devas are inferior, without doubt, to the Asuras,
38 in many respects. Now, to understand the East and the West, we
39 cannot do better than interpret the Hindus as the sons of the Devas
40 and the Westerners as the sons of the Asuras.

41 First, let us see about their respective ideas of cleanliness of
42 the body. Purity means cleanliness of mind and body; the latter is
43 effected by the use of water etc. No nation in the world is as cleanly
44 in the body as the Hindu, who uses water very freely. Taking a
45 plunge bath is wellnigh scarce in other nations, with a few
46 exceptions. The English have introduced it into their country after
47 coming in contact with India. Even now, ask those of our students
48 who have resided in England for education, and they will tell you
49 how insufficient the arrangements for bathing are there. When the
50 Westerners bathe--and that is once a week--they change their inner
51 clothing. Of course, nowadays, among those who have means, many
52 bathe daily and among Americans the number is larger; the

1 Germans once in a week, the French and others very rarely! Spain
2 and Italy are warm countries, but there it is still less! Imagine their
3 eating of garlic in abundance, profuse perspiration day and night,
4 and yet no bath! Ghosts must surely run away from them, what to
5 say of men! What is meant by bath in the West? Why, the washing of
6 face, head, and hands, i.e. only those parts which are exposed. A
7 millionaire friend of mine once invited me to come over to Paris:
8 Paris, which is the capital of modern civilisation--Paris, the heaven
9 of luxury, fashion, and merriment on earth--the centre of arts and
10 sciences. My friend accommodated me in a huge palatial hotel,
11 where arrangements for meals were in a right royal style, but, for
12 bath--well, no name of it. Two days I suffered silently--till at last I
13 could bear it no longer, and had to address my friend thus: "Dear
14 brother, let this royal luxury be with you and yours! I am panting to
15 get out of this situation. Such hot weather, and no facility of
16 bathing; if it continues like this, I shall be in imminent danger of
17 turning mad like a rabid dog." Hearing this, my friend became very
18 sorry for me and annoyed with the hotel authorities, and said: "I
19 won't let you stay here any more, let us go and find out a better
20 place". Twelve of the chief hotels were seen, but no place for
21 bathing was there in any of them. There are independent bathing-
22 houses, where one can go and have a bath for four or five rupees.
23 Good heavens! That very afternoon I read in a paper that an old
24 lady entered into the bath-tub and died then and there! Whatever
25 the doctors may say, I am inclined to think that perhaps that was
26 the first occasion in her life to come into contact with so much
27 water, and the frame collapsed by the sudden shock! This is no
28 exaggeration. Then, the Russians and some others are awfully
29 unclean in that line. Starting from Tibet, it is about the same all
30 over those regions. In every boarding house in America, of course,
31 there is a bath-room, and an arrangement of pipe-water.

32 See, however, the difference here. Why do we Hindus bathe?
33 Because of the fear of incurring sin. The Westerners wash their
34 hands and face for cleanliness' sake. Bathing with us means
35 pouring water over the body, though the oil and the dirt may stick
36 on and show themselves. Again, our Southern Indian brothers
37 decorate themselves with such long and wide caste-marks that it
38 requires, perchance the use of a pumice-stone to rub them off. Our
39 bath, on the other hand, is an easy matter--to have a plunge in,
40 anywhere; but not so, in the West. There they have to put off a load
41 of clothes, and how many buttons and hooks and eyes are there! We
42 do not feel any delicacy to show our body; to them it is awful, but
43 among men, say, between father and son, there is no impropriety;
44 only before women you have to cover yourself cap-a-pie.

45 This custom of external cleanliness, like all other customs,
46 somethings turns out to be, in the long run, rather a tyranny or the
47 very reverse of Achara (cleanliness). The European says that all
48 bodily matters have to be attended to in private. Well and good. "It
49 is vulgar to spit before other people. To rinse your mouth before
50 others is disgraceful." So, for fear of censure, they do not wash
51 their mouth after meals, and the result is that the teeth gradually
52 decay. Here is non-observance of cleanliness for fear of society or

1 civilisation. With us, it is the other extreme--to rinse and wash the
2 mouth before all men, or sitting in the street, making a noise as if
3 you were sick--this is rather tyranny. Those things should, no doubt,
4 be done privately and silently, but not to do them for fear of society
5 is also equally wrong.

6 Again, society patiently bears and accommodates itself to
7 those customs which are unavoidable in particular climates. In a
8 warm country like ours, we drink glass after glass of water; now,
9 how can we help eructating; but in the West, that habit is very
10 ungentlemanly. But there, if you blow the nose and use your pocket
11 handkerchief at the time of eating--that is not objectionable, but
12 with us, it is disgusting. In a cold country like theirs, one cannot
13 avoid doing it now and then.

14 We Hindus hold dirt in abomination very much, but, all the
15 same, we are, in point of fact, frequently dirty ourselves. Dirt is so
16 repugnant to us that if we touch it we bathe; and so to keep
17 ourselves away from it, we leave a heap of it to rot near the house--
18 the only thing to be careful about is not to touch it; but, on the other
19 hand, do we ever think that we are living virtually in hell? To avoid
20 one uncleanliness, we court another and a greater uncleanliness; to
21 escape from one evil, we follow on the heels of another and a
22 greater evil. He who keeps dirt heaped in his house is a sinner, no
23 doubt about that. And for his retribution he has not to wait for the
24 next life; it recoils on his head betimes--in this very life.

25 The grace of both Lakshmi (goddess of fortune) and Sarasvati
26 (goddess of learning) now shines on the peoples of the Western
27 countries. They do not stop at the mere acquisition of the objects of
28 enjoyment, but in all their actions they seek for a sort of beauty and
29 grace. In eating and drinking, in their homes and surroundings, in
30 everything, they want to see an all-round elegance. We also had
31 that trait once--when there was wealth and prosperity in the land.
32 We have now too much poverty, but, to make matters worse, we are
33 courting our ruin in two ways--namely, we are throwing away what
34 we have as our own, and labouring in vain to make others' ideals
35 and habits ours. Those national virtues that we had are gradually
36 disappearing, and we are not acquiring any of the Western ones
37 either? In sitting, walking, talking, etc., there was in the olden days
38 a traditional, specific trait of our own; that is now gone, and withal
39 we have not the ability to take in the Western modes of etiquette.
40 Those ancient religious rites, practices, studies, etc., that were left
41 to us, you are consigning to the tide-waters to be swept away--and
42 yet something new and suitable to the exigencies of the time, to
43 make up for them, is not striking its roots and becoming stable with
44 us. In oscillating between these two lines, all our present distress
45 lies. The Bengal that is to be has not as yet got a stable footing. It is
46 our arts that have fared the worst of all. In the days gone by, our old
47 women used to paint the floors, doors, and walls of their houses
48 with a paste of rice-powder, drawing various beautiful figures; they
49 used to cut plantain leaves in an artistic manner, to serve the food
50 on; they used to lavish their art in nicely arranging the different
51 comestibles on the plates. Those arts, in these days, have gradually
52 disappeared or are doing so.

1 Of course new things have to be learnt, have to be introduced
2 and worked out; but is that to be done by sweeping away all that is
3 old, just because it is old? What new things have you learnt? Not
4 any--save and except a jumble of words! What really useful science
5 or art have you acquired? Go, and see, even now in the distant
6 villages, the old woodwork and brickwork. The carpenters of your
7 towns cannot even turn out a decent pair of doors. Whether they
8 are made for a hut or a mansion is hard to make out! They are only
9 good at buying foreign tools, as if that is all of carpentry! Alas! That
10 state of things has come upon all matters in our country. What we
11 possessed as our own is all passing away, and yet, all that we have
12 learnt from foreigners is the art of speechifying. Merely reading
13 and talking! The Bengalis, and the Irish in Europe, are races cast in
14 the same mould--only talking and talking, and bandying words.
15 These two nations are adepts in making grandiloquent speeches.
16 They are nowhere, when a jot of real practical work is required--
17 over and above that, they are barking at each other and fighting
18 among themselves all the days of their life!

19 In the West, they have a habit of keeping everything about
20 themselves neat and clean, and even the poorest have an eye
21 towards it. And this regard for cleanliness has to be observed; for,
22 unless the people have clean suits of clothes, none will employ them
23 in their service. Their servants, maids, cooks, etc., are all dressed in
24 spotlessly clean clothes. Their houses are kept trim and tidy by
25 being daily brushed, washed, and dusted. A part of good breeding
26 consists in not throwing things about, but keeping them in their
27 proper places. Their kitchens look clean and bright--vegetable
28 peelings and such other refuse are placed, for the time being, in a
29 separate receptacle, and taken, later on, by a scavenger to a
30 distance and thrown away in a proper place set apart for the
31 purpose. They do not throw such things about in their yards or on
32 the roads.

33 The houses and other buildings of those who are wealthy are
34 really a sight worth seeing--these are, night and day, a marvel of
35 orderliness and cleanliness! Over and above that, they are in the
36 habit of collecting art treasures from various countries, and
37 adorning their rooms with them. As regards ourselves, we need not,
38 of course, at any rate for the present, go in for collecting works of
39 art as they do; but should we, or should we not, at least preserve
40 those which we possess from going to ruin? It will take up a long
41 time yet to become as good and efficient as they are in the arts of
42 painting and sculpture. We were never very skillful in those two
43 departments of art. By imitating the Europeans we at the utmost
44 can only produce one or two Ravi Varmas among us! But far better
45 than such artists are our Patuas (painters) who do the Chalchitras¹⁰⁵
46 of our goddesses, in Bengal. They display in their work at least a
47 boldness in the brilliancy of their colours. The paintings of Ravi
48 Varma and others make one hide one's face from shame! Far better
49 are those gilded pictures of Jaipur and the Chalchitra of the

1 ¹⁰⁵ ?Arch-shaped frames over the images of deities, with Pauranika
2 pictures.
3

goddess Durga that we have had from old times. I shall reserve my reflections on the European arts of sculpture and painting for some future occasion. That is too vast a subject to enter upon here.

III. FOOD AND COOKING

Now hear something about the Western art of cooking. There is greater purity observed in our cooking than in any other country; on the other hand, we have not that perfect regularity, method, and cleanliness of the English table. Every day our cook first bathes and changes his clothes before entering the kitchen; he neatly cleanses all the utensils and the hearth with water and earth, and if he chances to touch his face, nose, or any part of his body, he washes his hands before he touches again any food. The Western cook scarcely bathes; moreover, he tastes with a spoon the cooking he is engaged in, and does not think much of redipping the spoon into the pot. Taking out his handkerchief he blows his nose vigorously, and again with the same hand he, perchance, kneads the dough. He never thinks of washing his hands when he comes from outside, and begins his cooking at once. But all the same, he has snow-white clothes and cap. Maybe, he is dancing on the dough--why, because he may knead it thoroughly well with the whole pressure of his body, no matter if the sweat of his brow get mixed with it! (Fortunately nowadays, machines are widely in use for the task.) After all this sacrilege, when the bread is finished, it is placed on a porcelain dish covered with a snow-white napkin and is carried by the servant dressed in a spotless suit of clothes with white gloves on; then it is laid on the table spread over with a clean tablecloth. Mark here, the gloves--lest the man touches anything with his bare fingers!

Observe ours on the other hand. Our Brahmin cook has first purified himself with a bath, and then cooked the dinner in thoroughly cleansed utensils, but he serves it to you on a plate on the bare floor which has been pasted over with earth and cow-dung; and his cloth, albeit daily washed, is so dirty that it looks as if it were never washed. And if the plantain-leaf, which sometimes serves the purpose of a plate, is torn, there is a good chance of the soup getting mixed up with the moist floor and cow-dung paste and giving rise to a wonderful taste!

After taking a nice bath we put on a dirty-looking cloth, almost sticky with oil; and in the West, they put on a perfectly clean suit on a dirty body, without having had a proper bath. Now, this is to be understood thoroughly--for here is the point of essential difference between the Orient and the Occident. That inward vision of the Hindu and the outward vision of the West, are manifest in all their respective manners and customs. The Hindu always looks inside, and the Westerner outside. The Hindu keeps diamonds wrapped in a rag, as it were; and the Westerner preserves a lump of earth in a golden casket! The Hindu bathes to keep his body clean, he does not care how dirty his cloth may be; the Westerner takes care to wear clean clothes--what matters it if dirt remains on

1 his body! The Hindu keeps neat and clean the rooms, doors, floors,
2 and everything inside his house; what matters it if a heap of dirt
3 and refuse lies outside his entrance door! The Westerner looks to
4 covering his floors with bright and beautiful carpets, the dirt and
5 dust under them is all right if concealed from view! The Hindu lets
6 his drains run open over the road, the bad smell does not count
7 much! The drains in the West are underground--the hotbed of
8 typhoid fever! The Hindu cleanses the inside, the Westerner
9 cleanses the outside.

10 What is wanted is a clean body with clean clothes. Rinsing
11 the mouth, cleansing the teeth and all that must be done--but in
12 private. The dwelling-houses must be kept clean, as well as the
13 streets and thoroughfares and all outlying places. The cook must
14 keep his clothes clean as well as his body. Moreover, the meals must
15 be partaken of in spotless cups and plates, sitting in a neat and tidy
16 place. Achara or observance of the established rules of conduct in
17 life is the first step to religion, and of that again, cleanliness of body
18 and mind, cleanliness in everything, is the most important factor.
19 Will one devoid of Achara ever attain to religion? Don't you see
20 before your very eyes the miseries of those who are devoid of
21 Achara? Should we not, thus paying dearly for it, learn the lesson?
22 Cholera, malaria, and plague have made their permanent home in
23 India, and are carrying away their victims by millions. Whose fault
24 is it? Ours, to be sure. We are sadly devoid of Achara!

25 All our different sects of Hinduism admit the truth of the
26 celebrated saying of the Shruti,¹⁰⁶ "{Sanskrit}--When the food is
27 pure, then the inner-sense, memory (of the soul's perfection)
28 becomes steady." Only, according to Shankaracharya, the word
29 Ahara means the sense-perceptions, and Ramanuja takes the word
30 to mean food. But what is the solution? All sects agree that both are
31 necessary, and both ought to be taken into account. Without pure
32 food, how can the Indriyas (organs) perform their respective
33 functions properly? Everyone knows by experience that impure food
34 weakens the power of receptivity of the Indriyas or makes them act
35 in opposition to the will. It is a well-known fact that indigestion
36 distorts the vision of things and makes one thing appear as another,
37 and that want of food makes the eyesight and other powers of the
38 senses dim and weak. Similarly, it is often seen that some particular
39 kind of food brings on some particular state of the body and the
40 mind. This principle is at the root of those many rules which are so
41 strictly enjoined in Hindu society--that we should take this sort and
42 avoid that sort of food--though in many cases, forgetting their
43 essential substance, the kernel, we are now busy only with
44 quarrelling about the shell and keeping watch and ward over it.

45 Ramanujacharya asks us to avoid three sorts of defects
46 which, according to him, make food impure. The first defect is that
47 of the Jati, i.e. the very nature or the species to which the food
48 belongs, as onion, garlic, and so on. These have an exciting
49 tendency and, when taken, produce restlessness of the mind, or in
50 other words, perturb the intellect. The next is that of Ashraya, i.e.

¹⁰⁶ ?Chhandogya Upanishad, VII. xxvi. 2.

1 the nature of the person from whom the food comes. The food
2 coming from a wicked person will make one impure and think
3 wicked thoughts, while the food coming from a good man will
4 elevate one's thoughts. Then the other is Nimitta-dosha, i.e.
5 impurity in food due to such agents in it as dirt and dust, worms or
6 hair; taking such food also makes the mind impure. Of these three
7 defects, anyone can eschew the Jati and the Nimitta, but it is not
8 easy for all to avoid the Ashraya. It is only to avoid this Ashraya-
9 dosha, that we have so much of "Don't-touchism" amongst us
10 nowadays. "Don't touch me!" "Don't touch me!"

11 But in most cases, the cart is put before the horse; and the
12 real meaning of the principle being misunderstood, it becomes in
13 time a queer and hideous superstition. In these cases, the Acharas
14 of the great Acharyas, the teachers of mankind, should be followed
15 instead of the Lokacharas, i.e. the customs followed by the people
16 in general. One ought to read the lives of such great Masters as
17 Shri Chaitanya Deva and other similarly great religious teachers
18 and see how they behaved themselves with their fellow-men in this
19 respect. As regards the Jati-dosha in food, no other country in the
20 world furnishes a better field for its observation than India. The
21 Indians, of all nations, take the purest of foods and, all over the
22 world, there is no other country where the purity as regards the Jati
23 is so well observed as in India. We had better attend to the Nimitta-
24 dosha a little more now in India, as it is becoming a source of
25 serious evil with us. It has become too common with us to buy food
26 from the sweets-vendor's shop in the bazaar, and you can judge for
27 yourselves how impure these confections are from the point of view
28 of the Nimitta-dosha; for, being kept exposed, the dirt and dust of
29 the roads as well as dead insects adhere to them, and how stale and
30 polluted they must sometimes be. All this dyspepsia that you notice
31 in every home and the prevalence of diabetes from which the
32 townspeople suffer so much nowadays are due to the taking of
33 impure food from the bazaars; and that the village-people are not as
34 a rule so subject to these complaints is principally due to the fact
35 that they have not these bazaars near them, where they can buy at
36 their will such poisonous food as Loochi, Kachoori, etc. I shall dwell
37 on this in detail later on.

38 This is, in short, the old general rule about food. But there
39 were, and still are, many differences of opinion about it. Again, as in
40 the old, so in the present day, there is a great controversy whether
41 it is good or bad to take animal food or live only on a vegetable diet,
42 whether we are benefited or otherwise by taking meat. Besides, the
43 question whether it is right or wrong to kill animals has always
44 been a matter of great dispute. One party says that to take away
45 life is a sin, and on no account should it be done. The other party
46 replies: "A fig for your opinion! It is simply impossible to live
47 without killing." The Shastras also differ, and rather confuse one, on
48 this point. In one place the Shashtra dictates, "Kill animals in
49 Yajnas", and again, in another place it says, "Never take away life".
50 The Hindus hold that it is a sin to kill animals except in sacrifices,
51 but one can with impunity enjoy the pleasure of eating meat after
52 the animal is sacrificed in a Yajna. Indeed, there are certain rules

prescribed for the householder in which he is required to kill animals on certain occasions, such as Shraddha and so on; and if he omits to kill animals at those times, he is condemned as a sinner. Manu says that if those that are invited to Shraddha and certain other ceremonies do not partake of the animal food offered there, they take birth in an animal body in their next.

On the other hand, the Jains, the Buddhists, and the Vaishnavas protest, saying, "We do not believe in the dictates of such Hindu Shastras; on no account should the taking away of life be tolerated." Asoka, the Buddhist emperor, we read, punished those who would perform Yajnas or offer meat to the invited at any ceremony. The position in which the modern Vaishnavas find themselves is rather one of difficulty. Instances are found in the Ramayana¹⁰⁷ and the Mahabharata¹⁰⁸ of the drinking of wine and the taking of meat by Rama and Krishna, whom they worship as God. Sita Devi vows meat, rice, and a thousand jars of wine to the river-goddess, Ganga!¹⁰⁹

In the West, the contention is whether animal food is injurious to health or not, whether it is more strengthening than vegetable diet or not, and so on. One party says that those that take animal food suffer from all sorts of bodily complaints. The other contradicts this and says, "That is all fiction. If that were true, then the Hindus would have been the healthiest race, and the powerful nations, such as the English, the Americans, and others, whose principal food is meat, would have succumbed to all sorts of maladies and ceased to exist by this time." One says that the flesh of the goat makes the intellect like that of the goat, the flesh of the swine like that of the swine, and fish like that of the fish. The other declares that it can as well be argued then that the potato makes a potato-like brain, the vegetables make a vegetable-like brain--resembling dull and dead matter. Is it not better to have the intelligence of a living animal than to have the brain dull and inert like dead matter? One party says that those things which are in the chemical composition of animal food are also equally present in the vegetables. The other ridicules it and exclaims. "Why, they are in the air too. Go then and live on air only". One argues that the vegetarians are very painstaking and can go through hard and long-sustained labour. The other says, "If that were true, then the

¹⁰⁷ ?{Sanskrit}--"Embracing Sita with both his arms, Kakutstha (Rama) made her drink pure Mairaya wine, even as Indra makes Shachi partake of nectar. Servants quickly served flesh-meat variously dressed, and fruits of various kinds for the use of Rama."

¹⁰⁸ ?{Sanskrit}--"(I saw) both of them (Krishna and Arjuna) drunk with Madhvasava (sweet spirituous liquor made from honey), both adorned with sandal paste, garlanded, and wearing costly garments and beautiful ornaments." (Udyoga, LVIII. 5).

¹⁰⁹ ?{Sanskrit}--"Be merciful to us, O goddess, and I shall, on my return home, worship thee with a thousand jars of arrack (spirituous liquor) and rice well-dressed with flesh-meat" (Ramayana).

1 vegetarian nations would occupy the foremost rank, which is not
2 the case, the strongest and foremost nations being always those
3 that take animal food." Those who advocate animal food contend:
4 "Look at the Hindus and the Chinamen, how poor they are. They do
5 not take meat, but live somehow on the scanty diet of rice and all
6 sorts of vegetables. Look at their miserable condition. And the
7 Japanese were also in the same plight, but since they commenced
8 taking meat, they have turned over a new leaf. In the Indian
9 regiments there are about a lac and a half of native sepoys; see how
10 many of them are vegetarians. The best parts of them, such as the
11 Sikhs and the Goorkhas, are never vegetarians." One party says,
12 "Indigestion is due to animal food." The other says, "That is all stuff
13 and nonsense. It is mostly the vegetarians who suffer from stomach
14 complaints." Again, "It may be the vegetable food acts as an
15 effective purgative to the system. But is that any reason that you
16 should induce the whole world to take to it?"

17 Whatever one or the other may say, the real fact, however, is
18 that the nations who take animal food are always, as a rule, notably
19 brave, heroic, and thoughtful. The nations who take animal food
20 also assert that in those days when the smoke from Yajnas used to
21 rise in the Indian sky and the Hindus used to take the meat of
22 animals sacrificed, then only great religious geniuses and
23 intellectual giants were born among them; but since the drifting of
24 the Hindus into the Babaji's vegetarianism, not one great, original
25 man arose from amidst them. Taking this view into account, the
26 meat-eaters in our country are afraid to give up their habitual diet.
27 The Arya Samajists are divided amongst themselves on this point,
28 and a controversy is raging within their fold--one party holding that
29 animal food is absolutely necessary, and the opposite party
30 denouncing it as extremely wrong and unjust.

31 In this way, discussions of a conflicting character, giving rise
32 to mutual abuses, quarrels, and fights, are going on. After carefully
33 scrutinising all sides of the question and setting aside all fanaticism
34 that is rampant on this delicate question of food, I must say that my
35 conviction tends to confirm this view--that the Hindus are, after all
36 right; I mean that injunction of the Hindu Shastras which lays down
37 the rule that food, like many other things, must be different
38 according to the difference of birth and profession; this is the sound
39 conclusion. But the Hindus of the present day will neither follow
40 their Shastras nor listen to what their great Acharyas taught.

41 To eat meat is surely barbarous and vegetable food is
42 certainly purer--who can deny that? For him surely is a strict
43 vegetarian diet whose one end is to lead solely a spiritual life. But
44 he who has to steer the boat of his life with strenuous labour
45 through the constant life-and-death struggles and the competition
46 of this world must of necessity take meat. So long as there will be in
47 human society such a thing as the triumph of the strong over the
48 weak, animal food is required, or some other suitable substitute for
49 it has to be discovered; otherwise, the weak will naturally be
50 crushed under the feet of the strong. It will not do to quote solitary
51 instances of the good effect of vegetable food on some particular
52 person or persons: compare one nation with another and then draw

1 conclusions.

2 The vegetarians, again, are also divided amongst themselves.
3 Some say that rice, potatoes, wheat, barley, maize, and other
4 starchy foods are of no use; these have been produced by man, and
5 are the source of all maladies. Starchy food which generates sugar
6 in the system is most injurious to health. Even horses and cows
7 become sickly and diseased if kept within doors and fed on wheat
8 and rice; but they get well again if allowed to graze freely on the
9 tender and growing herbage in the meadows. There is very little
10 starchy substance in grass and other green edible herbs. The
11 orang-outang eats grass and nuts and does not usually eat potato
12 and wheat, but if he ever does so, he eats them before they are
13 ripe, i.e. when there is not much starch in them. Others say that
14 taking roast meat and plenty of fruit and milk is best suited to the
15 attainment of longevity. More especially, they who take much fruit
16 regularly, do not so soon lose their youth, as the acid of fruit
17 dissolves the foul crust formed on the bones which is mainly the
18 cause of bringing on old age.

19 All these contentions have no end; they are going on
20 unceasingly. Now the judicious view admitted by all in regard to
21 this vexed question is, to take such food as is substantial and
22 nutritious and at the same time, easily digested. The food should be
23 such as contains the greatest nutriment in the smallest compass,
24 and be at the same time quickly assimilable; otherwise, it has
25 necessarily to be taken in large quantity, and consequently the
26 whole day is required only to digest it. If all the energy is spend
27 only in digesting food, what will there be left to do other works?

28 All fried things are really poisonous. The sweets-vendor's
29 shop is Death's door. In hot countries, the less oil and clarified
30 butter (ghee) taken the better. Butter is more easily digested than
31 ghee. There is very little substance in snow-white flour; whole-
32 wheat flour is good as food. For Bengal, the style and preparation of
33 food that are still in vogue in our distant villages are commendable.
34 What ancient Bengali poet do you find singing the praise of Loochi
35 and Kachoori? These Loochis and Kachooris have been introduced
36 into Bengal from the North-Western Provinces; but even there,
37 people take them only occasionally. I have never seen even there
38 anyone who lives mainly on things fried in ghee, day after day. The
39 Chaube wrestlers of Mathura are, no doubt, fond of Loochis and
40 sweetmeats; but in a few years Chaubeji's power of digestion is
41 ruined, and he has to drug himself with appetising preparations
42 called Churans.

43 The poor die of starvation because they can get nothing to
44 eat, and the rich die of starvation because what they take is not
45 food. Any and every stuff eaten is not food; that is real food which,
46 when eaten, is well assimilated. It is better to fast rather than stuff
47 oneself with anything and everything. In the delicacies of the
48 sweetmeat shops there is hardly anything nourishing; on the other
49 hand, there is--poison! Of old, people used to take those injurious
50 things only occasionally; but now, the townspeople, especially those
51 who come from villages to live in towns, are the greatest sinners in
52 this respect, as they take them every day. What wonder is there that

1 they die prematurely of dyspepsia! If you are hungry, throw away
2 all sweets and things fried in ghee into the ditch, and buy a pice
3 worth of Moorhi (popped rice)--that will be cheaper and more
4 nutritious food. It is sufficient food to have rice, Dal (lentils), whole-
5 wheat Chapatis (unfermented bread), fish, vegetables, and milk.
6 But Dal has to be taken as the Southern Indians take it, that is, the
7 soup of it only; the rest of the preparation give to the cattle. He may
8 take meat who can afford it, but not making it too rich with heating
9 spices, as the North-Western people do. The spices are no food at
10 all; to take them in abundance is only due to a bad habit. Dal is a
11 very substantial food but hard to digest. Pea-soup prepared of
12 tender peas is easily digested and pleasant to the taste. In Paris this
13 pea-soup is a favourite dish. First, boil the peas well, then make a
14 paste of them and mix them with water. Now strain the soup
15 through a wire-strainer, like that in which milk is strained and all
16 the outer skin will be separated. Then add some spices, such as
17 turmeric, black pepper, etc., according to taste, and broil it with a
18 little ghee in the pan--and you get a pleasant and wholesome Dal.
19 The meat-eaters can make it delicious by cooking it with the head of
20 a goat or fish.

21 That we have so many cases of diabetes in India is chiefly due
22 to indigestion; of course there are solitary instances in which
23 excessive brain work is the cause, but with the majority it is
24 indigestion. Pot-belly is the foremost sign of indigestion. Does
25 eating mean stuffing oneself? That much which one can assimilate
26 is proper food for one. Growing thin or fat is equally due to
27 indigestion. Do not give yourself up as lost because some symptoms
28 of diabetes are noticeable in you; those are nothing in our country
29 and should not be taken seriously into account. Only, pay more
30 attention to your diet so that you may avoid indigestion. Be in the
31 open air as much as possible, and take good long walks and work
32 hard. The muscles of the leg should be as hard as iron. If you are in
33 service, take leave when possible and make a pilgrimage to the
34 Badarikashrama in the Himalayas. If the journey is accomplished on
35 foot through the ascent and descent of two hundred miles in the
36 hills, you will see that this ghost of diabetes will depart from you.
37 Do not let the doctors come near you; most of them will harm you
38 more than do any good; and so far as possible, never take
39 medicines, which in most cases kill the patient sooner than the
40 illness itself. If you can, walk all the way from town to your native
41 village every year during the Puja vacation. To be rich in our
42 country has come to be synonymous with being the embodiment of
43 laziness and dependence. One who has to walk being supported by
44 another, or one who has to be fed by another, is doomed to be
45 miserable--is a veritable invalid. He who eats cautiously only the
46 finer coating of the Loochi, for fear that the whole will not agree
47 with him, is already dead in life. Is he a man or a worm who cannot
48 walk twenty miles at a stretch? Who can save one who invites
49 illness and premature death of his own will?

50 And as for fermented bread, it is also poison; do not touch it
51 at all! Flour mixed with yeast become injurious. Never take any
52 fermented thing; in this respect the prohibition in our Shastras of

1 partaking of any such article of food is a fact of great importance.
2 Any sweet thing which has turned sour is called in the Shastras
3 "Shukta", and that is prohibited to be taken, excepting curd, which
4 is good and beneficial. If you have to take bread, toast it well over
5 the fire.

6 Impure water and impure food are the cause of all maladies.
7 In America, nowadays, it has become a craze to purify the drinking
8 water. The filter has had its day and is now discredited, because it
9 only strains the water through, while all the finer germs of diseases
10 such as cholera, plague, remain intact in it; moreover, the filter
11 itself gradually becomes the hotbed of these germs. When the filter
12 was first introduced in Calcutta, for five years, it is said there was
13 no outbreak of cholera; since then it has become as bad as ever, for
14 the reason that the huge filter itself has now come to be the vehicle
15 of cholera germs. Of all kinds, the simple method that we have of
16 placing three earthen jars one over another on a three-footed
17 bamboo frame, is the best; but every second or third day the sand
18 and charcoal should be changed, or used again after heating them.
19 The method of straining water through a cloth containing a lump of
20 alum in it, that we find in vogue in the villages along the banks of
21 the Ganga in the vicinity of Calcutta, is the best of all. The particles
22 of alum taking with them all earth and impurities and the disease
23 germs, gradually settle at the bottom of the deep jar as sediment;
24 this simple system brings into disrepute pipewater and excels all
25 your foreign filters. Moreover, if the water is boiled it becomes
26 perfectly safe. Boil the water when the impurities are settled down
27 by the alum, and then drink it, and throw away filters and such
28 other things into the ditch. Now in America, the drinking water is
29 first turned into vapour by means of huge machines; then the
30 vapour is cooled down into water again, and through another
31 machine pure air is pressed into it to substitute that air which goes
32 out during the process of vaporisation. This water is very pure and
33 is used in every home.

34 In our country, he who has some means, feeds his children
35 with all sorts of sweets and ghee-fried things, because, perchance,
36 it is a shame--just think what the people will say!--to let them have
37 only rice and Chapatis! What can you expect children fed like that
38 to be but disproportionate in figure, lazy, worthless idiots, with no
39 backbone of their own? The English people, who are so strong a
40 race, who work so hard day and night, and whose native place is a
41 cold country--even they hold in dread the very name of sweetmeats
42 and food fried in butter! And we, who live in the zone of fire, as it
43 were, who do not like to move from one place to another--what do
44 we eat?--Loochis, Kachooris, sweets, and other things, all fried in
45 ghee or oil! Formerly, our village zemindars in Bengal would think
46 nothing of walking twenty or thirty miles, and would eat twice-
47 twenty Koi-fish, bones and all--and they lived to a hundred years.
48 Now their sons and grandsons come to Calcutta and put on airs,
49 wear spectacles, eat the sweets from the bazaars, hire a carriage to
50 go from one street to another, and then complain of diabetes--and
51 their life is cut short; this is the result of their being "civilised,
52 Calcutta-ised" people. And doctors and Vaidyas hasten their ruin

1 too. They are all-knowing, they think they can cure anything with
2 medicine. If there is a little flatulence, immediately some medicine
3 is prescribed. Alas, it never enters into the heads of these Vaidyas
4 to advise them to keep away from medicine, and go and have a
5 good walk of four or five miles, or so.

6 I am seeing many countries, and many ways and preparations
7 of food; but none of them approaches the admirable cooking of our
8 various dishes of Bengal, and it is not too much to say that one
9 would like to take rebirth for the sake of again enjoying their
10 excellence.

11 It is a great pity that one does not appreciate the value of
12 teeth when one has them! Why should we imitate the West as
13 regards food--and how many can afford to do so? The food which is
14 suitable in our part of the country is pure Bengali food, cheap,
15 wholesome, and nourishing, like that of the people of Eastern
16 Bengal. Imitate their food as much as you can; the more you lean
17 westwards to copy the modes of food, the worse you are, and the
18 more uncivilised you become. You are Calcutta-ites, civilised,
19 forsooth! Carried away by the charm of that destructive net which
20 is of your own creation, the bazaar sweets, Bankura has consigned
21 its popped-rice to the river Damodar, its Kalai Dal has been cast
22 into the ditch, and Dacca and Vikrampur have thrown to the dogs
23 their old dishes--or in other words, they have become "civilised"!
24 You have gone to rack and ruin, and are leading others in the same
25 path, you townspeople, and you pride yourselves on your being
26 "civilised"! And these provincial people are so foolish that they will
27 eat all the refuse of Calcutta and suffer from dyspepsia and
28 dysentery, but will not admit that it is not suiting them, and will
29 defend themselves by saying that the air of Calcutta is damp and
30 "saline"! They must by all means be townspeople in every respect!

31 So far, in brief, about the merits of food and other customs.
32 Now I shall say something in the matter of what the Westerners
33 generally eat, and how by degrees it has changed.

34 The food of the poor in all countries is some species of corn;
35 herbs, vegetables, and fish and meat fall within the category of
36 luxuries and are used in the shape of *chutney*. The crop which
37 grows in abundance and is the chief produce of a country is the
38 staple food of its poorer classes; as in Bengal, Orissa, Madras, and
39 the Malabar coast, the prime food is rice, pulse, and vegetables,
40 and sometimes, fish and meat are used for *chutney* only. The food
41 of the well-to-do class in other parts of India is Chapatis
42 (unfermented bread) of wheat, and rice, of the people in general,
43 mainly Chapatis of Bazra, Marhua, Janar, Jhingora, and other corns.

44 All over India, herbs, vegetables, pulse, fish, and meat are
45 used only to make tasteful the Roti (unfermented bread), or the
46 rice, as the case may be, and hence they are called in Sanskrit,
47 "Vyanjana", i.e. that which seasons food. In the Punjab, Rajputana,
48 and the Deccan, though the rich people and the princes take many
49 kinds of meat every day, yet with them even, the principal food is
50 Roti or rice. He who takes daily one pound of meat, surely takes
51 two pounds of Chapatis along with it.

1 Similarly in the West, the chief foods of the people in poor
2 countries, and especially of the poor class in the rich parts, are
3 bread and potatoes; meat is rarely taken, and, if taken, is
4 considered as a *chutney*. In Spain, Portugal, Italy, and in other
5 comparatively warm countries, grapes grow profusely, and the wine
6 made of grapes is very cheap. These wines are not intoxicating (i.e.
7 unless one drinks a great quantity, one will not get intoxicated) and
8 are very nutritious. The poor of those countries, therefore, use
9 grape juice as a nourishment instead of fish and meat. But in the
10 northern parts of Europe, such as Russia, Sweden, and Norway,
11 bread made of rye, potatoes, and a little dried fish form the food of
12 the poor classes.

13 The food of the wealthy classes of Europe, and of all the
14 classes of America is quite different, that is to say, their chief food
15 is fish and meat, and bread, rice, and other things are taken as
16 *chutney*. In America, bread is taken very little. When fish is served,
17 it is served by itself, or when meat is served, it is served by itself
18 and is often taken without bread or rice. Therefore the plate has to
19 be changed frequently; if there are ten sorts of food, the plate has
20 to be changed as many times. If we were to take our food in this
21 way, we should have to serve like this--suppose the Shukta (bitter
22 curry) is first brought, and, changing that plate, Dal is served on
23 another; in the same way the soup arrives; and again a little rice by
24 itself, or a few Loochis, and so on. One benefit of this way of serving
25 is that a little only of many varieties is taken, and it saves one from
26 eating too much of anything. The French take coffee, and one or
27 two slices of bread and butter in the morning, fish and meat, etc., in
28 a moderate way about midday, and the principal meal comes at
29 night. With the Italians and Spaniards, the custom is the same as
30 that of the French. The Germans eat a good deal, five or six times a
31 day, with more or less meat every time; the English, three times,
32 the breakfast being rather small, but tea or coffee between; and the
33 Americans also three times, but the meal is rather large every time,
34 with plenty of meat. In all these countries, the principal meal, is,
35 however, dinner; the rich have French cooks and have food cooked
36 after the French fashion. To begin with, a little salted fish or roe, or
37 some sort of *chutney* or vegetable--this is by way of stimulating the
38 appetite; soup follows; then, according to the present day fashion,
39 fruit; next comes fish; then a meat-curry; after which a joint of roast
40 meat, and with it some vegetables; afterwards game birds, or
41 venison, etc., then sweets, and finally, delicious ice-cream. At the
42 table of the rich, the wine is changed every time the dish changes--
43 and hock, claret, and iced champagne are served with the different
44 courses. The spoon and knife and fork are also changed each time
45 with the plate. After dinner--coffee without milk and liqueurs in very
46 tiny glasses are brought in, and smoking comes last. The greater
47 the variety of wines served with the various dishes, the greater will
48 the host be regarded as a rich and wealthy man of fashion. As much
49 money is spent over there in giving a dinner as would ruin a
50 moderately rich man of our country.

51 Sitting cross-legged on a wooden seat on the ground, with a
52 similar one to lean his back against, the Arya used to take his food

1 on a single metal plate, placed on a slightly-raised wooden stool.
2 The same custom is still in vogue in the Punjab, Rajputana,
3 Maharashtra, and Gujarat. The people of Bengal, Orissa, Telinga,
4 and Malabar, etc., do not use wooden stools to put the plates on,
5 but take their food on a plate or a plantain-leaf placed on the
6 ground. Even the Maharaja of Mysore does the same. The
7 Mussulmans sit on a large, white sheet, when taking their food. The
8 Burmese and the Japanese place their plates on the ground and sit
9 supporting themselves on their knees and feet only, and not flat on
10 their haunches like the Indians. The Chinamen sit on chairs, with
11 their dishes placed on a table, and use spoons and wooden chop-
12 sticks in taking their food. In the olden times, the Romans and
13 Greeks had a table before them and, reclining on a couch, used to
14 eat their food with their fingers. The Europeans also, sitting on
15 chairs, used to take their food with their fingers from the table; now
16 they have spoons and forks. The Chinese mode of eating is really an
17 exercise requiring skill. As our Pan (betel)-vendors make, by
18 dexterity of hand, two separate pieces of thin iron-sheets work like
19 scissors in the trimming of Pan leaves, so the Chinese manipulate
20 two sticks between two fingers and the palm of the right hand, in
21 such a way as to make them act like tongs to carry the vegetables
22 up to their mouths. Again, putting the two together, and holding a
23 bowl of rice near the mouth, they push the rice in with the help of
24 those sticks formed like a little shovel.

25 The primitive ancestors of every nation used to eat, it is said,
26 whatever they could get. When they killed a big animal, they would
27 make it last for a month and would not reject it even after it got
28 rotten. Then gradually they became civilised and learnt cultivation.
29 Formerly, they could not get their food every day by hunting and
30 would, like the wild animals, gorge themselves one day and then
31 starve four or five days in the week. Later they escaped that, for
32 they could get their food every day by cultivation; but it remained a
33 standing custom to take with food something like rotten meat or
34 other things of the old days. Primarily, rotten meat was an
35 indispensable article of food; now that or something else in its place
36 became, like the sauce, a favourite relish. The Eskimos live in the
37 snowy regions, where no kind of corn can be produced; their daily
38 food is fish and flesh. Once in a way when they lose their appetite,
39 they take just a piece of rotten flesh to recover their lost appetite.
40 Even now, Europeans do not immediately cook wild birds, game,
41 and venison, while fresh, but they keep them hanging till they begin
42 to smell a little. In Calcutta the rotten meat of a deer is sold out as
43 soon as brought to the market, and people prefer some fish when
44 slightly rotten. In some parts of Europe, the cheese which smells a
45 little is regarded as very tasty. Even the vegetarians like to have a
46 little onion and garlic; the Southern Indian Brahmin must have
47 them in his cooking. But the Hindu Shastras prohibited that too,
48 making it a sin to take onions, garlic, domestic fowl, and pork to
49 one caste (the Brahmin); they that would take them would lose their
50 caste. So the orthodox Hindus gave up onions and garlic, and
51 substituted in their place asafoetida, a thing which is more
52 strikingly offensive in smell than either of the other two! The
53 orthodox Brahmins of the Himalayas similarly took to a kind of

1 dried grass smelling just like garlic! And what harm in that? The
2 scriptures do not say anything against taking these things!

3 Every religion contains some rules regarding the taking of
4 certain foods, and the avoiding of others; only Christianity is an
5 exception. The Jains and the Bauddhas will by no means take fish or
6 meat. The Jains, again, will not even eat potatoes, radishes, or other
7 vegetable roots, which grow underground, lest in digging them up
8 worms are killed. They will not eat at night lest some insect get into
9 their mouths in the dark. The Jews do not eat fish that have no
10 scales, do not eat pork, nor the animals that are not cloven-hoofed
11 and do not ruminate. Again, if milk or any preparation of milk be
12 brought into the kitchen where fish or flesh is being cooked, the
13 Jews will throw away everything cooked there. For this reason, the
14 orthodox Jews do not eat the food cooked by other nations. Like the
15 Hindus, too, they do not take flesh which is simply slaughtered and
16 not offered to God. In Bengal and the Punjab, another name of flesh
17 that is offered to the Goddess is Mahaprasada, lit., the "great
18 offering". The Jews do not eat flesh, unless it is Mahaprasada, i.e.
19 unless it is properly offered to God. Hence, they, like the Hindus,
20 are not permitted to buy flesh at any and every shop. The
21 Mussulmans obey many rules similar to the the Jews, but do not,
22 like them, go to extremes; they do not take milk and fish or flesh at
23 the same meal, but do not consider it so much harmful if they are in
24 the same kitchen or if one touches another. There is much similarity
25 respecting food between the Hindus and the Jews. The Jews,
26 however, do not take wild boar, which the Hindus do. In the Punjab,
27 on account of the deadly animosity between the Hindus and the
28 Mussulmans, the former do what the latter will not, and the wild
29 boar has come to be one of the very essential articles of food with
30 the Hindus there. With the Rajputs, hunting the wild boar and
31 partaking of its flesh is rather an act of Dharma. The taking of the
32 flesh of even the domesticated pig prevails to a great extent in the
33 Deccan among all castes except the Brahmins. The Hindus eat the
34 wild fowl (cock or hen), but not domesticated fowls.

35 The people of India from Bengal to Nepal and in the
36 Himalayas as far as the borders of Kashmir, follow the same usages
37 regarding food. In these parts, the customs of Manu are in force to
38 a large extent even up to this day. But they obtain more especially
39 in the parts from Kumaon to Kashmir than in Bengal, Bihar,
40 Allahabad, or Nepal. For example, the Bengalis do not eat fowl or
41 fowl's eggs, but they eat duck's eggs; so do the Nepalese; but from
42 Kumaon upwards, even that is not allowed. The Kashmiris eat with
43 pleasure eggs of the wild duck, but not of the domesticated bird. Of
44 the people of India, beginning from Allahabad, excepting in the
45 Himalayas, they who take the flesh of goat take fowl as well.

46 All these rules and prohibitions with respect to food are for
47 the most part meant, no doubt, in the interests of good health; of
48 course, in each and every instance, it is difficult accurately to
49 determine which particular food is conducive to health and which is
50 not. Again, swine and fowls eat anything and everything and are
51 very unclean; so they are forbidden. No one sees what the wild
52 animals eat in the forest; so they are not disallowed. Besides, the

1 wild animals are healthier and less sickly than the domesticated
2 ones. Milk is very difficult of digestion, especially when one is
3 suffering from acidity, and cases have happened when even by
4 gulping down a glass of milk in haste, life has been jeopardised.
5 Milk should be taken as a child does from its mother's breast; if it is
6 sucked or sipped by degrees, it is easily digestible, otherwise not.
7 Being itself hard of digestion, it becomes the more so when taken
8 with flesh; so the Jews are prohibited from taking flesh and milk at
9 the same meal.

10 The foolish and ignorant mother who forces her baby to
11 swallow too much milk beats her breast in despair within a few
12 months, on seeing that there is little hope of her darling's life! The
13 modern medical authorities prescribe only a pint of milk even for an
14 adult, and that is to be taken as slowly as possible; and for babies a
15 "feeding-bottle" is the best means. Our mothers are too busy with
16 household duties, so the maid-servant puts the crying baby in her
17 lap and not unfrequently holds it down with her knee, and by means
18 of a spoon makes it gulp down as much milk as she can! And the
19 result is that generally it is afflicted with liver complaint and seldom
20 grows up--that milk proves to be its doom; only those that have
21 sufficient vitality to survive this sort of dangerous feeding attain a
22 strong and healthy manhood. And think of our old-fashioned
23 confinement rooms, of the hot fomentations given to the baby, and
24 treatments of like nature. It was indeed a wonder and must have
25 been a matter of special divine grace that the mother and the baby
26 survived these severe trials and could become strong and healthy!

27 28 **IV. CIVILISATION IN DRESS**

29 In every country the respectability of a person is determined,
30 to a certain extent, by the nature of the dress he wears. As our
31 village-folk in Bengal say in their patois, "How can a gentleman be
32 distinguished from one of low birth unless his income is known?"
33 And not only income, "Unless it is seen how one dresses oneself,
34 how can it be known if one is a gentleman?" This is the same all
35 over the world, more or less. In Bengal, no gentleman can walk in
36 the streets with only a loin-cloth on; while in other parts of India, no
37 one goes out of doors with a turban on his head. In the West, the
38 French have all along taken the lead in everything--their food and
39 their dress are imitated by others. Even now, though different parts
40 of Europe have got different modes of clothes and dress of their
41 own, yet when one earns a good deal of money and becomes a
42 "gentleman", he straightway rejects his former native dress and
43 substitutes the French mode in its place. The Dutch farmer whose
44 native dress somewhat resembles the *pajamas* of the Kabulis, the
45 Greek clothed in full skirts, the Russ dressed somewhat after the
46 Tibetan fashion--as soon as they become "genteel", they wear
47 French coats and pantaloons. Needless to speak of women--no
48 sooner do they get rich than they must by any means have their
49 dresses made in Paris. America, England, France, and Germany are
50 now the rich countries in the West, and the dress of the people of
51 these countries, one and all, is made after the French fashion,

1 which is slowly and surely making its way into every part of Europe.
2 The whole of Europe seems to be an imitation of France. However,
3 men's clothes are better made nowadays in London than Paris, so
4 men have them "London-made", and women in the Parisian style.
5 Those who are very rich have their dresses sent from those two
6 places. America enforces an exorbitant tax upon the importation of
7 foreign dresses; notwithstanding that, the American women must
8 have them from Paris and London. This, only the Americans can
9 afford to do, for America is now the chief home of Kubera, the god
10 of wealth.

11 The ancient Aryans used to put on the Dhoti and Chadar.¹¹⁰
12 The Kshatriyas used to wear trousers and long coats when fighting.
13 At other times they would use only the Dhoti and Chadar; and they
14 wore the turban. The same custom is still in vogue, except in
15 Bengal, among the people in all parts of India; they are not so
16 particular about the dress for the rest of the body, but they must
17 have a turban for the head. In former times, the same was also the
18 custom for both the man and the woman. In the sculptured figures
19 of the Buddhistic period, the men and the women are seen to wear
20 only a piece of Kaupin. Even Lord Buddha's father, though a king, is
21 seen in some sculptures, sitting on a throne, dressed in the same
22 way; so also the mother, only she has, in addition, ornaments on her
23 feet and arms; but they all have turbans! The Buddhist Emperor,
24 Dharmashoka, is seen sitting on a drum-shaped seat, with only a
25 Dhoti on, and a Chadar round his neck, looking at damsels
26 performing a dance before him; the dancing girls are very little
27 clothed, having only short pieces of loose material hanging from the
28 waist; but the glory is--that the turban is there, and it makes the
29 principal feature of their dress. The high officials of the State who
30 attended the royal court, are, however, dressed in excellent
31 trousers and Chogas, or long coats. When the King Nala was
32 disguised as a charioteer in the service of the King Rituparna, he
33 drove the chariot at such a tremendous speed that the Chadar of
34 the king Rituparna was blown away to such a distance that it could
35 not be recovered; and as he had set out to marry, or join a
36 Svayamvara, he had to do so, perchance, without a Chadar. The
37 Dhoti and the Chadar are the time-honoured dress of the Aryans.
38 Hence, at the time of the performance of any religious ceremony,
39 the rule among the Hindus even now is to put on the Dhoti and
40 Chadar only.

41 The dress of the ancient Greeks and Romans was Dhoti and
42 Chadar--one broad piece of cloth and another smaller one made in
43 the form of the toga, from which the word Choga is derived.
44 Sometimes they used also a shirt, and at the time of fighting,
45 trousers and coats. The dress of the women was a long and
46 sufficiently broad, square-shaped garment, similar to that formed
47 by sewing two sheets lengthwise, which they slipped over the head
48 and tied round, once under the breast and again round the waist.

1 ¹¹⁰ ?Dhoti is a piece of cloth about four or five yards long, worn by
2 the Indians round the loins instead of breeches, and Chadar is a
3 piece of cloth three yards long, used as a loose upper garment.
4

1 Then they fastened the upper parts which were open, over both the
2 arms by means of large pins, in much the same way as the hill-
3 tribes of the northern Himalayas still wear their blankets. There
4 was a Chadar over this long garment. This dress was very simple
5 and elegant.

6 From the very old days, only the Iranians used shaped
7 dresses. Perhaps they learnt it from the Chinese. The Chinese were
8 the primeval teachers of civilisation in dress and other things
9 pertaining to various comforts and luxuries. From time immemorial,
10 the Chinese took their meals at a table, sitting on chairs, with many
11 elaborate auxiliaries, and wore shaped dresses of many varieties--
12 coat, cap, trousers, and so on.

13 On conquering Iran, Alexander gave up the old Greek Dhoti
14 and Chadar and began using trousers. At this, his Greek soldiers
15 became so disaffected towards him that they were on the point of
16 mutiny. But Alexander was not the man to yield, and by the sheer
17 force of his authority he introduced trousers and coats as a fashion
18 in dress.

19 In a hot climate, the necessity of clothes is not so much felt. A
20 mere Kaupin is enough for the purpose of decency; other clothes
21 serve more as embellishments. In cold countries, as a matter of
22 unavoidable necessity, the people, when uncivilised, clothe
23 themselves with the skins of animals, and when they gradually
24 become civilised, they learn the use of blankets, and by degrees,
25 shaped dresses, such as pantaloons, coats, and so on. Of course it is
26 impossible in cold countries to display the beauty of ornaments,
27 which have to be worn on the bare body, for if they did so they
28 would suffer severely from cold. So the fondness for ornaments is
29 transferred to, and is satisfied by, the niceties of dress. As in India
30 the fashions in ornaments change very often, so in the West the
31 fashions in dress change every moment.

32 In cold countries, therefore, it is the rule that one should not
33 appear before others without covering oneself from head to foot. In
34 London, a gentleman or a lady cannot go out without conforming
35 himself or herself exactly to what society demands. In the West, it is
36 immodest for a woman to show her feet in society, but at a dance it
37 is not improper to expose the face, shoulders, and upper part of the
38 body to view. In our country, on the other hand, for a woman to
39 show her face is a great shame, (hence that rigorous drawing of the
40 veil), but not so the feet. Again, in Rajputana and the Himalayas
41 they cover the whole body except the waist!

42 In the West, actresses and dancing-girls are very thinly
43 covered, to attract men. Their dancing often means exposing their
44 limbs in harmonious movements accompanied by music. In our
45 country, the women of gentle birth are not so particular in covering
46 themselves thoroughly, but the dancing-girls are entirely covered.
47 In the West, women are always completely clothed in the daytime;
48 so attraction is greater in their being thinly covered. Our women
49 remain in the house most of the time, and much dressing
50 themselves is unusual; so with us, attraction is greater in their fully
51 covering themselves. In Malabar, men and women have only a piece

1 of cloth round their loins. With the Bengalis it is about the same,
2 and before men, the women scrupulously draw their veils, and
3 cover their bodies.

4 In all countries except China, I notice many queer and
5 mysterious ideas of propriety--in some matters they are carried too
6 far, in others again, what strikes one as being very incorrect is not
7 felt to be so at all.

8 The Chinese of both sexes are always fully covered from head
9 to foot. The Chinese are the disciples of Confucious, are the
10 disciples of Buddha, and their morality is quite strict and refined.
11 Obscene language, obscene books or pictures, any conduct the
12 least obscene--and the offender is punished then and there. The
13 Christian missionaries translated the Bible into the Chinese tongue.
14 Now, in the Bible there are some passages so obscene as to put to
15 shame some of the Puranas of the Hindus. Reading those
16 indecorous passages, the Chinamen were so exasperated against
17 Christianity that they made a point of never allowing the Bible to be
18 circulated in their country. Over and above that, missionary women
19 wearing evening dress and mixing freely with men invited the
20 Chinese to their parties. The simple-minded Chinese were
21 disgusted, and raised a cry, saying: Oh, horror! This religion is
22 come to us to ruin our young boys, by giving them this Bible to
23 read, and making them fall an easy prey to the charms of these half
24 clothed wily women! This is why the Chinese are so very indignant
25 with the Christians. Otherwise, the Chinese are very tolerant
26 towards other religions. I hear that the missionaries have now
27 printed an edition, leaving out the objectionable parts; but this step
28 has made the Chinese more suspicious than before.

31 V. ETIQUETTE AND MANNERS

32 Again, in the West, ideas of decency and etiquette vary in
33 accordance with the different countries. With the English and
34 Americans they are of one type, with the French of another, with
35 the Germans again different. The Russians and the Tibetans have
36 much in common; and the Turks have their own quite distinct
37 customs, and so on.

38 In Europe and America, the people are extremely particular
39 in observing privacy, much more than we are.

40 We are vegetarians, and so eat a quantity of vegetables etc.,
41 and living in a hot country we frequently drink one or two glasses of
42 water at a time. The peasant of the Upper Provinces eats two
43 pounds of powdered barley, and then sets to drawing and drinking
44 water from the well every now and again, as he feels so thirsty. In
45 summer we keep open places in our house for distributing water to
46 the thirsty, through a hollowed bamboo stem. These ways make the
47 people not so very particular about privacy; they cannot help it.
48 Compare cowsheds and horses' stables with lions' and tigers' cages.
49 Compare the dog with the goat. The food of the Westerners is
50 chiefly meat, and in cold countries they hardly drink any water.

1 Gentlemen take a little wine in small glasses. The French detest
2 water; only Americans drink it in great quantities, for their country
3 is very warm in summer. New York is even hotter than Calcutta. The
4 Germans drink a good deal of beer, but not with their meals.

5 In cold countries, men are always susceptible to catching
6 cold, so they cannot help sneezing; in warm countries people have
7 to drink much water at meals, consequently we cannot help
8 eructation. Now note the etiquette: if you do that in a Western
9 society, your sin is unpardonable; but if you bring out your pocket-
10 handkerchief and blow your nose vigorously, it will see nothing
11 objectionable in that. With us, the host will not feel satisfied, so to
12 say, unless he sees you doing the former, as that is taken as a sign
13 of a full meal; but what would you think of doing the latter when
14 having a meal in the company of others?

15 In England and America, no mention of indigestion or any
16 stomach complaints, you may be suffering from, should be made
17 before women; it is different matter, of course, if your friend is an
18 old woman, or if she is quite well known to you. They are not so
19 sensitive about these things in France. The Germans are even less
20 particular.

21 English and American men are very guarded in their
22 conversation before women; you cannot even speak of a "leg". The
23 French, like us, are very free in conversation; the Germans and the
24 Russians will use vulgar terms in the presence of anybody.

25 But conversations on being in love are freely carried on
26 between mother and son, between brothers and sisters, and
27 between them and their fathers. The father asks the daughter many
28 questions about her lover (the future bridegroom) and cuts all sorts
29 of jokes about her engagement. On such occasions, the French
30 maiden modestly hangs down her head, the English maiden is
31 bashful, and the American maiden gives him sharp replies to his
32 face. Kissing and even embrace are not so very objectionable; these
33 things can be talked of in society. But in our country, no talk, nor
34 even an indirect hint of love affairs, is permissible before superior
35 relations.

36 The Westerners are now rich people. Unless one's dress is
37 very clean and in conformity with strict etiquette, one will not be
38 considered a gentleman and cannot mix in society. A gentleman
39 must change his collar and shirt twice or thrice every day; the poor
40 people, of course, cannot do this. On the outer garment there must
41 not be stains or even a crease. However much you may suffer from
42 heat, you must go out with gloves for fear of getting your hands
43 dirty in the streets, and to shake hands with a lady with hands that
44 are not clean is very ungentleman-like. In polite society, if the act of
45 spitting or rinsing the mouth or picking the teeth be ever indulged
46 in--the offender will be marked as a Chandala, a man of low caste,
47 and shunned!

48 The Dharma of the Westerners is worship of Shakti--the
49 Creative Power regarded as the Female Principle. It is with them
50 somewhat like the Vamachari's worship of women. As the Tantrika
51 says, "On the left side the women . . . on the right, the cup full of

1 wine; in short, warm meat with ingredients. . . . The Tantrika
2 religion is very mysterious, inscrutable even to the Yogis." It is this
3 worship of Shakti that is openly and universally practised. The idea
4 of motherhood, i.e. the relation of a son to his mother, is also
5 noticed in great measure. Protestantism as a force is not very
6 significant in Europe, where the religion is, in fact, Roman Catholic.
7 In the religion, Jehovah, Jesus, and the Trinity are secondary; there,
8 the worship is for the Mother--She, the Mother, with the Child Jesus
9 in her arms. The emperor cries "Mother", the field-marshal cries
10 "Mother", the soldier with the flag in his hand cries "Mother", the
11 seaman at the helm cries "Mother", the fisherman in his rags cries
12 "Mother", the beggar in the street cries "Mother"! A million voices
13 in a million ways, from a million places--from the palace, from the
14 cottage, from the church, cry "Mother", "Mother", "Mother"!
15 Everywhere is the cry "Ave Maria"; day and night, "Ave Maria",
16 "Ave Maria"!

17 Next is the worship of the woman. This worship of Shakti is
18 not lust, but is that Shakti-Puja, that worship of the Kumari (virgin)
19 and the Sadhava (the married woman whose husband is living),
20 which is done in Varanasi, Kalighat, and other holy places. It is the
21 worship of the Shakti, not in mere thought, not in imagination, but
22 in actual, visible form. Our Shakti-worship is only in the holy places,
23 and at certain times only is it performed; but theirs is in every place
24 and always, for days, weeks, months, and years. Foremost is the
25 woman's state, foremost is her dress, her seat, her food, her wants,
26 and her comforts; the first honours in all respects are accorded to
27 her. Not to speak of the noble-born, not to speak of the young and
28 the fair, it is the worship of any and every woman, be she an
29 acquaintance or a stranger. This Shakti-worship the Moors, the
30 mixed Arab race, Mohammedan in religion, first introduced into
31 Europe when they conquered Spain and ruled her for eight
32 centuries. It was the Moors who first sowed in Europe the seeds of
33 Western civilisation and Shakti-worship. In course of time, the
34 Moors forgot this Shakti-Worship and fell from their position of
35 strength, culture and glory, to live scattered and unrecognised in an
36 unnoticed corner of Africa, and their power and civilisation passed
37 over to Europe. The Mother, leaving the Moors, smiled Her loving
38 blessings on the Christians and illumined their homes.

39 40 **VI. FRANCE--PARIS**

41 What is this Europe? Why are the black, the bronze, the
42 yellow, the red inhabitants of Asia, Africa, and America bent low at
43 the feet of the Europeans? Why are they the sole rulers in this Kali-
44 Yuga? To understand this Europe one has to understand her
45 through France, the fountain-head of everything that is highest in
46 the West. The supreme power that rules the world is Europe, and of
47 this Europe the great centre is Paris. Paris is the centre of Western
48 civilisation. Here, in Paris, matures and ripens every idea of
49 Western ethics, manners and customs, light or darkness, good or
50 evil. This Paris is like a vast ocean, in which there is many a
51 precious gem, coral, and pearl, and in which, again, there are

1 sharks and other rapacious sea-animals as well. Of Europe, the
2 central field of work, the Karma-kshetra, is France. A picturesque
3 country, neither very cold nor very warm, very fertile, weather
4 neither excessively wet nor extremely dry, sky clear, sun sweet,
5 elms and oaks in abundance, grass-lands charming, hills and rivers
6 small, springs delightful. Excepting some parts of China, no other
7 country in the world have I seen that is so beautiful as France. That
8 play of beauty in water and fascination in land, that madness in the
9 air, that ecstasy in the sky! Nature so lovely--the men so fond of
10 beauty! The rich and the poor, the young and the old, keep their
11 houses, their rooms, the streets, the fields, the gardens, the walks,
12 so artistically neat and clean--the whole country looks like a picture.
13 Such love of nature and art have I seen nowhere else, except in
14 Japan. The palatial structures, the gardens resembling Indra's
15 paradise, the groves, even the farmer's fields--everywhere and in
16 everything there is an attempt at beauty, an attempt at art,
17 remarkable and effected with success, too.

18 From ancient times, France has been the scene of conflict
19 among the Gauls, the Romans, the Franks, and other nations. After
20 the destruction of the Roman Empire, the Franks obtained absolute
21 dominion over Europe. Their King, Charlemagne, forced
22 Christianity into Europe, by the power of the sword. Europe was
23 made known in Asia by these Franks. Hence we still call the
24 Europeans Franki, Feringi, Planki or Filinga, and so on.

25 Ancient Greece, the fountain-head of Western civilisation,
26 sank into oblivion from the pinnacle of her glory, the vast empire of
27 Rome was broken into pieces by the dashing waves of the barbarian
28 invaders--the light of Europe went out; it was at this time that
29 another barbarous race rose out of obscurity in Asia--the Arabs.
30 With extraordinary rapidity, that Arab tide began to spread over the
31 different parts of the world. Powerful Persia had to kiss the ground
32 before the Arabs and adopt the Mohammedan religion, with the
33 result that the Mussulman religion took quite a new shape; the
34 religion of the Arabs and the civilisation of Persia became
35 intermingled.

36 With the sword of the Arabs, the Persian civilisation began to
37 disseminate in all directions. That Persian civilisation had been
38 borrowed from ancient Greece and India. From the East and from
39 the West, the waves of Mussulman invaders dashed violently on
40 Europe and along with them also, the light of wisdom and
41 civilisation began dispersing the darkness of blind and barbarous
42 Europe. The wisdom, learning, and arts of ancient Greece entered
43 into Italy, overpowered the barbarians, and with their quickening
44 impulse, life began to pulsate in the dead body of the world-capital
45 of Rome. The pulsation of this new life took a strong and formidable
46 shape in the city of Florence--old Italy began showing signs of new
47 life. This is called the Renaissance, the new birth. But this new
48 birth was for Italy only a rebirth; while for the rest of Europe, it was
49 the first birth. Europe was born in the sixteenth century A.D. i.e.
50 about the time when Akbar, Jehangir, Shahjahan, and other Moghul
51 Emperors firmly established their mighty empire in India.

52 Italy was an old nation. At the call of the Renaissance, she

1 woke up and gave her response, but only to turn over on her side in
2 bed, as it were, and fall fast asleep again. For various reasons, India
3 also stirred up a little at this time. For three ruling generations
4 from Akbar, learning, wisdom, and arts came to be much esteemed
5 in India. But India was also a very old nation; and for some reason
6 or other, she also did the same as Italy and slept on again.

7 In Europe, the tide of revival in Italy struck the powerful,
8 young, and new nation, the Franks. The torrent of civilisation,
9 flowing from all quarters into Florence and there uniting, assumed
10 a new form; but Italy had not the power within herself to hold that
11 stupendous mass of fresh energy. The revival would have, as in
12 India, ended there, had it not been for the good fortune of Europe
13 that the new nation of the Franks gladly took up that energy, and
14 they in the vigour of their youthful blood boldly floated their
15 national ship on the tide; and the current of that progress gradually
16 gathered in volume and strength--from one it swelled into a
17 thousand courses. The other nations of Europe greedily took the
18 water of that tide into their own countries by cutting new channels,
19 and increased its volume and speed by pouring their own lifeblood
20 into it. That tidal wave broke, in the fullness of time, on the shores
21 of India. It reached as far as the coast of Japan, and she became
22 revitalised by bathing in its water. Japan is the new nation of Asia.

23 Paris is the fountain-head of European civilisation, as
24 Gomukhi is of the Ganga. This huge metropolis is a vision of heaven
25 on earth, the city of constant rejoicing. Such luxury, such
26 enjoyments, such mirthfulness are neither in London nor in Berlin
27 nor anywhere else. True, there is wealth in London and in New
28 York, in Berlin there is learning and wisdom; but nowhere is that
29 French soil, and above all, nowhere is that genius of the French
30 man. Let there be wealth in plenty, let there be learning and
31 wisdom, let there be beauty of nature also, elsewhere--but where is
32 the MAN? This remarkable French character is the incarnation of
33 the ancient Greek, as it were, that had died to be born again--
34 always joyful, always full of enthusiasm, very light and silly, yet
35 again exceedingly grave, prompt, and resolute to do every work,
36 and again despondent at the least resistance. But that despondency
37 is only for a moment with the Frenchman, his face soon after
38 flowing again with fresh hope and trust.

39 The Paris University is the model of European universities. All
40 the Academies of Science that are in the world are imitations of the
41 French Academy. Paris is the first teacher of the founding of
42 colonial empires. The terms used in military art in all languages are
43 still mostly French. The style and diction of French writings are
44 copied in all the European languages. Of science, philosophy, and
45 art, this Paris is the mine. Everywhere, in every respect, there is
46 imitation of the French. As if the French were the townspeople, and
47 the other nations only villagers compared with them! What the
48 French initiate, the Germans, the English, and other nations
49 imitate, may be fifty or twenty-five years later, whether it be in
50 learning, or in art, or in social matters. This French civilisation
51 reached Scotland, and when the Scottish king became the king of
52 England, it awoke and roused England; it was during the reign of

1 the Stuart Dynasty of Scotland that the Royal Society and other
2 institutions were established in England.

3 Again, France is the home of liberty. From here, the city of
4 Paris, travelled with tremendous energy the power of the People,
5 and shook the very foundations of Europe. From that time the face
6 of Europe has completely changed and a new Europe has come into
7 existence. "*Liberte, Equalite, Fraternite* " is no more heard in
8 France; she is now pursuing other ideas and other purposes, while
9 the spirit of the French Revolution is still working among the other
10 nations of Europe.

11 One distinguished scientist of England told me the other day
12 that Paris was the centre of the world, and that the more a nation
13 would succeed in establishing its connections with the city of Paris,
14 the more would that nation's progress in national life be achieved.
15 Though such assertion is a partial exaggeration of fact, yet it is
16 certainly true that if anyone has to give to the world any new idea,
17 this Paris is *the* place for its dissemination. If one can gain the
18 approbation of the citizens of Paris, that voice the whole of Europe
19 is sure to echo back. The sculptor, the painter, the musician, the
20 dancer, or any artist, if he can first obtain celebrity in Paris,
21 acquires very easily the esteem and eulogy of other countries.

22 We hear only of the darker side of this Paris in our country--
23 that it is a horrible place, a hell on earth. Some of the English hold
24 this view; and the wealthy people of other countries, in whose eyes
25 no other enjoyment is possible in life except the gratification of the
26 senses, naturally see Paris as the home of immorality and
27 enjoyments.

28 But it is the same in all big cities of the West, such as London,
29 Berlin, Vienna, New York. The only difference is: in other countries
30 the means of enjoyment are commonplace and vulgar, but the very
31 dirt of civilised Paris is coated over with gold leaf. To compare the
32 refined enjoyments of Paris with the barbarity, in this respect, of
33 other cities is to compare the wild boar's wallowing in the mire with
34 the peacock's dance spreading out its feathers like a fan.

35 What nation in the world has not the longing to enjoy and live
36 a life of pleasure? Otherwise, why should those who get rich hasten
37 to Paris of all places? Why do kings and emperors, assuming other
38 names come to Paris and live incognito and feel themselves happy
39 by bathing in this whirlpool of sense-enjoyment? The longing is in
40 all countries, and no pains are spared to satisfy it; the only
41 difference is: the French have perfected it as a science, they know
42 how to enjoy, they have risen to the highest rung of the ladder of
43 enjoyment.

44 Even then, most of the vulgar dances and amusements are for
45 the foreigner; the French people are very cautious, they never
46 waste money for nothing. All those luxuries, those expensive hotels
47 and cafes, at which the cost of a dinner is enough to ruin one, are
48 for the rich foolish foreigner. The French are highly refined, profuse
49 in etiquette, polished and suave in their manners, clever in drawing
50 money from one's pocket; and when they do, they laugh in their
51 sleeve.

1 Besides, there is another thing to note. Society, as it is among
2 the Americans, Germans, and the English, is open to all nations; so
3 the foreigner can quickly see the ins and outs of it. After an
4 acquaintance of a few days, the American will invite one to live in
5 his house for a while; the Germans also do the same; and the
6 English do so after a longer acquaintance. But it is very different
7 with the French; a Frenchman will never invite one to live with his
8 family unless he is very intimately acquainted with him. But when a
9 foreigner gets such an opportunity and has occasion and time
10 enough to see and know the family, he forms quite a different
11 opinion from what he generally hears. Is it not equally foolish of
12 foreigners to venture an opinion on our national character, as they
13 do, by seeing only the low quarters of Calcutta? So with Paris. The
14 unmarried women in France are as well guarded as in our country,
15 they cannot even mix freely in society; only after marriage can they
16 do so in company with their husbands. Like us, their negotiations
17 for marriage are carried on by their parents. Being a jolly people,
18 none of their big social functions will be complete without
19 professional dancers, as with us performances of dancing-girls are
20 given on the occasions of marriage and Puja. Living in a dark foggy
21 country, the English are gloomy, make long faces and remark that
22 such dances at one's home are very improper, but at a theatre they
23 are all right. It should be noted here that their dances may appear
24 improper to our eyes, but not so with them, they being accustomed
25 to them. The girl may, at a dance, appear in a dress showing the
26 neck and shoulders, and that is not taken as improper; and the
27 English and Americans would not object to attending such dances,
28 but on going home, might not refrain from condemning the French
29 customs!

30 Again, the idea is the same everywhere regarding the
31 chastity of women, whose deviation from it is fraught with danger,
32 but in the case of men it does not matter so much. The Frenchman
33 is, no doubt, a little freer in this respect, and like the rich men of
34 other countries cares not for criticism. Generally speaking, in
35 Europe, the majority of men do not regard a little lax conduct as so
36 very bad, and in the West, the same is the case with bachelors. The
37 parents of young students consider it rather a drawback if the latter
38 fight shy of women, lest they become effeminate. The one
39 excellence which a man must have, in the West, is courage. Their
40 word "virtue" and our word "Viratva" (heroism) are one and same.
41 Look to the derivation of the word "virtue" and see what they call
42 goodness in man. For women, they hold chastity as the most
43 important virtue, no doubt. One man marrying more than one wife
44 is not so injurious to society as a woman having more than one
45 husband at the same time, for the latter leads to the gradual decay
46 of the race. Therefore, in all countries good care is taken to
47 preserve the chastity of women. Behind this attempt of every
48 society to preserve the chastity of women is seen the hand of
49 nature. The tendency of nature is to multiply the population, and
50 the chastity of women helps that tendency. Therefore, in being
51 more anxious about the purity of women than of men, every society
52 is only assisting nature in the fulfillment of her purpose.

1 The object of my speaking of these things is to impress upon
2 you the fact that the life of each nation has a moral purpose of its
3 own, and the manners and customs of a nation must be judged from
4 the standpoint of that purpose. The Westerners should be seen
5 through their eyes; to see them through our eyes, and for them to
6 see us with theirs--both these are mistakes. The purpose of our life
7 is quite the opposite of theirs. The Sanskrit name for a student,
8 Brahmacharin, is synonymous with the Sanskrit word Kamajit.¹¹¹
9 Our goal of life is Moksha; how can that be ever attained without
10 Brahmacharya or absolute continence? Hence it is imposed upon
11 our boys and youth as an indispensable condition during their
12 studentship. The purpose of life in the West is Bhoga, enjoyment;
13 hence much attention to strict Brahmacharya is not so
14 indispensably necessary with them as it is with us.

15 Now, to return to Paris. There is no city in the world that can
16 compare with modern Paris. Formerly it was quite different from
17 what it is now--it was somewhat like the Bengali quarters of
18 Varanasi, with zigzag lanes and streets, two houses joined together
19 by an arch over the lane here and there, wells by the side of walls,
20 and so on. In the last Exhibition they showed a model of old Paris,
21 but that Paris has completely disappeared by gradual changes; the
22 warfare and revolutions through which the city has passed have,
23 each time, caused ravages in one part or another, razing everything
24 to the ground, and again, new Paris has risen in its place, cleaner
25 and more extensive.

26 Modern Paris is, to a great extent, the creation of Napoleon
27 III. He completed that material transformation of the city which had
28 already been begun at the fall of the ancient monarchy. The student
29 of the history of France need not be reminded how its people were
30 oppressed by the absolute monarchs of France prior to the French
31 Revolution. Napoleon III caused himself to be proclaimed Emperor
32 by sheer force of arms, wading through blood. Since the first
33 French Revolution, the French people were always fickle and thus a
34 source of alarm to the Empire. Hence the Emperor, in order to keep
35 his subjects contented and to please the ever-unstable masses of
36 Paris by giving them work, went on continually making new and
37 magnificent public roads and embankments and building gateways,
38 theatres, and many other architectural structures, leaving the
39 monuments of old Paris as before. Not only was the city traversed
40 in all directions by new thoroughfares, straight and wide, with
41 sumptuous houses raised or restored, but a line of fortification was
42 built doubling the area of the city. Thus arose the boulevards, and
43 the fine quarters of d'Antin and other neighbourhoods; and the
44 avenue of the Champs Elysees, which is unique in the world, was
45 reconstructed. This avenue is so broad that down the middle and on
46 both sides of it run gardens all along, and in one place it has taken
47 a circular shape which comprises the city front, towards the west,
48 called Place de la Concorde. Round this Place de la Concorde are
49 statues in the form of women representing the eight chief towns of
50 France. One of these statues represents the district of Strasburg.

1 ¹¹¹ ?One who has full control over his passions.
2

1 This district was wrested from the hands of the French by the
2 Germans after the battle of 1870. The pain of this loss the French
3 have not yet been able to get over, and that statue is still covered
4 with flowers and garlands offered in memory of its dead spirit, as it
5 were. As men place garlands over the tombs of their dead relations,
6 so garlands are placed on that statue, at one time or another.

7 It seems to me that the Chandni Chauk of Delhi might have
8 been at one time somewhat like this Place de la Concorde. Here
9 and there columns of victory, triumphal arches and sculptural art in
10 the form of huge statues of men and women, lions, etc., adorn the
11 square.

1 A very big triumphal column in imitation of Trajan's Column,
2 made of gun-metal (procured by melting 1,200 guns), is erected in
3 Place Vendome in memory of the great hero, Napoleon I; on the
4 sides are engraved the victories of his reign, and on the top is the
5 figure of Napoleon Bonaparte. In the Place de la Bastille stands the
6 Column of July (in memory of the Revolution of July 1789) on the
7 side of the old fortress, "The Bastille", afterwards used as a State
8 prison. Here were imprisoned those who incurred the king's
9 displeasure. In those old days, without any trial or anything of the
10 kind, the king would issue a warrant bearing the royal seal, called
11 "*Lettre de Cachet*". Then, without any inquiry as to what good
12 action the victim had done for his country, or whether he was really
13 guilty or not, without even any question as to what he actually did
14 to incur the king's wrath, he would be at once thrown into the
15 Bastille. If the fair favourites of the kings were displeased with
16 anyone, they could obtain by request a "*Lettre de Cachet* " from the
17 king against that man, and the poor man would at once be sent to
18 the Bastille. Of the unfortunate who were imprisoned there, very
19 few ever came out. When, afterwards, the whole country rose as
20 one man in revolt against such oppression and tyranny and raised
21 the cry of "Individual liberty, All are equal, No one is high or low",
22 the people of Paris in their mad excitement attacked the king and
23 queen. The very first thing the mob did was to pull down the
24 Bastille, the symbol of extreme tyranny of man over man, and
25 passed the night in dancing, singing, and feasting on the spot. The
26 king tried to escape, but the people managed to catch him, and
27 hearing that the father-in-law of the king, the Emperor of Austria,
28 was sending soldiers to aid his son-in-law, became blind with rage
29 and killed the king and the queen. The whole French nation became
30 mad in the name of liberty and equality--France became a republic--
31 they killed all the nobility whom they could get hold of, and many of
32 the nobility gave up their titles and rank and made common cause
33 with the subject people. Not only so, they called all the nations of
34 the world to rise--"Awake, kill the kings who are all tyrants, let all
35 be free and have equal rights." Then all the kings of Europe began
36 to tremble in fear lest this fire might spread into their countries,
37 lest it might burn their thrones; and hence, determined to put it
38 down, they attacked France from all directions. On the other side,
39 the leaders of the French Republic proclaimed, "Our native land is
40 in peril, come one and all", and the proclamation soon spread like
41 the flames of a conflagration throughout the length and breadth of
42 France. The young, the old, the men, the women, the rich, the poor,
43 the high, the low, singing their martial song, *La Marseillaise*, the
44 inspiring national song of France, came out--crowds of the poor
45 French people, in rags, barefooted, in that severe cold, and half-
46 starved--came out with guns on their shoulders--*{Sanskrit}* for the
47 destruction of the wicked and the salvation of their homes--and
48 boldly faced the vast united force of Europe. The whole of Europe
49 could not stand the onrush of that French army. At the head and
50 front of the French army, stood a hero at the movement of whose
51 finger the whole world trembled. He was Napoleon. With the edge
52 of the sword and at the point of the bayonet, he thrust "Liberty,
53 Equality, and Fraternity" into the very bone and marrow of Europe--

1 and thus the victory of the tri-coloured *Cocarde* was achieved.
2 Later, Napoleon became the Emperor of France and successfully
3 accomplished the consolidation of the French Empire.

4 Subsequently, not being favoured with an heir to the throne,
5 he divorced the partner of his life in weal and woe, the guiding
6 angel of his good fortune, the Empress Josephine, and married the
7 daughter of the Emperor of Austria. But the wheel of his luck
8 turned with his desertion of Josephine, his army died in the snow
9 and ice during his expedition against Russia. Europe, getting this
10 opportunity, forced him to abdicate his throne, sent him as an exile
11 to an island, and put on the throne one of the old royal dynasty. The
12 wounded lion escaped from the island and presented himself again
13 in France; the whole of France welcomed him and rallied under his
14 banner, and the reigning king fled. But this luck was broken once
15 for all, and it never returned. Again the whole of Europe united
16 against him and defeated him at the battle of Waterloo. Napoleon
17 boarded an English man-of-war and surrendered himself; the
18 English exiled him and kept him as a lifelong prisoner in the distant
19 island of St. Helena. Again a member of the old royal family of
20 France was reinstated as king. Later on, the French people became
21 restless under the old monarchy, rose in rebellion, drove away the
22 king and his family and re-established the Republic. In the course of
23 time a nephew of the great Napoleon became a favourite with the
24 people, and by means of intrigues he proclaimed himself Emperor.
25 He was Napoleon III. For some time his reign was very powerful;
26 but being defeated in conflict with the Germans he lost his throne,
27 and France became once more a republic; and since then down to
28 the present day she has continued to be republican.

30 VII. PROGRESS OF CIVILISATION

31 The theory of evolution, which is the foundation of almost all
32 the Indian schools of thought, has now made its way into the
33 physical science of Europe. It has been held by the religions of all
34 other countries except India that the universe in its entirety is
35 composed of parts distinctly separate from each other. God, nature,
36 man--each stands by itself, isolated from one another; likewise,
37 beasts, birds, insects, trees, the earth, stones, metals, etc., are all
38 distinct from one another; God created them separate from the
39 beginning.

40 Knowledge is to find unity in the midst of diversity--to
41 establish unity among things which appear to us to be different
42 from one another. That particular relation by which man finds this
43 sameness is called Law. This is what is known as Natural Law.

44 I have said before that our education, intelligence, and
45 thought are all spiritual, all find expression in religion. In the West,
46 their manifestation is in the external--in the physical and social
47 planes. Thinkers in ancient India gradually came to understand that
48 that idea of separateness was erroneous, that there was a
49 connection among all those distinct objects--there was a unity
50 which pervaded the whole universe--trees, shrubs, animals, men,
51 Devas, even God Himself; the Advaitin reaching the climax in this

1 line of thought declared all to be but the manifestations of the One.
2 In reality, the metaphysical and the physical universe are one, and
3 the name of this One is Brahman; and the perception of
4 separateness is an error--they called it Maya, Avidya, or nescience.
5 This is the end of knowledge.

6 If this matter is not comprehended at the present day by
7 anyone outside India--for India we leave out of consideration--how
8 is one to be regarded as a Pandit? However, most of the erudite
9 men in the West are coming to understand this, in their own way--
10 through physical science. But how that One has become the many--
11 neither do we understand, nor do they. We, too, have offered the
12 solution of this question by saying that it is beyond our
13 understanding, which is limited. They, too, have done the same. But
14 the variations that the One has undergone, the different sorts of
15 species and individuality It is assuming--that can be understood,
16 and the enquiry into this is called Science.

17 So almost all are now evolutionists in the West. As small
18 animals through gradual steps change into bigger ones, and big
19 animals sometimes deteriorate and become smaller and weaker,
20 and in course of time die out--so also, man is not born into a
21 civilised state all on a sudden; in these days an assertion to the
22 contrary is no longer believed in by anybody among the thoughtful
23 in the West, especially because of the evidence that their ancestors
24 were in a savage state only a few centuries ago, and from that state
25 such a great transformation has taken place in so short a time. So
26 they say that all men must have gradually evolved, and are evolving
27 from the uncivilised state.

28 Primitive men used to manage their work with implements of
29 wood and stone; they wore skins and leaves, and lived in mountain-
30 caves or in huts thatched with leaves made somewhat after the
31 fashion of birds' nests, and thus somehow passed their days.
32 Evidence in proof of this is being obtained in all countries by
33 excavating the earth, and also in some few places, men at that same
34 primitive stage are still living. Gradually men learnt to use metal--
35 soft metals such as tin and copper--and found out how to make tools
36 and weapons by fusing them. The ancient Greeks, the Babylonians,
37 and the Egyptians did not know the use of iron for a long time--even
38 when they became comparatively civilised and wrote books and
39 used gold and silver. At that time, the Mexicans, the Peruvians, the
40 Mayas, and other races among the aborigines of the New World
41 were comparatively civilised and used to build large temples; the
42 use of gold and silver was quite common amongst them (in fact the
43 greed for their gold and silver led the Spaniards to destroy them).
44 But they managed to make all these things, toiling very hard with
45 flint implements--they did not know iron even by name.

46 In the primitive stage, man used to kill animals and fish by
47 means of bows and arrows, or by the use of a net, and live upon
48 them. Gradually, he learnt to till the ground and tend the cattle.
49 Taming wild animals, he made them work for him or reared them
50 for his own eating when necessary; the cow, horse, hog, elephant,
51 camel, goat, sheep, fowls, birds, and other animals became
52 domesticated; of all these, the dog is the first friend of man.

1 So, in the course of time, the tilling of the soil came into
2 existence. The fruits, roots, herbs, vegetables, and the various
3 cereals eaten by man are quite different now from what they were
4 when they grew in a wild state. Through human exertion and
5 cultivation wild fruits gained in size and acquired toothsome-
6 ness, and wild grass was transformed into delicious rice. Constant
7 changes are going on, no doubt, in nature, by its own processes.
8 New species of trees and plants, birds and beasts are being always
9 created in nature through changes brought about by time,
10 environment and other causes. Thus before the creation of man,
11 nature was changing the trees, plants, and other animals by slow
12 and gentle degrees, but when man came on the scene, he began to
13 effect changes with rapid strides. He continually transported the
14 native fauna and flora of one country to another, and by crossing
15 them various new species of plants and animals were brought into
16 existence.

17 In the primitive stage there was no marriage, but gradually
18 matrimonial relations sprang up. At first, the matrimonial relation
19 depended, amongst all communities, on the mother. There was not
20 much fixity about the father, the children were named after the
21 mother; all the wealth was in the hands of the women, for they
22 were to bring up the children. In the course of time, wealth, the
23 women included, passed into the hands of the male members. The
24 male said, "All this wealth and grain are mine; I have grown these
25 in the fields or got them by plunder and other means; and if anyone
26 disputes my claims and wants to have a share of them, I will fight
27 him." In the same way he said, "All these women are exclusively
28 mine; if anyone encroaches upon my right to them, I will fight him."
29 Thus there originated the modern marriage system. Women became
30 as much the property of man as his slaves and chattels. The ancient
31 marriage custom was that the males of one tribe married the
32 women of another; and even then the women were snatched away
33 by force. In course of time, this business of taking away the bride
34 by violence dropped away, and marriage was contracted with the
35 mutual consent of both parties. But every custom leaves a faint
36 trace of itself behind, and even now we find in every country a mock
37 attack is made on such occasions upon the bridegroom.

38 In Bengal and Europe, handfuls of rice are thrown at the
39 bridegroom, and in Northern India the bride's women friends abuse
40 the bridegroom's party calling them names, and so on.

41 Society began to be formed and it varied according to
42 different countries. Those who lived on the seashore mostly earned
43 their livelihood by fishing in the sea, those on the plains by
44 agriculture. The mountaineers kept large flocks of sheep, and the
45 dwellers in the desert tended goats and camels. Others lived in the
46 forest and maintained themselves by hunting. The dwellers on the
47 plain learnt agriculture; their struggle for existence became less
48 keen; they had time for thought and culture, and thus became more
49 and more civilised. But with the advance of civilisation their bodies
50 grew weaker and weaker. The difference in physique between those
51 who always lived in the open air and whose principal article of food
52 was animal diet, and others who dwelt in houses and lived mostly

1 on grains and vegetables, became greater and greater. The hunter,
2 the shepherd, the fisherman turned robbers or pirates whenever
3 food became scarce and plundered the dwellers in the plains.
4 These, in their turn, united themselves in bands of large numbers
5 for the common interest of self-preservation; and thus little
6 kingdoms began to be formed.

7 The Devas lived on grains and vegetables, were civilised,
8 dwelt in villages, towns, and gardens, and wore woven clothing.
9 The Asuras¹¹² dwelt in the hills and mountains, deserts or on the
10 seashores, lived on wild animals, and the roots and fruits of the
11 forests, and on what cereals they could get from the Devas in
12 exchange for these or for their cows and sheep, and wore the hides
13 of wild animals. The Devas were weak in body and could not endure
14 hardships; the Asuras, on the other hand, were hardy with frequent
15 fasting and were quite capable of suffering all sorts of hardships.

16 Whenever food was scarce among the Asuras, they set out
17 from their hills and seashores to plunder towns and villages. At
18 times they attacked the Devas for wealth and grains; and whenever
19 the Devas failed to unite themselves in large numbers against them,
20 they were sure to die at the hands of the Asuras. But the Devas
21 being stronger in intelligence, commenced inventing all sorts of
22 machines for warfare. The Brahmastra, Garudastra, Vaishnavastra,
23 Shaivastra--all these weapons of miraculous power belonged to the
24 Devas. The Asuras fought with ordinary weapons, but they were
25 enormously strong. They defeated the Devas repeatedly, but they
26 never cared to become civilised, or learn agriculture, or cultivate
27 their intellect. If the victorious Asuras tried to reign over the
28 vanquished Devas in Svarga, they were sure to be outwitted by the
29 Devas' superior intellect and skill, and, before long, turned into
30 their slaves. At other times, the Asuras returned to their own places
31 after plundering. The Devas, whenever they were united, forced
32 them to retire, mark you, either into the hills or forests, or to the
33 seashore. Gradually each party gained in numbers and became
34 stronger and stronger; millions of Devas were united, and so were
35 millions of Asuras. Violent conflicts and fighting went on, and along
36 with them, the intermingling of these two forces.

37 From the fusion of these different types and races our
38 modern societies, manners, and customs began to be evolved. New
39 ideas sprang up and new sciences began to be cultivated. One class
40 of men went on manufacturing articles of utility and comfort, either
41 by manual or intellectual labour. A second class took upon
42 themselves the charge of protecting them, and all proceeded to
43 exchange these things. And it so happened that a band of fellows
44 who were very clever undertook to take these things from one place
45 to another and on the plea of remuneration for this, appropriated
46 the major portion of their profit as their due. One tilled the ground,
47 a second guarded the produce from being robbed, a third took it to
48 another place, and a fourth bought it. The cultivator got almost

1 ¹¹² ?The terms "Devas" and "Asuras" are used here in the sense in
2 which they occur in the Gita (XVI), i.e. races in which the
3 Daivi(divine) or the Asuri (non-divine) traits preponderate.
4

1 nothing; he who guarded the produce took away as much of it as he
2 could by force; the merchant who brought it to the market took the
3 lion's share; and the buyer had to pay out of all proportion for the
4 things, and smarted under the burden! The protector came to be
5 known as the king; he who took the commodities from one place to
6 another was the merchant. These two did not produce anything--but
7 still snatched away the best part of things and made themselves fat
8 by virtually reaping most of the fruits of the cultivator's toil and
9 labour. The poor fellow who produced all these things had often to
10 go without his meals and cry to God for help!

11 Now, with the march of events, all these matters grew more
12 and more involved, knots upon knots multiplied, and out of this
13 tangled network has evolved our modern complex society. But the
14 marks of a bygone character persist and do not die out completely.
15 Those who in their former births tended sheep or lived by fighting
16 or the like take to habits of piracy, robbery, and similar occupations
17 in their civilised incarnation also. With no forests to hunt in, no hills
18 or mountains in the neighbourhood on which to tend the flocks--by
19 the accident of birth in a civilised society, he cannot get enough
20 opportunity for either hunting, fishing, or grazing cattle--he is
21 obliged therefore to rob or steal, impelled by his own nature; what
22 else can he do? And the worthy daughters of those far-famed
23 ladies¹¹³ of the Pauranika age, whose names we are to repeat every
24 morning --they can no longer marry more than one husband at a
25 time, even if they want to, and so they turn unchaste. In these and
26 other ways, men of different types and dispositions, civilised and
27 savage, born with the nature of the Devas and the Asuras have
28 become fused together and form modern society. And that is why
29 we see, in every society, God playing in these forms--the Sadhu
30 Narayana, the robber Narayana, and so on. Again, the character of
31 any particular society came to be determined as Daivi (divine) or
32 Asuri (non-divine) quality, in proportion as one or the other of these
33 two different types of persons preponderated within it.

34 The whole of the Asian civilisation was first evolved on the
35 plains near large rivers and on fertile soils--on the banks of the
36 Ganga, the Yangtse-Kiang, and the Euphrates. The original
37 foundation of all these civilisations is agriculture, and in all of them
38 the Daivi nature predominates. Most of the European civilisation,
39 on the other hand, originated either in hilly countries or on the
40 seacoasts--piracy and robbery form the basis of this civilisation;
41 there the Asuri nature is preponderant.

42 So far as can be inferred in modern times, Central Asia and
43 the deserts of Arabia seem to have been the home of the Asuras.
44 Issuing from their fastnesses, these shepherds and hunters, the
45 descendants of the Asuras, being united in hordes after hordes,
46 chased the civilised Devas and scattered them all over the world.

47 Of course there was a primitive race of aborigines in the
48 continent of Europe. They lived in mountain caves, and the more
49 intelligent among them erected platforms by planting sticks in the

1 ¹¹³ ?Ahalya, Tara, Mandodari, Kunti, and Draupadi.

1 comparatively shallow parts of the water and built houses thereon.
2 They used arrows, spearheads, knives, and axes, all made of flint,
3 and managed every kind of work with them.

4 Gradually the current of the Asian races began to break forth
5 upon Europe, and as its effects, some parts became comparatively
6 civilised; the language of a certain people in Russia resembles the
7 languages of Southern India.

8 But for the most part these barbarians remained as
9 barbarous as ever, till a civilised race from Asia Minor conquered
10 the adjacent parts of Europe and founded a high order of new
11 civilisation: to us they are known as Yavanas, to the Europeans as
12 Greeks.

13 Afterwards, in Italy, a barbarous tribe known as the Romans
14 conquered the civilised Etruscans, assimilated their culture and
15 learning, and established a civilisation of their own on the ruins of
16 that of the conquered race. Gradually, the Romans carried their
17 victorious arms in all directions; all the barbarous tribes in the
18 south-west of Europe came under the suzerainty of Rome; only the
19 barbarians of the forests living in the northern regions retained
20 independence. In the efflux of time, however, the Romans became
21 enervated by being slaves to wealth and luxury, and at that time
22 Asia again let loose her armies of Asuras on Europe. Driven from
23 their homes by the onslaught of these Asuras, the barbarians of
24 Northern Europe fell upon the Roman Empire, and Rome was
25 destroyed. Encountered by the force of this Asian invasion, a new
26 race sprang up through the fusion of the European barbarians with
27 the remnants of the Romans and Greeks. At that time, the Jews
28 being conquered and driven away from their homes by the Romans,
29 scattered themselves throughout Europe, and with them their new
30 religion, Christianity, also spread all over Europe. All these
31 different races and their creeds and ideas, all these different hordes
32 of Asuras, heated by the fire of constant struggle and warfare,
33 began to melt and fuse in Mahamaya's crucible; and from that
34 fusion the modern European race has sprung up.

35 Thus a barbarous, very barbarous European race came into
36 existence, with all shades of complexion from the swarthy colour of
37 the Hindus to the milk-white colour of the north, with black, brown,
38 red, or white hair, black, grey, or blue eyes, resembling the fine
39 features of face, the nose and eyes of the Hindus, or the flat faces
40 of the Chinese. For some time they continued to fight among
41 themselves; those of the north leading the life of pirates harassed
42 and killed the comparatively civilised races. In the meantime,
43 however, the two heads of the Christian Churches, the Pope (in
44 French and Italian, *Pape* ¹¹⁴) of Italy and the Patriarch of
45 Constantinople, insinuating themselves, began to exercise their
46 authority over these brutal barbarian hordes, over their kings,
47 queens, and peoples.

48 On the other side, again Mohammedanism arose in the
49 deserts of Arabia. The wild Arabs, inspired by the teachings of a

1 ¹¹⁴ ?Pronounced as *Pâp*.
2

1 great sage, bore down upon the earth with an irresistible force and
2 vigour. That torrent, carrying everything before it, entered Europe
3 from both the East and the West, and along with this tide the
4 learning and culture of India and ancient Greece were carried into
5 Europe.

6 A tribe of Asuras from Central Asia known as the Seljuk
7 Tartars, accepted Mohammedanism and conquered Asia Minor and
8 other countries of Asia. The various attempts of the Arabs to
9 conquer India proved unsuccessful. The wave of Mohammedan
10 conquest, which had swallowed the whole earth, had to fall back
11 before India. They attacked Sindh once, but could not hold it; and
12 they did not make any other attempt after that.

13 But a few centuries afterwards, when the Turks and other
14 Tartar races were converted from Buddhism to Mohammedanism--
15 at that time they conquered the Hindus, Persians, and Arabs, and
16 brought all of them alike under their subjection. Of all the
17 Mohammedan conquerors of India, none was an Arab or a Persian;
18 they were all Turks and Tartars. In Rajputana, all the Mohammedan
19 invaders were called Turks, and that is a true and historical fact.
20 The Charans of Rajputana sang "*turuganko bodhi jor* --The Turks
21 are very powerful"--and that was true. From Kutubuddin down to
22 the Mogul Emperors--all of them are Tartars. They are the same
23 race to which the Tibetans belong; only they have become
24 Mohammedans and changed their flat round faces by intermarrying
25 with the Hindus and Persians. They are the same ancient races of
26 Asuras. Even today they are reigning on the thrones of Kabul,
27 Persia, Arabia, and Constantinople, and the Gandharis (natives of
28 Kandahar) and Persians are still the slaves of the Turks. The vast
29 Empire of China, too, is lying at the feet of the Manchurian Tartars;
30 only these Manchus have not given up their religion, have not
31 become Mohammedans, they are disciples of the Grand Lama.
32 These Asuras never care for learning and cultivation of the
33 intellect; the only thing they understand is fighting. Very little of the
34 warlike spirit is possible without a mixture of that blood; and it is
35 that Tartar blood which is seen in the vigorous, martial spirit of
36 Northern Europe, especially in the Russians, who have three-
37 fourths of Tartar blood in their veins. The fight between the Devas
38 and the Asuras will continue yet for a long time to come. The Devas
39 marry the Asura girls and the Asuras snatch away Deva brides--it is
40 this that leads to the formation of powerful mongrel races.

41 The Tartars seized and occupied the throne of the Arabian
42 Caliph, took possession of Jerusalem, the great Christian place of
43 pilgrimage, and other places, would not allow pilgrims to visit the
44 holy sepulchre, and killed many Christians. The heads of the
45 Christian Churches grew mad with rage and roused their barbarian
46 disciples throughout Europe, who in their turn inflamed the kings
47 and their subjects alike. Hordes of European barbarians rushed
48 towards Asia Minor to deliver Jerusalem from the hands of the
49 infidels. A good portion of them cut one another's throats, others
50 died of disease, while the rest were killed by the Mohammedans.
51 However, the blood was up of the wild barbarians, and no sooner
52 had the Mohammedans killed them than they arrived in fresh

1 numbers--with that dogged obstinacy of a wild savage. They
2 thought nothing even of plundering their own men, and making
3 meals of Mohammedans when they found nothing better. It is well
4 known that the English king Richard had a liking for Mohammedan
5 flesh.

6 Here the result was the same, as usually happens in a war
7 between barbarians and civilised men. Jerusalem and other places
8 could not be conquered. But Europe began to be civilised. The
9 English, French, German, and other savage nations who dressed
10 themselves in hides and ate raw flesh, came in contact with Asian
11 civilisation. An order of Christian soldiers of Italy and other
12 countries, corresponding to our Nagas, began to learn philosophy;
13 and one of their sects, the Knights Templars, became confirmed
14 Advaita Vedantists, and ended by holding Christianity up to ridicule.
15 Moreover, as they had amassed enormous riches, the kings of
16 Europe, at the orders of the Pope, and under the pretext of saving
17 religion, robbed and exterminated them.

18 On the other side, a tribe of Mohammedans, called the
19 Moors, established a civilised kingdom in Spain, cultivated various
20 branches of knowledge, and founded the first university in Europe.
21 Students flocked from all parts, from Italy, France, and even from
22 far-off England. The sons of royal families came to learn manners,
23 etiquette, civilisation, and the art of war. Houses, temples, edifices,
24 and other architectural buildings began to be built after a new
25 style.

26 But the whole of Europe was gradually transformed into a
27 vast military camp--and this is even now the case.

28 When the Mohammedans conquered any kingdom, their king
29 kept a large part for himself, and the rest he distributed among his
30 generals. These men did not pay any rent but had to supply the king
31 with a certain number of soldiers in time of need. Thus the trouble
32 of keeping a standing army always ready was avoided, and a
33 powerful army was created which served only in time of war. This
34 same idea still exists to a certain extent in Rajputana, and it was
35 brought into the West by the Mohammedans. The Europeans took
36 this system from the Mohammedans. But whereas with the
37 Mohammedans there were the king and his groups of feudatory
38 chiefs and their armies, and the rest--the body of the people--were
39 ordinary subjects who were left unmolested in time of war--in
40 Europe, on the other hand, the king and his groups of feudatory
41 chiefs were on one side, and they turned all the subject people into
42 their slaves. Everyone had to live under the shelter of a military
43 feudatory chief, as his man, and then only was he allowed to live; he
44 had to be always ready to fight at any time, at the word of
45 command.

46 What is the meaning of the "Progress of Civilisation" which
47 the Europeans boast so much about? The meaning of it is the
48 successful accomplishment of the desired object by the justification
49 of wrong means, i.e. by making the end justify the means. It makes
50 acts of theft, falsehood, and hanging appear proper under certain
51 circumstances; it vindicated Stanley's whipping of the hungry

1 Mohammedan guards who accompanied him, for stealing a few
2 mouthfuls of bread; it guides and justifies the well-known European
3 ethics which says, "Get out from this place, I want to come in and
4 possess it", the truth of which is borne out by the evidence of
5 history, that wherever the Europeans have gone, there has followed
6 the extinction of the aboriginal races. In London, this "progress of
7 civilisation" regards unfaithfulness in conjugal life, and, in Paris,
8 the running away of a man, leaving his wife and children helpless
9 and committing suicide as a mistake and not a crime.

10 Now compare the first three centuries of the quick spread of
11 the civilisation of Islam with the corresponding period of
12 Christianity. Christianity, during its first three centuries, was not
13 even successful in making itself known to the world; and since the
14 day when the sword of Constantine made a place for it in his
15 kingdom, what support has Christianity ever lent to the spread of
16 civilisation, either spiritual or secular? What reward did the
17 Christian religion offer to that European Pandit who sought to prove
18 for the first time that the Earth is a revolving planet? What scientist
19 has ever been hailed with approval and enthusiasm by the Christian
20 Church? Can the literature of the Christian flock consistently meet
21 the requirements of legal jurisprudence, civil or criminal, or of arts
22 and trade policies? Even now the "Church" does not sanction the
23 diffusion of profane literature. Is it possible, still, for a man who has
24 penetrated deep into modern learning and science to be an
25 absolutely sincere Christian? In the New Testament there is no
26 covert or overt praise of any arts and sciences. But there is scarcely
27 any science or branch of art that is not sanctioned and held up for
28 encouragement, directly or indirectly, in the Koran, or in the many
29 passages of the Hadis, the traditional sayings of Mohammed. The
30 greatest thinkers of Europe--Voltaire, Darwin, Buchner,
31 Flammarion, Victor Hugo, and a host of others like them--are in the
32 present times denounced by Christianity and are victims of the
33 vituperative tongues of its orthodox community. On the other hand,
34 Islam regards such people to be believers in the existence of God,
35 but only wanting in faith in the Prophet. Let there be a searching
36 investigation into the respective merits of the two religions as
37 regards their helpfulness, or the throwing of obstacles in the path
38 of progress, and it will be seen that wherever Islam has gone, there
39 it has preserved the aboriginal inhabitants--there those races still
40 exist, their language and their nationality abide even to the present
41 day.

42 Where can Christianity show such an achievement? Where
43 are, today, the Arabs of Spain, and the aboriginal races of America?
44 What treatment are the Christians according to the European Jews?
45 With the single exception of charitable organisations no other line
46 of work in Europe is in harmony with the teachings of the Gospel.
47 Whatever heights of progress Europe has attained, every one of
48 them has been gained by its revolt against Christianity--by its rising
49 against the Gospel. If Christianity had its old paramount sway in
50 Europe today, it would have lighted the fire of the Inquisition
51 against such modern scientists as Pasteur and Koch, and burnt
52 Darwin and others of his school at the stake. In modern Europe

1 Christianity and civilisation are two different things. Civilisation has
2 now girded up her loins to destroy her old enemy, Christianity, to
3 overthrow the clergy, and to wring educational and charitable
4 institutions from their hands. But for the ignorance-ridden rustic
5 masses, Christianity would never have been able for a moment to
6 support its present despised existence, and would have been pulled
7 out by its roots; for the urban poor are, even now, enemies of the
8 Christian Church! Now compare this with Islam. In the
9 Mohammedan countries, all the ordinances are firmly established
10 upon the Islamic religion, and its own preachers are greatly
11 venerated by all the officials of the State, and teachers of other
12 religions also are respected.

13 The European civilisation may be likened to a piece of cloth,
14 of which these are the materials: its loom is a vast temperate hilly
15 country on the seashore; its cotton, a strong warlike mongrel race
16 formed by the intermixture of various races; its warp is warfare in
17 defence of one's self and one's religion. The one who wields the
18 sword is great, and the one who cannot, gives up his independence
19 and lives under the protection of some warrior's sword. Its woof is
20 commerce. The means to this civilisation is the sword; its auxiliary--
21 courage and strength; its aim--enjoyment here and hereafter.

22 And how is it with us? The Aryans are lovers of peace,
23 cultivators of the soil, and are quite happy and contented if they can
24 only rear their families undisturbed. In such a life they have ample
25 leisure, and therefore greater opportunity of being thoughtful and
26 civilised. Our King Janaka tilled the soil with his own hands, and he
27 was also the greatest of the knowers of Truth, of his time. With us,
28 Rishis, Munis, and Yogis have been born from the very beginning;
29 they have known from the first that the world is a chimera. Plunder
30 and fight as you may, the enjoyment that you are seeking is only in
31 peace; and peace, in the renunciation of physical pleasures.
32 Enjoyment lies not in physical development, but in the culture of
33 the mind and the intellect.

34 It was the knowers who reclaimed the jungles for cultivation.
35 Then, over that cleared plot of land was built the Vedic altar; in that
36 pure sky of Bharata, up rose the sacred smoke of Yajnas; in that air
37 breathing peace, the Vedic Mantras echoed and re-echoed--and
38 cattle and other beasts grazed without any fear of danger. The
39 place of the sword was assigned at the feet of learning and
40 Dharma. Its only work was to protect Dharma and save the lives of
41 men and cattle. The hero was the protector of the weak in danger--
42 the Kshatriya. Ruling over the plough and the sword was Dharma,
43 the protector of all. He is the King of kings; he is ever-awake even
44 while the world sleeps. Everyone was free under the protection of
45 Dharma.

46 And what your European Pundits say about the Aryan's
47 swooping down from some foreign land, snatching away the lands
48 of the aborigines and settling in India by exterminating them, is all
49 pure nonsense, foolish talk! Strange, that our Indian scholars, too,
50 say amen to them; and all these monstrous lies are being taught to
51 our boys! This is very bad indeed.

1 I am an ignoramus myself; I do not pretend to any
2 scholarship; but with the little that I understand, I strongly
3 protested against these ideas at the Paris Congress. I have been
4 talking with the Indian and European savants on the subject, and
5 hope to raise many objections to this theory in detail, when time
6 permits. And this I say to you--to our Pundits--also, "You are learned
7 men, hunt up your old books and scriptures, please, and draw your
8 own conclusions."

9 Whenever the Europeans find an opportunity, they
10 exterminate the aborigines and settle down in ease and comfort on
11 their lands; and therefore they think the Aryans must have done the
12 same! The Westerners would be considered wretched vagabonds if
13 they lived in their native homes depending wholly on their own
14 internal resources, and so they have to run wildly about the world
15 seeking how they can feed upon the fat of the land of others by
16 spoliation and slaughter; and therefore they conclude the Aryans
17 must have done the same! But where is your proof? Guess-work?
18 Then keep your fanciful guesses to yourselves!

19 In what Veda, in what Sukta, do you find that the Aryans
20 came into India from a foreign country? Where do you get the idea
21 that they slaughtered the wild aborigines? What do you gain by
22 talking such nonsense? Vain has been your study of the Ramayana;
23 why manufacture a big fine story out of it?

24 Well, what is the Ramayana? The conquest of the savage
25 aborigines of Southern India by the Aryans! Indeed! Ramachandra
26 is a civilised Aryan king, and with whom is he fighting? With King
27 Ravana of Lanka. Just read the Ramayana, and you will find that
28 Ravana was rather more and not less civilised than Ramachandra.
29 The civilisation of Lanka was rather higher, and surely not lower,
30 than that of Ayodhya. And then, when were these Vanaras
31 (monkeys) and other Southern Indians conquered? They were all,
32 on the other hand, Ramachandra's friends and allies. Say which
33 kingdoms of Vali and Guhaka were annexed by Ramachandra?

34 It was quite possible, however, that in a few places there
35 were occasional fights between the Aryans and the aborigines;
36 quite possible, that one or two cunning Munis pretended to
37 meditate with closed eyes before their sacrificial fires in the jungles
38 of the Rakshasas, waiting, however, all the time to see when the
39 Rakshasas would throw stones and pieces of bone at them. No
40 sooner had this been done than they would go whining to the kings.
41 The mail-clad kings armed with swords and weapons of steel would
42 come on fiery steeds. But how long could the aborigines fight with
43 their sticks and stones? So they were killed or chased away, and the
44 kings returned to their capital. Well, all this may have been, but
45 how does this prove that their lands were taken away by the
46 Aryans? Where in the Ramayana do you find that?

47 The loom of the fabric of Aryan civilisation is a vast, warm,
48 level country, interspersed with broad, navigable rivers. The cotton
49 of this cloth is composed of highly civilised, semi-civilised, and
50 barbarian tribes, mostly Aryan. Its warp is Varnashramachara,¹¹⁵

1 ¹¹⁵ ?The old Aryan institution of the four castes and stages of life.

1 and its woof, the conquest of strife and competition in nature.

2 And may I ask you, Europeans, what country you have ever
3 raised to better conditions? Wherever you have found weaker
4 races, you have exterminated them by the roots, as it were. You
5 have settled on their lands, and they are gone for ever. What is the
6 history of your America, your Australia, and New Zealand, your
7 Pacific Islands and South Africa? Where are those aboriginal races
8 there today? They are all exterminated, you have killed them
9 outright, as if they were wild beasts. It is only where you have not
10 the power to do so, and there only, that other nations are still alive.

11 But India has never done that. The Aryans were kind and
12 generous; and in their hearts which were large and unbounded as
13 the ocean, and in their brains, gifted with superhuman genius, all
14 these ephemeral and apparently pleasant but virtually beastly
15 processes never found a place. And I ask you, fools of my own
16 country, would there have been this institution of Varnashrama if
17 the Aryans had exterminated the aborigines in order to settle on
18 their lands?

19 The object of the peoples of Europe is to exterminate all in
20 order to live themselves. The aim of the Aryans is to raise all up to
21 their own level, nay, even to a higher level than themselves. The
22 means of European civilisation is the sword; of the Aryans, the
23 division into different Varnas. This system of division into different
24 Varnas is the stepping-stone to civilisation, making one rise higher
25 and higher in proportion to one's learning and culture. In Europe, it
26 is everywhere victory to the strong and death to the weak. In the
27 land of Bharata, every social rule is for the protection of the weak.

28 *(Translated from*
29 *Bengali)*

1 The former comprise the Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra,
2 and the latter, Brahmacharya (student life), Garhasthya
3 (householder's life), Vanaprastha (hermit life), and Sannyasa (life of
4 renunciation).
5

THE METHODS AND PURPOSE OF RELIGION

In studying the religions of the world we generally find two methods of procedure. The one is from God to man. That is to say, we have the Semitic group of religions in which the idea of God comes almost from the very first, and, strangely enough, without any idea of soul. It was very remarkable amongst the ancient Hebrews that, until very recent periods in their history, they never evolved any idea of a human soul. Man was composed of certain mind and material particles, and that was all. With death everything ended. But, on the other hand, there was a most wonderful idea of God evolved by the same race. This is one of the methods of procedure. The other is through man to God. The second is peculiarly Aryan, and the first is peculiarly Semitic.

The Aryan first began with the soul. His ideas of God were hazy, indistinguishable, not very clear; but, as his idea of the human soul began to be clearer, his idea of God began to be clearer in the same proportion. So the inquiry in the Vedas was always through the soul. All the knowledge the Aryans got of God was through the human soul; and, as such, the peculiar stamp that has been left upon their whole cycle of philosophy is that introspective search after divinity. The Aryan man was always seeking divinity inside his own self. It became, in course of time, natural, characteristic. It is remarkable in their art and in their commonest dealings. Even at the present time, if we take a European picture of a man in a religious attitude, the painter always makes his subject point his eyes upwards, looking outside of nature for God, looking up into the skies. In India, on the other hand, the religious attitude is always presented by making the subject close his eyes. He is, as it were, looking inward.

These are the two subjects of study for man, external and internal nature; and though at first these seem to be contradictory, yet external nature must, to the ordinary man, be entirely composed of internal nature, the world of thought. The majority of philosophies in every country, especially in the West, have started with the assumption that these two, matter and mind, are contradictory existences; but in the long run we shall find that they converge towards each other and in the end unite and form an infinite whole. So it is not that by this analysis I mean a higher or lower standpoint with regard to the subject. I do not mean that those who want to search after truth through external nature are wrong, nor that those who want to search after truth through internal nature are higher. These are the two modes of procedure. Both of them must live; both of them must be studied; and in the end we shall find that they meet. We shall see that neither is the body antagonistic to the mind, nor the mind to the body, although we find many persons who think that this body is nothing. In old times, every country was full of people who thought this body was only a disease, a sin, or something of that kind. Later on, however, we see how, as it was taught in the Vedas, this body melts into the

1 mind, and the mind into the body.

2 You must remember the one theme that runs through all the
3 Vedas: "Just as by the knowledge of one lump of clay we know all
4 the clay that is in the universe, so what is that, knowing which we
5 know everything else?" This, expressed more or less clearly, is the
6 theme of all human knowledge. It is the finding of a unity towards
7 which we are all going. Every action of our lives--the most material,
8 the grossest as well as the finest, the highest, the most spiritual--is
9 alike tending towards this one ideal, the finding of unity. A man is
10 single. He marries. Apparently it may be a selfish act, but at the
11 same time, the impulsion, the motive power, is to find that unity. He
12 has children, he has friends, he loves his country, he loves the
13 world, and ends by loving the whole universe. Irresistibly we are
14 impelled towards that perfection which consists in finding the unity,
15 killing this little self and making ourselves broader and broader.
16 This is the goal, the end towards which the universe is rushing.
17 Every atom is trying to go and join itself to the next atom. Atoms
18 after atoms combine, making huge balls, the earths, the suns, the
19 moons, the stars, the planets. They, in their turn, are trying to rush
20 towards each other, and, at last, we know that the whole universe,
21 mental and material, will be fused into one.

22 The process that is going on in the cosmos on a large scale, is
23 the same as that going on in the microcosm on a smaller scale. Just
24 as this universe has its existence in separation, in distinction, and
25 all the while is rushing towards unity, non-separation, so in our little
26 worlds, each soul is born, as it were, cut off from the rest of the
27 world. The more ignorant, the more unenlightened the soul, the
28 more it thinks that it is separate from the rest of the universe. The
29 more ignorant the person, the more he thinks he will die or will be
30 reborn, and so forth--ideas that are an expression of this
31 separateness. But we find that, as knowledge comes, man grows,
32 morality is evolved, and the idea of non-separateness begins.
33 Whether men understand it or not, they are impelled by that power
34 behind to become unselfish. That is the foundation of all morality. It
35 is the quintessence of all ethics, preached in any language, or in
36 any religion, or by any prophet in the world. "Be thou unselfish",
37 "Not 'I', but 'thou'"--that is the background of all ethical codes. And
38 what is meant by this is the recognition of non-individuality--that
39 you are a part of me, and I of you; the recognition that in hurting
40 you I hurt myself, and in helping you I help myself; the recognition
41 that there cannot possibly be death for me when you live. When one
42 worm lives in this universe, how can I die? For my life is in the life
43 of that worm. At the same time it will teach us that we cannot leave
44 one of our fellow-beings without helping him, that in his good
45 consists my good.

46 This is the theme that runs through the whole of Vedanta, and
47 which runs through every other religion. For, you must remember,
48 religions divide themselves generally into three parts. There is the
49 first part, consisting of the philosophy, the essence, the principles of
50 every religion. These principles find expression in mythology--lives
51 of saints or heroes, demi-gods, or gods or divine beings; and the
52 whole idea of this mythology is that of power. And in the lower class

1 of mythologies--the primitive--the expression of this power is in the
2 muscles; their heroes are strong, gigantic. One hero conquers the
3 whole world. As man advances, he must find expression for his
4 energy higher than in the muscles; so his heroes also find
5 expression in something higher. The higher mythologies have
6 heroes who are gigantic moral men. Their strength is manifested in
7 becoming moral and pure. They can stand alone, they can beat back
8 the surging tide of selfishness and immorality. The third portion of
9 all religions is symbolism, which you call ceremonials and forms.
10 Even the expression through mythology, the lives of heroes, is not
11 sufficient for all. There are minds still lower. Like children they
12 must have their kindergarten of religion, and these symbologies are
13 evolved--concrete examples which they can handle and grasp and
14 understand, which they can see and feel as material somethings.

15 So in every religion you find there are the three stages:
16 philosophy, mythology and ceremonial. There is one advantage
17 which can be pleaded for the Vedanta, that in India, fortunately,
18 these three stages have been sharply defined. In other religions the
19 principles are so interwoven with the mythology that it is very hard
20 to distinguish one from the other. The mythology stands supreme,
21 swallowing up the principles; and in course of centuries the
22 principles are lost sight of. The explanation, the illustration of the
23 principle, swallows up the principle, and the people see only the
24 explanation, the prophet, the preacher, while the principles have
25 gone out of existence almost--so much so that even today, if a man
26 dares to preach the principles of Christianity apart from Christ,
27 they will try to attack him and think he is wrong and dealing blows
28 at Christianity. In the same way, if a man wants to preach the
29 principles of Mohammedanism, Mohammedans will think the same;
30 because concrete ideas, the lives of great men and prophets, have
31 entirely overshadowed the principles.

32 In Vedanta the chief advantage is that it was not the work of
33 one single man; and therefore, naturally, unlike Buddhism, or
34 Christianity, or Mohammedanism, the prophet or teacher did not
35 entirely swallow up or overshadow the principles. The principles
36 live, and the prophets, as it were, form a secondary group,
37 unknown to Vedanta. The Upanishads speak of no particular
38 prophet, but they speak of various prophets and prophetesses. The
39 old Hebrews had something of that idea; yet we find Moses
40 occupying most of the space of the Hebrew literature. Of course I
41 do not mean that it is bad that these prophets should take religious
42 hold of a nation; but it certainly is very injurious if the whole field of
43 principles is lost sight of. We can very much agree as to principles,
44 but not very much as to persons. The persons appeal to our
45 emotions; and the principles, to something higher, to our calm
46 judgment. Principles must conquer in the long run, for that is the
47 manhood of man. Emotions many times drag us down to the level of
48 animals. Emotions have more connection with the senses than with
49 the faculty of reason; and, therefore, when principles are entirely
50 lost sight of and emotions prevail, religions degenerate into
51 fanaticism and sectarianism. They are no better than party politics
52 and such things. The most horribly ignorant notions will be taken

1 up, and for these ideas thousands will be ready to cut the throats of
2 their brethren. This is the reason that, though these great
3 personalities and prophets are tremendous motive powers for good,
4 at the same time their lives are altogether dangerous when they
5 lead to the disregard of the principles they represent. That has
6 always led to fanaticism, and has deluged the world in blood.
7 Vedanta can avoid this difficulty, because it has not one special
8 prophet. It has many Seers, who are called Rishis or sages. Seers--
9 that is the literal translation--those who see these truths, the
10 Mantras.

11 The word Mantra means "thought out", cogitated by the
12 mind; and the Rishi is the seer of these thoughts. They are neither
13 the property of particular persons, nor the exclusive property of any
14 man or woman, however great he or she may be; nor even the
15 exclusive property of the greatest spirits--the Buddhas or Christs--
16 whom the world has produced. They are as much the property of
17 the lowest of the low, as they are the property of a Buddha, and as
18 much the property of the smallest worm that crawls as of the
19 Christ, because they are universal principles. They were never
20 created. These principles have existed throughout time; and they
21 will exist. They are non-create--uncreated by any laws which
22 science teaches us today. They remain covered and becomes
23 discovered, but are existing through all eternity in nature. If
24 Newton had not been born, the law of gravitation would have
25 remained all the same and would have worked all the same. It was
26 Newton's genius which formulated it, discovered it, brought it into
27 consciousness, made it a conscious thing to the human race. So are
28 these religious laws, the grand truths of spirituality. They are
29 working all the time. If all the Vedas and the Bibles and the Korans
30 did not exist at all, if seers and prophets had never been born, yet
31 these laws would exist. They are only held in abeyance, and slowly
32 but surely would work to raise the human race, to raise human
33 nature. But they are the prophets who see them, discover them, and
34 such prophets are discoverers in the field of spirituality. As Newton
35 and Galileo were prophets of physical science, so are they prophets
36 of spirituality. They can claim no exclusive right to any one of these
37 laws; they are the common property of all nature.

38 The Vedas, as the Hindus say, are eternal. We now
39 understand what they mean by their being eternal, i.e. that the laws
40 have neither beginning nor end, just as nature has neither
41 beginning nor end. Earth after earth, system after system, will
42 evolve, run for a certain time, and then dissolve back again into
43 chaos; but the universe remains the same. Millions and millions of
44 systems are being born, while millions are being destroyed. The
45 universe remains the same. The beginning and the end of time can
46 be told as regards a certain planet; but as regards the universe,
47 time has no meaning at all. So are the laws of nature, the physical
48 laws, the mental laws, the spiritual laws. Without beginning and
49 without end are they; and it is within a few years, comparatively
50 speaking, a few thousand years at best, that man has tried to reveal
51 them. The infinite mass remains before us. Therefore the one great
52 lesson that we learn from the Vedas, at the start, is that religion has

1 just begun. The infinite ocean of spiritual truth lies before us to be
2 worked on, to be discovered, to be brought into our lives. The world
3 has seen thousands of prophets, and the world has yet to see
4 millions.

5 There were times in olden days when prophets were many in
6 every society. The time is to come when prophets will walk through
7 every street in every city in the world. In olden times, particular,
8 peculiar persons were, so to speak, selected by the operations of
9 the laws of society to become prophets. The time is coming when
10 we shall understand that to become religious means to become a
11 prophet, and that none can become religious until he or she
12 becomes a prophet. We shall come to understand that the secret of
13 religion is not being able to think and say all these thoughts; but, as
14 the Vedas teach, to realise them, to realise newer and higher ones
15 than have ever been realised, to discover them, bring them to
16 society; and the study of religion should be the training to make
17 prophets. The schools and colleges should be training grounds for
18 prophets. The whole universe must become prophets; and until a
19 man becomes a prophet, religion is mockery and a byword unto
20 him. We must see religion, feel it, realise it in a thousand times
21 more intense a sense than that in which we see the wall.

22 But there is one principle which underlies all these various
23 manifestations of religion and which has been already mapped out
24 for us. Every science must end where it finds a unity, because we
25 cannot go any further. When a perfect unity is reached, that science
26 has nothing more of principles to tell us. All the work that religions
27 have to do is to work out the details. Take any science, chemistry,
28 for example. Suppose we can find one element out of which we can
29 manufacture all the other elements. Then chemistry, as a science,
30 will have become perfect. What will remain for us is to discover
31 every day new combinations of that one material and the
32 application of those combinations for all the purposes of life. So
33 with religion. The gigantic principles, the scope, the plan of religion
34 were already discovered ages ago when man found the last words,
35 as they are called, of the Vedas--"I am He"--that there is that One in
36 whom this whole universe of matter and mind finds its unity, whom
37 they call God, or Brahman, or Allah, or Jehovah, or any other name.
38 We cannot go beyond that. The grand principle has been already
39 mapped out for us. Our work lies in filling it in, working it out,
40 applying it to every part of our lives. We have to work now so that
41 every one will become a prophet. There is a great work before us.

42 In old times, many did not understand what a prophet meant.
43 They thought it was something by chance, that just by a fiat of will
44 or some superior intelligence, a man gained superior knowledge. In
45 modern times, we are prepared to demonstrate that this knowledge
46 is the birthright of every living being, whosoever and wheresoever
47 he be, and that there is no chance in this universe. Every man who,
48 we think, gets something by chance, has been working for it slowly
49 and surely through the ages. And the whole question devolves upon
50 us: "Do we want to be prophets?" If we want, we shall be.

51 This, the training of prophets, is the great work that lies
52 before us; and, consciously or unconsciously, all the great systems

1 of religion are working toward this one great goal, only with this
2 difference, that in many religions you will find they declare that this
3 direct perception of spirituality is not to be had in this life, that man
4 must die, and after his death there will come a time in another
5 world, when he will have visions of spirituality, when he will realise
6 things which now he must believe. But Vedanta will ask all people
7 who make such assertions, "Then how do you know that spirituality
8 exists?" And they will have to answer that there must have been
9 always certain particular people who, even in this life, have got a
10 glimpse of things which are unknown and unknowable.

11 Even this makes a difficulty. If they were peculiar people,
12 having this power simply by chance, we have no right to believe in
13 them. It would be a sin to believe in anything by chance, because
14 we cannot know it. What is meant by knowledge? Destruction of
15 peculiarity. Suppose a boy goes into a street or a menagerie, and
16 sees a peculiarly shaped animal. He does not know what it is. Then
17 he goes to a country where there are hundreds like that one, and he
18 is satisfied, he knows what the species is. Our knowledge is
19 knowing the principle. Our non-knowledge is finding the particular
20 without reference to principle. When we find one case or a few
21 cases separate from the principle, without any reference to the
22 principle, we are in darkness and do not know. Now, if these
23 prophets, as they say, were peculiar persons who alone had the
24 right to catch a glimpse of that which is beyond and no one else has
25 the right, we should not believe in these prophets, because they are
26 peculiar cases without any reference to a principle. We can only
27 believe in them if we ourselves become prophets.

28 You, all of you, hear about the various jokes that get into the
29 newspapers about the sea-serpent; and why should it be so?
30 Because a few persons, at long intervals, came and told their
31 stories about the sea-serpent, and others never see it. They have no
32 particular principle to which to refer, and therefore the world does
33 not believe. If a man comes to me and says a prophet disappeared
34 into the air and went through it, I have the right to see that. I ask
35 him, "Did your father or grandfather see it?" "Oh, no," he replies,
36 "but five thousand years ago such a thing happened." And if I do not
37 believe it, I have to be barbecued through eternity!

38 What a mass of superstition this is! And its effect is to
39 degrade man from his divine nature to that of brutes. Why was
40 reason given us if we have to believe? Is it not tremendously
41 blasphemous to believe against reason? What right have we not to
42 use the greatest gift that God has given to us? I am sure God will
43 pardon a man who will use his reason and cannot believe, rather
44 than a man who believes blindly instead of using the faculties He
45 has given him. He simply degrades his nature and goes down to the
46 level of the beasts--degrades his senses and dies. We must reason;
47 and when reason proves to us the truth of these prophets and great
48 men about whom the ancient books speak in every country, we shall
49 believe in them. We shall believe in them when we see such
50 prophets among ourselves. We shall then find that they were not
51 peculiar men, but only illustrations of certain principles. They
52 worked, and that principle expressed itself naturally, and we shall

1 have to work to express that principle in us. They were prophets,
2 we shall believe, when we become prophets. They were seers of
3 things divine. They could go beyond the bounds of senses and catch
4 a glimpse of that which is beyond. We shall believe that when we
5 are able to do it ourselves and not before.

6 That is the one principle of Vedanta. Vedanta declares that
7 religion is here and now, because the question of this life and that
8 life, of life and death, this world and that world, is merely one of
9 superstition and prejudice. There is no break in time beyond what
10 we make. What difference is there between ten and twelve o'clock,
11 except what we make by certain changes in nature? Time flows on
12 the same. So what is meant by this life or that life? It is only a
13 question of time, and what is lost in time may be made up by speed
14 in work. So, says Vedanta, religion is to be realised now. And for you
15 to become religious means that you will start without any religion,
16 work your way up and realise things, see things for yourself; and
17 when you have done that, then, and then alone, you have religion.
18 Before that you are no better than atheists, or worse, because the
19 atheist is sincere--he stands up and says, "I do not know about
20 these things"--while those others do not know but go about the
21 world saying, "We are very religious people." What religion they
22 have no one knows, because they have swallowed some
23 grandmother's story, and priests have asked them to believe these
24 things; if they do not, then let them take care. That is how it is
25 going.

26 Realisation of religion is the only way. Each one of us will
27 have to discover. Of what use are these books, then, these Bibles of
28 the world? They are of great use, just as maps are of a country. I
29 have seen maps of England all my life before I came here, they
30 were great helps to me in forming some sort of conception of
31 England. Yet, when I arrived in this country, what a difference
32 between the maps and the country itself! So is the difference
33 between realisation and scriptures. These books are only the maps,
34 the experiences of past men, as a motive power to us to dare to
35 make the same experiences and discover in the same way, if not
36 better.

37 This is the first principle of Vedanta, that realisation is
38 religion, and he who realises is the religious man; and he who does
39 not is no better than he who says, "I do not know", if not worse,
40 because the other says, "I do not know", and is sincere. In this
41 realisation, again, we shall be helped very much by these books, not
42 only as guides, but as giving instructions and exercises; for every
43 science has its own particular method of investigation. You will find
44 many persons in this world who will say, "I wanted to become
45 religious, I wanted to realise these things, but I have not been able,
46 so I do not believe anything". Even among the educated you will
47 find these. Large numbers of people will tell you, "I have tried to be
48 religious all my life, but there is nothing in it." At the same time you
49 will find this phenomenon: Suppose a man is a chemist, a great
50 scientific man. He comes and tells you this. If you say to him, "I do
51 not believe anything about chemistry, because I have tried all my
52 life to become a chemist and do not find anything in it", he will ask,

1 "When did you try?" "When I went to bed, I repeated 'O chemistry,
2 come to me', and it never came." That is the very same thing. The
3 chemist laughs at you and says, "Oh, that is not the way. Why did
4 you not go to the laboratory and get all the acids and alkalis and
5 burn your hands from time to time? That alone would have taught
6 you." Do you take the same trouble with religion? Every science has
7 its own method of learning, and religion is to be learnt the same
8 way. It has its own method, and here is something we can learn,
9 and must learn, from all the ancient prophets of the world, every
10 one who has found something, who has realised religion. They will
11 give us the methods, the particular methods, through which alone
12 we shall be able to realise the truths of religion. They struggled all
13 their lives, discovered particular methods of mental culture,
14 bringing the mind to a certain state, the finest perception, and
15 through that they perceived the truths of religion. To become
16 religious, to perceive religion, feel it, to become a prophet, we have
17 to take these methods and practice them; and then if we find
18 nothing, we shall have the right to say, "There is nothing in religion,
19 for I have tried and failed."

20 This is the practical side of all religions. You will find it in
21 every Bible in the world. Not only do they teach principles and
22 doctrines, but in the lives of the saints you find practices; and when
23 it is not expressly laid down as a rule of conduct, you will always
24 find in the lives of these prophets that even they regulated their
25 eating and drinking sometimes. Their whole living, their practice,
26 their method, everything was different from the masses who
27 surrounded them; and these were the causes that gave them the
28 higher light, the vision of the Divine. And we, if we want to have
29 this vision, must be ready to take up these methods. It is practice,
30 work, that will bring us up to that. The plan of Vedanta, therefore,
31 is: first, to lay down the principles, map out for us the goal, and
32 then to teach us the method by which to arrive at the goal, to
33 understand and realise religion.

34 Again, these methods must be various. Seeing that we are so
35 various in our natures, the same method can scarcely be applied to
36 any two of us in the same manner. We have idiosyncrasies in our
37 minds, each one of us; so the method ought to be varied. Some, you
38 will find, are very emotional in their nature; some very
39 philosophical, rational; others cling to all sorts of ritualistic forms--
40 want things which are concrete. You will find that one man does not
41 care for any ceremony or form or anything of the sort; they are like
42 death to him. And another man carries a load of amulets all over his
43 body; he is so fond of these symbols! Another man who is emotional
44 in his nature wants to show acts of charity to everyone; he weeps,
45 he laughs, and so on. And all of these certainly cannot have the
46 same method. If there were only one method to arrive at truth, it
47 would be death for everyone else who is not similarly constituted.
48 Therefore the methods should be various. Vedanta understands that
49 and wants to lay before the world different methods through which
50 we can work. Take up any one you like; and if one does not suit you,
51 another may. From this standpoint we see how glorious it is that
52 there are so many religions of the world, how good it is that there

1 are so many teachers and prophets, instead of there being only one,
2 as many persons would like to have it. The Mohammedans want to
3 have the whole world Mohammedan; the Christians, Christian; and
4 the Buddhists, Buddhist; but Vedanta says, "Let each person in the
5 world be separate, if you will; the one principle, the unity will be
6 behind. The more prophets there are, the more books, the more
7 seers, the more methods, so much the better for the world". Just as
8 in social life the greater the number of occupations in every society,
9 the better for that society, the more chance is there for everyone of
10 that society to make a living; so in the world of thought and of
11 religion. How much better it is today when we have so many
12 divisions of science--how much more is it possible for everyone to
13 have great mental culture, with this great variety before us! How
14 much better it is, even on the physical plane, to have the
15 opportunity of so many various things spread before us, so that we
16 may choose any one we like, the one which suits us best! So it is
17 with the world of religions. It is a most glorious dispensation of the
18 Lord that there are so many religions in the world; and would to
19 God that these would increase every day, until every man had a
20 religion unto himself!

21 Vedanta understands that and therefore preaches the one
22 principle and admits various methods. It has nothing to say against
23 anyone--whether you are a Christian, or a Buddhist, or a Jew, or a
24 Hindu, whatever mythology you believe, whether you owe
25 allegiance to the prophet of Nazareth, or of Mecca, or of India, or of
26 anywhere else, whether you yourself are a prophet--it has nothing
27 to say. It only preaches the principle which is the background of
28 every religion and of which all the prophets and saints and seers
29 are but illustrations and manifestations. Multiply your prophets if
30 you like; it has no objection. It only preaches the principle, and the
31 method it leaves to you. Take any path you like; follow any prophet
32 you like; but have only that method which suits your own nature, so
33 that you will be sure to progress.

THE NATURE OF THE SOUL AND ITS GOAL

The earliest idea is that a man, when he dies, is not annihilated. Something lives and goes on living even after the man is dead. Perhaps it would be better to compare the three most ancient nations--the Egyptians, the Babylonians, and the ancient Hindus--and take this idea from all of them. With the Egyptians and the Babylonians, we find a sort of soul idea--that of a double. Inside this body, according to them, there is another body which is moving and working here; and when the outer body dies, the double gets out and lives on for a certain length of time; but the life of the double is limited by the preservation of the outer body. If the body which the double has left is injured in any part, the double is sure to be injured in that part. That is why we find among the ancient Egyptians such solicitude to preserve the dead body of a person by embalming, building pyramids, etc. We find both with the Babylonians and the ancient Egyptians that this double cannot live on through eternity; it can, at best, live on for a certain time only, that is, just so long as the body it has left has been preserved.

The next peculiarity is that there is an element of fear connected with this double. It is always unhappy and miserable; its state of existence is one of extreme pain. It is again and again coming back to those that are living, asking for food and drink and enjoyments that it can no more have. It is wanting to drink of the waters of the Nile, the fresh waters which it can no more drink. It wants to get back those foods it used to enjoy while in this life; and when it finds it cannot get them, the double becomes fierce, sometimes threatening the living with death and disaster if it is not supplied with such food.

Coming to Aryan thought, we at once find a very wide departure. There is still the double idea there, but it has become a sort of spiritual body; and one great difference is that the life of this spiritual body, the soul, or whatever you may call it, is not limited by the body it has left. On the contrary, it has obtained freedom from this body, and hence the peculiar Aryan custom of burning the dead. They want to get rid of the body which the person has left, while the Egyptian wants to preserve it by burying, embalming, and building pyramids. Apart from the most primitive system of doing away with the dead, amongst nations advanced to a certain extent, the method of doing away with the bodies of the dead is a great indication of their idea of the soul. Wherever we find the idea of a departed soul closely connected with the idea of the dead body, we always find the tendency to preserve the body, and we also find burying in some form or other. On the other hand, with those in whom the idea has developed that the soul is a separate entity from the body and will not be hurt if the dead body is even destroyed, burning is always the process resorted to. Thus we find among all ancient Aryan races burning of the dead, although the Parsees changed it to exposing the body on a tower. But the very name of the tower (Dakhma) means a burning-place, showing that in ancient

1 times they also used to burn their bodies. The other peculiarity is
2 that among the Aryans there was no element of fear with these
3 doubles. They are not coming down to ask for food or help; and
4 when denied that help, they do not become ferocious or try to
5 destroy those that are living. They rather are joyful, are glad at
6 getting free. The fire of the funeral pyre is the symbol of
7 disintegration. The symbol is asked to take the departed soul gently
8 up and to carry it to the place where the fathers live, where there is
9 no sorrow, where there is joy forever, and so on.

10 Of these two ideas we see at once that they are of a similar
11 nature, the one optimistic, and the other pessimistic--being the
12 elementary. The one is the evolution of the other. It is quite possible
13 that the Aryans themselves had, or may have had, in very ancient
14 times exactly the same idea as the Egyptians. In studying their most
15 ancient records, we find the possibility of this very idea. But it is
16 quite a bright thing, something bright. When a man dies, this soul
17 goes to live with the fathers and lives there enjoying their
18 happiness. These fathers receive it with great kindness; this is the
19 most ancient idea in India of a soul. Later on, this idea becomes
20 higher and higher. Then it was found out that what they called the
21 soul before was not really the soul. This bright body, fine body,
22 however fine it might be, was a body after all; and all bodies must
23 be made up of materials, either gross or fine. Whatever had form or
24 shape must be limited, and could not be eternal. Change is inherent
25 in every form. How could that which is changeful be eternal? So,
26 behind this bright body, as it were, they found something which was
27 the soul of man. It was called the Atman, the Self. This Self idea
28 then began. It had also to undergo various changes. By some it was
29 thought that this Self was eternal; that it was very minute, almost
30 as minute as an atom; that it lived in a certain part of the body, and
31 when a man died, his Self went away, taking along with it the bright
32 body. There were other people who denied the atomic nature of the
33 soul on the same ground on which they had denied that this bright
34 body was the soul.

35 Out of all these various opinions rose Sankhya philosophy,
36 where at once we find immense differences. The idea there is that
37 man has first this gross body; behind the gross body is the fine
38 body, which is the vehicle of the mind, as it were; and behind even
39 that is the Self, the Perceiver, as the Sankhyas call it, of the mind;
40 and this is omnipresent. That is, your soul, my soul, everyone's soul
41 is everywhere at the same time. If it is formless, how can it be said
42 to occupy space? Everything that occupies space has form. The
43 formless can only be infinite. So each soul is everywhere. The
44 second theory put forward is still more startling. They all saw in
45 ancient times that human beings are progressive, at least many of
46 them. They grew in purity and power and knowledge; and the
47 question was asked: Whence was this knowledge, this purity, this
48 strength which men manifested? Here is a baby without any
49 knowledge. This baby grows and becomes a strong, powerful, and
50 wise man. Whence did that baby get its wealth of knowledge and
51 power? The answer was that it was in the soul; the soul of the baby
52 had this knowledge and power from the very beginning. This power,

1 this purity, this strength were in that soul, but they were
2 unmanifested; they have become manifested. What is meant by this
3 manifestation or unmanifestation? That each soul is pure and
4 perfect, omnipotent and omniscient, as they say in the Sankhya; but
5 it can manifest itself externally only according to the mind it has
6 got. The mind is, as it were, the reflecting mirror of the soul. My
7 mind reflects to a certain extent the powers of my soul; so your
8 soul, and so everyone's. That mirror which is clearer reflects the
9 soul better. So the manifestation varies according to the mind one
10 possesses; but the souls in themselves are pure and perfect.

11 There was another school who thought that this could not be.
12 Though souls are pure and perfect by their nature, this purity and
13 perfection become, as they say, contracted at times, and expanded
14 at other times. There are certain actions and certain thoughts
15 which, as it were, contract the nature of the soul; and then also
16 other thoughts and acts, which bring its nature out, manifest it.
17 This again is explained. All thoughts and actions that make the
18 power and purity of the soul get contracted are evil actions, evil
19 thoughts; and all those thoughts and actions which make the soul
20 manifest itself--make the powers come out, as it were--are good and
21 moral actions. The difference between the two theories is very
22 slight; it is more or less a play on the words expansion and
23 contraction. The one that holds that the variation only depends on
24 the mind the soul has got is the better explanation, no doubt, but
25 the contracting and expanding theory wants to take refuge behind
26 the two words; and they should be asked what is meant by
27 contraction of the soul, or expansion. Soul is a spirit. You can
28 question what is meant by contraction or expansion with regard to
29 material, whether gross which we call matter, or fine, the mind; but
30 beyond that, if it is not matter, that which is not bound by space or
31 by time, how to explain the words contraction and expansion with
32 regard to that? So it seems that this theory which holds that the
33 soul is pure and perfect all the time, only its nature is more
34 reflected in some minds than in others, is the better. As the mind
35 changes, its character grows, as it were, more and more clear and
36 gives a better reflection of the soul. Thus it goes on, until the mind
37 has become so purified that it reflects fully the quality of the soul;
38 then the soul becomes liberated.

39 This is the nature of the soul. What is the goal? The goal of
40 the soul among all the different sects in India seems to be the same.
41 There is one idea with all, and that is liberation. Man is infinite; and
42 this limitation in which he exists now is not his nature. But through
43 these limitations he is struggling upward and forward until he
44 reaches the infinite, the unlimited, his birthright, his nature. All
45 these combinations and recombinations and manifestations that we
46 see round us are not the aim or the goal, but merely by the way and
47 in passing. These combinations as earths and suns, and moons and
48 stars, right and wrong, good and bad, our laughter and our tears,
49 our joys and sorrows, are to enable us to gain experience through
50 which the soul manifests its perfect nature and throws off
51 limitation. No more, then, is it bound by laws either of internal or
52 external nature. It has gone beyond all law, beyond all limitation,

1 beyond all nature. Nature has come under the control of the soul,
2 not the soul under the control of nature, as it thinks it is now. That
3 is the one goal that the soul has; and all the succeeding steps
4 through which it is manifesting, all the successive experiences
5 through which it is passing in order to attain to that goal--freedom--
6 are represented as its births. The soul is, as it were, taking up a
7 lower body and trying to express itself through that. It finds that to
8 be insufficient, throws it aside, and a higher one is taken up.
9 Through that it struggles to express itself. That also is found to be
10 insufficient, is rejected, and a higher one comes; so on and on until
11 a body is found through which the soul manifests its highest
12 aspirations. Then the soul becomes free.

13 Now the question is: If the soul is infinite and exists
14 everywhere, as it must do, if it is a spirit, what is meant by its
15 taking up bodies and passing through body after body? The idea is
16 that the soul neither comes nor goes, neither is born nor dies. How
17 can the omnipresent be born? It is meaningless nonsense to say
18 that the soul lives in a body. How can the unlimited live in a limited
19 space? But as a man having a book in his hands reads one page and
20 turns it over, goes to the next page, reads that, turns it over, and so
21 on, yet it is the book that is being turned over, the pages that are
22 revolving, and not he--he is where he is always--even so with regard
23 to the soul. The whole of nature is that book which the soul is
24 reading. Each life, as it were, is one page of that book; and that
25 read, it is turned over, and so on and on, until the whole of the book
26 is finished, and the soul becomes perfect, having got all the
27 experiences of nature. Yet at the same time it never moved, nor
28 came, nor went; it was only gathering experiences. But it appears
29 to us that we are moving. The earth is moving, yet we think that the
30 sun is moving instead of the earth, which we know to be a mistake,
31 a delusion of the senses. So is also this delusion that we are born
32 and that we die, that we come or that we go. We neither come nor
33 go, nor have we been born. For where is the soul to go? There is no
34 place for it to go. Where is it not already?

35 Thus the theory comes of the evolution of nature and the
36 manifestation of the soul. The processes of evolution, higher and
37 higher combinations, are not in the soul; it is already what it is.
38 They are in nature. But as nature is evolving forward into higher
39 and higher combinations, more and more of the majesty of the soul
40 is manifesting itself. Suppose here is a screen, and behind the
41 screen is wonderful scenery. There is one small hole in the screen
42 through which we can catch only a little bit of that scenery behind.
43 Suppose that hole becomes increased in size. As the hole increases
44 in size, more and more of the scenery behind comes within the
45 range of vision; and when the whole screen has disappeared, there
46 is nothing between the scenery and you; you see the whole of it.
47 This screen is the mind of man. Behind it is the majesty, the purity,
48 the infinite power of the soul, and as the mind becomes clearer and
49 clearer, purer and purer, more of the majesty of the soul manifests
50 itself. Not that the soul is changing, but the change is in the screen.
51 The soul is the unchangeable One, the immortal, the pure, the ever-
52 blessed One.

1 So, at last, the theory comes to this. From the highest to the
2 lowest and most wicked man, in the greatest of human beings and
3 the lowest of crawling worms under our feet, is the soul, pure and
4 perfect, infinite and ever-blessed. In the worm that soul is
5 manifesting only an infinitesimal part of its power and purity, and in
6 the greatest man it is manifesting most of it. The difference consists
7 in the degree of manifestation, but not in the essence. Through all
8 beings exist the same pure and perfect soul.

9 There are also the ideas of heavens and other places, but
10 these are thought to be second-rate. The idea of heaven is thought
11 to be a low idea. It arises from the desire for a place of enjoyment.
12 We foolishly want to limit the whole universe with our present
13 experience. Children think that the whole universe is full of
14 children. Madmen think the whole universe a lunatic asylum, and so
15 on. So those to whom this world is but sense-enjoyment, whose
16 whole life is in eating and feasting, with very little difference
17 between them and brute beasts--such are naturally found to
18 conceive of places where they will have more enjoyments, because
19 this life is short. Their desire for enjoyment is infinite, so they are
20 bound to think of places where they will have unobstructed
21 enjoyment of the senses; and we see, as we go on, that those who
22 want to go to such places will have to go; they will dream, and when
23 this dream is over, they will be in another dream where there is
24 plenty of sense-enjoyment; and when that dream breaks, they will
25 have to think of something else. Thus they will be driving about
26 from dream to dream.

27 Then comes the last theory, one more idea about the soul. If
28 the soul is pure and perfect in its essence and nature, and if every
29 soul is infinite and omnipresent, how is it that there can be many
30 souls? There cannot be many infinities. There cannot be two even,
31 not to speak of many. If there were two infinities, one would limit the
32 other, and both become finite. The infinite can only be one, and
33 boldly the last conclusion is approached--that it is but one and not
34 two.

35 Two birds are sitting on the same tree, one on the top, the
36 other below, both of most beautiful plumage. The one eats the
37 fruits, while the other remains calm and majestic, concentrated in
38 its own glory. The lower bird is eating fruits, good and evil, going
39 after sense-enjoyments; and when it eats occasionally a bitter fruit,
40 it gets higher and looks up and sees the other bird sitting there
41 calm and majestic, neither caring for good fruit nor for bad,
42 sufficient unto itself, seeking no enjoyment beyond itself. It itself is
43 enjoyment; what to seek beyond itself? The lower bird looks at the
44 upper bird and wants to get near. It goes a little higher; but its old
45 impressions are upon it, and still it goes about eating the same
46 fruit. Again an exceptionally bitter fruit comes; it gets a shock,
47 looks up. There the same calm and majestic one! It comes near but
48 again is dragged down by past actions, and continues to eat the
49 sweet and bitter fruits. Again the exceptionally bitter fruit comes,
50 the bird looks up, gets nearer; and as it begins to get nearer and
51 nearer, the light from the plumage of the other bird is reflected
52 upon it. Its own plumage is melting away, and when it has come

1 sufficiently near, the whole vision changes. The lower bird never
2 existed, it was always the upper bird, and what it took for the lower
3 bird was only a little bit of a reflection.

4 Such is the nature of the soul. This human soul goes after
5 sense-enjoyments, vanities of the world; like animals it lives only in
6 the senses, lives only in momentary titillations of the nerves. When
7 there comes a blow, for a moment the head reels, and everything
8 begins to vanish, and it finds that the world was not what it thought
9 it to be, that life was not so smooth. It looks upward and sees the
10 infinite Lord a moment, catches a glimpse of the majestic One,
11 comes a little nearer, but is dragged away by its past actions.
12 Another blow comes, and sends it back again. It catches another
13 glimpse of the infinite Presence, comes nearer, and as it approaches
14 nearer and nearer, it begins to find out that its individuality--its low,
15 vulgar, intensely selfish individuality--is melting away; the desire to
16 sacrifice the whole world to make that little thing happy is melting
17 away; and as it gets gradually nearer and nearer, nature begins to
18 melt away. When it has come sufficiently near, the whole vision
19 changes, and it finds that it was the other bird, that this infinity
20 which it had viewed as from a distance was its own Self, this
21 wonderful glimpse that it had got of the glory and majesty was its
22 own Self, and it indeed was that reality. The soul then finds That
23 which is true in everything. That which is in every atom,
24 everywhere present, the essence of all things, the God of this
25 universe--know that thou art He, know that thou art free.

THE IMPORTANCE OF PSYCHOLOGY

The idea of psychology in the West is very much degraded. Psychology is the science of sciences; but in the West it is placed upon the same plane as all other sciences; that is, it is judged by the same criterion--utility.

How much practical benefit will it do to humanity? How much will it add to our rapidly growing happiness? How much will it detract from our rapidly increasing pain? Such is the criterion by which everything is judged in the West.

People seem to forget that about ninety per cent of all our knowledge cannot, in the very nature of things, be applied in a practical way to add to our material happiness or to lessen our misery. Only the smallest fraction of our scientific knowledge can have any such practical application to our daily lives. This is so because only an infinitely small percentage of our conscious mind is on the sensuous plane. We have just a little bit of sensuous consciousness and imagine that to be our entire mind and life; but, as a matter of fact, it is but a drop in the mighty ocean of subconscious mind. If all there is of us were a bundle of sense-perceptions, all the knowledge we could gain could be utilised in the gratification of our sense-pleasures. But fortunately such is not the case. As we get further and further away from the animal state, our sense-pleasures become less and less; and our enjoyment, in a rapidly increasing consciousness of scientific and psychological knowledge, becomes more and more intense; and "knowledge for the sake of knowledge", regardless of the amount of sense-pleasures it may conduce to, becomes the supreme pleasure of the mind.

But even taking the Western idea of utility as a criterion by which to judge, psychology, by such a standard even, is the science of sciences. Why? We are all slaves to our senses, slaves to our own minds, conscious and subconscious. The reason why a criminal is a criminal is not because he desires to be one, but because he has not his mind under control and is therefore a slave to his own conscious and subconscious mind, and to the mind of everybody else. He must follow the dominant trend of his mind; he cannot help it; he is forced onward in spite of himself, in spite of his own better promptings, his own better nature; he is forced to obey the dominant mandate of his own mind. Poor man, he cannot help himself. We see this in our own lives constantly. We are constantly doing things against the better side of our nature, and afterwards we upbraid ourselves for so doing and wonder what we could have been thinking of, how we could do such a thing! Yet again and again we do it, and again and again we suffer for it and upbraid ourselves. At the time, perhaps, we think we desire to do it, but we only desire it because we are forced to desire it. We are forced onward, we are helpless! We are all slaves to our own and to everybody else's mind; whether we are good or bad, that makes no difference. We are led here and there because we cannot help

1 ourselves. We say we think, we do, etc. It is not so. We think
2 because we have to think. We act because we have to. We are
3 slaves to ourselves and to others. Deep down in our subconscious
4 mind are stored up all the thoughts and acts of the past, not only of
5 this life, but of all other lives we have lived. This great boundless
6 ocean of subjective mind is full of all the thoughts and actions of the
7 past. Each one of these is striving to be recognised, pushing
8 outward for expression, surging, wave after wave, out upon the
9 objective mind, the conscious mind. These thoughts, the stored-up
10 energy, we take for natural desires, talents, etc. It is because we do
11 not realise their true origin. We obey them blindly, unquestioningly;
12 and slavery, the most helpless kind of slavery, is the result; and we
13 call ourselves free. Free! We who cannot for a moment govern our
14 own minds, nay, cannot hold our minds on a subject, focus it on a
15 point to the exclusion of everything else for a moment! Yet we call
16 ourselves free. Think of it! We cannot do as we know we ought to do
17 even for a very short space of time. Some sense-desire will crop up,
18 and immediately we obey it. Our conscience smites us for such
19 weakness, but again and again we do it, we are always doing it. We
20 cannot live up to a high standard of life, try as we will. The ghosts
21 of past thoughts, past lives hold us down. All the misery of the
22 world is caused by this slavery to the senses. Our inability to rise
23 above the sense-life--the striving for physical pleasures, is the cause
24 of all the horrors and miseries in the world.

25 It is the science of psychology that teaches us to hold in check
26 the wild gyrations of the mind, place it under the control of the will,
27 and thus free ourselves from its tyrannous mandates. Psychology is
28 therefore the science of sciences, without which all sciences and all
29 other knowledge are worthless.

30 The mind uncontrolled and unguided will drag us down,
31 down, for ever--rend us, kill us; and the mind controlled and guided
32 will save us, free us. So it must be controlled, and psychology
33 teaches us how to do it.

34 To study and analyse any material science, sufficient data are
35 obtained. These facts are studied and analysed, and a knowledge of
36 the science is the result. But in the study and analysis of the mind,
37 there are no data, no facts acquired from without, such as are
38 equally at the command of all. The mind is analysed by itself. The
39 greatest science, therefore, is the science of the mind, the science
40 of psychology.

41 In the West, the powers of the mind, especially unusual
42 powers, are looked upon as bordering on witchcraft and mysticism.
43 The study of higher psychology has been retarded by its being
44 identified with mere alleged psychic phenomena, as is done by
45 some mystery-mongering order of Hindu fakirs.

46 Physicists obtain pretty much the same results the world over.
47 They do not differ in their general facts, nor in the results which
48 naturally follow from such facts. This is because the data of physical
49 science are obtainable by all and are universally recognised, and
50 the results are logical conclusions based upon these universally
51 recognised facts. In the realm of the mind, it is different. Here there

1 are no data, no facts observable by the physical senses, and no
2 universally recognised materials therefore, from which to build a
3 system of psychology after their being equally experimented upon
4 by all who study the mind.

5 Deep, deep within, is the soul, the essential man, the Atman.
6 Turn the mind inward and become united to that; and from that
7 standpoint of stability, the gyrations of the mind can be watched
8 and facts observed, which are to be found in all persons. Such facts,
9 such data, are to be found by those who go deep enough, and only
10 by such. Among that large class of self-styled mystics the world
11 over, there is a great difference of opinion as to the mind, its
12 nature, powers, etc. This is because such people do not go deep
13 enough. They have noticed some little activity of their own and
14 others' minds and, without knowing anything about the real
15 character of such superficial manifestations, have published them
16 as facts universal in their application; and every religious and
17 mystical crank has facts, data, etc., which, he claims, are reliable
18 criteria for investigation, but which are in fact nothing more or less
19 than his own imaginings.

20 If you intend to study the mind, you must have systematic
21 training; you must practice to bring the mind under your control, to
22 attain that consciousness from which you will be able to study the
23 mind and remain unmoved by any of its wild gyrations. Otherwise
24 the facts observed will not be reliable; they will not apply to all
25 people and therefore will not be truly facts or data at all.

26 Among that class who have gone deeply into the study of the
27 mind, the facts observed have been the same, no matter in what
28 part of the world such persons may be or what religious belief they
29 may have. The results obtained by all who go deep enough into the
30 mind are the same.

31 The mind operates by perception and impulsion. For instance,
32 the rays of the light enter my eyes, are carried by the nerves to the
33 brain, and still I do not see the light. The brain then conveys the
34 impulse to the mind, but yet I do not see the light; the mind then
35 reacts, and the light flashes across the mind. The mind's reaction is
36 impulsion, and as a result the eye perceives the object.

37 To control the mind you must go deep down into the
38 subconscious mind, classify and arrange in order all the different
39 impressions, thoughts, etc. stored up there, and control them. This
40 is the first step. By the control of the subconscious mind you get
41 control over the conscious.

NATURE AND MAN

The modern idea of nature includes only that part of the universe that is manifested on the physical plane. That which is generally understood to be mind is not considered to be nature.

Philosophers endeavouring to prove the freedom of the will have excluded the mind from nature; for as nature is bound and governed by law, strict unbending law, mind, if considered to be in nature, would be bound by law also. Such a claim would destroy the doctrine of free will; for how can that be free which is bound by law?

The philosophers of India have taken the reverse stand. They hold all physical life, manifest and unmanifest, to be bound by law. The mind as well as external nature, they claim, is bound by law, and by one and the same law. If mind is not bound by law, if the thoughts we think are not the necessary results of preceding thoughts, if one mental state is not followed by another which it produces, then mind is irrational; and who can claim free will and at the same time deny the operation of reason? And on the other hand, who can admit that the mind is governed by the law of causation and claim that the will is free?

Law itself is the operation of cause and effect. Certain things happen according to certain other things which have gone before. Every precedent has its consequent. Thus it is in nature. If this operation of law obtains in the mind, the mind is bound and is therefore not free. No, the will is not free. How can it be? But we all know, we all feel, that we are free. Life would have no meaning, it would not be worth living, if we were not free.

The Eastern philosophers accepted this doctrine, or rather propounded it, that the mind and the will are within time, space, and causation, the same as so-called matter; and that they are therefore bound by the law of causation. We think in time; our thoughts are bound by time; all that exists, exists in time and space. All is bound by the law of causation.

Now that which we call matter and mind are one and the same substance. The only difference is in the degree of vibration. Mind at a very low rate of vibration is what is known as matter. Matter at a high rate of vibration is what is known as mind. Both are the same substance; and therefore, as matter is bound by time and space and causation, mind which is matter at a high rate of vibration is bound by the same law.

Nature is homogeneous. Differentiation is in manifestation. The Sanskrit word for nature is Prakriti, and means literally differentiation. All is one substance, but it is manifested variously.

Mind becomes matter, and matter in its turn becomes mind, it is simply a question of vibration.

Take a bar of steel and charge it with a force sufficient to cause it to vibrate, and what would happen? If this were done in a dark room, the first thing you would be aware of would be a sound,

1 a humming sound. Increase the force, and the bar of steel would
2 become luminous; increase it still more, and the steel would
3 disappear altogether. It would become mind.

4 Take another illustration: If I do not eat for ten days, I cannot
5 think. Only a few stray thoughts are in my mind. I am very weak
6 and perhaps do not know my own name. Then I eat some bread,
7 and in a little while I begin to think; my power of mind has
8 returned. The bread has become mind. Similarly, the mind lessens
9 its rate of vibration and manifests itself in the body, becomes
10 matter.

11 As to which is first--matter or mind, let me illustrate: A hen
12 lays an egg; the egg brings out another hen; that hen lays another
13 egg; that egg brings out another hen, and so on in an endless chain.
14 Now which is first--the egg or the hen? You cannot think of an egg
15 that was not laid by a hen, or a hen that was not hatched out of an
16 egg. It makes no difference which is first. Nearly all our ideas run
17 themselves into the hen and egg business.

18 The greatest truths have been forgotten because of their very
19 simplicity. Great truths are simple because they are of universal
20 application. Truth itself is always simple. Complexity is due to
21 man's ignorance.

22 Man's free agency is not of the mind, for that is bound. There
23 is no freedom there. Man is not mind, he is soul. The soul is ever
24 free, boundless, and eternal. Herein is man's freedom, in the soul.
25 The soul is always free, but the mind identifying itself with its own
26 ephemeral waves, loses sight of the soul and becomes lost in the
27 maze of time, space, and causation--Maya.

28 This is the cause of our bondage. We are always identifying
29 ourselves with the mind, and the mind's phenomenal changes.

30 Man's free agency is established in the soul, and the soul,
31 realising itself to be free, is always asserting the fact in spite of the
32 mind's bondage: "I am free! I am what I am! I am what I am!" This
33 is our freedom. The soul--ever free, boundless, eternal--through
34 aeons and aeons is manifesting itself more and more through its
35 instrument, the mind.

36 What relation then does man bear to nature? From the lowest
37 form of life to man, the soul is manifesting itself through nature.
38 The highest manifestation of the soul is involved in the lowest form
39 of manifest life and is working itself outward through the process
40 called evolution.

41 The whole process of evolution is the soul's struggle to
42 manifest itself. It is a constant struggle against nature.

43 It is a struggle against nature, and not conformity to nature,
44 that makes man what he is. We hear a great deal about living in
45 harmony with nature, of being in tune with nature. This is a
46 mistake. This table, this pitcher, the minerals, a tree, are all in
47 harmony with nature. Perfect harmony is there, no discord. To be in
48 harmony with nature means stagnation, death. How did man build
49 this house? By being in harmony with nature? No. By fighting

1 against nature. It is the constant struggle against nature that
2 constitutes human progress, not conformity with it.

CONCENTRATION AND BREATHING

The main difference between men and the animals is the difference in their power of concentration. All success in any line of work is the result of this. Everybody knows something about concentration. We see its results every day. High achievements in art, music, etc. are the results of concentration. An animal has very little power of concentration. Those who have trained animals find much difficulty in the fact that the animal is constantly forgetting what is told him. He cannot concentrate his mind long upon anything at a time. Herein is the difference between man and the animals--man has the greater power of concentration. The difference in their power of concentration also constitutes the difference between man and man. Compare the lowest with the highest man. The difference is in the degree of concentration. This is the only difference.

Everybody's mind becomes concentrated at times. We all concentrate upon those things we love, and we love those things upon which we concentrate our minds. What mother is there that does not love the face of her homeliest child? That face is to her the most beautiful in the world. She loves it because she concentrates her mind upon it; and if every one could concentrate his mind on that same face, everyone would love it. It would be to all the most beautiful face. We all concentrate our minds upon those things we love. When we hear beautiful music, our minds become fastened upon it, and we cannot take them away. Those who concentrate their minds upon what you call classical music do not like common music, and vice versa. Music in which the notes follow each other in rapid succession holds the mind readily. A child loves lively music, because the rapidity of the notes gives the mind no chance to wander. A man who likes common music dislikes classical music, because it is more complicated and requires a greater degree of concentration to follow it.

The great trouble with such concentrations is that we do not control the mind; it controls us. Something outside of ourselves, as it were, draws the mind into it and holds it as long as it chooses. We hear melodious tones or see a beautiful painting, and the mind is held fast; we cannot take it away.

If I speak to you well upon a subject you like, your mind becomes concentrated upon what I am saying. I draw your mind away from yourself and hold it upon the subject in spite of yourself. Thus our attention is held, our minds are concentrated upon various things, in spite of ourselves. We cannot help it.

Now the question is: Can this concentration be developed, and can we become masters of it? The Yogis say, yes. The Yogis say that we can get perfect control of the mind. On the ethical side there is danger in the development of the power of concentration--the danger of concentrating the mind upon an object and then being unable to detach at will. This state causes great suffering.

1 Almost all of our suffering is caused by our not having the power of
2 detachment. So along with the development of concentration we
3 must develop the power of detachment. We must learn not only to
4 attach the mind to one thing exclusively, but also to detach it at a
5 moment's notice and place it on something else. These two should
6 be developed together to make it safe.

7 This is the systematic development of the mind. To me the
8 very essence of education is concentration of mind, not the
9 collecting of facts. If I had to do my education over again, and had
10 any voice in the matter, I would not study facts at all. I would
11 develop the power of concentration and detachment, and then with
12 a perfect instrument I could collect facts at will. Side by side, in the
13 child, should be developed the power of concentration and
14 detachment.

15 My development has been one-sided all along. I developed
16 concentration without the power of detaching my mind at will; and
17 the most intense suffering of my life has been due to this. Now I
18 have the power of detachment, but I had to learn it in later life.

19 We should put our minds on things; they should not draw our
20 minds to them. We are usually forced to concentrate. Our minds are
21 forced to become fixed upon different things by an attraction in
22 them which we cannot resist. To control the mind, to place it just
23 where we want it, requires special training. It cannot be done in
24 any other way. In the study of religion the control of the mind is
25 absolutely necessary. We have to turn the mind back upon itself in
26 this study.

27 In training the mind the first step is to begin with breathing.
28 Regular breathing puts the body in a harmonious condition; and it is
29 then easier to reach the mind. In practicing breathing, the first
30 thing to consider is Asana or posture. Any posture in which a
31 person can sit easily is his proper position. The spine should be kept
32 free, and the weight of the body should be supported by the ribs.
33 Do not try by contrivances to control the mind; simple breathing is
34 all that is necessary in that line. All austerities to gain
35 concentration of the mind are a mistake. Do not practise them.

36 The mind acts on the body, and the body in its turn acts upon
37 the mind. They act and react upon each other. Every mental state
38 creates a corresponding state in the body, and every action in the
39 body has its corresponding effect on the mind. It makes no
40 difference whether you think the body and mind are two different
41 entities, or whether you think they are both but one body--the
42 physical body being the gross part and the mind the fine part. They
43 act and react upon each other. The mind is constantly becoming the
44 body. In the training of the mind, it is easier to reach it through the
45 body. The body is easier to grapple with than the mind.

46 The finer the instrument, the greater the power. The mind is
47 much finer and more powerful than the body. For this reason it is
48 easier to begin with the body.

49 The science of breathing is the working through the body to
50 reach the mind. In this way we get control of the body, and then we

1 begin to feel the finer working of the body, the finer and more
2 interior, and so on till we reach the mind. As we feel the finer
3 workings of the body, they come under our control. After a while
4 you will be able to feel the operation of the mind on the body. You
5 will also feel the working of one half of the mind upon the other
6 half, and also feel the mind recruiting the nerve centres; for the
7 mind controls and governs the nervous system. You will feel the
8 mind operating along the different nerve currents.

9 Thus the mind is brought under control--by regular systematic
10 breathing, by governing the gross body first and then the fine body.

11 The first breathing exercise is perfectly safe and very
12 healthful. It will give you good health, and better your condition
13 generally at least. The other practices should be taken up slowly
14 and carefully.

INTRODUCTION TO JNANA-YOGA

This is the rational and philosophic side of Yoga and very difficult, but I will take you slowly through it.

Yoga means the method of joining man and God. When you understand this, you can go on with your own definitions of man and God, and you will find the term Yoga fits in with every definition. Remember always, there are different Yogas for different minds, and that if one does not suit you, another may. All religions are divided into theory and practice. The Western mind has given itself up to the theory and only sees the practical part of religion as good works. Yoga is the practical part of religion and shows that religion is a practical power apart from good works.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century man tried to find God through reason, and Deism was the result. What little was left of God by this process was destroyed by Darwinism and Millism. Men were then thrown back upon historical and comparative religion. They thought, religion was derived from element worship (see Max Muller on the sun myths etc.); others thought that religion was derived from ancestor worship (see Herbert Spencer). But taken as a whole, these methods have proved a failure. Man cannot get at Truth by external methods.

"If I know one lump of clay, I know the whole mass of clay." The universe is all built on the same plan. The individual is only a part, like the lump of clay. If we know the human soul--which is one atom--its beginning and general history, we know the whole of nature. Birth, growth, development, decay, death--this is the sequence in all nature and is the same in the plant and the man. The difference is only in time. The whole cycle may be completed in one case in a day, in the other in three score years and ten; the methods are the same. The only way to reach a sure analysis of the universe is by the analysis of our own minds. A proper psychology is essential to the understanding of religion. To reach Truth by reason alone is impossible, because imperfect reason cannot study its own fundamental basis. Therefore the only way to study the mind is to get at facts, and then intellect will arrange them and deduce the principles. The intellect has to build the house; but it cannot do so without bricks, and *it* cannot make bricks. Jnana-Yoga is the surest way of arriving at facts.

First we have the physiology of mind. We have organs of the senses, which are divided into organs of action and organs of perception. By organs I do not mean the external sense-instruments. The ophthalmic centre in the brain is the organ of sight, not the eye alone. So with every organ, the function is internal. Only when the mind reacts, is the object truly perceived. The sensory and motor nerves are necessary to perception.

Then there is the mind itself. It is like a smooth lake which when struck, say by a stone, vibrates. The vibrations gather together and react on the stone, and all through the lake they will

1 spread and be felt. The mind is like the lake; it is constantly being
2 set in vibrations, which leave an impression on the mind; and the
3 idea of the Ego, or personal self, the "I", is the result of these
4 impressions. This "I" therefore is only the very rapid transmission of
5 force and is in itself no reality.

6 The mind-stuff is a very fine material instrument used for
7 taking up the Prana. When a man dies, the body dies; but a little bit
8 of the mind, the seed, is left when all else is shattered; and this is
9 the seed of the new body called by St. Paul "the spiritual body". This
10 theory of the materiality of the mind accords with all modern
11 theories. The idiot is lacking in intelligence because his mind-stuff
12 is injured. Intelligence cannot be in matter nor can it be produced
13 by any combinations of matter. Where then is intelligence? It is
14 behind matter; it is the Jiva, the real Self, working through the
15 instrument of matter. Transmission of force is not possible without
16 matter, and as the Jiva cannot travel alone, some part of mind is left
17 as a transmitting medium when all else is shattered by death.

18 How are perceptions made? The wall opposite sends an
19 impression to me, but I do not see the wall until my mind reacts,
20 that is to say, the mind cannot know the wall by mere sight. The
21 reaction that enables the mind to get a perception of the wall is an
22 intellectual process. In this way the whole universe is seen through
23 our eyes plus mind (or perceptive faculty); it is necessarily coloured
24 by our own individual tendencies. The *real* wall, or the *real*
25 universe, is outside the mind, and is unknown and unknowable. Call
26 this universe X, and our statement is that the seen universe is X
27 plus mind.

28 What is true of the external must also apply to the internal
29 world. Mind also wants to know itself, but this Self can only be
30 known through the medium of the mind and is, like the wall,
31 unknown. This self we may call Y, and the statement would then be,
32 Y plus mind is the inner self. Kant was the first to arrive at this
33 analysis of mind, but it was long ago stated in the Vedas. We have
34 thus, as it were, mind standing between X and Y and reacting on
35 both.

36 If X is unknown, then any qualities we give to it are only
37 derived from our own mind. Time, space, and causation are the
38 three conditions through which mind perceives. Time is the
39 condition for the transmission of thought, and space for the
40 vibration of grosser matter. Causation is the sequence in which
41 vibrations come. Mind can only cognise through these. Anything
42 therefore, beyond mind must be beyond time, space, and causation.

43 To the blind man the world is perceived by touch and sound.
44 To us with five senses it is another world. If any of us developed an
45 electric sense and the faculty of seeing electric waves, the world
46 would appear different. Yet the world, as the X to all of these, is still
47 the same. As each one brings his own mind, he sees his own world.
48 There is X plus one sense; X plus two senses, up to five, as we know
49 humanity. The result is constantly varied, yet X remains always
50 unchanged. Y is also beyond our minds and beyond time, space, and
51 causation.

1 But, you may ask, "How do we know there are two things (X
2 and Y) beyond time, space, and causation?" Quite true, time makes
3 differentiation, so that, as both are really beyond time, they must be
4 really one. When mind sees this *one*, it calls it variously--X, when it
5 is the outside world, and Y, when it is the inside world. This unit
6 exists and is looked at through the lens of mind.

7 The Being of perfect nature, universally appearing to us, is
8 God, is Absolute. The undifferentiated is the perfect condition; all
9 others must be lower and not permanent.

10 What makes the undifferentiated appear differentiated to
11 mind? This is the same kind of question as what is the origin of evil
12 and free will? The question itself is contradictory and impossible,
13 because the question takes for granted cause and effect. There is
14 no cause and effect in the undifferentiated; the question assumes
15 that the undifferentiated is in the same condition as the
16 differentiated. "Whys" and "wherefores" are in mind only. The Self
17 is beyond causation, and It alone is free. Its light it is which
18 percolates through every form of mind. With every action I assert I
19 am free, and yet every action proves that I am bound. The real Self
20 is free, yet when mixed with mind and body, It is not free. The will is
21 the first manifestation of the real Self; the first limitation therefore
22 of this real Self is the will. Will is a compound of Self and mind.
23 Now, no compound can be permanent, so that when we will to live,
24 we must die. Immortal life is a contradiction in terms, for life, being
25 a compound, cannot be immortal. True Being is undifferentiated
26 and *eternal*. How does this Perfect Being become mixed up with
27 will, mind, thought--all defective things? It never has become
28 mixed. You are the real you (the Y of our former statement); you
29 never were will; you never have changed; you as a person never
30 existed; It is illusion. Then on what, you will say, do the phenomena
31 of illusion rest? This is a bad question. Illusion never rests on Truth,
32 but only on illusion. Everything struggles to go back to what was
33 before these illusions, to be free in fact. What then is the value of
34 life? It is to give us experience. Does this view do away with the
35 evolution? On the contrary, it explains it. It is really the process of
36 refinement of matter allowing the real Self to manifest Itself. It is as
37 if a screen or a veil were between us and some other object. The
38 object becomes clear as the screen is gradually withdrawn. The
39 question is simply one of manifestation of the higher Self.

THE VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY AND CHRISTIANITY

(Notes of a lecture delivered at the Unitarian Church, in Oakland, California, on February 28, 1900)

Between all great religions of the world there are many points of similarity; and so startling is this likeness, at times, as to suggest the idea that in many particulars the different religions have copied from one another.

This act of imitation has been laid at the door of different religions; but that it is a superficial charge is evident from the following facts:

Religion is fundamental in the very soul of humanity; and as all life is the evolution of that which is within, it, of necessity, expresses itself through various peoples and nations.

The language of the soul is one, the languages of nations are many; their customs and methods of life are widely different. Religion is of the soul and finds expression through various nations, languages, and customs. Hence it follows that the difference between the religions of the world is one of expression and not of substance; and their points of similarity and unity are of the soul, are intrinsic, as the language of the soul is one, in whatever peoples and under whatever circumstances it manifests itself. The same sweet harmony is vibrant there also, as it is on many and diverse instruments.

The first thing in common in all great religions of the world is the possession of an authentic book. When religious systems have failed to have such a book, they have become extinct. Such was the fact of the religions of Egypt. The authentic book is the hearthstone, so to speak, of each great religious system, around which its adherents gather, and from which radiates the energy and life of the system.

Each religion, again, lays the claim that its particular book is the only authentic word of God; that all other sacred books are false and are impositions upon poor human credulity; and that to follow another religion is to be ignorant and spiritually blind.

Such bigotry is characteristic of the orthodox element of all religions. For instance, the orthodox followers of the Vedas claim that the Vedas are the only authentic word of God in the world; that God has spoken to the world only through the Vedas; not only that, but that the world itself exists by virtue of the Vedas. Before the world was, the Vedas were. Everything in the world exists because it is in the Vedas. A cow exists because the name cow is in the Vedas; that is, because the animal we know as cow is mentioned in the Vedas. The language of the Vedas is the original language of God, all other languages are mere dialects and not of God. Every word and syllable in the Vedas must be pronounced correctly, each sound must be given its true vibration, and every departure from this rigid exactness is a terrible sin and unpardonable.

1 Thus, this kind of bigotry is predominant in the orthodox
2 element of all religions. But this fighting over the letter is indulged
3 in only by the ignorant, the spiritually blind. All who have actually
4 attained any real religious nature never wrangle over the form in
5 which the different religions are expressed. They know that the life
6 of all religions is the same, and, consequently, they have no quarrel
7 with anybody because he does not speak the same tongue.

8 The Vedas are, in fact, the oldest sacred books in the world.
9 Nobody knows anything about the time when they were written or
10 by whom. They are contained in many volumes, and I doubt that
11 any one man ever read them all.

12 The religion of the Vedas is the religion of the Hindus, and the
13 foundation of all Oriental religions; that is, all other Oriental
14 religions are offshoots of the Vedas; all Eastern systems of religion
15 have the Vedas as authority.

16 It is an irrational claim to believe in the teachings of Jesus
17 Christ and at the same time to hold that the greater part of his
18 teachings have no application at the present time. If you say that
19 the reason why the powers do not follow them that believe (as
20 Christ said they would) is because you have not faith enough and
21 are not pure enough--that will be all right. But to say that they have
22 no application at the present time is to be ridiculous.

23 I have never seen the man who was not at least my equal. I
24 have travelled all over the world; I have been among the very worst
25 kind of people--among cannibals--and I have never seen the man
26 who is not at least my equal. I have done as they do--when I was a
27 fool. Then I did not know any better; now I do. Now they do not
28 know any better; after a while they will. Every one acts according to
29 his own nature. We are all in process of growth. From this
30 standpoint one man is not better than another.

WORSHIPPER AND WORSHIPPED

(Delivered in San Francisco area, April 9, 1900)

We have been taking up the more analytical side of human nature. In this course we [shall] study the emotional side. . . . The former deals with man as unlimited being, [as] principle, the latter with man as limited being. . . . The one has no time to stop for a few tear-drops or pangs; the other cannot proceed without wiping the tear-drop, without healing that misery. One is great, so great and grand that sometimes we are staggered by the magnitude; the other [is] commonplace, and yet most beautiful and dear to us. One gets hold of us, takes us up to the heights where our lungs almost burst. We cannot breathe [in] that atmosphere. The other leaves us where we are and tries to see the objects of life, [takes the limited] view. One will accept nothing until it has the shining seal of reason; the other has faith, and what it cannot see it believes. Both are necessary. A bird cannot fly with only one wing. . . .

What we want is to see the man who is harmoniously developed . . . great in heart, great in mind, [great in deed]. . . . We want the man whose heart feels intensely the miseries and sorrows of the world. . . . And [we want] the man who not only can feel but can find the meaning of things, who delves deeply into the heart of nature and understanding. [We want] the man who will not even stop there, [but] who wants to work out [the feeling and meaning by actual deeds]. Such a combination of head, heart, and hand is what we want. There are many teachers in this world, but you will find [that most of them] are one-sided. [One] sees the glorious midday sun of intellect [and] sees nothing else. Another hears the beautiful music of love and can hear nothing else. Another is [immersed] in activity, and has neither time to feel nor time to think. Why not [have] the giant who is equally active, equally knowing, and equally loving? Is it impossible? Certainly not. This is the man of the future, of whom there are [only a] few at present. [The number of such will increase] until the whole world is humanised.

I have been talking to you so long about intellect [and] reason. We have heard the whole of Vedanta. The veil of Maya breaks: wintry clouds vanish, and the sunlight shines on us. I have been trying to climb the heights of the Himalayas, where the peaks disappear beyond the clouds. I propose to study with you the other side: the most beautiful valleys, the most marvellous exquisiteness in nature. [We shall study the] love that holds us here in spite of all the miseries of the world, [the] love that has made us forge the chain of misery, this eternal martyrdom which man is suffering willingly, of his own accord. We want to study that for which man has forged the chain with his own hands, that for which he suffers, that eternal love. We do not mean to forget the other. The glacier of the Himalayas must join hands with the rice fields of Kashmir. The thunderbolt must blend its bass note with the warbling of the birds.

This course will have to do with everything exquisite and

1 beautiful. Worship is everywhere, in every soul. Everyone worships
2 God. Whatever be the name, they are all worshipping God. The
3 beginnings of worship--like the beautiful lotus, like life itself--are in
4 the dirt of the earth. . . . There is the element of fear. There is the
5 hungering for this world's gain. There is the worship of the beggar.
6 These are the beginnings of [the] world worshipping, [culminating
7 in] loving God and worshipping God through man.

8 Is there any God? Is there anyone to be loved, any such one
9 capable of being loved? Loving the stone would not be much good.
10 We only love that which understands love, that which draws our
11 love. So with worship. Never say [that] there is a man in this world
12 of ours who worshipped a piece of stone [as stone]. He always
13 worshipped [the omnipresent being in the stone].

14 We find out that the omnipresent being is in us. [But] how can
15 we worship, unless that being is separate from us? I can only
16 worship Thee, and not me. I can only pray to Thee, and not me. Is
17 there any "Thou"?

18 The One becomes many. When we see the One, any
19 limitations reflected through Maya disappear; but it is quite true
20 that the manifold is not valueless. It is through the many that we
21 reach the one. . . .

22 Is there any Personal God--a God who thinks, who
23 understands, a God who guides us? There is. The Impersonal God
24 cannot have any one of these attributes. Each one of you is an
25 individual: you think, you love, [you] hate, [you] are angry, sorry,
26 etc.; yet you are impersonal, unlimited. [You are] personal and
27 impersonal in one. You have the personal and the impersonal
28 aspects. That [impersonal reality] cannot be angry, [nor] sorry, [nor]
29 miserable--cannot even think misery. It cannot think, cannot know.
30 It is knowledge itself. But the personal [aspect] knows, thinks, and
31 dies, etc. Naturally the universal Absolute must have two aspects:
32 the one [representing the] infinite reality of all things; the other, a
33 personal aspect, the Soul of our souls, Lord of all lords. [It is] He
34 who creates this universe. Under [His] guidance this universe
35 exists. . . .

36 He, the Infinite, the Ever-Pure, the Ever-[Free]. . . . He is no
37 judge, God cannot be [a] judge. He does not sit upon a throne and
38 judge between the good and the wicked. . . . He is no magistrate,
39 [no] general, [nor] master. Infinitely merciful, infinitely loving is the
40 Personal [God].

41 Take it from another side. Every cell in your body has a soul
42 conscious of the cell. It is a separate entity. It has a little will of its
43 own, a little sphere of action of its own. All [cells] combined make
44 up an individual. [In the same way,] the Personal God of the
45 universe is made up of all these [many individuals].

46 Take it from another side. You, as I see you, are as much of
47 your absolute nature as has been limited and perceived by one. I
48 have limited you in order to see you through the power of my eyes,
49 my senses. As much of you as my eyes can see, I see. As much of
50 you as my mind can grasp is what I know to be you, and nothing

1 more. In the same way, I am reading the Absolute, the Impersonal
2 [and see Him as Personal]. As long as we have body and mind, we
3 always see this triune being: God, nature, and soul. There must
4 always be the three in one, inseparable. . . . There is nature. There
5 are human souls. There is again That in which nature and the
6 human souls [are contained].

7 The universal soul has become embodied. My soul itself is a
8 part of God. He is the eye of our eyes, the life of our life, the mind
9 of our mind, the soul of our soul. This is the highest ideal of the
10 Personal God we can have.

11 If you are not a dualist, [but are] a monist, you can still have
12 the Personal God. . . . There is the One without a second. That One
13 wanted to love Himself. Therefore, out of that One, He made
14 [many]. . . . It is the big Me, the real Me, that that little me is
15 worshipping. Thus in all systems you can have the Personal [God].

16 Some people are born under circumstances that make them
17 happier than others; why should this be in the reign of a just being?
18 There is mortality in this world. These are the difficulties in the way.
19 [These problems] have never been answered. They cannot be
20 answered from any dualistic plane. We have to go back to
21 philosophy to treat things as they are. We are suffering from our
22 own Karma. It is not the fault of God. What we do is our own fault,
23 nothing else. Why should God be blamed? . . .

24 Why is there evil? The only way you can solve [the problem] is
25 [by saying that God is] the cause of both good and evil. The great
26 difficulty in the theory of the Personal God is that if you say He is
27 only good and not evil, you will be caught in the trap of your own
28 argument. How do you know there is [a] God? You say [that He is]
29 the Father of this universe, and you say He is good; and because
30 there is [also] evil in the world, God must be evil. . . . The same
31 difficulty!

32 There is no good, and there is no evil. God is all there is. . . .
33 How do you know what is good? You feel [it]. [How do you know
34 what is evil? If] evil comes, you feel it. . . . We know good and evil
35 by our feelings. There is not one man who feels only good, happy
36 feelings. There is not one who feels only unhappy feelings. . . .

37 Want and anxiety are the causes of all unhappiness and
38 happiness too. Is want increasing or decreasing? Is life becoming
39 simple or complex? Certainly complex. Wants are being multiplied.
40 Your great-grandfathers did not want the same dress or the same
41 amount of money [you do]. They had no electric cars, [nor]
42 railroads, etc. That is why they had to work less. As soon as these
43 things come, the want arises, and you have to work harder. More
44 and more anxiety, and more and more competition.

45 It is very have to work to get money. It is harder work to keep
46 it. You fight the whole world to get a little money together [and]
47 fight all your life to protect it. [Therefore] there is more anxiety for
48 the rich man than for the poor. . . . This is the way it is. . . .

49 There are good and evil everywhere in this world. Sometimes
50 evil becomes good, true; but other times good becomes evil also. All

1 our senses produce evil some time or other. Let a man drink wine. It
2 is not bad [at first], but let him go on drinking, [and] it will produce
3 evil. . . . A man is born of rich parents; good enough. He becomes a
4 fool, never exercises his body or brain. That is good producing evil.
5 Think of this love of life: We go away and jump about and live a few
6 moments; we work hard. We are born babies, entirely incapable. It
7 takes us years to understand things again. At sixty or seventy we
8 open our eyes, and then comes the word, "Get out!" And there you
9 are.

10 We have seen that good and evil are relative terms. The thing
11 [that is] good for me is bad for you. If you eat the dinner that I eat,
12 you will begin to weep, and I shall laugh. . . . We [may] both dance,
13 but I with joy and you with pain. . . . The same thing is good at one
14 part of our life and bad at another part. How can you say [that]
15 good and evil are all cut and dried--[that] this is all good and that is
16 all evil?

17 Now, who is responsible for all this good and evil, if God is
18 ever the good? The Christians and the Mohammedans say there is a
19 gentleman called Satan. How can you say there are two gentlemen
20 working? There must be one. . . . The fire that burns the child also
21 cooks the meal. How can you call the fire good or bad, and how can
22 you say it was created by two different persons? Who creates all
23 [so-called] evil? God. There is no other way out. He sends death and
24 life, plague and epidemics, and everything. If such is God, He is the
25 good; He is the evil; He is the beautiful; He is the terrible; He is
26 life; and He is death.

27 How can such a God be worshipped? We shall come to
28 [understand] how the soul can really learn to worship the terrible;
29 then that soul will have peace. . . . Have you peace? Do you get rid
30 of anxieties? Turn around, first of all, and face the terrible. Tear
31 aside the mask and find the same [God]. He is the personal--all that
32 is [apparently] good and all that is [apparently] bad. There is none
33 else. If there were two Gods, nature could not stand a moment.
34 There is not another one in nature. It is all harmony. If God played
35 one side and the devil the other, the whole [of] nature would be [in
36 chaos]. Who can break the law? If I break this glass, it will fall
37 down. If anyone succeeds in throwing one atom out of place, every
38 other atom will go out of balance. . . . The law can never be broken.
39 Each atom is kept in its place. Each is weighed and measured and
40 fulfills its [purpose] and place. Through His command the winds
41 blow, the sun shines. Through His rule the worlds are kept in place.
42 Through His orders death is sporting upon the earth. Just think of
43 two or three Gods having a wrestling match in this world! It cannot
44 be.

45 We now come to see that we can have the Personal God, the
46 creator of this universe, who is merciful and also cruel. . . . He is
47 the good, He is the evil. He smiles, and He frowns. And none can go
48 beyond His law. He is the creator of this universe.

49 What is meant by creation, something coming out of nothing?
50 Six thousand years ago God woke up from His dream and created
51 the world [and] before that there was nothing? What was God doing

1 then, taking a good nap? God is the cause of the universe, and we
2 can know the cause through the effect. If the effect is not present,
3 the cause is not [the] cause. The cause is always known in and
4 through the effect. . . . Creation is infinite. . . . You cannot think of
5 the beginning in time or in space.

6 Why does He create it? Because He likes to; because He is
7 free. . . . You and I are bound by law, because we can work [only] in
8 certain ways and not in others. "Without hands, He can grasp
9 everything.

10 Without feet, [He moves fast]." Without body, He is
11 omnipotent. "Whom no eyes can see, but who is the cause of sight
12 in every eye, know Him to be the Lord." You cannot worship
13 anything else. God is the omnipotent supporter of this universe.
14 What is called "law" is the manifestation of His will. He rules the
15 universe by His laws.

16 So far [we have discussed] God and nature, eternal God and
17 eternal nature. What about souls? They also are eternal. No soul
18 was [ever] created; neither can [the] soul die. Nobody can even
19 imagine his own death. The soul is infinite, eternal. How can it die?
20 It changes bodies. As a man takes off his old, worn-out garments
21 and puts on new and fresh ones, even so the worn-out body is
22 thrown away and [a] fresh body is taken.

23 What is the nature of the soul? The soul is also [omnipotent]
24 and omnipresent. Spirit has neither length, nor breadth, nor
25 thickness. . . . How can it be said to be here and there? This body
26 falls; [the soul] works [through] another body. The soul is a circle of
27 which the circumference is nowhere, but the centre is in the body.
28 God is a circle whose circumference is nowhere, but whose centre
29 is everywhere. The soul by its [very] nature is blessed, pure, and
30 perfect; it could never be pure if its nature was impure. . . . The
31 soul's nature is purity; that is why souls [can] become pure. It is
32 blessed [by nature]; that is why it [can] become blessed. It is peace;
33 [that is why it can become peaceful]. . . .

34 All of us who find ourselves in this plane, attracted to the
35 body, work hard for a living, with jealousies and quarrels and
36 hardships, and then death. That shows we are not what we should
37 be. We are not free, perfectly pure, and so on. The soul, as it were,
38 has become degraded. Then what the soul requires is
39 expansion. . . .

40 How can you do it? Can you work it out yourself? No. If a
41 man's face is dusty, can you wash it out with dust? If I put a seed in
42 the ground, the seed produces a tree, the tree produces a seed, the
43 seed another tree, etc. Hen and egg, egg and hen. If you do
44 something good, you will have to reap the result of that, be born
45 again and be sorry. Once started in this infinite chain, you cannot
46 stop. You go on, . . . up and down, [to] heavens and earths, and all
47 these [bodies]. . . . There is no way out.

48 Then how can you get out of all this, and what are you here
49 for? One idea is to get rid of misery. We are all struggling day and
50 night to get rid of misery. . . . We cannot do it by work. Work will

1 produce more work. It is only possible if there is someone who is
2 free himself and lends us a hand. "Hear, ye children of immortality,
3 all those that reside in this plane and all those that reside in the
4 heavens above, I have found the secret", says the great sage. "I
5 have found Him who is beyond all darkness. Through His mercy
6 alone we cross this ocean of life".

7 In India, the idea of the goal is this: There are heavens, there
8 are hells, there are earths, but they are not permanent. If I am sent
9 to hell, it is not permanent. The same struggle goes on and on
10 wherever I am . How to get beyond all this struggle is the problem.
11 If I go to heaven, perhaps there will be a little bit of rest. If I get
12 punished for my misdeeds, that cannot last [for ever either]. . . .
13 The Indian ideal is not to go to heaven. Get out of this earth, get out
14 of hell, and get out of heaven! What is the goal? It is freedom. You
15 must all be free. The glory of the soul is covered up. It has to be
16 uncovered again. The soul exists. It is everywhere. Where shall it
17 go? . . . Where can it go? It can only go where it is not. If you
18 understand [that] it is ever present, [there will be] perfect
19 happiness for ever afterwards. No more births and deaths. . . . No
20 more disease, no body. [The] body itself is the biggest disease. . . .

21 The soul shall stand [as] soul. Spirit shall live as spirit. How is
22 this to be done? By worshipping [the Lord in] the soul, who, by his
23 [very] nature is ever present, pure, and perfect. There cannot be
24 two almighty beings in this world. [Imagine having] two or three
25 Gods; one will create the world, another says, "I will destroy the
26 world". It [can] never happen. There must be one God. The soul
27 attains to perfection; [it becomes] almost omnipotent [and]
28 omniscient. This is the worshipper. Who is the worshipped? He, the
29 Lord God Himself, the Omnipresent, the Omniscient, and so on. And
30 above all, He is Love. How is [the soul] to attain this perfection? By
31 worship.

32 (*Vedanta and the West*, July-August 1955)

FORMAL WORSHIP

(Delivered in San Francisco area, April 10, 1900)

All of you who are students of the Bible . . . understand that the whole [of] Jewish history and Jewish thought have been produced by two [types of] teachers--priests and prophets, the priests representing the power of conservatism, the prophets the power of progress. The whole thing is that a conservative ritualism creeps in; formality gets hold of everything. This is true of every country and every religion. Then come some new seers with new visions; they preach new ideals and ideas and give a new push to society. In a few generations the followers become so faithful to their masters' ideas that they cannot see anything else. The most advanced, liberal preachers of this age within a few years will be the most conservative priests. The advanced thinkers, in their turn, will begin to hinder the man who goes a little farther. They will not let anyone go farther than what they themselves have attained. They are content to leave things as they are.

The power which works through the formative principles of every religion in every country is manifested in the forms of religion. . . . Principles and books, certain rules and movements--standing up, sitting down--all these belong to the same category of worship. Spiritual worship becomes materialised in order that the majority of mankind can get hold of it. The vast majority of mankind in every country are never [seen] to worship spirit as spirit. It is not yet possible. I do not know if there ever will be a time when they can. How many thousands in this city are ready to worship God as spirit? Very few. They cannot; they live in the senses. You have to give them cut and dried ideas. Tell them to do something physical: Stand up twenty times; sit down twenty times. They will understand that. Tell them to breathe in through one nostril and breathe out through the other. They will understand that. All this idealism about spirit they cannot accept at all. It is not their fault. . . . If you have the power to worship God as spirit, good! But there was a time when you could not. . . . If the people are crude, the religious conceptions are crude, and the forms are uncouth and gross. If the people are refined and cultured, the forms are more beautiful. There must be forms, only the forms change according to the times.

It is a curious phenomenon that there never was a religion started in this world with more antagonism . . . [to the worship of forms] than Mohammedanism. . . . The Mohammedans can have neither painting, nor sculpture, nor music. . . . That would lead to formalism. The priest never faces his audience. If he did, that would make a distinction. This way there is none. And yet it was not two centuries after the Prophet's death before saint worship [developed]. Here is the toe of the saint! There is the skin of the saint! So it goes. Formal worship is one of the stages we have to pass through.

1 Therefore, instead of crusading against it, let us take the best
2 in worship and study its underlying principles.

3 Of course, the lowest form of worship is what is known as
4 [tree and stone worship]. Every crude, uncultured man will take up
5 anything and add to it some idea [of his own]; and that will help
6 him. He may worship a bit of bone, or stone--anything. In all these
7 crude states of worship man has never worshipped a stone as
8 stone, a tree as tree. You know that from common sense. Scholars
9 sometimes say that men worshipped stones and trees. That is
10 nonsense. Tree worship is one of the stages through which the
11 human race passed. Never, really, was there ever worship of
12 anything but the spirit by man.

13 He is spirit [and] can feel nothing but spirit. Divine mind
14 could never make such a gross mistake as [to worship spirit as
15 matter]. In this case, man conceived the stone as spirit or the tree
16 as spirit. He [imagined] that some part of that Being resides in [the
17 stone] or the tree, that [the stone or] the tree has a soul.

18 Tree worship and serpent worship always go together. There
19 is the tree of knowledge. There must always be the tree, and the
20 tree is somehow connected with the serpent. These are the oldest
21 [forms of worship]. Even there you find that some particular tree or
22 some particular stone is worshipped, not all the [trees or] stones in
23 the world.

24 A higher state in [formal worship is that of] images [of
25 ancestors and God]. People make images of men who have died and
26 imaginary images of God. Then they worship those images.

27 Still higher is the worship of saints, of good men and women
28 who have passed on. Men worship their relics. [They feel that] the
29 presence of the saints is somehow in the relics, and that they will
30 help them. [They believe that] if they touch the saint's bone, they
31 will be healed--not that the bone itself heals, but that the saint who
32 resides there does. . . .

33 These are all low states of worship and yet worship. We all
34 have to pass through them. It is only from an intellectual standpoint
35 that they are not good enough. In our hearts we cannot get rid of
36 them. [If] you take from a man all the saints and images and do not
37 allow him to go into a temple, [he will still] imagine all the gods. He
38 has to. A man of eighty told me he could not conceive God except as
39 an old man with a long beard sitting on a cloud. What does that
40 show? His education is not complete. There has not been any
41 spiritual education, and he is unable to conceive anything except in
42 human terms.

43 There is still a higher order of formal worship--the world of
44 symbolism. The forms are still there, but they are neither trees, nor
45 [stones], nor images, nor relics of saints. They are symbols. There
46 are all sorts [of symbols] all over the world. The circle is a great
47 symbol of eternity. . . . There is the square; the well-known symbol
48 of the cross; and two figures like S and Z crossing each other.

49 Some people take it into their heads to see nothing in
50 symbols. . . . [Others want] all sorts of abracadabra. If you tell them

1 plain, simple truths, they will not accept them. . . . Human nature
2 being [what it is], the less they understand the better--the greater
3 man [they think] you are. In all ages in every country such
4 worshippers are deluded by certain diagrams and forms. Geometry
5 was the greatest science of all. The vast majority of the people
6 knew nothing [of it. They believed that if] the geometrist just drew
7 a square and said abracadabra at the four corners, the whole world
8 would begin to turn, the heavens would open, and God would come
9 down and jump about and be a slave. There is a whole mass of
10 lunatics today poring over these things day and night. All this is a
11 sort of disease. It is not for the metaphysician at all; it is for the
12 physician.

13 I am making fun, but I am so sorry. I see this problem so
14 [grave] in India. These are signs of the decay of the race, of
15 degradation and duress. The sign of vigour, the sign of life, the sign
16 of hope, the sign of health, the sign of everything that is good, is
17 strength. As long as the body lives, there must be strength in the
18 body, strength in the mind, [and strength] in the hand. In wanting to
19 get spiritual power through [all this abracadabra] there is fear, fear
20 of life. I do not mean that sort of symbolism.

21 But there is some truth in symbolism. There cannot be any
22 falsehood without some truth behind it. There cannot be any
23 imitation without something real.

24 There is the symbolic form of worship in the different
25 religions. There are fresh, vigorous, poetic, healthy symbols. Think
26 of the marvelous power the symbol of the cross has had upon
27 millions of people! Think of the symbol of the crescent! Think of the
28 magnetism of this one symbol! Everywhere there are good and
29 great symbols in the world. They interpret the spirit and bring
30 [about] certain conditions of the mind; as a rule we find [they
31 create] a tremendous power of faith and love.

32 Compare the Protestant with the Catholic [Church]. Who has
33 produced more saints, more martyrs within the last four hundred
34 years [during which] both have been in existence? The tremendous
35 appeal of Catholic ceremonialism--all those lights, incense, candles,
36 and the robes of the priests--has a great effect in itself.
37 Protestantism is quite austere and unpoetic. The Protestants have
38 gained many things, have granted a great deal more freedom in
39 certain lines than the Catholics have, and so have a clear, more
40 individualistic conception. That is all right, but they have lost a
41 good deal. . . . Take the paintings in the churches. That is an
42 attempt at poetry. If we are hungry for poetry, why not have it? Why
43 not give the soul what it wants? We have to have music. They are
44 the "Mohammedans" of the Christians. Down with all poetry! Down
45 with all ceremonials! Then they produce music. It appeals to the
46 senses. I have seen how collectively they strive for the ray of light
47 there over the pulpit.

48 Let the soul have its fill of poetry and religion represented on
49 the external plane. Why not. . . ? You cannot fight [formal worship].
50 It will conquer again and again. . . . If you do not like what the
51 Catholics do, do better. But we will neither do anything better nor

1 have the poetry that already exists. That is a terrible state of things!
2 Poetry is absolutely necessary. You may be the greatest philosopher
3 in the world. But philosophy is the highest poetry. It is not dry
4 bones. It is essence of things. The Reality itself is more poetic than
5 any dualism. . . .

6 Learning has no place in religion; for the majority learning is
7 a block in the way. . . . A man may have read all the libraries in the
8 world and may not be religious at all, and another, who cannot
9 perhaps write his own name, senses religion and realises it. The
10 whole of religion is our own inner perception. When I use the words
11 "man-making religion", I do not mean books, nor dogmas, nor
12 theories. I mean the man who has realised, has fully perceived,
13 something of that infinite presence in his own heart.

14 The man at whose feet I sat all my life--and it is only a few
15 ideas of his that I try to teach--could [hardly] write his name at all.
16 All my life I have not seen another man like that, and I have
17 travelled all over the world. When I think of that man, I feel like a
18 fool, because I want to read books and he never did. He never
19 wanted to lick the plates after other people had eaten. That is why
20 he was his own book. All my life I am repeating what Jack said and
21 John said, and never say anything myself. What glory is it that you
22 know what John said twenty-five years ago and what Jack said five
23 years ago? Tell me what *you* have to say.

24 Mind you, there is no value in learning. You are all mistaken
25 in learning. The only value of knowledge is in the strengthening, the
26 disciplining, of the mind. By all this eternal swallowing it is a
27 wonder that we are not all dyspeptics. Let us stop, and burn all the
28 books, and get hold of ourselves, and think. You all talk [about] and
29 get distracted over losing your "individuality". You are losing it
30 every moment of your lives by this eternal swallowing. If any one of
31 you believes what I teach, I will be sorry. I will only be too glad if I
32 can excite in you the power of thinking for yourselves. . . . My
33 ambition is to talk to men and women, not to sheep. By men and
34 women, I mean individuals. You are not little babies to drag all the
35 filthy rags from the street and bind them up into a doll!

36 "This is a place for learning! That man is placed in the
37 university! He knows all about what Mr. Blank said!" But Mr. Blank
38 said nothing! If I had the choice, I would . . . say to the professor,
39 "Get out! You are nobody!" Remember this individualism at any
40 cost! Think wrong if you will, no matter whether you get truth or
41 not. The whole point is to discipline the mind. That truth which you
42 swallow from others will not be yours. You cannot teach truth from
43 my mouth; neither can you learn truth from my mouth. None can
44 teach another. You have to realise truth and work it out for yourself
45 according to your own nature. . . . All must struggle to be
46 individuals--strong, standing on your own feet, thinking your own
47 thoughts, realising your own Self. No use swallowing doctrines
48 others pass on--standing up together like soldiers in jail, sitting
49 down together, all eating the same food, all nodding their heads at
50 the same time. Variation is the sign of life. Sameness is the sign of
51 death.

1 Once I was in an Indian city, and an old man came to me. He
2 said, "Swami, teach me the way." I saw that that man was as dead
3 as this table before me. Mentally and spiritually he was really dead.
4 I said, "Will you do what I ask you to do? Can you steal? Can you
5 drink wine? Can you eat meat?"

6 The man [exclaimed], "What are you teaching!"

7 I said to him, "Did this wall ever steal? Did the wall ever drink
8 wine?"

9 "No, sir."

10 Man steals, and he drinks wine, and becomes God. "I know
11 you are not the wall, my friend. Do something! Do something!" I
12 saw that if that man stole, his soul would be on the way to salvation.

13 How do I know that you are individuals--all saying the same
14 thing, all standing up and sitting down together? That is the road to
15 death! Do something for your souls! Do wrong if you please, but do
16 something! You will understand me by and by, if you do not just
17 now. Old age has come upon the soul, as it were. It has become
18 rusty. The rust must be [rubbed off], and then we go on. Now you
19 understand why there is evil in the world. Go home and think of
20 that, just to take off that rustiness!

21 We pray for material things. To attain some end we worship
22 God with shopkeeping worship. Go on and pray for food and
23 clothes! Worship is good. Something is always better than nothing.
24 "A blind uncle is better than no uncle at all." A very rich young man
25 becomes ill, and then to get rid of his disease he begins to give to
26 the poor. That is good, but it is not religion yet, not spiritual
27 religion. It is all on the material plane. What is material, and what is
28 not? When the world is the end and God the means to attain that
29 end, that is material. When God is the end and the world is only the
30 means to attain that end, spirituality has begun.

31 Thus, to the man who wants this [material] life enough, all his
32 heavens are a continuance of this life. He wants to see all the
33 people who are dead, and have a good time once more.

34 There was one of those ladies who brings the departed spirits
35 down to us--a medium. She was very large, yet she was called a
36 medium. Very good! This lady liked me very much and invited me to
37 come. The spirits were all very polite to me. I had a very peculiar
38 experience. You understand, it was a [seance], midnight. The
39 medium said, ". . . I see a ghost standing here. The ghost tells me
40 that there is a Hindu gentleman on that bench." I stood up and said,
41 "It required no ghost to tell you that."

1 There was a young man present who was married, intelligent,
2 and well educated. He was there to see his mother. The medium
3 said. "So-and-so's mother is here." This young man had been telling
4 me about his mother. She was very thin when she died, but the
5 mother that came out of the screen! You ought to have seen her! I
6 wanted to see what this young man would do. To my surprise he
7 jumped up and embraced this spirit and said, "Oh mother, how
8 beautiful you have grown in the spirit land!" I said, "I am blessed
9 that I am here. It gives me insight into human nature!"

10 Going back to formal worship. . . . it is a low state of worship
11 when you worship God as a means to the end, which is this life and
12 this world. . . . The vast majority of [people] have never had any
13 conception of anything higher than this lump of flesh and the joys of
14 the senses. Even in this life, all the pleasures these poor souls have
15 are the same as the beasts. . . . They eat animals. They love their
16 children. Is that all the glory of man? And we worship God
17 Almighty! What for? Just to give us these material things and
18 defend them all the time. . . . It means we have not gone beyond the
19 [animals and] birds. We are no better. We do not know any better.
20 And woe unto us, we should know better! The only difference is that
21 they do not have a God like ours. . . . We have the same five senses
22 [as the animals], only theirs are better. We cannot eat a morsel of
23 food with the relish that a dog chews a bone. They have more
24 pleasure in life than we; so we are a little less than animals.

25 Why should you want to be something that any power in
26 nature can operate better? This is the most important question for
27 you to think about. What do you want--this life, these senses, this
28 body, or something infinitely higher and better, something from
29 which there is no more fall, no more change?

30 So what does it mean . . . ? You say, "Lord, give me my bread,
31 my money! Heal my diseases! Do this and that!" Every time you say
32 that, you are hypnotising yourselves with the idea, "I am matter,
33 and this matter is the goal." Every time you try to fulfil a material
34 desire, you tell yourselves that you are [the] body, that you are not
35 spirit. . . .

36 Thank God, this is a dream! Thank God, for it will vanish!
37 Thank God, there is death, glorious death, because it ends all this
38 delusion, this dream, this fleshiness, this anguish. No dream can be
39 eternal; it must end sooner or later. There is none who can keep his
40 dream for ever. I thank God that it is so! Yet this form of worship is
41 all right. Go on! To pray for something is better than nothing. These
42 are the stages through which we pass. These are the first lessons.
43 Gradually, the mind begins to think of something higher than the
44 senses, the body, the enjoyments of this world.

45 How does [man] do it? First he becomes a thinker. When you
46 think upon a problem, there is no sense-enjoyment there, but [the]
47 exquisite delight of thought. . . . It is that that makes the man. . . .
48 Take one great idea! It deepens. Concentration comes. You no
49 longer feel your body. Your senses have stopped. You are above all
50 physical senses. All that was manifesting itself through the senses
51 is concentrated upon that one idea. That moment you are higher

1 than the animal. You get the revelation none can take from you--a
2 direct perception of something higher than the body. . . . Therein is
3 the gold of mind, not upon the plane of the senses.

4 Thus, working through the plane of the senses, you get more
5 and more entry into the other regions, and then this world falls
6 away from you. You get one glimpse of that spirit, and then your
7 senses and your sense-enjoyments, your clinging to the flesh, will
8 all melt away from you. Glimpse after glimpse will come from the
9 realm of spirit. You will have finished Yoga, and spirit will stand
10 revealed as spirit. Then you will begin the worship of God

1 as spirit. Then you will begin to understand that worship is
2 not to gain something. At heart, our worship was that infinite-finite
3 element, love, which [is] an eternal sacrifice at the feet of the Lord
4 by the soul. "Thou and not I. I am dead. Thou art, and I am not. I do
5 not want wealth, nor beauty, no, nor even learning. I do not want
6 salvation. If it be Thy will, let me go into twenty million hells. I only
7 want one thing: Be Thou my love!"

8 (*Vedanta and the West* , Nov.-Dec. 1955)

DIVINE LOVE

(Delivered in San Francisco area, April 12, 1900)

[Love may be symbolised by a triangle. The first angle is,] love questions not. It is not a beggar. . . . Beggar's love is no love at all. The first sign of love is when love asks nothing, [when it] gives everything. This is the real spiritual worship, the worship through love. Whether God is merciful is no longer questioned. He is God; He is my love. Whether God is omnipotent and almighty, limited or unlimited, is no longer questioned. If He distributes good, all right; if He brings evil, what does it matter? All other attributes vanish except that one--infinite love.

There was an old Indian emperor who on a hunting expedition came across a great sage in the forest. He was so pleased with this sage that he insisted that the latter come to the capital to receive some presents. [At first] the sage refused. [But] the emperor insisted, and at last the sage consented. When he arrived [at the palace], he was announced to the emperor who said, "Wait a minute until I finish my prayer." The emperor prayed, "Lord, give me more wealth, more [land, more health], more children." The sage stood up and began to walk out of the room. The emperor said, "You have not received my presents." The sage replied, "I do not beg from beggars. All this time you have been praying for more land, [for] more money, for this and that. What can you give me? First satisfy your own wants!"

Love never asks; it always gives. . . . When a young man goes to see his sweetheart, . . . there is no business relationship between them; theirs is a relationship of love, and love is no beggar. [In the same way], we understand that the beginning of real spiritual worship means no begging. We have finished all begging: "Lord, give me this and that." Then will religion begin.

The second [angle of the triangle of love] is that love knows no fear. You may cut me to pieces, and I [will] still love you. Suppose one of you mothers, a weak woman, sees a tiger in the street snatching your child. I know where you will be: you will face the tiger. Another time a dog appears in the street, and you will fly. But you jump at the mouth of the tiger and snatch your child away. Love knows no fear. It conquers all evil. The fear of God is the beginning of religion, but the love of God is the end of religion. All fear has died out.

The third [angle of the love-triangle is that] love is its own end. It can never be the means. The man who says, "I love you for such and such a thing", does not love. Love can never be the means; it must be the perfect end. What is the end and aim of love? To love God, that is all. Why should one love God? [There is] no why, because it is not the means. When one can love, that is salvation, that is perfection, that is heaven. What more? What else can be the end? What can you have higher than love?

1 I am not talking about what every one of us means by love.
2 Little namby-pamby love is lovely. Man falls in love with a woman,
3 and woman goes to die for man. The chances are that in five
4 minutes John kicks Jane, and Jane kicks John. This is a materialism
5 and no love at all. If John could really love Jane, he would be perfect
6 that moment. [His true] nature is love; he is perfect in himself. John
7 will get all the powers of Yoga simply by loving Jane, [although] he
8 may not know a word about religion, psychology, or theology. I
9 believe that if a man and woman can really love, [they can acquire]
10 all the powers the Yogis claim to have, for love itself is God.

11 That God is omnipresent, and [therefore] you have that love,
12 whether you know it or not.

13 I saw a boy waiting for a girl the other evening. . . . I thought
14 it a good experiment to study this boy. He developed clairvoyance
15 and clairsaudience through the intensity of his love. Sixty or seventy
16 times he never made a mistake, and the girl was two hundred miles
17 away. [He would say], "She is dressed this way." [Or], "There she
18 goes." I have seen that with my own eyes.

19 This is the question: Is not your husband God, your child God?
20 If you can love your wife, you have all the religion in the world. You
21 have the whole secret of religion and Yoga in you. But can you love?
22 This is the question. You say, "I love . . . Oh Mary, I die for you!"
23 [But if you] see Mary kissing another man, you want to cut his
24 throat. If Mary sees John talking to another girl, she cannot sleep at
25 night, and she makes life hell for John. This is not love. This is
26 barter and sale in sex. It is blasphemy to talk of it as love. The
27 world talks day and night of God and religion--so of love. Making a
28 sham of everything, that is what you are doing! Everybody talks of
29 love, [yet in the] columns in the newspapers [we read] of divorces
30 everyday. When you love John, do you love John for his sake or for
31 your sake? [If you love him for your sake], you expect something
32 from John. [If you love him for his sake], you do not want anything
33 from John. He can do anything he likes, [and] you [will] love him
34 just the same.

35 These are the three points, the three angles that constitute
36 the triangle [of love]. Unless there is love, philosophy becomes dry
37 bones, psychology becomes a sort of [theory], and work becomes
38 mere labor. [If there is love], philosophy becomes poetry,
39 psychology becomes [mysticism], and work the most delicious thing
40 in creation. [By merely] reading books [one] becomes barren. Who
41 becomes learned? He who can feel even one drop of love. God is
42 love, and love is God. And God is everywhere. After seeing that God
43 is love and God is everywhere, one does not know whether one
44 stands on one's head or [on one's] feet--like a man who gets a bottle
45 of wine and does not know where he stands. . . . If we weep ten
46 minutes for God, we will not know where we are for the next two
47 months. . . . We will not remember the times for meals. We will not
48 know what we are eating. [How can] you love God and always be so
49 nice and businesslike? . . . The . . . all-conquering omnipotent
50 power of love--how can it come? . . .

51 Judge people not. They are all mad. Children are [mad] after

1 their games, the young after the young, the old [are] chewing the
2 cud of their past years; some are mad after gold. Why not some
3 after God? Go crazy over the love of God as you go crazy over Johns
4 and Janes. Who are they? [People] say, "Shall I give up this? Shall I
5 give up that?" One asked, "Shall I give up marriage?" Do not give
6 up anything! Things will give you up. Wait, and you will forget them.

7 [To be completely] turned into love of God--there is the real
8 worship! You have a glimpse of that now and then in the Roman
9 Catholic Church--some of those wonderful monks and nuns going
10 mad with marvelous love. Such love you ought to have! Such should
11 be the love of God--without asking anything, without seeking
12 anything. . . .

13 The question was asked: How to worship? Worship Him as
14 dearer than all your possessions, dearer than all your relatives,
15 [dearer than] your children. [Worship Him as] the one you love as
16 Love itself. There is one whose name is infinite Love. That is the
17 only definition of God. Do not care if this . . . universe is destroyed.
18 What do we care as long as He is infinite love? [Do you] see what
19 worship means? All other thoughts must go. Everything must vanish
20 except God. The love the father or mother has for the child, [the
21 love] the wife [has] for the husband, the husband for the wife, the
22 friend for the friend--all these loves concentrated into one must be
23 given to God. Now, if the woman loves the man, she cannot love
24 another man. If the man loves the woman, he cannot love another
25 [woman]. Such is the nature of love.

26 My old Master used to say, "Suppose there is a bag of gold in
27 this room, and in the next room there is a robber. The robber is well
28 aware that there is a bag of gold. Would the robber be able to
29 sleep? Certainly not. All the time he would be crazy thinking how to
30 reach the gold." . . . [Similarly], if a man loves God, how can he love
31 anything else? How can anything else stand before the mighty love
32 of God? Everything else vanishes [before it]. How can the mind stop
33 without going crazy to find [that love], to realise, to feel, to live in
34 that?

35 This is how we are to love God: "I do not want wealth, nor
36 [friends, nor beauty], nor possessions, nor learning, nor even
37 salvation. If it be Thy will, send me a thousand deaths. Grant me,
38 this--that I may love Thee and that for love's sake. That love which
39 materialistic persons have for their worldly possessions, may that
40 strong love come into my heart, but only for the Beautiful. Praise to
41 God! Praise to God the Lover!" God is nothing else than that. He
42 does not care for the wonderful things many Yogis can do. Little
43 magicians do little tricks. God is the big magician; He does all the
44 tricks. Who cares how many worlds [there are]? . . .

45 There is another [way. It is to] conquer everything, [to]
46 subdue everything--to conquer the body [and] the mind. . . . "What
47 is the use of conquering everything? My business is with God!"
48 [says the devotee.]

49 There was one Yogi, a great lover. He was dying of cancer of
50 the throat. He [was] visited [by] another Yogi, who was a
51 philosopher. [The latter] said, "Look here, my friend, why don't you

1 concentrate your mind on that sore of yours and get it cured?" The
2 third time this question was asked [this great Yogi] said, "Do you
3 think it possible that the [mind] which I have given entirely to the
4 Lord [can be fixed upon this cage of flesh and blood]?" Christ
5 refused to bring legions of angels to his aid. Is this little body so
6 great that I should bring twenty thousand angels to keep it two or
7 three days more?

8 [From the worldly standpoint,] my all is this body. My world is
9 this body. My God is this body. I am the body. If you pinch me, I am
10 pinched. I forget God the moment I have a headache. I am the
11 body! God and everything must come down for this highest goal--
12 the body. From this standpoint, when Christ died on the cross and
13 did not bring angels [to his aid], he was a fool. He ought to have
14 brought down angels and gotten himself off the cross! But from the
15 standpoint of the lover, to whom this body is nothing, who cares for
16 this nonsense? Why bother thinking about this body that comes and
17 goes? There is no more to it than the piece of cloth the Roman
18 soldiers cast lots for.

19 There is a whole gamut of difference between [the worldly
20 standpoint] and the lover's standpoint. Go on loving. If a man is
21 angry, there is no reason why you should be angry; if he degrades
22 himself, that is no reason why you should degrade yourself. . . .
23 "Why should I become angry just because another man has made a
24 fool of himself? Do thou resist not evil!" That is what the lovers of
25 God say. Whatever the world does, wherever it goes, has no
26 influence [on them].

27 One Yogi had attained supernatural powers. He said, "See my
28 power! See the sky; I will cover it with clouds." It began to rain.
29 [Someone] said, "My lord, you are wonderful. But teach me that,
30 knowing which, I shall not ask for anything else." . . . To get rid
31 even of power, to have nothing, not to want power! [What this
32 means] cannot be understood simply by intellect. . . . You cannot
33 understand by reading thousands of books. . . . When we begin to
34 understand, the whole world opens before us. . . . The girl is playing
35 with her dolls, getting new husbands all the time; but when her real
36 husband comes, all the dolls will be put away [for ever]. . . . So
37 [with] all these goings-on here. [When] the sun of love rises, all
38 these play-suns of power and these [cravings] all pass [away]. What
39 shall we do with power? Thank God if you can get rid of the power
40 that you have. Begin to love. Power must go. Nothing must stand
41 between me and God except love. God is only love and nothing
42 else--love first, love in the middle, and love at the end.

43 [There is the] story of a queen preaching [the love of God] in
44 the streets. Her enraged husband persecuted her, and she was
45 hunted up and down the country. She used to sing songs describing
46 her [love]. Her songs have been sung everywhere. "With tears in
47 my eyes I [nourished the everlasting creeper] of love. . . ." This is
48 the last, the great [goal]. What else is there? [People] want this and
49 that. They all want to have and possess. That is why so few
50 understand [love], so few come to it. Wake them and tell them! They
51 will get a few more hints.

1 Love itself is the eternal, endless sacrifice. You will have to
2 give up everything. You cannot take possession of anything. Finding
3 love, you will never [want] anything [else]. . . . "Only be Thou my
4 love for ever!" That is what love wants. "My love, one kiss of those
5 lips! [For him] who has been kissed by Thee, all sorrows vanish.
6 Once kissed by Thee, man becomes happy and forgets love of
7 everything else. He praises Thee alone and he sees Thee alone." In
8 the nature of human love even, [there lurk divine elements. In] the
9 first moment of intense love the whole world seems in tune with
10 your own heart. Every bird in the universe sings your love; the
11 flowers bloom for you. It is infinite, eternal love itself that [human]
12 love comes from.

13 Why should the lover of God fear anything--fear robbers, fear
14 distress, fear even for his life? . . . The lover [may] go to the utmost
15 hell, but would it be hell? We all have to give up these ideas of
16 heaven [and hell] and get greater [love]. . . . Hundreds there are
17 seeking this madness of love before which everything [but God
18 vanishes].

19 At last, love, lover, and beloved become one. That is the goal. .
20 . . Why is there any separation between soul and man, between soul
21 and God? . . . Just to have this enjoyment of love. He wanted to love
22 Himself, so He split Himself into many. . . . "This is the whole reason
23 for creation", says the lover. "We are all one. 'I and my Father are
24 one.' Just now I am separate in order to love God. . . . Which is
25 better--to become sugar or to eat sugar? To become sugar, what fun
26 is that? To eat sugar--that is infinite enjoyment of love."

27 All the ideals of love--[God] as [our] father, mother, friend,
28 child--[are conceived in order to strengthen devotion in us and
29 make us feel nearer and dearer to God.] The intensest love is that
30 between the sexes. God must be loved with that sort of love. The
31 woman loves her father; she loves her mother; she loves her child;
32 she loves her friend. But she cannot express herself all to the
33 father, nor to the mother, nor to the child, nor to the friend. There is
34 only one person from whom she does not hide anything. So with the
35 man. . . . The [husband-] wife relationship is the all-rounded
36 relationship. The relationship of the sexes [has] all the other loves
37 concentrated into one. In the husband, the woman has the father,
38 the friend, the child. In the wife, the husband has mother, daughter,
39 and something else. That tremendous complete love of the sexes
40 must come [for God]--that same love with which a woman opens
41 herself to a man without any bond of blood--perfectly, fearlessly,
42 and shamelessly. No darkness! She would no more hide anything
43 from her lover than she would from her own self. That very love
44 must come [for God]. These things are hard and difficult to
45 understand. You will begin to understand by and by, and all idea of
46 sex will fall away. "Like the water drop on the sand of the river bank
47 on a summer day, even so is this life and all its relations."

48 All these ideas [like] "He is the creator", are ideas fit for
49 children. He is my love, my life itself--that must be the cry of my
50 heart! . . .

51 I have one hope. They call Thee the Lord of the world, and --

1 good or evil, great or small--I am part of the world, and Thou art
2 also my love. My body, my mind, and my soul are all at Thy altar.
3 Love, refuse these gifts not!"
4 (*Vedanta and the West* , Sept.-Oct. 1955)

RELIGION AND SCIENCE

Experience is the only source of knowledge. In the world, religion is the only source where there is no surety, because it is not taught as a science of experience. This should not be. There is always, however, a small group of men who teach religion from experience. They are called mystics, and these mystics in every religion speak the same tongue and teach the same truth. This is the real science of religion. As mathematics in every part of the world does not differ, so the mystics do not differ. They are all similarly constituted and similarly situated. Their experience is the same; and this becomes law.

In the church, religionists first learn a religion, then begin to practise it; they do not take experience as the basis of their belief. But the mystic starts out in search of truth, experiences it first, and then formulates his creed. The church takes the experience of others; the mystic has his own experience. The church goes from the outside in; the mystic goes from the inside out.

Religion deals with the truths of the metaphysical world just as chemistry and the other natural sciences deal with the truths of the physical world. The book one must read to learn chemistry is the book of nature. The book from which to learn religion is your own mind and heart. The sage is often ignorant of physical science, because he reads the wrong book--the book within; and the scientist is too often ignorant of religion, because he too reads the wrong book--the book without.

All science has its particular methods; so has the science of religion. It has more methods also, because it has more material to work upon. The human mind is not homogeneous like the external world. According to the different nature, there must be different methods. As some special sense predominates in a person--one person will see most, another will hear most--so there is a predominant mental sense; and through this gate must each reach his own mind. Yet through all minds runs a unity, and there is a science which may be applied to all. This science of religion is based on the analysis of the human soul. It has no creed.

No one form of religion will do for all. Each is a pearl on a string. We must be particular above all else to find individuality in each. No man is born to any religion; he has a religion in his own soul. Any system which seeks to destroy individuality is in the long run disastrous. Each life has a current running through it, and this current will eventually take it to God. The end and aim of all religions is to realise God. The greatest of all training is to worship God alone. If each man chose his own ideal and stuck to it, all religious controversy would vanish.

RELIGION IS REALISATION

1 The greatest name man ever gave to God is Truth. Truth is
2 the fruit of realisation; therefore seek it within the soul. Get away
3 from all books and forms and let your soul see its Self. "We are
4 deluded and maddened by books", Shri Krishna declares. Be
5 beyond the dualities of nature. The moment you think creed and
6 form and ceremony the "be-all" and "end-all", then you are in
7 bondage. Take part in them to help others, but take care they do not
8 become a bondage. Religion is one, but its application must be
9 various. Let each one, therefore, give his message; but find not the
10 defects in other religions. You must come out from all form if you
11 would see the Light. Drink deep of the nectar of the knowledge of
12 God. The man who realises, "I am He", though clad in rags, is
13 happy. Go forth into the Eternal and come back with eternal energy.
14 The slave goes out to search for truth; he comes back free.

16 RELIGION IS SELF-ABNEGATION

18 One cannot divide the rights of the universe. To talk of "right"
19 implies limitation. It is not "right" but "responsibility". Each is
20 responsible for the evil anywhere in the world. No one can separate
21 himself from his brother. All that unites with the universal is virtue;
22 all that separates is sin. You are a part of the Infinite. This is your
23 nature. Hence you are your brother's keeper.

24 The first end of life is knowledge; the second end of life is
25 happiness. Knowledge and happiness lead to freedom. But not one
26 can attain liberty until every being (ant or dog) has liberty. Not one
27 can be happy until all are happy. When you hurt anyone you hurt
28 yourself, for you and your brother are one. He is indeed a Yogi who
29 sees himself in the whole universe and the whole universe in
30 himself. Self-sacrifice, not self-assertion, is the law of the highest
31 universe. The world is so evil because Jesus' teaching, "Resist not
32 evil", has never been tried. Selflessness alone will solve the
33 problem. Religion comes with intense self-sacrifice. Desire nothing
34 for yourself. Do all for others. This is to live and move and have
35 your being in God.

37 UNSELFISH WORK IS TRUE RENUNCIATION

39 This world is not for cowards. Do not try to fly. Look not for
40 success or failure. Join yourself to the perfectly unselfish will and
41 work on. Know that the mind which is born to succeed joins itself to
42 a determined will and perseveres. You have the right to work, but
43 do not become so degenerate as to look for results. Work
44 incessantly, but see something behind the work. Even good deeds
45 can find a man in great bondage. Therefore be not bound by good
46 deeds or by desire for name and fame. Those who know this secret
47 pass beyond this round of birth and death and become immortal.

48 The ordinary Sannyasin gives up the world, goes out, and
49 thinks of God. The real Sannyasin lives in the world, but is not of it.

1 Those who deny themselves, live in the forest, and chew the cud of
2 unsatisfied desires are not true renouncers. Live in the midst of the
3 battle of life. Anyone can keep calm in a cave or when asleep. Stand
4 in the whirl and madness of action and reach the Centre. If you
5 have found the Centre, you cannot be moved.

6 7 FREEDOM OF THE SELF

8
9 As we cannot know except through effects that we have eyes,
10 so we cannot see the Self except by Its effects. It cannot be brought
11 down to the low plane of sense-perception. It is the condition of
12 everything in the universe, though Itself unconditioned. When we
13 know that we are the Self, then we are free. The Self can never
14 change. It cannot be acted on by a cause, because It is Itself the
15 cause. It is self-caused. If we can find in ourself something that is
16 not acted on by any cause, then we have known the Self.

17 Freedom is inseparably connected with immortality. To be
18 free one must be above the laws of nature. Law exists so long as we
19 are ignorant. When knowledge comes, then we find that law
20 nothing but freedom in ourselves. The will can never be free,
21 because it is the slave of cause and effect. But the "I" behind the
22 will is free; and this is the Self. "I am free"--that is the basis on
23 which to build and live. And freedom means immortality.

24 25 26 NOTES ON VEDANTA

27
28 The cardinal features of the Hindu religion are founded on
29 the meditative and speculative philosophy and on the ethical
30 teachings contained in the various books of the Vedas, which assert
31 that the universe is infinite in space and eternal in duration. It
32 never had a beginning, and it never will have an end. Innumerable
33 have been the manifestations of the power of the Spirit in the realm
34 of matter, of the force of the Infinite in the domain of the finite, but
35 the Infinite Itself is self-existent, eternal, and unchangeable. The
36 passage of time makes no mark whatever on the dial of eternity. In
37 its supersensuous region, which cannot be comprehended at all by
38 the human understanding, there is no past and there is no future.

39 The Vedas teach that the soul of man is immortal. The body is
40 subject to the law of growth and decay; what grows must of
41 necessity decay. But the indwelling spirit is related to the infinite
42 and eternal life; it never had a beginning, and it will never have an
43 end. One of the chief distinctions between the Vedic and the
44 Christian religion is that the Christian religion teaches that each
45 human soul had its beginning at its birth into this world; whereas
46 the Vedic religion asserts that the spirit of man is an emanation of
47 the Eternal Being and had no more a beginning than God Himself.
48 Innumerable have been and will be its manifestations in its passage

1 from one personality to another, subject to the great law of spiritual
2 evolution, until it reaches perfection, when there is no more
3 change.

4 5 HINDU AND GREEK

6
7 Three mountains stand as typical of progress--the Himalayas
8 of Indo-Aryan, Sinai of Hebrew, and Olympus of Greek civilisation.
9 When the Aryans reached India, they found the climate so hot that
10 they could not work incessantly, so they began to think; thus they
11 became introspective and developed religion. They discovered that
12 there was no limit to the power of mind; they therefore sought to
13 master that; and through it they learnt that there was something
14 infinite coiled up in the frame we call man, which was seeking to
15 become kinetic. To evolve this became their chief aim. Another
16 branch of the Aryans went into the smaller and more picturesque
17 country of Greece, where the climate and natural conditions were
18 more favorable; so their activity turned outwards, and they
19 developed the external arts and outward liberty. The Greek sought
20 political liberty. The Hindu has always sought spiritual liberty. Both
21 are one-sided. The Indian cares not enough for national protection
22 or patriotism, he will defend only his religion; while with the Greek
23 and in Europe (where the Greek civilisation finds its continuation)
24 the country comes first. To care only for spiritual liberty and not for
25 social liberty is a defect, but the opposite is a still greater defect.
26 Liberty of both soul and body is to be striven for.

27 28 THOUGHTS ON THE VEDAS AND UPANISHADS

29
30 The Vedic sacrificial altar was the origin of Geometry.

31 The invocation of the Devas, or bright ones, was the basis of
32 worship. The idea is that one invoked is helped and helps.

33 Hymns are not only words of praise but words of power, being
34 pronounced with the right attitude of mind.

35 Heaven are only other states of existence with added senses
36 and heightened powers.

37 All higher bodies also are subject to disintegration as is the
38 physical. Death comes to all forms of bodies in this and other lives.
39 Devas are also mortal and can only give enjoyment.

40 Behind all Devas there is the Unit Being--God, as behind this
41 body there is something higher that feels and sees.

42 The powers of creation, preservation, and destruction of the
43 Universe, and the attributes, such as omnipresence, omniscience,
44 and omnipotence, make God of gods.

45 "Hear ye children of Immortality! Hear ye Devas who live in
46 higher spheres!" (Shvetashvatara, II.5). "I have found out a ray
47 beyond all darkness, beyond all doubt. I have found the Ancient

1 One" (ibid. III.8). The way to this is contained in the Upanishads.

2 On earth we die. In heaven we die. In the highest heaven we
3 die. It is only when we reach God that we attain life and become
4 immortal.

5 The Upanisads treat of this alone. The path of the Upanishads
6 is the pure path. Many manners, customs, and local allusions
7 cannot be understood today. Through them, however, truth becomes
8 clear. Heavens and Earth are all thrown off in order to come to
9 Light.

10 The Upanisads declare:

11 "He the Lord has interpenetrated the universe. It is all His."

12 "He the Omnipresent, the One without a second, the One
13 without a body, pure, the great poet of the universe, whose metre is
14 the suns and stars, is giving to each what he deserves" (Isha
15 Upanishad, 8, adapted).

16 "They are groping in utter darkness who try to reach the
17 Light by ceremonials. And they who think this nature is all are in
18 darkness. They who wish to come out of nature through this
19 thought are groping in still deeper darkness" (Isha, 9).

20 Are then ceremonials bad? No, they will benefit those who
21 are coming on.

22 In one of the Upanishads (i.e. Katha) this question is asked by
23 Nachiketa, a youth: "Some say of a dead man, he is gone; others, he
24 is still living. You are Yama, Death.

25 You know the truth; do answer me." Yama replied, "Even the
26 Devas, many of them, know not--much less men. Boy, do not ask of
27 me this answer." But Nachiketa persists. Yama again replies, "The
28 enjoyments of the gods, even these I offer you. Do not insist upon
29 your query." But Nachiketa was firm as a rock. Then the god of
30 death said, "My boy, you have declined, for the third time, wealth,
31 power, long life, fame, family. You are brave enough to ask the
32 highest truth. I will teach you. There are two ways, one of truth, one
33 of enjoyment. You have chosen the former."

34 Now note here the conditions of imparting the truth. First,
35 the purity--a boy, a pure, unclouded soul, asking the secret of the
36 universe. Second, that he must take truth for truth's sake alone.

37 Until the truth has come through one who has had realisation,
38 from one who has perceived it himself, it cannot become fruitful.
39 Books cannot give it, argument cannot establish it. Truth comes
40 unto him who knows the secret of it.

41 After you have received it, be quiet. Be not ruffled by vain
42 argument. Come to your own realisation. You alone can do it.

43 Neither happiness nor misery, vice nor virtue, knowledge nor
44 non-knowledge is it. You must realise it. How can I describe it to
45 you?

1 He who cries out with his whole heart, "O Lord, I want but
2 Thee"--to him the Lord reveals Himself. Be pure, be calm; the mind
3 when ruffled cannot reflect the Lord.

4 "He whom the Vedas declare, He, to reach whom, we serve
5 with prayer and sacrifice, Om is the sacred name of that
6 indescribable One. This word is the holiest of all words. He who
7 knows the secret of this word receives that which he desires." Take
8 refuge in this word. Whoso takes refuge in this word, to him the
9 way opens.

11 ON RAJA-YOGA

13 The first stage of Yoga is Yama.

14 To master Yama five things are necessary:

15 (1) Non-injuring any being by thought, word, and deed.

16 (2) Speaking the truth in thought, word, and deed.

17 (3) Non-covetousness in thought, word, and deed.

18 (4) Perfect chastity in thought, word, and deed.

19 (5) Perfect sinlessness in thought, word, and deed.

20 Holiness is the greatest power. Everything else quails before
21 it.

22 Then comes Asana, or posture, of a devotee. The seat must be
23 firm, the head, ribs, and body in a straight line, erect. Say to
24 yourself that you are firmly seated, and that nothing can move you.
25 Then mention the perfection of the body, bit by bit, from head to
26 foot. Think of it as being clear as crystal, and as a perfect vessel to
27 sail over the sea of life.

28 Pray to God and to all the prophets and saviors of the world
29 and holy spirits in the universe to help you.

30 Then for half an hour practice Pranayama or the suspending,
31 restraining, and controlling of the breath, mentally repeating the
32 word Om as you inhale and exhale the breath. Words charged with
33 spirit have wonderful power.

34 The other stages of Yoga are: (1) Pratyahara or the restraint
35 of the organs of sense from all outward things, and directing them
36 entirely to mental impressions; (2) Dharana or steadfast
37 concentration; (3) Dhyana or meditation; (4) Samadhi or abstract
38 meditation. It is the highest and last stage of Yoga. Samadhi is
39 perfect absorption of thought into the Supreme Spirit, when one
40 realises, "I and my Father are one."

41 Do one thing at a time and while doing it put your whole soul
42 into it to the exclusion of all else.

43

ON BHAKTI-YOGA

Bhakti-Yoga is the path of systematised devotion for the attainment of union with the Absolute. It is the easiest and surest path to religion or realisation.

Love to God is the one essential to be perfect in this path.

There are five stages of love.

First, man wants help and has a little fear.

Second, when God is seen as Father.

Third, when God is seen as Mother. Then all women are looked upon as reflections of the Mother-God. With the idea of Mother-God real love begins.

Fourth, love for love's sake. Love for love's sake transcends all qualities.

Fifth, love in Divine-union. It leads to oneness or superconsciousness.

God is both Personal and Impersonal as we are personal and impersonal.

Prayer and praise are the first means of growth. Repeating the names of God has wonderful power.

Mantra is a special word, or sacred text, or name of God chosen by the Guru for repetition and reflection by the disciple. The disciple must concentrate on a personality for prayer and praise, and that is his Ishta.

These words (Mantras) are not sounds of words but God Himself, and we have them within us. Think of Him, speak of Him. No desire for the world! Buddhas's Sermon on the Mount was, "As thou thinkest, so art thou."

After attaining superconsciousness the Bhakta descends again to love and worship.

Pure love has no motive. It has nothing to gain.

After prayer and praise comes meditation. Then comes reflection on the name and on the Ishta of the individual.

Pray that that manifestation which is our Father, our Mother, may cut our bonds.

Pray, "Take us by the hand as a father takes his son, and leave us not."

Pray, "I do not want wealth or beauty, this world or another, but Thee, O God! Lord! I have become weary. Oh, take me by the hand, Lord, I take shelter with Thee. Make me Thy servant. Be Thou my refuge."

Pray, "Thou our Father, our Mother, our dearest Friend! Thou who bearest this universe, help us to bear the little burden of this our life. Leave us not. Let us never be separated from Thee. Let us always dwell in Thee."

1 When love to God is revealed and is all, this world appears
2 like a drop.

3 Pass from non-existence to existence, from darkness to light.

5 ON JNANA-YOGA

7 First, meditation should be of a negative nature. Think away
8 everything. Analyse everything that comes in the mind by the sheer
9 action of the will.

10 Next, assert what we really are--existence, knowledge, and
11 bliss--being, knowing, and loving.

12 Meditation is the means of unification of the subject and
13 object. Meditate:

14 Above, it is full of me; below, it is full of me; in the middle, it
15 is full of me. I am in all beings, and all beings are in me. Om Tat
16 Sat, I am It. I am existence above mind. I and the one spirit of the
17 universe. I am neither pleasure nor pain.

18 The body drinks, eats, and so on. I am not the body. I am not
19 mind. I am He.

20 I am the witness. I look on. When health comes I am the
21 witness. When disease comes I am the witness.

22 I am Existence, Knowledge, Bliss.

23 I am the essence and nectar of knowledge. Through eternity I
24 change not. I am calm, resplendent, and unchanging.

27 THE REALITY AND SHADOW

29 That which differentiates one thing from another is time,
30 space, and causation.

31 The differentiation is in the form, not in the substance. You
32 may destroy the form and it disappears for ever; but the substance
33 remains the same. You can never destroy the substance.

34 Evolution is in nature, not in the soul--evolution of nature,
35 manifestation of the soul.

36 Maya is not illusion as it is popularly interpreted. Maya is
37 real, yet it is not real. It is real in that the Real is behind it and
38 gives it its appearance of reality. That which is real in Maya is the
39 Reality in and through Maya. Yet the Reality is never seen ; and
40 hence that which is seen is unreal, and it has no real independent
41 existence of itself, but is dependent upon the Real for its existence.

42 Maya then is a paradox--real, yet not real, an illusion, yet not
43 an illusion.

1 He who knows the Real sees in Maya not illusion, but reality.
2 He who knows not the Real sees in Maya illusion and thinks it real.

3 4 5 HOW TO BECOME FREE

6
7 All things in nature work according to law. Nothing is
8 excepted. The mind as well as everything in external nature is
9 governed and controlled by law.

10 Internal and external nature, mind and matter, are in time
11 and space, and are bound by the law of causation.

12 The freedom of the mind is a delusion. How can the mind be
13 free when it is controlled and bound by law?

14 The law of Karma is the law of causation.

15 We must become free. We are free; the work is to know it. We
16 must give up all slavery, all bondage of whatever kind. We must not
17 only give up our bondage to earth and everything and everybody on
18 earth, but also to all ideas of heaven and happiness.

19 We are bound to earth by desire and also to God, heaven, and
20 the angels. A slave is a slave whether to man, to God, or to angels.

21 The idea of heaven must pass away. The idea of heaven after
22 death where the good live a life of eternal happiness is a vain
23 dream, without a particle of meaning or sense in it. Wherever there
24 is happiness there must follow unhappiness sometime. Wherever
25 there is pleasure there must be pain. This is absolutely certain,
26 every action has its reaction somehow.

27 The idea of freedom is the only true idea of salvation--
28 freedom from everything, the senses, whether of pleasure or pain,
29 from good as well as evil.

30 More than this even, we must be free from death; and to be
31 free from death, we must be free from life. Life is but a dream of
32 death. Where there is life, there will be death; so get away from life
33 if you would be rid of death.

34 We are ever free if we would only believe it, only have faith
35 enough. You are the soul, free and eternal, ever free, ever blessed.
36 Have faith enough and you will be free in a minute.

37 Everything in time, space, and causation is bound. The soul is
38 beyond all time, all space, all causation. That which is bound is
39 nature, not the soul.

40 Therefore proclaim your freedom and be what you are--ever
41 free, ever blessed.

42 Time, space, and causation we call Maya.

43

44

SOUL AND GOD

Anything that is in space has form. Space itself has form. Either you are in space, or space is in you. The soul is beyond all space. Space is in the soul, not the soul in space.

Form is confined to time and space and is bound by the law of causation. All time is in us, we are not in time. As the soul is not in time and space, all time and space are within the soul. The soul is therefore omnipresent.

Our idea of God is the reflection of ourselves.

Old Persian and Sanskrit have affinities.

The primitive idea of God was identifying God with different forms of nature--nature-worship. The next stage was the tribal God. The next stage, the worship of kings.

The idea of God in heaven is predominant in all nations except in India. The idea is very crude.

The idea of the continuity of life is foolish. We can never get rid of death until we get rid of life.

THE GOAL

Dualism recognises God and nature to be eternally separate: the universe and nature eternally dependent upon God.

The extreme monists make no such distinction. In the last analysis, they claim, all is God: the universe becomes lost in God; God is the eternal life of the universe.

With them infinite and finite are mere terms. The universe, nature, etc. exist by virtue of differentiation. Nature is itself differentiation.

Such questions as, "Why did God create the universe?" "Why did the All-perfect create the imperfect?" etc., can never be answered, because such questions are logical absurdities. Reason exists in nature; beyond nature it has no existence. God is omnipotent, hence to ask why He did so and so is to limit Him; for it implies that there is a purpose in His creating the universe. If He has a purpose, it must be a means to an end, and this would mean that He could not have the end without the means. The questions, why and wherefore, can only be asked of something which depends upon something else.

ON PROOF OF RELIGION

1 The great question about religion is: What makes it so
2 unscientific? If religion is a science, why is it not as certain as other
3 sciences? All beliefs in God, heaven, etc., are mere conjectures,
4 mere beliefs. There seems to be nothing certain about it. Our ideas
5 concerning religion are changing all the time. The mind is in a
6 constant state of flux.

7 Is man a soul, an unchanging substance, or is he a constantly
8 changing quantity? All religions, except primitive Buddhism, believe
9 that man is a soul, an identity, a unit that never dies but is
10 immortal.

11 The primitive Buddhists believe that man is a constantly
12 changing quantity, and that his consciousness consists in an almost
13 infinite succession of incalculably rapid changes, each change, as it
14 were, being unconnected with the others, standing alone, thus
15 precluding the theory of the law of sequence or causation.

16 If there is a unit, there is a substance. A unit is always simple.
17 A simple is not a compound of anything. It does not depend on
18 anything else. It stands alone and is immortal.

19 Primitive Buddhists contend that everything is unconnected;
20 nothing is a unit; and that the theory of man being a unit is a mere
21 belief and cannot be proved.

22 Now the great question is : Is man a unit, or is he a constantly
23 changing mass?

24 There is but one way to prove this, to answer this question.
25 Stop the gyrations of the mind, and the theory that a man is a unit,
26 a simple, will be demonstrated. All changes are in me, in the Chitta,
27 the mind-substance. I am not the changes. If I were, I could not
28 stop them.

29 Everyone is trying to make himself and everybody else
30 believe that this world is all very fine, that he is perfectly happy. But
31 when man stops to question his motives in life, he will see that the
32 reason he is struggling after this and that is because he cannot help
33 himself. He must move on. He cannot stop, so he tries to make
34 himself believe that he really wants this and that. The one who
35 actually succeeds in making himself believe that he is having a good
36 time is the man of splendid physical health. This man responds to
37 his desires instantly, without question. He acts in response to that
38 power within him, urging him on without a thought, as though he
39 acted because he wanted to. But when he has been knocked about
40 a good deal by nature, when he has received a good many wounds
41 and bruises, he begins to question the meaning of all this; and as he
42 gets hurt more and thinks more, he sees that he is urged on by a
43 power beyond his control and that he acts simply because he must.
44 Then he begins to rebel, and the battle begins.

45 Now if there is a way out of all this trouble, it is within
46 ourselves. We are always trying to realise the Reality. Instinctively
47 we are always trying to do that. It is creation in the human soul that
48 covers up God; that is why there is so much difference in God-
49 ideals. Only when creation stops can we find the Absolute. The
50 Absolute is in the soul, not in creation. So by stopping creation, we

1 come to know the Absolute. When we think of ourselves, we think of
2 the body; and when we think of God, we think of Him as body. To
3 stop the gyrations of the mind, so that the soul may become
4 manifested, is the work. Training begins with the body. Breathing
5 trains the body, gets it into a harmonious condition. The object of
6 the breathing exercises is to attain meditation and concentration. If
7 you can get absolutely still for just one moment, you have reached
8 the goal. The mind may go on working after that; but it will never
9 be the same mind again. You will know yourself as you are--your
10 true Self. Still the mind but for one moment, and the truth of your
11 real nature will flash upon you, and freedom is at hand: no more
12 bondage after that. This follows from the theory that if you can
13 know an instant of time, you know all time, as the whole is the rapid
14 succession of one. Master the one, know thoroughly one instant--
15 and freedom is reached.

16 All religions believe in God and the soul except the primitive
17 Buddhist. The modern Buddhists believe in God and the soul.
18 Among the primitive Buddhists are the Burmese, Siamese, Chinese,
19 etc.

20 Arnold's book, *The Light of Asia*, represents more of
21 Vedantism than Buddhism.

24 THE DESIGN THEORY

26 The idea that nature in all her orderly arrangements shows
27 design on the part of the Creator of the universe is good as a
28 kindergarten teaching to show the beauty, power, and glory of God,
29 in order to lead children in religion up to a philosophical conception
30 of God; but apart from that, it is not good, and perfectly illogical. As
31 a philosophical idea, it is entirely without foundation, if God is taken
32 to be omnipotent.

33 If nature shows the power of God in creating the universe,
34 (then) to have a design in so doing also shows His weakness. If God
35 is omnipotent, He needs no design, no scheme, to do anything. He
36 has but to will it, and it is done. No question, no scheme, no plan, of
37 God in nature.

38 The material universe is the result of the limited
39 consciousness of man. When man becomes conscious of his divinity,
40 all matter, all nature, *as we know it*, will cease to exist.

41 The material world, as such, has no place in the
42 consciousness of the All-Presence as a necessity of any end. If it
43 had, God would be limited by the universe. To say that nature exists
44 by His permission is not to say that it exists as a necessity for Him
45 to make man perfect, or for any other reason.

46 It is a creation for man's necessity, not God's. There is no
47 scheme of God in the plan of the universe. How could there be any
48 if He is omnipotent? Why should He have need of a plan, or a

1 scheme, or a reason to do anything? To say that He has is to limit
2 Him and to rob Him of His character of omnipotence.

3 For instance, if you came to a very wide river, so wide that
4 you could not get across it except by building a bridge, the very fact
5 that you would have to build the bridge to get across the river
6 would show your limitation, would show your weakness, even if the
7 ability to build the bridge did show your strength. If you were not
8 limited but could just fly or jump across, you would not be under the
9 necessity of building a bridge; and to build the bridge just to exhibit
10 your power to do so would show your weakness again by showing
11 your vanity, more than it would show anything else.

12 Monism and dualism are essentially the same. The difference
13 consists in the expression. As the dualists hold the Father and Son
14 to be two, the monists hold them to be really one. Dualism is in
15 nature, in manifestation, and monism is pure spirituality in the
16 essence.

17 The idea of renunciation and sacrifice is in all religions as a
18 means to reach God.

21 SPIRIT AND NATURE

23 Religion is the realisation of Spirit as Spirit; not Spirit as
24 matter.

25 Religion is a growth. Each one must experience it himself.
26 The Christians believe that Jesus Christ died to save man. With you
27 it is belief in a doctrine, and this belief constitutes your salvation.
28 With us doctrine has nothing whatever to do with salvation. Each
29 one may believe in whatever doctrine he likes; or in no doctrine.

30 What difference does it make to you whether Jesus Christ
31 lived at a certain time or not? What has it to do with you that Moses
32 saw God in the burning bush? The fact that Moses saw God in the
33 burning bush does not constitute your seeing Him, does it? If it
34 does, then the fact that Moses ate is enough for you; you ought to
35 stop eating. One is just as sensible as the other. Records of great
36 spiritual men of the past do us no good whatever except that they
37 urge us onward to do the same, to experience religion ourselves.
38 Whatever Christ or Moses or anybody else did does not help us in
39 the least, except to urge us on.

1 Each one has a special nature peculiar to himself, which he
2 must follow and through which he will find his way to freedom. Your
3 teacher should be able to tell you what your particular path in
4 nature is and to put you in it. He should know by your face where
5 you belong and should be able to indicate it to you. You should
6 never try to follow another's path, for that is his way, not yours.
7 When that path is found, you have nothing to do but fold your arms,
8 and the tide will carry you to freedom. Therefore when you find it,
9 never swerve from it. Your way is the best for you, but that is no sign
10 that it is the best for others.

11 The truly spiritual see Spirit as Spirit, not as matter. It is
12 Spirit that makes nature move; It is the reality in nature. So action
13 is in nature; not in the Spirit. Spirit is always the same, changeless,
14 eternal. Spirit and matter are in reality the same; but Spirit, as
15 such, never becomes matter; and matter, as such, never becomes
16 Spirit.

17 The Spirit never acts. Why should it? It merely is, and that is
18 sufficient. It is pure existence absolute and has no need of action.

19 You are not bound by law. That is in your nature. The mind is
20 in nature and is bound by law. All nature is bound by law, the law of
21 its own action; and this law can never be broken. If you could break
22 a law of nature, all nature would come to an end in an instant.
23 There would be no more nature. He who attains freedom breaks the
24 law of nature, and for him nature fades away and has no more
25 power over him. Each one will break the law but once and for ever;
26 and that will end his trouble with nature.

27 Governments, societies, etc. are comparative evils. All
28 societies are based on bad generalisation. The moment you form
29 yourselves into an organisation, you begin to hate everybody
30 outside of that organisation. When you join an organisation, you are
31 putting bounds upon yourself, you are limiting your own freedom.
32 The greatest goodness is the highest freedom. Our aim should be to
33 allow the individual to move towards this freedom. More of
34 goodness, less of artificial laws. Such laws are not laws at all. If it
35 were a law, it could not be broken. The fact that these so-called
36 laws are broken, shows clearly that they are not laws. A law is that
37 which cannot be broken.

38 Whenever you suppress a thought, it is simply pressed down
39 out of sight, in a coil like a spring, only to spring out again at a
40 moment's notice, with all the pent-up force resulting from the
41 suppression, and do in a few moments what it would have done in a
42 much longer period.

43 Every ounce of pleasure brings its pound of pain. It is the
44 same energy that at one time manifests itself as pleasure, at
45 another time as pain. As soon as one set of sensations stops,
46 another begins. But in some cases, in more advanced persons, one
47 may have two, yea, even a hundred different thoughts entering into
48 active operation at the same time.

49 Mind is action of its own nature. Mind-activity means
50 creation. The thought is followed by the word, and the word by the

1 form. All of this creating will have to stop, both mental and physical,
2 before the mind can reflect the soul.

3 4 5 THE PRACTICE OF RELIGION

6 *(At Alameda, Calif., March 18, 1900)*
7

8 We read many books, but that does not bring us knowledge.
9 We may read all the Bibles in the world, but that will not give us
10 religion. Theoretical religion is easy enough to get, any one may get
11 that. What we want is practical religion.

12 The Christian idea of a practical religion is in doing good
13 works--worldly utility.

14 What good is utility? Judged from a utilitarian standpoint,
15 religion is a failure. Every hospital is a prayer that more people may
16 come there. What is meant by charity? Charity is not fundamental.
17 It is really helping on the misery of the world, not eradicating it.
18 One looks for name and fame and covers his efforts to obtain them
19 with the enamel of charity and good works. He is working for
20 himself under the pretext of working for others. Every so-called
21 charity is an encouragement of the very evil it claims to operate
22 against.

23 Men and women go to balls and dance all night in honor of
24 some hospital or other charitable institution, then go home, behave
25 like beasts, and bring devils into the world to fill jails, insane
26 asylums, and hospitals. So it goes on, and it is called good works--
27 building hospital, etc. The ideal of good works is to lessen, or
28 eradicate, the misery of the world. The Yogi says, all misery comes
29 from not being able to control the mind. The Yogi's ideal is freedom
30 from nature. Conquest of nature is his standard of work. The Yogi
31 says that all power is in the soul, and by the controlling of the mind
32 and body one conquers nature by the power of the soul.

33 Every ounce of muscle in excess of what is beyond the needs
34 of one's physical work is that much less of brain. Do not exercise
35 too hard; it is injurious. The one who does not work hard will live
36 the longest. Eat less food and work less. Store up brain food.

37 Household work is enough for women.

38 Do not make the lamp burn fast; let it burn slowly.

39 Proper diet means simple diet, not highly spiced.
40
41

42 FRAGMENTARY NOTES ON THE RAMAYANA 43

1 Worship Him who alone stands by us, whether we are doing
2 good or are doing evil; who never leaves us even; as love never
3 pulls down, as love knows no barter, no selfishness.

4 Rama was the soul of the old king; but he was a king, and he
5 could not go back on his word.

6 "Wherever Rama goes, there go I", says Lakshmana, the
7 younger brother.

8 The wife of the elder brother to us Hindus is just like a
9 mother.

10 At last he found Sita, pale and thin, like a bit of the moon that
11 lies low at the foot of the horizon.

12 Sita was chastity itself; she would never touch the body of
13 another man except that of her husband.

14 "Pure? She is chastity itself", says Rama.

15 Drama and music are by themselves religion; any song, love
16 song or any song, never mind; if one's whole soul is in that song, he
17 attains salvation, just by that; nothing else he has to do; if a man's
18 whole soul is in that, his soul gets salvation. They say it leads to the
19 same goal.

20 Wife--the co-religionist. Hundreds of ceremonies the Hindu
21 has to perform, and not one can be performed if he has not a wife.
22 You see the priests tie them up together, and they go round temples
23 and make very great pilgrimages tied together.

24 Rama gave up his body and joined Sita in the other world.

25 Sita--the pure, the pure, the all-suffering!

26 Sita is the name in India for everything that is good, pure,
27 and holy; everything that in woman we call woman.

28 Sita--the patient, all-suffering, ever-faithful, ever-pure wife!
29 Through all the suffering she had, there was not one harsh word
30 against Rama.

31 Sita never returned injury.

32 "Be Sita!"

33

34

35 **NOTES TAKEN DOWN IN MADRAS, 1892-93**

36

37 The three essentials of Hinduism are belief in God, in the
38 Vedas as revelation, in the doctrine of Karma and transmigration.

39 If one studies the Vedas between the lines, one sees a religion
40 of harmony.

41 One point of difference between Hinduism and other religions
42 is that in Hinduism we pass from truth to truth--from a lower truth
43 to a higher truth--and never from error to truth.

44 The Vedas should be studied through the eye-glass of

1 evolution. They contain the whole history of the progress of
2 religious consciousness, until religion has reached perfection in
3 unity.

4 The Vedas are Anadi, eternal. The meaning of the statement
5 is not, as is erroneously supposed by some, that the words of the
6 Vedas are Anadi, but that the spiritual laws inculcated by the Vedas
7 are such. These laws which are immutable and eternal have been
8 discovered at various times by great men or Rishis, though some of
9 them are forgotten now, while others are preserved.

10 When a number of people from various angles and distances
11 have a look at the sea, each man sees a portion of it according to
12 his horizon. Though each man may say that what he sees is the real
13 sea, all of them speak the truth, for all of them see portions of the
14 same wide expanse. So the religious scriptures, though they seem
15 to contain varying and conflicting statements, speak the truth, for
16 they are all descriptions of that one infinite Reality.

17 When one sees a mirage for the first time, he mistakes it for a
18 reality, and after vainly trying to quench his thirst in it, learns that it
19 is a mirage. But whenever he sees such a phenomenon in future, in
20 spite of the apparent reality, the idea that he sees a mirage always
21 presents itself to him. So is the world of Maya to a Jivanmukta (the
22 liberated in life).

23 Some of the Vedic secrets were known to certain families
24 only, as certain powers naturally exist in some families. With the
25 extinction of these families, those secrets have died away.

26 Vedic anatomy was no less perfect than the Ayurvedic.

27 There were many names for many parts of the organs,
28 because they had to cut up animals for sacrifice. The sea is
29 described as full of ships. Sea voyage was prohibited later on,
30 partly because there came the fear that people might thereby
31 become Buddhists.

32 Buddhism was the rebellion of newly-formed Kshatriyas
33 against Vedic priestcraft.

34 Hinduism threw away Buddhism after taking its sap. The
35 attempt of all the Southern Acharyas was to effect a reconciliation
36 between the two. Shankaracharya's teaching shows the influence of
37 Buddhism. His disciples perverted his teaching and carried it to
38 such an extreme point that some of the later reformers were right
39 in calling the Acharya's followers "crypto-Buddhists".

40 What is Spencer's unknowable? It is our Maya. Western
41 philosophers are afraid of the unknowable, but our philosophers
42 have taken a big jump into the unknown, and they have conquered.

43 Western philosophers are like vultures soaring high in the
44 sky, but all the while, with their eye fixed on the carrion beneath.
45 They cannot cross the unknown, and they therefore turn back and
46 worship the almighty dollar.

47 There have been two lines of progress in this world--political
48 and religious. In the former the Greeks are everything, the modern
49 political institutions being only the development of the Grecian; in

1 the latter the Hindus are everything.

2 My religion is one of which Christianity is an offshoot and
3 Buddhism a rebel child.

4 Chemistry ceases to improve when one element is found from
5 which all others are deductible. Physics ceases to progress when
6 one force is found of which all others are manifestations. So
7 religion ceases to progress when unity is reached, which is the case
8 with Hinduism.

9 There is no new religious idea preached anywhere which is
10 not found in the Vedas.

11 In everything, there are two kinds of development--analytical
12 and synthetical. In the former the Hindus excel other nations. In the
13 latter they are nil.

14 The Hindus have cultivated the power of analysis and
15 abstraction. No nation has yet produced a grammar like that of
16 Panini.

17 Ramanuja's important work is the conversion of Jains and
18 Buddhists to Hinduism. He is a great advocate of image-worship.
19 He introduced love and faith as potent means of salvation.

20 Even in the Bhagavata, twenty-four Avatars are mentioned
21 corresponding to the twenty-four Tirthankaras of the Jains, the
22 name of Rishabhadeva being common to both.

23 The practice of Yoga gives the power of abstraction. The
24 superiority of a Siddha over others consists in his being able to
25 separate attributes from objects and think of them independently,
26 giving them objective reality.

27

28 The opposite extremes always meet and resemble each other.
29 The greatest self-forgotten devotee whose mind is absorbed in the
30 contemplation of the infinite Brahman and the most debased,
31 drunken maniac present the same externals. At times we are
32 surprised with the analogical transition from one to the other.

33 Extremely nervous men succeed as religious men. They
34 become fervent over whatever they take into their head.

35 "All are mad in this world; some are mad after gold, others
36 after women, and some are after God; if drowning is to be the fate
37 of man, it is better to be drowned in an ocean of milk than in a pool
38 of dung", a devotee replied who was charged with madness.

39 The God of Infinite Love and the object of Love sublime and
40 infinite are painted blue. Krishna is painted blue, so also Solomon's
41 God of Love. It is a natural law that anything sublime and infinite is
42 associated with blue colour. Take a handful of water, it is absolutely
43 colourless. But look at the deep wide ocean; it is as blue as
44 anything. Examine the space near you; it is colourless. But look at
45 the infinite expanse of the sky; it is blue.

46 That the Hindus, absorbed in the ideal, lacked in realistic
47 observation is evident from this. Take painting and sculpture. What

1 do you see in the Hindu paintings? All sorts of grotesque and
2 unnatural figures. What do you see in a Hindu temple? A
3 Chaturbhanga Narayana or some such thing. But take into
4 consideration any Italian picture or Grecian statue--what a study of
5 nature you find in them! A gentleman for twenty years sat burning a
6 candle in his hand, in order to paint a lady carrying a candle in her
7 hand.

8 The Hindus progressed in the subjective sciences.

9 There are as many different conducts taught in the Vedas as
10 there are differences in human nature. What is taught to an adult
11 cannot be taught to a child.

12 A Guru should be a doctor of men. He should understand the
13 nature of his disciple and teach him the method which suits him
14 best.

15 There are infinite ways of practicing Yoga. Certain methods
16 have produced successful result with certain men. But two are of
17 general importance with all: (1) Reaching the reality by negating
18 every known experience, (2) Thinking that you are everything, the
19 whole universe. The second method, though it leads to the goal
20 sooner than the first, is not the safest one. It is generally attended
21 with great dangers which may lead a man astray and deter him
22 from obtaining his aim.

23 There is this difference between the love taught by
24 Christianity and that taught by Hinduism: Christianity teaches us to
25 love our neighbours as we should wish them to love us; Hinduism
26 asks us to love them as ourselves, in fact to see ourselves in them.

27 A mongoose is generally kept in a glass-case with a long
28 chain attached to it, so that it may go about freely. When its scents
29 danger as it wanders about, with one jump it goes into the glass
30 case. So is a Yogi in this world.

31 The whole universe is one chain of existence, of which matter
32 forms one pole and God the other; the doctrine of Vishishtadvaitism
33 may be explained by some such ideas.

34 The Vedas are full of passages which prove the existence of a
35 Personal God. The Rishis, who through long devotion saw God, had
36 a peep into the unknown and threw their challenge to the world. It
37 is only presumptuous men, who have not walked in the path
38 described by the Rishis and who have not followed their teachings,
39 that criticise them and oppose them. No man has yet come forward
40 who would dare to say that he has properly followed their
41 directions and has not seen anything and that these men are liars.
42 There are men who have been under trial at various times and have
43 felt that they have not been forsaken by God. The world is such that
44 if faith in God does not offer us any consolation, it is better to
45 commit suicide.

46 A pious missionary went out on business. All of a sudden his
47 three sons died of cholera. His wife covered the three dead bodies
48 of her beloved children with a sheet and was awaiting her husband
49 at the gate. When he returned, she detained him at the gate and

1 put him the question, "My dear husband, some one entrusts
2 something to you and in your absence suddenly takes it back. Will
3 you feel sorry?" He replied, "Certainly I would not". Then she took
4 him in, removed the sheet and showed the three corpses. He bore
5 this calmly and buried the bodies. Such is the strength of mind of
6 those who hold firm faith in the existence of an all-merciful God
7 who disposes of everything in the universe.

8 The Absolute can never be thought of. We can have no idea of
9 a thing unless it is finite. God the infinite can only be conceived and
10 worshipped as the finite.

11 John the Baptist was an Essene--a sect of Buddhists. The
12 Christian cross is nothing but the Shivalinga converted into two
13 across. Remnants of Buddhist worship are still to be found among
14 the relics of ancient Rome.

15 In South India, some of the Ragas (tunes) are sung and
16 remembered as independent Ragas, whereas they are derivations
17 of the six primary ones. In their music, there is very little of
18 Murchhana, or oscillating touches of sound.

19 Even the use of the perfect instrument of music is rare. The
20 Vina of the South is not the real Vina. We have no martial music, no
21 martial poetry either. Bhavabhuti is a little martial.

22 Christ was a Sannyasin, and his religion is essentially fit for
23 Sannyasins only. His teachings may be summed up as: "Give up";
24 nothing more--being fit for the favoured few.

25 "Turn the other cheek also!"--impossible, impracticable! The
26 Westerners know it. It is meant for those who hunger and thirst
27 after righteousness, who aim at perfection.

28 "Stand on your rights", is the rule for the ordinary men. One
29 set of moral rules cannot be preached to all--Sadhus and
30 householders.

31 All sectarian religions take for granted that all men are equal.
32 This is not warranted by science. There is more difference between
33 minds than between bodies. One fundamental doctrine of Hinduism
34 is that all men are different, there being unity in variety. Even for a
35 drunkard, there are some Mantras--even for a man going to a
36 prostitute!

37 Morality is a relative term. Is there anything like absolute
38 morality in this world? The idea is a superstition. We have no right
39 to judge every man in every age by the same standard.

40 Every man, in every age, in every country is under peculiar
41 circumstances. If the circumstances change, ideas also must
42 change. Beef-eating was once moral. The climate was cold, and the
43 cereals were not much known. Meat was the chief food available.
44 So in that age and clime, beef was in a manner indispensable. But
45 beef-eating is held to be immoral now.

46 The one thing unchangeable is God. Society is moving.

47 Jagat (world) means that which is moving. God is Achala
48 (immovable).

1 What I say is not, "Reform", but, "Move on". Nothing is too
2 bad to reform. Adaptability is the whole mystery of life--the
3 principle underneath which serves to unfold it. Adjustment or
4 adaptation is the outcome of the Self pitted against external forces
5 tending to suppress It. He who adjusts himself best lives the
6 longest. Even if I do not preach this, society is changing, it must
7 change. It is not Christianity nor science, it is necessity, that is
8 working underneath, the necessity that people must have to live or
9 starve.

10 The best scenery in the world can be seen on the sublime
11 heights of the Himalayas. If one lives there for a time, he is sure to
12 have mental calmness, however restless he might have been before.

13 God is the highest form of generalised law. When once this
14 law is known, all others can be explained as being subordinate to it.
15 God is to religion what Newton's law of gravity is to falling bodies.

16 Every worship consists of prayer in the highest form. For a
17 man who cannot make Dhyana or mental worship, Puja or
18 ceremonial worship is necessary. He must have the thing concrete.

19 The brave alone can afford to be sincere. Compare the lion
20 and the fox.

21 Loving only the *good* in God and nature--even a child does
22 that. You should love the terrible and the painful as well. A father
23 loves the child, even when he is giving him trouble.

24 Shri Krishna was God, incarnated to save mankind. Gopi-Lila
25 (his disport with cowherd maids) is the acme of the religion of love
26 in which individuality vanishes and there is communion. It is in this
27 Lila that Shri Krishna shows what he preaches in the Gita: "Give up
28 every other tie for me." Go and take shelter under Vrindavana-Lila
29 to understand Bhakti. On this subject a great number of books is
30 extant. It is the religion of India. The larger number of Hindus
31 follow Shri Krishna.

32 Shri Krishna is the God of the poor, the beggar, the sinner, the
33 son, the father, the wife, and of everyone. He enters intimately into
34 all our human relations and makes everything holy and in the end
35 brings us to salvation. He is the God who hides himself from the
36 philosopher and the learned and reveals himself to the ignorant and
37 the children. He is the God of faith and love and not of learning.
38 With the Gopis, love and God were the same thing--they knew Him
39 to be love incarnate.

40 In Dwaraka, Shri Krishna teaches duty; in Vrindavana, love.
41 He allowed his sons to kill each other, they being wicked.

42 God, according to the Jewish and Mohammedan idea, is a big
43 Session Judge. Our God is rigorous on the surface, but loving and
44 merciful at heart.

45 There are some who do not understand Advaitism and make a
46 travesty of its teachings. They say, "What is Shuddha and Ashuddha
47 (pure and impure)--what is the difference between virtue and vice?
48 It is all human superstition", and observe no moral restraint in their
49 actions. It is downright roguery; and any amount of harm is done by

1 the preaching of such things.

2 This body is made up of two sorts of Karma consisting of
3 virtue and vice--injurious vice and non-injurious virtue. A thorn is
4 pricking my body, and I take another thorn to take it out and then
5 throw both away. A man desiring to be perfect takes a thorn of
6 virtue and with it takes off the thorn of vice. He still lives, and
7 virtue alone being left, the momentum of action left to him must be
8 of virtue. A bit of holiness is left to the Jivanmukta, and he lives, but
9 everything he does must be holy.

10 Virtue is that which tends to our improvement, and vice to
11 our degeneration. Man is made up of three qualities--brutal, human,
12 and godly. That which tends to increase the divinity in you is virtue,
13 and that which tends to increase brutality in you is vice. You must
14 kill the brutal nature and become human, that is, loving and
15 charitable. You must transcend that too and become pure bliss,
16 Sachchidananda, fire without burning, wonderfully loving, but
17 without the weakness of human love, without the feeling of misery.

18 Bhakti is divided into Vaidhi and Raganuga Bhakti.

19 Vaidhi Bhakti is implicit belief in obedience to the teachings
20 of the Vedas.

21 Raganuga Bhakti is of five kinds:

22 (1) Shanta as illustrated by the religion of Christ;

23 (2) Dasya as illustrated by that of Hanuman to Rama;

24 (3) Sakhya as illustrated by that of Arjuna to Shri
25 Krishna;

26 (4) Vatsalya as illustrated by that of Vasudeva to Shri
27 Krishna;

28 (5) Madhura (that of the husband and wife) in the lives
29 of Shri Krishna and the Gopikas.

30 Keshab Chandra Sen compared society to an ellipse. God is
31 the central sun. Society is sometimes in the aphelion and
32 sometimes in the perihelion. An Avatar comes and takes it to the
33 perihelion. Then it goes back again. Why should it be so? I cannot
34 say. What necessity for an Avatara? What necessity was there to
35 create? Why did He not create us all perfect? It is Lila (sport), we
36 do not know.

37 Men can become Brahman but not God. If anybody becomes
38 God, show me his creation. Vishvamitra's creation is his own
39 imagination. It should have obeyed Vishvamitra's law. If anybody
40 becomes a Creator, there would be an end of the world, on account
41 of the conflict of laws. The balance is so nice that if you disturb the
42 equilibrium of one atom, the whole world will come to an end.

43 There were great men--so great that no number nor human
44 arithmetic could state the difference between them and us. But
45 compared with God, they were geometrical points. In comparison
46 with the Infinite, everything is nothing. Compared with God, what is
47 Vishvamitra but a human moth?

1 Patanjali is the father of the theory of evolution, spiritual and
2 physical.

3 Generally the organism is weaker than the environment. It is
4 struggling to adjust itself. Sometimes it over-adjusts itself. Then the
5 whole body changes into another species. Nandi was a man whose
6 holiness was so great that the human body could not contain it. So
7 those molecules changed into a god-body.

8 The tremendous engine of competition will destroy
9 everything. If you are to live at all, you must adjust yourself to the
10 times. If we are to live at all, we must be a scientific nation.
11 Intellectual power is the force. You must learn the power of
12 organisation of the Europeans. You must become educated and
13 must educate your women. You must abolish child marriage.

14 All these ideas are floating over society. You all know it, yet
15 dare not act. Who is to bell the cat? In the fullness of time a
16 wonderful man will come. Then all the rats will be made bold.

17 Whenever a great man comes, the circumstances are ready
18 under his feet. He is the last straw to break the camel's back. He is
19 the spark of the cannon. There is something in the talking--we are
20 preparing for him.

21 Was Krishna cunning? No, he was not cunning. He tried his
22 best to prevent war. It was Duryodhana who forced the war. But,
23 when once in the thing, you should not recede--that is the man of
24 duty. Do not run away, it is cowardice. When in the thing, you must
25 do it. You should not budge an inch--of course not for a wrong thing;
26 this was a righteous war.

27 The devil comes in many guises--anger in the form of justice--
28 passion in the form of duty. When it first comes, the man knows and
29 then he forgets. Just as your pleaders' conscience; at first they
30 know it is all Badmashi (roguery), then it is duty to their clients; at
31 last they get hardened.

32 Yogis live on the banks of the Narmada--the best place for
33 them, because the climate is very even. Bhaktas live in Vrindavana.

34 Sipahis (sepoys) die soon--nature is full of defect--the athletes
35 die soon. The gentlemen class are the strongest, while the poor are
36 the hardest. Fruit diet may agree with a costive man. Civilised man
37 needs rest for intellectual work. For food he has to take spices and
38 condiments. The savage walks forty or fifty miles a day. He relishes
39 the blandest foods.

40 Our fruits are all artificial, and the natural mango is a poor
41 affair. Wheat also is artificial.

42 Save the spiritual store in your body by observing continence.

43 The rule for a householder about the expenditure of his
44 income is, one-fourth of the income for his family, one-fourth for
45 charity, one-fourth to be saved, one-fourth for self.

46 Unity in variety is the plan of creation, individuality in
47 universality.

48 Why deny the cause only? Deny the effect also. The cause

1 must contain everything that is in the effect.

2 Christ's public life extended only over eighteen months, and
3 for this he had silently been preparing himself for thirty-two years.
4 Mohammed was forty years old before he came out.

5 It is true that the caste system becomes essential in the
6 ordinary course of nature. Those that have aptitudes for a
7 particular work form a class. But who is to settle the class of a
8 particular individual? If a Brahmin thinks that he has a special
9 aptitude for spiritual culture, why should he be afraid to meet a
10 Shudra in an open field? Will a horse be afraid of running a race
11 with a jade?

12 Refer to the life of the author of *Krishna-karnamrita*,
13 Vilvamangala--a devotee who plucked his eyes out because he could
14 not see God. His life illustrates the principle that even misdirected
15 love leads in the end to love proper.

16 Too early religious advancement of the Hindus and that
17 superfineness in everything which made them cling to higher
18 alternatives, have reduced them to what they are. The Hindus have
19 to learn a little bit of materialism from the West and teach them a
20 little bit of spirituality.

21 Educate your women first and leave them to themselves; then
22 they will tell you what reforms are necessary for them. In matters
23 concerning them, who are you?

24 Who reduced the Bhangis and the Pariahs to their present
25 degraded condition? Heartlessness in our behavior and at the same
26 time preaching wonderful Advaitism--is it not adding insult to
27 injury?

28 Form and formless are intertwined in this world. The formless
29 can only be expressed in form and form can only be thought with
30 the formless. The world is a form of our thoughts. The idol is the
31 expression of religion.

32 In God all natures are possible. But we can see Him only
33 through human nature. We can love Him as we love a man--as
34 father, son. The strongest love in the world is that between man and
35 woman, and that also when it is clandestine. This is typified in the
36 love between Krishna and Radha.

37 Nowhere is it said in the Vedas that man is born a sinner. To
38 say so is a great libel on human nature.

39 It is not an easy task to reach the state of seeing the Reality
40 face to face. The other day one could not find the hidden cat in a
41 whole picture, though it occupied the major portion of the picture.

42 You cannot injure anybody and sit quietly. It is a wonderful
43 machinery--you cannot escape God's vengeance.

44 Kama (lust) is blind and leads to hell. Prema is love, it leads to
45 heaven.

46 There is no idea of lust or sympathy in the love of Krishna and
47 Radha. Radha says to Krishna, "If you place your feet on my heart,
48 all lust will vanish."

1 When abstraction is reached lust dies and there is only love.

2 A poet loved a washerwoman. Hot Dal fell upon the feet of
3 the woman and the feet of the poet were scalded.

4 Shiva is the sublime aspect of God, Krishna the beautiful
5 aspect of God. Love crystallises into blueness. Blue colour is
6 expressive of intense love. Solomon saw "Krishna". Here Krishna
7 came to be seen by all.

8 Even now, when you get love, you see Radha. Become Radha
9 and be saved. There is no other way, Christians do not understand
10 Solomon's song. They call it prophecy symbolising Christ's love for
11 the Church. They think it nonsense and father some story upon it.

12 Hindus believe Buddha to be an Avatara.

13 Hindus believe in God positively. Buddhism does not try to
14 know whether He is or not.

15 Buddha came to whip us into practice. Be good, destroy the
16 passions. Then you will know for yourself whether Dvaita or Advaita
17 philosophy is true--whether there is one or there are more than one.

18 Buddha was a reformer of Hinduism.

19 In the same man the mother sees a son, while the wife at the
20 same time sees differently with different results. The wicked see in
21 God wickedness. The virtuous see in Him virtue. He admits of all
22 forms. He can be moulded according to the imagination of each
23 person. Water assumes various shapes in various vessels. But water
24 is in all of them. Hence all religions are true.

25 God is cruel and not cruel. He is all being and not being at
26 the same time. Hence He is all contradictions. Nature also is
27 nothing but a mass of contradictions.

28

29 Freedom of the will--it is as you feel you are free to act. But
30 this freedom is a species of necessity. There is one infinite link
31 before, after, and between the thought and the action, but the latter
32 takes the name of freedom--like a bird flitting through a bright
33 room. We feel the freedom and feel it has no other cause. We
34 cannot go beyond consciousness, therefore we feel we are free. We
35 can trace it no further than consciousness. God alone feels the real
36 freedom. Mahapurushas (saints) feel themselves identified with
37 God; hence they also feel the real freedom.

1 You may stop the water flowing out of the fountain by closing
2 that part of the stream and gathering it all in the fountain; you have
3 no liberty beyond it. But the source remains unchanged. Everything
4 is predestination--and a part of that predestination is that you shall
5 have such feeling--the feeling of freedom. I am shaping my own
6 action. Responsibility is the feeling of reaction. There is no absolute
7 power. Power here is the conscious feeling of exercising any faculty
8 which is created by necessity. Man has the feeling "I act"; what he
9 means by power of freedom is the feeling. The power is attended
10 with responsibility. Whatever may be done through us by
11 predestination, we feel the reaction. A ball thrown by one, itself
12 feels the reaction.

13 But this innate necessity which comes to us as our freedom
14 does not affect also the conscious relations we form with our
15 surroundings. The relativity is not changed. Either everybody is free
16 or everybody is under necessity. That would not matter. The
17 relations would be the same. Vice and virtue would be the same. If
18 a thief pleads that he was under the necessity of stealing, the
19 magistrate would say that he was under the necessity to punish. We
20 are seated in a room, and the whole room is moving--the relation
21 between us is unchanged. To get out of this infinite chain of
22 causation is Mukti (freedom). Muktas (free souls) are not actuated
23 by necessity, they are like god. They begin the chain of cause and
24 effect. God is the only free being--the first source of their will--and
25 is always experienced by them as such.

26 The feeling of want is the real prayer, not the words. But you
27 must have patience to wait and see if your prayers are answered.

28 You should cultivate a noble nature by doing your duty. By
29 doing our duty we get rid of the idea of duty; and then and then
30 only we feel everything as done by God. We are but machines in His
31 hand. This body is opaque, God is the lamp. Whatever is going out
32 of the body is God's. You do not feel it. You feel "I". This is delusion.
33 You must learn calm submission to the will of God. Duty is the best
34 school for it. This duty is morality. Drill yourself to be thoroughly
35 submissive. Get rid of the "I". No humbuggism. Then you can get rid
36 of the idea of duty; for all is His. Then you go on naturally, forgiving,
37 forgetting, etc.

38 Our religion always presents different gradations of duty and
39 religion to different people.

40 Light is everywhere visible only in the men of holiness. A
41 Mahapurusha is like crystal glass--full rays of God passing and
42 repassing through. Why not worship a Jivanmukta?

43 Contact with holy men is good. If you go near holy men, you
44 will find holiness overflowing unconsciously in everything there.

45 Resist not evil done to yourself, but you may resist evil done
46 to others.

47 If you wish to become a saint, you should renounce all kinds
48 of pleasures. Ordinarily, you may enjoy all, but pray to God for
49 guidance, and He will lead you on.

1 The universe fills only a small portion of the heart which
2 craves for something beyond and above the world.

3 Selfishness is the devil incarnate in every man. Every bit of
4 self, bit by bit, is devil. Take off self by one side and God enters by
5 the other. When the self is got rid of, only God remains. Light and
6 darkness cannot remain together.

7 Forgetting the little "I" is a sign of healthy and pure mind. A
8 healthy child forgets its body.

9 Sita--to say that she was pure is a blasphemy. She was purity
10 itself embodied--the most beautiful character that ever lived on
11 earth.

12 A Bhakta should be like Sita before Rama. He might be
13 thrown into all kinds of difficulties. Sita did not mind her sufferings;
14 she centred herself in Rama.

15 Buddhism proves nothing about the Absolute Entity. In a
16 stream the water is changing; we have no right to call the stream
17 *one*. Buddhist deny the *one*, and say, it is *many*. We say it is *one*
18 and deny the *many*. What they call Karma is what we call the soul.
19 According to Buddhism, man is a series of waves. Every wave dies,
20 but somehow the first wave causes the second. That the second
21 wave is identical with the first is illusion. To get rid of illusion good
22 Karma is necessary. Buddhists do not postulate anything beyond the
23 world. We say, beyond the relative there is the Absolute. Buddhism
24 accepts that there is misery, and sufficient it is that we can get rid
25 of this Duhkha (misery); whether we get Sukha (happiness) or not,
26 we do not know. Buddha preached not the soul preached by others.
27 According to the Hindus, soul is an entity or substance, and God is
28 absolute. Both agree in this, that they destroy the relative. But
29 Buddhists do not give what is the effect of that destruction of the
30 relative.

31 Present-day Hinduism and Buddhism were growths from the
32 same branch. Buddhism degenerated, and Shankara lopped it off!

33 Buddha is said to have denied the Vedas because there is so
34 much Himsa (killing) and other things. Every page of Buddhism is a
35 fight with the Vedas (the ritualistic aspect). But he had no authority
36 to do so.

37 Buddha is expressly agnostic about God; but God is
38 everywhere preached in our religion. The Vedas teach God--both
39 personal and impersonal. God is everywhere preached in the Gita.
40 Hinduism is nothing without God. The Vedas are nothing without
41 Him. That is the only way to salvation. Sannyasins have to repeat
42 the following, several times: I, wishing for Mukti, take refuge in
43 God, who created the world, who breathed out the Vedas.

44 Buddha, we may say now, ought to have understood the
45 harmony of religions. He introduced sectarianism.

46 Modern Hinduism, modern Jainism, and Buddhism branched
47 off at the same time. For some period, each seemed to have wanted
48 to outdo the others in grotesqueness and humbuggism.

49 We cannot imagine anything which is not God. He is all that

1 we can imagine with our five senses, and more. He is like a
2 chameleon; each man, each nation, sees one face of Him and at
3 different times, in different forms. Let each man see and take of
4 God whatever is suitable to him. Compare each animal absorbing
5 from nature whatever food is suitable to it.

6 The fault with all religions like Christianity is that they have
7 one set of rules for all. But Hindu religion is suited to all grades of
8 religious aspiration and progress. It contains all the ideals in their
9 perfect form. For example, the ideal of Shanta or blessedness is to
10 be found in Vasishtha; that of love in Krishna; that of duty in Rama
11 and Sita; and that of intellect in Shukadeva. Study the characters of
12 these and of other ideal men. Adopt one which suits you best.

13 Follow truth wherever it may lead you; carry ideas to their
14 utmost logical conclusions. Do not be cowardly and hypocritical.
15 You must have a great devotion to your ideal, devotion not of the
16 moment, but calm, persevering, and steady devotion, like that of a
17 Chataka (a kind of bird) which looks into the sky in the midst of
18 thunder and lightening and would drink no water but from the
19 clouds. Perish in the struggle to be holy; a thousand times welcome
20 death. Be not disheartened. When good nectar is unattainable, it is
21 no reason why we should eat poison. There is no escape. *This*
22 *world is as unknown as the other.*

23 Charity never faileth; devotion to an ideal never fails in
24 sympathy, never becomes weary of sympathising with others. Love
25 to enemies is not possible for ordinary men: they drive out others in
26 order to live themselves. Only a very few men lived in the world
27 who practised both. King Janaka was one of them. Such a man is
28 superior even to Sannyasins. Shukadeva, who was purity and
29 renunciation embodied, made Janaka his Guru; and Janaka said to
30 him, "You are a born Siddha; whatever you know and your father
31 taught you, is true. I assure you of this."

32 Individuality in universality is the plan of creation. Each cell
33 has its part in bringing about consciousness. Man is individual and
34 at the same time universal. It is while realising our individual
35 nature that we realise even our national and universal nature. Each
36 is an infinite circle whose centre is everywhere and circumference
37 nowhere. By practice one can feel universal Selfhood which is the
38 essence of Hinduism. He who sees in every being his own Self is a
39 Pandita (sage).

40 Rishis are discoverers of spiritual laws.

41 In Advaitism, there is no Jivatma; it is only a delusion. In
42 Dvaitism, there is Jiva infinitely distinct from God. Both are true.
43 One went to the fountain, another to the tank. Apparently we are all
44 Dvaitists as far as our consciousness goes. But beyond? Beyond that
45 we are Advaitists. In reality, this is the only truth. According to
46 Advaitism, love every man as your own Self and not as your brother
47 as in Christianity. Brotherhood should be superseded by universal
48 Selfhood. Not universal brotherhood, but universal Selfhood is our
49 motto. Advaitism may include also the "greatest happiness" theory.

50 So'ham--I am He. Repeat the idea constantly, voluntarily at

1 first; then it becomes automatic in practice. It percolates to the
2 nerves. So this idea, by rote, by repetition, should be driven even
3 into the nerves.

4 Or, first begin with Dvaitism that is in your consciousness;
5 second stage, Vishishtadvaitism--"I in you, you in me, and all is
6 God." This is the teaching of Christ.

7 The highest Advaitism cannot be brought down to practical
8 life. Advaitism made practical works from the plane of
9 Vishishtadvaitism. Dvaitism--small circle different from the big
10 circle, only connected by Bhakti; Vishishtadvaitism--small circle
11 within big circle, motion regulated by the big circle; Advaitism--
12 small circle expands and coincides with the big circle. In Advaitism
13 "I" loses itself in God. God is here, God is there, God is "I".

14 One way for attaining Bhakti is by repeating the name of God
15 a number of times. Mantras have effect--the mere repetition of
16 words. Jalagiman Chetti's powers are due to the repetition of the
17 Mantra--repetition of certain words with certain ceremonies. The
18 powers of the Astras or Banas (missiles, arrows, etc.) of ancient
19 war were due to Mantra. This is taken for granted throughout our
20 Shastras. That we should take all these Shastras to be imagination
21 is superstition.

22 To obtain Bhakti, seek the company of holy men who have
23 Bhakti, and read books like the Gita and the *Imitation of Christ*;
24 always think of the attributes of God.

25 The Vedas contain not only the means how to obtain Bhakti
26 but also the means for obtaining any earthly good or evil. Take
27 whatever you want.

28 Bengal is a land of Bhakti or Bhaktas. The stone on which
29 Chaitanya used to stand in the temple of Jagannatha to see the
30 image was worn by his tears of love and devotion. When he took
31 Sannyasa, he showed his fitness for it to his Guru by keeping sugar
32 on his tongue for some time without its being dissolved. He
33 discovered Vrindavana by the power of insight he had acquired
34 through devotion.

35 I will tell you something for your guidance in life. Everything
36 that comes from India take as true, until you find congruent reasons
37 for disbelieving it. Everything that comes from Europe take as false,
38 until you find congruent reasons for believing it. Do not be carried
39 away by European fooleries. Think for yourselves. Only one thing is
40 lacking: you are slaves; you follow whatever Europeans do. That is
41 simply an impotent state of mind. Society may take up materials
42 from any quarter but should grow in its own way.

43 To be shocked by a new custom is the father of all
44 superstition, the first road to hell. It leads to bigotry and fanaticism.
45 Truth is heaven. Bigotry is hell.

46
47

CONCENTRATION

Concentration is the essence of all knowledge; nothing can be done without it. Ninety per cent of thought force is wasted by the ordinary human being, and therefore he is constantly committing blunders; the trained man or mind never makes a mistake. When the mind is concentrated and turned backward on itself, all within us will be our servants, not our masters. The Greeks applied their concentration to the external world, and the result was perfection in art, literature, etc. The Hindu concentrated on the internal world, upon the unseen realms in the Self, and developed the science of Yoga. Yoga is controlling the senses, will and mind. The benefit of its study is that we learn to control instead of being controlled. Mind seems to be layer on layer. Our real goal is to cross all these intervening strata of our being and find God. The end and aim of Yoga is to realise God. To do this we must go beyond relative knowledge, go beyond the sense-world. The world is awake to the senses, the children of the Lord are asleep on that plane. The world is asleep to the Eternal, the children of the Lord are awake in that realm. These are the sons of God. There is but one way to control the senses--to see Him who is the Reality in the universe. Then and only then can we really conquer our senses.

Concentration is restraining the mind into smaller and smaller limits. There are eight processes for thus restraining the mind. The first is Yama, controlling the mind by avoiding externals. All morality is included in this. Beget no evil. Injure no living creature. If you injure nothing for twelve years, then even lions and tigers will go down before you. Practise truthfulness. Twelve years of absolute truthfulness in thought, word, and deed gives a man what he wills. Be chaste in thought, word, and action. Chastity is the basis of all religions. Personal purity is imperative. Next in Niyama, not allowing the mind to wander in any direction. Then Asana, posture. There are eighty-four postures: but the best is that most natural to each one; that is, which can be kept longest with the greatest ease.

After this comes Pranayama, restraint of breath. Then Pratyahara, drawing in of the organs from their objects. Then Dharana, concentration. Then Dhyana, contemplation or meditation. (This is the kernel of the Yoga system.) And last, Samadhi, superconsciousness. The purer the body and mind, the quicker the desired result will be obtained. You must be perfectly pure. Do not think of evil things, such thoughts will surely drag you down. If you are perfectly pure and practise faithfully, your mind can finally be made a searchlight of infinite power. There is no limit to its scope. But there must be constant practice and non-attachment to the world. When a man reaches the superconscious state, all feeling of body melts away. Then alone does he become free and immortal. To all external appearances, unconsciousness and superconsciousness are the same; but they differ as a lump of clay from a lump of gold. The one whose whole soul is given up to God has reached the superconscious plane.

THE POWER OF THE MIND

The cause becomes the effect. The cause is not one thing and the effect something else that exists as a result. The effect is always the cause worked out. Always, the cause becomes the effect. The popular idea is that the effect is the result of the operation of a cause which is something independent and aloof from the effect. This is not so. The effect is always the cause worked out into another condition.

The universe is really homogeneous. Heterogeneity is only in appearance. There seem to be different substances, different powers, etc. throughout nature. But take two different substances, say a piece of glass and a piece of wood, grind them up together fine enough, reduce them till there is nothing more to reduce, and the substance remaining appears homogeneous. All substances in the last analysis are one. Homogeneity is the substance, the reality; heterogeneity is the appearance of many things as though they were many substances. The One is homogeneity; the appearance of the One as many is heterogeneity.

Hearing, seeing, or tasting, etc. is the mind in different states of action.

The atmosphere of a room may be hypnotised so that everybody who enters it will see all sorts of things--men and objects flying through the air.

Everybody is hypnotised already. The work of attaining freedom, of realising one's real nature, consists in de-hypnotisation.

One thing to be remembered is that we are not gaining powers at all. We have them already. The whole process of growth is de-hypnotisation.

The purer the mind, the easier it is to control. Purity of the mind must be insisted upon if you would control it. Do not think covetously about mere mental powers. Let them go. One who seeks the powers of the mind succumbs to them. Almost all who desire powers become ensnared by them.

Perfect morality is the all in all of complete control over mind. The man who is perfectly moral has nothing more to do; he is free. The man who is perfectly moral cannot possibly hurt anything or anybody. Non-injuring has to be attained by him who would be free. No one is more powerful than he who has attained perfect non-injuring. No one could fight, no one could quarrel, in his presence. Yes, his very presence, and nothing else, means peace, means love wherever he may be. Nobody could be angry or fight in his presence. Even the animals, ferocious animals, would be peaceful before him.

I once knew a Yogi, a very old man, who lived in a hole in the ground all by himself. All he had was a pan or two to cook his meals

1 in. He ate very little, and wore scarcely anything, and spent most of
2 his time meditating.

3 With him all people were alike. He had attained to non-
4 injuring. What he saw in everything, in every person, in every
5 animal, was the Soul, the Lord of the Universe. With him, every
6 person and every animal was "my Lord". He never addressed any
7 person or animal in any other way. Well, one day a thief came his
8 way and stole one of his pans. He saw him and ran after him. The
9 chase was a long one. At last the thief from exhaustion had to stop,
10 and the Yogi, running up to him, fell on his knees before him and
11 said, "My Lord, you do me a great honour to come my way. Do me
12 the honour to accept the other pan. It is also yours." This old man is
13 dead now. He was full of love for everything in the world. He would
14 have died for an ant. Wild animals instinctively knew this old man to
15 be their friend. Snakes and ferocious animals would go into his hold
16 and sleep with him. They all loved him and never fought in his
17 presence.

18 Never talk about the faults of others, no matter how bad they
19 may be. Nothing is ever gained by that. You never help one by
20 talking about his fault; you do him an injury, and injure yourself as
21 well.

22 All regulations in eating, practising, etc., are all right so long
23 as they are complementary to a spiritual aspiration, but they are
24 not ends in themselves; they are only helps.

25 Never quarrel about religion. All quarrels and disputation
26 concerning religion simply show that spirituality is not present.
27 Religious quarrels are always over the husks. When purity, when
28 spirituality goes, leaving the soul dry, quarrels begin, and not
29 before.

32 LESSONS ON RAJA-YOGA

33 **Prana**

34
35 The theory of creation is that matter is subject to five
36 conditions: ether, luminous ether, gaseous, liquid, and solid. They
37 are all evoked out of one primal element, which is very finest ether.

38 The name of the energy in the universe is Prana, which is the
39 force residing in these elements. Mind is the great instrument for
40 using the Prana. Mind is material. Behind the mind is Atman which
41 takes hold of the Prana. Prana is the driving power of the world,
42 and can be seen in every manifestation of life. The body is mortal
43 and the mind is mortal; both, being compounds, must die. Behind
44 all is the Atman which never dies. The Atman is pure intelligence
45 controlling and directing Prana. But the intelligence we see around
46 us is always imperfect. When intelligence is perfect, we get the
47 Incarnation--the Christ. Intelligence is always trying to manifest
48 itself, and in order to do this it is creating minds and bodies of

1 different degrees of development. In reality, and at the back of all
2 things, every being is equal.

3 Mind is very fine matter; it is the instrument for manifesting
4 Prana. Force requires matter for manifestation.

5 The next point is how to use this Prana. We all use it, but how
6 sadly we waste it! The first doctrine in the preparatory stage is that
7 all knowledge is the outcome of experience. Whatever is beyond the
8 five senses must also be experienced in order to become true to us.

9 Our mind is acting on three planes: the subconscious,
10 conscious, and superconscious. Of men, the Yogi alone is
11 superconscious. The whole theory of Yoga is to go beyond the mind.
12 These three planes can be understood by considering the vibrations
13 of light or sound. There are certain vibrations of light too slow to
14 become visible; then as they get faster, we see them as light; and
15 then they get too fast for us to see them at all. The same with
16 sound.

17 How to transcend the senses without disturbing the health is
18 what we want to learn. The Western mind has stumbled into
19 acquiring some of the psychic gifts which in them are abnormal and
20 are frequently the sign of disease. The Hindu has studied and made
21 perfect this subject of science, which all may now study without
22 fear or danger.

23 Mental healing is a fine proof of the superconscious state; for
24 the thought which heals is a sort of vibration in the Prana, and it
25 does not go as a thought but as something higher for which we
26 have no name.

27 Each thought has three states. First, the rising or beginning,
28 of which we are unconscious; second, when the thought rises to the
29 surface; and third, when it goes from us. Thought is like a bubble
30 rising to the surface. When thought is joined to will, we call it
31 power. That which strikes the sick person whom you are trying to
32 help is not thought, but power. The self-man running through it all
33 is called in Sanskrit Sutratma, the "Thread-self".

34 The last and highest manifestation of Prana is love. The
35 moment you have succeeded in manufacturing love out of Prana,
36 you are free. It is the hardest and the greatest thing to gain. You
37 must not criticise others; you must criticise *yourself*. If you see a
38 drunkard, do not criticise him; remember he is you in another
39 shape. He who has not darkness sees no darkness in others. What
40 you have inside you is that you see in others. This is the surest way
41 of reform. If the would-be reformers who criticise and see evil
42 would themselves stop creating evil, the world would be better.
43 Beat this idea into yourself.

46 The Practice of Yoga

48 The body must be properly taken care of. The people who

1 torture their flesh are demoniacal. Always keep your mind joyful; if
2 melancholy thoughts come, kick them out. A Yogi must not eat too
3 much, but he also must not fast; he must not sleep too much, but he
4 must not go without any sleep. In all things only the man who holds
5 the golden mean can become a Yogi.

6 What is the best time for practice in Yoga? The junction time
7 of dawn and twilight, when all nature becomes calm. Take help of
8 nature. Take the easiest posture in sitting. Have the three parts
9 straight--the ribs, the shoulders, and the head--leaving the spine
10 free and straight, no leaning backwards or forwards. Then mentally
11 hold the body as perfect, part by part. Then send a current of love
12 to all the world; then pray for enlightenment. And lastly, join your
13 mind to your breath and gradually attain the power of
14 concentrating your attention on its movements. The reason for this
15 will be apparent by degrees.

16 17 The Ojas

18
19 The "Ojas" is that which makes the difference between man
20 and man. The man who has much Ojas is the leader of men. It gives
21 a tremendous power of attraction. Ojas is manufactured from the
22 nerve-currents. It has this peculiarity: it is most easily made from
23 that force which manifests itself in the sexual powers. If the powers
24 of the sexual centres are not frittered away and their energies
25 wasted (action is only thought in a grosser state), they can be
26 manufactured into Ojas. The two great nerve currents of the body
27 start from the brain, go down on each side of the spinal cord, but
28 they cross in the shape of the figure 8 at the back of the head. Thus
29 the left side of the body is governed by the right side of the head. At
30 the lowest point of the circuit is the sexual centre, the Sacral
31 Plexus. The energy conveyed by these two currents of nerves comes
32 down, and a large amount is continually being stored in the Sacral
33 Plexus. The last bone in the spine is over the Sacral Plexus and is
34 described in symbolic language as a triangle; and as the energy is
35 stored up beside it, this energy is symbolised by a serpent.
36 Consciousness and subconsciousness work through these two
37 nerve-currents. But superconsciousness takes off the nerve-current
38 when it reaches the lower end of the circuit, and instead of allowing
39 it to go up and complete the circuit, stops and forces it up the spinal
40 cord as Ojas from the Sacral Plexus. The spinal cord is naturally
41 closed, but it can be opened to form a passage for this Ojas. As the
42 current travels from one centre of the spinal cord to another, *you*
43 can travel from one plane of existence to another. This is why the
44 human being is greater than others, because all planes, all
45 experiences, are possible to the spirit in the human body. We do not
46 need another; for man can, if he likes, finish in his body his
47 probation and can after that become pure spirit. When the Ojas has
48 gone from centre to centre and reaches the Pineal Gland (a part of
49 the brain to which science can assign no function), man then
50 becomes neither mind nor body, he is free from all bondage.

51 The great danger of psychic powers is that man stumbles, as

1 it were, into them, and knows not how to use them rightly. He is
2 without training and without knowledge of what has happened to
3 him. The danger is that in using these psychic powers, the sexual
4 feelings are abnormally roused as these powers are in fact
5 manufactured out of the sexual centre. The best and safest way is
6 to avoid psychic manifestations, for they play the most horrible
7 pranks on their ignorant and untrained owners.

8 To go back to symbols. Because this movement of the Ojas up
9 the spinal cord feels like a spiral one, it is called the "snake". The
10 snake, therefore, or the serpent, rests on the bone or triangle.
11 When it is roused, it travels up the spinal cord; and as it goes from
12 centre to centre, a new natural world is opened inside us--the
13 Kundalini is roused.

14 15 PRANAYAMA

16
17 The practice of Pranayama is the training of the
18 superconscious mind. The physical practice is divided into three
19 parts and deals entirely with the breath. It consists of drawing in,
20 holding, and throwing out the breath. The breath must be drawn in
21 by one nostril whilst you count four, then held whilst you count
22 sixteen, and thrown away by the other nostril whilst you count
23 eight. Then reverse the process closing the other nostril while you
24 breathe in. You will have to begin by holding one nostril with your
25 thumb; but in time your breathing will obey your mind. Make four
26 of these Pranayamas morning and evening.

27 28 METAGNOSTICISM

29
30 "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." The word
31 "repent" is in Greek "metanoete" ("meta" means behind, after,
32 beyond) and means literally "go beyond knowledge"--the knowledge
33 of the (five) senses--"and look within where you will find the
34 kingdom of heaven".

35 Sir William Hamilton says at the end of a philosophical work,
36 "Here philosophy ends, here religion begins". Religion is not, and
37 never can be, in the field of intellect. Intellectual reasoning is based
38 on facts evident to the *senses*. Now religion has nothing to do with
39 the senses. The agnostics say they cannot know God, and rightly,
40 for they have exhausted the limits of their senses and yet get no
41 further in knowledge of God. Therefore in order to prove religion--
42 that is, the existence of God, immortality, etc.--we have to go
43 beyond the knowledge of the senses. All great prophets and seers
44 claim to have "seen God", that is to say, they have had direct
45 experience. There is no knowledge without experience, and man
46 has to see God in his own soul. When man has come face to face
47 with the one great fact in the universe, then alone will doubts
48 vanish and crooked things become straight. This is "seeing God".
49 Our business is to verify, not to swallow. Religion, like other

1 sciences, requires you to gather facts, to see for yourself, and this is
2 possible when you go beyond the knowledge which lies in the
3 region of the five senses. Religious truths need verification by
4 everyone. To see God is the one goal. Power is not the goal. Pure
5 Existence-Knowledge-and-Love is the goal; and Love is God.

6 7 8 **THOUGHT, IMAGINATION, AND** 9 **MEDITATION**

10
11 The same faculty that we employ in dreams and thoughts,
12 namely, imagination, will also be the means by which we arrive at
13 Truth. When the imagination is very powerful, the object becomes
14 visualised. Therefore by it we can bring our bodies to any state of
15 health or disease. When we see a thing, the particles of the brain
16 fall into a certain position like the mosaics of a kaleidoscope.
17 Memory consists in getting back this combination and the same
18 setting of the particles of the brain. The stronger the will, the
19 greater will be the success in resetting these particles of the brain.
20 There is only one power to cure the body, and that is in every man.
21 Medicine only rouses this power. Disease is only the manifest
22 struggle of that power to throw off the poison which has entered
23 the body. Although the power to overthrow poison may be roused by
24 medicine, it may be more permanently roused by the force of
25 thought. Imagination must hold to the thought of health and
26 strength in order that in case of illness the memory of the ideal of
27 health may be roused and the particles re-arranged in the position
28 into which they fell when healthy. The tendency of the body is then
29 to follow the brain.

30 The next step is when this process can be arrived at by
31 another's mind working on us. Instances of this may be seen every
32 day. Words are only a mode of mind acting on mind. Good and evil
33 thoughts are each a potent power, and they fill the universe. As
34 vibration continues, so thought remains in the form of thought until
35 translated into action. For example, force is latent in the man's arm
36 until he strikes a blow, when he translates it into activity. We are
37 the heirs of good and evil thought. If we make ourselves pure and
38 the instruments of good thoughts, these will enter us. The good soul
39 will not be receptive to evil thoughts. Evil thoughts find the best
40 field in evil people; they are like microbes which germinate and
41 increase only when they find a suitable soil. Mere thoughts are like
42 little wavelets; fresh impulses to vibration come to them
43 simultaneously, until at last one great wave seems to stand up and
44 swallow up the rest. These universal thoughtwaves seem to recur
45 every five hundred years, when invariably the great wave typifies
46 and swallows up the others. It is this which constitutes a prophet.
47 He focuses in his own mind the thought of the age in which he is
48 living and gives it back to mankind in concrete form. Krishna,
49 Buddha, Christ, Mohammed, and Luther may be instanced as the
50 great waves that stood up above their fellows (with a probable

lapse of five hundred years between them). Always the wave that is backed by the greatest purity and the noblest character is what breaks upon the world as movement of social reform. Once again in our day there is a vibration of the waves of thought and the central idea is that of the Immanent God, and this is everywhere cropping up in every form and every sect. In these waves, construction alternates with destruction; yet the construction always makes an end of the work of destruction. Now, as a man dives deeper to reach his spiritual nature, he feels no longer bound by superstition. The majority of sects will be transient, and last only as bubbles because the leaders are not usually men of character. Perfect love, the heart never reacting, this is what builds character. There is no allegiance possible where there is no character in the leader, and perfect purity ensures the most lasting allegiance and confidence.

Take up an idea, devote yourself to it, struggle on in patience, and the sun will rise for you.

To return to imagination:

We have to visualise the Kundalini. The symbol is the serpent coiled on the triangular bone.

Then practice the breathing as described before, and, while holding the breath, imagine that breath like the current which flows down the figure 8; when it reaches the lowest point, imagine that it strikes the serpent on the triangle and causes the serpent to mount up the channel within the spinal cord. Direct the breath in thought to this triangle.

We have now finished the physical process and from this point it becomes mental.

The first exercise is called the "gathering-in". The mind has to be gathered up or withdrawn from wandering.

After the physical process, let the mind run on and do not restrain it; but keep watch on your mind as a witness watching its action. This mind is thus divided into two--the player and the witness. Now strengthen the witnessing part and do not waste time in restraining your wanderings. The mind must think; but slowly and gradually, as the witness does its part, the player will come more and more under control, until at last you cease to play or wander.

2nd Exercise: Meditation--which may be divided into two. We are concrete in constitution and the mind must think in forms. Religion admits this necessity and gives the help of outward forms and ceremonies. You cannot meditate on God without some form. One will come to you, for thought and symbol are inseparable. Try to fix your mind on that form.

3rd Exercise: This is attained by practicing meditation and is really "one-pointedness". The mind usually works in a circle; make it remain on one point.

The last is the result. When the mind has reached this, all is gained--healing, clairvoyance, and all psychic gifts. In a moment you can direct this current of thought to anyone, as Jesus did, with

1 instantaneous result.

2 People have stumbled upon these gifts without previous
3 training, but I advise you to wait and practise all these steps slowly;
4 then you will get everything under your control. You may practise
5 healing a little if love is the motive, for that cannot hurt. Man is
6 very short-sighted and impatient. All want power, but few will wait
7 to gain it for themselves. He distributes but will not store up. It
8 takes a long time to earn and but a short time to distribute.
9 Therefore store up your powers as you acquire them and do not
10 dissipate them.

11 Every wave of passion restrained is a balance in your favor. It
12 is therefore good *policy* not to return anger for anger, as with all
13 true morality. Christ said, "Resist not evil", and we do not
14 understand it until we discover that it is not only moral but actually
15 the best policy, for anger is loss of energy to the man who displays
16 it. You should not allow your minds to come into those brain-
17 combinations of anger and hatred.

18 When the primal element is discovered in chemical science,
19 the work of the chemist will be finished. When unity is discovered,
20 perfection in the science of religion is reached, and this was
21 attained thousands of years ago. Perfect unity is reached when man
22 says, "I and my Father are one".

23 24 **LESSONS ON BHAKTI-YOGA**

25 **The Yoga Through Devotion**

26
27 We have been considering Raja-Yoga and the physical
28 exercises. Now we shall consider Yoga through devotion. But you
29 must remember that no one system is *necessary* (for all). I want to
30 set before you many systems, many ideals, in order that you may
31 find one that will suit you; if one does not, perhaps another may.

32 We want to become harmonious beings, with the psychical,
33 spiritual, intellectual, and working (active) sides of our nature
34 equally developed. Nations and individuals typify one of these sides
35 or types and cannot understand more than that one. They get so
36 built up into one ideal that they cannot see any other. The ideal is
37 really that we should become many-sided. Indeed the cause of the
38 misery of the world is that we are so one-sided that we cannot
39 sympathise with one another. Consider a man looking at the sun
40 from beneath the earth, up the shaft of a mine; he sees one aspect
41 of the sun. Then another man sees the sun from the earth's level,
42 another through mist and fog, another from the mountain top. To
43 each the sun has a different appearance. So there are many
44 appearances, but in reality there is only one sun. There is diversity
45 of vision, but one object; and that is the sun.

46 Each man, according to his nature, has a peculiar tendency
47 and takes to certain ideals and a certain path by which to reach
48 them. But the goal is always the same to all. The Roman Catholic is

1 deep and spiritual, but he has lost breadth. The Unitarian is wide,
2 but he has lost spirituality and considers religion as of divided
3 importance. What we want is the depth of the Roman Catholic and
4 the breadth of the Unitarian. We must be as broad as the skies, as
5 deep as the ocean; we must have the zeal of the fanatic, the depth
6 of the mystic, and the width of the agnostic. The word "toleration"
7 has acquired an unpleasant association with the conceited man
8 who, thinking himself in a high position, looks down on his fellow-
9 creatures with pity. This is a horrible state of mind. We are all
10 travelling the same way, towards the same goal, but by different
11 paths made by the necessities of the case to suit diverse minds. We
12 must become many-sided, indeed we must become protean in
13 character, so as not only to tolerate, but to do what is much more
14 difficult, to sympathise, to enter into another's path, and feel *with*
15 *him* in his aspirations and seeking after God. There are two
16 elements in every religion--a positive and a negative. In
17 Christianity, for instance, when you speak of the Incarnation, of the
18 Trinity, of salvation through Jesus Christ, I am with you. I say, "Very
19 good, that I also hold true." But when you go on to say, "There is no
20 other true religion, there is no other revelation of God", then I say,
21 "Stop, I cannot go with you when you shut out, when you deny."
22 Every religion has a message to deliver, something to teach man;
23 but when it begins to protest, when it tries to disturb others, then it
24 takes up a negative and therefore a dangerous position, and does
25 not know where to begin or where to end.

26 Every force completes a circuit. The force we call man starts
27 from the Infinite God and must return to Him. This return to God
28 must be accomplished in one of two ways--either by slowly drifting
29 back, going with nature, or by our own inward power, which causes
30 us to stop on our course, which would, if left alone, carry us in a
31 circuit back to God, and violently turn round and find God, as it
32 were, by a short cut. This is what the Yogi does.

1 I have said that every man must choose his own ideal which is
2 in accord with his nature. This ideal is called a man's Ishta. You
3 must keep it sacred (and therefore secret) and when you worship
4 God, worship according to your Ishta. How are we to find out the
5 particular method? It is very difficult, but as you persevere in your
6 worship, it will come of itself. Three things are the special gifts of
7 God to man--the human body, the desire to be free, and the blessing
8 of help from one who is already free. Now, we cannot have devotion
9 without a Personal God. There must be the lover and the beloved.
10 God is an infinitised human being. It is bound to be so, for so long
11 as we are human, we must have a humanised God, we are forced to
12 see a Personal God and Him only. Consider how all that we see in
13 this world is not the object pure and simple, but the object *plus* our
14 own mind. The chair plus the chair's reaction on your mind is the
15 real chair. You must colour everything with your mind, and then
16 alone you can see it. (Example: The white, square, shiny, hard box,
17 seen by the man with three senses, then by the man with four
18 senses, then by him with five senses. The last alone sees it with all
19 the enumerated qualities, and each one before has seen an
20 additional one to the previous man. Now suppose a man with six
21 senses sees the same box, he would see still another quality added.)

22 Because I see love and knowledge, I know the universal cause
23 is manifesting that love and knowledge. How can that be loveless
24 which causes love in me? We cannot think of the universal cause
25 without human qualities. To see God as separate from ourselves in
26 the universe is necessary as a first step. There are three visions of
27 God: the lowest vision, when God seems to have a body like
28 ourselves (see Byzantine art); a higher vision when we invest God
29 with human qualities; and then on and on, till we come to the
30 highest vision, when we see God.

31 But remember that in *all* these steps we are seeing God and
32 God alone; there is no illusion in it, no mistake. Just as when we
33 saw the sun from different points, it was still the sun and not the
34 moon or anything else.

35 We cannot help seeing God as we are--infinitised, but still as
36 we are. Suppose we tried to conceive God as the Absolute, we
37 should have again to come back to the relative state in order to
38 enjoy and love.

39 The devotion to God as seen in every religion is divided into
40 two parts: the devotion which works through forms and ceremonies
41 and through words, and that which works through love. In this
42 world we are bound by laws, and we are always striving to break
43 through these laws, we are always trying to disobey, to trample on
44 nature. For instance, nature gives us no houses, we build them.
45 Nature made us naked, we clothe ourselves. Man's goal is to be
46 free, and just in so far as we are incompetent to break nature's laws
47 shall we suffer. We only obey nature's law in order to be *outlawed--*
48 beyond law. The whole struggle of life is *not* to obey. (That is why I
49 sympathise with Christian Scientists, for they teach the liberty of
50 man and the divinity of soul.) The soul is superior to all
51 environment. "The universe is my father's kingdom; I am the heir-
52 apparent"--that is the attitude for man to take. "My own soul can

1 subdue all."

2 We must work through law before we come to liberty.
3 External helps and methods, forms, ceremonies, creeds, doctrines,
4 all have their right place and are meant to support and strengthen
5 us *until we become strong*. Then they are no more necessary. They
6 are our nurses, and as such indispensable in youth. Even books are
7 nurses, medicines are nurses. But we must work to bring about the
8 time when man shall recognise his mastery over his own body.
9 Herbs and medicines have power over us as long as we allow them;
10 when we become strong, these external methods are no more
11 necessary.

12 13 14 Worships Through Words and Love

15
16 Body is only mind in a grosser form, mind being composed of
17 finer layers and the body being the denser layers; and when man
18 has perfect control over his mind, he will also have control over his
19 body. Just as each mind has its own peculiar body, so to each word
20 belongs a particular thought. We talk in double consonants when
21 we are angry--"stupid", "fool", "idiot", etc.; in soft vowels when we
22 are sad--"Ah me!" These are momentary feelings, of course; but
23 there are eternal feelings, such as love, peace, calmness, joy,
24 holiness; and these feelings have their word-expression in all
25 religions, the word being only the embodiment of these, man's
26 highest feelings. Now the thought has produced the word, and in
27 their turn these words may produce the thoughts or feelings. This is
28 where the help of words come in. Each of such words covers one
29 ideal. These sacred mysterious words we all recognise and know,
30 and yet if we merely read them in books, they have no effect on us.
31 To be effective, they must be charged with spirit, touched and used
32 by one who has himself been touched by the Spirit of God and who
33 now *lives*. It is only he who can set the current in motion. The
34 "laying on of hands" is the continuation of that current which was
35 set in motion by Christ. The one who has the power of transmitting
36 this current is called a Guru. With great teachers the use of words
37 is not necessary--as with Jesus. But the "small fry" transmit this
38 current through words.

39 Do not look on the faults of others. You cannot judge a man by
40 his faults. (Example: Suppose we were to judge of an apple tree by
41 the rotten, unripe, unformed apples we find on the ground. Even so
42 do the faults of a man not show what the man's character is.)
43 Remember, the wicked are always the same all over the world. The
44 thief and the murderer are the same in Asia and Europe and
45 America. They form a nation by themselves. It is only in the good
46 and the pure and the strong that you find variety. Do not recognise
47 wickedness in others. Wickedness is ignorance, weakness. What is
48 the good of telling people they are weak?

49 Criticism and destruction are of no avail. We must give them
50 something higher; tell them of their own glorious nature, their

1 birthright. Why do not more people come to God? The reason is that
2 so few people have any enjoyments outside their five senses. The
3 majority *cannot* see with their eyes nor hear with their ears in the
4 inner world.

5 We now come to *Worship through Love*.

6 It has been said, "It is good to be born in a church, but not to
7 die in it." The tree receives support and shelter from the hedge that
8 surrounds it when young; but unless the hedge is removed, the
9 growth and strength of that tree will be hindered. Formal worship,
10 as we have seen, is a necessary stage, but gradually by slow growth
11 we outgrow it and come to a higher platform. When love to God
12 becomes perfect, we think no more of the qualities of God--that He
13 is omnipotent, omnipresent, and all those big adjectives. We do not
14 *want* anything of God, so we do not care to notice these qualities.
15 Just all we want is love of God. But anthropomorphism still follows
16 us. We cannot get away from our humanity, we cannot jump out of
17 our bodies; so we must love God as we love one another.

18 There are five steps in human love.

19 1. The lowest, most commonplace, "peaceful" love,
20 when we look up to our Father for all we want--protection, food, etc.

21 2. The love which makes us want to serve. Man wants
22 to serve God as his master, the longing to serve dominating every
23 other feeling; and we are indifferent whether the master is good or
24 bad, kind or unkind.

25 3. The love of a friend, the love of equals--companions,
26 playmates. Man feels God to be his companion.

27 4. Motherly love. God is looked upon as a child. In India
28 this is considered a higher love than the foregoing, because it has
29 absolutely no element of fear.

30 5. The love of husband and wife; love for love's sake--
31 God the perfect, beloved one.

32 It has been beautifully expressed: "Four eyes meet, a change
33 begins to come into two souls; love comes in the middle between
34 these two souls and makes them *one*."

35 When a man has this last and most perfect form of love, then
36 all desires vanish, forms and doctrines and churches drop away,
37 even the desire for freedom (the end and aim of all religions is
38 freedom from birth and death and other things) is given up. The
39 highest love is the love that is sexless, for it is perfect unity that is
40 expressed in the highest love, and sex differentiates bodies. It is
41 therefore only in spirit that union is possible. The less we have of
42 the physical idea, the more perfect will be our love; at last all
43 physical thought will be forgotten, and the two souls will become
44 one. We love, love always. Love comes and penetrates through the
45 forms and sees beyond. It has been said, "The lover sees Helen's
46 beauty in an Ethiopian's brow." The Ethiopian is the suggestion and
47 upon that suggestion the man throws his love. As the oyster throws
48 over the irritants, it finds in its shell, the substance that turns the
49 irritants into beautiful pearls, so man throws out love, and it is

1 always man's highest ideal that he loves, and the highest ideal is
2 always selfless; so man loves love. God is love, and we love God--or
3 love love. We only *see* love, love cannot be expressed. "A dumb
4 man eating butter" cannot tell you what butter is like. Butter is
5 butter, and its qualities cannot be expressed to those who have not
6 tasted it. Love for love's sake cannot be expressed to those who
7 have not felt it.

8 Love may be symbolised by a triangle. The first angle is, love
9 never begs, never asks for anything; the second, love knows no
10 fear; the third and the apex, love for love's sake.

11 Through the power of love the senses become finer and
12 higher. The perfect love is very rare in human relation, for human
13 love is almost always interdependent and mutual. But God's love is
14 a constant stream, nothing can hurt or disturb it. When man loves
15 God as his highest ideal, as no beggar, wanting nothing, then is love
16 carried to the extreme of evolution, and it becomes a great power in
17 the universe. It takes a long time to get to these things, and we
18 have to begin by that which is nearest to our nature; some are born
19 to service, some to be mothers in love. Anyhow, the result is with
20 God. We must take advantage of nature.

21 22 On Doing Good to the World 23

24 We are asked: What good is your Religion to society? Society
25 is made a test of truth. Now this is very illogical. Society is only a
26 stage of growth through which we are passing. We might just as
27 well judge the good or utility of a scientific discovery by its use to
28 the baby. It is simply monstrous. If the social state were permanent,
29 it would be the same as if the baby remained a baby. There can be
30 no perfect man-baby; the words are a contradiction in terms, so
31 there can be no perfect society. Man must and will grow out of such
32 early stages. Society is good at a certain stage, but it cannot be our
33 ideal; it is a constant flux. The present mercantile civilisation must
34 die, with all its pretensions and humbug--all a kind of "Lord Mayor's
35 Show". What the world wants is thought-power through individuals.
36 My Master used to say, "Why don't you help your own lotus flower
37 to bloom? The bees will then come of themselves." The world needs
38 people who are mad with love of God. You must believe in yourself,
39 and then you will believe in God. The history of the world is that of
40 six men of faith, six men of deep pure character. We need to have
41 three things; the heart to feel, the brain to conceive, the hand to
42 work. First we must go out of the world and make ourselves fit
43 instruments. Make yourself a dynamo. *Feel* first for the world. At a
44 time when all men are ready to work, where is the man of *feeling*?
45 Where is the feeling that produced an Ignatius Loyola? Test your
46 love and humility. That man is not humble or loving who is jealous.
47 Jealousy is a terrible, horrible sin; it enters a man so mysteriously.
48 Ask yourself, does your mind react in hatred or jealousy? Good
49 works are continually being undone by the tons of hatred and anger
50 which are being poured out on the world. If you are pure, if you are
51 strong, *you, one* man, are equal to the whole world.

1 The brain to conceive the next condition of doing good works
2 is only a dry Sahara after all; it cannot do anything alone unless it
3 has the *feeling* behind it. Take love, which has never failed; and
4 then the brain will conceive, and the hand will work righteousness.
5 Sages have dreamed of and have *seen* the vision of God. "The pure
6 in heart shall see God." All the great ones claim to have *seen* God.
7 Thousands of years ago has the vision been seen, and the unity
8 which lies beyond has been recognised; and now the only thing we
9 can do is to fill in these glorious outlines.

MOTHER-WORSHIP

13 The two conjoint facts of perception we can never get rid of
14 are happiness and unhappiness--things which bring us pain also
15 bring pleasure. Our world is made up of these two. We cannot get
16 rid of them; with every pulsation of life they are present. The world
17 is busy trying to reconcile these opposites, sages trying to find
18 solution of this commingling of the opposites. The burning heat of
19 pain is intermitted by flashes of rest, the gleam of light breaking the
20 darkness in intermittent flashes only to make the gloom deeper.

21 Children are born optimists, but the rest of life is a
22 continuous disillusionment; not one ideal can be fully attained, not
23 one thirst can be quenched. So on they go trying to solve the riddle,
24 and religion has taken up the task.

25 In religions of dualism, among the Persians, there was a God
26 and a Satan. This through the Jews has gone all over Europe and
27 America. It was a working hypothesis thousands of years ago; but
28 now we know, that is not tenable. There is nothing absolutely good
29 or evil; it is good to one and evil to another, evil today, good
30 tomorrow, and vice versa. . . .

31 God was first of course a clan-god, then He became God of
32 gods. With ancient Egyptians and Babylonians, this idea (of a dual
33 God and Satan) was very practically carried out. Their Moloch
34 became God of gods and the captured gods were forced to do
35 homage in His temple.

36 Yet the riddle remains: Who presides over this Evil? Many are
37 hoping against hope that all is good and that we do not understand.
38 We are clutching at a straw, burying our heads in the sand. Yet we
39 all follow morality and the gist of morality is sacrifice--not I but
40 thou. Yet how it clashes with the great good God of the universe!
41 He is so selfish, the most vengeful person that we know, with
42 plagues, famines, war!

43 We all have to get experiences in this life. We may try to fly
44 bitter experiences, but sooner or later they catch us. And I pity the
45 man who does not face the whole.

46 Manu Deva of the Vedas, was transformed in Persia as
47 Ahriman. So the mythological explanation of the question was dead;
48 but the question remained, and there was no reply, no solution.

1 But there was the other idea in the old Vedic hymn to the
2 Goddess: "I am the light. I am the light of the sun and moon; I am
3 the air which animates all beings." This is the germ which
4 afterwards develops into Mother-worship. By Mother-worship is not
5 meant difference between father and mother. The first idea
6 connoted by it is that of energy--I am the power that is in all beings.

7 The baby is a man of nerves. He goes on and on till he is a
8 man of power. The idea of good and evil was not at first
9 differentiated and developed. An advancing consciousness showed
10 power as the primal idea. Resistance and struggle at every step is
11 the law. We are the resultant of the two--energy and resistance,
12 internal and external power. Every atom is working and resisting
13 every thought in the mind. Everything we see and know is but the
14 resultant of these two forces.

15 This idea of God is something new. In the Vedic hymns Varuna
16 and Indra shower the choicest gifts and blessings on devotees, a
17 very human idea, more human than man himself.

18 This is the new principle. There is one power behind all
19 phenomena. Power is power everywhere, whether in the form of
20 evil or as Saviour of the world. So this is the new idea; the old idea
21 was man-God. Here is the first opening out of the idea of one
22 universal power.

23 "I stretch the bows of Rudra when He desires to destroy evil"
24 (Rig-Veda, X.125, *Devi-Sukta*).

25 Very soon in the Gita (IX.19, also X.4-5) we find, "O Arjuna, I
26 am the Sat and I am the Asat, I am the good and I am the bad, I am
27 the power of saints, I am the power of the wicked." But soon the
28 speaker patches up truth, and the idea goes to sleep. I am power in
29 good so long as it is doing good works.

30 In the religion of Persia, there was the idea of Satan, but in
31 India, no conception of Satan. Later books began to realise this new
32 idea. Evil exists, and there is no shirking the fact. The universe is a
33 fact; and if a fact, it is a huge composition of good and evil.
34 Whoever rules must rule over good and evil. If that power makes us
35 live, the same makes us die. Laughter and tears are kin, and there
36 are more tears than laughter in this world. Who made flowers, who
37 made the Himalayas?--a very good God. Who made my sins and
38 weaknesses?--Karma, Satan, self. The result is a lame, one-legged
39 universe, and naturally the God of the universe, a one-legged God.

40 The view of the absolute separation of good and evil, two cut
41 and dried and separate existences, makes us brutes of
42 unsympathetic hearts. The good woman jumps aside from the
43 streetwalker. Why? She may be infinitely better than you in some
44 respects. This view brings eternal jealousy and hatred in the world,
45 eternal barrier between man and man, between the good man and
46 the comparatively less good or evil man. Such brutal view is pure
47 evil, more evil than evil itself. Good and evil are not separate
48 existences, but there is an evolution of good, and what is less good
49 we call evil.

50 Some are saints and some sinners. The sun shines on good

1 and evil alike. Does he make any distinction?

2 The old idea of the fatherhood of God is connected with the
3 sweet notion of God presiding over happiness. We want to deny
4 facts. Evil is non-existent, is zero. The "I" is evil. And the "I" exists
5 only too much. Am I zero? Every day I try to find myself so and fail.

6 All these ideas are attempts to fly evil. But we have to face it.
7 Face the whole! Am I under contract to anyone to offer partial love
8 to God only in happiness and good, not in misery and evil?

9 The lamp by the light of which one forges a name and another
10 writes a cheque for a thousand dollars for famine, shines on both,
11 knows no difference. Light knows no evil; you and I make it good or
12 evil.

13 This idea must have a new name. It is called Mother, because
14 in a literal sense it began long ago with a feminine writer elevated
15 to a goddess. Then came Samkhya, and with it all energy is female.
16 The magnet is still, the iron filings are active.

17 The highest of all feminine types in India is mother, higher
18 than wife. Wife and children may desert a man, but his mother
19 never. Mother is the same or loves her child perhaps a little more.
20 Mother represents colourless love that knows no barter, love that
21 never dies. Who can have such love?--only mother, not son, nor
22 daughter, nor wife.

23 "I am the Power that manifests everywhere", says the
24 Mother--She who is bringing out this universe, and She who is
25 bringing forth the following destruction. No need to say that
26 destruction is only the beginning of creation. The top of a hill is only
27 the beginning of a valley.

28 Be bold, face facts as facts. Do not be chased about the
29 universe by evil. Evils are evils. What of that?

30 After all, it is only Mother's play. Nothing serious after all.
31 What could move the Almighty? What made Mother create the
32 universe? She could have no goal. Why? Because the goal is
33 something that is not yet attained. What is this creation for? Just
34 fun. We forget this and begin to quarrel and endure misery. We are
35 the playmates of the Mother.

36 Look at the torture the mother bears in bringing up the baby.
37 Does she enjoy it? Surely. Fasting and praying and watching. She
38 loves it better than anything else. Why? Because there is no
39 selfishness.

40 Pleasure will come--good: who forbids? Pain will come:
41 welcome that too. A mosquito was sitting on a bull's horn; then his
42 conscience troubled him and he said, "Mr. Bull, I have been sitting
43 here a long time. Perhaps I annoy you. I am sorry, I will go away."
44 But the bull replied, "Oh, no, not at all! Bring your whole family and
45 live on my horn; what can you do to me?"

46 Why can we not say that to misery? To be brave is to have
47 faith in the Mother!

48 "I am Life, I am Death." She it is whose shadow is life and

1 death. She is the pleasure in all pleasure. She is the misery in all
2 misery. If life comes, it is the Mother; if death comes, it is the
3 Mother. If heaven comes, She is. If hell comes, there is the Mother;
4 plunge in. We have not faith, we have not patience to see this. We
5 trust the man in the street; but there is one being in the universe
6 we never trust and that is God. We trust Him when He works just
7 our way. But the time will come when, getting blow after blow, the
8 self-sufficient mind will die. In everything we do, the serpent ego is
9 rising up. We are glad that there are so many thorns on the path.
10 They strike the hood of the cobra.

11 Last of all will come self-surrender. Then we shall be able to
12 give ourselves up to the Mother. If misery comes, welcome; if
13 happiness comes, welcome. Then, when we come up to this love, all
14 crooked things shall be straight. There will be the same sight for
15 the Brahmin, the Pariah, and the dog. Until we love the universe
16 with samesightedness, with impartial, undying love, we are missing
17 again and again. But then all will have vanished, and we shall see in
18 all the same infinite eternal Mother.

20 NARADA-BHAKTI-SUTRAS

21 *(A free translation dictated by Swamiji in America)*

22 Chapter I

- 24 1. Bhakti is intense love for God.
- 25 2. It is the nectar of love;
- 26 3. Getting which man becomes perfect, immortal, and
27 satisfied for ever;
- 28 4. Getting which man desires no more, does not become
29 jealous of anything, does not take pleasure in vanities:
- 30 5. Knowing which man becomes filled with spirituality,
31 becomes calm, and finds pleasure only in God.
- 32 6. It cannot be used to fill any desire, itself being the check to
33 all desires.
- 34 7. Sannyasa is giving up both the popular and the scriptural
35 forms of worship.
- 36 8. The Bhakti-Sannyasin is the one whose whole soul goes
37 unto God, and whatever militates against love to God, he rejects.
- 38 9. Giving up all other refuge, he takes refuge in God.
- 39 10. Scriptures are to be followed as long as one's life has not
40 become firm;
- 41 11. Or else there is danger of doing evil in the name of liberty.
- 42 12. When love becomes established, even social forms are
43 given up, except those which are necessary for the preservation of
44 life.
- 45 13. There have been many definitions of love, but Narada

1 gives these as the signs of love: When all thoughts, all words, and
2 all deeds are given up unto the Lord, and the least forgetfulness of
3 God makes one intensely miserable, then *love has begun*.

4 14. As the Gopis had it--

5 15. Because, although worshipping God as their lover, they
6 never forgot his God-nature;

7 16. Otherwise they would have committed the sin of
8 unchastity.

9 17. This is the highest form of love, because there is no desire
10 of reciprocity, which desire is in all human love.

11 12 Chapter II

13
14 1. Bhakti is greater than Karma, greater than Jnana, greater
15 than Yoga (Raja-Yoga), because Bhakti itself is its result, because
16 Bhakti is both the means and the end (fruit).

17 2. As a man cannot satisfy his hunger by simple knowledge or
18 sight of food, so a man cannot be satisfied by the knowledge or
19 even the perception of God until love comes; therefore love is the
20 highest.

21 22 Chapter III

23
24 1. These, however, the Masters have said about Bhakti:

25 2. One who wants this Bhakti must give up sense-enjoyments
26 and even the company of people.

27 3. Day and night he must think about Bhakti and nothing else.

28 4. (He must) go where they sing or talk of God.

29 5. The principle cause of Bhakti is the mercy of a great (or
30 free) soul.

31 6. Meeting with a great soul is hard to obtain, and never fails
32 to save the soul.

33 7. Through the mercy of God we get such Gurus.

34 8. There is no difference between Him and His (own) ones.

35 9. Seek, therefore, for this.

36 10. Evil company is always to be shunned;

37 11. Because it leads to lust and anger, illusion, forgetfulness
38 of the goal, destruction of the will (lack of perseverance), and
39 destruction of everything.

40 12. These disturbances may at first be like ripples, but evil
41 company at last makes them like the sea.

42 13. He gets across Maya who gives up all attachment, serves
43 the great ones, lives alone, cuts the bondages of this world, goes

beyond the qualities of nature, and depends upon the Lord for even his living.

14. He who gives up the fruits of work, he who gives up all work and the dualism of joy and misery, who gives up even the scriptures, gets that unbroken love for God;

15. He crosses this river and helps others to cross it.

Chapter IV

1. The nature of love is inexpressible.

2. As the dumb man cannot express what he tastes, but his actions betray his feelings, so man cannot express this love in words, but his actions betray it.

3. In some rare persons it is expressed.

4. Beyond all qualities, all desires, ever increasing, unbroken, the finest perception is love.

5. When a man gets this love, he sees love everywhere, he hears love everywhere, he talks love everywhere, he thinks love everywhere.

6. According to the qualities or conditions, this love manifests itself differently.

7. The qualities are: Tamas (dullness, heaviness), Rajas (restlessness, activity), Sattva (serenity, purity); and the conditions are: Arta (afflicted), Artharthi (wanting something), Jijnasu (searching truth), Jnani (knower).

8. Of these the latter are higher than the preceding ones.

9. Bhakti is the easiest way of worship.

10. It is its own proof and does not require any other.

11. Its nature is peace and perfect bliss.

12. Bhakti never seeks to injure anyone or anything, not even the popular modes of worship.

13. Conversation about lust, or doubt of God or about one's enemies must not be listened to.

14. Egotism, pride, etc. must be given up.

15. If those passions cannot be controlled, place them upon God, and place all your actions on Him.

16. Merging the trinity of Love, Lover, and Beloved, worship God as His eternal servant, His eternal bride--thus love is to be made unto God.

Chapter V

1. That love is highest which is concentrated upon God.

1 2. When such speak of God, their voices stick in their throats,
2 they cry and weep; and it is they who give holy places their
3 holiness; they make good works, good books better, because they
4 are permeated with God.

5 3. When a man loves God so much, his forefathers rejoice, the
6 gods dance, and the earth gets a Master!

7 4. To such lovers there is no difference of caste, sex,
8 knowledge, form, birth, or wealth;

9 5. Because they are all God's.

10 6. Arguments are to be avoided;

11 7. Because there is no end to them, and they lead to no
12 satisfactory result.

13 8. Read books treating of this love, and do deeds which
14 increase it.

15 9. Giving up all desires of pleasure and pain, gain and loss,
16 worship God day and night. Not a moment is to be spent in vain.

17 10. Ahimsa (non-killing), truthfulness, purity, mercy, and
18 godliness are always to be kept.

19 11. Giving up all other thoughts, the whole mind should day
20 and night worship God. Thus being worshipped day and night, He
21 reveals Himself and makes His worshippers feel Him.

22 12. In past, present, and future, *Love is greatest* !

23 Thus following the ancient sages, we have dared to preach
24 the doctrine of *Love*, without fearing the jeers of the world.

HISTORICAL EVOLUTION OF INDIA

Om Tat Sat

Om Namo Bhagavate Ramakrishnaya

{Sanskrit}--Existence cannot be produced by non-existence.

Non-existence can never be the cause of what exists. Something cannot come out of nothing. That the law of causation is omnipotent and knows no time or place when it did not exist is a doctrine as old as the Aryan race, sung by its ancient poet-seers, formulated by its philosophers, and made the corner-stone upon which the Hindu man even of today builds his whole scheme of life.

There was an inquisitiveness in the race to start with, which very soon developed into bold analysis, and though, in the first attempt, the work turned out might be like the attempts with shaky hands of the future master-sculptor, it very soon gave way to strict science, bold attempts, and startling results.

Its boldness made these men search every brick of their sacrificial altars; scan, cement, and pulverise every word of their scriptures; arrange, re-arrange, doubt, deny, or explain the ceremonies. It turned their gods inside out, and assigned only a secondary place to their omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent Creator of the universe, their ancestral Father-in-heaven; or threw Him altogether overboard as useless, and started a world-religion without Him with even now the largest following of any religion. It evolved the science of geometry from the arrangements of bricks to build various altars, and startled the world with astronomical knowledge that arose from the attempts accurately to time their worship and oblations. It made their contribution to the science of mathematics the largest of any race, ancient or modern, and to their knowledge of chemistry, of metallic compounds in medicine, their scale of musical notes, their invention of the bow-instruments--(all) of great service in the building of modern European civilisation. It led them to invent the science of building up the child-mind through shining fables, of which every child in every civilised country learns in a nursery or a school and carries an impress through life.

Behind and before this analytical keenness, covering it as in a velvet sheath, was the other great mental peculiarity of the race--poetic insight. Its religion, its philosophy, its history, its ethics, its politics were all inlaid in a flower-bed of poetic imagery--the miracle of language which was called Sanskrit or "perfected", lending itself to expressing and manipulating them better than any other tongue. The aid of melodious numbers was invoked even to express the hard facts of mathematics.

This analytical power and the boldness of poetical visions which urged it onward are the two great internal causes in the make-up of the Hindu race. They together formed, as it were, the keynote to the national character. This combination is what is always making the race press onwards beyond the senses--the

1 secret of those speculations which are like the steel blades the
2 artisans used to manufacture--cutting through bars of iron, yet
3 pliable enough to be easily bent into a circle.

4 They wrought poetry in silver and gold; the symphony of
5 jewels, the maze of marble wonders, the music of colours, the fine
6 fabrics which belong more to the fairyland of dreams than to the
7 real--have back of them thousands of years of working of this
8 national trait.

9 Arts and sciences, even the realities of domestic life, are
10 covered with a mass of poetical conceptions, which are pressed
11 forward till the sensuous touches the supersensuous, and the real
12 gets the rose-hue of the unreal.

13 The earliest glimpses we have of this race show it already in
14 the possession of this characteristic, as an instrument of some use
15 in its hands. Many forms of religion and society must have been left
16 behind in the onward march, before we find the race as depicted in
17 the scriptures, the Vedas.

18 An organised pantheon, elaborate ceremonials, divisions of
19 society into hereditary classes necessitated by a variety of
20 occupations, a great many necessities and a good many luxuries of
21 life are already there.

22 Most modern scholars are agreed that surroundings as to
23 climate and conditions, purely Indian, were not yet working on the
24 race.

25 Onwards through several centuries, we come to a multitude
26 surrounded by the snows of Himalayas on the north and the heat of
27 the south--vast plains, interminable forests, through which mighty
28 rivers roll their tides. We catch a glimpse of different races--
29 Dravidians, Tartars, and Aborigines pouring in their quota of blood,
30 of speech, of manners and religions. And at last a great nation
31 emerges to our view--still keeping the type of the Aryan--stronger,
32 broader, and more organised by the assimilation. We find the
33 central assimilative core giving its type and character to the whole
34 mass, clinging on with great pride to its name of "Aryan", and,
35 though willing to give other races the benefits of its civilisation, it
36 was by no means willing to admit them within the "Aryan" pale.

37 The Indian climate again gave a higher direction to the genius
38 of the race. In a land where nature was propitious and yielded easy
39 victories, the national mind started to grapple with and conquer the
40 higher problems of life in the field of thought. Naturally the thinker,
41 the priest, became the highest class in the Indian society, and not
42 the man of the sword. The priests again, even at that dawn of
43 history, put most of their energy in elaborating rituals; and when
44 the nation began to find the load of ceremonies and lifeless rituals
45 too heavy--came the first philosophical speculations, and the royal
46 race was the first to break through the maze of killing rituals.

47 On the one hand, the majority of the priests impelled by
48 economical considerations were bound to defend that form of
49 religion which made their existence a necessity of society and
50 assigned them the highest place in the scale of caste; on the other

1 hand, the king-caste, whose strong right hand guarded and guided
2 the nation and who now found itself as leading in the higher
3 thoughts also, were loath to give up the first place to men who only
4 knew how to conduct a ceremonial. There were then others,
5 recruited from both the priests and king-castes, who ridiculed
6 equally the ritualists and philosophers, declared spiritualism as
7 fraud and priestcraft, and upheld the attainment of material
8 comforts as the highest goal of life. The people, tired of ceremonials
9 and wondering at the philosophers, joined in masses the
10 materialists. This was the beginning of that caste question and that
11 triangular fight in India between ceremonials, philosophy, and
12 materialism which has come down unsolved to our own days.

13 The first solution of the difficulty attempted was by applying
14 the eclecticism which from the earliest days had taught the people
15 to see in differences the same truth in various garbs. The great
16 leader of this school, Krishna--himself of royal race--and his sermon,
17 the Gita, have after various vicissitudes, brought about by the
18 upheavals of the Jains, the Buddhists, and other sects, fairly
19 established themselves as the "Prophet" of India and the truest
20 philosophy of life. Though the tension was toned down for the time,
21 it did not satisfy the social wants which were among the causes--the
22 claim of the king-race to stand first in the scale of caste and the
23 popular intolerance of priestly privilege. Krishna had opened the
24 gates of spiritual knowledge and attainment to all irrespective of
25 sex or caste, but he left undisturbed the same problem on the social
26 side. This again has come down to our own days, in spite of the
27 gigantic struggle of the Buddhists, Vaishnavas, etc. to attain social
28 equality for all.

29 Modern India admits spiritual equality of all souls--but strictly
30 keeps the social difference.

31 Thus we find the struggle renewed all along the line in the
32 seventh century before the Christian era and finally in the sixth,
33 overwhelming the ancient order of things under Shakya Muni, the
34 Buddha. In their reaction against the privileged priesthood,
35 Buddhists swept off almost every bit of the old ritual of the Vedas,
36 subordinated the gods of the Vedas to the position of servants to
37 their own human saints, and declared the "Creator and Supreme
38 Ruler" as an invention of priestcraft and superstition.

39 But the aim of Buddhism was reform of the Vedic religion by
40 standing against ceremonials requiring offerings of animals, against
41 hereditary caste and exclusive priesthood, and against belief in
42 permanent souls. It never attempted to destroy that religion, or
43 overturn the social order. It introduced a vigorous method by
44 organising a class of Sannyasins into a strong monastic
45 brotherhood, and the Brahnavadinis into a body of nuns--by
46 introducing images of saints in the place of altar-fires.

47 It is probable that the reformers had for centuries the
48 majority of the Indian people with them. The older forces were
49 never entirely pacified, but they underwent a good deal of
50 modification during the centuries of Buddhistic supremacy.

51 In ancient India the centres of national life were always the

1 intellectual and spiritual and not political. Of old, as now, political
2 and social power has been always subordinated to spiritual and
3 intellectual. The outburst of national life was round colleges of
4 sages and spiritual teachers. We thus find the Samitis of the
5 Panchalas, of the Kashyas (of Varanasi), the Maithilas standing out
6 as great centres of spiritual culture and philosophy, even in the
7 Upanisads. Again these centres in turn became the focus of political
8 ambition of the various divisions of the Aryans.

9 The great epic Mahabharata tells us of the war of the Kurus
10 and Panchalas for supremacy over the nation, in which they
11 destroyed each other. The spiritual supremacy veered round and
12 centred in the East among the Magadhas and Maithilas, and after
13 the Kuru-Panchala war a sort of supremacy was obtained by the
14 kings of Magadha.

15 The Buddhist reformation and its chief field of activity were
16 also in the same eastern region; and when the Maurya kings, forced
17 possibly by the bar sinister on their escutcheon, patronised and led
18 the new movement, the new priest power joined hands with the
19 political power of the empire of Pataliputra. The popularity of
20 Buddhism and its fresh vigour made the Maurya kings the greatest
21 emperors that India ever had. The power of the Maurya sovereigns
22 made Buddhism that world-wide religion that we see even today.

23 The exclusiveness of the old form of Vedic religions debarred
24 it from taking ready help from outside. At the same time it kept it
25 pure and free from many debasing elements which Buddhism in its
26 propagandist zeal was forced to assimilate.

27 This extreme adaptability in the long run made Indian
28 Buddhism lose almost all its individuality, and extreme desire to be
29 of the people made it unfit to cope with the intellectual forces of the
30 mother religion in a few centuries. The Vedic party in the
31 meanwhile got rid of a good deal of its most objectionable features,
32 as animal sacrifice, and took lessons from the rival daughter in the
33 judicious use of images, temple processions, and other impressive
34 performances, and stood ready to take within her fold the whole
35 empire of Indian Buddhism, already tottering to its fall.

36 And the crash came with the Scythian invasions and the total
37 destruction of the empire of Pataliputra.

38 The invaders, already incensed at the invasion of their central
39 Asiatic home by the preachers of Buddhism, found in the sun-
40 worship of the Brahmins a great sympathy with their own solar
41 religion--and when the Brahminist party were ready to adapt and
42 spiritualise many of the customs of the new-comers, the invaders
43 threw themselves heart and soul into the Brahminic cause.

44 Then there is a veil of darkness and shifting shadows; there
45 are tumults of war, rumors of massacres; and the next scene rises
46 upon a new phase of things.

47 The empire of Magadha was gone. Most of northern India
48 was under the rule of petty chiefs always at war with one another.
49 Buddhism was almost extinct except in some eastern and
50 Himalayan provinces and in the extreme south; and the nation after

1 centuries of struggle against the power of hereditary priesthood
2 awoke to find itself in the clutches of a double priesthood of
3 hereditary Brahmins and exclusive monks of the new regime, with
4 all the powers of the Buddhistic organisation and without their
5 sympathy for the people.

6 A renascent India, bought by the valour and blood of the
7 heroic Rajputs, defined by the merciless intellect of a Brahmin from
8 the same historical thought-centre of Mithila, led by a new
9 philosophical impulse organised by Shankara and his bands of
10 Sannyasins, and beautified by the arts and literature of the courts
11 of Malava--arose on the ruins of the old.

12 The task before it was profound, problems vaster than any
13 their ancestors had ever faced. A comparatively small and compact
14 race of the same blood and speech and the same social and
15 religious aspiration, trying to save its unity by unscalable walls
16 around itself, grew huge by multiplication and addition during the
17 Buddhistic supremacy; and (it) was divided by race, colour, speech,
18 spiritual instinct, and social ambitions into hopelessly jarring
19 factions. And this had to be unified and welded into one gigantic
20 nation. This task Buddhism had also come to solve, and had taken it
21 up when the proportions were not so vast.

22 So long it was a question of Aryanising the other types that
23 were pressing for admission and thus, out of different elements,
24 making a huge Aryan body. In spite of concessions and
25 compromises, Buddhism was eminently successful and remained
26 the national religion of India. But the time came when the
27 allurements of sensual forms of worship, indiscriminately taken in
28 along with various low races, were too dangerous for the central
29 Aryan core, and a longer contact would certainly have destroyed
30 the civilisation of the Aryans. Then came a natural reaction for self-
31 preservation, and Buddhism as a separate sect ceased to live in
32 most parts of its land of birth.

33 The reaction-movement, led in close succession by Kumarila
34 in the north, and Shankara and Ramanuja in the south, has become
35 the last embodiment of that vast accumulation of sects and
36 doctrines and rituals called Hinduism. For the last thousand years
37 or more, its great task has been assimilation, with now and then an
38 outburst of reformation. This reaction first wanted to revive the
39 rituals of the Vedas--failing which, it made the Upanishads or the
40 philosophic portions of the Vedas its basis. It brought Vyasa's
41 system of Mimamsa philosophy and Krishna's sermon, the Gita, to
42 the forefront; and all succeeding movements have followed the
43 same. The movement of Shankara forced its way through its high
44 intellectuality; but it could be of little service to the masses,
45 because of its adherence to strict caste-laws, very small scope for
46 ordinary emotion, and making Sanskrit the only vehicle of
47 communication. Ramanuja on the other hand, with a most practical
48 philosophy, a great appeal to the emotions, an entire denial of
49 birthrights before spiritual attainments, and appeals through the
50 popular tongue completely succeeded in bringing the masses back
51 to the Vedic religion.

1 The northern reaction of ritualism was followed by the fitful
2 glory of the Malava empire. With the destruction of that in a short
3 time, northern India went to sleep as it were, for a long period, to
4 be rudely awakened by the thundering onrush of Mohammedan
5 cavalry across the passes of Afghanistan. In the south, however, the
6 spiritual upheaval of Shankara and Ramanuja was followed by the
7 usual Indian sequence of united races and powerful empires. It was
8 the home of refuge of Indian religion and civilisation, when
9 northern India from sea to sea lay bound at the feet of Central
10 Asiatic conquerors. The Mohammedan tried for centuries to
11 subjugate the south, but can scarcely be said to have got even a
12 strong foothold; and when the strong and united empire of the
13 Moguls was very near completing its conquest, the hills and
14 plateaus of the south poured in their bands of fighting peasant
15 horsemen, determined to die for the religion which Ramdas
16 preached and Tuka sang; and in a short time the gigantic empire of
17 the Moguls was only a name.

18 The movements in northern India during the Mohammedan
19 period are characterised by their uniform attempt to hold the
20 masses back from joining the religion of the conquerors--which
21 brought in its train social and spiritual equality for all.

22 The friars of the orders founded by Ramananda, Kabir, Dadu,
23 Chaitanya, or Nanak were all agreed in preaching the equality of
24 man, however differing from each other in philosophy. Their energy
25 was for the most part spent in checking the rapid conquest of Islam
26 among the masses, and they had very little left to give birth to new
27 thoughts and aspirations. Though evidently successful in their
28 purpose of keeping the masses within the fold of the old religion,
29 and tempering the fanaticism of the Mohammedans, they were
30 mere apologists, struggling to obtain permission to live.

31 One great prophet, however, arose in the north, Govind
32 Singh, the last Guru of the Sikhs, with creative genius; and the
33 result of his spiritual work was followed by the well-known political
34 organisation of the Sikhs. We have seen throughout the history of
35 India, a spiritual upheaval is almost always succeeded by a political
36 unity extending over more or less area of the continent, which in its
37 turn helps to strengthen the spiritual aspiration that brings it to
38 being. But the spiritual aspiration that preceded the rise of the
39 Mahratta or the Sikh empire was entirely reactionary. We seek in
40 vain to find in the court of Poona or Lahore even a ray of reflection
41 of that intellectual glory which surrounded the courts of the
42 Moguls, much less the brilliance of Malava or Vidyanagara. It was
43 intellectually the darkest period of Indian history; and both these
44 meteoric empires, representing the upheaval of mass-fanaticism
45 and hating culture with all their hearts, lost all their motive power
46 as soon as they had succeeded in destroying the rule of the hated
47 Mohammedans.

48 Then there came again a period of confusion. Friends and
49 foes, the Mogul empire and its destroyers, and the till then peaceful
50 foreign traders, French and English, all joined in a melee of fight.
51 For more than half a century there was nothing but war and pillage
52 and destruction. And when the smoke and dust cleared, England

1 was stalking victorious over the rest. There has been half a century
2 of peace and law and order under the sway of Britain. Time alone
3 will prove if it is the order of progress or not.

4 There have been a few religious movements amongst the
5 Indian people during the British rule, following the same line that
6 was taken up by northern Indian sects during the sway of the
7 empire of Delhi. They are the voices of the dead or the dying--the
8 feeble tones of a terrorised people, pleading for permission to live.
9 They are ever eager to adjust their spiritual or social surroundings
10 according to the tastes of the conquerors--if they are only left the
11 right to live, especially the sects under the English domination, in
12 which social differences with the conquering race are more glaring
13 than the spiritual. The Hindu sects of the century seem to have set
14 one ideal of truth before them--the approval of their English
15 masters. No wonder that these sects have mushroom lives to live.
16 The vast body of the Indian people religiously hold aloof from them,
17 and the only popular recognition they get is the jubilation of the
18 people when they die.

19 But possibly, for some time yet, it cannot be otherwise.

22 **THE STORY OF THE BOY GOPALA**

24 "O mother! I am so afraid to go to school through the woods
25 alone; other boys have servants or somebody to bring them to
26 school or take them home--why cannot I have someone to bring me
27 home?"--thus said Gopala, a little Brahmin boy, to his mother one
28 winter afternoon when he was getting ready for school. The school
29 hours were in the morning and afternoon. It was dark when the
30 school closed in the afternoon, and the path lay through the woods.

31 Gopala's mother was a widow. His father who had lived as a
32 Brahmin should--never caring for the goods of the world, studying
33 and teaching, worshipping and helping others to worship--died
34 when Gopala was a baby. And the poor widow retired entirely from
35 the concerns of the world--even from that little she ever had--her
36 soul given entirely to God, and waiting patiently with prayers,
37 fasting, and discipline, for the great deliverer death, to meet in
38 another life, him who was the eternal companion of her joys and
39 sorrows, her partner in the good and evil of the beginningless chain
40 of lives. She lived in her little cottage. A small rice-field her
41 husband received as sacred gift to learning brought her sufficient
42 rice; and the piece of land that surrounded her cottage, with its
43 clumps of bamboos, a few cocoanut palms, a few mangoes and
44 lichis, with the help of the kindly village folk, brought forth
45 sufficient vegetables all the year round. For the rest, she worked
46 hard every day for hours at the spinning-wheel.

47 She was up long before the rosy dawn touched the tufted
48 heads of the palms, long before the birds had begun to warble in
49 their nests, and sitting on her bed--a mat on the ground covered

1 with a blanket--repeated the sacred names of the holy women of the
2 past, saluted the ancient sages, recited the sacred names of
3 Narayana the Refuge of mankind, of Shiva the merciful, of Tara the
4 Saviour Mother; and above all, (she) prayed to Him whom her heart
5 most loved, Krishna, who had taken the form of Gopala, a cowherd,
6 to teach and save mankind, and rejoiced that by one day she was
7 nearer to him who had gone ahead, and with him nearer by day to
8 Him, the Cowherd.

9 Before the light of the day, she had her bath in the
10 neighbouring stream, praying that her mind might be made as
11 clean by the mercy of Krishna, as her body by the water. Then she
12 put on her fresh-washed white cotton garment, collected some
13 flowers, rubbed a piece of sandalwood on a circular stone with a
14 little water to make a fragrant paste, gathered a few sweet-scented
15 Tulasi leaves, and retired into a little room in the cottage, kept
16 apart for worship. In this room she kept her Baby Cowherd; on a
17 small wooden throne under a small silk canopy, on a small velvet
18 cushion, almost covered with flowers, was placed a bronze image of
19 Krishna as a baby. Her mother's heart could only be satisfied by
20 conceiving God as her baby. Many and many a time her learned
21 husband had talked to her of Him who is preached in the Vedas, the
22 formless, the infinite, the impersonal. She listened with all
23 attention, and the conclusion was always the same--what is written
24 in the Vedas must be true; but, oh! it was so immense, so far off,
25 and she, only a weak, ignorant woman; and then, it was also
26 written: "In whatsoever form one seeks Me, I reach him in that
27 form, for all mankind are but following the paths I laid down for
28 them"--and that was enough. She wanted to know no more. And
29 there she was--all of the devotion, of faith, of love her heart was
30 capable of, was there in Krishna, the Baby Cowherd, and all that
31 heart entwined round the visible Cowherd, this little bronze image.

32 Then again she had heard: "Serve Me as you would a being of
33 flesh and blood, with love and purity, and I accept that all." So she
34 served as she would a master, a beloved teacher, above all, as she
35 would serve the apple of her eye, her only child, her son.

36 So she bathed and dressed the image, burned incense before
37 it, and for offering?--oh, she was so poor!--but with tears in her eyes
38 she remembered her husband reading from the books: "I accept
39 with gladness even leaves and flowers, fruits and water, whatever is
40 offered with love", and she offered: "Thou for whom the world of
41 flowers bloom, accept my few common flowers. Thou who feedest
42 the universe, accept my poor offerings of fruits. I am weak, I am
43 ignorant. I do not know how to approach Thee, how to worship
44 Thee, my God, my Cowherd, my child; let my worship be pure, my
45 love for Thee selfless; and if there is any virtue in worship, let it be
46 Thine, grant me only love, love that never asks for anything--'never
47 seeks for anything but love'." Perchance the mendicant in his
48 morning call was singing in the little yard:

49 Thy knowledge, man! I value not,

50 It is thy love I fear;

51 It is thy love that shakes My throne,

1 Brings God to human tear.
2 For love behold the Lord of all,
3 The formless, ever free,
4 Is made to take the human form
5 To play and live with thee.
6 What learning, they of Vrinda's groves,
7 The herdsmen, ever got?
8 What science, girls that milked the kine?
9 They loved, and Me they bought.

10 Then, in the Divine, the mother-heart found her earthly son
11 Gopala (lit. cowherd), named after the Divine Cowherd. And the
12 soul which would almost mechanically move among its earthly
13 surroundings--which, as it were, was constantly floating in a
14 heavenly ether ready to drift away from contact of things material
15 found its earthly moorings in her child. It was the only thing left to
16 her to pile all her earthly joys and love on. Were not her
17 movements, her thoughts, her pleasures, her very life for that little
18 one that bound her to life?

19 For years she watched over the day-to-day unfolding of that
20 baby life with all a mother's care; and now that he was old enough
21 to go to school, how hard she worked for months to get the
22 necessities for the young scholar!

23 The necessities however were few. In a land where men
24 contentedly pass their lives poring over books in the light of a mud
25 lamp, with an ounce of oil in which is a thin cotton wick--a rush mat
26 being the only furniture about them--the necessities of a student
27 are not many. Yet there were some, and even those cost many a day
28 of hard work to the poor mother.

29 How for days she toiled over her wheel to buy Gopala a new
30 cotton Dhoti and a piece of cotton Chadar, the under and upper
31 coverings, the small mat in which Gopala was to put his bundle of
32 palm leaves for writing and his reed pens, and which he was to
33 carry rolled up under his arm to be used as his seat at school--and
34 the inkstand. And what joy to her it was, when on a day of good
35 omen Gopal attempted to write his first letters, only a mother's
36 heart, a poor mother's, can know!

37 But today there is a dark shadow in her mind. Gopala is
38 frightened to go alone through the wood. Never before had she felt
39 her widowhood, her loneliness, her poverty so bitter. For a moment
40 it was all dark, but she recalled to her mind what she had heard of
41 the eternal promise: "Those that depend on Me giving up all other
42 thoughts, to them I Myself carry whatever is necessary." And she
43 was one of the souls who could believe.

44 So the mother wiped her tears and told her child that he need
45 not fear. For in those woods lived another son of hers tending cattle,
46 and also called Gopala; and if he was ever afraid passing through
47 them, he had only to call on brother Gopala!

1 The child was that mother's son, and he believed.

2 That day, coming home from school through the wood, Gopala
3 was frightened and called upon his brother Gopala, the cowherd:
4 "Brother cowherd, are you here? Mother said you are, and I am to
5 call on you: I am frightened being alone." And a voice came from
6 behind the trees: "Don't be afraid, little brother, I am here; go home
7 without fear."

8 Thus every day the boy called, and the voice answered. The
9 mother heard of it with wonder and love; and she instructed her
10 child to ask the brother of the wood to show himself the next time.

11 The next day the boy, when passing through the woods, called
12 upon his brother. The voice came as usual, but the boy asked the
13 brother in the woods to show himself to him. The voice replied, "I
14 am busy today, brother, and cannot come." But the boy insisted, and
15 out of the shade of the trees came the Cowherd of the woods, a boy
16 dressed in the garb of cowherds, with a little crown on his head in
17 which were peacock's feathers, and the cowherd's flute in his
18 hands.

19 And they were so happy: they played together for hours in the
20 woods, climbing trees, gathering fruits and flowers--the widow's
21 Gopala and the Gopala of the woods, till it was almost late for
22 school. Then the widow's Gopala went to school with a reluctant
23 heart, and nearly forgot all his lesson, his mind eager to return to
24 the woods and play with his brother.

25 Months passed this wise. The poor mother heard of it day by
26 day and, in the joy of this Divine mercy, forgot her widowhood, her
27 poverty, and blessed her miseries a thousand times.

28 Then there came some religious ceremonies which the
29 teacher had to perform in honour of his ancestors. These village
30 teachers, managing alone a number of boys and receiving no fixed
31 fees from them, have to depend a great deal upon presents when
32 the occasion requires them.

33 Each pupil brought in his share, in goods or money. And
34 Gopala, the orphan, the widow's son!--the other boys smiled a smile
35 of contempt on him when they talked of the present they were
36 bringing.

37 That night Gopala's heart was heavy, and he asked his mother
38 for some present for the teacher, and the poor mother had nothing.

39 But she determined to do what she had been doing all her
40 life, to depend on the Cowherd, and told her son to ask from his
41 brother Gopala in the forest for some presents for the teacher.

42 The next day, after Gopala had met the Cowherd boy in the
43 woods as usual and after they had some games together, Gopala
44 told his brother of the forest the grief that was in his mind and
45 begged him to give him something to present his teacher with.

46 "Brother Gopala," said the cowherd, "I am only a cowherd you
47 see, and have no money, but take this pot of cream as from a poor
48 cowherd and present it to your teacher."

1 Gopala, quite glad that he now had something to give his
2 teacher, more so because it was a present from his brother in the
3 forest, hastened to the home of the teacher and stood with an eager
4 heart behind a crowd of boys handing over their presents to the
5 teacher. Many and varied were the presents they had brought, and
6 no one thought of looking even at the present of the orphan.

7 The neglect was quite disheartening; tears stood in the eyes
8 of Gopala, when by a sudden stroke of fortune the teacher
9 happened to take notice of him. He took the small pot of cream
10 from Gopala's hand, and poured the cream into a big vessel, when
11 to his wonder the pot filled up again! Again he emptied the contents
12 into a bigger vessel, again it was full; and thus it went on, the small
13 pot filling up quicker than he could empty it.

14 Then amazement took hold of everyone; and the teacher took
15 the poor orphan in his arms and inquired about the pot of cream.

16 Gopala told his teacher all about his brother Cowherd in the
17 forest, how he answered his call, how he played with him, and how
18 at last he gave him the pot of cream.

19 The teacher asked Gopala to take him to the woods and show
20 him his brother of the woods, and Gopala was only too glad to take
21 his teacher there.

22 The boy called upon his brother to appear, but there was no
23 voice even that day. He called again and again. No answer. And
24 then the boy entreated his brother in the forest to speak, else the
25 teacher would think he was not speaking the truth. Then came the
26 voice as from a great distance:

27 "Gopala, thy mother's and thy love and faith brought Me to
28 thee; but tell thy teacher, he will have to wait a long while yet."

31 MY PLAY IS DONE

32 *(Written in the Spring of 1895 in New York)*

34 Ever rising, ever falling with the waves of time,
35 still rolling on I go

36 From fleeting scene to scene ephemeral,
37 with life's currents' ebb and flow.

38 Oh! I am sick of this unending force;
39 these shows they please no more.

40 This ever running, never reaching,
41 nor e'en a distant glimpse of shore!

42 From life to life I'm waiting at the gates,
43 alas, they open not.

44 Dim are my eyes with vain attempt

1 to catch one ray long sought.
2 On little life's high, narrow bridge
3 I stand and see below
4 The struggling, crying, laughing throng.
5 For what? No one can know.
6 In front yon gates stand frowning dark,
7 and say: "No farther way,
8 This is the limit; tempt not Fate,
9 bear it as best you may;
10 Go, mix with them and drink this cup
11 and be as mad as they.
12 Who dares to know but comes to grief;
13 stop then, and with them stay."
14 Alas for me, I cannot rest.
15 This floating bubble, earth--
16 Its hollow form, its hollow name,
17 its hollow death and birth--
18 For me is nothing. How I long
19 to get beyond the crust
20 Of name and form! Ah! ope the gates;
21 to me they open must.
22 Open the gates of light, O Mother, to me Thy tired son.
23 I long, oh, long to return home!
24 Mother, my play is done.
25 You sent me out in the dark to play,
26 and wore a frightful mask;
27 Then hope departed, terror came,
28 and play became a task.
29 Tossed to and fro, from wave to wave
30 in this seething, surging sea
31 Of passions strong and sorrows deep,
32 grief *is*, and joy *to be*,
33 Where life is living death, alas! and death--
34 who knows but 'tis
35 Another start, another round of this old wheel
36 of grief and bliss?
37 Where children dream bright, golden dreams,

1 too soon to find them dust,
2 And aye look back to hope long lost
3 and life a mass of rust!
4 Too late, the knowledge age doth gain;
5 scarce from the wheel we're gone
6 When fresh, young lives put their strength
7 to the wheel, which thus goes on
8 From day to day and year to year.
9 'Tis but delusion's toy,
10 False hope its motor; desire, nave;
11 its spokes are grief and joy.
12 I go adrift and know not whither.
13 Save me from this fire!
14 Rescue me, merciful Mother, from floating with desire!
15 Turn not to me Thy awful face,
16 'tis more than I can bear.
17 Be merciful and kind to me,
18 to chide my faults forbear.
19 Take me, O Mother, to those shores
20 where strifes for ever cease;
21 Beyond all sorrows, beyond tears,
22 beyond e'en earthly bliss;
23 Whose glory neither sun, nor moon,
24 nor stars that twinkle bright,
25 Nor flash of lightning can express.
26 They but reflect its light.
27 Let never more delusive dreams
28 veil off Thy face from me.
29 My play is done, O Mother,
30 break my chains and make me free!

31
32

33 **THE CUP**

34
35
36
37

This is your cup--the cup assigned
to you from the beginning.
Nay, My child, I know how much

1 of that dark drink is your own brew
2 Of fault and passion, ages long ago,
3 In the deep years of yesterday, I know.

4
5 This is your road--a painful road and drear.
6 I made the stones that never give you rest.
7 I set your friend in pleasant ways and clear,
8 And he shall come like you, unto My breast.
9 But you, My child, must travel here.

10
11 This is your task. It has no joy nor grace,
12 But it is not meant for any other hand,
13 And in My universe hath measured place,
14 Take it. I do not bid you understand.
15 I bid you close your eyes to see My face.

18 A BENEDICTION

19
20 The mother's heart, the hero's will,
21 The sweetness of the southern breeze,
22 The sacred charm and strength that dwell
23 On Aryan altars, flaming, free;
24 All these be yours, and many more
25 No ancient soul could dream before--
26 Be thou to India's future son
27 The mistress, servant, friend in one.

30 THE HYMN OF CREATION

31
32 Existence was not then, nor non-existence,
33 The world was not, the sky beyond was neither.
34 What covered the mist? Of whom was that?
35 What was in the depths of darkness thick?
36
37 Death was not then, nor immortality,

1 The night was neither separate from day,
2 But motionless did *That* vibrate
3 Alone, with Its own glory one--
4 Beyond *That* nothing did exist.
5
6 At first in darkness hidden darkness lay,
7 Undistinguished as one mass of water,
8 Then *That* which lay in void thus covered
9 A glory did put forth by *Tapah* !
10
11 First desire rose, the primal seed of mind,
12 (The sages have seen all this in their hearts
13 Sifting existence from non-existence.)
14 Its rays above, below and sideways spread.
15
16 Creative then became the glory,
17 With self-sustaining principle below.
18 And Creative Energy above.
19
20 Who knew the way? Who there declared
21 Whence this arose? Projection whence?
22 For after this projection came the gods.
23 Who therefore knew indeed, came out this whence?
24
25 This projection whence arose,
26 Whether held or whether not,
27 He the ruler in the supreme sky, of this
28 He, O Sharman! knows, or knows not
29 He perchance!

33 ON THE SEA'S BOSOM

34
35 In blue sky floats a multitude of clouds--
36 White, black, of many shades and thicknesses;
37 An orange sun, about to say farewell,

1 Touches the massed cloud-shapes with streaks of red.

2

3 The wind blows as it lists, a hurricane

4 Now carving shapes, now breaking them apart:

5 Fancies, colours, forms, inert creations--

6 A myriad scenes, though real, yet fantastic.

7

8 There light clouds spread, heaping up spun cotton;

9 See next a huge snake, then a strong lion;

10 Again, behold a couple locked in love.

11 All vanish, at last, in the vapoury sky.

12

13 Below, the sea sings a varied music,

14 But not grand, O India, nor ennobling:

15 Thy waters, widely praised, murmur serene

16 In soothing cadence, without a harsh roar.

17

18

19 HINDUISM AND SHRI RAMAKRISHNA

20

21 By the word "Shastras" the Vedas without beginning or end
22 are meant. In matters of religious duty the Vedas are the only
23 capable authority.

24 The Puranas and other religious scriptures are all denoted by
25 the word "Smriti". And their authority goes so far as they follow the
26 Vedas and do not contradict them.

27 Truth is of two kinds: (1) that which is cognisable by the five
28 ordinary senses of man, and by reasonings based thereon; (2) that
29 which is cognisable by the subtle, supersensuous power of Yoga.

30 Knowledge acquired by the first means is called science; and
31 knowledge acquired by the second is called the Vedas.

32 The whole body of supersensuous truths, having no beginning
33 or end, and called by the name of the Vedas, is ever-existent. The
34 Creator Himself is creating, preserving, and destroying the
35 universe with the help of these truths.

36 The person in whom this supersensuous power is manifested
37 is called a Rishi, and the supersensuous truths which he realises by
38 this power are called the Vedas.

39 This Rishihood, this power of supersensuous perception of
40 the Vedas, is real religion. And so long as this does not develop in
41 the life of an initiate, so long is religion a mere empty word to him,
42 and it is to be understood that he has not taken yet the first step in

1 religion.

2 The authority of the Vedas extends to all ages, climes and
3 persons; that is to say, their application is not confined to any
4 particular place, time, and persons.

5 The Vedas are the only exponent of the universal religion.

6 Although the supersensuous vision of truths is to be met with
7 in some measure in our Puranas and Itihasas and in the religious
8 scriptures of other races, still the fourfold scripture known among
9 the Aryan race as the Vedas being the first, the most complete, and
10 the most undistorted collection of spiritual truths, deserve to
11 occupy the highest place among all scriptures, command the
12 respect of all nations of the earth, and furnish the rationale of all
13 their respective scriptures.

14 With regard to the whole Vedic collection of truths discovered
15 by the Aryan race, this also has to be understood that those
16 portions alone which do not refer to purely secular matters and
17 which do not merely record tradition or history, or merely provide
18 incentives to duty, form the Vedas in the real sense.

19 The Vedas are divided into two portions, the Jnana-kanda
20 (knowledge-portion) and the Karma-kanda (ritual-portion). The
21 ceremonies and the fruits of the Karma-kanda are confined within
22 the limits of the world of Maya, and therefore they have been
23 undergoing and will undergo transformation according to the law of
24 change which operates through time, space, and personality.

25 Social laws and customs likewise, being based on this Karma-
26 kanda, have been changing and will continue to change hereafter.
27 Minor social usages also will be recognised and accepted when they
28 are compatible with the spirit of the true scriptures and the conduct
29 and example of holy sages. But blind allegiance only to usages such
30 as are repugnant to the spirit of the Shastras and the conduct of
31 holy sages has been one of the main causes of the downfall of the
32 Aryan race.

33 It is the Jnana-kanda or the Vedanta only that has for all time
34 commanded recognition for leading men across Maya and
35 bestowing salvation on them through the practice of Yoga, Bhakti,
36 Jnana, or selfless work; and as its validity and authority remain
37 unaffected by any limitations of time, place or persons, it is the only
38 exponent of the universal and eternal religion for all mankind.

39 The Samhitas of Manu and other sages, following the lines
40 laid down in the Karma-kanda, have mainly ordained rules of
41 conduct conducive to social welfare, according to the exigencies of
42 time, place, and persons. The Puranas etc. have taken up the truths
43 imbedded in the Vedanta and have explained them in detail in the
44 course of describing the exalted life and deeds of Avatars and
45 others. They have each emphasised, besides, some out of the
46 infinite aspects of the Divine Lord to teach men about them.

47 But when by the process of time, fallen from the true ideals
48 and rules of conduct and devoid of the spirit of renunciation,
49 addicted only to blind usages, and degraded in intellect, the

1 descendants of the Aryans failed to appreciate even the spirit of
2 these Puranas etc. which taught men of ordinary intelligence the
3 abstruse truths of the Vedanta in concrete form and diffuse
4 language and appeared antagonistic to one another on the surface,
5 because of each inculcating with special emphasis only particular
6 aspects of the spiritual ideal--

7 And when, as a consequence, they reduced India, the fair
8 land of religion, to a scene of almost infernal confusion by breaking
9 up piecemeal the one Eternal Religion of the Vedas (Sanatana
10 Dharma), the grand synthesis of all the aspects of the spiritual
11 ideal, into conflicting sects and by seeking to sacrifice one another
12 in the flames of sectarian hatred and intolerance--

13 Then it was that Shri Bhagavan Ramakrishna incarnated
14 himself in India, to demonstrate what the true religion of the Aryan
15 race is; to show where amidst all its many divisions and offshoots,
16 scattered over the land in the course of its immemorial history, lies
17 the true unity of the Hindu religion, which by its overwhelming
18 number of sects discordant to superficial view, quarrelling
19 constantly with each other and abounding in customs divergent in
20 every way, has constituted itself a misleading enigma for our
21 countrymen and the butt of contempt for foreigners; and above all,
22 to hold up before men, for their lasting welfare, as a living
23 embodiment of the Sanatana Dharma, his own wonderful life into
24 which he infused the universal spirit and character of this Dharma,
25 so long cast into oblivion by the process of time.

26 In order to show how the Vedic truths--eternally existent as
27 the instrument with the Creator in His work of creation,
28 preservation, and dissolution--reveal themselves spontaneously in
29 the minds of the Rishis purified from all impressions of worldly
30 attachment, and because such verification and confirmation of the
31 scriptural truths will help the revival, reinstatement, and spread of
32 religion--the Lord, though the very embodiment of the Vedas, in this
33 His new incarnation has thoroughly discarded all external forms of
34 learning.

35 That the Lord incarnates again and again in human form for
36 the protection of the Vedas or the true religion, and of Brahminhood
37 or the ministry of that religion--is a doctrine well established in the
38 Puranas etc.

39 The waters of a river falling in a cataract acquire greater
40 velocity, the rising wave after a hollow swells higher; so after every
41 spell of decline, the Aryan society recovering from all the evils by
42 the merciful dispensation of Providence has risen the more glorious
43 and powerful--such is the testimony of history.

44 After rising from every fall, our revived society is expressing
45 more and more its innate eternal perfection, and so also the
46 omnipresent Lord in each successive incarnation is manifesting
47 Himself more and more.

48 Again and again has our country fallen into a swoon, as it
49 were, and again and again has India's Lord, by the manifestation of
50 Himself, revived her.

1 But greater than the present deep dismal night, now almost
2 over, no pall of darkness had ever before enveloped this holy land of
3 ours. And compared with the depth of this fall, all previous falls
4 appear like little hoof-marks.

5 Therefore, before the effulgence of this new awakening, the
6 glory of all past revivals in her history will pale like stars before the
7 rising sun; and compared with this mighty manifestation of
8 renewed strength, all the many past epochs of such restoration will
9 be as child's play.

10 The various constituent ideals of the Religion Eternal, during
11 its present state of decline, have been lying scattered here and
12 there for want of competent men to realise them--some being
13 preserved partially among small sects and some completely lost.

14 But strong in the strength of this new spiritual renaissance,
15 men, after reorganising these scattered and disconnected spiritual
16 ideals, will be able to comprehend and practise them in their own
17 lives and also to recover from oblivion those that are lost. And as
18 the sure pledge of this glorious future, the all-merciful Lord has
19 manifested in the present age, as stated above, an incarnation
20 which in point of completeness in revelation, its synthetic
21 harmonising of all ideals, and its promoting of every sphere of
22 spiritual culture, surpasses the manifestations of all past ages.

23 So at the very dawn of this momentous epoch, the
24 reconciliation of all aspects and ideals of religious thought and
25 worship is being proclaimed; this boundless, all-embracing idea had
26 been lying inherent, but so long concealed, in the Religion Eternal
27 and its scriptures, and now rediscovered, it is being declared to
28 humanity in a trumpet voice.

29 This epochal new dispensation is the harbinger of great good
30 to the whole world, specially to India; and the inspirer of this
31 dispensation, Shri Bhagavan Ramakrishna, is the reformed and
32 remodelled manifestation of all the past great epoch-makers in
33 religion. O man, have faith in this, and lay it to heart.

34 The dead never return; the past night does not reappear; a
35 spent-up tidal wave does not rise anew; neither does man inhabit
36 the same body over again. So from the worship of the dead past, O
37 man, we invite you to the worship of the living present; from the
38 regretful brooding over bygones, we invite you to the activities of
39 the present; from the waste of energy in retracing lost and
40 demolished pathways, we call you back to broad new-laid highways
41 lying very near. He that is wise, let him understand.

42 Of that power, which at the very first impulse has roused
43 distant echoes from all the four quarters of the globe, conceive in
44 your mind the manifestation in its fullness; and discarding all idle
45 misgivings, weaknesses, and the jealousies characteristic of
46 enslaved peoples, come and help in the turning of this mighty wheel
47 of new dispensation!

48 With the conviction firmly rooted in your heart that you are
49 the servants of the Lord, His children, helpers in the fulfillment of
50 His purpose, enter the arena of work.

THE BENGALI LANGUAGE

(Written for the "Udbodhan")

In our country, owing to all learning being in Sanskrit from the ancient times, there has arisen an immeasurable gulf between the learned and the common folk. All the great personages, from Buddha down to Chaitanya and Ramakrishna, who came for the well-being of the world, taught the common people in the language of the people themselves. Of course, scholarship is an excellent thing; but cannot scholarship be displayed through any other medium than a language that is stiff and unintelligible, that is unnatural and merely artificial? Is there no room for art in the spoken language? What is the use of creating an unnatural language to the exclusion of the natural one? Do you not think out your scholastic researches in the language which you are accustomed to speak at home? Why then do you introduce such a queer and unwieldy thing when you proceed to put them in black and white? The language in which you think out philosophy and science in your mind, and argue with others in public--is not that the language for writing philosophy and science? If it is not, how then do you reason out those truths within yourselves and in company of others in that very language? The language in which we naturally express ourselves, in which we communicate our anger, grief, or love, etc.--there cannot be a fitter language than that. We must stick to that idea, that manner of expression, that diction and all. No artificial language can ever have that force, and that brevity and expressiveness, or admit of being given any turn you please, as that spoken language. Language must be made like pure steel--turn and twist it any way you like, it is again the same--it cleaves a rock in twain at one stroke, without its edge being turned. Our language is becoming artificial by imitating the slow and pompous movement--and only that--of Sanskrit. And language is the chief means and index of a nation's progress.

If you say, "It is all right, but there are various kinds of dialects in different parts of Bengal--which of them to accept?"--the answer is: We must accept that which is gaining strength and spreading through natural laws, that is to say, the language of Calcutta. East or west, from wheresoever people may come, once they breathe in the air of Calcutta, they are found to speak the language in vogue there; so nature herself points out which language to write in. The more railroads and facilities of communication there are, the more will the difference of east and west disappear, and from Chittagong to Baidyanath there will be that one language, viz that of Calcutta. It is not the question which district possesses a language most approaching Sanskrit--you must see which language is triumphing. When it is evident that the language of Calcutta will soon become the language of the whole of Bengal, then, if one has to make the written and spoken language the same, one would, if one is intelligent enough certainly make the

1 language of Calcutta one's foundation. Here local jealousies also
2 should be thrown overboard. Where the welfare of the whole
3 province is concerned, you must overlook the claims to superiority
4 of your own district or village.

5 Language is the vehicle of ideas. It is the ideas that are of
6 prime importance, language comes after. Does it look well to place
7 a monkey on a horse that has trappings of diamonds and pearls?
8 Just look at Sanskrit. Look at the Sanskrit of the Brahmanas, at
9 Shabara Swami's commentary on the Mimamsa philosophy, the
10 *Mahabhashya* of Patanjali, and, finally, at the great commentary of
11 Acharya Shankara: and look also at the Sanskrit of comparatively
12 recent times. You will at once understand that so long as a man is
13 alive, he talks a living language, but when he is dead, he speaks a
14 dead language. The nearer death approaches, the more does the
15 power of original thinking wane, the more is there the attempt to
16 bury one or two rotten ideas under a heap of flowers and scents.
17 Great God! What a parade they make! After ten pages of big
18 adjectives, all on a sudden you have--"There lived the King!" Oh,
19 what an array of spun-out adjectives, and giant compounds, and
20 skilful puns! They are symptoms of death. When the country began
21 to decay, then all these signs became manifest. It was not merely in
22 language--all the arts began to manifest them. A building now
23 neither expressed any idea nor followed any style; the columns
24 were turned and turned till they had all their strength taken out of
25 them. The ornaments pierced the nose and the neck and converted
26 the wearer into a veritable ogress; but oh, the profusion of leaves
27 and foliage carved fantastically in them! Again, in music, nobody,
28 not even the sage Bharata, the originator of dramatic
29 performances, could understand whether it was singing, or
30 weeping, or wrangling, and what meaning or purpose it sought to
31 convey! And what an abundance of intricacies in that music! What
32 labyrinths of flourishes--enough to strain all one's nerves! Over and
33 above that, that music had its birth in the nasal tone uttered
34 through the teeth compressed, in imitation of the Mohammedan
35 musical experts! Nowadays there is an indication of correcting
36 these; now will people gradually understand that a language, or art,
37 or music that expresses no meaning and is lifeless, is of no good.
38 Now they will understand that the more strength is infused into the
39 national life, the more will language, art, and music, etc. become
40 spontaneously instinct with ideas and life. The volume of meaning
41 that a couple of words of everyday use will convey, you may search
42 in vain in two thousand set epithets. Then every image of the Deity
43 will inspire devotion, every girl decked in ornaments will appear to
44 be a goddess, and every house and room and furniture will be
45 animated with the vibration of life.

46 47 48 MATTER FOR SERIOUS THOUGHT 49

50 A man presented himself to be blessed by a sight of the Deity.
51 He had an excess of joy and devotion at the sight; and perhaps to

1 pay back the good he received, he burst out into a song. In one
2 corner of the hall, reclining against a pillar, was Chobeji dozing. He
3 was the priest in the temple, an athlete, a player on the guitar, was
4 a good hand in swallowing two jugfuls of Bhang, and had various
5 other qualifications besides. All on a sudden, a dreadful noise
6 assailing his tympanum, the fantastic universe conjured up under
7 the influence of the inebriating liquor vanished for a moment from
8 Chobeji's enormous chest of two and forty inches! And casting his
9 crimson-tinged, languid eyes around in search of the cause of
10 disturbance to his tranquil mind, Chobeji discovered that in front of
11 the God was a man singing, overwhelmed with his own feelings, in
12 a tune as touching as the scouring of cauldrons in a festive house,
13 and, in so doing, he was subjecting the shades of the whole host of
14 musical masters like Narada, Bharata, Hanuman, Nayaka, and the
15 rest to ineffable anguish. The mortified Chobeji in a sharp
16 reprimanding tone addressed the man who had been the direct
17 obstacle to his enjoyment of that peculiar bliss of inebriation,
18 "Hallo, my friend, what are you shouting like that for, without
19 caring for time or tune?" Quick came the response, "What need I
20 care for time or tune? I am trying to win the Lord's heart."
21 "Humph!" retorted Chobeji, "do you think the Lord is such a fool?
22 You must be mad! You could not win my heart even--and has the
23 Lord less brains than I?"

24 The Lord has declared unto Arjuna: "Take thou refuge in Me,
25 thou hast nothing else to do. And I shall deliver thee." Bholachand
26 is mighty glad to hear this from some people; he now and then yells
27 out in a trenchant note: "I have taken refuge in the Lord. I shall not
28 have to do anything further." Bholachand is under the impression
29 that it is the height of devotion to bawl out those words repeatedly
30 in the harshest tone possible. Moreover, he does not fail to make it
31 known now and then in the aforesaid pitch that he is ever ready to
32 lay down his life even, for the Lord's sake, and that if the Lord does
33 not voluntarily surrender Himself to this tie of devotion, everything
34 would be hollow and false. And a few foolish satellites of his also
35 share the same opinion. But Bholachand is not prepared to give up
36 a single piece of wickedness for the sake of the Lord. Well, is the
37 Lord really such a fool? Why, this is not enough to hoodwink us
38 even!

39 Bhola Puri an out and out Vedantin--in everything he is
40 careful to trumpet his Brahminhood. If all people are about to
41 starve for food around Bhola Puri, it does not touch him even in the
42 least; he expounds the unsubstantiality of pleasure and pain. If
43 through disease, or affliction, or starvation people die by the
44 thousand, what matters even that to him? He at once reflects on the
45 immortality of the soul! If the strong overpower the weak and even
46 kill them before his very eyes, Bhola Puri is lost in the profound
47 depths of the meaning of the spiritual dictum, "The soul neither kills
48 nor is killed." He is exceedingly averse to action of any kind. If hard
49 pressed, he replies that he finished all actions in his previous births.
50 But Bhola Puri's realisation of unity of the Self suffers a terrible
51 check when he is hurt in one point. When there is some anomaly in
52 the completeness of his Bhiksha, or when the householder is

1 unwilling to offer him worship according to his expectations, then,
2 in the opinion of Puriji, there are no more despicable creatures on
3 earth than householders, and he is at a loss to make out why the
4 village that failed to offer adequate worship to him should, even for
5 a moment, add to the world's burden.

6 He, too, has evidently thought the Lord more foolish than
7 ourselves.

8 "I say, Ram Charan, you have neither education nor the
9 means to set up a trade, nor are you fit for physical labour. Besides,
10 you cannot give up indulging in intoxications, nor do away with your
11 wickednesses. Tell me, how do you manage to make your living?"

12 Ram Charan--"That is an easy job, sir; I preach unto all."

13 What has Ram Charan taken the Lord for?

14 The city of Lucknow is astir with the festivities of the
15 Mohurrum. The gorgeous decorations and illumination in the
16 principal mosque, the Imambara, know no bounds. Countless
17 people have congregated. Hindus, Mohammedans, Christians,
18 Jews--all sorts of people--men, women, and children of all races and
19 creeds have crowded today to witness the Mohurrum. Lucknow is
20 the capital of the Shias, and wailings in the name of the illustrious
21 Hassan and Hossain rend the skies today. Who was there whose
22 heart was not touched by the lamentation and beating of breasts
23 that took place on this mournful occasion? The tale of the Karbala,
24 now a thousand years old, has been renovated today.

25 Among this crowd of spectators were two Rajput gentlemen,
26 who had come from a far-off village to see the festival. The Thakur
27 Sahibs were--as is generally the case with village zemindars
28 (landlords)--innocent of learning. That Mohammedan culture, the
29 shower of euphuistic phraseology with its nice and correct
30 pronunciation, the varieties of fashionable dress--the loose-fitting
31 cloaks and tight trousers and turbans, of a hundred different
32 colours, to suit the taste of the townsfolk--all these had not yet
33 found their way to such a remote village to convert the Thakur
34 Sahibs. The Thakurs were, therefore, simple and straightforward,
35 always fond of hunting, stalwart and hardy, and of exceedingly
36 tough hearts.

37 The Thakurs had crossed the gate and were about to enter
38 the mosque, when the guard interrupted them. Upon inquiring into
39 the reasons, he answered, "Look here, this giant figure that you see
40 standing by the doorway, you must give it five kicks first, and then
41 you can go in." "Whose is the statue, pray?" "It is the statue of the
42 nefarious Yejid who killed the illustrious Hassan and Hossain a
43 thousand years ago. Therefore is this crying and this mourning."
44 The guard thought that after this elaborate explanation the statue
45 of Yejid was sure to merit ten kicks instead of five. But mysterious
46 are the workings of Karma, and everything was sadly
47 misunderstood. The Thakurs reverentially put their scarfs round
48 their neck and prostrated and rolled themselves at the feet of the
49 statue of Yejid, praying with faltering accents: "What is the use of
50 going in any more? What other gods need be seen? Bravo Yejid!

1 Thou alone art the true God. Thou hast thrashed the rascals so well
2 that they are weeping till now!"

3 There is the towering temple of the Eternal Hindu Religion,
4 and how many ways of approaching it! And what can you not find
5 there? From the Absolute Brahman of the Vedantin down to
6 Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Shakti, Uncle Sun, the rat-riding Ganesha,
7 and the minor deities such as Shashthi and Makal, and so forth--
8 which is lacking there? And in the Vedas, in the Vedanta, and the
9 Philosophies, in the Puranas and the Tantras, there are lots of
10 materials, a single sentence of which is enough to break one's chain
11 of transmigration for ever. And oh, the crowd! Millions and millions
12 of people are rushing towards the temple. I, too, had a curiosity to
13 see and join in the rush. But what was this that met my eyes when I
14 reached the spot! Nobody was going inside the temple! By the side
15 of the door, there was a standing figure, with fifty heads, a hundred
16 arms, two hundred bellies, and five hundred legs, and everyone was
17 rolling at the feet of that. I asked one for the reason and got the
18 reply: "Those deities that you see in the interior, it is worship
19 enough for them to make a short prostration, or throw in a few
20 flowers from a distance. But the real worship must be offered to
21 him who is at the gate; and those Vedas, the Vedanta, and the
22 Philosophies, the Puranas and other scriptures that you see--there
23 is no harm if you hear them read now and then; but you must obey
24 the mandate of this one." Then I asked again, "Well, what is the
25 name of this God of gods?" "He is named Popular Custom"--came
26 the reply. I was reminded of the Thakur Sahibs, and exclaimed,
27 "Bravo, Popular Custom! Thou hast thrashed them so well", etc.

28 Gurgure Krishnavyal Bhattacharya is a vastly learned man,
29 who has the knowledge of the whole world at his finger-ends. His
30 frame is a skeleton; his friends say it is through the rigours of his
31 austerities, but his enemies ascribe it to want of food. The wicked,
32 again, are of opinion that such a physique is but natural to one who
33 has a dozen issues every year. However that may be, there is
34 nothing on earth that Krishnavyal does not know; specially, he is
35 omniscient about the flow of electric magnetic currents all over the
36 human body, from the hair-tuft to its furthest nook and corner. And
37 being possessed of this esoteric knowledge, he is incomparably the
38 best authority for giving a scientific explanation of all things--from a
39 certain earth used in the worship of the goddess Durga down to the
40 reasonable age of puberty of a girl being ten, and sundry
41 inexplicable and mysterious rites pertaining to allied matters. And
42 as for adducing precedents, well, he has made the thing so clear
43 that even boys could understand it. There is forsooth no other land
44 for religion than India, and within India itself none but the
45 Brahmins have the qualification for understanding religion and
46 among Brahmins, too, all others excepting the Krishnavyal family
47 are as nothing and, of these latter again, Gurgure has the pre-
48 eminent claim! Therefore, whatever Gurgure Krishnavyal says is
49 self-evident truth.

50 Learning is being cultivated to a considerable extent, and
51 people are becoming a bit conscious and active, so that they want
52 to understand and taste everything; so Krishnavyal is assuring

everybody: "Discard all fear! Whatever doubts are arising in your minds, I am giving scientific explanations for them. You remain just as you were. Sleep to your heart's content and never mind anything else. Only, don't forget my honorarium." The people exclaimed: "Oh, what a relief! What a great danger did really confront us! We should have had to sit up, and walk, and move--what a pest!" So they said, "Long live Krishnavyal", and turned on one side on the bed once more. The habit of a thousand years was not to go so soon. The body itself would resent it. The inveterate obtuseness of the mind of a thousand years was not to pass away at a moment's notice. And is it not for this that the Krishnavyal class are held in repute? "Bravo, Habit! Thou hast thrashed them so well", etc.

(Translated from Bengali)

SHIVA'S DEMON

Baron K__ lived in a district of Germany. Born in an aristocratic family, he inherited high rank, honour and, wealth even in early youth; besides, he was highly cultured and endowed with many accomplishments. A good many charming, affluent, and young women of rank craved for his love. And which father or mother does not wish for a son-in-law of such parts, culture, handsomeness, social position, lineage, and youthful age? An aristocratic beauty had attracted Baron K__ also, but the marriage was still far off. In spite of all rank and wealth, Baron K__ had none to call his own, except a sister who was exquisitely beautiful and educated. The Baron had taken a vow that he would marry only after his sister had chosen her fiance and the marriage celebrated with due eclat and rich dowries from him. She had been the apple of her parents' eyes. Baron K__ did not want to enjoy a married life, before her wedding. Besides, the custom in this Western country is that the son does not live in his father's or in any relative's family after marriage; the couple live separately. It may be possible for the husband to live with his wife in his father-in-law's house but a wife will never live in her father-in-law's. So K__ postponed his marriage till his sister's.

For some months K__ had no news of his sister. Foregoing the life of ease, comfort, and happiness in a palace served by a big retinue, and snatching herself from the affection of her only brother, she had absconded. All search had been in vain. That brought K__ untold sorrow. He had no more any relish for the pleasures of life; he was ever unhappy and dejected. His relatives now gave up all hope of the sister's return, and tried to make the Baron cheerful. They were very anxious about him, and his fiancée was ever full of apprehension.

It was the time of the Paris Exhibition. The *elite* of all countries assembled there. The art-treasures, and artistic products were brought to Paris from all quarters. Baron K__'s relatives advised him to go to Paris where his despondent heart would regain

1 its normal health and buoyancy, once it was in contact with that
2 active, invigorating current of joy. The Baron bowed down to their
3 wishes and started for Paris with his friends.

1
2
3 LETTERS

4 I

5 Vrindaban
6 12th Aug.,
7

1888

8 {original in Bengali}

9 Dear Sir {Pramadadas Mitra},

10 Leaving Ayodhya I have reached the holy Vrindaban, and am
11 putting up at Kala Babu's Kunja. In the town the mind feels
12 contracted. Places like Radha-kunda, I have heard, are delightful;
13 but they are at some distance from the town. I have a mind to
14 proceed very shortly to Hardwar. In case you have any
15 acquaintance there, you would be doing me a great favour if you
16 would kindly write him an introduction for me. What about your
17 visiting this place? Please reply early and oblige.

18 Yours etc.,
19 Vivekananda
20
21

22 II

23 Vrindaban
24 20th Aug.,
25

1888

26 {original in Bengali}

27 Dear Sir {Pramadadas Mitra},

28 An aged brother-disciple of mine who has just come back to
29 Vrindaban after visiting Kedarnath and Badrinath met Gangadhar.
30 Twice did Gangadhar ascend up to Tibet and Bhutan. He is in great
31 happiness and felt overwhelmed and wept at the meeting. He spent
32 the winter at Kankhal. The Karoa (waterpot) you gave him, he still
33 keeps with him. He is coming back and is expected at Vrindaban
34 this very month. So in the hope of meeting him, I postpone my
35 going to Hardwar for some days. Please convey my deepest
36 respects to the Brahmin devotee of Shiva who is with you and
37 accept the same yourself.

38 Yours etc.,
39 Vivekananda
40
41

42 III

43 *Salutation to Bhagavan*

1 *Ramakrishna!*

2 The

3 Baranagore Math

4 19th Nov.,

5 1888

6 {original in Bengali}

7 Respected Sir {Pramadadas Mitra},

8 I have received the two books sent by you and am filled with
9 joy to read your wonderfully affectionate letter which betokens your
10 broad, generous heart. No doubt, it is due to good merit of my
11 previous births that you show, sir, so much kindness to a mendicant
12 like me who lives on begging. By sending your gift of the "Vedanta",
13 you have laid under lifelong obligation not only myself but the
14 whole group of Shri Ramakrishna's Sannyasins. They all bow down
15 to you in respect. It is not for my own sake alone that I asked of you
16 the copy of Panini's grammar; a good deal of study, in fact, is given
17 to Sanskrit scriptures in this Math. The Vedas may well be said to
18 have fallen quite out of vogue in Bengal. Many here in this Math are
19 conversant with Sanskrit, and they have a mind to master the
20 Samhita portions of the Vedas. They are of opinion that what has to
21 be done must be done to a finish. So, believing that a full measure
22 of proficiency in the Vedic language is impossible without first
23 mastering Panini's grammar, which is the best available for the
24 purpose, a copy of the latter was felt to be a necessity. The
25 grammatical work *Mugdhabodha* , which we studied in our
26 boyhood, is superior in many respects to *Laghukaumudi* . You are
27 yourself, however, a deeply learned man and, therefore, the best
28 judge we can have in this matter. So if you consider the *Ashtadhyayi*
29 (Panini's) to be the most suitable in our case, you will lay us under a
30 debt of lifelong gratitude by sending the same (provided you feel it
31 convenient and feel so inclined). This Math is not wanting in men of
32 perseverance, talent, and penetrative intellect. I may hope that by
33 the grace of our Master, they will acquire in a short time Panini's
34 system and then succeed in restoring the Vedas to Bengal. I bet to
35 send you two photographs of my revered Master and two parts of
36 some of his teachings as given in his homely style compiled, and
37 published by a certain gentleman--hoping you will give us the
38 pleasure of your acceptance. My health is now much improved, and
39 I expect the blessings of meeting you within two or three months. . .
40 .

41 Yours etc.,

42 Vivekananda

43

44

45

IV

46

Victory to God!

47

Baranagore,

48

4th Feb.,

1 1889

2 {original in Bengali}

3 Dear Sir {Pramadadas Mitra},

4 For some reason I had been feeling today agitated and
5 cramped in my mind, when your letter of invitation to the heavenly
6 city of Varanasi reached me. I accept it as the call of Vishveshvara. I
7 am now on a pilgrimage to the place of my Master's nativity, and
8 after a sojourn of a few days there, I shall present myself to you. He
9 must be made of stone whose mind does not melt at the sight of
10 Kashi and its Lord! I feel now much improved in health. My regards
11 to Jnanananda. I am coming as soon as I can. It all depends
12 ultimately on Vishveshvara's will. . . . More when we meet.

13 Yours etc.,

14 Vivekananda

15

16

17 V

18 Auntpur,

19 7th February,

20 1889

21 Dear M__ {Master Mahashaya},

22 Thanks a hundred thousand times, Master! You have hit
23 Ramakrishna in the right point.

24 Few, alas, few understand him!

25 Yours,

26 Vivekananda

27 PS. My heart leaps with joy--and it is a wonder that I do not
28 go mad when I find anybody thoroughly launched into the midst of
29 the doctrine which is to shower peace on earth hereafter.

30

31

32 VI

33 *Shri Durga be my Refuge!*

34 Baranagore,

35 26th June,

36 1889

37 {original in Bengali}

38 Dear Sir {Pramadadas Mitra},

39 For sundry reasons I have been unable to write to you for
40 long, for which please excuse me. I have now obtained news of
41 Gangadhar. He met one of my brother-disciples, and both are now
42 staying in the Uttarakhand (the sacred Himalayas). Four of us
43 from here are in the Himalayas now, and with Gangadhar they are

1 five. One brother-disciple named Shivananda came across
2 Gangadhar at Srinagara on the way to holy Kedarnath, and
3 Gangadhar has sent two letters here. During his first year in the
4 Himalayas, he could not secure permission to enter Tibet, but he
5 got it the next year. The Lamas love him much, and he had picked
6 up the Tibetan language. He says the Lamas form ninety per cent of
7 the population, but they mostly practise Tantrika forms of worship.
8 The country is intensely cold--eatables there are scarcely any--only
9 dried meat; and Gangadhar had to travel and live on that food. My
10 health is passable, but the state of mind is terrible!

11 Yours etc.,
12 Vivekananda

13
14

15 VII
16 *Victory to God!*

17 Baghbazar,
18 Calcutta

19 4th July, 1889

20 {original in Bengali}

21 Dear Sir {Pramadadas Mitra},

22 It pleased me highly to know all the news in your letter
23 yesterday. You have asked me to request Gangadhar to write to you,
24 but I see no chance thereof, for though they are sending us letters,
25 they do not stop anywhere for more than two or three days and
26 therefore do not receive any of ours.

27 Some relative of my former life has purchased a bungalow at
28 Simultala (near Baidynath). The place being credited with a healthy
29 climate, I stayed there for some time. But the summer heat growing
30 excessive, I had an attack of acute diarrhoea, and I have just fled
31 away from the place.

32 Words fail to describe how strong is the desire in my mind to
33 go to Varanasi and have my soul blessed by meeting you and
34 sojourning with you in good converse, but everything rests on His
35 will! I wonder what linking of heart existed between us, sir, from
36 some previous incarnation that, receiving as I do the love and
37 affection of not a few men of wealth and position in this city of
38 Calcutta, I am apt to feel so much bored by their society, while only
39 through one day's interview my heart felt charmed enough to
40 accept you as a near relative and friend in spiritual life! One reason
41 is that you are a favoured servant of God. Another perhaps is:

42 {Sanskrit}¹¹⁶

43 I am indebted to you for the advice which comes from you as

1 ¹¹⁶ Kalidasa's *Shakuntalam*, Act V: "It must be the memories, unwittingly
2 recalled, of affinities firmly established in previous incarnations through depths
3 of heart."
4

1 the outcome of your experience and spiritual practice. It is very
2 true, and I have also found it so very often, that one has to suffer at
3 times for holding in one's brain novel views of all sorts.

4 But with me it is a different malady this time. I have not lost
5 faith in a benign Providence--nor am I going ever to lose it--my faith
6 in the scriptures is unshaken. But by the will of God, the last six or
7 seven years of my life have been full of constant struggles with
8 hindrances and obstacles of all sorts. I have been vouchsafed the
9 ideal Shastra; I have seen the ideal man; and yet fail myself to get
10 on with anything to the end--this is my profound misery.

11 And particularly, I see no chance of success while remaining
12 near Calcutta. In Calcutta live my mother and two brothers. I am
13 the eldest; the second is preparing for the First Arts Examination,
14 and the third is young.

15 They were quite well off before, but since my father's death,
16 it is going very hard with them--they even have to go fasting at
17 times! To crown all, some relatives, taking advantage of their
18 helplessness, drove them away from the ancestral residence.
19 Though a part of it is recovered through suing at the High Court,
20 destitution is now upon them--a matter of course in litigation.

21 Living near Calcutta I have to witness their adversity, and the
22 quality of Rajas prevailing, my egotism sometimes develops into the
23 form of a desire that rises to plunge me into action; in such
24 moments, a fierce fighting ensues in my mind, and so I wrote that
25 the state of my mind was terrible. Now their lawsuit has come to an
26 end. So bless me that after a stay here in Calcutta for a few days
27 more to settle matters, I may bid adieu to this place for ever.

28 {Sanskrit}¹¹⁷

29 Bless me that my heart may wax strong with supreme
30 strength Divine, and that all forms of Maya may drop off from me
31 for aye: "We have taken up the Cross, Thou hast laid it upon us and
32 grant us strength that we bear it unto death. Amen!"--*Imitation of*
33 *Christ* .

34 I am now staying in Calcutta. My address is: c/o Balaram
35 Babu, 57 Ramkanta Bose's Street, Baghbazar, Calcutta.

36 Yours etc.,

37 Vivekananda

38
39 VIII

40 *All Glory to God!*

41 Baranagore,

42 Calcutta

1 ¹¹⁷ ?The Gita, II.70: "Not he that lusteth after objects of desire, but he alone
2 obtaineth peace in whom desires lose themselves like river-water flowing into the
3 ocean but leaving it unaffected and unmodified in spite of constant accession."
4

1889

{original in Bengali}

Dear Sir {Pramadadas Mitra},

It is more than a week since I received your letter, but having had another attack of fever, I could not send a reply all this time, for which please excuse me. For an interval of a month and a half I kept well, but I have suffered again for the last ten days; now I am doing well.

I have certain questions to put, and you, sir, have a wide knowledge of Sanskrit; so please favour me with answers to the following:

1. Does any narrative occur about Satyakama, son of Jabala, and about Janashruti, anywhere else in the Vedas excepting the Upanishads?¹¹⁸

2. In most cases where Shankaracharya quotes Smriti in his commentary on the *Vedanta-Sutras*, he cites the authority of the Mahabharata. But seeing that we find clear proofs about caste being based on qualification both in the Bhishmaparva of the Mahabharata and in the stories there of the Ajagara and of Uma and Maheshvara, has he made any mention in his writings of this fact?

3. The doctrine of caste in the *Purusha-Sukta* of the Vedas does not make it hereditary--so what are those instances in the Vedas where caste has been made a matter of hereditary transmission?

4. The Acharya could not adduce any proof from the Vedas to the effect that the Shudra should not study the Vedas. He only quotes {Sanskrit}¹¹⁹ (Tai. Samhita, VII.i.1.6) to maintain that when he is not entitled to perform Yajnas, he has neither any right to study the Upanishads and the like. But the same Acharya contends with reference to {Sanskrit},¹²⁰ (*Vedanta-Sutras*, I.i.1) that the word {Sanskrit} here does not mean "subsequent to the study of the Vedas", because it is contrary to proof that the study of the Upanishad is not permissible without the previous study of the Vedic Mantras and *Brahmanas* and because there is no intrinsic sequence between the Vedic Karma-kanda and Vedic Jnana-kanda. It is evident, therefore, that one may attain to the knowledge of Brahman without having studied the ceremonial parts of the Vedas.

¹¹⁸ ?Shankaracharya in his commentary on the *Vedanta-Sutras*, I. iii. 34-37, interprets the aphorisms to prove that Upanishadic wisdom was imparted to Janashruti and Satyakama, only because they were *not* Shudras, as borne out by actual texts. But as these texts are doubtful even after Shankaracharya's explanation, Swamiji wants to be referred to other similar Vedic texts.

¹¹⁹ ?"The Shudra is not conceived of as a performer of Yajna or Vedic sacrifices."

¹²⁰ ?"Now then commences hence the inquiry about Brahman."

1 So if there is no sequence between the sacrificial practices and
2 Jnana, why does the Acharya contradict his own statement when it
3 is a case of the Shudras, by inserting the clause "by force of the
4 same logic"? Why should the Shudra not study the Upanishad?

5 I am mailing you, sir, a book named *Imitation of Christ*
6 written by a Christian Sannyasin. It is a wonderful book. One is
7 astonished to find that such renunciation, Vairagya, and Dasya-
8 Bhakti have existed even among the Christians. Probably you may
9 have read this book before; if not, it will give me the greatest
10 pleasure if you will kindly read it.

11 Yours etc.,

12 Vivekananda

13
14
15 IX

16 Baranagore

17 17th Aug.,

18 1889

19 {original in Bengali}

20 Dear Sir {Pramadadas Mitra},

21 You have expressed embarrassment in your last favour for
22 being addressed reverentially. But the blame attaches not to me but
23 to your own excellent qualities. I wrote in one letter before that
24 from the way I feel attracted by your lofty virtues, it seems we had
25 some affinity from previous births. I make no distinction as to
26 householder or Sannyasin in this, that for all time my head shall
27 bend low in reverence wherever I see greatness, broadness of
28 heart, and holiness--Shantih! Shantih! Shantih! My prayer is that
29 among the many people embracing Sannyasa nowadays, greedy of
30 honour, posing renunciation for the sake of a living, and fallen off
31 from the ideal on both sides, may one in a lakh at least become
32 high-souled like you! To you my Brahmin fellow-disciples who have
33 heard of your noble virtues tender their best prostrations.

34 About one amongst my several questions to which you sent
35 your replies, my wrong idea is corrected. For this I shall remain
36 indebted to you for ever. Another of these questions was: Whether
37 Acharya Shankara gives any conclusion regarding caste based on
38 Gunas as mentioned in Puranas like the Mahabharata. If he does,
39 where is it to be found? I have no doubt that according to the
40 ancient view in this country, caste was hereditary, and it cannot also
41 be doubted that sometimes the Shudras used to be oppressed more
42 than the helots among the Spartans and the negroes among the
43 Americans! As for myself, I have no partiality for any party in this
44 caste question, because I know it is a social law and is based on
45 diversity of Guna and Karma. It also means grave harm if one bent
46 on going beyond Guna and Karma cherishes in mind any caste
47 distinctions. In these matters, I have got some settled ideas through
48 the grace of my Guru but, if I come to know of your views, I may

1 just confirm some points or rectify others in them. One doesn't have
2 honey dripping unless one pokes at the hive--so I shall put you some
3 more questions; and looking upon me as ignorant and as a boy,
4 please give proper replies without taking any offence.

5 1. Is the Mukti, which the *Vedanta-Sutras* speaks of, one and
6 the same with the Nirvana of the Avadhuta-Gita and other texts?

7 2. What is really meant by Nirvana if, according to the
8 aphorism, "Without the function of creating etc."¹²¹ (ibid., IV.iv.7),
9 none can attain to the fullest Godhead?

10 3. Chaitanya-deva is said to have told Sarvabhauma at Puri, "I
11 understand the Sutras (aphorisms) of Vyasa, they are dualistic; but
12 the commentator makes them, monistic, which I don't understand."
13 Is this true? Tradition says, Chaitanya-deva had a dispute with
14 Prakashananda Sarasvati on the point, and Chaitanya-deva won.
15 One commentary by Chaitanya-deva was rumoured to have been
16 existing in Prakashananda's Math.

17 4. In the Tantra, Acharya Shankara has been called a crypto-
18 Buddhist; views expressed in *Prajnaparamita*, the Buddhist
19 Mahayana book, perfectly tally with the Vedantic views propounded
20 by the Acharya. The author of *Panchadashi* also says, "What we call
21 Brahman is the same truth as the Shunya of the Buddhist." What
22 does all this mean?

23 5. Why has no foundation for the authority of the Vedas been
24 adduced in the *Vedanta-Sutras*? First, it has been said that the
25 Vedas are the authority for the existence of God, and then it has
26 been argued that the authority for the Vedas is the text: "It is the
27 breath of God." Now, is this statement not vitiated by what in
28 Western logic is called an argument in a circle?

29 6. The Vedanta requires of us faith, for conclusiveness cannot
30 be reached by mere argumentation. Then why, has the slightest
31 flaw, detected in the position of the schools of Sankhya and Nyaya,
32 been overwhelmed with a fusillade of dialectics? In whom,
33 moreover, are we to put our faith? Everybody seems to be mad over
34 establishing his own view; if, according to Vyasa, even the great
35 Muni Kapila, "the greatest among perfected souls",¹²² is himself

1 ¹²¹ ?" {Sanskrit} "--"Having regard to the context which ascribes the threefold
2 function relating to the universe only to God, and because the fact of their
3 conscious mental distinction comes between that function and their liberated
4 state, we have to conclude that the state of final liberation or Mukti in the case of
5 men is devoid of the capacity to create, preserve, and dissolve the universe." So if
6 this capacity is reserved only for God, what is meant, Swamiji asks, by saying that
7 in Nirvana the human merges completely into the Divine?

8 We must remember that many of the questions here reflect the intellectual stages
9 through which Swamiji was reaching out in those days towards that plentitude of
10 Vedantic wisdom which was his in future years. We also find a glimpse of those
11 processes through which his intellect was growing towards a fuller
12 understanding of our ancient scriptures and customs.
13

14 ¹²² ?Kapila is so spoken of in Shvetashvatara Upanishad, V.2. In his commentary
15 of *Vedanta-Sutras*, II. i. 1, Shankara doubts the identity of the Vedic Kapila with
16 the Sankhyan Kapila.
17

1 deeply involved in error, then who would say that Vyasa may not be
2 so involved in a greater measure? Did Kapila fail to understand the
3 Vedas?

4 7. According to the Nyaya, "Shabda or Veda (the criterion of
5 truth), is the word of those who have realised the highest"; so the
6 Rishis as such are omniscient. Then how are they proved, according
7 to the *Surya-siddhanta*, to be ignorant of such simple astronomical
8 truths? How can we accept their intelligence as the refuge to ferry
9 us across the ocean of transmigratory existence, seeing that they
10 speak of the earth as triangular, of the serpent Vasuki as the
11 support of the earth and so on?

12 8. If in His acts of creation God is dependent on good and evil
13 Karmas, then what does it avail us to worship Him? There is a fine
14 song of Nareshchandra, where occurs the following: "If what lies in
15 one's destiny is to happen anyhow, O Mother, then what good all
16 this invoking by the holy name of Durga?"

17 9. True, it is improper to hold many texts on the same subject
18 to be contradicted by one or two. But why then are the long-
19 continued customs of Madhuparka¹²³ and the like repealed by one
20 or two such texts as, "The horse sacrifice, the cow sacrifice,
21 Sannyasa, meat-offerings in Shraddha", etc.? If the Vedas are
22 eternal, then what are the meaning and justification of such
23 specifications as "this rule of Dharma is for the age of Dvapara,"
24 "this for the age of Kali", and so forth?

25 10. The same God who gives out the Vedas becomes Buddha
26 again to annul them; which of these dispensations is to be obeyed?
27 Which of these remains authoritative, the earlier or the later one?

28 11. The Tantra says, in the Kali-Yuga the Veda-Mantras are
29 futile. So which behest of God, the Shiva, is to be followed?

30 12. Vyasa makes out in the *Vedanta-Sutras* that it is wrong to
31 worship the tetrad of divine manifestation, Vasudeva, Sankarshana,
32 etc., and again that very Vyasa expatiates on the great merits of
33 that worship in the *Bhagavata* ! Is this Vyasa a madman?

34 I have many doubts besides these, and, hoping to have them
35 dispelled from my mind through your kindness, I shall lay them
36 before you in future. Such questions cannot be all set forth except
37 in a personal interview; neither can as much satisfaction be
38 obtained as one expects to. So I have a mind to lay before you all
39 these facts when presenting myself to you, which I expect will be
40 very soon, by the grace of the Guru.

41 I have heard it said that without inner progress in the
42 practice of religion, no true conclusion can be reached concerning

1 ¹²³ Madhuparka was a Vedic ceremony, usually in honour of guest, in which a
2 respectful offering was made consisting, among other dainties, of beef. The text
3 which Swamiji partially quotes forbids such food. The full text means that in the
4 Kali-Yuga the following five customs are to be forsaken: the horse sacrifice, cow-
5 killing ceremonies, meat-offerings in Shraddha, Sannyasa, and maintaining the
6 line of progeny through the husband's younger brother in case of failure through
7 the husband.
8

1 these matters, simply by means of reasoning; but satisfaction, at
2 least to some extent, seems to be necessary at the outset.

3 Yours etc.,

4 Vivekananda

7 X

8 Baghbazar,

9 Calcutta,

10 2nd Sept.,

11 1889

12 {original in Bengali}

13 Dear Sir {Pramadadas Mitra},

14 Some days ago I received your two kind letters. I am very
15 much pleased to find in you a wonderful harmony of Jnana and
16 Bhakti. Your advice to me to give up arguing and disputing is very
17 true indeed, and that is really the goal of life for the
18 individual--"Sundered are the knots of the heart, torn off are all his
19 doubts, and the seeds of his Karma wear off, when the sight of the
20 Transcendent One is gained."¹²⁴ But then, as my Master used to say,
21 when a pitcher is being filled (by immersion), it gurgles, but when
22 full, it is noiseless; know my condition to be the same. Within two or
23 three weeks perhaps, I shall be able to meet you--may God fulfil
24 that wish!

25 Yours etc.,

26 Vivekananda

29 XI

30 Baghbazar,

31 3rd Dec.,

32 1889

33 {original in Bengali}

34 Dear Sir {Pramadadas Mitra},

35 I have not heard from you for a long time, I hope you are
36 doing well in body and mind. Two of my brother-disciples are
37 shortly leaving for Varanasi. One is Rakhal by name, the other is
38 Subodh. The first-named was beloved of my Master and used to
39 stay much with him.

40 Please recommend them to some Satra (house of alms) during
41 their stay in the city, if you find it convenient. You will hear from
42 them all my news.

124 ?Mundakopanishad, II. ii. 8.

1 With my best regards and greetings.

2 Yours etc.,

3 Vivekananda

4 PS. Gangadhar is now proceeding to Kailas. The Tibetans
5 wanted to slash him up on the way, taking him to be a spy of the
6 foreigners. Eventually some Lamas kindly set him free. We obtain
7 this news from a Tibet-going trader. Gangadhar's blood won't cool
8 down before seeing Lhasa. The gain is that his physical endurance
9 has grown immensely--one night he passed uncovered on a bed of
10 snow, and that without much hardship.

11 Vivekananda

12

13

14 XII

15 Baranagore,

16 Calcutta,

17 13th Dec.,

18 1889

19 {original in Bengali}

20 Dear Sir {Pramadadas Mitra},

21 I have all particulars from your letter; and from Rakhal's
22 which followed, I came to know of your meeting. I have received the
23 pamphlet written by you. A kind of scientific Advaitism has been
24 spreading in Europe ever since the theory of the conservation of
25 energy was discovered, but all that is Parinamavada, evolution by
26 real modification. It is good you have shown the difference between
27 this and Shankara's Vivartavada (progressive manifestation by
28 unreal superimposition). I can't appreciate your citing Spencer's
29 parody on the German transcendentalists; he himself is fed much
30 on their doles. It is doubtful whether your opponent Gough
31 understands his Hegel sufficiently. Anyway, your rejoinder is very
32 pointed and thrashing.

33 Yours etc.,

34 Vivekananda

35

36 XIII

37 Baidyanath,

38 26th Dec.,

39 1889

40 {original in Bengali}

41 Dear Sir {Pramadadas Mitra},

42 After a long attempt, I think, I am now in a position to present
43 myself before you. In a day or two I take myself to your feet at holy
44 Kashi.

1 I have been putting up here for some days with a gentleman
2 of Calcutta, but my mind is much longing for Varanasi. My idea is to
3 remain there for some time, and to watch how Vishvanatha and
4 Annapurna deal it out to my lot. And my resolve is something like
5 "either to lay down my life or realise my ideal"--so help me the Lord
6 of Kashi.

7 Yours etc.,

8 Vivekananda

10
11 XIV

12 Allahabad

13 30th

14 December, 1889

15 {original in Bengali}

16 Dear Sir {Pramadadas Mitra},

17 I wrote in a letter to you that I was to go to Varanasi in a day
18 or two, but who can nullify the decree of Providence? News
19 reached me that a brother-disciple, Yogen by name, had been
20 attacked with smallpox after arriving here from a pilgrimage to
21 Chitrakuta, Omkarnath, etc., and so I came to this place to nurse
22 him. He has now completely recovered. Some Bengali gentlemen
23 here are of a greatly pious and loving disposition. They are very
24 lovingly taking care of me, and their importunate desire is that I
25 should stay here during the month of Magha (Jan.-Feb.) keeping the
26 Kalpa vow. But my mind is very keenly harping on the name of
27 Varanasi and is quite agog to see you. Yes, I am going to try my best
28 to slip away and avoid their importunities in a day or two and
29 betake myself to the holy realm of the Lord of Varanasi. If one of my
30 monastic brother-disciples, Achyutananda Saraswati by name, calls
31 on you to enquire of me, please tell him I am soon coming to
32 Varanasi. He is indeed a very good man and learned. I was obliged
33 to leave him behind at Bankipore. Are Rakhal and Subodh still there
34 in Varanasi? Please inquire and inform me whether the Kumbha fair
35 this year is going to be held at Hardwar or not.

36 Many a man of wisdom, of piety, many a Sadhu (holy man)
37 and Pundit have I met in so many places, and I have been very
38 much favoured by them, but {Sanskrit}--"Men are of varying
39 tastes"--*Raghuvamsham*. I know not what sort of soul-affinity there
40 is between us, for nowhere else does it seem so pleasing and
41 agreeable as with you. Let me see how the Lord of Kashi disposes.

42 Yours etc.,

43 Vivekananda

44 My address is: c/o Govinda Chandra Basu, Chauk, Allahabad.

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XV

Salutation to Shri

Ramakrishna!

Allahabad

5th January,

1890

{original in Bengali}

My dear Sir {Sj. Balaram Bose},

I am very sorry to hear of your illness from your kind note. The gist of the letter I wrote to you about your change to Baidyanath was that it would be impossible for a man of weak and extremely delicate physique like you to live in that place unless you spent a good deal of money. If change be really advisable for you, and if you have deferred it so long simply to select a cheaper place and that sort of thing, it is certainly a matter of regret. . . . Baidyanath is excellent so far as the air is concerned, but the water is not good, it upsets the stomach. I used to suffer from acidity every day. I have already written you a letter; have you got it, or finding it a bearing letter, have you left it to its fate? In my opinion, if you *have* to go away for a change, the sooner the better. But, pardon me, you have a tendency to expect that everything should fit in exactly with your requirements, but unfortunately, such a state of things is very rare in this world. "{Sanskrit}--One must save oneself under any circumstances." "Lord have mercy", is all right, but He helps him who helps himself. If you simply try to save your purse, will the Lord arrange the change for you by drawing on His ancestral capital? If you think you have so much reliance on the Lord, don't call in the doctor, please. . . . If that does not suit you, you should go to Varanasi. I would have already left this place, but the local gentlemen would not give me leave to depart! . . . But let me repeat once more, if change is actually decided upon, please do not hesitate out of miserliness. That would be suicide. And not even God can save a suicide. Please convey my compliments to Tulasi Babu and the rest.

With best regards,

Yours

affectionately,

Vivekananda

XVI

c/o Babu Satish Chandra

Mukherji

Gorabazar, Ghazipur

21st Jan., 1890

{original in Bengali}

Dear Sir {Pramadadas Mitra},

1 I reached Ghazipur three days ago. Here I am putting up in
2 the house of Babu Satish Chandra Mukherji, a friend of my early
3 age. The place is very pleasant. Close by flows the Ganga, but
4 bathing there is troublesome, for there is no regular path, and it is
5 hard work wading through sands. Babu Ishan Chandra Mukherji,
6 my friend's father, that noble-hearted man of whom I spoke to you,
7 is here. Today he is leaving for Varanasi whence he will proceed to
8 Calcutta. I again had a great mind to go over to Kashi, but the
9 object of my coming here, namely, an interview with the Babaji, has
10 not yet been realised, and hence the delay of a few days becomes
11 necessary. Everything here appears good. The people are all
12 gentlemen, but very much Westernised; and it is a pity I am so
13 thoroughly against every affectation of the Western idea. Only my
14 friend very little affects such ideals. What a frippery civilisation is it
15 indeed that the foreigners have brought over here! What a
16 materialistic illusion have they created! May Vishvanatha save
17 these weak-hearted! After seeing Babaji, I shall send you a detailed
18 account.

19 Yours etc.,

20 Vivekananda

21 PS. Alas for the irony of our fate, that in this land of Bhagavan
22 Shuka's birth, renunciation is looked down upon as madness and
23 sin!

24
25 XVII

26 Ghazipur

27 31st Jan.,

28 1890

29 {original in Bengali}

30 Dear Sir {Pramadadas Mitra},

31 It is so very difficult to meet the Babaji. He does not step out
32 of his home; and, when willing to speak at all, he just comes near
33 the door to speak from inside. I have come away with having just a
34 view of his garden-house with chimneys tapering above and
35 encircled by high walls--no means of admittance within! People say
36 there are cave-like rooms within where he dwells; and he only
37 knows what he does there, for nobody has had a peep. I had to
38 come away one day sorely used up with waiting and waiting, but
39 shall take my chance again. On Sunday, I leave for holy Varanasi--
40 only the Babus here won't let me off; otherwise all my fancy to see
41 the Babaji has flattened down. I am prepared to be off today, but
42 anyhow, I am leaving on Sunday. What of your plan of going to
43 Hrishikesh?

44 Yours etc.,

45 Vivekananda

46 PS. The redeeming feature is that the place seems healthy.

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XVIII

Ghazipur
4th Feb.,

1890

{original in Bengali}

Dear Sir {Pramadadas Mitra},

Received your kind note, and through supreme good fortune, I have obtained an interview with Babaji. A great sage indeed!--It is all very wonderful, and in this atheistic age, a towering representation of marvellous power born of Bhakti and Yoga! I have sought refuge in his grace; and he has given me hope--a thing very few may be fortunate enough to obtain. It is Babaji's wish that I stay on for some days here, and he would do me some good. So following this saint's bidding I shall remain here for some time. No doubt, this will give you also much pleasure. I don't mention them in a letter, but the facts are very strange indeed--to be disclosed when we meet. Unless one is face to face with the life of such men, faith in the scriptures does not grow in all its real integrity.

Yours etc.,
Vivekananda

XIX

Ghazipur
7th Feb.,

1890

{original in Bengali}

Dear Sir {Pramadadas Mitra},

I feel very happy to hear from you just now. Apparently in his features, the Babaji is a Vaishnava, the embodiment, so to speak, of Yoga, Bhakti, and humility. His dwelling has walls on all sides with a few doors in them. Inside these walls, there is one long underground burrow wherein he lays himself up in Samadhi. He talks to others only when he comes out of the hole. Nobody knows what he eats, and so they call him Pavhari Baba. Once he did not come out of the hole for five years, and people thought he had given up the body. But now again he is out. But this time he does not show himself to people and talks from behind the door. Such sweetness in speech I have never come across! He does not give a direct reply to questions but says, "What does this servant know?" But then fire comes out as the talking goes on. On my pressing him very much he said, "Favour me highly by staying here some days." But he never speaks in this way; so from this I understood he meant to reassure me; and whenever I am importunate, he asks me to stay on. So I wait in hope. He is a learned man no doubt but nothing in

1 the line betrays itself. He performs scriptural ceremonials, for from
2 the full-moon day to the last day of the month, sacrificial oblations
3 go on. So it is sure, he is not retiring into the hole during this
4 period. How can I ask his permission, for he never gives a direct
5 reply; he goes on multiplying such expressions as "this servant",
6 "my fortune", and so on. If you yourself have a mind, then come
7 sharp on receipt of this note. Or after his passing away, the keenest
8 regret will be left in your mind. In two days you may return after an
9 interview--I mean a talk with him *ab intra*. My friend Satish Babu
10 will receive you most warmly. So, do come up directly you receive
11 this; I shall meanwhile let Babaji know of you.

12 Yours etc.,

13 Vivekananda

14 PS. Even though one can't have his company, no trouble taken
15 for the sake of such a great soul can ever go unrewarded.

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18 XX

19 Ghazipur

20 13th Feb.,

21 1890

22 {original in Bengali}

23 Dear Sir {Pramadadas Mitra},

24 I am in anxiety to hear of your illness. I am also having some
25 sort of a pain in the loins which, being aggravated of late, gives
26 much trouble. For two days I could not go out to meet Babaji, and
27 so a man came from him to inquire about me. For this reason, I go
28 today. I shall convey your countless compliments. "Fire comes out"--
29 that is, a wonderful devotion to Guru and resignation are revealed;
30 and such amazing endurance and humility I have never seen.
31 Whatever good things I may come by, sure, you have your share in
32 them.

33 Yours etc.,

34 Vivekananda

35
36
37 XXI

38 Ghazipur

39 14th Feb.,

40 1890

41 {original in Bengali}

42 Dear Sir {Pramadadas Mitra},

43 In my note of yesterday I perhaps forgot to ask you to return
44 brother Sharat's letter. Please send it. I have heard from brother

1 Gangadhar. He is now in Rambag Samadhi, Srinagar, Kashmir. I
2 am greatly suffering from lumbago.

3 Yours etc.,

4 Vivekananda

5 PS. Rakhal and Subodh have come to Vrindaban after visiting
6 Omkar, Girnar, Abu, Bombay, and Dwaraka.

9 XXII

10 *Victory to the Lord!*

11 Ghazipur

12 19th Feb.,

13 1890

14 {original in Bengali}

15 Dear Sir {Pramadadas Mitra},

16 I wrote a letter to brother Gangadhar asking him to stop his
17 wandering and settle down somewhere and to send me an account
18 of the various Sadhus he had come across in Tibet and their ways
19 and customs. I enclose the reply that came from him. Brother Kali is
20 having repeated attacks of fever at Hrishikesh. I have sent him a
21 wire from this place. So if from the reply I find I am wanted by him,
22 I shall be obliged to start direct for Hrishikesh from this place,
23 otherwise I am coming to you in a day or two. Well, you may smile,
24 sir, to see me weaving all this web of Maya--and that is no doubt the
25 fact. But then there is the chain of iron, and there is the chain of
26 gold. Much good comes of the latter; and it drops off by itself when
27 all the good is reaped. The sons of my Master are indeed the great
28 objects of my service, and here alone I feel I have some duty left for
29 me. Perhaps I shall send brother Kali down to Allahabad or
30 somewhere else, as convenient. At your feet are laid a hundred and
31 one faults of mine--"I am as thy son, so guide me who have taken
32 refuge in thee {Gita, II.7}".

33 Yours etc.,

34 Vivekananda

37 XXIII

38 *Salutation to Bhagavan*

39 *Ramakrishna!*

40 Ghazipur

41 February,

42 1890

43 {original in Bengali}

44 Beloved Akhandananda,

1 Very glad to receive your letter. What you have written about
2 Tibet is very promising, and I shall try to go there once. In Sanskrit
3 Tibet is called the Uttarakuruvarsha, and is not a land of
4 Mlechchhas. Being the highest tableland in the world, it is
5 extremely cold, but by degrees one may become accustomed to it.
6 About the manners and customs of the Tibetans you have written
7 nothing. If they are so hospitable, why did they not allow you to go
8 on? Please write everything in detail, in a long letter. I am sorry to
9 learn that you will not be able to come, for I had a great longing to
10 see you. It seems that I love you more than all others. However, I
11 shall try to get rid of this Maya too.

12 The Tantrika rites among the Tibetans that you have spoken
13 of arose in India itself, during the decline of Buddhism. It is my
14 belief that the Tantras, in vogue amongst us, were the creation of
15 the Buddhists themselves. Those Tantrika rites are even more
16 dreadful than our doctrine of Vamachara; for in them adultery got a
17 free rein, and it was only when the Buddhists became demoralised
18 through immorality that they were driven away by Kumarila Bhatta.
19 As some Sannyasins speak of Shankara, or the Bauls of Shri
20 Chaitanya, that he was in secret an epicure, a drunkard, and one
21 addicted to all sorts of abominable practices--so the modern
22 Tantrika Buddhists speak of the Lord Buddha as a dire Vamachari
23 and give an obscene interpretation to the many beautiful precepts
24 of the *Prajnaparamita*, such as the *Tattvagatha* and the like. The
25 result of all this has been that the Buddhists are divided into two
26 sects nowadays; the Burmese and the Sinhalese have generally set
27 the Tantras at naught, have likewise banished the Hindu gods and
28 goddesses, and at the same time have thrown overboard the
29 Amitabha Buddha held in regard among the Northern School of
30 Buddhists. The long and the short of it is that the Amitabha Buddha
31 and the other gods whom the Northern School worship are not
32 mentioned in books like the *Prajnaparamita*, but a lot of gods and
33 goddesses are recommended for worship. And the Southern people
34 have willfully transgressed the Shastras and eschewed the gods
35 and goddesses. The phase of Buddhism which declares "Everything
36 for others", and which you find spread throughout Tibet, has greatly
37 struck modern Europe. Concerning that phase, however, I have a
38 good deal to say--which it is impossible to do in this letter. What
39 Buddha did was to break wide open the gates of that very religion
40 which was confined in the Upanishads to a particular caste. What
41 special greatness does his theory of Nirvana confer on him? His
42 greatness lies in his unrivalled sympathy. The high orders of
43 Samadhi etc., that lend gravity to his religion are, almost all there
44 in the Vedas; what are absent there are his intellect and heart,
45 which have never since been paralleled throughout the history of
46 the world.

47 The Vedic doctrine of Karma is the same as in Judaism and all
48 other religions, that is to say, the purification of the mind through
49 sacrifices and such other external means--and Buddha was the first
50 man who stood against it. But the inner essence of the ideas
51 remained as of old--look at that doctrine of mental exercises which
52 he preached, and that mandate of his to believe in the Suttas

1 instead of the Vedas. Caste also remained as of old (caste was not
2 wholly obsolete at the time of Buddha), but it was now determined
3 by personal qualifications; and those that were not believers in his
4 religion were declared as heretics, all in the old style. "Heretic" was
5 a very ancient word with the Buddhists, but then they never had
6 recourse to the sword (good souls!) and had great toleration.
7 Argument blew up the Vedas. But what is the proof of your religion?
8 Well, put faith in it! --the same procedure as in all religions. It was
9 however an imperative necessity of the times; and that was the
10 reason of his having incarnated himself. His doctrine is like that of
11 Kapila. But that of Shankara, how far more grand and rational!
12 Buddha and Kapila are always saying the world is full of grief and
13 nothing but that--flee from it--ay, for your life, do! Is happiness
14 altogether absent here? It is a statement of the nature of what the
15 Brahmos say--the world is full of happiness! There is grief, forsooth,
16 but what can be done? Perchance some will suggest that grief itself
17 will appear as happiness when you become used to it by constant
18 suffering. Shankara does not take this line of argument. He says:
19 This world *is* and *is not* --*manifold yet one*; I shall unravel its
20 mystery--I shall know whether grief be there, or anything else; I do
21 not flee from it as from a bugbear. I will know all about it--as to the
22 infinite pain that attends its search, well, I am embracing it in its
23 fullest measure. Am I a beast that you frighten me with happiness
24 and misery, decay and death, which are but the outcome of the
25 senses? I will know about it--will give up my life for it. There is
26 nothing to know about in this world--therefore, if there be anything
27 beyond this relative existence--what the Lord Buddha has
28 designated as *Prajnapara* --the transcendental--if such there be, I
29 want that alone. Whether happiness attends it or grief, I do not
30 care. What a lofty idea! How grand! The religion of Buddha has
31 reared itself on the Upanishads, and upon that also the philosophy
32 of Shankara. Only, Shankara had not the slightest bit of Buddha's
33 wonderful heart, dry intellect merely! For fear of the Tantras, for
34 fear of the mob, in his attempt to cure a boil, he amputated the very
35 arm itself!¹²⁵ One has to write a big volume if one has to write about
36 them at all--but I have neither the learning nor the leisure for it.

37 The Lord Buddha is my Ishta--my God. He preached no theory
38 about Godhead--he was himself God, I fully believe it. But no one
39 has the power to put a limit to God's infinite glory. No, not even God
40 Himself has the power to make Himself limited. The translation of
41 the *Gandara-Sutta* that you have made from the *Suttanipata*, is
42 excellent. In that book there is another *Sutta* --the *Dhaniya-Sutta* --
43 which has got a similar idea. There are many passages in the
44 *Dhammapada* too, with similar ideas. But that is at the last stage
45 when one has got perfectly satisfied with knowledge and

1 ¹²⁵ ?In his anxiety to defend the purity of the Vedic religion against the excesses
2 of Tantrikism, which was capturing the rank and file of his countrymen, Shankara
3 neglected the problem of the latter, stigmatised as Shudras by the Vedicists. This
4 is perhaps the meaning of Swamiji. It seems he could never forgive Sankara for
5 applying in his commentary on the *Brahma-Sutras* the old logic of forbidding
6 Vedic rituals to the Shudras to the more modern question of their right to higher
7 modes of worship (Upasana) and knowledge (Jnana) of the Jnana-kanda.
8

1 realisation, is the same under all circumstances and has gained
2 mastery over his senses--{Sanskrit} (Gita, VI.8.). He who has not
3 the least regard for his body as something to be taken care of--it is
4 he who may roam about at pleasure like the mad elephant caring
5 for naught. Whereas a puny creature like myself should practice
6 devotion, sitting at one spot, till he attains realisation; and then only
7 should he behave like that; but it is a far-off question--very far
8 indeed.

9 {Sanskrit} (*Vivekachudmani*, 538-40)

10 --To a knower of Brahman food comes of itself, without effort--
11 he drinks wherever he gets it. He roams at pleasure everywhere--he
12 is fearless, sleeps sometimes in the forest, sometimes in a
13 crematorium and, treads the Path which the Vedas have taken but
14 whose end they have not seen. His body is like the sky; and he is
15 guided, like a child, by others' wishes; he is sometimes naked,
16 sometimes in gorgeous clothes, and at times has only Jnana as his
17 clothing; he behaves sometimes like a child, sometimes like a
18 madman, and at other times again like a ghoul, indifferent to
19 cleanliness.

20 I pray to the holy feet of our Guru that you may have that
21 state, and you may wander like the rhinoceros.

22 Yours etc.,

23 Vivekananda

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26 XXIV

27 *Victory to the Lord!*

28 Ghazipur,

29 25th Feb.,

30 1890

31 {original in Bengali}

32 Dear Sir {Pramadadas Mitra},

33 The lumbago is giving a good deal of trouble, or else I would
34 have already sought to come to you. The mind does not find rest
35 here any longer. It is three days since I came away from Babaji's
36 place, but he inquires of me kindly almost every day. As soon as the
37 lumbago is a little better, I bid good-bye to Babaji. Countless
38 greetings to you.

39 Yours etc.,

40 Vivekananda

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43 XXV

44 *Victory to the Lord!*

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Ghazipur,
3rd March,

1890

{original in Bengali}

Dear Sir {Pramadadas Mitra},

Your kind letter comes to hand just now. You know not, sir, I am a very soft-natured man in spite of the stern Vedantic views I hold. And this proves to be my undoing. At the slightest touch I give myself away; for howsoever I may try to think only of my own good, I slip off in spite of myself to think of other peoples' interests. This time it was with a very stern resolve that I set out to pursue my own good, but I had to run off at the news of the illness of a brother at Allahabad! And now comes this news from Hrishikesh, and my mind has run off with me there. I have wired to Sharat, but no reply yet--a nice place indeed to delay even telegrams so much! The lumbago obstinately refuses to leave me, and the pain is very great. For the last few days I haven't been able to go to see Pavhariji, but out of his kindness he sends every day for my report. But now I see the whole matter is inverted in its bearings! While I myself have come, a beggar, at his door, he turns round and wants to learn of me! This saint perhaps is not yet perfected--too much of rites, vows, observances, and too much of self-concealment. The ocean in its fullness cannot be contained within its shores, I am sure. So it is not good, I have decided not to disturb this Sadhu (holy man) for nothing, and very soon I shall ask leave of him to go. No help, you see; Providence has dealt me my death to make me so tender! Babaji does not let me off, and Gagan Babu (whom probably you know--an upright, pious, and kind-hearted man) does not let me off. If the wire in reply requires my leaving this place, I go; if not, I am coming to you at Varanasi in a few days. I am not going to let you off--I must take you to Hrishikesh--no excuse or objections will do. What are you saying about difficulties there of keeping clean? Lack of water in the hills or lack of room!! Tirthas (places of pilgrimage) and Sannyasins of the Kali Yuga--you know what they are. Spend money and the owners of temples will fling away the installed god to make room for you; so no anxiety about a resting-place! No trouble to face there, I say; the summer heat has set in there now, I believe, though not that degree of it as you find at Varanasi--so much the better. Always the nights are quite cool there, from which good sleep is almost a certainty.

Why do you get frightened so much? I stand guarantee that you shall return home safe and that you shall have no trouble anywhere. It is my experience that in this British realm no fakir or householder gets into any trouble.

Is it a mere idle fancy of mine that between us there is some connection from previous birth? Just see how one letter from you sweeps away all my resolution and, I bend my steps towards Varanasi leaving all matters behind! . . .

I have written again to brother Gangadhar and have asked him this time to return to the Math. If he comes, he will meet you.

1 How is the climate at Varanasi now? By my stay here I have been
2 cured of all other symptoms of malaria, only the pain in the loins
3 makes me frantic; day and night it is aching and chafes me very
4 much. I know not how I shall climb up the hills. I find wonderful
5 endurance in Babaji, and that's why I am begging something of him;
6 but no inkling of the mood to give, only receiving and receiving! So
7 I also fly off.

8 Yours etc.,

9 Vivekananda

10 PS. To no big person am I going any longer--"Remain, O mind,
11 within yourself, go not to anybody else's door; whatever you seek,
12 you shall obtain sitting at your ease, only seek for it in the privacy
13 of your heart. There is the supreme Treasure, the philosophers'
14 stone, and He can give whatever you ask for; for countless gems, O
15 mind, lie strewn about the portals of His abode. He is the wishing-
16 stone that confers boons at the mere thought." Thus says the poet
17 Kamalakanta.

18 So now the great conclusion is that Ramakrishna has no peer;
19 nowhere else in this world exists that unprecedented perfection,
20 that wonderful kindness for all that does not stop to justify itself,
21 that intense sympathy for man in bondage. Either he must be the
22 Avatara as he himself used to say, or else the ever-perfected divine
23 man, whom the Vedanta speaks of as the free one who assumes a
24 body for the good of humanity. This is my conviction sure and
25 certain; and the worship of such a divine man has been referred to
26 by Patanjali in the aphorism: "Or the goal may be attained by
27 meditating on a saint."¹²⁶

28 Never during his life did he refuse a single prayer of mine;
29 millions of offences has he forgiven me; such great love even my
30 parents never had for me. There is no poetry, no exaggeration in all
31 this. It is the bare truth and every disciple of his knows it. In times
32 of great danger, great temptation, I wept in extreme agony with the
33 prayer, "O God, do save me," but no response came from anybody;
34 but this wonderful saint, or Avatara, or anything else he may be,
35 came to know of all my affliction through his powers of insight into
36 human hearts and lifted it off--in spite of my desire to the contrary--
37 after getting me brought to his presence. If the soul be deathless,
38 and so, if he still lives, I pray to him again and again: "O Bhagavan
39 Ramakrishna, thou infinite ocean of mercy and my only refuge, do
40 graciously fulfil the desires of my esteemed friend, who is every
41 inch a great man." My he impart to you all good, he whom alone I
42 have found in this world to be like an ocean of unconditioned
43 mercy! Shantih, Shantih, Shantih.

44 Please send a prompt reply.

45 Yours etc.,

46 Vivekananda

1 ¹²⁶ ?Patanjali's aphorism has "Ishvara" in place of "saint". Narda has an
2 aphorism which runs thus: Bhakti (Supreme Love) is attainable chiefly through
3 the grace of a saint, or by a bit of Divine Grace.
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XXVI

Victory to God!

Ghazipur,
8th March,

1890

{original in Bengali}

Dear Sir {Pramadadas Mitra},

Your note duly reached me, and so I too shall be off to Prayag.
Please write to inform where you mean to put up while there.

Yours etc.,

Vivekananda

PS. In case Abhedananda reaches your place in a day or two,
I shall be much obliged if you start him on his way to Calcutta.

Vivekananda

XXVII

Salutation to Bhagavan

Ramakrishna!

Ghazipur,
March, 1890

{original in Bengali}

Beloved Akhandananda,

Very glad to receive your letter yesterday. I am at present staying with the wonderful Yogi and devotee of this place, called Pavhariji. He never comes out of his room and holds conversations with people from behind the door. Inside the room there is a pit in which he lives. It is rumoured that he remains in a state of Samadhi for months together. His fortitude is most wonderful. Our Bengal is the land of Bhakti and of Jnana, where Yoga is scarcely so much as talked of even. What little there is, is but the queer breathing exercises of the Hatha-Yoga--which is nothing but a kind of gymnastics. Therefore I am staying with this wonderful Raja-Yogi--and he has given me some hopes, too. There is a beautiful bungalow in a small garden belonging to a gentleman here; I mean to stay there. The garden is quite close to Babaji's cottage. A brother of the Babaji stays there to look after the comforts of the Sadhus, and I shall have my Bhiksha at his place. Hence, with a view to seeing to the end of this fun, I give up for the present my plan of going to the hills. For the last two months I have had an attack of lumbago in the waist, which also makes it impossible to climb the hills now. Therefore let me wait and see what Babaji will give me.

1 My motto is to learn whatever good things I may come across
2 anywhere. This leads many friends to think that it will take away
3 from my devotion to the Guru. These ideas I count as those of
4 lunatics and bigots. For all Gurus are one and are fragments and
5 radiations of God, the Universal Guru.

6 If you come to Ghazipur, you have but to inquire at Satish
7 Babu's or Gagan Babu's at Gorabazar, and you know my
8 whereabouts. Or, Pavhari Baba is so well-known a person here that
9 everyone will inform you about his Ashrama at the very mention of
10 his name, and you have only to go there and inquire about the
11 Paramahamsa, and they will tell you of me. Near Moghul Sarai
12 there is a station named Dildarnagar, where you have to change to
13 a short branch railway and get down at Tarighat, opposite
14 Ghazipur; then you have to cross the Ganga to reach Ghazipur.

15 For the present, I stay at Ghazipur for some days, and wait
16 and see what the Babaji does. If you come, we shall stay together at
17 the said bungalow for some time, and then start for the hills, or for
18 any other place we may decide upon. Don't, please, write to anyone
19 at Baranagore that I am staying at Ghazipur.

20 With blessings and best wishes,

21 Ever yours,

22 Vivekananda

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25 XXVIII

26 *Salutation to Bhagavan*

27 *Ramakrishna!*

28 Ghazipur,

29 March, 1890

30 {original in Bengali}

31 Beloved Akhandananda,

32 Received another letter of yours just now, and with great
33 difficulty deciphered the scribblings. I have written everything in
34 detail in my last letter. You start immediately on receipt of this. I
35 know the route to Tibet via Nepal that you have spoken of. As they
36 don't allow anyone to enter Tibet easily, so they don't allow anybody
37 to go anywhere in Nepal, except Katmandu, its capital, and one or
38 two places of pilgrimage. But a friend of mine is now a tutor to His
39 Highness the Maharaja of Nepal, and a teacher in his school, from
40 whom I have it that when the Nepal government send their subsidy
41 to China, they send it via Lhasa. A Sadhu contrived in that way to
42 go to Lhasa, China, Manchuria, and even to the holy seat of Tara
43 Devi in North China. We, too, can visit with dignity and respect
44 Tibet, Lhasa, China, and all, if that friend of mine tries to arrange it.
45 You therefore start immediately for Ghazipur. After a few days' stay
46 here with the Babaji, I shall correspond with my friend, and,
47 everything arranged, I shall certainly go to Tibet via Nepal.

You have to get down at Dildarnagar to come to Ghazipur. It is three or four stations from Moghul Sarai. I would have sent you the passage if I could have collected it here; so you get it together and come. Gagan Babu with whom I am putting up, is an exceedingly courteous, noble, and generous-minded man. No sooner did he come to know of Kali's illness than he sent him the passage at Hrishikesh; he has besides spent much on my account. Under the circumstances it would be violating a Sannyasin's duty to tax him for the passage to Kashmir, and I desist from it. You collect the fare and start as soon as you receive this letter. Let the craze for visiting Amarnath be put back for the present.

Yours

affectionately,

Vivekananda

XXIX

Ghazipur,

31st March,

1890

{original in Bengali}

Dear Sir {Pramadadas Mitra},

I haven't been here for the last few days and am again going away today. I have asked brother Gangadhar to come here; and if he comes, we go over to you together. For some special reasons, I shall continue to stay in secret in a village some distance from this place, and there's no facility for writing any letter from that place, owing to which I could not reply to your letter so long. Brother Gangadhar is very likely to come, otherwise the reply to my note would have reached me. Brother Abhedananda is putting up with Doctor Priya at Varanasi. Another brother of mine had been with me, but has left for Abhedananda's place. The news of his arrival has not yet been received, and, his health being bad, I am rather anxious for his sake. I have behaved very cruelly towards him--that is, I have harassed him much to make him leave my company. There's no help, you see; I am so very weak-hearted, so much overmastered by the distractions of love! Bless me that I may harden. What shall I say to you about the condition of my mind! Oh, it is as if the hell-fire is burning there day and night! Nothing, nothing could I do yet! And this life seems muddled away in vain; I feel quite helpless as to what to do! The Babaji throws out honeyed words and keeps me from leaving. Ah, what shall I say? I am committing hundreds of offences against you--please excuse them as so many misdoings of a man driven mad with mental agonies. Abhedananda is suffering from dysentery. I shall be very much obliged if you will kindly inquire about his condition and send him down to our Math in case he wants to go there with our brother who has come from here. My Gurubhais must be thinking me very cruel and selfish. Oh, what can I do? Who will see deep down into my mind? Who will know how much I am suffering day and night?

1 Bless me that I may have the most unflinching patience and
2 perseverance.

3 With countless greetings,

4 Yours etc.,

5 Vivekananda.

6 PS. Abhedananda is staying in Doctor Priya's house at
7 Sonarpura. My lumbago is as before.

8 Vivekananda

11 XXX

12 *Salutation to Bhagavan*

13 *Ramakrishna!*

14 Ghazipur,

15 2nd April,

16 1890

17 My Dear Kali {Abhedananda},

18 Glad to receive your letter as well as Pramada Babu's and
19 Baburam's (Premananda's). I am doing pretty well here. You have
20 expressed a desire to see me. I too have a similar longing, and it is
21 this that makes me afraid of going. Moreover, the Babaji forbids me
22 to do so. I shall try to go on a few days' leave from him. But there is
23 this fear that by so doing I shall be drawn up to the hills by the
24 attraction I have for Hrishikesh, and it will be very difficult to shake
25 it off, specially for one weak-minded, you see, like myself. The
26 attack of lumbago, too, will not leave me on any account--a
27 botheration! But then I am getting used to it. Please convey my
28 countless salutations to Pramada Babu; his is a friendship which
29 greatly benefits both my mind and body. And I am particularly
30 indebted to him. Things will turn up some way, anyhow.

31 With best wishes,

32 Yours

33 affectionately,

34 Vivekananda

37 XXXI

38 Ghazipur,

39 2nd April,

40 1890

41 {original in Bengali}

42 Dear Sir {Pramadadas Mitra},

43 Where shall I get that renunciation you speak of in your

1 advice to me? It is for the sake of that very thing that I am out a
2 tramp through the earth. If ever I get this true renunciation, I shall
3 let you know; and if you get anything of the kind, please remember
4 me as a partner thereof.

5 Yours,
6 Vivekananda

9 XXXII

10 *Victory to Ramakrishna!*

11 Baranagore,
12 10th May,

13 1890

14 {original in Bengali}

15 Dear Sir {Pramadadas Mitra},

16 I could not write to you because of various distractions and a
17 relapse of fever. Glad to learn from Abhedananda's letter that you
18 are doing well. Gangadhar (Akhandananda) has probably arrived at
19 Varanasi by this time. King Death happens here to be casting into
20 his jaws these days many of our friends and own people, hence I am
21 very much taken up. Perhaps no letter for me has arrived there
22 from Nepal. I know not how and when Vishvanatha (the Lord of
23 Kashi) would choose to vouchsafe some rest to me. Directly the hot
24 weather relaxes a little, I am off from this place, but I am still at a
25 loss where to go. Do please pray for me to Vishvanatha that He may
26 grant me strength. You are a devotee, and I beseech you with the
27 Lord's words coming to my mind, "Those who are the devoted ones
28 to My devotees, are indeed considered the best of My devotees."

29 Yours etc.,
30 Vivekananda

32 XXXIII

33 57, Ramkanta

34 Bose's Street

35 Baghbazar,

36 Calcutta

37 26th May, 1890

38 {original in Bengali}

39 Dear Sir {Pramadadas Mitra},

40 I write this to you while caught in a vortex of many untoward
41 circumstances and great agitation of mind; with a prayer to
42 Vishvanatha, please think of the propriety and possibility, or
43 otherwise, of all that I set forth below and then oblige me greatly by
44 a reply.

1 1. I already told you at the outset that I am Ramakrishna's
2 slave, having laid my body at his feet "with Til and Tulasi leaves", I
3 cannot disregard his behest. If it is in failure that that great sage
4 laid down his life after having attained to superhuman heights of
5 Jnana, Bhakti, Love, and powers, and after having practised for
6 forty years stern renunciation, non-attachment, holiness, and great
7 austerities, then where is there anything for us to count on? So I am
8 obliged to trust his words as the words of one identified with truth.

9 2. Now his behest to me was that I should devote myself to
10 the service of the order of all-renouncing devotees founded by him,
11 and in this I have to persevere, come what may, being ready to take
12 heaven, hell, salvation, or anything that may happen to me.

13 3. His command was that his all-renouncing devotees should
14 group themselves together, and I am entrusted with seeing to this.
15 Of course, it matters not if any one of us goes out on visits to this
16 place or that, but these shall be but visits, while his own opinion
17 was that absolute homeless wandering suited him alone who was
18 perfected to the highest point. Before that state, it is proper to
19 settle somewhere to dive down into practice. When all the ideas of
20 body and the like are dissolved of themselves, a person may then
21 pursue whatever state comes to him. Otherwise, it is baneful for a
22 practising aspirant to be always wandering.

23 4. So in pursuance of this his commandment, his group of
24 Sannyasins are now assembled in a dilapidated house at
25 Baranagore, and two of his lay disciples, Babu Suresh Chandra
26 Mitra and Babu Balaram Bose, so long provided for their food and
27 house-rent.

28 5. For various reasons, the body of Bhagavan Ramakrishna
29 had to be consigned to fire. There is no doubt that this act was very
30 blamable. The remains of his ashes are now preserved, and if they
31 be now properly enshrined somewhere on the banks of the Ganga, I
32 presume we shall be able in some measure to expiate the sin lying
33 on our head. These sacred remains, his seat, and his picture are
34 every day worshipped in our Math in proper form; and it is known
35 to you that a brother-disciple of mine, of Brahmin parentage, is
36 occupied day and night with the task. The expenses of the worship
37 used also to be borne by the two great souls mentioned above.

38 6. What greater regret can there be than this that no
39 memorial could yet be raised in this land of Bengal in the very
40 neighbourhood of the place where he lived his life of Sadhana--he
41 by whose birth the race of Bengalees has been sanctified, the land
42 of Bengal has become hallowed, he who came on earth to save the
43 Indians from the spell of the worldly glamour of Western culture
44 and who therefore chose most of his all-renouncing disciples from
45 university men?

46 7. The two gentlemen mentioned above had a strong desire to
47 have some land purchased on the banks of the Ganga and see the
48 sacred remains enshrined on it, with the disciples living there
49 together; and Suresh Babu had offered a sum of Rs. 1,000 for the
50 purpose, promising to give more, but for some inscrutable purpose
51 of God he left this world yesternight! And the news of Balaram

1 Babu's death is already known to you.

2 8. Now there is no knowing as to where his disciples will
3 stand with his sacred remains and his seat (and you know well,
4 people here in Bengal are profuse in their professions, but do not
5 stir out an inch in practice). The disciples are Sannyasins and are
6 ready forthwith to depart anywhere their way may lie. But I, their
7 servant, am in an agony of sufferings, and my heart is breaking to
8 think that a small piece of land could not be had in which to install
9 the remains of Bhagavan Ramakrishna.

10 9. It is impossible with a sum of Rs. 1,000 to secure land and
11 raise a temple near Calcutta. Some such land would at least cost
12 about five to seven thousands.

13 10. You remain now the only friend and patron of Shri
14 Ramakrishna's disciples. In the North-Western Province great
15 indeed is your fame, your position, and your circle of acquaintance.
16 I request you to consider, if you feel like it, the propriety of your
17 getting the affair through by raising subscriptions from well-to-do
18 pious men known to you in your province. If you deem it proper to
19 have some shelter erected on the banks of the Ganga in Bengal for
20 Bhagavan Ramakrishna's sacred remains and for his disciples, I
21 shall with your leave report myself to you, and I have not the
22 slightest qualm to beg from door to door for this noble cause, for
23 the sake of my Lord and his children. Please give this proposal your
24 best thoughts with prayers to Vishvanatha. To my mind, if all these
25 sincere, educated, youthful Sannyasins of good birth fail to live up
26 to the ideals of Sri Ramakrishna owing to want of an abode and
27 help, then alas for our country!

28 11. If you ask, "You are a Sannyasin, so why do you trouble
29 over these desires?" --I would then reply, I am Ramakrishna's
30 servant, and I am willing even to steal and rob, if by doing so I can
31 perpetuate his name in the land of his birth and Sadhana (spiritual
32 struggle) and help even a little his disciples to practise his great
33 ideals. I know you to be my closest in kinship, and I lay my mind
34 bare to you. I returned to Calcutta for this reason. I had told you
35 this before I left, and now I leave it to you to do what you think
36 best.

37 12. If you argue that it is better to have the plan carried out
38 in some place like Kashi, my point is, as I have told you, it would be
39 the greatest pity if the memorial shrine could not be raised in the
40 land of his birth and Sadhana! The condition of Bengal is pitiable.
41 The people here cannot even dream what renunciation truly
42 means--luxury and sensuality have been so much eating into the
43 vitals of the race! May God send renunciation and unworldliness
44 into this land! They have here nothing to speak of, while the people
45 of the North-Western Province, specially the rich there as I believe,
46 have great zeal in noble causes like this. Please send me such reply
47 as you think best. Gangadhar has not yet arrived today, and may do
48 so tomorrow. I am so eager to see him again.

49 Please write to the address given above.

50

Yours etc.,

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Vivekananda

XXXIV

Calcutta

Baghbazar,

July 6, 1890

Dear Sharat {Saradananda} and Kripananda,

Your letters have duly reached us. They say Almora is healthiest at this time of the year, yet you are taken ill! I hope it is nothing malarious. . . .

I find Gangadhar the same pliant child with his turbulence moderated by his wanderings, and with a greater love for us and for our Lord. He is bold, brave, sincere, and steadfast. The only thing needed is a guiding mind to whom he would instinctively submit with reverence, and a fine man would be the result.

I had no wish to leave Ghazipur this time, and certainly not to come to Calcutta, but Kali's illness made me go to Varanasi, and Balaram's sudden death brought me to Calcutta. So Suresh Babu and Balaram Babu are both gone! G.C. Ghosh is supporting the Math. . . . I intend shortly, as soon as I can get my fare, to go up to Almora and thence to some place in Gharwal on the Ganga where I can settle down for a long meditation. Gangadhar is accompanying me. Indeed it was with this desire and intention that I brought him down from Kashmir.

I don't think you ought to be in any hurry about coming down to Calcutta. You have done with roving; that's good, but you have not yet attempted the one thing you should do, that is, be resolved to sit down and meditate. I don't think Jnana is a thing like rousing a maiden suddenly from sleep by saying, "Get up, dear girl, your marriage ceremony is waiting for you!" as we say. I am strongly of opinion that very few persons in any Yuga (age) attain Jnana, and therefore we should go on striving and striving even unto death. That's my old-fashioned way, you know. About the humbug of modern Sannyasins' Jnana I know too well. Peace be unto you and strength! Daksha, who is staying at Vrindaban with Rakhal (Brahmananda), has learnt to make gold and has become a *pucca* Jnani, so writes Rakhal. God bless him, and you may say, amen!

I am in fine health now, and the good I gained by my stay in Ghazipur will last, I am sure, for some time. I am longing for a flight to the Himalayas. This time I shall not go to Pavhari Baba or any other saint--they divert one from his highest purpose. Straight up!

How do you find the climate at Almora? Neither S__ nor you need come down. What is the use of so many living together in one place and doing no good to one's soul? Don't be fools always wandering from place to place; that's all very good, but be heroes.

{Sanskrit}

1 "Free from pride and delusion, with the evil of attachment
2 conquered, ever dwelling in the Self, with desires completely
3 receded, liberated from the pairs of opposites known as pleasure
4 and pain, the undeluded reach that Goal Eternal" (Gita, XV. 5).

5 Who advises you to jump into fire? If you don't find the
6 Himalayas a place for Sadhana, go somewhere else then. So many
7 gushing inquiries simply betray a weak mind. Arise, ye mighty one,
8 and be strong! Work on and on, struggle on and on! Nothing more
9 to write.

10 Yours
11 affectionately,
12 Vivekananda
13

14
15 XXXV

16 Ajmer
17 14th April,
18 1891

19 Dear Govinda Sahay,
20 . . . Try to be pure and unselfish--that is the whole of
21 religion. . . .
22 Yours with
23 love,
24 Vivekananda
25

26
27 XXXVI

28 Mount Abu
29 30th April,
30 1891

31 Dear Govinda Sahay,
32 Have you done the Upanayana of that Brahmin boy? Are you
33 studying Sanskrit? How far have you advanced? I think you must
34 have finished the first part. . . . Are you diligent in your Shiva Puja?
35 If not, try to be so. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all good
36 things will be added unto you." Follow God and you shall have
37 whatever you desire. . . . To the two Commander Sahebs my best
38 regards; they being men of high position were very kind to a poor
39 fakir like me. My children, the secret of religion lies not in theories
40 but in practice. To be good and to do good--that is the whole of
41 religion. "Not he that crieth 'Lord', 'Lord', but he that doeth the will
42 of the Father". You are a nice band of young men, you Alwaris, and I
43 hope in no distant future many of you will be ornaments of the
44 society and blessings to the country you are born in.

45 Yours with

1 blessings,

2

V.

3

4

PS. Don't be ruffled if now and then you get a brush from the world; it will be over in no time, and everything will be all right.

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XXXVII

8

Mount Abu

9

1891

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Dear Govinda Sahay,

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13

You must go on with your Japa whatever direction the mind takes. Tell Harbux that he is to begin with the Pranayama in the following way.

14

Try hard with your Sanskrit studies.

15

Yours with

16

love,

17

V.

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XXXVIII

21

Khetri

22

27th April,

23

1893

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Dear Doctor {Dr. Nanjunda Rao, M.D.},

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Your letter has just reached me. I am very much gratified by your love for my unworthy self. So, so sorry to learn that poor Balaji has lost his son. "The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." We only know that nothing is lost or can be lost. For us is only submission, calm and perfect. The soldier has no right to complain, nay murmur, if the general orders him into the cannon's mouth. May He comfort Balaji in his grief, and may it draw him closer and closer to the breast of the All-merciful Mother!

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As to my taking ship from Madras, I do not think it feasible, as I have already made arrangements from Bombay. Tell Bhattacharya that the Raja¹²⁷ or my Gurubhais would be the last men to put any obstacles in my way. As for the Rajaji, his love for me is simply without limit.

39

40

May the Giver of all good bless you all here and hereafter, will be the constant prayer of

41

Sachchidananda

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¹²⁷ ?The Maharaja of Khetri, Rajputana.

XXXIX

Bombay

24th May,

1893

{original in Bengali}

Dear Mother {Shrimati Indumati Mitra},

Very glad to receive your letter and that of dear Haripada. Please do not be sorry that I could not write to you very often. I am always praying to the Lord for your welfare. I cannot go to Belgaum now as arrangements are all ready for my starting for America on the 31st next. The Lord willing, I shall see you on returning from my travels in America and Europe. Always resign yourselves to the Lord Shri Krishna. Always remember that we are but puppets in the Lord's hands. Remain pure always. Please be careful not to become impure even in thought, as also in speech and action; always try to do good to others as far as in you lies. And remember that the paramount duty of a woman is to serve her husband by thought, word, and deed. Please read the Gita every day to the best of your opportunity. Why have you signed yourself as . . . Dasi (maidservant)? The Vaishya and the Shudra should sign as Dasa and Dasi, but the Brahmin and Kshatriya should write Deva and Devi (goddess). Moreover, these distinctions of caste and the like have been the invention of our modern sapient Brahmins. Who is a servant, and to whom? Everyone is a servant of the Lord Hari. Hence a woman should use her patronymic, that is, the surname of her husband. This is the ancient Vedic custom, as for example, such and such Mitra, or the like. It is needless to write much, dear mother; always know that I am constantly praying for your well-being. From America I shall now and then write you letters with descriptions of the wonderful things there. I am now at Bombay, and shall stay here up to the 31st. The private Secretary to the Maharaja of Khetri has come here to see me off.

With blessings,

Yours

sincerely,

Vivekananda

XL

America

1894

{To the Maharaja of Khetri}

. . . "It is not the building that makes the home, but it is the wife that makes it," says a Sanskrit poet, and how true it is! The

1 roof that affords you shelter from heat and cold and rain is not to be
2 judged by the pillars that support it--the finest Corinthian columns
3 though they be--but by the real spirit-pillar who is the centre, the
4 real support of the home--the woman. Judged by that standard, the
5 American home will not suffer in comparison with any home in the
6 world.

7 I have heard many stories about the American home: of
8 liberty running into licence, of unwomanly women smashing under
9 their feet all the peace and happiness of home-life in their mad
10 liberty-dance, and much nonsense of that type. And now after a
11 year's experience of American homes, of American women, how
12 utterly false and erroneous that sort of judgment appears!
13 American women! A hundred lives would not be sufficient to pay my
14 deep debt of gratitude to you! I have not words enough to express
15 my gratitude to you. "The Oriental hyperbole" alone expresses the
16 depth of Oriental gratitude--"If the Indian Ocean were an inkstand,
17 the highest mountain of the Himalaya the pen, the earth the scroll
18 and time itself the writeress well-to-do, and the camp people are
19 healthy, young, *sincere*, and holy men and women. I teach them
20 Shivo'ham, Shivo'ham, and they all repeat it, innocent and pure as
21 they are and brave beyond all bounds. And so I am happy and
22 glorified. Thank God for making me poor, thank God for making
23 these children in the tents poor. The Dudes and Dudines are in the
24 Hotel, but iron-bound nerves and souls of triple steel and spirits of
25 fire are in the camp. If you had seen them yesterday, when the rain
26 was falling in torrents and the cyclone was overturning everything,
27 hanging by their tent strings to keep them from being blown down,
28 and standing on the majesty of their souls--these brave ones--it
29 would have done your hearts good. I will go a hundred miles to see
30 the like of them. Lord bless them! I hope you are enjoying your nice
31 village life. Never be anxious for a moment. I *will* be taken care of,
32 and if not, I *will* know my time has come and shall pass out.

33 "Sweet One! Many people offer to You many things, I am
34 poor--but I have the body, mind, and soul. I give them over to You.
35 Deign to accept, Lord of the Universe, and refuse them not."--So
36 have I given over my life and soul once for all. One thing--they are a
37 dry sort of people here--and as to that very few in the whole world
38 are there that are not. They do not understand "Madhava", the
39 Sweet One. They are either intellectual or go after faith cure, table
40 turning, witchcraft, etc., etc. Nowhere have I heard so much about
41 "love, life, and liberty" as in this country, but nowhere is it less
42 understood. Here God is either a terror or a healing power,
43 vibration, and so forth. Lord bless their souls! And these parrots
44 talk day and night of love and love and love!

45 Now, good dreams, good thoughts for you. You are good and
46 noble. Instead of materialising the spirit, that is, dragging the
47 spiritual to the material plane as these folks do, convert the matter
48 into spirit, catch a glimpse at least, every day, of that world of
49 infinite beauty and peace and purity--the spiritual, and try to live in
50 it day and night. Seek not, touch not with your toes even, anything
51 that is uncanny. Let your souls ascend day and night like an
52 "unbroken string" unto the feet of the Beloved whose throne is in

1 your own hearts and let the rest take care of themselves, that is the
2 body and everything else. Life is evanescent, a fleeting dream;
3 youth and beauty fade. Say day and night, "Thou art my father, my
4 mother, my husband, my love, my lord, my God--I want nothing but
5 Thee, nothing but Thee, nothing but Thee. Thou in me, I in Thee, I
6 am Thee. Thou art me." Wealth goes, beauty vanishes, life flies,
7 powers fly--but the Lord abideth for ever, love abideth for ever. If
8 here is glory in keeping the machine in good trim, it is more
9 glorious to withhold the soul from suffering with the body--that is
10 the only demonstration of your being "not matter", by letting the
11 matter alone.

12 Stick to God! Who cares what comes to the body or to
13 anything else! Through the terrors of evil, say--my God, my love!
14 Through the pangs of death, say--my God, my love! Through all the
15 evils under the sun, say--my God, my love! Thou art here, I see
16 Thee. Thou art with me, I feel Thee. I am Thine, take me. Do not go
17 for glass beads leaving the mine of diamonds! This life is a great
18 chance. What, seekest thou the pleasures of the world?--He is the
19 fountain of all bliss. Seek for the highest, aim at that highest, and
20 you *shall* reach the highest.

21 Yours with all
22 blessings,

23 Vivekananda

24
25 XLV

26 *Salutation to Bhagavan Shri*

27 *Ramakrishna!*

28 1894

29 {original in Bengali}

30 Dear Brothers {Brother-disciples of Swamiji},

31 Before this I wrote to you a letter which for want of time was
32 very incomplete. Rakhal (Brahmananda) and Hari (Turiyananda)
33 wrote in a letter from Lucknow that Hindu newspapers were
34 praising me, and that they were very glad that twenty thousand
35 people had partaken of food at Shri Ramakrishna's anniversary. I
36 could do much more work but for the Brahmos and missionaries
37 who have been opposing me unceasingly, and the Hindus of India
38 too did nothing for me. I mean, if the Hindus of Calcutta or Madras
39 had held a meeting and passed a resolution recognising me as their
40 representative, and thanking the American people for receiving me
41 with kindness, things would have progressed appreciably. But it is
42 over a year, and nothing done. Of course I never relied on the
43 Bengalis, but the Madrasis couldn't do anything either. . . .

44 There is no hope for our nation. Not one original idea crosses
45 anyone's brains, all fighting over the same old, threadbare rug--that
46 Ramakrishna Paramahansa was such and such--and cock-and-bull
47 stories--stories having neither head nor tail. My God! Won't you do
48 something to show that you are in any way removed from the
49 common run of men!--Only indulging in madness! . . . Today you

1 have your bell, tomorrow you add a horn, and follow suit with a
2 chowry the day after; or you introduce a cot today, and tomorrow
3 you have its legs silver-mounted, and people help themselves to a
4 rice-porridge, and you spin out two thousand cock-and-bull stories--
5 in short, nothing but external ceremonials. This is called in English
6 imbecility. Those into whose heads nothing but that sort of silliness
7 enters are called imbecile.

8 Those whose heads have a tendency to be troubled day and
9 night over such questions as whether the bell should ring on the
10 right or on the left, whether the sandalpaste mark should be put on
11 the head or anywhere else, whether the light should be waved
12 twice or four times--simply deserve the name of wretches, and it is
13 owing to that sort of notion that we are the outcasts of Fortune,
14 kicked and spurned at, while the people of the West are masters of
15 the whole world. . . . There is an ocean of difference between
16 idleness and renunciation.

17 If you want any good to come, just throw your ceremonials
18 overboard and worship the Living God, the Man-God--every being
19 that wears a human form--God in His universal as well as individual
20 aspect. The universal aspect of God means this world, and
21 worshipping it means serving it--this indeed is work, not indulging
22 in ceremonials. Neither is it work to cogitate as to whether the rice-
23 plate should be placed in front of the God for ten minutes or for half
24 an hour--that is called lunacy. Millions of rupees have been spent
25 only that the temple-doors at Varanasi or Vrindaban may play at
26 opening and shutting all day long! Now the Lord is having His
27 toilet, now He is taking His meals, now He is busy on something
28 else we know not what. . . . And all this, while the Living God is
29 dying for want of food, for want of education! The banias of Bombay
30 are erecting hospitals for bugs--while they would do nothing for
31 men even if they die! You have not the brain to understand this
32 simple thing--that it is a plague with our country, and lunatic
33 asylums are rife all over. . . . Let some of you spread like fire, and
34 preach this worship of the universal aspect of the Godhead--a thing
35 that was never undertaken before in our country. No quarrelling
36 with people, we must be friends with all. . . .

37 Spread ideas--go from village to village, from door to door--
38 then only there will be real work. Otherwise, lying complacently on
39 the bed and ringing the bell now and then is a sort of disease, pure
40 and simple. . . . Be independent, learn to form independent
41 judgments. --That such and such a chapter of such and such a
42 Tantra has prescribed a standard length for the handle of a bell,--
43 what matters it to me? Through the Lord's will, out of your lips shall
44 come millions of Vedas and Tantras and Puranas. . . . If now you can
45 show this in practice, if you can make three or four hundred
46 thousand disciples in India within a year, then only I may have some
47 hope. . . .

48 By the bye, you know the boy who had his head shaven and
49 went with Brother Tarak from Bombay to Rameswaram? He calls
50 himself a disciple of Ramakrishna Paramahansa! Let Brother Tarak
51 initiate him. . . . He had never even met Shri Ramakrishna in his
52 life, and yet a disciple!--What impudence! Without an unbroken

1 chain of discipleship--Guruparampara--nothing can be done. Is it a
2 child's play? To have no connection whatsoever and call oneself a
3 disciple! The idiot! If that boy refuses to go on in the right way, turn
4 him out. Nothing, I say, can be done without the chain of
5 discipleship, that is, the power that is transmitted from the Guru to
6 the disciple, and from him to his disciple, and so on. Here he comes
7 and proclaims himself a disciple of Ramakrishna--is it tomfoolery?
8 Jagamohan told me of somebody calling himself a brother-disciple
9 of mine. I have now a suspicion that it is that boy. To pose as a
10 brother-disciple! He feels humiliated to call himself a disciple, I
11 dare say, and would fain turn a Guru straightway! Turn him out if
12 he does not follow the established procedure.

13 Talking of the restlessness of Tulasi (Nirmalananda) and
14 Subodh (Subodhananda) it all means that they have got no work to
15 do. . . . Go from village to village, do good to humanity and to the
16 world at large. Go to hell yourself to buy salvation for others. There
17 is no Mukti on earth to call my own. Whenever you think of yourself,
18 you are bound to feel restless. What business have you to do with
19 peace, my boy? You have renounced everything. Come! Now is the
20 turn for you to banish the desire for peace, and that for Mukti too!
21 Don't worry in the least; heaven or hell, or Bhakti or Mukti--don't
22 care for anything, but go, my boy, and spread the name of the Lord
23 from door to door! It is only by doing good to others that one attains
24 to one's own good, and it is by leading others to Bhakti and Mukti
25 that one attains them oneself. Take that up, forget your own self for
26 it, be mad over the idea. As Shri Ramakrishna used to love you, as I
27 love you, come, love the world like that. Bring all together. Where is
28 Gunanidhi? You must have him with you. My infinite love to him.
29 Where is Gupta (Sadananda)? Let him join if he likes. Call him in my
30 name. Remember these few points:

31 1. We are Sannyasins, who have given up *everything*--Bhakti,
32 and Mukti, and enjoyment, and all.

33 2. To do the highest good to the world, everyone down to the
34 lowest--this is our vow. Welcome Mukti or hell, whichever comes of
35 it.

36 3. Ramakrishna Paramahansa came for the good of the
37 world. Call him a man, or God, or an Incarnation, just as you please.
38 Accept him each in your own light.

39 4. He who will bow before him will be converted into purest
40 gold that very moment. Go with this message from door to door, if
41 you can, my boy, and all your disquietude will be at an end. Never
42 fear--where's the room for fear?--Caring for nothing whatsoever is a
43 part of your life. You have so long spread his name and your
44 character all around, well and good. Now spread them in an
45 organised way. The Lord is with you. Take heart!

46 Whether I live or die, whether I go back to India or not, you
47 go on spreading love, love that knows no bounds. Put Gupta too to
48 this task. But remember one needs weapons to overcome others.
49 "{Sanskrit}"--When death is so certain, it is better to die for a good
50 cause."

1 Yours affly.,
2 Vivekananda

3 PS. Remember my previous letter--we want both men and
4 women. There is no distinction of sex in the soul. It won't do merely
5 to call Shri Ramakrishna an Incarnation, you must manifest power.
6 Where are Gour-Ma, Yogin-Ma, and Golap-Ma? Tell them to spread
7 these ideas. We want thousands of men and thousands of women
8 who will spread like wild fire from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin,
9 from the North Pole to the South Pole--all over the world. It is no
10 use indulging in child's play--neither is there time for it. Let those
11 who have come for child's play be off now, while there is time, or
12 they will surely come to grief. We want an organisation. Off with
13 laziness. Spread! Spread! Run like fire to all places. Do not depend
14 upon me. Whether I live or die, go on spreading, yourselves.

15

16

17 XLVI

18 Hotel Belle
19 Vue

20 Beacon

21 Street, Boston

22 19th

23 September, '94

24 Dear Mother Sara {Mrs. Ole Bull},

25 I did not forget you at all. You do not think I will be ever as
26 ungrateful as that! You did not give me your address, still I have
27 been getting news about you from Landsberg through Miss Phillips.
28 Perhaps you have seen the memorial and address sent to me from
29 Madras. I sent some to be sent to you at Landsberg's.

30 A Hindu son never lends to his mother, but the mother has
31 every right over the son and so the son in the mother. I am very
32 much offended at your offering to repay me the nasty few dollars. I
33 can never repay my debts to you.

34 I am at present lecturing in several places in Boston. What I
35 want is to get a place where I can sit down and write down my
36 thoughts. I have had enough of speaking; now I want to write. I
37 think I will have to go to New York for it. Mrs. Guernsey was so
38 kind to me, and she is ever willing to help me. I think I will go to her
39 and sit down and write my book.

40 Yours ever
41 affectionately,

42 Vivekananda

43 PS. Kindly write me whether the Guernseys have returned to
44 town or are still in Fishkill-V.

45

46

New York

25th

September, 1894

{original in Bengali}

My Dear--, {meant for his brother-disciples}

Glad to receive some letters from you. It gives me great pleasure to learn that Shashi and others are making a stir. We must create a stir, nothing short of this will do. You will be throwing the whole world into convulsion. Victory to the Guru! You know, "{Sanskrit}--Great undertakings are always fraught with many obstacles." It is these obstacles which knock and shape great characters. . . . Is it in the power of missionaries and people of that sort to withstand this shock? . . . Should a fool succeed where scholars have failed? It is no go, my boy, set your mind at ease about that. In every attempt there will be one set of men who will applaud, and another who will pick holes. Go on doing your own work, what need have you to reply to any party? "{Sanskrit}--Truth alone triumphs, not falsehood. Through Truth lies Devayana, the path of gods" (Mundaka, III.i.6). Everything will come about by degrees.

Here in summer they go to the seaside: I also did the same. They have got almost a mania for boating and yachting. The yacht is a kind of light vessel which everyone, young and old, who has the means, possesses. They set sail in them every day to the sea, and return home, to eat and drink and dance--while music continues day and night. Pianos render it a botheration to stay indoors!

I shall now tell you something of the Hales to whose address you direct my letters. He and his wife are an old couple, having two daughters, two nieces, and a son. The son lives abroad where he earns a living. The daughters live at home. In this country, relationship is through the girls. The son marries and no longer belongs to the family, but the daughter's husband pays frequent visits to his father-in-law's house. They say,

"Son is son till he gets a wife;

The daughter is daughter all her life."

All the four are young and not yet married. Marriage is a very troublesome business here. In the first place, one must have a husband after one's heart. Secondly, he must be a moneyed man. . . . They will probably live unmarried; besides, they are now full of renunciation through my contact and are busy with thoughts of Brahman!

The two daughters are blondes, that is, have golden hair, while the two nieces are brunettes, that is, of dark hair. They know all sorts of occupations. The nieces are not so rich, they conduct a kindergarten school; but the daughters do not earn. Many girls of this country earn their living. Nobody depends upon others. Even millionaires' sons earn their living; but they marry and have separate establishments of their own. The daughters call me

1 brother; and I address their mother as mother. All my things are at
2 their place; and they look after them, wherever I may go. Here the
3 boys go in search of a living while quite young; and the girls are
4 educated in the universities. So you will find that in a meeting there
5 will be ninety-nine per cent of girls. The boys are nowhere in
6 comparison with them.

7 There are a good many spiritualists in this country. The
8 medium is one who induces the spirit. He goes behind a screen; and
9 out of this come ghosts of all sizes and all colours. I have witnessed
10 some cases; but they seemed to be a hoax. I shall test some more
11 before I come to a final conclusion. Many of the spiritualists respect
12 me.

13 Next comes Christian Science. They form the most influential
14 party, nowadays, figuring everywhere. They are spreading by leaps
15 and bounds, and causing heart-burn to the orthodox. They are
16 Vedantins; I mean, they have picked up a few doctrines of the
17 Advaita and grafted them upon the Bible. And they cure diseases by
18 proclaiming "So'ham So'ham"--"I am He! I am He!"--through
19 strength of mind. They all admire me highly.

20 Nowadays the orthodox section of this country are crying for
21 help. "Devil worship" is but a thing of the past. They are mortally
22 afraid of me and exclaim, "What a pest? Thousands of men and
23 women follow him! He is going to root out orthodoxy!" Well, the
24 torch has been applied and the conflagration that has set in through
25 the grace of the Guru will not be put out. In course of time the
26 bigots will have their breath knocked out of them. . . .

27 The Theosophists have not much power. But they, too, are
28 dead set against the orthodox section.

29 The Christian Science is exactly like our Kartabhaja sect: Say,
30 "I have no disease", and you are whole; and say, "I am
31 He"--"So'ham"--and you are quits--be at large. This is a thoroughly
32 materialistic country. The people of this Christian land will
33 recognise religion if only you can cure diseases, work miracles, and
34 open up avenues to money; and they understand little of anything
35 else. But there are honourable exceptions. . . .

36 People here have found a new type of man in me. Even the
37 orthodox are at their wit's end. And people are now looking up to
38 me with an eye of reverence. Is there a greater strength than that
39 of Brahmacharya--purity, my boy?

40 I am now busy writing a reply to the Madras Address, which
41 was published in all the newspapers here and created a sensation.
42 If it be cheap, I shall send it in print, but if dear, I shall send a type-
43 written copy. To you also I shall send a copy; have it published in
44 the *Indian Mirror*. The unmarried girls of this country are very good
45 and have a good deal of self-respect. . . . These (the people) are
46 come of Virochana's race. To them ministering to the body is a
47 great thing: they would trim and polish and give their whole
48 attention to that. A thousand instruments for paring nails, ten
49 thousand for hair-cutting, and who can count the varieties of dress
50 and toilet and perfumery? . . . They are good-natured, kind, and

1 truthful. All is right with them, but that enjoyment is their God. It is
2 a country where money flows like a river, with beauty as its ripple
3 and learning its waves, and which rolls in luxury.

4 {Sanskrit}

5 --"Longing for success in action, in this world, (men) worship
6 the deities. For success is quickly attained through action in this
7 world of man" (Gita, IV.12).

8 Here you have a wonderful manifestation of grit and power--
9 what strength, what practicality, and what manhood! Horses huge
10 as elephants are drawing carriages that are as big as houses. You
11 may take this as a specimen of the gigantic proportions in other
12 things also. Here is a manifestation of tremendous energy. . . . They
13 look with veneration upon women, who play a most prominent part
14 in their lives. Here this form of worship has attained its perfection--
15 that is the long and the short of it. But to come to the point. Well, I
16 am almost at my wit's end to see the women of this country! They
17 take me to the shops and everywhere, as if I were a child. They do
18 all sorts of work--I cannot do even a sixteenth part of what they do.
19 They are like Lakshmi (the Goddess of Fortune), in beauty, and like
20 Sarasvati (the Goddess of Learning) in virtues--they are the Divine
21 Mother incarnate and worshipping them, one verily attains
22 perfection in everything. Great God! Are we to be counted among
23 men? If I can raise a thousand such Madonnas, Incarnations of the
24 Divine Mother, in our country before I die, I shall die in peace. Then
25 only will your countrymen become worthy of their name. . . .

26 I am really struck with wonder to see the women here. How
27 gracious the Divine Mother is on them! Most wonderful women,
28 these! They are about to corner the men, who have been nearly
29 worsted in the competition. It is all through Thy grace, O Mother! . .
30 . I shall not rest till I root out this distinction of sex. Is there any
31 sex-distinction in the Atman (Self)? Out with the differentiation
32 between man and woman--all is Atman! Give up the identification
33 with the body, and stand up! Say, "Asti, Asti"--"Everything is!"--
34 cherish positive thoughts. By dwelling too much upon "Nasti,
35 Nasti"--"It is not! It is not!" (negativism), the whole country is going
36 to ruin! "So'ham, So'ham, Shivo'ham"--"I am He! I am He! I am
37 Shiva!" What a botheration! In every soul is infinite strength; and
38 should you turn yourselves into cats and dogs by harbouring
39 negative thoughts? Who dares to preach negativism? Whom do you
40 call weak and powerless? "Shivo'ham, Shivo'ham"--"I am Shiva! I
41 am Shiva!" I feel as if a thunderbolt strikes me on the head when I
42 hear people dwell on negative thoughts. That sort of self-
43 depreciating attitude is another name for disease--do you call that
44 humility? It is vanity in disguise! "{Sanskrit}--The external badge
45 does not confer spirituality. It is same-sightedness to all beings
46 which is the test of a liberated soul." "{Sanskrit} (It is, It is),"
47 "{Sanskrit}," "{Sanskrit}"--"I am He!", "I am Shiva, of the essence
48 of Knowledge and Bliss!" "{Sanskrit}--He frees himself from the
49 meshes of this world as a lion from its cage!" "{Sanskrit}--This
50 Atman is not accessible to the weak". . . . Hurl yourselves on the
51 world like an avalanche--let the world crack in twain under your
52 weight! Hara! Hara! Mahadeva! {Sanskrit}--One must save the self

1 by one's own self"--by personal prowess.

2 . . . Will such a day come when this life will go for the sake of
3 other's good? The world is not a child's play--and great men are
4 those who build highways for others with their heart's blood. This
5 has been taking place through eternity, that one builds a bridge by
6 laying down his own body, and thousands of others cross the river
7 through its help. "{Sanskrit}--Be it so! Be it so! I am Shiva! I am
8 Shiva!"

9 It is welcome news that Madras is in a stir.

10 Were you not going to start a paper or something of that sort,
11 what about that? We must mix with all, and alienate none. All the
12 powers of good against all the powers of evil--this is what we want.
13 Do not insist upon everybody's believing in our Guru. . . . You shall
14 have to edit a magazine, half Bengali and half Hindi--and if possible,
15 another in English. . . . It won't do to be roaming aimlessly.
16 Wherever you go, you must start a permanent preaching centre.
17 Then only will people begin to change. I am writing a book. As soon
18 as it is finished, I run for home! . . . Always remember that Shri
19 Ramakrishna came for the good of the world--not for name or fame.
20 *Spread only what he came to teach. Never mind his name--it will*
21 *spread of itself.* Directly you insist on everybody's accepting your
22 Guru, you will be creating a sect, and everything will fall to the
23 ground--so beware! Have a kind word for all--it spoils work to show
24 temper. Let people say whatever they like, stick to your own
25 convictions, and rest assured, the world will be at your feet. They
26 say, "Have faith in this fellow or that fellow", but I say, "Have faith
27 in yourself first", that's the way. Have faith in yourself--all power is
28 in you--be conscious and bring it out. Say, "I can do everything."
29 "Even the poison of a snake is powerless if you can firmly deny it."
30 Beware! No saying "nay", no negative thoughts! Say, "Yea, Yea,"
31 "So'ham, So'ham"--"I am He! I am He!"

32 {Sanskrit}

33 --"What makes you weep, my friend? In you is all power.
34 Summon up your all-powerful nature, O mighty one, and this whole
35 universe will lie at your feet. It is the Self alone that predominates,
36 and not matter."

37 To work, with undaunted energy! What fear! Who is powerful
38 enough to thwart you! "{Sanskrit}--We shall crush the stars to
39 atoms, and unhinge the universe. Don't you know who we are? We
40 are the servants of Shri Ramakrishna." Fear?

41 Whom to fear, forsooth?

42 {Sanskrit}

43 --"It is those foolish people who identify themselves with their
44 bodies, that piteously cry, 'We are weak, we are low.' All this is
45 atheism. Now that we have attained the state beyond fear, we shall
46 have no more fear and become heroes. This indeed is theism which
47 we, the servants of Shri Ramakrishna, will choose.

48 "Giving up the attachment for the world and drinking
49 constantly the supreme nectar of immortality, for ever discarding

1 that self-seeking spirit which is the mother of all dissension, and
2 ever meditating on the blessed feet of our Guru which are the
3 embodiment of all well-being, with repeated salutations we invite
4 the whole world to participate in drinking the nectar.

5 "That nectar which has been obtained by churning the infinite
6 ocean of the Vedas, into which Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, and the
7 other gods have poured their strength, which is charged with the
8 life-essence of the Avataras--Gods Incarnate on earth--Shri
9 Ramakrishna holds that nectar in his person, in its fullest measure!"

10 We must work among the English educated young men.
11 "{Sanskrit}--Through renunciation alone some (rare ones) attained
12 immortality." Renunciation!--Renunciation!--you must preach this
13 above everything else. There will be no spiritual strength unless
14 one renounces the world. . . .

15 Why are Baburam and Yogen suffering so much? It is owing to
16 their negative, their self-abasing spirit. Tell them to brush aside
17 their illness by mental strength, and in an hour it will disappear! I
18 the Atman smitten with disease! Off with it! Tell them to meditate
19 for an hour at a stretch, "I am the Atman, how can I be affected by
20 disease!"--and everything will vanish. Think all of you that you are
21 the infinitely powerful Atman, and see what strength comes out. . . .
22 Self-depreciation! What is it for? I am the child of the Infinite, the
23 all-powerful Divine Mother. What means disease, or fear, or want to
24 me? Stamp out the negative spirit as if it were a pestilence, and it
25 will conduce to your welfare in every way. No negative, all positive,
26 affirmative. I *am* , God *is* , everything is in me. I *will* manifest
27 health, purity, knowledge, whatever I want. Well, these foreign
28 people could grasp my teachings, and you are suffering from illness
29 owing to your negative spirit! Who says you are ill--what is disease
30 to you? Brush it aside! "{Sanskrit}

31 {Sanskrit}--Thou art Energy, impart energy unto me. Thou
32 art Strength, impart strength unto me. Thou art Spirituality, impart
33 spirituality unto me. Thou art Fortitude, impart fortitude unto me!"
34 The ceremony of steadying the seat (Asana-Pratishtha) that you
35 perform every day when you sit down to worship the
36 Lord--"{Sanskrit}--One must think of oneself as strong and
37 invulnerable," and so forth--what does it all mean? Say, "Everything
38 is in me, and I can manifest it at will." Repeat to yourself that such
39 and such are Atman, that they are infinite, and how can they have
40 any disease? Repeat this an hour or so, on a few successive days,
41 and all disease and trouble will vanish into nought.

42 Yours ever,
43 Vivekananda
44

46 XLVIII

47 Boston
48 26th Sept.,
49

1894

1 Dear Mrs. Bull,

2 I have received both of your kind notes. I will have to go back
3 to Melrose on Saturday and remain there till Monday. On Tuesday I
4 will come over to your place. But I have forgotten the exact
5 location. If you kindly write me that, I cannot express my gratitude
6 for your kindness. For that is exactly what I wanted, a quiet place to
7 write. Of course, much less space will suffice me than what you
8 have kindly proposed to put at my disposal, I can bundle myself up
9 anywhere and feel quite comfortable.

10 Yours very
11 sincerely,

12 Vivekananda

13 IL

14 Baltimore,

15 U.S.A.

16 22nd

17 October, 1894

18 {original in Bengali}

19 Dear--{Swami Ramakrishnananda},

20 Glad to receive your letter and go through the contents. I
21 received today a letter of Akshay Kumar Ghosh from London, which
22 also gives me some information. . . .

23 Now you have come to know your own powers. Strike the iron
24 while it is hot. Idleness won't do. Throw overboard all idea of
25 jealousy and egotism, once for all. Come on to the practical field
26 with tremendous energy; to work, in the fullness of strength! As to
27 the rest, the Lord will point out the way. The whole world will be
28 deluged by a tidal wave. Work, work, work--let this be your motto. I
29 cannot see anything else. There is no end of work here--I am
30 careering all over the country. Wherever the seed of his power will
31 find its way, there it will fructify--"{Sanskrit}--be it today, or in a
32 hundred years." You must work in sympathy with all, then only it
33 will lead to quick results. . . .

34 Our object is to do good to the world, and not the trumpeting
35 of our own names. Why doesn't Niranjan (Niranjanananda) learn
36 Pali in Ceylon, and study Buddhist books? I cannot make out what
37 good will come of aimless rambling. . . . Those that have come
38 under *his* protection, have virtue, wealth, desires, and freedom
39 lying at their feet. {Sanskrit}--Courage! Everything will come about
40 by degrees. From all of you I want this that you must discard for
41 ever self-aggrandisement, faction-mongering, and jealousy. You
42 must be all-forbearing, like Mother Earth. If you can achieve this,
43 the world will be at your feet. . . .

44 Try to give less of material food in the anniversary
45 celebrations, and give some food for the brain instead. . . .

46 Yours
47 affectionately,

Vivekananda

L

c/o Mrs. E. Totten
1708, 1st Street,
Washington, D.C.

27th Oct., 1894

Dear Mrs. Bull,

Many thanks for your kindness in sending me the introduction to Mr. Frederic Douglas. You need not be sorry on account of the ill-treatment I received at the hands of a low class hotel-keeper at Baltimore. It was the fault of the Vrooman brothers. Why should they take me to a low hotel?

And then the American women, as everywhere, came to my rescue, and I had a very good time.

In Washington I am the guest of Mrs. E. Totten who is an influential lady here and a metaphysician. She is moreover the niece of one of my Chicago friends. So everything is going on all right. I also saw Mrs. Colville and Miss Young here.

With my eternal love and gratitude for you,

I remain,
Yours etc.,

Vivekananda

LI

U.S.A.
30th
November, 1894

Dear and Beloved {Dr. Nanjunda Rao},

Your beautiful letter just came to hand. I am so glad that you have come to know Shri Ramakrishna. I am very glad at the strength of your Vairagya. It is the one primary necessity in reaching God. I had always great hopes for Madras, and still I have the firm belief that from Madras will come the spiritual wave that will deluge India. I can only say Godspeed to your good intentions; but here, my son, are the difficulties. In the first place, no man ought to take a hasty step. In the second place, you must have some respect for the feelings of your mother and wife. True, you may say that we, the disciples of Ramakrishna, had not always shown great deference to the opinions of our parents. I know, and know for sure, that great things are done only by great sacrifices. I know for certain that India requires the sacrifice of her highest and best, and I sincerely hope that it will be your good fortune to be one of them.

1 Throughout the history of the world you find great men make
2 great sacrifices and the mass of mankind enjoy the benefit. If you
3 want to give up everything for your own salvation, it is nothing. Do
4 you want to forgo even your own salvation for the good of the
5 world? You are God, think of that. My advice to you is to live the life
6 of a Brahmacharin, i.e. giving up all sexual enjoyment for a certain
7 time live in the house of your father; this the "Kutichaka" stage. Try
8 to bring your wife to consent to your great sacrifice for the good of
9 the world. And if you have burning faith and all-conquering love and
10 almighty purity, I do not doubt that you will shortly succeed. Give
11 yourself body and soul to the work of spreading the teachings of
12 Shri Ramakrishna, for work (Karma) is the first stage. Study
13 Sanskrit diligently as well as practise devotion. For you are to be a
14 great teacher of mankind, and my Guru Maharaja used to say, "A
15 penknife is sufficient to commit suicide with, but to kill others one
16 requires guns and swords." And in the fullness of time it will be
17 given unto you when to go forth out of the world and preach His
18 sacred name. Your determination is holy and good. Godspeed to
19 you, but do not take any hasty step. First purify yourself by work
20 and devotion. India has suffered long, the Religion Eternal has
21 suffered long. But the Lord is merciful. Once more He has come to
22 help His children, once more the opportunity is given to rise to
23 fallen India. India can only rise by sitting at the feet of Shri
24 Ramakrishna. His life and his teachings are to be spread far and
25 wide, are to be made to penetrate every pore of Hindu society. Who
26 will do it? Who are to take up the flag of Ramakrishna and march
27 for the salvation of the world? Who are to stem the tide of
28 degeneration at the sacrifice of name and fame, wealth and
29 enjoyment--nay of every hope of this or other worlds? A few young
30 men have jumped in the breach, have sacrificed themselves. They
31 are a few; we want a few thousands of such as they, and *they will*
32 *come*. I am glad that our Lord has put it in your mind to be one of
33 them. Glory unto him on whom falls the Lord's choice. Your
34 determination is good, your hopes are high, your aim is the noblest
35 in the world--to bring millions sunk in darkness to the light of the
36 Lord.

37 But, my son, here are the drawbacks. Nothing shall be done
38 in haste. Purity, patience, and perseverance are the three essentials
39 to success and, above all, *love*. All time is yours, there is no
40 indecent haste. Everything will come right if you are pure and
41 sincere. We want hundreds like you bursting upon society and
42 bringing new life and vigour of the Spirit wherever they go.
43 Godspeed to you.

44 Yours with all
45 blessings,

46 Vivekananda

1 c/o G. W.
2 Hale, Esq.,
3 Chicago,
4 U.S.A.

5 Dear Govinda Sahay,

6 Do you keep any correspondence with my Gurubhais of
7 Calcutta? Are you progressing morally, spiritually, and in your
8 worldly affairs? . . . Perhaps you have heard how for more than a
9 year I have been preaching Hindu religion in America. I am doing
10 very well here. Write to me as soon as you can and as often as you
11 like.

12 Yours with
13 love,
14 Vivekananda
15

16

17

18 LIII

19 U.S.A.

20 1894

21 Dear Govinda Sahay,

22 . . . Honesty is the best policy, and a virtuous man must gain
23 in the end. . . You must always bear in mind, my son, that however
24 busy or however distant, or living with men however high in
25 position I may be, I am always praying, blessing, and remembering
everyone of my friends, even the humblest.

26 Yours, with
27 blessings,
28 Vivekananda
29

30

31

32 LIV

33 c/o George W.

34 Hale, Esq.

35 541 Dearborn Ave,

36 Chicago

37 (Beginning of?)

38 1894

39 {original in Bengali}

40 My Dear__, {Swami Ramakrishnananda}

41 Very glad to receive your letter. I am very sorry to hear of
42 Mazoomdar's doings. One always behaves thus in trying to push
43 oneself before all others. I am not much to blame. M-- came here
ten years ago, and got much reputation and honour; now I am in

1 flying colours. Such is the will of the Guru, what shall I do? It is
2 childishness on M--'s part to be annoyed at this. Never mind,
3 {Sanskrit}

4 {Sanskrit}--Great men like you should pay no heed to what he
5 says. Shall we, children of Shri Ramakrishna, nourished with his
6 heart's blood, be afraid of worm-bites? "The wicked criticise the
7 conduct of the magnanimous, which is extraordinary and whose
8 motives are difficult to fathom"--remember all this and forgive this
9 fool. It is the will of the Lord that people of this land have their
10 power of introspection roused, and does it lie in anybody to check
11 His progress? I want no name--I want to be a voice without a form. I
12 do not require anybody to defend me--{Sanskrit}--who am I to
13 check or to help the course of His march? And who are others also?
14 Still, my heartfelt gratitude to them. "{Sanskrit}--Established in
15 which state a man is not moved even by great misfortune" (Gita)--
16 that state he has not reached; think of this and look upon him with
17 pity. Through the Lord's will, the desire for name and fame has not
18 yet crept into my heart, and I dare say never will. I am an
19 instrument, and He is the operator. Through this instrument He is
20 rousing the religious instinct in thousands of hearts in this far-off
21 country. Thousands of men and women here love and revere me. . . .
22 "{Sanskrit}--He makes the dumb eloquent and makes the lame
23 cross mountains." I am amazed at His grace. Whichever town I visit,
24 it is in an uproar. They have named me "the cyclonic Hindu".
25 Remember, it is His will--I am a voice without a form.

26 The Lord knows whether I shall go to England or any other
27 blessed place. He will arrange everything. Here a cigar costs one
28 rupee. Once you get into a cab, you have to pay three rupees; a coat
29 costs a hundred rupees; the hotel charge is nine rupees a day. The
30 Lord provides everything. . . . The Lord be praised, I know nothing.
31 "{Sanskrit}--Truth alone triumphs, not falsehood. Through Truth
32 alone lies the path of Devayana." You must be fearless. It is the
33 coward who fears and defends himself. Let no one amongst us come
34 forward to defend me. I get all news of Madras and Rajputana from
35 time to time. . . . There are eyes that can see at a distance of
36 fourteen thousand miles. It is quite true. Keep quiet now, everything
37 will see the light in time, as far as He wills it. Not one word of His
38 proves untrue. My brother, do men grieve over the fight of cats and
39 dogs? So the jealousy, envy, and elbowing of common men should
40 make no impression on your mind. For the last six months I have
41 been saying, the curtain is going up, the sun is rising. Yes, the
42 curtain is lifting by degrees, slow but sure; you will come to know it
43 in time. *He* knows. One cannot speak out one's mind. These are
44 things not for writing. . . . Never let go your hold of the rudder,
45 grasp it firm. We are steering all right, no mistaking that, but
46 landing on the other shore is only a question of time. That's all. Can
47 a leader be made my brother? A leader is born. Do you understand?
48 And it is a very difficult task to take on the role of a leader. --One
49 must be {Sanskrit}--a servant of servants, and must accommodate
50 a thousand minds. There must not be a shade of jealousy or
51 selfishness, then you are a leader. First, by birth, and secondly,
52 unselfish--that's a leader. Everything is going all right, everything

1 will come round. He casts the net all right, and winds it up likewise
2 {Sanskrit}--ours is but to follow; love is the best instrument. Love
3 conquers in the long run. It won't do to become impatient--wait,
4 wait--patience is bound to give success. . .

5 I tell you brother, let everything go on as it is, only take care
6 that no form becomes necessary--unity in variety--see that
7 universality be not hampered in the least. Everything must be
8 sacrificed, if necessary, for that one sentiment, *universality*.
9 Whether I live or die, whether I go back to India or not, remember
10 this specially, that universality--perfect acceptance, not tolerance
11 only--we preach and perform. Take care how you trample on the
12 least rights of others. Many a huge ship has foundered in that
13 whirlpool. Remember, perfect devotion minus its bigotry--this is
14 what we have got to show. Through His grace everything will go all
15 right. . . . Everybody wants to be a leader, but it is the failure to
16 grasp that he is *born*, that causes all this mischief. . . .

17 Our matrons are all hale and hearty, I hope? Where is Gour-
18 Ma? We want a thousand such Mothers with that noble stirring
19 spirit. . . . We want all. It is not at all necessary that all should have
20 the same faith in our Lord as we have, but we want to unite all the
21 powers of goodness against all the powers of evil. . . . A besetting
22 sin with Sannyasins is the taking pride in their monastic order. That
23 may have its utility during the first stages, but when they are full-
24 grown, they need it no more. One must make no distinction
25 between householders and Sannyasins--then only one is a true
26 Sannyasin. . . .

27 A movement which half a dozen penniless boys set on foot
28 and which now bids fair to progress in such an accelerated motion--
29 it is a humbug or the Lord's will? If it is, then let all give up party-
30 spirit and jealousy, and unite in action. A universal religion cannot
31 be set up through party faction. . . .

32 If all understand one day for one minute that one cannot
33 become great by the mere wish, that he only rises whom He raises,
34 and he falls whom He brings down, then all trouble is at an end. But
35 there is that egotism--hollow in itself, and without the power to
36 move a finger: how ludicrous of it to say, "I won't let anyone rise!"
37 That jealousy, that absence of conjoint action is the very nature of
38 enslaved nations. But we must try to shake it off. The terrible
39 jealousy is characteristic of us. . . . You will be convinced of this if
40 you visit some other countries. Our fellows in this respect are the
41 enfranchised negroes of this country--if but one amongst them rises
42 to greatness, all the others would at once set themselves against
43 him and try to level him down by making a common cause with the
44 whites. . . .

45 At any cost, any price, any sacrifice, we must never allow that
46 to creep in among ourselves. Whether we be ten or two, do not
47 care, but those few must be perfect characters. . . . "It is not good
48 to ask of one's father if the Lord keeps His promise (to look after
49 His devotees)." And the Lord *will* do so, set your minds easy on
50 that score. . . . We must spread his name in Rajputana, Punjab, U.P.,
51 Madras, and such other provinces--yes, in Rajputana, where still

1 there are people who can say, "Such has ever been the custom with
2 Raghu's line that they keep their word even at the cost of life."

3 A bird, in the course of its flight, reaches a spot whence it
4 looks on the ground below with supreme calmness. Have you
5 reached that spot? He who has not reached there has no right to
6 teach others. Relax your limbs and float with the current, and you
7 are sure to reach your destination.

8 Cold is making itself scarce by degrees, and I have been
9 almost through the winter. Here in winter the whole body becomes
10 charged with electricity. In shaking hands one feels a shock,
11 accompanied by a sound. You can light the gas with your finger. And
12 about the cold I have written to you already. I am coursing through
13 the length and breadth of the country, but Chicago is my "Math"
14 (monastery), where I always return after my wanderings. I am now
15 making for the east. He knows where the bark will reach the
16 shore. . . .

17 Has Dashu the same sort of love for you? Does he see you
18 frequently? How is Bhavanath, and what is he doing? Do you visit
19 him, and look upon him with an eye of regard? Yes, brother, the
20 distinction between Sannyasin and layman is a fiction. "{Sanskrit}"
21 etc.--"He makes the dumb fluent," etc. My friend, it is difficult to
22 judge what is in a particular individual. Shri Ramakrishna has
23 spoken highly of him; and he deserves our respect. Fie upon you if
24 you have no faith even after so much experience. Does he love you?
25 Please convey to him my hearty love and esteem. My love to
26 Kalikrishna Babu, he is a very noble soul. How is Ramlal? He has
27 got a little faith and devotion? My love and greetings to him. Sanyal
28 is moving all right with the mill, I suppose? Ask him to have
29 patience, and the mill will go on all right.

30 My heart's love to all.

31
32 love, Ever yours in

Vivekananda

36 LV

37 *Salutation to Bhagavan*
38 *Ramakrishna!*

39 (March or
40 April?) 1894

41 {original in Bengali}

42 My dear Akhandananda,

43 I am very glad to receive your letter. It is a great pleasure to
44 me to learn that you have regained your health to a great extent by
45 your stay at Khetri.

46 Brother Tarak (Shivananda) has done a good deal of work in
47 Madras. Very agreeable news indeed! I heard much praise of him

1 from the people of Madras. . . .

2 Try to develop spirituality and philanthropy amongst the
3 Thakurs in the different places of Rajputana. We must work, and
4 this cannot be done by merely sitting idle. Make a trip now and
5 then to Malsisar, Alsisar, and all the other "sars" that are there. And
6 carefully learn Sanskrit and English. Gunanidhi is in the Punjab, I
7 presume. Convey my special love to him and bring him to Khetri.
8 Learn Sanskrit with his help, and teach him English. Let me have
9 his address by all means. . . .

10 Go from door to door amongst the poor and lower classes of
11 the town of Khetri and teach them religion. Also, let them have oral
12 lessons on geography and such other subjects. No good will come of
13 sitting idle and having princely dishes, and saying "Ramakrishna, O
14 Lord!"--unless you can do some good to the poor. Go to other
15 villages from time to time, and teach the people the arts of life as
16 well as religion. Work, worship, and Jnana (knowledge)--first work,
17 and your mind will be purified; otherwise everything will be
18 fruitless like pouring oblations on a pile of ashes instead of in the
19 sacred fire. When Gunanidhi comes, move from door to door of the
20 poor and the destitute in every village of Rajputana. If people object
21 to the kind of food you take, give it up immediately. It is preferable
22 to live on grass for the sake of doing good to others. The Gerua
23 robe is not for enjoyment. It is the banner of heroic work. You must
24 give your body, mind, and speech to "the welfare of the world". You
25 have read--"{Sanskrit}--Look upon your mother as God, look upon
26 your father as God"--but I say "{Sanskrit}--The poor, the illiterate,
27 the ignorant, the afflicted--let these be your God." Know that
28 service to these alone is the highest religion.

29 Ever yours, with
30 blessings,

31 Vivekananda

32

33 LVI

34 *Salutation to Bhagavan*

35 *Ramakrishna!*

36 (Summer?)

37 1894

38 {original in Bengali}

39 Dear and Beloved {brother-disciples at Alambazar
40 monastery},

41 Your letter gives me all the news over there. I am grieved to
42 hear of the bereavement Balaram Babu's wife has sustained. Such
43 is the Lord's will. This is a place for action, not enjoyment, and
44 everyone will go home when his task is done--some earlier, and
45 some later, that is all. Fakir has gone--well, such is the will of the
46 Lord!

47 It is a welcome news that Shri Ramakrishna's festival has
48 come off with great eclat; the more his name is spread, the better it

1 is. But there is one thing to know: Great sages come with special
2 messages for the world, and not for name; but their followers throw
3 their teachings overboard and fight over their names--this is verily
4 the history of the world. I do not take into any consideration
5 whether people accept his name or not, but I am ready to lay down
6 my life to help his teachings, his life, and his message spread all
7 over the world. What I am most afraid of is the worship room. It is
8 not bad in itself, but there is a tendency in some to make this all in
9 all and set up that old-fashioned nonsense over again--this is what
10 makes me nervous. I know why they busy themselves with those
11 old, effete ceremonials. Their spirit craves for work, but having no
12 outlet they waste their energy in ringing bells and all that.

13 I am giving you a new idea. If you can work it out, then I shall
14 know you are men and will be of service. . . . Make an organised
15 plan. A few cameras, some maps, globes, and some chemicals, etc.,
16 are needed. The next thing you want is a big hut. Then you must get
17 together a number of poor, indigent folk. Having done all this, show
18 them pictures to teach them astronomy, geography, etc., and preach
19 Shri Ramakrishna to them. Try to have their eyes opened as to what
20 has taken place or is taking place in different countries, what this
21 world is like, and so forth. You have got lots of poor and ignorant
22 folk there. Go to their cottages, from door to door, in the evening, at
23 noon, any time--and open their eyes. Books etc., won't do--give them
24 oral teaching. Then slowly extend your centres. Can you do all this?
25 Or only bell-ringing?

26 I have heard everything about Brother Tarak from Madras.
27 They are highly pleased with him. Dear Brother Tarak, if you go to
28 Madras and live there for some time, a lot of work will be done. But
29 before you go, start this work there first. Can't the lady devotees
30 convert some widows into disciples? And can't you put a bit of
31 learning into their heads? And can't you then send them out to
32 preach Shri Ramakrishna from door to door, and impart education
33 along with it? . . .

34 Come! Apply yourselves heart and soul to it. The day of gossip
35 and ceremonials is gone, my boy, *you must work now*. Now, let me
36 see how far a Bengali's religion will go. Niranjan writes that Latu
37 (Adbhutananda) wants some warm clothing. The people here import
38 winter clothing from Europe and India. You will get a woollen wrap
39 in Calcutta at one-fourth of the price at which I might buy it here. . .
40 . I don't know when I shall go to Europe, everything is uncertain
41 with me--I am getting on somehow in this country, that is all.

42 This is a very funny country. It is now summer; this morning it
43 was as hot as April in Bengal, but now it is as cold as February at
44 Allahabad! So much fluctuation within four hours! The hotels of this
45 country beggar description. For instance, there is a hotel in New
46 York where a room can be hired for up to Rs. 5,000 a day, excluding
47 boarding charges. Not even in Europe is there a country like this in
48 point of luxury. It is indeed the richest country in the world, where
49 money is drained off like water. I seldom live in hotels, but am
50 mostly the guest of big people here. To them I am a widely known
51 man. The whole country knows me now; so wherever I go they
52 receive me with open arms into their homes. Mr. Hale's home is my

1 centre in Chicago. I call his wife mother, and his daughters call me
2 brother. I scarcely find a family so highly pure and kind. Or why
3 should God shower His blessings on them in such abundance, my
4 brother? Oh, how wonderfully kind they are! If they chance to learn
5 that a poor man is in a strait at such and such a place, there they
6 will go, ladies and gentlemen, to give him food and clothing, and
7 find him some job! And what do we do!

8 In summer they leave their homes to go to foreign lands, or to
9 the seaside. I, too, shall go somewhere, but have not yet fixed a
10 place. In other points, they are just as you see Englishmen. They
11 have got books and things of that sort, but very dear. You can have
12 five times those things in Calcutta for the same price. In other
13 words, these people will not let foreign goods be imported into the
14 country. They set a heavy tax on them, and as a result, the market
15 goes up enormously. Besides, they are not much in the way of
16 manufacturing clothing etc. They construct tools and machinery,
17 and grow wheat, rice, cotton, etc., which are fairly cheap.

18 By the bye, nowadays we have plenty of Hilsa fish here. Eat
19 your fill, but everything digests. There are many kinds of fruits;
20 plantain, lemon, guava, apple, almond, raisin, and grape are in
21 abundance; besides many other fruits come from California. There
22 are plenty of pineapples but there are no mangoes or lichis, or
23 things of that sort.

24 There is a kind of spinach, which, when cooked, tastes just
25 like our Note of Bengal, and another class, which they call
26 asparagus, tastes exactly like the tender Dengo herb, but you can't
27 have our Charchari made of it here.

28 There is no Kalai or any other pulse; they do not even know of
29 them. There is rice, and bread, and numerous varieties of fish and
30 meat, of all descriptions. Their menu is like that of the French.
31 There is your milk, rarely curd, but plenty of whey. Cream is an
32 article of everyday use. In tea and coffee and everything there is
33 that cream--not the hardened crust of boiled milk, mind you-- and
34 there is your butter, too, and ice-water--no matter whether it is
35 summer or winter, day or night, whether you have got a bad cold or
36 fever--you have ice-water in abundance. These are scientific people
37 and laugh when they are told that ice-water aggravates cold. The
38 more you take, the better. And there is plenty of ice-cream, of all
39 sorts of shapes. I have seen the Niagara Falls seven or eight times,
40 the Lord be praised! Very grand no doubt, but not quite as you have
41 heard them spoken of. One day, in winter, we had the aurora
42 borealis.

43 . . . Only childish prattle! I have not much time to listen to
44 that sort of thing in this life; it will be time enough to see if I can do
45 that in the next. Yogen has completely rallied by this time, I hope?
46 The vagabond spirit of Sarada (Trigunatita) is not yet at an end, I
47 see. What is wanted is a power of organisation--do you understand
48 me? Have any of you got that much brain in your head? If you do,
49 let your mind work. Brother Tarak, Sharat, and Hari will be able to
50 do it. --has got very little originality, but is a very good workman and
51 persevering--which is an essential necessity, and Shashi

1 (Ramakrishnananda) is executive to a degree. . . . We want some
2 disciples--fiery young men--do you see?--intelligent and brave, who
3 dare to go to the jaws of Death, and are ready to swim the ocean
4 across. Do you follow me? We want hundreds like that, both men
5 and women. Try your utmost for that end alone. Make converts
6 right and left, and put them into our purity-drilling machine.

7 . . . What made you communicate to the *Indian Mirror* that
8 Paramahansa Deva used to call Narendra such and such, and all
9 sorts of nonsense?--As if he had nothing else to do but that! Only
10 thought-reading and nonsensical mystery-mongering! . . . It is
11 excellent that Sanyal is visiting you often. Do you write letters to
12 Gupta? Convey to him my love, and take kind care of him.
13 Everything will come right by degrees. I don't find much time to
14 write heaps of letters. As for lectures and so forth, I don't prepare
15 them beforehand. Only one I wrote out, which you have printed.
16 The rest I deliver off-hand, whatever comes to my lips--Gurudeva
17 backs me up. I have nothing to do with pen and paper. Once at
18 Detroit I held forth for three hours at a stretch. Sometimes I myself
19 wonder at my own achievement--to think that there was such stuff
20 in this pate! They ask me here to write a book. Well, I think I must
21 do something that way, this time. But that's the botheration; who
22 will take the trouble of putting things in black and white and all
23 that! . . . We must electrify society, electrify the world. Idle gossip
24 and barren ceremonials won't do. Ceremonials are meant for
25 householders, your work is the distribution and propagation of
26 thought-currents. If you can do that, then it is all right. . . .

27 Let character be formed and then I shall be in your midst. Do
28 you see? We want two thousand Sannyasins, nay ten, or even
29 twenty thousand--men and women, both. What are our matrons
30 doing? We want converts at any risk. Go and tell them, and try
31 yourselves, heart and soul. Not householder disciples, mind you, we
32 want Sannyasins. Let each one of you have a hundred heads
33 tonsured--young educated men, not fools. Then you are heroes. We
34 must make a sensation. Give up your passive attitude, gird your
35 loins, and stand up. Let me see you make some electric circuits
36 between Calcutta and Madras. Start centres at places, go on always
37 making converts. Convert everyone into the monastic order
38 whoever seeks for it, irrespective of sex, and then I shall be in your
39 midst. A huge spiritual tidal wave is coming--he who is low shall
40 become noble, and he who is ignorant shall become the teacher of
41 great scholars--through HIS grace. "{Sanskrit}--Arise! Awake! and
42 stop not till the goal is reached." Life is ever expanding, contraction
43 is death. The self-seeking man who is looking after his personal
44 comforts and leading a lazy life--there is no room for him even in
45 hell. He alone is a child of Shri Ramakrishna who is moved to pity
46 for all creatures and exerts himself for them even at the risk of
47 incurring personal damnation, {Sanskrit}--others are vulgar people.
48 Whoever, at this great spiritual juncture, will stand up with a
49 courageous heart and go on spreading from door to door, from
50 village to village, his message, is alone my brother, and a son of his.
51 This is the test, he who is Ramakrishna's child does not seek his
52 personal good. "{Sanskrit}--They wish to do good to others even

1 when at the point of death." Those that care for their personal
2 comforts and seek a lazy life, who are ready to sacrifice all before
3 their personal whims, are none of us; let them pack off, while yet
4 there is time. Propagate his character, his teaching, his religion.
5 This is the only spiritual practice, the only worship, this verily is the
6 means, and this the goal. Arise! Arise! A tidal wave is coming!
7 Onward! Men and women, down to the Chandala (Pariah)--all are
8 pure in his eyes. Onward! Onward! There is no time to care for
9 name, or fame, or Mukti, or Bhakti! We shall look to these some
10 other time. Now in this life let us infinitely spread his lofty
11 character, his sublime life, his infinite soul. This is the only work--
12 there is nothing else to do. Wherever his name will reach, the
13 veriest worm will attain divinity, nay, is actually attaining it; you
14 have got eyes, and don't you see it? Is it a child's play? Is it silly
15 prattle? Is it foolery? "{Sanskrit}--Arise! Awake!" Great Lord! He is
16 at our back. I cannot write anymore. --Onward! I only tell you this,
17 that whoever reads this letter will imbibe my spirit! Have faith!
18 Onward! Great Lord! . . . I feel as if somebody is moving my hand to
19 write in this way. Onward! Great Lord! Everyone will be swept
20 away! Take care, he is coming! Whoever will be ready to serve him--
21 no, not him but his children--the poor and the downtrodden, the
22 sinful and the afflicted, down to the very worm--who will be ready to
23 serve these, in them he will manifest himself. Through their tongue
24 the Goddess of Learning Herself will speak, and the Divine Mother--
25 the Embodiment of all Power--will enthrone Herself in their hearts.
26 Those that are atheists, unbelievers, worthless, and foppish, why do
27 they call themselves as belonging to his fold. . . .

28 Yours

29 affectionately,

30 Vivekananda

31 PS. . . . The term organisation means division of labour. Each
32 does his own part, and all the parts taken together express an ideal
33 of harmony. . . .

36 LVII

37 Brooklyn

38 28th Dec.,

39 1894

40 Dear Mrs. Bull,

41 I arrived safely in New York where Landsberg met me at the
42 depot. I proceeded at once to Brooklyn where I arrived in time.

43 We had a nice evening. Several gentlemen belonging to the
44 Ethical Culture Society came to see me.

Next Sunday we shall have a lecture. Dr. Janes was as usual very kind and good, and Mr. Higgins is as practical as ever. Here alone in New York I find more men interested in religion than in any other city, and do not know why here the interest is more amongst men than women. . . .

Herewith I send a copy of that pamphlet Mr. Higgins has published about me. Hope to send more in the future.

With my love to Miss Farmer and all the holy family,
I remain yours
obediently,

Vivekananda

LVIII

New York, 228 W. 39,
17th Jan.,
1895

{original in Bengali}

Dear Sarada {Swami Trigunatita},

Your two letters are to hand, as also the two of Ramdayal Babu. I have got the bill of lading; but it will be long before the goods arrive. Unless one arranges for the prompt despatch of goods they take about six months to come. It is four months since Haramohan wrote that the Rudraksha beads and Kusha mats had been despatched, but there is no news of their whereabouts yet. The thing is, when the goods reach England, the agent of the company here gives me notice; and about a month later, the goods arrive. I received your bill of lading about three weeks ago, but no sign of the notice! Only the goods sent by Raja of Khetri arrive quickly. Most probably he spends a lot of money for them. However it is a matter of congratulation that goods do arrive without fail in this region of Patala, at the other end of the globe. I shall let you know as soon as the goods come. Now keep quiet for at least three months.

Now is the time for you to apply yourself to start the magazine. Tell Ramdayal Babu that though the gentleman of whom he speaks be a competent person, I am not in a position to have anybody in America at present. . . . What about your article on Tibet? When it is published in the *Mirror*, send me a copy. . . .

Come, here is a task for you, conduct that magazine. Thrust it on people and make them subscribe to it, and don't be afraid. What work do you expect from men of little hearts?--Nothing in the world! You must have an iron will if you would cross the ocean. You must be strong enough to pierce mountains. I am coming next winter. We shall set the world on fire--let those who will, join us and be blessed, and those that won't come, will lag behind for ever and

1 ever; let them do so. You gird up your loins and keep yourself ready.
2 . . . Never mind anything! In your lips and hands the Goddess of
3 Learning will make Her seat; the Lord of infinite power will be
4 seated on your chest; you will do works that will strike the world
5 with wonder. By the bye, can't you shorten your name a bit, my boy?
6 What a long, long name--a single name enough to fill a volume!
7 Well, you hear people say that the Lord's name keeps away death!
8 It is not the simple name Hari, mind you. It is those deep and
9 sonorous names, such as {Sanskrit} (Destroyer of Agha, Bhaga,
10 and Naraka) {Sanskrit} (Subduer of the pride of Tripura, demon of
11 the "three cities"), and {Sanskrit} (Giver of infinite and endless
12 blessings), and so forth--that put to rout King Death and his whole
13 party. Won't it look nice if you simplify yours a little? But it is too
14 late, I am afraid, as it has already been abroad. But, believe me, it
15 is a world-entrancing, death-defying name that you have got!¹²⁸

16 Yours

17 affectionately,

18 Vivekananda

19 PS. Throw the whole of Bengal and, for the matter of that, the
20 whole of India into convulsion! Start centres at different places.

21 The *Bhagavata* has reached me--a very nice edition indeed;
22 but people of this country have not the least inclination for studying
23 Sanskrit; hence there is very little hope for its sale. There may be a
24 little in England, for there many are interested in the study of
25 Sanskrit. Give my special thanks to the editor. I hope his noble
26 attempt will meet with complete success. I shall try my best to push
27 his book here. I have sent his prospectus to different places. Tell
28 Ramdayal Babu that a flourishing trade can be set on foot with
29 England and America in Mung Dal, Arhar Dal, etc. Dal soup will
30 have a go if properly introduced. There will be a good demand for
31 these things if they be sent from house to house, in small packets,
32 with directions for cooking on them and a depot started for storing
33 a quantity of them. Similarly Badis too will have a good market. We
34 want an enterprising spirit. Nothing is done by leading idle lives. If
35 anyone forms a company and exports Indian goods here and into
36 England, it will be a good trade. But they are a lazy set, enamoured
37 of child marriage and nothing else.

40 LIX

41 54 W. 33rd St.,
42 New York,
43 9th February,
44 1895
45 {original in Bengali}

1 ¹²⁸ ?The full name which Swami Trigunatita, to whom this letter was addressed,
2 bore at first was "Swami Trigunatitananda"--hence Swamiji's pleasantry about it.
3

1 Dear Sanyal,

2 . . . Paramahansa Deva was my Guru, and whatever I may
3 think of him in point of greatness, why should the world think like
4 me? And if you press the point hard, you will spoil everything. The
5 idea of worshipping the Guru as God is nowhere to be met with
6 outside Bengal, for other people are not yet ready to take up that
7 ideal. . . . Many would fain associate my name with themselves--"I
8 belong to them!" But when it comes to doing something I want, they
9 are nowhere. So selfish is the whole world!

10 I shall consider myself absolved from a debt of obligation
11 when I succeed in purchasing some land for Mother. I don't care for
12 anything after that.

13 In this dire winter I have travelled across mountains and over
14 snows at dead of night and collected a little fund; and I shall have
15 peace of mind when a plot is secured for Mother.

16 Henceforth address my letters as above, which is to be my
17 permanent seat from now. Try to send me an English translation of
18 the *Yogavasishtha Ramayana*. . . . Don't forget those books I asked
19 for before, viz Sanskrit *Narada* and *Shandilya Sutras*.

20 "{Sanskrit}--Hope is the greatest of miseries, the highest
21 bliss lies in giving up hope."

22 Yours
23 affectionately,

24 Vivekananda

25

26

27 LX

28 54 W. 33rd St.,
29 New York,

30 14th Feb., 1895

31 Dear Mrs. Bull,

32 Accept my heartfelt gratitude for your motherly advice. I hope
33 I will be able to carry out them in life.

34 How can I express my gratitude to you for what you have
35 already done for me and my work, and my eternal gratitude to you
36 for your offering to do something more this year. But I sincerely
37 believe that you ought to turn all your help to Miss Farmer's
38 Greenacre work this year. India can wait as she is waiting centuries
39 and an immediate work at hand should always have the preference.

40 Again, according to Manu, collecting funds even for a good
41 work is not good for a Sannyasin, and I have begun to feel that the
42 old sages were right. "Hope is the greatest misery, despair is the
43 greatest happiness." It appears like a hallucination. I am getting out
44 of them. I was in these childish ideas of doing this and doing that.

45 "Give up all desire and be at peace. Have neither friends nor
46 foes, and live alone. Thus shall we travel having neither friends nor

1 foes, neither pleasure nor pain, neither desire nor jealousy, injuring
2 no creatures, being the cause of injury to no creatures--from
3 mountain to mountain, from village to village, preaching the name
4 of the Lord."

5 "Seek no help from high or low, from above or below. Desire
6 nothing--and look upon this vanishing panorama as a witness and
7 let it pass."

8 Perhaps these mad desires were necessary to bring me over
9 to this country. And I thank the Lord for the experience.

10 I am very happy now. Between Mr. Landsberg and me, we
11 cook some rice and lentils or barley and quietly eat it, and write
12 something or read or receive visits from poor people who want to
13 learn something, and thus I feel I am more a Sannyasin now than I
14 ever was in America.

15 "In wealth is the fear of poverty, in knowledge the fear of
16 ignorance, in beauty the fear of age, in fame the fear of backbiters,
17 in success the fear of jealousy, even in body is the fear of death.
18 Everything in this earth is fraught with fear. He alone is fearless
19 who has given up everything" (*Vairagya-Shatakam* , 31).

20 I went to see Miss Corbin the other day, and Miss Farmer and
21 Miss Thursby were also there. We had a nice half-hour and she
22 wants me to hold some classes in her home from next Sunday.

23 I am no more seeking for these things. If they come, the Lord
24 be blessed, if not, blessed more be He.

25 Again accept my eternal gratitude.

26 Your devoted
27 son,

Vivekananda

31 LXI

32 54 W. 33rd St.,
33 New York,
34 21st March,
35 1895

36 Dear Mrs. Bull,

1 I am astonished to hear the scandals the Ramabai circles are
2 indulging in about me. Don't you see, Mrs. Bull, that however a man
3 may conduct himself, there will always be persons who invent the
4 blackest lies about him? At Chicago I had such things every day
5 against me. And these women are invariably the very Christian of
6 Christians! . . . I am going to have a series of paid lectures in my
7 rooms (downstairs), which will seat about a hundred persons, and
8 that will cover the expenses. I am in no great hurry about the
9 money to be sent to India. I will wait. Is Miss Farmer with you? Is
10 Mrs. Peake at Chicago? Have you seen Josephine Locke? Miss
11 Hamlin has been very kind to me and does all she can to help me.

12 My master used to say that these names, as Hindu, Christian,
13 etc., stand as great bars to all brotherly feelings between man and
14 man. We must try to break them down first. They have lost all their
15 good powers and now only stand as baneful influences under whose
16 black magic even the best of us behave like demons. Well, we will
17 have to work hard and must succeed.

18 That is why I desire so much to have a centre. Organisation
19 has its faults, no doubt, but without that nothing can be done. And
20 here, I am afraid, I will have to differ from you--that no one ever
21 succeeded in keeping society in good humour and at the same time
22 did great works. One must work as the dictate comes from within,
23 and then if it is right and good, society is bound to veer round,
24 perhaps centuries after one is dead and gone. We must plunge
25 heart and soul and body into the work. And until we be ready to
26 sacrifice everything else to one *Idea* and to one alone, we *never*,
27 *never* will see the light.

28 Those that want to help mankind must take their own
29 pleasure and pain, name and fame, and all sorts of interests, and
30 make a bundle of them and throw them into the sea, and then come
31 to the Lord. This is what all the Masters *said* and *did*.

32 I went to Miss Corbin's last Saturday and told her that I
33 should not be able to come to hold classes any more. Was it ever in
34 the history of the world that any great work was done by the rich?
35 It is the heart and the brain that do it ever and ever and not the
36 purse.

37 My *idea* and all my life with it--and to *God* for help; to none
38 else! This is the only secret of success. I am sure you are one with
39 me here. My love to Mrs. Thursby and Mrs. Adams.

40 Ever yours in grateful
41 affection,

42 Vivekananda

43
44
45 LXII

46 54 W. 33rd St.,
47 New York,

48 11th April, 1895

1 Dear Mrs. Bull,

2 . . . I am going away to the country tomorrow to see Mr.
3 Leggett for a few days. A little fresh air will do me good, I hope.

4 I have given up the project of removing from this house just
5 now, as it will be too expensive, and moreover it is not advisable to
6 change just now. I am working it up slowly.

7 . . . I send you herewith the letter from H. H. the Maharaja of
8 Khetri; also enclose the slip on Gurjun oil for leprosy. Miss Hamlin
9 has been helping me a good deal. I am very grateful to her. She is
10 very kind and, I hope, sincere. She wants me to be introduced to
11 the "right kind of people". This is the second edition of the "Hold
12 yourself steady" business, I am afraid. The only "right sort of
13 people" are those whom the Lord sends--that is what I understand
14 in my life's experience. They alone can and will help me. As for the
15 rest, Lord help them in a mass and save me from them.

16 Every one of my friends thought it would end in nothing, this
17 my getting up quarters all by myself, and that no *ladies would ever*
18 *come here* . Miss Hamlin especially thought that "she" or "her right
19 sort of people" were *way up* from such things as to go and listen to
20 a man who lives by himself in a poor lodging. But the "right kind"
21 came for all that, day and night, and she too. Lord! how hard it is
22 for man to believe in Thee and Thy mercies! Shiva! Shiva! Where is
23 the right kind and where is the bad, mother? It is all *He* ! In the
24 tiger and in the lamb, in the saint and sinner all *He* ! In Him I have
25 taken my refuge, body, soul, and Atman. Will He leave me now after
26 carrying me in His arms all my life? Not a drop will be in the ocean,
27 not a twig in the deepest forest, not a crumb in the house of the god
28 of wealth, if the Lord is not merciful. Streams will be in the desert
29 and the beggar will have plenty, if He wills it. He seeth the
30 sparrow's fall. Are these but words, mother, or literal, actual life?

31 Truce to this "right sort of presentation". Thou art my right,
32 Thou my wrong, my Shiva. Lord, since a child I have taken refuge in
33 Thee. Thou wilt be with me in the tropics or at the poles, on the
34 tops of mountains or in the depth of oceans. My stay--my guide in
35 life--my refuge--my friend--my teacher--my God--my real Self, Thou
36 wilt never leave me, *never* . I know it for sure. Sometimes I become
37 weak, being alone and struggling against odds, my God; and I think
38 of human help. Save Thou me for ever from these weaknesses, and
39 may I never, never seek for help from any being but Thee. If a man
40 puts his trust in another good man, he is never betrayed, never
41 forsaken. Wilt Thou forsake me, Father of all good, Thou who
42 knowest that *all* my life I am Thy servant and Thine alone? Wilt
43 Thou give me over to be played upon by others, or dragged down by
44 evil?

45 He will never leave me, I am sure, mother.

46
47 obedient son,

Your ever

48 Vivekananda

49

U.S.A.

11th April,

1895

{original in Bengali}

My Dear Shashi {Ramakrishnananda},

. . . You write that you have recovered from your illness; but you must henceforth be very careful. Late dinners, or unwholesome food, or living in a stinking place may bring on a relapse, and make it hard to escape the clutches of malaria. First of all you should hire a small garden-house--you may get one for thirty or forty rupees. Secondly, see that cooking and drinking water be filtered--a bamboo filter of a big size will do. Water is the cause of all sorts of disease. It is not the clearness or dirtiness of water, but its being full of disease germs, that causes disease. Let the water be boiled and filtered. You must all pay attention to your health first. A cook, a servant, clean beds, and timely meals--these are absolutely necessary. Please see that all these suggestions be carried out *in toto* The success of your undertakings depends wholly upon your mutual love. There is no good in store so long as malice and jealousy and egotism will prevail. . . . Kali's pamphlet is very well written and has no exaggerations. Know that talking ill of others in private is a sin. You must wholly avoid it. Many things may occur to the mind, but it gradually makes a mountain of a molehill if you try to express them. Everything is ended if you forgive and forget. It is welcome news that Shri Ramakrishna's festival was celebrated with great eclat. You must try so that there is a muster of a hundred thousand people next year. Put your energies together to start a magazine. Shyness won't do any more. . . . He who has infinite patience and infinite energy at his back, will alone succeed. You must pay special attention to study. Do you understand? You must not huddle together too many fools. I shall be glad if you bring together a few real men. Why, I don't hear even a single one opening his lips. You distributed sweets at the festival, and there was singing by some parties, mostly idlers. True, but I don't hear what spiritual food you have given. So long as that *nil admirari* attitude is not gone, you will not be able to do anything, and none of you will have courage. Bullies are always cowards.

Take up everyone with sympathy, whether he believes in Shri Ramakrishna or not. If anybody comes to you for vain dispute, politely withdraw yourselves. . . . You must express your sympathy with people of all sects. When these cardinal virtues will be manifested in you, then only you will be able to work with great energy. Otherwise, mere taking the name of the Guru will not do. However, there is no doubt that this year's festival has been a great success, and you deserve special thanks for it; but you must push forward, do you see? What is Sharat doing? Never shall you be able to know anything if you persist in pleading ignorance. . . . We want something of a higher tone--that will appeal to the intellect of the

1 learned. It won't do merely to get up musical parties and all that.
2 Not only will this festival be his memorial, but also the central union
3 of an intense propaganda of his doctrines. . . . All will come in good
4 time. But at times I fret and stamp like a leashed hound. Onward
5 and forward, my old watchword. I am doing well.

6 No use going back to India in a hurry. Summon all your
7 energies and set yourselves to work heart and soul; that will really
8 be heroic.

9 Yours

10 affectionately,

11 Vivekananda

12
13
14 LXIV

15 54 W. 33rd Street,

16 New York

17 25th April, 1895

18 Dear Mrs. Bull,

19 The day before yesterday I received a kind note from Miss
20 Farmer including a cheque for a hundred dollars for the Barbar
21 House lectures. She is coming to New York next Saturday. I will of
22 course tell her to put my name in her circulars; and what is more, I
23 cannot go to Greenacre now; I have arranged to go to the Thousand
24 Islands, wherever that may be. There is a cottage belonging to Miss
25 Dutcher, one of my students, and a few of us will be there in rest
26 and peace and seclusion. I want to manufacture a few "Yogis" out of
27 the materials of the classes, and a busy farm like Greenacre is the
28 last place for that, while the other is quite out of the way, and none
29 of the curiosity-seekers will dare go there.

30 I am very glad that Miss Hamlin took down the names of the
31 130 persons who come to the Jnana-Yoga class. There are 50 more
32 who come to the Wednesday Yoga class and about 50 more to the
33 Monday class. Mr. Landsberg had all the names; and they will come
34 anyhow, names or no names. . . . If they do not, others will, and so it
35 will go on--the Lord be praised.

36 Taking down names and giving notices is a big task, no doubt,
37 and I am very thankful to both of them for doing that for me. But I
38 am thoroughly persuaded that it is laziness on my part, and
39 therefore immoral, to depend on others, and always evil comes out
40 of laziness. So henceforth I will do it all myself. . . .

41 However, I will be only too glad to take in any one of Miss
42 Hamlin's "right sort of persons", but unfortunately for me, not one
43 such has as yet turned up. It is the duty of the teacher always to
44 turn the "right sort" out of the most "unrighteous sort" of persons.
45 After all, though I am very, very grateful to the young lady, Miss
46 Hamlin, for the great hope and encouragement she gave me of
47 introducing me to the "right sort of New Yorkers" and for the
48 practical help she has given me, I think I had better do my little

1 work with my own hands. . . .

2 I am only glad that you have such a great opinion about Miss
3 Hamlin. I for one am glad to know that you will help her, for she
4 requires it. But, mother, through the mercy of Ramakrishna, my
5 instinct "sizes up" almost infallibly a human face as soon as I see it,
6 and the result is this: you may do anything you please with my
7 affairs, *I will not even murmur* ;--I will be only too glad to take Miss
8 Farmer's advice, in spite of ghosts and spooks. Behind the spooks I
9 see a heart of immense love, only covered with a thin film of
10 *laudable* ambition--even that is bound to vanish in a few years.
11 Even I will allow Landsberg to "monkey" with my affairs from time
12 to time; but here I put a full stop. Help from any other persons
13 besides these *frightens* me. That is all I can say. Not only for the
14 help you have given me, but from my instinct (or, as I call it,
15 inspiration of my *Master*), I regard you as my mother and will
16 always abide by any advice you may have for me--but only
17 *personally* . When you select a medium, I will beg leave to exercise
18 my choice. That is all.

19 Herewith I send the English gentleman's letter. I have made a
20 few notes on the margin to explain Hindustani words.

21 Your obedient
22 son,

23 Vivekananda

24

25

26 LXV

27 54 W. 33,

28 New York,

29 7th May,

30 1895

31 Dear Mrs. Bull,

32 . . . I had a newspaper from India with a publication in it of
33 Dr. Barrows' short reply to the thanks sent over from India. Miss
34 Thursby will send it to you. Yesterday I received another letter from
35 India from the President of Madras meeting to thank the Americans
36 and to send me an Address. . . . This gentleman is the chief citizen
37 of Madras and a Judge of the Supreme Court, a very high position
38 in India.

39 I am going to have two public lectures more in New York in
40 the upper hall of the Mott's Memorial Building. The first one will be
41 on Monday next, on the Science of Religion. The next, on the
42 Rationale of Yoga. . . . Has Miss Hamlin sent you the book on the
43 financial condition of India? I wish your brother will read it and
44 then find out for himself what the English rule in India means.

45 Ever gratefully
46 your son,

47 Vivekananda

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LXVI

54 West 33rd Street,
New York
May, 1895, Thursday

Dear Mrs. Bull,

The classes are going on; but I am sorry to say, though the attendance is large, it does not even pay enough to cover the rent. I will try this week and then give up.

I am going this summer to the Thousand Islands to Miss Dutcher's, one of my students. The different books on Vedanta are now being sent over to me from India. I expect to write a book in English on the Vedanta Philosophy in its three stages when I am at Thousand Islands, and I may go to Greenacre later on. Miss Farmer wants me to lecture there this summer.

I am rather busy just now in writing a promised article for the Press Association on Immortality.

Yours,
Vivekananda

LXVII

Percy, New
Hampshire
7th June,
1895

Dear Mrs. Bull,

I am here at last with Mr. Leggett. This is one of the most beautiful spots I have ever seen. Imagine a lake, surrounded with hills covered with a huge forest, with nobody but ourselves. So lovely, so quiet, so restful! And you may imagine how glad I am to be here after the bustle of cities.

It gives me a new lease of life to be here. I go into the forest alone and read my Gita and am quite happy. I will leave this place in about ten days and go to the Thousand Island Park. I will meditate by the hour there and be all alone to myself. The very idea is ennobling.

Vivekananda

LXVIII

1 54 West 33rd
2 Street,
3 New York
4 June, 1895

5 Dear Mrs. Bull,

6 I have just arrived home. The trip did me good, and I enjoyed
7 the country and the hills, and especially Mr. Leggett's country-
8 house in New York State. Poor Landsberg has gone from this house.
9 Neither has he left one his address. May the Lord bless Landsberg
10 wherever he goes! He is one of the few sincere souls I have had the
privilege in this life to come across.

11 All is for good. All conjunctions are for subsequent
12 disjunction. I hope I shall be perfectly able to work alone. The less
13 help from men, the more from the Lord! Just now I received a letter
14 from an Englishman in London who had lived in India in the
15 Himalayas with two of my brethren. He asks me to come to London.

16 Yours,
17 Vivekananda
18

19
20 LXIX

21 1895

22 {original in Bengali}

23 Dear Shashi {Ramakrishnananda},

24 . . . I am quite in agreement with what Sarada is doing, but it
25 is not necessary to preach that Ramakrishna Paramahansa was an
26 Incarnation, and things of that sort. He came to do good to the
27 world; not to trumpet his own name--you must always remember
28 this. Disciples pay their whole attention to the preservation of their
29 master's name and throw overboard his teachings; and
30 sectarianism etc., are the result. Alasinga writes of Charu; but I do
31 not recollect him. Write all about him and convey him my thanks.
32 Write in detail about all; I have no time to spare for idle gossip. . . .
33 Try to give up ceremonials. They are not meant for Sannyasins; and
34 one must work only so long as one does not attain to illumination. . .
35 . I have nothing to do with sectarianism, or party-forming and
36 playing the frog-in-the-well, whatever else I may do. . . . It is
37 impossible to preach the catholic ideas of Ramakrishna
38 Paramahansa and form sects at the same time. . . . Only one kind of
39 work I understand, and that is doing good to others; all else is doing
40 evil. I therefore prostrate myself before the Lord Buddha. . . . I am
41 a Vedantist; Sachchidananda--Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute--
42 is my God. I scarcely find any other God than the majestic form of
43 my own Self. By the word "Incarnation" are meant those who have
44 attained that Brahmanhood, in other words, the Jivanmuktas--those
45 who have realised this freedom in this very life. I do not find any
46 speciality in Incarnations: all beings from Brahma down to a clump
47 of grass will attain to liberation-in-life in course of time, and our
48 duty lies in helping all to reach that state. This help is called

1 religion; the rest is irreligion. This help is work; the rest is evil-
2 doing--I see nothing else. Other kinds of work, for example, the
3 Vaidika or the Tantrika, may produce results; but resorting to them
4 is simply waste of life, for that purity which is the goal of work is
5 realisable only through doing good to others. Through works such
6 as sacrifices etc., one may get enjoyments, but it is impossible to
7 have the purity of soul. . . . Everything exists already in the Self of
8 all beings. He who asserts he is free, shall be free. He who says he
9 is bound, bound he shall remain. To me, the thought of oneself as
10 low and humble is a sin and ignorance. "{Sanskrit}--This Atman is
11 not to be attained by one who is weak." "{Sanskrit}--If you say
12 Brahman *is* , existence will be the result; if you say Brahman *is not* ,
13 non-existent It shall verily become." He who always thinks of
14 himself as weak will never become strong, but he who knows
15 himself to be a lion, "{Sanskrit}--rushes out from the world's
16 meshes, as a lion from its cage." Another point, it was no new truth
17 that Ramakrishna Paramahansa came to preach, though his advent
18 brought the old truths to light. In other words, he was the
19 embodiment of all the past religious thoughts of India. His life alone
20 made me understand what the Shastras really meant, and the
21 whole plan and scope of the old Shastras.

22 Missionaries and others could not do much against me in this
23 country. Through the Lord's grace the people here like me greatly
24 and are not to be tricked by the opinions of any particular class.
25 They appreciate my ideas in a manner my own countrymen cannot
26 do, and are not selfish. I mean, when it comes to practical work
27 they will give up jealousy and all those ideas of self-sufficiency.
28 Then all of them agree and act under the direction of a capable
29 man. That is what makes them so great. But then they are a nation
30 of Mammon-worshippers. Money comes before everything. People
31 of our country are very liberal in pecuniary matters, but not so
32 much these people. Every home has a miser. It is almost a religion
33 here. But they fall into the clutches of the priests when they do
34 something bad, and then buy their passage to heaven with money.
35 These things are the same in every country--priestcraft. I can say
36 nothing as to whether I shall go back to India and when. There also
37 I shall have to lead a wandering life as I do here; but here
38 thousands of people listen to and understand my lectures, and
39 these thousands are benefited. But can you say the same thing
40 about India? . . . I am perfectly at one with what Sarada is doing. A
41 thousand thanks to him. . . . In Madras and Bombay I have lots of
42 men who are after my heart. They are learned and understand
43 everything. Moreover they are kind-hearted and can therefore
44 appreciate the philanthropic spirit. . . . I have printed neither books
45 nor anything of the kind. I simply go on lecturing tours. . . . When I
46 take a retrospective view of my past life, I feel no remorse. From
47 country to country I have travelled teaching something, however
48 little, to people, and in exchange for that have partaken of their
49 slices of bread. If I had found I had done no work, but simply
50 supported myself by imposing upon people, I would have committed
51 suicide today. Why do those who think themselves unfit to teach
52 their fellow-beings, wear the teacher's garb and earn their bread by
53 cheating them? Is not that a deadly sin? . . .

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Yours etc.,
Vivekananda

LXX

19 W. 38,

New York

8th July, 1895

Dear Alberta {Sturges},

I am sure you are engrossed in your musical studies now. Hope you have found out all about the scales by this time. I will be so happy to take a lesson on the scales from you next time we meet.

We had such jolly good time up there at Percy with Mr. Leggett--isn't he a saint?

Hollister is also enjoying Germany greatly, I am sure, and I hope none of you have injured your tongues in trying to pronounce German words--especially those beginning with sch, tz, tsz, and other sweet things.

I read your letter to your mother from on board. Most possibly I am going over to Europe next September. I have never been to Europe yet. It will not be very much different from the United States after all. And I am already well drilled in the manners and customs of this country.

We had a good deal of rowing at Percy and I learnt a point or two in rowing. Aunt Joe Joe had to pay for her sweetness, for the flies and mosquitoes would not leave her for a moment. They rather gave me a wide berth, I think, because they were very orthodox sabbatarian flies and would not touch a heathen. Again, I think, I used to sing a good deal at Percy, and that must have frightened them away. We had such fine birch trees. I got up an idea of making books out of the bark, as was used to be done in ancient times in our country, and wrote Sanskrit verses for your mother and aunt.

I am sure, Alberta, you are going to be a tremendously learned lady very soon.

With love and blessings for both of you,

affectionate, Ever your

Vivekananda Swami

LXXI

Salutation to Bhagavan
Ramakrishna!

{original in Bengali}

Dear Rakhal {Brahmananda},

I have now got lots of newspapers etc., and you need not send any more. Let the movement now confine itself to India. . . .

It isn't much use getting up a sensation every day. But avail yourselves of this stir that is rife all over the country, and scatter yourselves in all quarters. In other words, try to start branches at different places. Let it not be an empty sound merely. You must join the Madrasis and start associations etc., at different places. What about the magazine which I heard was going to be started? Why are you nervous about conducting it? . . . Come? Do something heroic! Brother, what if you do not attain Mukti, what if you suffer damnation a few times? Is the saying untrue?--

"{Sanskrit} --There are some saints who full of holiness in thought, word, and deed, please the whole world by their numerous beneficent acts, and who develop their own hearts by magnifying an atom of virtue in others as if it were as great as a mountain" (Bhartrihari, *Nitishataka*).

What if you don't get Mukti? What childish prattle! Lord! They say even the venom of a snake loses its power by firmly denying it. Isn't it true? What queer humility is this to say, "I know nothing!" "I am nothing!" This is pseudo-renunciation and mock-modesty, I tell you. Off with such a self-debasing spirit! "If I do not know, who on earth does!" What have you been doing so long if you now plead ignorance? These are the words of an atheist--the humility of a vagabond wretch. We can do everything, and will do everything! He who is fortunate enough will heroically join us, letting the worthless mew like cats from their corner. A saint writes, "Well, you have had enough of blazoning. Now come back home." I would have called him a man if he could build a house and call me. Ten years' experience of such things has made me wiser. I am no more to be duped by words. Let him who has courage in his mind and love in his heart come with me. I want none else. Through Mother's grace, single-handed I am worth a hundred thousand now and will be worth two millions. . . . There is no certainty about my going back to India. I shall have to lead a wandering life there also, as I am doing here. But here one lives in the company of scholars, and there one must live among fools--there is this difference as of the poles. People of this country organise and work, while *our* undertakings all come to dust clashing against laziness--miscalled "renunciation"--and jealousy, etc. __writes me big letters now and then, half of which I cannot decipher, which is a blessing to me. For a great part of the news is of the following description--that in such and such a place such and such a man was speaking ill of me, and that he, being unable to bear the same, had a quarrel with him, and so forth. Many thanks for his kind defence of me. But what seriously hinders me from listening to what particular people may be saying about me is--"{Sanskrit}--Time is short, but the obstacles are many." . . .

1 An organised society is wanted. Let Shashi look to the
2 household management, Sanyal take charge of money matters and
3 marketing, and Sharat act as secretary, that is, carry on
4 correspondence etc. Make a permanent centre--it is no use making
5 random efforts as you are doing now. Do you see my point? I have
6 quite a heap of newspapers, now I want you to do something. If you
7 can build a Math, I shall say you are heroes; otherwise you are
8 nothing. Consult the Madras people when you work. They have a
9 great capacity for work. Celebrate this year's Shri Ramakrishna
10 festival with such eclat as to make it a record. The less the feeding
11 propaganda is, the better. It is enough if you distribute Prasada in
12 earthen cups to the devotees standing in rows. . . .

13 I am going to write a very short sketch of Shri Ramakrishna's
14 life in English, which I shall send you. Have it printed and
15 translated into Bengali and sell it at the festival--people do not read
16 books that are distributed free. Fix some nominal price. Have the
17 festival done with great pomp. . . .

18 You must have an all-sided intellect to do efficient work. In
19 any towns or villages you may visit, start an association wherever
20 you find a number of people revering Shri Ramakrishna. Have you
21 travelled through so many villages all for nothing? We must slowly
22 absorb the Hari-Sabhas and such other associations. Well, I cannot
23 tell you all--if I could but get another demon like me! The Lord will
24 supply me everything in time. . . . If one has got power, one must
25 manifest it in action. . . . Off with your ideas of Mukti and Bhakti!
26 There is only one way in the world, "{Sanskrit}", "{Sanskrit}"--"The
27 good live for others alone", "The wise man should sacrifice himself
28 for others". I can secure my own good only by doing you good.
29 There is no other way, none whatsoever. . . . You are God, I am God,
30 and man is God. It is this God manifested through humanity who is
31 doing everything in this world. Is there a different God sitting high
32 up somewhere? To work, therefore!

33 Bimala has sent me a book written by Shashi (Sanyal). . . .
34 From a perusal of that work Bimala has come to know that all the
35 people of this world are impure and that they are by their very
36 nature debarred from having a jot of religion; that only the handful
37 of Brahmins that are in India have the sole right to it, and among
38 these again, Shashi (Sanyal) and Bimala are the sun and moon, so
39 to speak. Bravo! What a powerful religion indeed! In Bengal
40 specially, that sort of religion is very easy to practise. There is no
41 easier way than that. The whole truth about austerities and
42 spiritual exercises is, in a nutshell, that I am pure and all the rest
43 are impure! A beastly, demoniac, hellish religion this! If the
44 American people are unfit for religion, if it is improper to preach
45 religion here, why then ask their help? . . . What can remedy such a
46 disease? Well, tell Shashi (Sanyal) to go to Malabar. The Raja there
47 has taken his subjects' land and offered it at the feet of Brahmins.
48 There are big monasteries in every village where sumptuous
49 dinners are given, supplemented by presents in cash. . . . There is
50 no harm in touching the non-Brahmin classes when it serves one's
51 purpose; and when you have done with it, you bathe, for the non-
52 Brahmins are as a class unholy and must never be touched on other

1 occasions! Monks and Sannyasins and Brahmins of a certain type
2 have thrown the country into ruin. Intent all the while on theft and
3 wickedness, these pose as preachers of religion! They will take gifts
4 from the people and at the same time cry, "Don't touch me!" And
5 what great things they have been doing!--"If a potato happens to
6 touch a brinjal, how long will the universe last before it is deluged?"
7 "If they do not apply earth a dozen times to clean their hands, will
8 fourteen generations of ancestors go to hell, or twenty-four?"--For
9 intricate problems like these they have been finding out scientific
10 explanations for the last two thousand years--while one fourth of
11 the people are starving. A girl of eight is married to a man of thirty,
12 and the parents are jubilant over it. . . . And if anyone protests
13 against it, the plea is put forward, "Our religion is being
14 overturned." What sort of religion have they who want to see their
15 girls becoming mothers before they attain puberty even and offer
16 scientific explanations for it? Many, again, lay the blame at the door
17 of the Mohammedans. They are to blame, indeed! Just read the
18 *Grihya-Sutras* through and see what is given as the marriageable
19 age of a girl. . . . There it is expressly stated that a girl must be
20 married before attaining puberty. The entire *Grihya-Sutras* enjoin
21 this. And in the Vedic Ashvamedha sacrifice worse things would be
22 done. . . . All the *Brahmanas* mention them, and all the
23 commentators admit them to be true. How can you deny them?

24 What I mean by mentioning all this is that there were many
25 good things in the ancient times, but there were bad things too. The
26 good things are to be retained, but the India that is to be, the future
27 India, must be much greater than ancient India. From the day Shri
28 Ramakrishna was born dates the growth of modern India and of the
29 Golden Age. And you are the agents to bring about this Golden Age.
30 To work, with this conviction of heart!

31 Hence, when you call Shri Ramakrishna an Incarnation and in
32 the same breath plead your ignorance unhesitatingly, I say, "You are
33 false to the backbone!" If Ramakrishna Paramahansa be true, you
34 also are true. But you must show it. . . . In you all there is
35 tremendous power. The atheist has nothing but rubbish in him.
36 Those who are believers are heroes. They will manifest tremendous
37 power. The world will be swept before them. "Sympathy and help to
38 the poor"; "Man is God, he is Narayana"; "In Atman there is no
39 distinction of male or female, of Brahmin or Kshatriya, and the
40 like"; "All is Narayana from the Creator down to a clump of grass."
41 The worm is less manifested, the Creator more manifested. Every
42 action that helps a being manifest its divine nature more and more
43 is *good*, every action that retards it is *evil*.

44 The only way of getting our divine nature manifested is by
45 helping others to do the same.

46 If there is inequality in nature, still there must be equal
47 chance for all--or if greater for some and for some less--the weaker
48 should be given more chance than the strong.

49 In other words, a Brahmin is not so much in need of
50 education as a Chandala. If the son of a Brahmin needs one teacher,
51 that of a Chandala needs ten. For greater help must be given to him

1 whom nature has not endowed with an acute intellect from birth. It
2 is a madman who carries coals to Newcastle. The poor, the
3 downtrodden, the ignorant, let these be your God.

4 A dreadful slough is in front of you--take care; many fall into it
5 and die. The slough is this, that the present religion of the Hindus is
6 not in the Vedas, nor in the Puranas, nor in Bhakti, nor in Mukti--
7 religion has entered into the cooking-pot. The present religion of
8 the Hindus is neither the path of knowledge nor that of reason--it is
9 "Don't-touchism". "Don't touch me!" "Don't touch me!"--that
10 exhausts its description. See that you do not lose your lives in this
11 dire irreligion of "Don't-touchism". Must the teaching, "{Sanskrit}--
12 Looking upon all beings as your own self"--be confined to books
13 alone? How will they grant salvation who cannot feed a hungry
14 mouth with a crumb of bread? How will those who become impure
15 at the mere breath of others purify others? Don't-touchism is a form
16 of mental disease. Beware! All expansion is life, all contraction is
17 death. All love is expansion, all selfishness is contraction. Love is
18 therefore the only law of life. He who loves lives, he who is selfish is
19 dying. Therefore love for love's sake, because it is the only law of
20 life, just as you breathe to live. This is the secret of selfless love,
21 selfless action and the rest. . . . Try to help Shashi (Sanyal) if you
22 can, in any way. He is a very good and pious man, but of a narrow
23 heart. It does not fall to the lot of all to feel for the misery of others.
24 Good Lord! Of all Incarnations Lord Chaitanya was the greatest,
25 but he was comparatively lacking in knowledge; in the Ramakrishna
26 Incarnation there is knowledge, devotion and love--infinite
27 knowledge, infinite love, infinite work, infinite compassion for all
28 beings. You have not yet been able to understand him. "{Sanskrit}--
29 Even after hearing about Him, most people do not understand
30 Him." What the whole Hindu race has thought in ages, he *lived* in
31 one life. His life is the living commentary to the *Vedas* of all
32 nations. People will come to know him by degrees. My old
33 watchword--struggle, struggle up to light! Onward!

34 Yours in
35 service,

Vivekananda

LXXII

40 C/o E. T.
41 Sturdy, Esq.,
42 High View,
43 Caversham,
44 1895

{original in Bengali}

Beloved Akhandananda,

47 I am glad to go through the contents of your letter. Your idea
48 is grand but our nation is totally lacking in the faculty of

1 organisation. It is this one drawback which produces all sorts of
2 evil. We are altogether averse to making a common cause for
3 anything. The first requisite for organisation is obedience. I do a
4 little bit of work when I feel so disposed, and then let it go to the
5 dogs--this kind of work is of no avail. We must have plodding
6 industry and perseverance. Keep a regular correspondence, I mean,
7 make it a point to write to me every month, or twice a month, what
8 work you are doing and what has been its outcome. We want here
9 (in England) a Sannyasin well-versed in English and Sanskrit. I shall
10 soon go to America again, and he is to work here in my absence.
11 Except Sharat and Shashi--I find no one else for this task. I have
12 sent money to Sharat and written to him to start at once. I have
13 requested Rajaji that his Bombay agent may help Sharat in
14 embarking. I forgot to write--but if you can take the trouble to do it,
15 please send through Sharat a bag of Mung, gram, and Arhar Dal,
16 also a little of the spice called Methi. Please convey my love to
17 Pundit Narayan Das, Mr. Shankar Lal, Ojhaji, Doctor, and all. Do
18 you think you can get the medicine for Gopi's eyes here?--
19 Everywhere you find patent medicines, which are all humbug.
20 Please give my blessings to him and to the other boys. Yajneswar
21 has founded a certain society at Meerut and wants to work
22 conjointly with us. By the bye, he has got a certain paper too; send
23 Kali there, and let him start a Meerut centre, if he can and, try to
24 have the paper in Hindi. I shall help a little now and then. I shall
25 send some money when Kali goes to Meerut and reports to me
26 exactly how matters stand. Try to open a centre at Ajmer. . . .
27 Pundit Agnihotri has started some society at Saharanpur. They
28 wrote me a letter. Please keep in correspondence with them. Live
29 on friendly terms with all. Work! Work! Go on opening centres in
30 this way. We have them already in Calcutta and Madras, and it will
31 be excellent if you can start new ones at Meerut and Ajmer. Go on
32 slowly starting centres at different places like that. Here all my
33 letters etc., are to be addressed in care of E. T. Sturdy, Esq., High
34 View, Caversham, Reading, England, and those for America, C/o
35 Miss Phillips, 19 W. 38 Street, New York. By degrees we must
36 spread the world over. The first thing needed is obedience. You
37 must be ready to plunge into fire--then will work be done. . . . Form
38 societies like that at different villages in Rajputana. There you have
39 a hint.

40 affectionately,

Yours

Vivekananda

LXXIII

U.S.A.

(Summer of?)

1895

{original in Bengali}

1 My Dear--{Brother-disciples at the Math},
2 The books that Sanyal sent have arrived. I forgot to mention
3 this. Please inform him about it.

4 Let me write down something for you all:

5 1. Know partiality to be the chief cause of all evil. That is to
6 say, if you show towards any one more love than towards somebody
7 else, rest assured, you will be sowing the seeds of future troubles.

8 2. If anybody comes to you to speak ill of any of his brothers,
9 refuse to listen to him *in toto* . It is a great sin to listen even. In that
10 lies the germ of future troubles.

11 3. Moreover, bear with everyone's shortcomings. Forgive
12 offences by the million. And if you love all unselfishly, all will by
13 degrees come to love one another. As soon as they fully understand
14 that the interests of one depend upon those of others, everyone of
15 them will give up jealousy. To do something conjointly is not in our
16 very national character. Therefore you must try to inaugurate that
17 spirit with the utmost care, and wait patiently. To tell you the truth,
18 I do not find among you any distinction of great or small: everyone
19 has the capacity to manifest, in times of need, the highest energy. I
20 see it. Look for instance how Shashi will remain always constant to
21 his spot; his steadfastness is a great foundation-rock. How
22 successfully Kali and Jogen brought about the Town Hall meeting; it
23 was indeed a momentous task! Niranjan has done much work in
24 Ceylon and elsewhere. How extensively has Sarada travelled and
25 sown seeds of gigantic future works! Whenever I think of the
26 wonderful renunciation of Hari, about his steadiness of intellect and
27 forbearance, I get a new access of strength! In Tulasi, Gupta,
28 Baburam, Sharat, to mention a few, in every one of you there is
29 tremendous energy. If you still entertain any doubt as to Shri
30 Ramakrishna's being a jewel-expert, what then is the difference
31 between you and a madman! Behold, hundreds of men and women
32 of this country are beginning to worship our Lord as the greatest of
33 all Avataras! Steady! Every great work is done slowly. . . .

34 He is at the helm, what fear! You are all of infinite strength--
35 how long does it take you to keep off petty jealousy or egoistic
36 ideas! The moment such propensity comes, resign yourselves to the
37 Lord! Just make over your body and mind to His work, and all
38 troubles will be at an end for ever.

39 There will not be room enough, I see, in the house where you
40 are at present living. A commodious building is needed. That is to
41 say, you need not huddle together in one room. If possible, not more
42 than two should live in the same room. There should be a big hall,
43 where the books may be kept.

44 Every morning there should be a little reading from the
45 scriptures, which Kali and others may superintend by turns. In the
46 evening there should be another class, with a little practice in
47 meditation and Sankirtanas etc. You may divide the work, and set
48 apart one day for Yoga, a day for Bhakti, another for Jnana, and so
49 forth: It will be excellent if you fix a routine like this, so that outside
50 people also may join in the evening classes. And every Sunday, from

1 ten in the morning up till night, there should be a continuous
2 succession of classes and Sankirtanas etc. That is for the public. If
3 you take the trouble to continue this kind of routine work for some
4 time, it will gradually make itself easy and smooth. There should be
5 no smoking in that hall, for which another place must be set apart.
6 If you can take trouble to bring about this state of things by
7 degrees, I shall think a great advance is made.

8 What about a certain magazine that Haramohan was trying to
9 publish? If you can manage to start one, it will indeed be nice.

10 affectionately, Yours
11
12 Vivekananda

13
14
15 LXXIV

16 U.S.A.

17 (End of?)

18 1895

19 {original in Bengali}

20 My Dear Rakhal {Brahmananda},

21 Just now I got your letter and was glad to go through it. No
22 matter whether there is any work done in India or not, the real
23 work lies here. I do not want anybody to come over now. On my
24 return to India I shall train a few men, and after that there will be
25 no danger for them in the West. Yes, it was of Gunanidhi that I
26 wrote. Give my special love and blessings to Hari Singh and others.
27 Never take part in quarrels and disputes. Who on earth possesses
28 the power to put the Raja of Khetri down?--The Divine Mother is at
29 his elbow! I have received Kali's letter too. It will be very good
30 indeed if you can start a centre in Kashmir. Wherever you can, open
31 a centre. . . . Now I have laid the foundations firm here and in
32 England, and nobody has the power to shake them. New York is in a
33 commotion this year. Next year will come the turn of London. Even
34 big giants will give way, who counts your pigmies! Gird up your
35 loins and set yourselves to work! We must throw the world into
36 convulsions with our triumphal shouts. This is but the beginning,
37 my boy. Do you think there are *men* in our country, it is a *Golgotha*
38 ! There is some chance if you can impart education to the masses.
39 Is there a greater strength than that of Knowledge? Can you give
40 them education? Name me the country where rich men ever helped
41 anybody! In all countries it is the middle classes that do all great
42 works. How long will it take to raise the money? Where are the *men*
43 ? Are there any in our country? Our countrymen are boys, and we
44 must treat them as such. . . . There are some few religious and
45 philosophical books left--the remnants of the mansion that has been
46 burnt down; take them with you, quick and come over to this
47 country. . . .

48 Never fear! The Divine Mother is helping me! This year such

1 work is going to be turned out that you will be struck dumb to hear
2 of it!

3 What fear! Whom to fear! Steel your hearts and set
4 yourselves to work!

5 Yours
6 affectionately,

7 Vivekananda

8 PS. Sarada is talking of bringing out a Bengali magazine.
9 Help it with all your might. It is not a bad idea. You must not throw
10 cold water on anybody's project. Give up criticism altogether. Help
11 all as long as you find they are doing all right, and in cases where
12 they seem to be going wrong, show them their mistakes gently. It is
13 criticising each other that is at the root of all mischief. That is the
14 chief factor in breaking down organisations. . . .

15
16
17 LXXV

18 U.S.A.

19 (Beginning
20 of?) 1895

21 {original in Bengali}

22 My Dear Shashi {Ramakrishnananda},

23 Yesterday I received a letter from you in which there was a
24 smattering of news, but nothing in detail. I am much better now.
25 Through the grace of the Lord I am proof against the severe cold
26 for this year. Oh, the terrible cold! But these people keep all down
27 through scientific knowledge. Every house has its cellar
28 underground, in which there is a big boiler whence steam is made
29 to course day and night through every room. This keeps all the
30 rooms warm, but it has one defect, that while it is summer indoors,
31 it is 30 to 40 degrees below zero outside! Most of the rich people of
32 this country make for Europe during the winter, which is
33 comparatively warm.

34 Now, let me give you some instructions. This letter is meant
35 for you. Please go through these instructions once a day and act up
36 to them. I have got Sarada's letter--he is doing good work--but now
37 we want organisation. To him, Brother Tarak, and others please
38 give my special love and blessings. The reason why I give you these
39 few instructions is that there is an organising power in you--the
40 Lord has made this known to me--but it is not yet fully developed.
41 Through His blessings it will soon be. That you never lose your
42 centre of gravity is an evidence of this, but it must be both intensive
43 and extensive.

44 1. All the Shastras hold that the threefold misery that there is
45 in this world is not natural, hence it is removable.

46 2. In the Buddha Incarnation the Lord says that the root of
47 the Adhibhautika misery, or misery arising from other terrestrial

1 beings, is the formation of *classes* (Jati); in other words, every form
2 of class-distinction, whether based on birth, or acquirements, or
3 wealth is at the bottom of this misery. In the Atman there is no
4 distinction of sex, or Varna or Ashrama, or anything of the kind, and
5 as mud cannot be washed away by mud, it is likewise impossible to
6 bring about oneness by means of separative ideas.

7 3. In the Krishna Incarnation He says that the root of all sorts
8 of misery is Avidya (Nescience) and that selfless work purifies the
9 mind. But "{Sanskrit}--Even sages are bewildered to decide what is
10 work and what is no-work" (Gita).

11 4. Only that kind of work which develops our spirituality is
12 work. Whatever fosters materiality is no-work.

13 5. Therefore work and no-work must be regulated by a
14 person's aptitude, his country, and his age.

15 6. Works such as sacrifices were suited to the olden times but
16 are not for the modern times.

17 7. From the date that the Ramakrishna Incarnation was born,
18 has sprung the Satya-Yuga (Golden Age). . . .

19 8. In this Incarnation atheistic ideas . . . will be destroyed by
20 the sword of Jnana (knowledge), and the whole world will be unified
21 by means of Bhakti (devotion) and Prema (Divine Love). Moreover,
22 in this Incarnation, Rajas, or the desire for name and fame etc., is
23 altogether absent. In other words, blessed is he who acts up to His
24 teachings; whether he accepts Him or not, does not matter.

25 9. The founders of different sects, in the ancient or modern
26 times, have not been in the wrong. They have done well, but they
27 must do better. Well-better--best.

28 10. Therefore we must take all up where they are, that is, we
29 must lead them on to higher and higher ideals, without upsetting
30 their own chosen attitude. As to social conditions, those that prevail
31 now are good, but they shall be better--best.

32 11. There is no chance for the welfare of the world unless the
33 condition of women is improved. It is not possible for a bird to fly on
34 only one wing.

35 12. Hence, in the Ramakrishna Incarnation, the acceptance of
36 a woman as the Guru, hence His practising in the woman's garb
37 and frame of mind,¹²⁹ hence too His preaching the motherhood of
38 women as representations of the Divine Mother.

39 13. Hence it is that my first endeavour is to start a Math for
40 women. This Math shall be the origin of Gargis and Maitreyis, and
41 women of even higher attainments than these. . . .

42 14. No great work can be achieved by humbug. It is through
43 love, a passion for truth, and tremendous energy, that all
44 undertakings are accomplished. {Sanskrit}--Therefore, manifest
45 your manhood.

1 ¹²⁹ ?For some time Shri Ramakrishna dressed himself as a woman and
2 practised Sadhana conceiving himself to be a woman to get rid of the sex-idea.
3

1 15. There is no need for quarrel or dispute with anybody. Give
2 your message and leave others to their own thoughts. "{Sanskrit}--
3 Truth alone triumphs, not falsehood." {Sanskrit}--Why then fight?

4 . . . Combine seriousness with childlike *naivete* . Live in
5 harmony with all. Give up all idea of egoism, and entertain no
6 sectarian views. Useless wrangling is a great sin.

7 . . . From Sarada's letter I came to know that N__ Ghosh has
8 compared me with Jesus Christ, and the like. That kind of thing may
9 pass muster in our country, but if you send such comments here in
10 print, there is a chance of my being insulted! I mean, I do not like to
11 hamper anybody's freedom of thought--am I a missionary? If Kali
12 has not sent those papers to this country, tell him not to do it. Only
13 the Address will do, I do not want the proceedings. Now many
14 respectable ladies and gentlemen of this country hold me in
15 reverence. The missionaries and others of that ilk have tried their
16 utmost to put me down, but finding it useless have now become
17 quiet. Every undertaking must pass through a lot of obstacles.
18 Truth triumphs if only one pursues a peaceful course. I have no
19 need to reply to what a Mr. Hudson has spoken against me. In the
20 first place, it is unnecessary, and secondly, I shall be bringing
21 myself down to the level of people of Mr. Hudson's type. Are you
22 mad? Shall I fight from here with one Mr. Hudson? Through the
23 Lord's grace, people who are far above Mr. Hudson in rank listen to
24 me with veneration. Please do not send any more papers. Let all
25 that go on in India, it will do no harm. For the Lord's work at one
26 time there was need for that kind of newspaper blazoning. When
27 that is done, there is no more need for it. . . . It is one of the
28 attendant evils of name and fame that you can't have anything
29 private. . . . Before you begin any undertaking, pray to Shri
30 Ramakrishna, and he will show you the right way. We want a big
31 plot of land to begin with, then building and all will come. Slowly
32 our Math is going to raise itself, don't worry about it. . . .

33 Kali and all others have done good work. Give my love and
34 best wishes to all. Work in unison with the people of Madras, and
35 let someone or other amongst you go there at intervals. Give up for
36 ever the desire for name and fame and power. While I am on earth,
37 Shri Ramakrishna is working through me. So long as you believe in
38 this there is no danger of any evil for you.

39 The *Ramakrishna Punthi* (Life of Shri Ramakrishna in
40 Bengali verse) that Akshaya has sent is very good, but there is no
41 glorification of the *Shakti* at the opening which is a great defect.
42 Tell him to remedy it in the second edition. Always bear this in mind
43 that we are now standing before the gaze of the world, and that
44 people are watching every one of our actions and utterances.
45 Remember this and work.

46 . . . Be on the look-out for a site for our Math. . . . If it be at
47 some little distance from Calcutta, no harm. Wherever we shall
48 build our Math, there we shall have a stir made. Very glad to learn
49 about Mahim Chakravarty. The Andes have turned into the holy
50 Gaya, I see! Where is he? Please give him, Sj. Bijoy Goswami, and
51 our other friends my cordial greetings. . . . To beat an opponent one

1 needs a sword and buckler, so carefully learn English and Sanskrit.
2 Kali's English is getting nicer every day, while that of Sarada is
3 deteriorating. Tell Sarada to give up the flowery style. It is
4 extremely difficult to write a flowery style in a foreign tongue.
5 Please convey to him a hundred thousand bravos from me! There's
6 a hero indeed. . . . Well done, all of you! Bravo, lads! The beginning
7 is excellent. Go on in that way. If the adder of jealousy does not
8 come in, there is no fear! {Sanskrit}--Cheer up! "{Sanskrit}--Those
9 who serve My devotees are My best devotees." Have all of you a
10 little grave bearing. I am not writing any book on Hinduism at
11 present. But I am jotting down my thoughts. Every religion is an
12 expression, a language to express the same truth, and we must
13 speak to each in his own language. That Sarada has grasped this, is
14 all right. It will be time enough to look to Hinduism later on. Do you
15 think people in this country would be much attracted if I talk of
16 Hinduism?--The very name of narrowness in ideas will scare them
17 away! The real thing is--*the Religion* taught by Shri Ramakrishna,
18 let the Hindus call it Hinduism--and others call it in their own way.
19 Only you must proceed slowly. "{Sanskrit}--One must make
20 journeys slowly." Give my blessings to Dinanath, the new recruit. I
21 have very little time to write--always lecture, lecture, lecture.
22 Purity, Patience, Perseverance. . . . You must ask those numerous
23 people who are now paying heed to Shri Ramakrishna's teachings,
24 to help you pecuniarily to a certain extent. How can the Math be
25 maintained unless they help you? You must not be shy of making
26 this plain to all. . . .

27 There is no gain in hastening my return from this country. In
28 the first place, a little sound made here will resound there a great
29 deal. Then, the people of this country are immensely rich and are
30 bold enough to pay. While the people of our country have neither
31 money nor the least bit of boldness.

32 You will know everything by degrees. Was Shri Ramakrishna
33 the Saviour of India merely? It is this narrow idea that has brought
34 about India's ruin, and her welfare is an impossibility so long as this
35 is not rooted out. Had I the money I would send each one of you to
36 travel all over the world. No great idea can have a place in the
37 heart unless one steps out of his little corner. It will be verified in
38 time. Every great achievement is done slowly. Such is the Lord's
39 will. . . .

40 Why didn't any of you write about Daksha and Harish? I shall
41 be glad to know if you watch their whereabouts. That Sanyal is
42 feeling miserable is because his mind is not yet pure like the water
43 of the Ganga. It is not yet selfless, but will be in time. He will have
44 no misery if he can give up the little crookedness and be straight-
45 forward. My special loving greetings to Rakhal and Hari. Take great
46 care of them. . . . Never forget that Rakhal was the special object of
47 Shri Ramakrishna's love. Let nothing daunt you. Who on earth has
48 the power to snub us so long as the Lord favours us? Even if you
49 are at your last breath, be not afraid. Work on with the intrepidity
50 of a lion but, at the same time with the tenderness of a flower. Let
51 this year's Shri Ramakrishna festival be celebrated in great pomp.
52 Let the feeding be quite ordinary--Prasada being distributed in

earthen plates among the devotees standing in rows. There should be readings from Shri Ramakrishna's Life. Place books like the Vedas and the Vedanta together and perform Arati before them. . . . Avoid issuing invitation cards of the old style. "{Sanskrit}--With Bhagavan Shri Ramakrishna's blessings and our great esteem we have the pleasure to invite you." Write some such line, and then write that to defray the expenses of Shri Ramakrishna's Birthday Festival and those of the maintenance of the Math, you want his assistance. That if he likes, he may kindly send the money to such and such, at such and such address, and so on. Also add a page in English. The term "Lord Ramakrishna" has no meaning. You must give it up. Write "Bhagavan" in English characters, and add a line or two in English:

THE ANNIVERSARY OF BHAGAVAN SHRI RAMAKRISHNA

Sir, we have great pleasure in inviting you to join us in celebrating the ___th anniversary of Bhagavan Ramakrishna Paramahansa. For the celebration of this great occasion and for the maintenance of the Alambazar Math funds are absolutely necessary. If you think that the cause is worthy of your sympathy, we shall be very grateful to receive your contribution to the great work.

Yours

obediently,

(Name)

If you get more than enough money, spend only a little of it and keep the surplus as a reserve fund to defray your expenses. On the plea of offering the food to the Lord, do not make everybody wait till he is sick, to have a stale and unsavoury dinner. Have two filters made and use that filtered water for both cooking and drinking purposes. Boil the water before filtering. If you do this, you will never more hear of malaria. Keep a strict eye on everybody's health. If you can give up lying on the floor--in other words, if you can get the money to do it, it will be excellent indeed. Dirty clothes are the chief cause of disease. . . . About the food offering, let me tell you that only a little Payasanna (milk-rice with sugar) will do. He used to love that alone. It is true that the worship-room is a help to many, but it is no use indulging in Rajasika and Tamasika food. Let the ceremonials give place to a certain extent to a little study of the Gita or the Upanishads or other sacred books. What I mean is this--let there be as little materialism as possible, with the maximum of spirituality. . . . Did Shri Ramakrishna come for this or that particular individual, or for the world at large? If the latter, then you must present him in such a light that the whole world may understand him. . . . *You must not identify yourselves with any life of his written by anybody nor give your sanction to any*. There is no danger so long as such books do not come out associated with our name. . . . "Say yea, yea, to all and stick to your own."

. . . A thousand thanks to Mahendra Babu for his kindly helping us. He is a very liberal-hearted man. . . . About Sanyal, he will attain the highest good by doing his bit of work attentively, that

1 is, by simply serving Shri Ramakrishna's children. . . . Brother
2 Tarak is doing very good work. Bravo! Well done! That is what we
3 want. Let me see all of you shoot like so many meteors! What is
4 Gangadhar doing? Some Zemindars in Rajputana respect him. Tell
5 him to get some money from them as Bhiksha; then he is a man. . . .

6 Just now I read Akshaya's book. Give him a hundred thousand
7 hearty embraces from me. Through his pen Shri Ramakrishna is
8 manifesting himself. Blessed is Akshaya! Let him recite that *Punthi*
9 before all. He must recite it before all in the Festival. If the work be
10 too large, let him read extracts of it. Well, I do not find a single
11 irrelevant word in it. I cannot tell in words the joy I have
12 experienced by reading his book. Try all of you to give the book an
13 extensive sale. Then ask Akshaya to go from village to village to
14 preach. Well done Akshaya! He is doing his work. Go from village to
15 village and proclaim to all Shri Ramakrishna's teachings, can there
16 be a more blessed lot than this? I tell you, Akshaya's book and
17 Akshaya himself must electrify the masses. Dear, dear, Akshaya, I
18 bless you with all my heart, my dear brother. May the Lord sit in
19 your tongue! Go and spread his teachings from door to door. There
20 is no need whatever of your becoming a Sannyasin. . . . Akshaya is
21 the future apostle for the masses of Bengal. Take great care of
22 Akshaya; his faith and devotion have borne fruit.

23 Ask Akshaya to write these few points in the third section of
24 his book, "The Propagation of the Faith".

25 1. Whatever the Vedas, the Vedanta, and all other
26 Incarnations have done in the past, Shri Ramakrishna lived to
27 practise in the course of a single life.

28 2. One cannot understand the Vedas, the Vedanta, the
29 Incarnations, and so forth, without understanding *his* life. For he
30 was the explanation.

31 3. From the very date that he was born, has sprung the Satya-
32 Yuga (Golden Age). Henceforth there is an end to all sorts of
33 distinctions, and everyone down to the Chandala will be a sharer in
34 the Divine Love. The distinction between man and woman, between
35 the rich and the poor, the literate and illiterate, Brahmins and
36 Chandalas--he lived to root out all. And he was the harbinger of
37 Peace--the separation between Hindus and Mohammedans,
38 between Hindus and Christians, all are now things of the past. That
39 fight about distinctions that there was, belonged to another era. In
40 this Satya-Yuga the tidal wave of Shri Ramakrishna's Love has
41 unified all.

42 Tell him to expand these ideas and write them in his own
43 style.

44 Whoever--man or woman--will worship Shri Ramakrishna, be
45 he or she ever so low, will be then and there converted into the very
46 highest. Another thing, the Motherhood of God is prominent in this
47 Incarnation. He used to dress himself as a woman--he was, as it
48 were, our Mother--and we must likewise look upon all women as the
49 reflections of the Mother. In India there are two great evils.
50 Trampling on the women, and grinding the poor through caste

1 restrictions. He was the Saviour of women, Saviour of the masses,
2 Saviour of all, high and low. And let Akshaya introduce his worship
3 in every home--Brahmin or Chandala, man or woman--everyone has
4 the right to worship him. Whoever will worship him only with
5 devotion shall be blessed for ever.

6 Tell him to write in this strain. Never mind anything--the Lord
7 will be at his side.

8 Yours
9 affectionately,

10 Vivekananda

11 PS. . . . Ask Sanyal to send me a copy each of the *Narada* and
12 *Shandilya Sutras* , and one of the *Yogavasishtha* , that has been
13 translated in Calcutta. I want the English translation of the last, not
14 a Bengali edition. . . .

15

16

17 LXXVI

18 C/o E. T. Sturdy,

19 Esq.,

20 Reading,

21 Caversham, England

22 1895

23 {original in Bengali}

24 Dear Rakhal {Brahmananda},

25 Glad to receive your letters. There are two defects in the
26 letters which you all write, specially in yours. The first is that very
27 few of the important points I ask are answered. Secondly, there is
28 unusual delay in replying. . . . I have to work day and night, and am
29 always whirling from place to place besides. . . . These are
30 countries where the people are most luxurious, fashionable folk,
31 and nobody would touch a man who has but a speck of dirt on his
32 body. . . . I hoped that somebody would come while I was still here,
33 but as yet nothing has been settled I see. . . . Business is business,
34 that is, you must do everything promptly; delay and shuffling won't
35 do. By the end of next week I shall go to America, so there is no
36 chance of my meeting him who is coming. . . . These are countries
37 of gigantic scholars. Is it a joke to make disciples of such people?
38 You are but children and talk like children. Only this much is
39 needed that there should be someone to teach a little Sanskrit, or
40 translate a bit in my absence, that's all. Why not let Girish Babu
41 visit these lands? It is a good idea. It will cost him but 3000 rupees
42 to visit England and America, and go back. The more people come
43 to these countries, the better. But then it sets my nerves on edge to
44 look at those who don hats and pose as *Sahibs* !

45 Black as chimney sweeps, and calling themselves Europeans!
46 Why not wear one's country-dress, as befits gentlemen?--Instead of
47 that, to add to that frightfulness of appearance! Good heavens! . . .

1 Here, as in our country one has to spend from one's own pocket to
2 give lectures, but one can make good the expenses if one lives long
3 enough and makes a reputation. Another thing, my incessant
4 lecturing tours are making my constitution very nervous, causing
5 insomnia and other troubles. Over and above that, I have to work
6 single-handed. It is no use depending on my countrymen. No one (in
7 Bengal) has hitherto helped me with a penny, nor has a single soul
8 stepped forward to my assistance. Everybody in this world seeks
9 help, and the more you help him, the more he wants. And if you can
10 do no further, he will call you a cheat. . . . I love ___ and trust him. . .
11 . He will be free from disease through the Lord's grace. I take all
12 his responsibility. . . .

13 Yours

14 affectionately,

15 Vivekananda

16
17
18 LXXVII

19 C/o E. T. Sturdy, Esq.,

20 High View,

21 Caversham, England

22 1895

23 {original in Bengali}

24 Dear Shashi {Ramakrishnananda},

25 . . . I am in receipt of Rakhal's letter today. I am sorry to hear
26 that ___ has suffered from gravel. Most probably it was due to
27 indigestion. Gopal's debts have been cleared; now ask him to join
28 the monastic order. The worldly-wise instinct is most difficult to root
29 out. . . . Let him come and work in the Math. One is apt to imbibe a
30 lot of mischievous ideas by concerning oneself too long in worldly
31 affairs. If he refuses to take the monastic vow, please tell him to
32 clear out. I don't want amphibious type of men who will be half
33 monks and half householders. . . . Haramohan has coined a *Lord*
34 Ramakrishna Paramahansa, I see. What does he mean? English
35 Lord, or Duke? Tell Rakhal, let people say whatever they will--"Men
36 (who wrongly criticise) are to be treated as worms!" as Shri
37 Ramakrishna used to say. Let there be no disparity between what
38 you profess and what you do, also eschew the very name of
39 Jesuitism. Was I ever an orthodox, Pauranika Hindu, an adherent of
40 social usages? I do not pose as one. You will not have to say things
41 that will be *pleasant* to any section of people. You must not so
42 much as notice what the Bengalis say for or against us. . . . They
43 could not do a penny-worth of service to him whose birth has
44 sanctified their country where the primary laws of health and
45 sanitation are trampled, and yet they would talk big! What matters
46 is, my brother, what such men have got to say! . . . It is for you to go
47 on doing your own work. Why look up to men for approbation, look
48 up to God! I hope Sharat will be able to teach them the Gita and the
49 Upanishads and their commentaries somehow, with the help of the

1 dictionary.--Or, is it an empty Vairagya that you have? The days of
2 such Vairagya are gone! It is not for everyone, my boy, to become
3 Ramakrishna Paramahansa! I hope Sharat has started by this time.
4 Please send a copy of the *Panchadashi* , a copy of the Gita (with as
5 many commentaries as possible), a copy each of the *Narada* and
6 *Shandilya Sutras* (published in Varanasi), a translation (good, not
7 worthless) of the *Panchadashi* --if it is available--and the translation
8 by Kalivara Vedantavagisha of Shankara's Commentary. And if there
9 be any translation, Bengali or English (by Shrish Babu of
10 Allahabad), of Panini's Sutras, or the *Kashika-Vritti*, or the *Phani-*
11 *Bhashya* , please send a copy of each. . . . Now, just tell your
12 Bengalis to send me a copy of the *Vachaspathya* Dictionary, and that
13 will be a good test for those tall-talking people. In England,
14 religious movements make very slow progress. These people here
15 are either bigots or atheists. And the former again have only a bit of
16 formal religion. They say, "Patriotism is our religion." That is all.

17 Send the books to America, c/o Miss Mary Phillips, 19 West
18 38th Street, New York, U.S.A. That is my American address. By the
19 end of November I shall go to America. So send my books etc.,
20 there. If Sharat has started immediately on your receipt of my
21 letter, then only I may meet him, otherwise not. Business is
22 business, no child's play. Mr. Sturdy will see to him and
23 accommodate him. This time I have come to England just to probe a
24 little. Next summer I shall try to make some stir. The winter after
25 that, I shall go to India. . . . Correspond regularly with those who
26 are interested in us, so as to keep up their interest. Try to open
27 centres in places all over Bengal. . . . This much for the present. In
28 my next I shall give you more details. Mr. Sturdy is a very nice
29 gentleman, a staunch Vedantist, and understands a smattering of
30 Sanskrit. It is with a good deal of labour that you can do a little bit
31 of work in these countries; a sheer uphill task, with cold and rain
32 into the bargain. Moreover, here you must support yourself and do
33 your labour of love. Englishmen won't spend a penny on lectures or
34 things of that sort. If they do come to listen to you, well, thank your
35 stars--as is the case in our country. Besides, the common people
36 here do not even know of me now. In addition to all this, they will
37 give you a wide berth if you preach God and such things to them.
38 They think this must be another clergyman! Well, you just patiently
39 do one thing--set about collecting everything that books, beginning
40 with the Rig-Veda down to the most insignificant of Puranas and
41 Tantras, have got to say about creation and annihilation of the
42 universe, about race, heaven, and hell, the soul, consciousness, and
43 intellect, etc., the sense-organs, Mukti, transmigration, and
44 suchlike things. No child's play would do, I want real scholarly
45 work. The most important thing is to collect the materials. My love
46 to you all.

47 Yours

48 affectionately,

49 Vivekananda

50

51

{original in Bengali}

Dear Rakhal,

. . . Your suggestion to me to go back to India is no doubt right, but a seed has been sown in this country, and there is the possibility of its being nipped in the bud if I go away all on a sudden. Hence I have to wait some time. Moreover it will be possible to manage everything nicely from here. Everybody requests me to return to India. It is all right, but don't you see it is not wise to depend upon others. A wise man should stand firm on his own legs and act. Everything will come about slowly. For the present don't forget to be on the look-out for a site. We want a big plot-of about ten to twenty thousand rupees--it must be right on the Ganga. Though my capital is small, I am exceedingly bold. Have an eye on securing the land. At present we shall have to work three centres, one in New York, another in Calcutta and a third in Madras. Then, by degrees, as the Lord will arrange. . . . You must keep a strict eye on your health; let everything else be subordinated to that. . . .

Brother Tarak is eager for travel. Well, it is good, but these are very expensive countries; a preacher needs here at least a thousand rupees a month. But Brother Tarak has boldness, and it is God who provides everything. Quite true, but he must have to improve his English a little. The thing is, one has to snatch one's bread from the jaws of the missionary scholars. That is, one must prevail over these people by dint of learning, or one will be blown off at a puff. They understand neither Sadhus nor your Sannyasins, nor the spirit of renunciation. What they do understand is the vastness of learning, the display of eloquence and tremendous activity. Over and above that, the whole country will be searching for flaws, the clergy will day and night try to snub you, through force or guile. You must get rid of these obstructions to preach your doctrines. Through the mercy of the Divine Mother everything is possible. But in my opinion if Brother Tarak goes on starting some societies in the Punjab and Madras, and you become organised, it will be the best thing. It is indeed a great thing to discover a new path, but it is as difficult a task to cleanse that path and make it spacious and nice. If you live for some time in places where I have sown the seeds of our Master's ideals and succeed in developing the seeds into plants, you will be doing much greater work than I did. What will they who cannot manage some ready-made thing do with regard to things that are yet to come? If you cannot add a little salt to a dish almost done, how am I to believe that you will collect all the ingredients? Let Brother Tarak, as an alternative, start a Himalayan Math at Almora and have a library there, so that we may spend some of our spare time in a cool place and practise spiritual exercises. However, I have nothing to say against any particular course which any one may be led to adopt; on the contrary, God-speed--"{Sanskrit}--May your journey be prosperous". Tell him to wait a bit. What's the good of being in a hurry? You shall all travel

1 the whole world. Courage! Brother Tarak has a great capacity for
2 work within him. Hence I expect much of him.. . . You remember, I
3 suppose, how after Shri Ramakrishna's passing away, all forsook us
4 as so many worthless, ragged boys. Only people like Balaram,
5 Suresh, Master, and Chuni Babu were our friends at that hour of
6 need. And we shall never be able to repay our debts to them. . . .
7 Tell Chuni Babu in private that he has nothing to fear, that those
8 who are protected by the Lord must be above fear. I am a puny
9 man, but the glories of the Lord are infinite. {Sanskrit}--Discard
10 fear. Let not your faith be shaken. . . . Has danger any power over
11 one whom the Lord has taken into His fold?

12 Ever yours,
13 Vivekananda

14
15
16 LXXIX

17 C/o E. T. Sturdy, Esq.,
18 High View, Caversham,
19 Reading
20 England
21 17th Sept., 1895

22 Dear Mrs. Bull,

23 Mr. Sturdy and I want to get hold of a few of the best, say,
24 strong and intelligent men in England to form a society, and
25 therefore we must proceed slowly. We must take care not to be run
26 over with "fads" from the first. This you will know has been my
27 policy in America too. Mr. Sturdy has been in India living with our
28 Sannyasins in their manner for some time. He is an exceedingly
29 energetic man, educated and well versed in Sanskrit. . . . So far so
30 good. . . . Purity, perseverance, and energy--these three I want, and
31 if I get only half a dozen here, my work will go on. I have a great
32 chance of such a few.

33 Vivekananda
34
35

36 LXXX

37 Reading,
38 England
39 24th Sept.,
40 '95

41 Dear Mrs. Bull,

42 I have not done any visible work as yet except helping Mr.
43 Sturdy in studying Sanskrit. . . . Mr. Sturdy wants me to bring over
44 a monk from India from amongst my brethren to help him when I
45 am away in America. I have written to India for one. . . . So far it is

1 all right. I am waiting for the next wave. "Avoid not and seek not--
2 wait for what the Lord sends", is my motto. . . . I am a slow writer,
3 but the heart is full of gratitude.

4 Yours with best
5 wishes,

6 Vivekananda

7
8
9 LXXXI

10 C/o E. T. Sturdy, Esq.,
11 High View,
12 Caversham, Reading
13 England,
14 October, 1895

15 Dear Mother {Mrs. F. H. Leggett},

16 You have not forgotten your son? Where are you now? And
17 Tante and the babies? What about our saintly worshipper at your
18 shrine? Joe Joe is not entering "Nirvana" so soon, but her deep
19 silence almost seems to be a big "Samadhi".

20 Are you on the move? I am enjoying England very much. I am
21 living with my friend on *philosophy* , leaving a little margin for
22 eating and smoking. We are getting nothing else but Dualism and
23 Monism and all the rest of them.

24 Hollister has become very manly, I suppose, in his long
25 trousers; and Alberta is studying German.

26 The Englishmen here are very friendly. Except a few Anglo-
27 Indians, they do not hate black men at all. Not even do they hoot at
28 me in the streets. Sometimes I wonder whether my face has turned
29 white, but the mirror tells the truth. Yet they are all so friendly
30 here.

31 Again, the English men and women who love India are more
32 Hindu than the Hindus themselves. I am getting plenty of
33 vegetables cooked, you will be surprised to hear, *a la Indienne*
34 perfectly. When an Englishman takes up a thing, he goes to its very
35 depths. Yesterday I met a Prof. Fraser, a high official here. He has
36 been half his life in India; and he has lived so much in ancient
37 thought and wisdom that he does not care a fig for anything out of
38 India!! You will be astonished to hear that many of the thoughtful
39 English men and women think that the Hindu caste is the only
40 solution of the social problem. With that idea in their head you may
41 imagine how they hate the socialists and other social democrats!!
42 Again, here the men--and the most highly educated--take the
43 greatest interest in Indian thought, and very few women. The
44 woman's sphere is narrower here than in America. So far
45 everything is going very well with me. I shall let you know any
46 further developments.

1 With my love to paterfamilias, to the Queen Mother, to Joe Joe
2 (no title), and to the babies,
3 Ever yours with love and
4 blessings,
5 Vivekananda
6

8 LXXXII

9 Reading,
10 England,
11 4th Oct.,
12 1895
13 Dear __,
14 . . . Purity, patience, and perseverance overcome all
15 obstacles. All great things must of necessity be slow. . . .
16 Yours with
17 love,
18 Vivekananda
19

21 LXXXIII

22 C/o E. T. Sturdy
23 High View,
24 Caversham, Reading
25 4th October, 1895

26 {original in Bengali}

27 My dear Rakhal,

28 You know that I am now in England. I shall stay here for
29 about a month and go back to America. Next summer I shall again
30 come to England. At present there is not much prospect in England,
31 but the Lord is omnipotent. Let us wait and see. . . .

32 It is impossible for __ to come now. The thing is, the money
33 belongs to Mr. Sturdy, and we must have the kind of man he likes.
34 Mr. Sturdy has taken initiation from me, and is a very enterprising
35 and good man.

36 In the first place we want a man who has a thorough mastery
37 of English and Sanskrit. It is true that __ will be able to pick up
38 English soon should he come here but I am as yet unable to bring
39 men here to learn. We want them, first, who will be able to teach. In
40 the second place, I trust those that will not desert me in prosperity
41 and adversity alike. . . . The most trustworthy men are needed.
42 Then, after the foundation is laid, let him who will, come and make
43 a noise, there is no fear. __ gave no proof of wisdom in being
44 carried away by a hubbub and joining the party of those charlatans.

1 Sir, granted that Ramakrishna Paramahansa was a sham, granted
2 that it has been a very serious mistake, indeed, to take refuge in
3 him, but what is the way out now? What if one life is spent in vain,
4 but shall a *man* eat his own words? Can there be such a thing as
5 having a dozen husbands? Any of you may join any party you like, I
6 have no objection, no, not in the least, but travelling this world over
7 I find that save and except his circle alone, everywhere else thought
8 and act are at variance. For those that belong to him, I have the
9 utmost love, the utmost confidence. I have no alternative in the
10 matter. Call me one-sided if you will, but there you have my *bona*
11 *fide* avowal. If but a thorn pricks the foot of one who has
12 surrendered himself to Shri Ramakrishna, it makes my bones ache.
13 All others I love; you will find very few men so unsectarian as I am;
14 but you must excuse me, I have that bit of bigotry. If I do not appeal
15 to his name, whose else shall I? It will be time enough to seek for a
16 big Guru in our next birth; but in this, it is that unlearned Brahmin
17 who has bought this body of mine for ever.

18 I give you a bit of my mind; don't be angry, pray. I am your
19 slave so long as you are his--step a hair's breadth outside that, and
20 you and I are on a par. All the sects and societies that you see, the
21 whole host of them, inside the country or out, he has already
22 swallowed them all, my brother. "{Sanskrit}--These have verily
23 been killed by Myself long ago, be only the instrument, O Arjuna."
24 Today or tomorrow they will be merged in your own body. O man of
25 little faith! Through his grace, "{Sanskrit}--The whole universe
26 becomes a hoof-mark of the cow." Be not traitors, that is a sin past
27 atonement. Name, fame, good deeds, "{Sanskrit} etc--Whatever
28 sacrifices you perform, whatever penances you undergo, whatever
29 you eat"--surrender everything to his feet. What on earth do we
30 want? He has given us refuge, what more do we want? Bhakti is
31 verily its own reward--what else is needed? My brother, he who
32 made men of us by feeding and clothing and imparting wisdom and
33 knowledge, who opened the eyes of our self, whom day and night
34 we found the living God--must we be traitors to him!!! And you
35 forget the mercy of such a Lord! The lives of Buddha and Krishna
36 and Jesus are matters of ancient history, and doubts are entertained
37 about their historicity, and you in spite of seeing the greatness of
38 Shri Ramakrishna's life in flesh and blood sometimes lose your
39 head! Fie upon you! I have nothing to say. His likeness is being
40 worshipped in and out of your country, by godless and heartless
41 men, and you are stranded at times on disbelief!! In a breath he will
42 create for himself hundreds of thousands of such as you are.
43 Blessed is your birth, blessed your lineage, and blessed your
44 country that you were allowed to take the dust of his feet. Well I
45 can't help. He is protecting us, forsooth--I see it before my eyes.
46 Insane that you are, is it through my own strength that beauty like
47 that of fairies, and hundreds of thousands of rupees, lose their
48 attraction and appear as nothing to me? Or is it he who is
49 protecting me? He who has no faith in him and no reverence for the
50 Holy Mother will be a downright loser, I tell you plainly.

51 . . . Haramohan has written about his troubled circumstances,
52 and says he will be dislodged from his home soon. He has asked for

1 some lectures; but I have none at present, but have still some
2 money left in my purse, which I shall send him. So he need not be
3 afraid. I could send him at once, but I suspect that the money I last
4 sent was miscarried, therefore I postpone sending it. Secondly, I
5 know, besides, of no address to send it to. I see the Madras people
6 have failed to start the paper. Practical wisdom is altogether
7 wanting in the Hindu race, I see. Whenever you promise to do any
8 work, you must do it exactly at the appointed time, or people lose
9 their faith in you. Money matters require a speedy reply. . . . If
10 Master Mahashaya be willing, tell him to be my Calcutta agent, for
11 I have an implicit faith in him, and he understands a good deal of
12 these things; it is not for a childish and noisy rabble to do it. Tell
13 him to fix upon a centre, an address that will not change every hour,
14 and to which I shall direct all my Calcutta correspondence. . . .
15 Business is business. . . .

16 Yours etc.,

17 Vivekananda

18
19 LXXXIV

20 Reading

21 6th Oct.,

22 1895

23 Dear Mrs. Bull,

24 . . . I am translating a little book on Bhakti with Mr. Sturdy
25 with copious commentaries, which is to be published soon. This
26 month I am to give two lectures in London and one in Maidenhead.
27 This will open up the way to some classes and parlour lectures. We
28 do not wish to make any noise but to go quietly. . . .

29 Yours with best

30 wishes,

31 Vivekananda

32
33
34 LXXXV

35 London,

36 13th Nov.,

37 1895

38 {original in Bengali}

39 My Dear Akhandananda,

40 I am very glad to receive your letter. It is excellent work that
41 you are doing. R_ is very liberal and open-handed, but no
42 advantage should be taken over him for that reason. About the
43 raising of funds by Shriman_, well, it is a fair enterprise; but my
44 boy, this is a very queer world, where even the World-Gods Brahma
45 and Vishnu find it difficult to evade the clutches of lust and gold.
46 Wherever there is any the least concern with money, there is the

1 chance for misunderstanding. Let therefore nobody undertake such
2 work as raising money on behalf of the Math. . . . Whenever you
3 hear of any householder collecting funds in my or our name on the
4 plea of erecting a Math, or some such thing, the first thing you
5 should do is to distrust him, and never set your hand to it. The more
6 so, as householders of poor means take to various tricks to supply
7 their wants. Therefore, if ever a trusty devotee or a householder
8 with a heart, being of affluent circumstances, undertakes such
9 works as the founding of a Math, or if the funds raised be kept in
10 the custody of a trusty householder of wealth--well and good,
11 otherwise never have a hand in it. On the contrary, you must
12 dissuade others from such a thing. You are but a boy and are
13 ignorant of the snare of gold. Opportunities will turn even a staunch
14 moralist into a cheat. This is the way of the world. . . .

15 It is not at all in our nature to do a work conjointly. It is to this
16 that our miserable condition is due. He who knows how to obey
17 knows how to command. Learn obedience first. Among these
18 Western nations, with such a high spirit of independence, the spirit
19 of obedience is equally strong. We are all of us self-important--
20 which never produces any work. Great enterprise, boundless
21 courage, tremendous energy, and, above all, perfect obedience--
22 these are the only traits that lead to individual and national
23 regeneration. These traits are altogether lacking in us.

24 Go on with the work as you are doing it, but then you must
25 pay particular attention to study. J__ Babu has sent a Hindi
26 magazine, in which Pundit R__ of Alwar has published a translation
27 of my Chicago Address. Please convey my special indebtedness and
28 thanks to both.

29 Let me now address myself to you--take particular care to
30 start a centre in Rajputana. It must be in some central place like
31 Jaipur or Ajmer. Then branches must be established in towns like
32 Alwar and Khetri. You must mix with all, we do not want to quarrel
33 with any. Give my loving embrace to Pundit N__; the man is very
34 energetic, and will be a very practical man in time. Tender my
35 loving regards to Mr. M__ and __ji too. A Religious Association or
36 something of the kind has been afoot at Ajmer--what is it? Let me
37 know all about it. M__ Babu writes that he and others have written
38 me letters; but I have not received any up till now. . . .

39 About Maths, or centres, or anything of the kind, it is no use
40 starting them in Calcutta; Varanasi is the place for them. I have
41 many plans like that, but all depends on funds. You will know of
42 them by degrees. You might have noticed from the papers that our
43 movement is steadily gaining ground in England. Every enterprise
44 in this country takes some time to have a go. But once John Bull
45 sets his hand to a thing, he will never let it go. The Americans are
46 quick, but they are somewhat like straw on fire, ready to be
47 extinguished. Do not preach to the public that Ramakrishna
48 Paramahansa was an Incarnation, and things of that sort. I have
49 some followers at __ look after them. . . . Infinite power will come
50 unto you--never fear. Be pure, have faith, be obedient.

51 Teach against the marriage of boys. No scripture ever

1 sanctions it. But for the present say nothing against little girls being
2 married. Directly you stop the marriage of boys, that of girls will
3 stop of itself. Girls surely are not going to marry among themselves!
4 Write to the Secretary, Arya Samaj, Lahore, asking the whereabouts
5 of a Sannyasin named Achyutananda who used to live with them.
6 Make special inquiry of the man. . . . Never fear.

7 affectionately, Yours
8
9 Vivekananda

10
11
12 LXXXVI

13 London,
14 21st Nov.,
15 1895

16 Dear Mrs. Bull,

17 I sail by the *Britannic* on Wednesday, the 27th. My work so
18 far has been very satisfactory here and I am sure to do splendid
19 work here next summer. . . .

20 Yours with
21 love,
22 Vivekananda

23
24
25 LXXXVII

26 R.M.S. "Britannic",
27 Thursday morning,
28 Dec.5, 1895

29 Dear Alberta,

30 Received your nice letter last evening. Very kind of you to
31 remember me. I am going soon to see the "Heavenly Pair". Mr.
32 Leggett is a saint as I have told you already, and your mother is a
33 born empress, every inch of her, with a saint's heart inside.

34 I am so glad you are enjoying the Alps so much. They must be
35 wonderful. It is always in such places that the human soul aspires
36 for freedom. Even if the nation is spiritually poor, it aspires for
37 physical freedom. I met a young Swiss in London. He used to come
38 to my classes. I was very successful in London, and though I did not
39 care for the noisy city, I was very much pleased with the people. In
40 your country, Alberta, the Vedantic thought was introduced in the
41 beginning by ignorant "cranks", and one has to work his way
42 through the difficulties created by such introductions. You may have
43 noticed that only a few men or women of the upper classes ever
44 joined my classes in America. Again in America the upper classes
45 being the rich, their whole time is spent in enjoying their wealth

1 and imitating (aping?) the Europeans. On the other hand in England
2 the Vedantic ideas have been introduced by the most learned men
3 in the country, and there are a large number among the upper
4 classes in England who are very thoughtful. So you will be
5 astonished to hear that I found my grounds all prepared, and I am
6 convinced that my work will have more hold on England than
7 America. Add to this the tremendous tenacity of the English
8 character, and judge for yourself. By this you will find that I have
9 changed a good deal of my opinion about England, and I am glad to
10 confess it. I am perfectly sure that we will do still better in
11 Germany. I am coming back to England next summer. In the
12 meanwhile my work is in very able hands. Joe Joe has been the
13 same kind good pure friend to me here as in America, and my debt
14 to your family is simply immense. My love and blessings to Hollister
15 and you. The steamer is standing at anchor on account of fog. The
16 purser has very kindly given me a whole cabin by myself. Every
17 Hindu is a Raja, they think, and are very polite--and the charm will
18 break, of course, when they find that the Raja is penniless!!

19 Yours with love and
20 blessings,

21 Vivekananda

22
23
24 LXXXVIII

25 228 West 39th St.
26 New York

27 8th Dec. 1895

28 Dear Mrs. Bull,

29 Many thanks for your kind note of welcome. I arrived last
30 Friday after ten days of a very tedious voyage. It was awfully rough
31 and for the first time in my life I was very badly seasick. . . . I have
32 left some strong friends in England who will work in my absence
33 expecting my arrival next summer. My plans are not settled yet
34 about the work here. Only I have an idea to run to Detroit and
35 Chicago meanwhile, and then come back to New York. The public
36 lecture plan I intend to give up entirely, as I find the best thing for
37 me to do is to step entirely out of the money question--either in
38 public lectures or private classes. In the long run it does harm and
39 sets a bad example.

40 In England I worked on this principle and refused even the
41 voluntary collections they made. Mr. Sturdy, being a rich man, bore
42 the major part of the expenses of lecturing in big halls--the rest I
43 bore. It worked well.

44 Again, to use rather a vulgar illustration, even in religion
45 there is no use overstocking the market. The supply must follow the
46 demand, and the demand alone. If people want me, they will get up
47 lectures. I need not bother myself about these things. If you think
48 after consultation with Mrs. Adams and Miss Locke that it would be
49 practicable for me to come to Chicago for a course of lectures,

1 write to me. Of course the money question should be left entirely
2 out.

3 My idea is for autonomic, independent groups in different
4 places. Let them work on their own account and do the best they
5 can. As for myself, I do not want to entangle myself in any
6 organisation. Hoping you are enjoying good health both physically
7 and mentally,

8 I am yours, in
9 the Lord,

Vivekananda

LXXXIX

14 228 W. 39th Street,
15 New York

10th Dec., 1895

17 Dear Mrs. Bull,

18 . . . I have received the Secretary's letter and will be glad to
19 lecture before the Harvard Philosophical Club as requested. The
20 difficulty in the way is: I have begun to write in earnest, as I want to
21 finish some text-books to form the basis of work when I am gone. I
22 have to hurry through four little books before I go.

23 This month, notices are out for the four Sunday lectures. The
24 lectures for the first week of February in Brooklyn are being
25 arranged by Dr. Janes and others.

26 Yours, with best
27 wishes,

Vivekananda

XC

32 New York
33 29th Dec.,
34 1895

35 Dear Sister {Miss S. Farmer},

36 In this universe where nothing is lost, where we live in the
37 midst of death *in life*, every thought that is thought, in public or in
38 private, in crowded thoroughfares or in the deep recesses of
39 primeval forests, lives. They are continuously trying to become self-
40 embodied, and until they have embodied themselves, they will
41 struggle for expression, and any amount of repression cannot kill
42 them. Nothing can be destroyed--those thoughts that caused evil in
43 the past are also seeking embodiment, to be filtered through
44 repeated expression and, at last, transfigured into perfect good.

As such, there is a mass of thought which is at the present time struggling to get expression. This new thought is telling us to give up our dreams of dualism, of good and evil in essence, and the still wilder dream of suppression. It teaches us that higher direction and not destruction is the law. It teaches us that it is not a world of bad and good, but good and better--and still better. It stops short of nothing but acceptance. It teaches that no situation is hopeless, and as such accepts every form of mental, moral, or spiritual thought where it already stands, and without a world of condemnation tells it that so far it has done good, now is the time to do better. What in old times was thought of as the elimination of bad, it teaches as the transfiguration of evil and the doing of better. It, above all, teaches that the kingdom of heaven is already in existence if we will have it, that perfection is already in man if he will see it.

The Greenacre meetings last summer were so wonderful, simply because you opened yourself fully to that thought which has found in you so competent a medium of expression, and because you took your stand on the highest teaching of this thought that the kingdom of heaven already exists.

You have been consecrated and chosen by the Lord as a channel for converting this thought into life, and every one that helps you in this wonderful work is serving the Lord.

Our scripture teaches that he who serves the servants of the Lord is His highest worshipper. You are a servant of the Lord, and as a disciple of Krishna I will always consider it a privilege and worship to render you any service in the carrying out of your inspired mission wherever I be.

brother. Ever your affectionate

Vivekananda

XCI

Jan., 1896

{original in Bengali}

Dear Sarada,

. . . Your idea of the paper is very good indeed. Apply yourself to it heart and soul. . . . Never mind the funds. . . . There are many to preach Christianity and Mohammedanism--you just go through the preaching of your own country's religion. But then if you can get hold of a Mohammedan who is versed in Arabic and have old Arabic books translated, it will be a good plan. There is much of Indian history in the Persian language. If you can have the books translated bit by bit, it will be a good regular item. We want quite a number of writers, then there is the difficult task of getting subscribers. The way out is this: You lead a wandering life; wherever you find Bengali language spoken, thrust the paper on whomsoever you can lay your hands on. Enlist them by

1 vehemence!--they would always turn tail the moment they have to
2 spend something. Never mind anything! Push it on! Begin to
3 contribute articles, all of you who can. It won't do merely to sit idle.
4 You have done a heroic deed! Bravo! Those who falter and vacillate
5 will lag behind, and you will jump straight on top of all! Those that
6 are working for their own salvation will neither have their own nor
7 that of others. Let the commotion that you make be such as to
8 resound to the world's end. There are people who are ready to pick
9 holes in everything, but when it comes to the question of work, not
10 a scent of them can be had! To work!--as far as in you lies! Then I
11 shall go to India and move the whole country. What fear! "Even a
12 snake loses its venom if it is insisted that it has none." These people
13 will go on the negative track, till they are actually reduced to
14 nothing! . . .

15 Gangadhar has done right heroic work! Well done! Kali has
16 joined him in work--thrice well done!! Let one go to Madras, and
17 another to Bombay, let the world shake on its hinges! Oh, the grief!
18 If I could get two or three like me, I could have left the world
19 convulsed. As it is, I have to proceed gently. Move the world to its
20 foundations! Send one to China, another to Japan! What will the
21 poor householders do, with their little bits of life? It is for the
22 Sannyasins, Shiva's demons, to rend the skies with their shouts of
23 "Hara! Hara! Shambho!"

24 affectionately, Yours
25
26 Vivekananda

27
28
29 XCII
30 228 W. 39,
31 New York
32 24th Jan.,
33 1896

34 {original in Bengali}

35 Dear Yogen,

36 . . . I am very sorry to hear that your health is not yet all right.
37 Can you go to a very cold climate where there is plenty of snowfall
38 in the winter, Darjeeling, for instance? The severity of the cold will
39 set your stomach right, as it has done in my case. And can you give
40 up altogether the habit of using ghee and spices? Butter digests
41 more quickly than ghee. . . .

42 Three months more and I go to England, to try once more to
43 make some stir; the following winter to India--and after that, it
44 depends on the Lord.

45 Put forth all nerve for the magazine that Sarada is wanting to
46 publish. Ask Shashi to look to it. One thing, neither Kali nor
47 anybody else has any need of coming to England at present. I shall
48 train them first when I go to India, and then they may go wherever

1 they please.

2 We would do nothing ourselves and would scoff at others who
3 try to do something--this is the bane that has brought about our
4 downfall as a nation. Want of sympathy and lack of energy are at
5 the root of all misery, and you must therefore give these two up.
6 Who but the Lord knows what potentialities there are in particular
7 individuals--let all have opportunities, and leave the rest to the
8 Lord. It is indeed very difficult to have an equal love for all, but
9 without it there is no Mukti.

10 affectionately, Yours

11
12 Vivekananda

13

14

15 XCIII

16 New York,
17 25th Jan.,
18 1896

19 Dear Mrs. Bull,

20 Your letter to Sturdy has been sent over to me. It was very
21 kind of you to write that note. This year, I am afraid, I am getting
22 overworked, as I feel the strain. I want a rest badly. So it is very
23 good, as you say, that the Boston work be taken up in the end of
24 March. By the end of April I will start for England.

25 Land can be had in large plots in the Catskills for very little
26 money. There is a plot of 101 acres for \$200. The money I have
27 ready, only I cannot buy the land in my name. You are the only
28 friend in this country in whom I have perfect trust. If you consent, I
29 will buy the land in your name. The students will go there in
30 summer and build cottages or camps as they like and practise
31 meditation. Later on, if they can collect funds, they may build
32 something up. I am sorry, you cannot come just now. Tomorrow will
33 be the last Sunday lecture of this month. The first Sunday of next
34 month there will be a lecture in Brooklyn; the rest, three in New
35 York, with which I will close this year's New York lectures.

36 I have worked my best. If there is any seed of truth in it, it
37 will come to life. So I have no anxiety about anything. I am also
38 getting tired of lecturing and having classes. After a few months'
39 work in England I will go to India and hide myself absolutely for
40 some years or for ever. I am satisfied in my conscience that I did not
41 remain an idle Swami. I have a note-book which has travelled with
42 me all over the world. I find these words written seven years
43 ago--"Now to seek a corner and lay myself there to die!" Yet all this
44 Karma remained. I hope I have worked it out. I hope the Lord will
45 give me freedom from this preaching and adding good bondages.

46 "If you have known the Atman as the one existence and that
47 nothing else exists, for whom, for what desire, do you trouble
48 yourself?" Through Maya all this doing good etc. came into my

1 brain--now they are leaving me. I get more and more convinced that
2 there is no other object in work except the purification of the soul--
3 to make it fit for knowledge. This world with its good and evil will
4 go on in various forms. Only the evil and good will take new names
5 and new seats. My soul is hankering after peace and rest eternal
6 undisturbed.

7 "Live alone, live alone. He who is alone never comes into
8 conflict with others--never disturbs others, is never disturbed by
9 others." I long, oh! I long for my rags, my shaven head, my sleep
10 under the trees, and my food from begging! India is the only place
11 where, with all its faults, the soul finds its freedom, its God. All this
12 Western pomp is only vanity, only bondage of the soul. Never more
13 in my life I realised more forcibly the vanity of the world. May the
14 Lord break the bondage of all--may all come out of Maya--is the
15 constant prayer of

16 Vivekananda

17
18
19 XCIV

20 Boston

21 2nd March,

22 1896

23 {original in Bengali}

24 Dear Sarada,

25 Your letter informed me of everything; but I note that you do
26 not so much as refer to the cable I sent about the celebration. The
27 dictionary that Shashi sent a few months ago has not arrived so
28 far. . . . I am going to England soon. Sharat need not come now at
29 all; for I am myself going to England. I do not want people who take
30 such a long time to make up their minds. I did not invite him for a
31 European tour, and I do not have the money either. So ask him not
32 to come, and none else need.

33 On perusal of your letter on Tibet, I came to lose all regard
34 for your common sense. In the first place, it is nonsense to say that
35 Notovitch's book is genuine. Did you see any original copy, or bring
36 it to India? Secondly, you say you saw in the Kailas Math the
37 portrait of Jesus and the Samaritan Woman. How do you know that
38 it was Jesus' portrait, and not that of a man in the street? Even
39 taking it for granted, how do you know that it was not put up in the
40 said Math by someone who was a Christian? And your opinions on
41 the Tibetans too are unsound; you did not certainly see the heart of
42 Tibet, but only a fringe of the trade route. In places like those only
43 the dregs of a nation are to be met. If on seeing the Chinabazar and
44 Barabazar quarters of Calcutta, anybody called every Bengali a liar,
45 would that be correct?

46 Consult Shashi properly when writing any article. . . . What
47 you need is only obedience. . . .

48 Yours

1 affectionately,

2 Vivekananda

3

4

5 XCV

6 Indiana Ave,

7 Chicago, Ill.

8 6th April, 1896

9 Dear Mrs. Bull,

10 Your kind note was duly received. I had beautiful visits with
11 my friends and have already held several classes. I shall have a few
12 more and then start on Thursday.

13 Everything has been well arranged here, thanks to the
14 kindness of Miss Adams. She is so, so good and kind.

15 I am suffering from slight fever the last two days; so I can't
16 write a long letter.

17 My love to all in Boston.

18 Yours with

19 kind regards,

20 Vivekananda

21

22

23 XCVI

24 124 E. 44th Street,

25 New York

26 14th April, 1896

27 Dear Mrs. Bull,

28 . . . Here is a curious person who comes to me with a letter
29 from Bombay. He is a practical mechanic and his one idea is to see
30 cutlery and other iron manufactories in this country. . . . I do not
31 know anything about him, but even if he be a rogue, I like very
32 much to foster this sort of adventurous spirit among my
33 countrymen. He has money enough to pay his way.

34 Now, if with all caution testing of his genuineness of spirit,
35 you feel satisfied, all he wants is to get some opportunities of seeing
36 these manufactories. I hope he is true and that you can manage to
37 help him in this.

38 Yours with

39 kind regards,

40 Vivekananda

41

42

New York,
14th April,

1896

{original in Bengali}

Dear Sarada,

Glad to hear everything in your letter. I have got news that Sharat arrived safe. I am in receipt of your letter and the copy of the *Indian Mirror*. Your contribution is good, go on writing regularly. . . . It is very easy to search for faults, but the characteristic of a saint lies in looking for merits--never forget this. . . . You need a little business faculty. . . . Now what you want is organisation--that requires strict obedience and division of labour. I shall write out everything in every particular from England, for which I start tomorrow. I am determined to make you decent workers thoroughly organised. . . .

The term "Friend" can be used with all. In the English language you have not that sort of cringing politeness common in Bengali, and such Bengali terms translated into English become ridiculous. That Ramakrishna Paramahansa was God--and all that sort of thing--has no go in countries like this. M__ has a tendency to put that stuff down everybody's throat, but that will make our movement a little sect. You keep aloof from such attempts; at the same time, if people worship him as God, no harm. Neither encourage nor discourage. The masses will always have the *person*, the higher ones the *principle*; we want both. But principles are universal, *not* persons. Therefore stick to the principles he taught, let people think whatever they like of his person. . . . Truce to all quarrels and jealousies and bigotry! These will spoil everything. "But many *that are* first shall be last; and the last first." "{Sanskrit}--Those who are the devotees of My devotees are My best devotees."

Yours

affectionately,

Vivekananda

Road,

63 St. George's
London

30th May, 1896

Dear Mrs. Bull,

. . . Day before yesterday I had a fine visit with Prof. Max Muller. He is a saintly man and looks like a young man in spite of his seventy years, and his face is without a wrinkle. I wish I had half his love for India and Vedanta. At the same time he is a friend of Yoga too and believes in it. Only he has no patience with humbugs.

1 Above all, his reverence for Ramakrishna Paramahansa is
2 extreme, and he has written an article on him for the *Nineteenth*
3 *Century*. He asked me, "What are you doing to make him known to
4 the world?" Ramakrishna has charmed him for years. Is it not good
5 news? . . .

6 Things are going on here slowly but steadily. I am to begin
7 from next Sunday my public lectures.

8 Yours ever in grateful
9 affection,

Vivekananda

XCIX

63 St. George's Road,
London S.W.

5th June, 1896

Dear Mrs. Bull,

The *Raja-Yoga* book is going on splendidly. Saradananda goes
to the States soon.

I do not like any one whom I love to become a lawyer,
although my father was one. My Master was against it, and I
believe that that family is sure to come to grief where there are
several lawyers. Our country is full of them; the universities turn
them out by the hundreds. What my nation wants is pluck and
scientific genius. So I want Mohin to be an electrician. Even if he
fails in life, still I will have the satisfaction that he strove to become
great and really useful to his country. . . . In *America alone* there is
something in the air which brings out whatever is best in every one.
. . . I want him to be daring, bold, and to struggle to cut a new path
for himself and his nation. An electrical engineer can make a living
in India.

Yours with
love,

Vivekananda

PS. Goodwin is writing to you this mail with reference to a
magazine in America. I think something of the sort is necessary to
keep the work together, and shall of course do all that I can to help
it on in the line he suggests.

. . . I think it very probable that he will come over with
Saradananda.

C

63 St. George's Road,
London S.W.

24th June, 1896

{original in Bengali}

Dear Shashi,

Max Muller wants all the sayings of Shri Ramakrishna classified, that is, all on Karma in one place, on Vairagya in another place, so on Bhakti, Jnana, etc., etc. You must undertake to do this forthwith. . . . We must take care to present only the universal aspect of his teachings. . . .

Sharat starts for America tomorrow. The work here is coming to a head. We have already got funds to start a London Centre. Next month I go to Switzerland to pass a month or two there, then I shall return to London. What will be the good of my going home?--This London is the hub of the world. The heart of India is here. How can I leave without laying a sure foundation here? Nonsense! For the present, I shall have Kali here, tell him to be ready. . . .

We want great spirit, tremendous energy, and boundless enthusiasm, no womanishness will do. Try to go on exactly as I wrote to you in my last. We want organisation. Organisation is power, and the secret of this is obedience.

Yours

affectionately,

Vivekananda

CI

High View,

Caversham, Reading

3rd July, 1896

Dear Shashi,

Send Kali to England as soon as you get this letter. . . . He will have to bring some books for me. I have only got Rig-Veda Samhita. Ask him to bring the Yajur-Veda, Sama-Veda, Atharva-Samhita, as many of the Brahmanas as he can get, beginning with the Shatapatha, some of the Sutras, and Yaska's Nirukta. . . .

Let there be no delay as in Sharat's case, but let Kali come at once. Sharat has gone to America, as he had no work to do here. That is to say, he was late by six months, and then when he came, I was here. . . .

Yours

affectionately,

Vivekananda

CII

1
2 London S.W.

63 St. George's Road,

3
4 6th July, 1896

5 Dear Frankincense {Mr. Leggett},

6 . . . Things are going on with me very well on this side of the Atlantic.

7 The Sunday lectures were quite successful; so were the
8 classes. The season has ended and I too am thoroughly exhausted. I
9 am going to make a tour in Switzerland with Miss Muller. The
10 Galsworthys have been very very kind. Joe brought them round
11 splendidly. I simply admire Joe in her tact and quiet way. She is a
12 feminine statesman or woman. She can wield a kingdom. I have
13 seldom seen such strong yet good common sense in a human being.
14 I will return next autumn and take up the work in America.

15 The night before last I was at a party at Mrs. Martin's, about
16 whom you must already know a good deal from Joe.

17 Well, the work is growing silently yet surely in England.
18 Almost every other man or woman came to me and talked about the
19 work. This British Empire with all its drawbacks is the greatest
20 machine that ever existed for the dissemination of ideas. I mean to
21 put my ideas in the center of this machine, and they will spread all
22 over the world. Of course, all great work is slow, and the difficulties
23 are too many, especially as we Hindus are the conquered race. Yet,
24 that is the very reason why it is bound to work, for spiritual ideals
25 have always come from the downtrodden. Jews overwhelmed the
26 Roman Empire with their spiritual ideals. You will be pleased to
27 know that I am also learning my lessons every day in patience and,
28 above all, in sympathy. I think I am beginning to see the Divine,
29 even inside the high and mighty Anglo-Indians. I think I am slowly
30 approaching to that state when I should be able to love the very
31 "Devil" himself, if there were any.

32 At twenty years of age I was the most unsympathetic,
33 uncompromising fanatic; I would not walk on the footpath on the
34 theatre side of the streets in Calcutta. At thirty-three, I can live in
35 the same house with prostitutes and never would think of saying a
36 word of reproach to them. Is it degenerate? Or is it that I am
37 broadening out into the Universal Love which is the Lord Himself?
38 Again I have heard that if one does not see the evil round him he
39 cannot do good work--he lapses into a sort of fatalism. I do not see
40 that. On the other hand, my power of work is immensely increasing
41 and becoming immensely effective. Some days I get into a sort of
42 ecstasy. I feel that I must bless every one, everything, love and
43 embrace everything, and I do see that evil is a delusion. I am in one
44 of these moods now, dear Francis, and am actually shedding tears
45 of joy at the thought of you and Mrs. Leggett's love and kindness to
46 me. I bless the day I was born. I have had so much of kindness and
47 love here, and that Love Infinite that brought me into being has
48 guarded every one of my actions, good or bad, (don't be
49 frightened), for what am I, what was I ever, but a tool in His hands,
50 for whose service I have given up everything, my beloved ones, my

1 joys, my life? He is my playful darling, I am His playfellow. There is
2 neither rhyme nor reason in the universe! What reason binds Him?
3 He the playful one is playing these tears and laughters over all
4 parts of the play! Great fun, great fun, as Joe says.

5 It is a funny world, and the funniest chap you ever saw is He--
6 the Beloved Infinite! Fun, is it not? Brotherhood or playmatehood--a
7 school of romping children let out to play in this playground of the
8 world! Isn't it? Whom to praise, whom to blame, it is all His play.
9 They want explanations, but how can you explain Him? He is
10 brainless, nor has He any reason. He is fooling us with little brains
11 and reason, but this time He won't find me napping.

12 I have learnt a thing or two: Beyond, beyond reason and
13 learning and talking is the feeling, the "Love", the "Beloved". Ay,
14 *sake* , fill up the cup and we will be mad.

15 Yours ever in
16 madness,

17 Vivekananda

18
19
20 CIII

21 63 St. George's Road,

22 London S.W.

23 8th July, 1896

24 Dear Mrs. Bull,

25 The English people are very generous. In three minutes' time
26 the other evening, my class raised £150 for the new quarters for
27 next autumn's work. They would have given £500 on the spot if
28 wanted, but we want to go slow, and not rush into expense. There
29 will be many hands here to carry on the work, and they understand
30 a bit of renunciation, here--the deep English character.

31 Yours with best

32 wishes,

33 Vivekananda

34
35
36 CIV

37 Saas-Grund,

38 Switzerland

39 25th July, 1896

40 Dear Mrs. Bull,

41 I want to forget the world entirely at least for the next two
42 months and practise hard. That is my rest. . . . The mountains and
43 snow have a beautifully quieting influence on me, and I am getting
44 better sleep here than for a long time.

1 My love to all friends.

2 Yours etc.,
3 Vivekananda

4

5

6 CV

7 C/o E. T. Sturdy, Esq.
8 High View,
9 Caversham, Reading

10 5th August, 1896

11 Dear Sahji {Lala Badri Sah},

12 Many thanks for your kind greetings. I have an inquiry to
13 make; if you kindly forward me the information I seek, I would be
14 much obliged.

15 I want to start a Math at Almora or near Almora rather. I have
16 heard that there was a certain Mr. Ramsay who lived in a bungalow
17 near Almora and that he had a garden round his bungalow. Can't it
18 be bought? What is the price? If not to be bought, can it be rented?

19 Do you know of any suitable place near Almora where I can
20 build my monastery with a garden etc.? I would rather like to have
21 a hill all to myself.

22 Hoping to get an early reply, I remain, with blessings and love
23 to you and all the rest of my friends in Almora,

24 Vivekananda

25

26

27 CVI

28 Lake Lucerne,
29 Switzerland

30 23rd August, 1896

31 {original in Bengali}

32 My dear Shashi,

33 Today I received a letter from Ramdayal Babu, in which he
34 writes that many public women attend the Ramakrishna
35 anniversary festival at Dakshineswar, which makes many less
36 inclined to go there. Moreover, in his opinion, one day should be
37 appointed for men and another for women. My decision on the point
38 is this:

39 1. If public women are not allowed to go to such a great place
40 of pilgrimage as Dakshineswar, where else shall they go to? If is for
41 the sinful that the Lord manifests Himself specially, not so much for
42 the virtuous.

43 2. Let distinctions of sex, caste, wealth, learning, and the

1 whole host of them, which are so many gateways to hell, be
2 confined to the world alone. If such distinctions persist in holy
3 places of pilgrimage, where then lies the difference between them
4 and hell itself?

5 3. Ours is a gigantic City of Jagannatha, where those who
6 have sinned and those who have not, the saintly and the vicious,
7 men and women and children irrespective of age, all have equal
8 right. That for one day at least in the year thousands of men and
9 women get rid of the sense of sin and ideas of distinction and sing
10 and hear the name of the Lord, is in itself a supreme good.

11 4. If even in a place of pilgrimage people's tendency to evil be
12 not curbed for one day, the fault lies with you, not them. Create
13 such a huge tidal wave of spirituality that whatever people come
14 near will be swept away.

15 5. Those who, even in a chapel, would think this is a public
16 woman, that man is of a low caste, a third is poor, and yet another
17 belongs to the masses--the less be the number of such people (that
18 is, whom you call gentlemen) the better. Will they who look to the
19 caste, sex, or profession of Bhaktas appreciate our Lord? I pray to
20 the Lord that hundreds of public women may come and bow their
21 heads at His feet; it does not matter if not one gentleman comes.
22 Come public women, come drunkards, come thieves and all--His
23 Gate is open to all. "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye
24 of a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God." Never
25 let such cruel, demoniacal ideas have a place in your mind.

26 6. But then some social vigilance is needed. How are we to do
27 that? A few men (old men, preferably) should take charge as the
28 warders for the day. They will make circuits round the scene of the
29 festival, and in case they find any man or woman showing
30 impropriety of speech or conduct, they will at once expel them out
31 of the garden. But so long as they behave like good men and
32 women, they are Bhaktas and are to be respected--be they men or
33 women, honest citizens or unchaste.

34 I am at present travelling in Switzerland, and shall soon go to
35 Germany, to see Professor Deussen. I shall return to England from
36 there about the 23rd or 24th September, and the next winter will
37 find me back in my country.

38 My love to you and all.

39 Yours etc.,

40 Vivekananda

41
42
43 CVII

44 Lucerne,

45 Switzerland

46 23rd August,

47 1896

1 Dear Mrs. Bull,

2 I received your last today. By this time you must have
3 received my receipt for £5 you sent. I do not know what
4 membership you mean. I have no objection to have my name to be
5 put on the list of membership of any society. As for Sturdy, I do not
6 know what his opinions are. I am now travelling in Switzerland;
7 from hence I go to Germany, then to England, and next winter to
8 India. I am very glad to hear that Saradananda and Goodwin are
9 doing good work in the U.S. As for me, I do not lay any claim to that
10 £500 for any work. I think I have worked enough. I am now going to
11 retire. I have sent for another man from India who will join me next
12 month. I have begun the work, let others work it out. So you see, to
13 set the work going I had to touch money and property, for a time.
14 Now I am sure my part of the work is done, and I have no more
15 interest in Vedanta or any philosophy in the world or the work itself.
16 I am getting ready to depart to return no more to this hell, this
17 world. Even its religious utility is beginning to pall me. May Mother
18 gather me soon to Herself never to come back any more! These
19 works, and doing good, etc., are just a little exercise to cleanse the
20 mind. I had enough of it. This world will be world ever and always.
21 What we are, so we see it. Who works? Whose work? There is no
22 world. It is God Himself. In delusion we call it world. Neither I nor
23 thou nor you--it is all He the Lord, all One. So I do not want
24 anything to do about money matters from this time. It is your
25 money. You spend what comes to you just as you like, and blessings
26 follow you.

27 Yours in the
28 Lord,

29 Vivekananda

30 PS. I have entire sympathy with the work of Dr. Janes and
31 have written him so. If Goodwin and Saradananda can speed the
32 work in U.S., Godspeed to them. They are in no way bound to me or
33 to Sturdy or to anybody else. It was an awful mistake in the
34 Greenacre programme that it was printed that Saradananda was
35 there by the kind permission (leave of absence from England) of
36 Sturdy. Who is Sturdy or anybody else to *permit* a Sannyasin?
37 Sturdy himself laughed at it and was sorry too. It was a piece of
38 folly. Nothing short of that. It was an insult to Sturdy and would
39 have proved serious for my work if it had reached India.
40 Fortunately I tore all those notices to pieces and threw them into
41 the gutter, and wondered whether it was the celebrated "Yankee"
42 manners the English people delight in talking about. Even so, I am
43 no master to any Sannyasin in this world. They do whatever it suits
44 them, and if I can help them--that is all my connection with them. I
45 have given up the bondage of iron, the family tie--I am not to take
46 up the golden chain of religious brotherhood. I am free, must
47 always be free. I wish everyone to be free--free as the air. If New
48 York needs Vedanta, or Boston, or any other place in the U.S., it
49 must receive them and keep them and provide for them. As for me,
50 I am as good as retired. I have played my part in the world.

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CVIII

Airlie Lodge,
Ridgeway Gardens
Wimbledon, England
17th Sept., 1896

Dear Sister {Harriet Hale},

Your very welcome news reached me just now, on my return here from Switzerland. I am very, very happy to learn that at last you have thought it better to change your mind about the felicity of "Old Maids Home". You are perfectly right now--marriage is the truest goal for ninety-nine per cent of the human race, and they will live the happiest life as soon as they have learnt and are ready to abide by the eternal lesson--that we are bound to bear and forbear and that life to every one must be a compromise.

Believe me, dear Harriet, perfect life is a contradiction in terms. Therefore we must always expect to find things not up to our highest ideal. Knowing this, we are bound to make the best of everything. From what I know of you, you have the calm power which bears and forbears to a great degree, and therefore I am safe to prophesy that your married life will be very happy.

All blessings attend you and your *fiance* and may the Lord make him always remember what good fortune was his in getting such a wife as you--good, intelligent, loving, and beautiful. I am afraid it is impossible for me to cross the Atlantic so soon. I wish I could, to see your marriage.

The best I can do in the circumstances is to quote from one of our books: "May you always enjoy the undivided love of your husband, helping him in attaining all that is desirable in this life, and when you have seen your children's children, and the drama of life is nearing its end, may you help each other in reaching that infinite ocean of Existence, Knowledge, and Bliss, at the touch of whose waters all distinctions melt away and we are all one!"

"May you be like Uma, chaste and pure throughout life--may your husband be like Shiva, whose life was in Uma!"

Your loving
brother,

Vivekananda

CIX

C/o Miss Muller,
Airlie Lodge,
Ridgeway Gardens
Wimbledon, England

7th October, 1896

{To Josephine MacLeod}

Once more in London, dear Joe Joe, and the classes have begun already. Instinctively I looked about for one familiar face which never had a line of discouragement, never changed, but was always helpful, cheerful, and strengthening--and my mind conjured up that face before me, in spite of a few thousand miles of space. For what is space in the realm of spirit? Well, you are gone to your home of rest and peace. For me, ever-increasing mad work; yet I have your blessings with me always, have I not? My natural tendency is to go into a cave and be quiet, but a fate behind pushes me forward and I go. Whoever could resist fate?

Why did not Christ say in the Sermon on the Mount, "Blessed are they that are always cheerful and always hopeful for they have already the kingdom of heaven"? I am sure, He must have said it, He with the sorrows of a whole world in His heart, He who likened the saintly soul with the child--but it was not noted down; of a thousand things they noted down only one, I mean, remembered.

Most of our friends came--one of the Galsworthys too--i.e. the married daughter. Mrs. Galsworthy could not come today; it was very short notice. We have a hall now, a pretty big one holding about 200 or more. There is a big corner which will be fitted up as the Library. I have another man from India now to help me.

I enjoyed Switzerland immensely, also Germany. Prof. Deussen was very kind--we came together to London and had great *fun* here. Prof. Max Muller is very, very friendly too. In all, the English work is becoming *solid* --and respectable too, seeing that great scholars are sympathising. Probably I go to India this winter with some English friends. So far about my own sweet self.

Now what about the holy family? Everything is going on first-rate, I am sure. You must have heard of Fox by this time. I am afraid I rather made him dejected the day before he sailed by telling him that he could not marry Mabel, until he began to earn a good deal of money! Is Mabel with you now? Give her my love. Also give me your present address.

How is Mother? Frankincense, same solid sterling gold as ever, I am sure. Alberta, working at her music and languages, laughing a good deal and eating a good many apples as usual? By the by, I now live mostly on fruits and nuts. They seem to agree with me well. If ever the old doctor, with "land" up somewhere, comes to see you, you may confide to him this secret. I have lost a good deal of my fat. But on days I lecture, I have to go on solid food. How is Hollis? I never saw a sweeter boy--may all blessings ever attend him through life.

I hear your friend Cola is lecturing on Zoroastrian philosophy--surely the stars are not smiling on him. What about your Miss Andreas and our Yogananda? What news about the brotherhood of the ZZZ's and our Mrs. (forgotten!)? I hear that half a shipload of Hindus and Buddhists and Mohammedans and Brotherhoods and what not have entered the U.S., and another

1 cargo of Mahatma-seekers, evangelists etc. have entered India!
2 Good. India and the U.S. seem to be two countries for religious
3 enterprise. Have a care, Joe; the heathen corruption is dreadful. I
4 met Madam Sterling in the street today. She does not come any
5 more for my lectures, good for her. Too much of philosophy is not
6 good. Do you remember that lady who used to come to every
7 meeting too late to hear a word but button-holed me immediately
8 after and kept me talking, till a battle of Waterloo would be raging
9 in my internal economy through hunger? She came. They are all
10 coming and more. That is cheering.

11 It is getting late in the night. So goodnight, Joe. (Is strict
12 etiquette to be followed in New York too?) And Lord bless you ever
13 and ever.

14 "Man's all-wise maker, wishing to create a faultless form
15 whose matchless symmetry should far transcend creation's choicest
16 works, did call together by his mighty will, and garner up in his
17 eternal mind, a bright assemblage of all lovely things, and then, as
18 in a picture, fashioned them into one perfect and ideal form. Such
19 the divine, the wondrous prototype whence her fair shape was
20 moulded into being." (*Shakuntalam* by Kalidasa, translated by
21 Monier Williams).

22 That is you, Joe Joe; only I would add, the same the creator
23 did with all purity and nobility and other qualities and then Joe was
24 made.

25 Ever yours, with love and
26 blessings,

27 Vivekananda

28 PS. Mrs. & Mr. Sevier in whose house (flat) I am writing now,
29 send their kindest regards.

30
31
32 CX

33 Airlie Lodge, Ridgeway
34 Gardens,

35 Wimbledon

36 8th October, 1896

37 Dear (Miss S.E. Waldo),

38 . . . I had a fine rest in Switzerland and made a great friend of
39 Prof. Paul Deussen. My European work in fact is becoming more
40 satisfactory to me than any other work, and it tells immensely on
41 India. The London classes were resumed, and today is the opening
42 lecture. I now have a hall to myself holding two hundred or more. . .
43 .

44 You know of course the steadiness of the English; they are the
45 least jealous of each other of all nations, and that is why they
46 dominate the world. They have solved the secret of obedience
47 without slavish cringing--great freedom with great law-abidingness.

1 I know very little of the young man R__. He is a Bengali and
2 can teach a little Sanskrit. You know my settled doctrine. I do not
3 trust any one who has not conquered "lust and gold". You may try
4 him in theoretical subjects, but keep him off from teaching Raja-
5 Yoga--that is a dangerous game except for the regularly trained to
6 play at. Of Saradananda, the blessing of the greatest Yogi of
7 modern India is on him--and there is no danger. Why do you not
8 begin to teach? . . . You have a thousand times more philosophy
9 than this boy R__. Send notices to the class and hold regular talks
10 and lectures.

11 *I will be thousand times more pleased* to see one of you start
12 than any number of Hindus securing success in America--even one
13 of my brethren. "Man wants Victory from everywhere, but defeat
14 from his own children". . . . Make a blaze! Make a blaze!

15 With all love and
16 blessings,

17 Vivekananda

18
19
20 CXI

21 Wimbledon,
22 8th October,
23 1896

24 Dear Mrs. Bull,

25 . . . I met in Germany Prof. Deussen. I was his guest at Kiel
26 and we travelled together to London and had some very pleasant
27 meetings here. . . . Although I am in full sympathy with the various
28 branches of religious and social work, I find that specification of
29 work is absolutely necessary. Our special branch is to preach
30 Vedanta. Helping in other work should be subservient to that one
31 ideal. I hope you will inculcate this in the mind of Saradananda very
32 strongly.

33 Did you read Max Muller's article on Ramakrishna? . . .
34 Things are working very favourably here in England. The work is
35 not only popular but appreciated.

36 Yours affly.,
37 Vivekananda

38
39
40 CXII

41 14 Greycoat Gardens,
42 Westminster
43 London, England
44 1st November, 1896

45 My dear Mary {Hale},

1 "Silver and gold", my dear Mary, "have I none; but such as I
2 have give I thee" freely, and that is the knowledge that the goldness
3 of gold, the silverness of silver, the manhood of man, the
4 womanhood of woman, the reality of everything is the Lord--and
5 that this Lord we are trying to realise from time without beginning
6 in the objective, and in the attempt throwing up such "queer"
7 creatures of our fancy as man, woman, child, body, mind, the earth,
8 sun, moon, stars, the world, love, hate, property, wealth, etc.; also
9 ghosts, devils, angels and gods, God etc.

10 The fact being that the Lord is in us, we are He, the eternal
11 subject, the real ego, never to be objectified, and that all this
12 objectifying process is mere waste of time and talent. When the
13 soul becomes aware of this, it gives up objectifying and falls back
14 more and more upon the subjective. This is the evolution, less and
15 less in the body and more and more in the mind--*man* the highest
16 form, meaning in Sanskrit *manas*, thought--the animal that thinks
17 and not the animal that "senses" only. This is what in theology is
18 called "renunciation". The formation of society, the institution of
19 marriage, the love for children, our good works, morality, and ethics
20 are all different forms of renunciation. All our lives in every society
21 are the subjection of the will, the thirst, the desire. This surrender
22 of the will or the fictitious self--or the desire to jump out of
23 ourselves, as it were--the struggle still to objectify the subject--is
24 the one phenomenon in this world of which all societies and social
25 forms are various modes and stages. Love is the easiest and
26 smoothest way towards the self-surrender or subjection of the will,
27 and hatred, the opposite.

28 People have been cajoled through various stories or
29 superstitions of heavens and hells and Rulers above the sky,
30 towards this one end of self-surrender. The philosopher does the
31 same knowingly without superstition, by giving up desires.

32 An objective heaven or millennium therefore has existence
33 only in the fancy--but a subjective one is already in existence. The
34 musk-deer, after vain search for the cause of the scent of the musk,
35 at last will have to find it in himself.

36 Objective society will always be a mixture of good and evil--
37 objective life will always be followed by its shadow, death, and the
38 longer the life, the longer will also be the shadow. It is only when
39 the sun is on our own head that *there is no shadow*. When God and
40 good and everything else is in us, there is no evil. In objective life,
41 however, every bullet has its billet--evil goes with every good as its
42 shadow. Every improvement is coupled with an equal degradation.
43 The reason being that good and evil are not two things but one, the
44 difference being only in manifestation--one of degree, not kind.

45 Our very lives depend upon the death of others--plants or
46 animals or bacilli! The other great mistake we often make is that
47 good is taken as an ever-increasing item, whilst evil is a fixed
48 quantity. From this it is argued that evil being diminished every day,
49 there will come a time when good alone will remain. The fallacy lies
50 in the assumption of a false premise. If good is increasing, so is evil.
51 My desires have been much more than the desires of the masses

1 among my race. My joys have been much greater than theirs--but
2 my miseries a million times more intense. The same constitution
3 that makes you feel the least touch of good makes you feel the least
4 of evil too. The same nerves that carry sensations of pleasure carry
5 the sensations of pain too--and the same mind feels both. The
6 progress of the world means more enjoyment and more misery too.
7 This mixture of life and death, good and evil, knowledge and
8 ignorance is what is called Maya--or the universal phenomenon. You
9 may go on for eternity inside this net, seeking for happiness--you
10 find much, and much evil too. To have good and no evil is childish
11 nonsense. Two ways are left open--one by giving up all hope to take
12 up the world as it is and bear the pangs and pains in the hope of a
13 crumb of happiness now and then. The other, to give up the search
14 for pleasure, knowing it to be pain in another form, and seek for
15 *truth* --and those that dare try for truth succeed in finding that truth
16 as ever present--present in themselves. Then we also discover how
17 the same truth is manifesting itself both in our relative error and
18 knowledge--we find also that the same truth is bliss which again is
19 manifesting itself as good and evil, and with it also we find real
20 existence which is manifesting itself as both death and life.

21 Thus we realise that all these phenomena are but the
22 reflections, bifurcated or manifolded, of the one existence, truth-
23 bliss-unity--my real Self and the reality of everything else. Then and
24 then only is it possible to do good without evil, for such a soul has
25 known and got the control of the material of which both good and
26 evil are manufactured, and he alone can manifest one or the other
27 as he likes, and we know he manifests only good. This is the Jivan-
28 mukta--the living free--the goal of Vedanta as of all other
29 philosophies.

30 Human society is in turn governed by the four castes--the
31 priests, the soldiers, the traders, and the labourers. Each state has
32 its glories as well as its defects. When the priest (Brahmin) rules,
33 there is a tremendous exclusiveness on hereditary grounds; the
34 persons of the priests and their descendants are hemmed in with all
35 sorts of safeguards--none but they have any knowledge--none but
36 they have the right to impart that knowledge. Its glory is that at this
37 period is laid the foundation of sciences. The priests cultivate the
38 mind, for through the mind they govern.

39 The military (Kshatriya) rule is tyrannical and cruel, but they
40 are not exclusive; and during that period arts and social culture
41 attain their height.

42 The commercial (Vaishya) rule comes next. It is awful in its
43 silent crushing and blood-sucking power. Its advantage is, as the
44 trader himself goes everywhere, he is a good disseminator of ideas
45 collected during the two previous states. They are still less
46 exclusive than the military, but culture begins to decay.

47 Last will come the labourer (Shudra) rule. Its advantages will
48 be the distribution of physical comforts--its disadvantages,
49 (perhaps) the lowering of culture. There will be a great distribution
50 of ordinary education, but extraordinary geniuses will be less and
51 less.

If it is possible to form a state in which the knowledge of the priest period, the culture of the military, the distributive spirit of the commercial, and the ideal of equality of the last can all be kept intact, minus their evils, it will be an ideal state. But is it possible?

Yet the first three have had their day. Now is the time for the last-they must have it-none can resist it. I do not know all the difficulties about the gold or silver standards (nobody seems to know much as to that), but this much I see that the gold standard has been making the poor poorer, and the rich richer. Bryan was right when he said, "We refuse to be crucified on a cross of gold." The silver standard will give the poor a better chance in this unequal fight. I am a socialist not because I think it is a perfect system, but half a loaf is better than no bread.

The other systems have been tried and found wanting. Let this one be tried--if for nothing else, for the novelty of the thing. A redistribution of pain and pleasure is better than always the same persons having pains and pleasures. The sum total of good and evil in the world remains ever the same. The yoke will be lifted from shoulder to shoulder by new systems, that is all.

Let every dog have his day in this miserable world, so that after this experience of so-called happiness they may all come to the Lord and give up this vanity of a world and governments and all other botherations.

With love to you all,

Ever your faithful

brother,

Vivekananda

CXIII

Greycoat Gardens,
Westminster,

London, S.W.

13th November.

1896

Dear Mrs. Bull,

. . . I am very soon starting for India, most probably on the 16th of December. As I am very desirous to see India once before I come again to America, and as I have arranged to take several friends from England with me to India, it is impossible for me to go to America on my way, however I might have liked it.

Dr. Janes is doing splendid work indeed. I can hardly express my gratitude for the many kindnesses and the help he has given me and my work. . . . The work is progressing beautifully here.

You will be interested to know that the first edition of *Raja-Yoga* is sold out, and there is a standing order for several hundreds more.

Yours etc.,
Vivekananda

CXIV

Street 39 Victoria
London S.W.
21st
November, 1896

{original in Bengali}

Dear Lalaji {Lala Badri Sah},

I reach Madras about the 7th of January; after a few days in the plains I intend to come up to Almora.

I have three English friends with me. Two of them, Mr. and Mrs. Sevier, are going to settle in Almora. They are my disciples, you know, and they are going to build the Math for me in the Himalayas. It was for that reason I asked you to look for some suitable site. We want a whole hill, with a view of the snow-range, all to ourselves. It would of course take time to fix on a site and complete the building. In the meanwhile will you kindly engage a small bungalow for my friends? The bungalow ought to accommodate three persons. I do not require a large one. A small one would do for the present. My friends will live in this bungalow in Almora and then go about looking for a site and building.

You need not reply to this letter, as before your reply will reach me, I shall be on my way to India. I will wire to you from Madras as soon as I reach there.

With love and blessings to you all,

Yours,
Vivekananda

CXV

Caversham, Reading

1896

Dear _____,

... Can anything be done unless everybody exerts himself to

1 his utmost? "{Sanskrit}" etc.--"It is the man of action, the lion-
2 heart, that the Goddess of Wealth resorts to." No need of looking
3 behind. FORWARD! We want infinite energy, infinite zeal, infinite
4 courage, and infinite patience, then only will great things be
5 achieved. . . .

6
7 affectionately, Yours
8 Vivekananda

9
10

11 CXVI
12 39 Victoria St.,
13 London S.W.

14 28th Nov., 1896

15 Dear Sisters {Mary and Harriet Hale},

16 . . . I feel impelled to write a few lines to you before my
17 departure for India. The work in London has been a roaring
18 success. The English are not so bright as the Americans, but once
19 you touch their heart, it is yours for ever. Slowly have I gained, and
20 it is strange that in six months' work altogether I would have a
21 steady class of 120 persons apart from public lectures. Here every
22 one means work--the practical Englishman. Capt. and Mrs. Sevier
23 and Mr. Goodwin are going to India with me to work and spend
24 their own money on it! There are scores here ready to do the same:
25 men and women of position, ready to give up everything for the
26 idea, once they feel convinced! And last though not the least, the
27 help in the shape of money to start my "work" in India has come
28 and more will follow. My ideas about the English have been
29 revolutionised. I now understand why the Lord has blessed them
30 above all other races. They are steady, sincere to the backbone,
31 with great depths of feeling--only with a crust of stoicism on the
32 surface; if that is broken, you have your man.

33 Now I am going to start a centre in Calcutta and another in
34 the Himalayas. The Himalayan one will be an entire hill about 7,000
35 ft. high--cool in summer, cold in winter. Capt. and Mrs. Sevier will
36 live there, and it will be the centre for European workers, as I do
37 not want to kill them by forcing on them the Indian mode of living
38 and the fiery plains. My plan is to send out numbers of Hindu boys
39 to every civilised country to preach--get men and women from
40 foreign countries to work in India. This would be a good exchange.
41 After having established the centres, I go about up and down like
42 the gentleman in the book of Job.

43 Here I must end to catch the mail. Things are opening for me.
44 I am glad, and I know so you are. Now all blessings be yours and all
45 happiness.

46 With eternal
47 love,
48 Vivekananda

1 PS. What about Dharmapala? What is he doing? Give him my
2 love if you meet him.

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4
5 CXVII

6 14 Greycoat
7 Gardens,
8 Westminster,
9 London S.W.

10 3rd Dec., 1896

11 Dear Alberta,

12 Herewith I enclose a letter of Mabel to Joe Joe to you. I have
13 enjoyed the news in it very much and so I am sure you will.

14 I am to start from here for India on the 16th and to take the
15 steamer at Naples. I will, therefore, be in Italy for some days and in
16 Rome for three or four days. I will be very happy to look in to say
17 goodbye to you.

18 Capt. and Mrs. Sevier from England are going to India with
19 me, and they will be with me in Italy of course. You saw them last
20 summer.

21 I intend to return to the U.S. and to Europe thence in about a
22 year.

23 With all love and
24 blessings,

25 Vivekananda

26
27
28 CXVIII

29 39 Victoria Street,
30 London

31 9th Dec., 1896

32 Dear Mrs. Bull,

33 It is needless to express my gratitude at your most generous
34 offer. I don't want to encumber myself with a large amount of
35 money at the first start, but as things progress on I will be very glad
36 to find employment for that sum. My idea is to start on a very small
37 scale. I do not know anything yet. I will know my bearings when on
38 the spot in India. From India I will write to you more details about
39 my plans and the practical way to realise them. I start on the 16th
40 and after a few days in Italy take the steamer at Naples.

41 Kindly convey my love to Mrs. Vaughan and Saradananda and
42 to the rest of my friends there. As for you, I have always regarded
43 you as the best friend I have, and it will be the same all my life.

44 With love and blessings.

1 Yours,
2 Vivekananda
3
4

5 CXIX

6 13th Dec.,
7 1896

8 Dear Frankincense {Mr. Leggett},

9 So Gopala has taken the female form! It is fit that it should be
10 so--the time and the place considering. May all blessings follow her
11 through life. She was keenly desired, prayed for, and she comes as
12 a blessing to you and to your wife for life. I have not the least doubt.

13 I wish I could have come to America now if only to fulfil the
14 form "the sages of the East bringing presents to the Western baby".
15 But the heart is there with all prayers and blessings, and the mind
16 is more powerful than the body.

17 I am starting on the 16th of this month and take the steamer
18 at Naples. Will see Alberta in Rome surely. With all love to the holy
19 family.

20 Yours ever in
21 the Lord,

22 Vivekananda
23
24

25 CXX

26 Hotel Minerva,
27 Florence

28 20th Dec., 1896

29 Dear Alberta,

30 Tomorrow we reach Rome. I will most possibly come to see
31 you day after tomorrow as it will be late in the night when we reach
32 Rome. We stop at the Hotel Continental.

33 With all love and
34 blessings,

35 Vivekananda
36
37

38 CXXI

39 Ramnad,
40 30th Jan.,
41 1897

42 My dear Mary,

1 Things are turning out most curiously for me. From Colombo
2 in Ceylon, where I landed, to Ramnad, the nearly southernmost
3 point of the Indian continent where I am just now as the guest of
4 the Raja of Ramnad, my journey has been a huge procession--
5 crowds of people, illuminations, addresses, etc., etc. A monument
6 forty feet high is being built on the spot where I landed. The Raja of
7 Ramnad has presented his address to "His most Holiness" in a huge
8 casket of solid gold beautifully worked. Madras and Calcutta are on
9 the tiptoe of expectation as if the whole nation is rising to honour
10 me. So you see, Mary, I am on the very height of my destiny, yet the
11 mind turns to quietness and peace, to the days we had in Chicago,
12 of rest, of peace, and love; and that is why I write just now, and may
13 this find you all in health and peace! I wrote a letter to my people
14 from London to receive Dr. Barrows kindly. They accorded him a big
15 reception, but it was not my fault that he could not make any
16 impression there. The Calcutta people are a hard-headed lot! Now
17 Barrows thinks a world of me, I hear! Such is the world.

18 With all love to mother, father, and you all,

19 I remain,
20 yours affly.,

21 Vivekananda

22
23
24 CXXII

25 Alambazar

26 Math, Calcutta

27 25th Feb., 1897

28 Dear Mrs. Bull,

29 Saradananda sends £20 to be placed in the famine relief in
30 India. But as there is famine in his own home, I thought it best to
31 relieve that first, as the old proverb says. So it has been employed
32 accordingly.

33 I have not a moment to die as they say, what with processions
34 and tomtomings and various other methods of reception all over the
35 country; I am almost dead. As soon as the Birthday is over I will fly
36 off to the hills. I received an address from the Cambridge
37 Conference as well as one from the Brooklyn Ethical Association.
38 One from the Vedanta Association of New York, as mentioned in Dr.
39 Janes's letter, has not yet arrived.

40 Also there is a letter from Dr. Janes suggesting work along
41 the line of your conference, here in India. It is almost impossible for
42 me to pay any attention to these things. I am so, so tired. I do not
43 know whether I would live even six months more or not, unless I
44 have some rest.

45 Now I have to start two centres, one in Madras, the other in
46 Calcutta. The Madras people are deeper and more sincere, and I
47 am sure, will be able to collect funds from Madras itself. The
48 Calcutta people are mostly enthusiastic (I mean the aristocracy)

1 through patriotism, and their sympathy would never materialise. On
2 the other hand, the country is full of persons, jealous and pitiless,
3 who would leave no stones unturned to pull my work to pieces.

4 But as you know well, the more the opposition, the more the
5 demon in me is roused. My duty would not be complete if I die
6 without starting the two places, one for the Sannyasins, the other
7 for the women.

8 I have already £500 from England about, £500 from Mr.
9 Sturdy, and if your money be added to it, I am sure I will be able to
10 start the two. I think, therefore, you ought to send the money as
11 soon as possible. The safest way is to put the money in a bank in
12 America in your and my name jointly, so that either of us may draw
13 it. In case I die before the money is employed, you will be able to
14 draw it all and put it to the use I wanted. So that, in case of my
15 death, none of my people would be able to meddle with it. The
16 English money has been put in the bank in the same position in the
17 joint names of Mr. Sturdy and myself.

18 With love to Saradananda and eternal love and gratitude to
19 yourself,

20 Yours etc.,

21 Vivekananda

22
23
24 CXXIII

25 Darjeeling

26 April 28,

27 1897

28 Dear Mary,

29 A few days ago I received your beautiful letter. Yesterday
30 came the card announcing Harriet's marriage. Lord bless the happy
31 pair!

32 The whole country here rose like one man to receive me.
33 Hundreds of thousands of persons, shouting and cheering at every
34 place, Rajas drawing my carriage, arches all over the streets of the
35 capitals with blazing mottoes etc.!!! The whole thing will soon come
36 out in the form of a book, and you will have a copy soon. But
37 unfortunately I was already exhausted by hard work in England;
38 and this tremendous exertion in the heat of Southern India
39 prostrated me completely. I had of course to give up the idea of
40 visiting other parts of India and fly up to the nearest hill station,
41 Darjeeling. Now I feel much better, and a month more in Almora
42 would complete the cure. By the bye, I have just lost a chance of
43 coming over to Europe. Raja Ajit Singh and several other Rajas
44 start next Saturday for England. Of course, they wanted hard to get
45 me to go over with them. But unfortunately the doctors would not
46 hear of my undertaking any physical or mental labour just now. So
47 with the greatest chagrin I had to give it up, reserving it for a near
48 future.

1 Dr. Barrows has reached America by this time, I hope. Poor
2 man! He came here to preach the most bigoted Christianity, with
3 the usual result that nobody listened to him. Of course they
4 received him very kindly; but it was my letter that did it. I could not
5 put brains into him! Moreover, he seems to be a queer sort of man.
6 I hear that he was mad at the national rejoicings over my coming
7 home. You ought to have sent a brainier man anyway, for the
8 Parliament of Religions has been made a farce of in the Hindu mind
9 by Dr. Barrows. On metaphysical lines no nation on earth can hold a
10 candle to the Hindus; and curiously all the fellows that come over
11 here from Christian land have that one antiquated foolishness of an
12 argument that because the Christians are powerful and rich and the
13 Hindus are not, so Christianity must be better than Hinduism. To
14 which the Hindus very aptly retort that, that is the very reason why
15 Hinduism is a religion and Christianity is not; because, in this
16 beastly world, it is blackguardism and that alone which *prosper* ,
17 virtue always suffers. It seems, however advanced the Western
18 nations are in scientific culture, they are mere babies in
19 metaphysical and spiritual education. Material science can only
20 give worldly prosperity, whilst spiritual science is for eternal life. If
21 there be no eternal life, still the enjoyment of spiritual thoughts as
22 ideas is keener and makes a man happier, whilst the foolery of
23 materialism leads to competition and undue ambition and ultimate
24 death, individual and national.

25 This Darjeeling is a beautiful spot with a view of the glorious
26 Kanchenjanga (28,146 ft.) now and then when the clouds permit it,
27 and from a near hilltop one can catch a glimpse of Gauri Shankar
28 (29,000 ft?) now and then. Then, the people here too are
29 picturesque, the Tibetans and Nepalese and, above all, the
30 beautiful Lepcha women. Do you know one Colston Turnbull of
31 Chicago? He was here a few weeks before I reached India. He
32 seems to have had a great liking for me, with the result that Hindu
33 people all liked him very much. What about Joe, Mrs. Adams, Sister
34 Josephine, and all the rest of our friends? Where are our beloved
35 Mills? Grinding slow but sure? I wanted to send some nuptial
36 presents to Harriet, but with your "terrible" duties I must reserve it
37 for some near future. Maybe I shall meet them in Europe very soon.
38 I would have been very glad, of course, if you could announce your
39 engagement, and I would fulfil my promise by filling up half a dozen
40 papers in one letter. . . .

41 My hair is turning grey in bundles, and my face is getting
42 wrinkled up all over; that losing of flesh has given me twenty years
43 of age more. And now I am losing flesh rapidly, because I am made
44 to live upon meat and meat alone--no bread, no rice, no potatoes,
45 not even a lump of sugar in my coffee!! I am living with a Brahmin
46 family who all dress in knickerbockers, women excepted of course!
47 I am also in knickers. I would have given you a surprise if you had
48 seen me bounding from rock to rock like a chamois, or galloping
49 might and main up and down mountain roads.

50 I am very well here, for life in the plains has become a
51 torture. I cannot put the tip of my nose out into the streets, but
52 there is a curious crowd!! Fame is not all milk and honey!! I am

1 going to train a big beard; now it is turning grey. It gives a
2 venerable appearance and saves one from American scandal-
3 mongers! O thou white hair, how much thou canst conceal, all glory
4 unto thee, Hallelujah!

5 The mail time is nearly up, so I finish. Good dreams, good
6 health, all blessings attend you.

7 With love to father and mother and you all,

8 Yours,

9 Vivekananda

10
11
12 CXXIV

13 Almora

14 30th May,

15 1897

16 {original in Bengali}

17 Dear Sir {Pramada Das Mitra},

18 I hear some unavoidable domestic grief has come upon you.
19 To you, a man of wisdom, what can this misery do? Yet the
20 amenities of friendly intercourse, incidental to relative existence in
21 this world, require my making mention of it. Those moments of
22 grief, however, very often bring out a better spiritual realisation. As
23 if for a while the clouds withdraw and the sun of truth shines out. In
24 the case of some, half of the bondage is loosened. Of all bondages
25 the greatest is that of position--the fear of reputation is stronger
26 than the fear of death; but even this bondage appears to relax a
27 little. As if the mind sees for a moment that it is much better to
28 listen to the indwelling Lord than to the opinions of men. But again
29 the clouds close up, and this indeed is Maya.

30 Though for a long time I had no direct correspondence with
31 you, yet I have often been receiving from others almost all the news
32 about you. Some time ago you kindly sent me to England a copy of a
33 translation of the Gita. The cover only bore a line of your
34 handwriting. The few words in acknowledgment of this gift, I am
35 told, raised doubts in your mind about my old affection towards you.

36 Please know these doubts to be groundless. The reason of
37 that laconic acknowledgement is that I was given to see, during
38 four or five years, only that one line of your handwriting on the
39 cover of an English Gita, from which fact I thought, if you had no
40 leisure to write more, would you have leisure enough to read much?
41 Secondly, I learnt, you were particularly the friend of white-skinned
42 missionaries of the Hindu religion and the roguish black natives
43 were repelling! There was apprehension on this score. Thirdly, I am
44 a Mlechchha, Shudra, and so forth; I eat anything and everything,
45 and with anybody and everybody--and that in public both abroad
46 and here. In my views, besides, much perversion has supervened--
47 one attributeless absolute Brahman, I see, I fairly understand, and I

1 see in some particular individuals the special manifestations of that
2 Brahman; if those individuals are called by the name of God, I can
3 well follow--otherwise the mind does not feel inclined towards
4 intellectual theorisings such as the postulated Creator and the like.

5 Such a God I have seen in my life, and his commands I live to
6 follow. The Smritis and the Puranas are productions of men of
7 limited intelligence and are full of fallacies, errors, the feelings of
8 class and malice. Only parts of them breathing broadness of spirit
9 and love are acceptable, the rest are to be rejected. The
10 Upanishads and the Gita are the true scriptures; Rama, Krishna,
11 Buddha, Chaitanya, Nanak, Kabir, and so on are the true Avatars,
12 for they had their hearts broad as the sky--and above all,
13 Ramakrishna. Ramanuja, Shankara etc., seem to have been mere
14 Pundits with much narrowness of heart. Where is that love, that
15 weeping heart at the sorrow of others?--Dry pedantry of the Pandit--
16 and the feeling of only oneself getting to salvation hurry-scurry! But
17 is that going to be possible, sir? Was it ever likely or will it ever be
18 so? Can anything be attained with any shred of "I" left anyhow?

19 Another great discrepancy: the conviction is daily gaining on
20 my mind that the idea of caste is the greatest dividing factor and
21 the root of Maya; all caste either on the principle of birth or of
22 merit is bondage. Some friends advise, "True, lay all that at heart,
23 but outside, in the world of relative experience, distinctions like
24 caste must needs be maintained." . . . The idea of oneness at heart
25 (with a craven impotence of effort, that is to say), and outside, the
26 hell-dance of demons--oppression and persecution--ay, the dealer of
27 death to the poor, but if the Pariah be wealthy enough, "Oh, he is
28 the protector of religion!"

29 Over and above, I come to see from my studies that the
30 disciplines of religion are not for the Shudra; if he exercises any
31 discrimination about food or about going out to foreign lands, it is
32 all useless in his case, only so much labour lost. I am a Shudra, a
33 Mlechchha, so I have nothing to do with all that botheration. To me
34 what would Mlechchha's food matter or Pariah's? It is in the books
35 written by priests that madnesses like that of caste are to be found,
36 and not in books revealed from God. Let the priests enjoy the fruits
37 of their ancestors' achievement, while I follow the word of God, for
38 my good lies there.

39 Another truth I have realised is that altruistic service only is
40 religion, the rest, such as ceremonial observances, are madness--
41 even it is wrong to hanker after one's own salvation. Liberation is
42 only for him who gives up everything for others, whereas others
43 who tax their brains day and night harping on "my salvation", "my
44 salvation", wander about with their true well-being ruined, both
45 present and prospective; and this I have seen many a time with my
46 own eyes. Reflecting on all these sundry matters, I had no heart for
47 writing a letter to you. If notwithstanding all these discrepancies,
48 you find your attachment for me intact, I shall feel it to be a very
49 happy issue indeed.

50 Yours etc.,

51 Vivekananda

{Sanskrit}

{Sanskrit}

TRANSLATION:

Almora,

1st June,

1897

Dear Shuddhananda,

Glad to know from your letter that all are doing well there, and to go through the news in detail. I too am in better health; the rest you will know from Dr. Shashi Bhushan. Let the teaching go on for the present in the method revised by Brahmananda, and if any changes are needed in future, have them done. But it should never be lost sight of that this must be done with the consent of all.

I am now living in a garden belonging to a merchant, situated a little to the north of Almora. Before e are the snow-peaks of the Himalayas looking, in the reflection of the sun, like a mass of silver, a delight to the heart. By taking free air, regular diet, and plenty of exercise, I have grown strong and healthy in body. But I hear that Yogananda is very ill. I am inviting him to come here. But then, he fears the mountain air and water. I wrote to him today, saying, "Stay in this garden for some days, and if you find your illness shows no improvement, you may go to Calcutta." He will do as he pleases.

At Almora, every evening Achyutananda gathers the people together and reads t them the Gita and other Shastras. Many residents of the town, as also soldiers from the cantonment, come there daily. I learn also that he is appreciated by all.

The Bengali interpretation that you have given of the Shloka {Sanskrit}¹³⁰ etc., does not seem to me to be right. The interpretation in question is this: "When(the land) is flooded with water, what is the use of drinking water?" If the law of nature be such that when a land is flooded with water, drinking it is useless, that through certain air passages or through any other recondite ways people's thirst may be allayed, then only can this novel interpretation be relevant, otherwise not. It is Shankara whom you should follow. Or you may explain it in this way: As, even when whole tracts are flooded with water, small pools are also of great use to the thirsty (that is to say, just a little water suffices him, and he says, as it were, " Let the vast sheet of water be, even a little of water will satisfy my object."), of identical use are the whole Vedas to a learned Brahmin. As even when the land is overflowed, one's concern lies in drinking the water and no more, so in all the Vedas illumination alone is the concern.

¹³⁰ ? {Sanskrit} (Gita, II.46.)

Here is another interpretation which hits better the meaning the author wishes to convey: Even when the land is overflowed, it is only that water which is drinkable and salutary, that people seek for, and no other kind. There are various kinds of water, which differ in quality and properties--even though the land be flooded over--according to the differences in property of their substratum, the soil. Likewise a skilful Brahmin, too, will, for the quenching of the worldly thirst, choose from that sea of words known as the Vedas which is flooded over with diverse courses of knowledge, that which alone will be of potency to lead to liberation. And it is the knowledge of the Brahman which will do this.

With blessing and good wishes.

Yours

Vivekananda.

CXXVI

Almora

3rd June,

1897.

Dear Miss Noble,

...As for myself I am quite content. I have rouse a good many of our people, and that was all I wanted. Let things have their course and Karma its sway. I have no bonds here below. I have seen life, and it is all self-- life is for self, love for self, honour for self, everything for self. I look back and scarcely find any action I have done for self--even my wicked deed were not for the self. So I am content; not that I feel I have done anything specially good or great, but the world is so little, life so mean a thing, existence so, so servile-- that I wonder and smile that human beings, rational souls, should be running after this self--so mean and detestable a prize.

This is the truth. We are caught in a trap, and the sooner one gets out, the better for one. I have seen the truth--let the body float up or down, who cares?

It is a beautiful mountain park I am living in now. On the north, extending almost all along the horizon, are peak after peak of the snow-clad Himalayas--forests abounding. It is not cold here, neither very warm; the evenings and mornings are simply delicious. I should like to be here this summer, and when the rains set in, I go down to the plains to work.

I was born for the life of a scholar--retired, quiet, poring over my books. But the Mother dispenses otherwise--yet the tendency is there.

Yours etc.,

Vivekananda.

CXXVII*

Almora,

1 14th June,
2 1897.

3 Dear Rakhal,

4 I am wholly in sympathy with the subject-matter of the letter
5 of Charu that you have sent me.

6 In the proposed Address to the Queen-Empress the following
7 points should be noted:

8 1. That it must be free from exaggeration, in other words,
9 statements to the effect that she is God's regent and so forth, which
10 are so common to us natives.

11 2. That all religions have been protected during her reign, we
12 have been able fearlessly to preach our Vedantic doctrines both in
13 India and England.

14 3. Her kindness towards the Indian poor--as, for instance, her
15 inspiring the English to unique acts of charity by contributing
16 herself to the cause of famine-relief.

17 4. Prayer for her long life and for the continual growth of
18 happiness and prosperity a month the people of her dominions.

19 Have this written in correct English and send it to me at
20 Almora, and I shall sign it and send it to Simla. Let me know to
21 whom it should be addressed in simla.

22 Yours
23 affectionately,

24 Vivekananda.

25 PS. Let Shuddhananda preserve a copy of the weekly letters
26 that he writes to me from the Math.

27 V.

28 CXXVIII*

29 Almora,
30 15th June,
31 1897.

32 My dear Akhandananada,

33 I am getting detailed reports of you and getting more and
34 more delighted. It is that sort of work which can conquer the world.
35 What do differences of sect and opinions matter! Bravo! Accept a
36 hundred thousand embraces and blessings from me. Work, work,
37 work--I care for nothing else. Work, work, work, even unto death!
38 Those that are weak must make themselves great workers, great
39 heroes--never mind money, it will drop from the heavens. Let them
40 whose gifts you will accept, give in their own name if they like, no
41 harm. Whose name, and what is it worth? Who cares for name? Off
42 with it! If in the attempt to carry morsels of food to starving
43 mouths, name and possession and all be doomed even--{Sanskrit}--
44 thrice blessed art thou! It is the heart, the heart that conquers, not
45 the brain. Books and learning, Yoga and meditation and
46 illumination--all are but dust compared with love. It is love that

1 gives you the supernatural powers, love that gives you Bhakti, love
2 that gives illumination, and love, again, that leads to emancipation.
3 This indeed is worship, worship of the Lord in the human
4 tabernacle,"{Sanskrit}--not this that people worship".¹³¹ This is but
5 the beginning, and unless we spread over the whole of India, nay,
6 the whole earth, in that way, where lies the greatness of our Lord!

7 Let people see whether or not the touch of our Lord's feet
8 confers divinity on man! It is this that is called liberation-in-life--
9 when the last trace of egoism and selfishness is gone. Well done!
10 Glory to the Lord! Gradually try to spread. If you can, go to
11 Calcutta, and raise a fund with the help of another band of boys; set
12 one or two of them to work at some place, and begin somewhere
13 else. Spread in that way, and go on inspecting them. You will see
14 that the work will gradually become permanent, and spread of
15 religion and education will follow as a matter of course. I have
16 given particular instructions to them in Calcutta. Do that kind of
17 work, and I shall carry you on my shoulders--bravo! You will see
18 that by degrees every district will become a centre--and that a
19 permanent one. I am soon going down to the plains. I am a fighter,
20 and shall die in the battlefield. Does it behove me to sit up here
21 like a zenana lady?

22 Yours with all
23 love,

24 Vivekananda.

25 CXXIX*

26 Almora,
27 20th June,
28 1897.

29 Dear Rakhal,

30 Glad to learn that you are better in health than before. Well, it
31 is seldom that Brother Yogen reports the bare truths, so do not at
32 all be anxious to hear them. I am all right now, with plenty of
33 muscular strength, and no thirst....The liver, too, acts well. I am not
34 certain as to what effects Shashi (Babu)'s medicine had. So I have
35 stopped using it. I am having plenty of mangoes. I am getting
36 exceptionally adept in riding, and do not feel the least pain or
37 exhaustion even after a run of twenty or thirty miles at a stretch.
38 Milk I have altogether stopped for fear of corpulence.

39 Yesterday I came to Almora, and shall not go any more to the
40 garden. Henceforth I am to have three meals a day in the English
41 fashion, as Miss Muller's guest....

42 Shuddhananda writes to say that they are going on with
43 Ruddock's Practice of Medicine or something of that sort. What
44 nonsense do you mean by having such things taught in the class? A
45 set of common apparatus for physics and another for chemistry, an
46 ordinary telescope and a microscope--all these can be had for
47 Rupees 150 to 200. Shashi Babu may give a lecture on practical
48 chemistry once a week, and Hariprasanna on physics etc. *And buy*

1 ¹³¹ ?That is, things other than God.

1 *all the good scientific books that you can have in Bengali, and have*
2 *them read.*

3
4 affectionately,

Yours

Vivekananda.

6 CXXX*

7 Salutations to Bhagavan Ramakrishna!

8 Almora

9 10th July,
10 1897.

11 My dear Rakhal,

12 Today I send back the proofs of the objects of our Association
13 that you sent me, corrected. The rules and regulations portion
14 (which the members of our Association had read) is full of mistakes.
15 Correct it very carefully and reprint it, or people will laugh.

16 ...The kind of work that is going on at Berhampore is
17 exceedingly nice. It is those works that will triumph--can doctrines
18 and dogmas touch the heart? Work, work--live the life; what do
19 doctrines and opinions count? Philosophy and Yoga and penance--
20 the worship-room--your sunned rice or vegetable offerings--all these
21 constitute the religion of one man or one country; doing good to
22 others is the one great, universal religion. Men and women, young
23 and old, down to the Pariah, nay, the very animal--all can grasp this
24 religion. Can a merely negative religion be of any avail? The stone
25 is never unchaste, the cow never tells a lie, nor do trees commit
26 theft or robbery, but what does it matter? Granted that you do not
27 steal, nor tell a lie, nor lead an unchaste life, but meditate four
28 hours a day and religiously ring the bell for twice as many hours--
29 yet, what matters it after all? That work, little as it is, that you have
30 done, has brought Berhampore to your feet for ever--now people
31 will do whatever you wish them to. Now you will no longer have to
32 argue to the people that "Ramakrishna is God." Without it what will
33 mere lectures do?--Do fine words butter any parsnips? If you could
34 do like that in ten districts, all the ten would become yours to have
35 and hold. Therefore, like the intelligent boy you are, lay your
36 greatest stress, for the present, on that work department, and try
37 heart and soul to augment the utility of that alone. Organise a
38 number of boys to go from door to door, let them fetch, in the
39 manner of the Alakhia Sadhus, whatever they get--money, or worn
40 out clothes, or rice and eatables, or anything. Then distribute them.
41 That is work, work indeed. After that people will have faith, and will
42 then do what they are told.

43 Whatever is left over after defraying the expenses of the
44 Calcutta meeting, remit for famine relief, or help with it the
45 countless poor that live in the slums of Calcutta; let Memorial Halls
46 and things of that kind go to the dogs. The Lord will do what He
47 thinks best. I am at present in excellent health....

48 Why are you not collecting materials?--I shall go down and
49 start the paper myself. Kindness and love can buy you the whole

1 world; lectures and books and philosophy all stand lower than
2 these.

3 Please write to Shashi to open a work department like this for
4 the service of the poor.

5 ...Curtail the expenses of worship to a rupee or two per
6 mensem. The children of the Lord are dying of starvation....Worship
7 with water and Tulasi leaves alone, and let the allowance for His
8 Bhoga (food offerings) be spent in offering food to the Living God
9 who dwells in the persons of the poor--then will His grace descend
10 on everything. Yogen felt unwell here; so today he started for
11 Calcutta. I shall again go to Dewaldhar tomorrow. Please accept my
12 love and tender it to all.

13 Affly. yours,

14 Vivekananda.

15 CXXXI*

16 Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna

17 Almora,

18 24th July,

19 1897.

20 My dear Akhandananda,

21 I am very glad to receive your letter and go through the
22 contents. Your wishes about the orphanage are very food and Shri
23 Maharaj¹³² will not fail to fulfil them at an early date. Try your best
24 to found a permanent centre....Never worry about money.
25 Tomorrow I shall leave Almora for the plains; and wherever there
26 will be made some stir, I shall open a subscription list for famine--
27 set your mind easy on that score. When in every district there will
28 be a Math on the model of our Math in Calcutta, then will my
29 heart's desire be fulfilled. Let not the work of preaching, too, be at
30 a standstill, and greater even than preaching, is the work of
31 imparting education. By means of lectures and the like, the village
32 people must be taught religion, history, and such other subjects--
33 specially history. To help our educational work there is a Society in
34 England, which, as I find from reports, is doing excellent work. In
35 time we shall get help of this kind from everywhere, don't be
36 frightened. They only do work who think that help *will* come,
37 directly they are on the field of work.

38 All strength is in you, have faith in it. It will not go
39 unmanifested. Accept my heartiest love and blessings, and convey
40 them to the Brahmacharin. Write now and then fiery letters to the
41 Math, so that all may take heart and work. Victory to the Guru!

42 Yours affly.,

43 Vivekananda.

44 CXXXII*

45 Almora,

1 ¹³² ?Shri Ramakrishna,

30th July

1897.

My dear Akhandananda,

According to your instructions, I write a letter to Mr. Levinge, the Dist. Magistrate. Besides, you will write a big letter to the *Indian Mirror*, describing in detail his method of work (having got the same revised by Dr. Shashi), and send a copy of it to the gentleman named above. Our fools only search for people's shortcomings. let them see some virtues too.

I am leaving this place next Monday. ...

What do you talk of the difficulty in getting orphans? Better ask for four or five men from the Math, if you like; you can find some orphans in two days, if you seek from village to village.

Of course we must have a permanent centre. And can anything be done in this country unless the--help? Do not mix in politics etc., nor have any connection with them. At the same time you need not have any quarrel with anybody. you must put your body, mind, and all you have to some one work. Here I gave a lecture to a European audience in English, and another to the Indian residents in Hindi. This was my maiden speech in Hindi, but everyone liked it for all that. Of course the Westerners, as is their wont, were in raptures over it, as coming from a "nigger"! "Oh, how wonderful!" and that sort of thing. Next Saturday there will be another lecture for the Europeans. A big Association has been set on foot here--let us wait and see how far it works in future. The object of the Association is to impart education and religion.

Monday next, trip to Bareilly then to Saharanpur, next to Ambala, thence, most probably, to Mussoorie with Captain Sevier, and as soon as it is a little cool, return to the plains and journey to Rajputana etc. Go on working at top speed. Never fear! I, too, have determined to work. The body must go, no mistake about that. Why then let it go in idleness? It is better to wear out than rust out. Don't be anxious even when I die, my very bones will work miracles. We must spread over the whole of India in ten years, short of this it is no good. To work like an athlete! Victory to the Guru! Money and all will come of themselves, we want men, not money. It is man that makes everything, what can money do?--Men we want, the more you get, the better. . . . Here, for instance, was M__ who brought together a lot of money, but there was no man, and what good did he achieve?

Yours affly.,

Vivekananda

CXXXII

The Math

19th August, 1897

1 Dear Mrs. Bull,

2 . . . My health is indifferent, and although I have some rest, I
3 do not think I shall be able to regain my usual vigour till winter
4 next. I had a letter from Joe saying that you are both coming to
5 India. I, of course, will be very glad to see you in India, only you
6 ought to know from the first that India is the dirtiest and
7 unhealthiest hole in the world, with scarcely any European comforts
8 except in the big capitals.

9 I learn from England that Mr. Sturdy is sending Abhedananda
10 to New York. It seems that the English work is impossible without
11 me. Only a magazine will be started and worked by Mr. Sturdy. I
12 had arranged to come to England this season, but I was foolishly
13 prevented by the doctors. In India the work is going on.

14 I do not think any European or American will be of any
15 service here just now, and it will be hard for any Westerner to bear
16 the climate. Annie Besant with her exceptional powers works only
17 among the Theosophists, and thus she submits to all the indignities
18 of isolation which a Mlechchha is made to undergo here. Even
19 Goodwin smarts now and then and has to be called to order.
20 Goodwin is doing good work, as he is a man and can mix with the
21 people. Women have no place in men's society here, and she can do
22 good only among her own sex in India. The English friends that
23 came over to India have not been of any help as yet, and do not
24 know whether they will be of any in the future. With all these, if
25 anybody wants to try, she is welcome.

26 If Saradananda wants to come, he may, and I am sure he will
27 be of very good service to me just now in organising the work, now
28 that my health is broken. There is a young English woman, Miss
29 Margaret Noble, very eager to come to India to learn the state of
30 things, so that she may do some work when she is back home. I
31 have written her to accompany you in case you come via London.
32 The great difficulty is that you can never understand the situation
33 here from a distance. The two types are so entirely different in all
34 things that it is not possible to form any idea from America or
35 England.

36 You ought to think that you are starting for the interior of
37 Africa, and if you meet anything better, that will be unexpected.

38 Ever yours
39 etc.,

40 Vivekananda

41

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CXXXIV

44

1897

45

{original in Bengali}

46

Dear Mother {Shrimati Indumati Mitra},

47

Please be not anxious because I could not write to you and

1 could not go to Belgaon. I was suffering very much from illness and
2 it was impossible for me to go then. Now thanks to my travels in the
3 Himalayas, I have greatly regained my health. I shall soon resume
4 work. In two weeks I am going to the Punjab, and just after
5 delivering a lecture or two at Lahore and Amritsar, I shall start via
6 Karachi for Gujarat, Cutch, etc. I shall surely see you at Karachi.

7 This Kashmir is a veritable heaven on earth. Nowhere else in
8 the world is such a country as this. Mountains and rivers, trees and
9 plants, men and women, beasts and birds--all vie with one another
10 for excellence. I feel a pang at heart not to have visited it so long.
11 Please write to me in detail how you are doing, mentally and
12 physically, and accept my special blessings. I am constantly having
13 your welfare at heart, know this for certain.

14 Yours

15 sincerely,

16 Vivekananda

17
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19 CXXXV

20 Murree,

21 10th October,

22 1897

23 {original in Bengali}

24 Dear Sarada,

25 I am sorry to learn from your letter that you are not doing
26 well. If you can make an unpopular man popular, then I call you a
27 clever fellow. There is no prospect of work there in the future; it
28 would have been better had you gone rather to Dacca, or some
29 other place. However, it is a good thing that the work will close in
30 November. If you get very badly off in health, you should better
31 come away. There is much field for work in the Central Provinces;
32 and even without famine, there is no lack of poverty-stricken people
33 in our country. Wherever it is, if you can choose a site with an eye
34 to prospect, you are sure to turn out good work. However, be not
35 sorry. What one does has no destruction--no, never. Who knows, at
36 that very place the future may reap golden results.

37 I shall very soon begin my work in the plains. I have now no
38 need of travelling over the mountains.

39 Keep watch over your health.

40 Yours

41 affectionately,

42 Vivekananda

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45 CXXXVI

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Murree,
10th October,

1897

{original in Bengali}

My dear Akhandananda,

I am very glad to receive your letter. You need not make a big plan for the present, but do only what is possible under existing circumstances. Gradually the way will open to you. We must certainly have the orphanage, no hesitating in that. We must not leave the girls in the lurch either. But then we must have a lady superintendent for an orphanage of girls. I believe Mother will be a very good hand for that. Or engage for this task some aged widow of the village who has no issue. And there must be separate places for the boys and girls. Captain Sevier is ready to send you money to help in this. Nedou's Hotel, Lahore--that is his address. If you write to him, write the words, "To wait arrival", on the letter. I am soon going to Rawalpindi, tomorrow or the day after; then I visit Lahore and other places via Jammu, and return to Rajputana via Karachi etc.,

I am doing well.

Yours,
Vivekananda

PS. You must admit Mohammedan boys, too, but never tamper with their religion. The only thing you will have to do is to make separate arrangements for their food etc., and teach them so that they may be moral, manly, and devoted to doing good to others. This indeed is religion.

Shelve your intricate philosophical speculations for the present. In our country we at present need manhood and kindness. "{Sanskrit}--The Lord is the Essence of unutterable love." But instead of saying "{Sanskrit}--He is manifest in special objects", we should say, "{Sanskrit}--He is ever manifest as Love in all beings." What other God--the creation of your mind--are you then going to worship! Let the Vedas, the Koran, the Puranas, and all scriptural lumber rest now for some time--let there be worship of the visible God of Love and Compassion in the country. All idea of separation is bondage, that of non-differentiation is Mukti. Let not the words of people dead-drunk with worldliness terrify you. "{Sanskrit}--Be fearless" "Ignore the ordinary critics as worms!" Admit boys of all religions--Hindu, Mohammedan, Christian, or anything; but begin rather gently--I mean, see that they get their food and drink a little separately, and teach them only the universal side of religion.

Be mad over this, and strike others with this madness! This life has no other end. Preach His name, let His teachings penetrate the world to the very bone. Never forget. Repeat this Mantra in your heart of hearts unceasingly, as you go the round of your daily duties.

Yours,

V.

CXXXVII

Murree

10th October,

1897

{original in Bengali}

Dear Rakhal,

Reached Murree from Kashmir in the evening of the day before yesterday. Everybody had an enjoyable time of it, only Krishnalal (Dhirananda) and Gupta (Sadananda) suffered now and then from fever, which, however, was but slight. This Address is to be sent to the Raja of Khetri. Have it printed in gilt etc. The Raja is expected at Bombay about the 21st or 22nd of October. None of us is staying at Bombay at present--if there be any, send him a copy so that he may present the same to the Raja even on Board the ship, or somewhere in the city of Bombay. Send the superior copy to Khetri. Have this passed in a meeting and if any change is needed, no harm. Then sign it, all of you, only leaving a blank for my name, and I shall sign it on going to Khetri. Let no pains be spared in this.

. . . Captain Sevier says he is very anxious for a site. He wishes to have a spot near Mussoorie or in some other central place, as soon as possible. . . . The thing is that we do not want a place which is too cold, at the same time it must not be too hot. Dehra Dun is unbearable in summer, but pleasant in winter; Mussoorie itself is, I dare say, not the right place for many in winter. Above or below it, that is, in British or Garhwal territory, some land is sure to be found. At the same time there must be a supply of water at the place throughout the year, for drinking purposes and for everyday use. My plan is this: With only Achyutananda and Gupta I go from Murree to Rawalpindi, thence to Jammu, thence to Lahore, and from Lahore straight to Karachi. . . . Give my hearty love and blessings to Shashi Babu. I see that Master Mahashaya has buckled to work after such a long time. Give him my special love and greetings. To see him, with his feminine retiringness, stirred to work, my courage has gone up by leaps and bounds. I am writing to him tomorrow even. Victory to the Lord!--To work! To work!

Yours

affectionately,

Vivekananda

CXXXVIII

C/o Lala

Hansraj

1 Rawalpindi
2 Oct., 1897

3 Dear M,

4 *C'est bon, mon ami* --now you are doing just the thing. Come
5 out, man! No sleeping all life; time is flying. Bravo! That is the way.

6 Many thanks for your publication. Only, I am afraid it will not
7 pay its way in a pamphlet form. . . . Never mind, pay or no pay--let it
8 see the blaze of daylight. You will have many blessings on you and
9 many more curses--but that is always the way of the world!

10 This is the time.

11 Yours in the
12 Lord,

13 Vivekananda

14

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16 CXXXIX

17 Lahore,

18 15th

19 November, 1897

20 {original in Bengali}

21 Dear Mother {Shrimati Indumati Mitra},

22 It is a matter of deep regret that in spite of my earnest
23 wishes, I do not find it feasible to go to Karachi this time and see
24 you. First, because Captain and Mrs. Sevier, who have come from
25 England and are travelling with me for the last nine months nearly,
26 are very anxious to buy some land at Dehra Dun and start an
27 orphanage there. It is their special request that I should go and
28 open the work. This makes it unavoidable to go to Dehra Dun.

1 Secondly, owing to my kidney troubles I cannot count upon a
2 long life. Even now it is one of my desires to start a Math in
3 Calcutta, towards which as yet I could do nothing. Moreover, the
4 people of my country have withheld the little help that they used to
5 give to our Math of late. They have got a notion that I have brought
6 plenty of money from England! Over and above that, it is impossible
7 to celebrate Shri Ramakrishna's festival this year, for the
8 proprietors of Rasmani's garden would not let me go there, as I am
9 returned from the West! Hence my first duty lies in seeing the few
10 friends we have in Rajputana and trying my best to have a centre in
11 Calcutta. For these reasons I have been very sorry to postpone my
12 tour to Sindh at present. I shall try my best to go there via
13 Rajputana and Kathiawar. Please do not be sorry. Never for a day
14 do I forget you all. But duty must be done first. It will ease me of my
15 anxiety when a Math is established in Calcutta. Then I can hope
16 that the work for which I struggled all my life through all sorts of
17 privation and suffering will not die out after I cease to live in this
18 body. I start for Dehra Dun this very day. After a week's stay there,
19 to Rajputana, thence to Kathiawar, and so on.

20 With blessings,

21
22 sincerely,

Yours

23 Vivekananda

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25
26 CXL

27 Dehra Dun,
28 24th

29 November, 1897

30 {original in Bengali}

31 Dear Mother {Shrimati Indumati Mitra},

32 I have duly received your letter and that of dear Haripada. Of
33 course you have ample reason to feel sorry for, but you see, I
34 couldn't help it. And what took me here also became a fiasco;
35 neither could I go to Sindh. It is the Lord's will. Now, I have an idea
36 of proceeding to Calcutta through Rajputana, Kathiawar, and
37 Sindh. But some difficulty may crop up on the way. If all goes well, I
38 am certainly coming to Sindh. You must have undergone a lot of
39 difficulty in coming to Hyderabad by arranging for leave etc. Any
40 least trouble undergone, is bound to produce its excellent results.
41 Friday next I shall leave this place, and have a mind to go via
42 Saharanpur to Rajputana direct. I am doing well now, and trust you
43 too are in health and peace of mind. . . .

44 With best love and blessings to yourself and Haripada,

45
46 sincerely,

Yours

47 Vivekananda

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CXLI

Almora
20th May,

1898

Dear Margot {Nivedita},
. . . Duty has no end, and the world is extremely selfish.
Be of good cheer. "Never a worker of good came to grief." . . .

Ever yours
etc.,
Vivekananda

CXLII

Almora,
10th June,

1898

My dear Friend {Mohammed Sarfaraz Husain},

I appreciate your letter very much and am extremely happy to learn that the Lord is silently preparing wonderful things for our motherland.

Whether we call it Vedantism or any *ism*, the truth is that Advaitism is the last word of religion and thought and the only position from which one can look upon all religions and sects with love. I believe it is the religion of the future enlightened humanity. The Hindus may get the credit of arriving at it earlier than other races, they being an older race than either the Hebrew or the Arab; yet practical Advaitism, which looks upon and behaves to all mankind as one's own soul, was never developed among the Hindus universally.

On the other hand, my experience is that if ever any religion approached to this equality in an appreciable manner, it is Islam and Islam alone.

Therefore I am firmly persuaded that without the help of practical Islam, theories of Vedantism, however fine and wonderful they may be, are entirely valueless to the vast mass of mankind. We want to lead mankind to the place where there is neither the Vedas, nor the Bible, nor the Koran; yet this has to be done by harmonising the Vedas, the Bible and the Koran. Mankind ought to be taught that religions are but the varied expressions of THE RELIGION, which is Oneness, so that each may choose that path that suits him best.

For our own motherland a junction of the two great systems, Hinduism and Islam--Vedanta brain and Islam body--is the only

1 hope.

2 I see in my mind's eye the future perfect India rising out of
3 this chaos and strife, glorious and invincible, with Vedanta brain
4 and Islam body.

5 Ever praying that the Lord may make of you a great
6 instrument for the help of mankind, and especially of our poor, poor
7 motherland.

8 Yours with
9 love,

10 Vivekananda

11

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13 CXLIII

14 Kashmir,

15 25th Aug.,

16 1898

17 Dear Margot {Nivedita},

18 It is a lazy life I am leading for the last two months, floating
19 leisurely in a boat, which is also my home, up and down the
20 beautiful Jhelum, through the most gorgeous scenery God's world
21 can afford, in nature's own park, where the earth, air, land, grass,
22 plants, trees, mountains, snows, and the human form, all express,
23 on the outside at least, the beauty of the Lord--with almost no
24 possessions, scarcely a pen or an inkstand even, snatching up a
25 meal whenever or wherever convenient, the very ideal of a Rip Van
26 Winkle! . . .

27 Do not work yourself out. It is no use; always
28 remember--"Duty is the midday sun whose fierce rays are burning
29 the very vitals of humanity." It is necessary for a time as a
30 discipline; beyond that, it is a morbid dream. Things go on all right
31 whether we lend them our helping hands or not. We in delusion only
32 break ourselves. There is a false sentiment which goes the extreme
33 of unselfishness, only to injure others by its submission to every
34 evil. We have no right to make others selfish by our unselfishness;
35 have we? . . .

36 Yours etc.,

37 Vivekananda

38

39

40 CXLIV

41 The Math,

42 Belur

43 15th Dec.,

44 1898

45 Dear___,

1 . . . The Mother is our guide and whatever happens or will
2 happen is under Her ordination. . . .

3 Yours etc.,
4 Vivekananda
5
6

7 CXLV

8 Baidyanath,
9 Deoghar
10 29th Dec.,
11 1898

12 My dear Dhira Mata {Mrs. Bull},

13 You know already my inability to accompany you. I cannot
14 gather strength enough to accompany you. The cold in the lungs
15 continues, and that is just what makes me unfit for travel. On the
16 whole I hope to improve here.

17 I find my cousin has been all these years cultivating her mind
18 with a will, and she knows all that the Bengali literature can give
19 her, and that is a good deal, especially of metaphysics. She has
20 already learnt to sign her name in English and the Roman alphabet.
21 It is now real brain work to teach her, and therefore I have desisted.
22 I am trying simply to idle away my time and force myself to take
23 rest.

24 Ere this I had only love for you, but recent development
25 proves that you are appointed by the Mother to watch over my life;
26 hence, faith has been added to love! As regards me and my work, I
27 hold henceforth that you are inspired, and I will gladly shake off all
28 responsibilities from my shoulder and abide by what the Mother
29 ordains through you.

30 Hoping soon to join you in Europe or America, I remain,
31 Ever your
32 loving son,

33 Vivekananda
34
35

36 CXLVI

37 The Math
38 11th April,
39 1899

40 Dear ___,

41 . . . Two years of physical suffering have taken away twenty
42 years of my life. Well, but the soul changeth not, does it? It is there,
43 the same madcap Atman, mad upon one idea, intent and
44 intense. . . .

1 Yours etc.,
2 Vivekananda
3
4

5 CXLVII

6 Ridgely
7 4th Sept.,
8 1899

9 Dear Mrs. Bull,
10 . . . Mother knows best, that is all about me. . . .

11 Yours etc.,
12 Vivekananda
13

14
15 CXLVIII

16 Ridgely
17 1st Nov.,
18 1899

19 Dear Margot {Nivedita},
20 . . . It seems there is a gloom over your mind. Never mind,
21 nothing is to last for ever. Anyhow life is not eternal. I am so,
22 thankful for it. Suffering is the lot of the world's best and bravest--
23 yet, for aeons yet--till things are righted, if possible, here--at least it
24 is a discipline which breaks the dream. In my sane moments I
25 rejoice for my sufferings. Some one must suffer here;--I am glad it is
26 I, amongst others of nature's sacrifices.

27 Yours etc.,
28 Vivekananda
29

30
31 CXLIX

32 New York,
33 15th Nov.,
34 1899

35 Dear Margot {Nivedita},
36 . . . On the whole I don't think there is any cause for anxiety
37 about my body. This sort of nervous body is just the instrument to
38 play great music at times and at times to moan in darkness.

39 Yours etc.,
40 Vivekananda
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CL

12th Dec.,

1899

My dear Mrs. Bull,

You are perfectly right; I am brutal, very indeed. But about the tenderness etc., that is my fault. I wish I had less, much less of that--that is my weakness--and alas! all my sufferings have come from that. Well, the municipality is trying to tax us out--good; that is my fault as I did not make the Math public property by a deed of trust. I am very sorry I use harsh language to my boys; but they also know I love them more than anybody else on earth. I may have had Divine help--true; but oh, the pound of blood every bit of Divine help has been to me!! I would be gladder and a better man without that. The present looks very gloomy indeed; but I am a fighter and must die fighting, not give way--that is why I get crazy at the boys. I don't ask them to fight, but not to hinder my fight.

I don't grudge my fate. But oh! now I want a man, one of my boys, to stand by me and fight against all odds! Don't you vex yourself; if anything is to be done in India, my presence is necessary; and I am much better in health; possibly the sea will make me better. Anyway I did not do anything this time in America except bother my friends. Possibly Joe will help me out with the passage, and I have some money with Mr. Leggett. I have hopes of collecting some money in India yet. I did not see any of my friends in different parts of India. I have hope of collecting the fifteen thousand that will make up the fifty thousand, and a deed of trust will bring down the municipal taxes. If I cannot collect that--it is better to struggle and die for it than vegetate here in America. My mistakes have been great; but everyone of them was from too much love. How I hate *love* ! Would I never had any Bhakti! Indeed, I wish I could be an Advaitist, calm and heartless. Well, this life is done. I will try in the next. I am sorry, especially now, that I have done more injury to my friends than there have been blessings on them. The peace, the quiet I am seeking, I never found.

I went years ago to the Himalayas, never to come back; and my sister committed suicide, the news reached me there, and that weak heart flung me off from that prospect of peace! It is the weak heart that has driven me out of India to seek some help for those I love, and here I am! Peace have I sought, but the heart, that seat of Bhakti, would not allow me to find it. Struggle and torture, torture and struggle. Well, be it then, since it is my fate, and the quicker it is over, the better. They say I am impulsive, but look at the circumstances!!! I am sorry I have been the cause of pain to you, to you above all, who love me so much, who have been so, so kind. But it is done--was a fact. I am now going to cut the knot or die in the attempt.

Ever your
son,

Vivekananda

1 PS. As Mother wants it, so let it be. I am going to beg of Joe a
2 passage via San Francisco to India. If she gives it, I start
3 immediately via Japan. It would take a month. In India, I think, I can
4 raise some money to keep things straight or on a better footing--at
5 least to leave things where I get them all muddled. The end is
6 getting very dark and very much muddled; well, I expected it so.
7 Don't think I give in in a moment. Lord bless you; if the Lord has
8 made me His hack to work and die on the streets, let Him have it. I
9 am more cheerful just now after your letter than I was for years--
10 *Wah Guru ki Fateh!* Victory unto the Guru!! Yes, let the world
11 come, the hells come, the gods come, let Mother come, I fight and
12 do not give in. Ravana got his release in three births by fighting the
13 Lord Himself! It is glorious to fight Mother.

14 All blessings on you and yours. You have done for me more,
15 much more, than I deserved ever.

16 Love to Christine and Turiyananda.

17 Vivekananda

18
19
20 CLI

21 921, 21st Street, Los
22 Angeles

23 23rd December,
24 1899

25 My dear Margot {Nivedita},

26 Yes, I am really getting well under the manipulations of
27 magnetic healing! At any rate I am all right. There was never
28 anything serious with my organs--it was nerves and dyspepsia.

29 Now I walk miles every day, at any time--before or after
30 meals. I am perfectly well--and am going to remain so, I am sure.

31 The wheel is turning up, Mother is working it up. She cannot
32 let me go before Her work is done--and that is the secret.

33 See, how England is working up. After this blood-letting,
34 people will then have time of thinking better and higher things than
35 "war", "war", "war". That is our opportunity. We run in quick, get
36 hold of them by the dozens and then set the Indian work in full
37 swing.

38 I pray that England will lose Cape Colony, so that she will be
39 able to concentrate her energy on India. These capes and
40 promontories never are of any use to England except in puffing up a
41 false pride and costing her hordes of money and blood.

42 Things are looking up. So get ready. With all love to the four
43 sisters and to you,

44 Vivekananda

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CLII

California
Los Angeles,
24th Jan., 1900

Dear Margot {Nivedita},

I am afraid that the rest and peace I seek for will never come. But Mother does good to others through me, at least some to my native land, and it is easier to be reconciled to one's fate as a sacrifice. We are all sacrifices--each in his own way. The great worship is going on--no one can see its meaning except that it is a great sacrifice. Those that are willing escape a lot of pain. Those who resist are broken into submission and suffer more. I am now determined to be a willing one.

Yours etc.,
Vivekananda

CLIII

Mead,
Building,
California
C/o Miss
447 Douglas
Los Angeles,
15th Feb.,
1900

My dear Nivedita,

Yours of the __ reached me today at Pasadena. I see Joe has missed you at Chicago--although I have not heard anything from them yet from New York.

There was a bundle of English newspapers from England with a line on the envelope expressing good wishes for me and signed, F.H.M. Nothing important was in those, however. I would have written a letter to Miss Muller, but I do not know the address; then I was afraid to frighten her.

In the meanwhile, Mrs. Leggett started a plan of a \$100 subscription each a year for ten years to help me, and headed the list with her \$100 for 1900, and got 2 others here to do the same. Then she went on writing letters to all my friends asking each to join in it. When she went on writing to Mrs. Miller I was rather shy--but she did it before I knew. A very polite but cold letter came to her in reply from Mrs. Hale, written by Mary, expressing their inability and assuring her of their love for me. I am afraid Mrs. Hale and Mary are displeased. But it was not my fault at all!!

I get news from Mrs. Sevier that Niranjana is seriously ill in Calcutta. I do not know if he has passed away.

1 Well--but I am strong now, Margo, stronger than ever I was
2 mentally. I was mentally getting a sort of ironing over my heart. I
3 am getting nearer a Sannyasin's life now. I have not had any news
4 from Saradananda for two weeks. I am glad you got the stories;
5 rewrite them if you think so--get them published if you find anybody
6 to do it and take the proceeds, if any, for your work. I do not want
7 any. I have got a few hundred dollars here. Going to San Francisco
8 next week, and hope to do better there. Tell Mary when you see her
9 next that I had nothing whatsoever to do with the proposal of \$100
10 a year subscription to Mrs. Hale. I am so grateful to them.

11 Well, money will come for your school, never fear--it has got
12 to come; if it does not come, who cares? One road is quite as good
13 as the other. Mother knows best. I don't know whether I am very
14 soon going to the East or not. If I have an opportunity, of course I
15 will go to Indiana.

16 The international scheme is a good one and by all means join
17 it, and be the medium of getting some Indian women's clubs to join
18 it through you, which is better. . . .

19 Things shall look up for us, never mind. As soon as the war is
20 finished we go to England and try to do a big work there. What do
21 you think? Shall I write to Mother Superior? If so, send her
22 whereabouts. Has she written to you? Sturdies and "Shakies" will
23 all come round--hold on.

24 You are learning your lessons--that is all I want. So am I; the
25 moment we are fit, money and men must flow towards us. Between
26 my nerves and your emotion we may make a mess of everything just
27 now. So Mother is curing my nerves and drilling you into level-
28 headedness--and then we go. This time good is coming in chunks, I
29 am sure. We will make the foundations of the old land shake this
30 time.

31 . . . I am getting cool as a cucumber--let anything come, I am
32 ready. The next move--any blow shall tell--not one miss--such is the
33 next chapter.

34 With all love,
35 Vivekananda

36
37
38 CLIV

39 California
40 21st

41 February, 1900

42 {original in Bengali}

43 My dear Akhandananda,

44 I am very glad to receive your letter and go through the
45 details of news. Learning and wisdom are superfluities, the surface
46 glitter merely, but it is the heart that is the seat of all power. It is
47 not in the brain but in the heart that the Atman, possessed of

1 knowledge, power, and activity, has Its seat. "{Sanskrit}--The
2 nerves of the heart are a hundred and one" etc. The chief nerve-
3 centre near the heart, called the sympathetic ganglia, is where the
4 Atman has Its citadel. The more heart you will be able to manifest,
5 the greater will be the victory you achieve. It is only a few that
6 understand the language of the brain, but everyone, from the
7 Creator down to a clump of grass, understands the language that
8 comes from the heart. But then, in our country, it is a case of
9 rousing men that are, as it were, dead. It will take time, but if you
10 have infinite patience and perseverance, success is bound to come.
11 No mistake in that.

12 How are the English officials to blame? Is the family, of whose
13 unnatural cruelty you have written, an isolated one in India? Or, are
14 there plenty of such? It is the same story all over the country. But
15 then, it is not as a result of pure wickedness that the selfishness
16 commonly met with in our country has come. This bestial
17 selfishness is the outcome of centuries of failure and repression. It
18 is not real selfishness, but deep-rooted despair. It will be cured at
19 the first inkling of success. It is only this that the English officials
20 are noticing all round; so how can they have faith at the very
21 outset? But tell me, do they not sympathise with any real work that
22 they meet with? . . .

23 In these days of dire famine, flood, disease, and pestilence,
24 tell me where your Congressmen are. Will it do merely to say,
25 "Hand the government of the country over to us"? And who is there
26 to listen to them? If a man does work, has he to open his mouth to
27 ask for anything? If there be two thousand people like you working
28 in several districts, won't it be the turn of the English themselves to
29 consult you in matter of political moment? "{Sanskrit} The wise
30 man should achieve his object." . . . A__ was not allowed to open a
31 centre, but what of that! Has not Kishengarh allowed it?--Let him
32 work on without ever opening his lips; there is no use of either
33 telling anything to anybody, or quarrelling with any. Whoever will
34 assist in this work of the Divine Mother of the universe, will have
35 Her grace, and whoever will oppose it will not only be "{Sanskrit}--
36 raising a deadly enemy for nothing", but also laying the axe to his
37 own prospects. {Sanskrit} etc.,--all in good time. Many a little
38 makes a mickle. When a great work is being done, when the
39 foundations are laid or a road constructed, when super-human
40 energy is needed--it is one or two extraordinary men who silently
41 and noiselessly work through the world of obstacles and difficulties.
42 When thousands of people are benefited, there is a great
43 tomtoming, and the whole country is loud in notes of praise. But
44 then the machine has already been set agoing, and even a boy can
45 work it, or a fool add to it some impetus. Grasp this that, that
46 benefit done to a village or two, that orphanage with its twenty
47 orphans, those ten or twenty workers--all these are enough; they
48 form the nucleus, never to be destroyed. From these, hundreds of
49 thousands of people will be benefited in time. Now we want half a
50 dozen lions, then excellent work will be turned out by even
51 hundreds of jackals. . . .

52 If orphan girls happen to come to your hands for shelter, you

1 must take them in above all else. Otherwise, Christian missionaries
2 will take them, poor things, away! What matters it that you have no
3 particular arrangements for them? Through the Divine Mother's
4 will, they will be provided for. When you get a horse, never you
5 worry about the whip. . . . Get together whomsoever you can lay
6 your hands on, no picking and choosing now--everything will be set
7 right in course of time. In every attempt there are many obstacles
8 to cope with, but gradually the path becomes smooth.

9 Convey to the European officer many thanks from me. Work
10 on fearlessly--there is a hero! Bravo! Thrice well done! The starting
11 of a centre at Bhagalpur that you have written about is no doubt a
12 good idea--enlightening the schoolboys and things of that sort. But
13 our mission is for the destitute, the poor, and the illiterate
14 peasantry and labouring classes, and if, after everything has been
15 done for the first, there is spare time, then only for the gentry.
16 Those peasants and labouring people will be won over by love.
17 Afterwards it will be they who will collect small sums and start
18 missions at their own villages, and gradually, from among those
19 very men, teachers will spring.

20 Teach some boys and girls of the peasant classes the
21 rudiments of learning and infuse a number of ideas into their
22 brains. Afterwards the peasants of each village will collect funds
23 and have one of these in their village. "{Sanskrit}--One must raise
24 oneself by one's own exertions"--this holds good in all spheres. We
25 help them to help themselves. That they are supplying you with
26 your daily bread is a real bit of work done. The moment they will
27 come to understand their own condition and feel the necessity of
28 help and improvement, know that your work is taking effect and is
29 in the right direction, while the little good that the moneyed
30 classes, out of pity, do to the poor, does not last, and ultimately it
31 does nothing but harm to both parties. The peasants and labouring
32 classes are in a moribund condition, so what is needed is that the
33 moneyed people will only help them to regain their vitality, and
34 nothing more. Then leave the peasants and labourers to look to
35 their own problem, to grapple with and solve it. But then you must
36 take care not to set up class-strife between the poor peasants, the
37 labouring people, and the wealthy classes. Make it a point not to
38 abuse the moneyed classes. "{Sanskrit}--The wise man should
39 achieve his own object."

40 Victory to the Guru! Victory to the Mother of the Universe!
41 What fear! Opportunity, remedy, and its application will present
42 themselves. I do not care about the result, well or ill. I shall be
43 happy if only you do this much of work. Wordy warfares, texts and
44 scriptures, doctrines and dogmas--all these I am coming to loathe
45 as poison in this my advanced age. Know this for certain that he
46 who will work will be the crown on my head. Useless bandying of
47 words and making noise is taking away our time, is consuming our
48 life-energy, without pushing the cause of humanitarianism a step
49 further. {Sanskrit}--Away with fear! Bravo! There is a hero indeed!
50 May the blessed Guru be enthroned in your heart, and the Divine
51 Mother guide your hands.

Yours

1 affectionately,

2 Vivekananda

3

4

5 CLV

6 San

7 Francisco,

8 4th March,

9 1900

10 Dear Nivedita,

11 I don't want to work. I want to be quiet, and rest. I know the
12 time and the place; but the fate or Karma, I think, drives me on--
13 work, work. We are like cattle driven to the slaughter-house--hastily
14 nibbling a bite of grass on the roadside as they are driven along
15 under the whip. And all this is our work, our fear--fear, the
16 beginning of misery, of disease, etc. By being nervous and fearful
17 we injure others. By being so fearful to hurt we hurt more. By
18 trying so much to avoid evil we fall into its jaws.

19 What a mass of namby-pamby nonsense we create round
20 ourselves!! It does us no good, it leads us on to the very thing we
21 try to avoid--misery. . . .

22 Oh, to become fearless, to be daring, to be careless of
23 everything! . . .

24 Yours etc.,

25 Vivekananda

26

27

28 CLVI

29 San

30 Francisco

31 25th March,

32 1900

33 Dear Nivedita,

34 I am much better and am growing very strong. I feel
35 sometimes that freedom is near at hand, and the tortures of the last
36 two years have been great lessons in many ways. Disease and
37 misfortune come to do us good in the long run, although at the time
38 we feel that we are submerged for ever.

39 I am the infinite blue sky; the clouds may gather over me, but
40 I am the same infinite blue.

41 I am trying to get a taste of that peace which I know is my
42 nature and everyone's nature. These tin pots of bodies and foolish
43 dreams of happiness and misery--what are they?

44 My dreams are breaking. Om Tat Sat!

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Yours,
Vivekananda

CLVIII

1719 Turk

San

28th March,

Street

Francisco

My dear Margot,

I am so glad at your good fortune. Things have got to come round if we are steady. I am sure you will get all the money you require here or in England.

I am working hard; and the harder I work, the better I feel. This ill health has done me a great good, sure. I am really understanding what non-attachment means. And I hope very soon to be perfectly non-attached.

We put all our energies to concentrate and get attached to one thing; but the other part, though equally difficult, we seldom pay any attention to--the faculty of detaching ourselves at a moment's notice from anything.

Both attachment and detachment perfectly developed make a man great and happy.

I am so glad at Mrs. Leggett's gift of \$1,000. She is working up, wait. She has a great part to play in Ramakrishna's work, whether she knows it or not.

I enjoyed your accounts of Prof. Geddes, and Joe has a funny account of a clairvoyant. Things are just now beginning to turn. . . .

This letter, I think, will reach you at Chicago. . . .

I had a nice letter from Max Gysic, the young Swiss who is a great friend of Miss Souter. Miss Souter also sends her love, and they ask to know the time when I come over to England. Many people are inquiring, they say.

Things have got to come round--the seed must die underground to come up as the tree. The last two years were the underground rotting. I never had a struggle in the jaws of death, but it meant a tremendous upheaval of the whole life. One such brought me to Ramakrishna, another sent me to the U.S., this has been the greatest of all. It is gone--I am so calm that it astonishes me sometimes!! I work every day morning and evening, eat anything any hour--and go to bed at 12 p.m. in the night--but such fine sleep!! I never had such power of sleeping before!

Yours with all love and
blessings,

Vivekananda

CLVIII

Alameda,
California
18th April,
1900

My dear Joe,

Just now I received yours and Mrs. Bull's welcome letter. I direct this to London. I am so glad Mrs. Leggett is on the sure way to recovery.

I am so sorry Mr. Leggett resigned the presidency.

Well, I keep quiet for fear of making further trouble.

You know my methods are extremely harsh and once roused I may rattle A__ too much for his peace of mind.

I wrote to him only to tell him that his notions about Mrs. Bull are entirely wrong.

Work is always difficult; pray for me Joe that my works stop for ever, and my whole soul be absorbed in Mother. Her works, She knows.

You must be glad to be in London once more--the old friends, give them all my love and gratitude.

I am well, very well mentally. I feel the rest of the soul more than that of the body. The battles are lost and won. I have bundled my things and am waiting for the great deliverer.

"Shiva, O Shiva, carry my boat to the other shore."

After all, Joe, I am only the boy who used to listen with rapt wonderment to the wonderful words of Ramakrishna under the Banyan at Dakshineswar. That is my true nature; works and activities, doing good and so forth are all superimpositions. Now I again hear his voice; the same old voice thrilling my soul. Bonds are breaking--love dying, work becoming tasteless--the glamour is off life. Only the voice of the Master calling.--"I come Lord, I come." "Let the dead bury the dead, follow thou Me."--"I come, my beloved Lord, I come."

Yes, I come. Nirvana is before me. I feel it at times--the same infinite ocean of peace, without a ripple, a breath.

I am glad I was born, glad I suffered so, glad I did make big blunders, glad to enter peace. I leave none bound, I take no bonds. Whether this body will fall and release me or I enter into freedom in the body, the old man is gone, gone for ever, never to come back again! The guide, the Guru, the leader, the teacher has passed away; the boy, the student, the servant is left behind.

You understand why I do not want to meddle with A__. Who am I to meddle with anyone, Joe? I have long given up my place as a leader--I have no right to raise my voice. Since the beginning of this

1 year I have not dictated anything in India. You know that. Many
2 thanks for what you and Mrs. Bull have been to me in the past. All
3 blessings follow you ever! The sweetest moments of my life have
4 been when I was drifting: I am drifting again--with the bright warm
5 sun ahead and masses of vegetation around--and in the heat
6 everything is so still, so calm--and I am drifting languidly--in the
7 warm heart of the river! I dare not make a splash with my hands or
8 feet--for fear of breaking the marvellous stillness, stillness that
9 makes you feel sure it is an illusion!

10 Behind my work was ambition, behind my love was
11 personality, behind my purity was fear, behind my guidance the
12 thirst of power! Now they are vanishing, and I drift. I come!
13 Mother, I come! In Thy warm bosom, floating wheresoever Thou
14 takest me, in the voiceless, in the strange, in the wonderland, I
15 come--a spectator, no more an actor.

16 Oh, it is so calm! My thoughts seem to come from a great,
17 great distance in the interior of my own heart. They seem like faint,
18 distant whispers, and peace is upon everything, sweet, sweet
19 peace--like that one feels for a few moments just before falling into
20 sleep, when things are seen and felt like shadows--without fear,
21 without love, without emotion. Peace that one feels alone,
22 surrounded with statues and pictures--I come! Lord, I come!

23 The world *is*, but not beautiful nor ugly, but as sensations
24 without exciting any emotion. Oh, Joe, the blessedness of it!
25 Everything is good and beautiful; for things are all losing their
26 relative proportions to me--my body among the first. Om That
27 Existence!

28 I hope great things to come to you all in London and Paris.
29 Fresh joy--fresh benefits to mind and body.

30 With love as ever to you and Mrs. Bull,

31
32 faithfully,

Yours

Vivekananda

36 CLIX

37 New York

38 20th June,

39 1900

40 Dear Nivedita,

41 . . . Well, Mother seems to be kind again and the wheel is
42 slowly rising up. . . .

43 Yours etc.,

44 Vivekananda

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CLX

New York,
2nd July,

1900

Dear Nivedita,

. . . Mother knows, as I always say. Pray to Mother. It is hard work to be a leader--one must crush all one's own self under the feet of the community. . . .

Yours etc.,
Vivekananda

CLXI

6 Place des Etats

Unis, Paris

25th Aug., 1900

Dear Nivedita,

Your letter reached me just now. Many thanks for the kind expressions.

I gave a chance to Mrs. Bull to draw her money out of the Math; and as she did not say anything about it, and the trust deeds were waiting here to be executed, I got them executed duly at the British Consulate; and they are on their way to India now.

Now I am free, as I have kept no power or authority or position for me in the work. I also have resigned the presidentship of the Ramakrishna Mission.

The Math etc., belong now to the immediate disciples of Ramakrishna except myself. The presidentship is now Brahmananda's--next it will fall on Premananda etc., etc., in turn.

I am so glad a whole load is off me, now I am happy. I have served Ramakrishna through mistakes and success for 20 years now. I retire for good and devote the rest of my life to myself.

I no longer represent anybody, nor am I responsible to anybody. As to my friends, I had a morbid sense of obligation. I have thought well and find I owe nothing to anybody; if anything, I have given my best energies, unto death almost, and received only hectoring and mischief-making and botheration. I am done with everyone here and in India.

Your letter indicates that I am jealous of your new friends. You must know once for all, I am born without jealousy, without avarice, without the desire to rule--whatever other vices I am born with.

I never directed you before; now, after I am nobody in the work, I have no direction whatever. I only know this much: So long as you serve "Mother" with a whole heart, She will be your guide.

I never had any jealousy about what friends you made. I

never criticised my brethren for mixing up in anything. Only I do believe the Western people have the peculiarity of trying to force upon others whatever seems good to them, forgetting that what is good for you may not be good for others. As such, I am afraid you might try to force upon others whatever turn your mind might take in contact with new friends. That was the only reason I sometimes tried to stop any particular influence, and nothing else.

You are free, have your own choice, your own work. . . .

Friends or foes, they are all instruments in Her hands to help us work out our own Karma, through pleasure or pain. As such "Mother" bless them all.

With all love and blessings,

Yours

affectionately,

Vivekananda

CLXII

Paris,

28th August,

1900

Dear Nivedita,

Such is life--grind, grind; and yet what else are we to do? Grind, grind! Something will come--some way will be opened. If it does not, as it probably never will--then, then--what then? All our efforts are only to stave off, for a season, the great climax--death! Oh, what would the world do without you, Death! Thou great healer!

The world, as it is, is not real, is not eternal, thank the Lord!! How can the future be any better? That must be an effect of this one--at least like this, if not worse!

Dreams, oh dreams! Dream on! Dream, the magic of dream, is the cause of this life, it is also the remedy. Dream, dream, only dream! Kill dream by dream!

I am trying to learn French, talking to __ here. Some are very appreciative already. Talk to all the world--of the eternal riddle, the eternal spool of fate, whose thread-end no one finds and everyone seems to find, at least to his own satisfaction, at least for a time--to fool himself a moment, isn't it?

Well, now great things are to be done! Who cares for great things? Why not do small things as well? One is as good as the other. The greatness of little things, that is what the Gita teaches--bless the old book!! . . .

I have not had much time to think of the body. So it must be well. Nothing is ever well here. We forget them at times, and that is being well and doing well. . . .

We play our parts here--good or bad. When the dream is finished and we have left the stage, we will have a hearty laugh at all this--of this only I am sure.

Yours etc.,

Vivekananda

CLXIII

6 Place des Etats

Unis, Paris

3rd Sept., 1900

Dear Mother {Mrs. Leggett},

We had a congress of cranks here in this house.

The representatives came from various countries, from India in the south, to Scotland in the north, with England and America buttressing the sides.

We were having great difficulty in electing the president, for though Dr. James (Professor William James) was there, he was more mindful of the blisters raised on him by Mrs. Melton (probably a magnetic healer) than solution of world problems.

I proposed Joe (Josephine MacLeod), but she refused on the ground of non-arrival of her new gown--and went to a corner to watch the scene, from a coign of vantage.

Mrs. (Ole) Bull was ready, but Margot (Sister Nivedita) objected to this meeting being reduced to a comparative philosophy class.

When we were thus in a fix--up sprung a short, square, almost round figure from the corner, and without any ceremony declared that all difficulties will be solved, not only of electing a president but of life itself, if we all took to worshipping the Sun God and Moon God. He delivered his speech in five minutes; but it took his disciple, who was present, fully three quarters of an hour to translate. In the meanwhile, the master began to draw the rugs in your parlour up in a heap, with the intention, as he said, of giving us an ocular demonstration of the power of "Fire God", then and there.

At this juncture Joe interposed and insisted that she did not want a fire sacrifice in her parlour; whereupon the Indian saint looked daggers at Joe, entirely disgusted at the behaviour of one he confidently believed to be a perfect convert to fire worship.

Then Dr. James snatched a minute from nursing his blisters and declared that he would have something very interesting to speak upon Fire God and his brethren, if he were not entirely occupied with the evolution of Meltonian blisters. Moreover his great Master, Herbert Spencer, not having investigated the subject before him, he would stick to golden silence.

1 "Chutney is the thing", said a voice near the door. We all
2 looked back and saw Margot. "It is Chutney," she said, "Chutney
3 and Kali, that will remove all difficulties of life, and make it easy for
4 us to swallow all evils, and relish what is good." But she stopped all
5 of a sudden and vehemently asserted that she was not going to
6 speak any further, as she has been obstructed by a certain male
7 animal in the audience in her speech. She was sure one man in the
8 audience had his head turned towards the window and was not
9 paying the attention proper to a lady, and though as to herself she
10 believed in the equality of the sexes, yet she wanted to know the
11 reason of that disgusting man's want of due respect for women.
12 Then one and all declared that they had been giving her the most
13 undivided attention, and all above the equal right, her due, but to
14 no purpose. Margot would have nothing to do with that horrible
15 crowd and sat down.

16 Then Mrs. Bull of Boston took the floor and began to explain
17 how all the difficulties of the world were from not understanding
18 the true relation between the sexes. She said, "The only panacea
19 was a right understanding of the proper persons, and then to find
20 liberty in love and freedom in liberty and motherhood, brotherhood,
21 fatherhood, Godhood, love in freedom and freedom in love, in the
22 right holding up of the true ideal in sex."

23 To this the Scotch delegate vehemently objected and said that
24 as the hunter chased the goatherd, the goatherd the shepherd, the
25 shepherd the peasant, and the peasant drove the fisher into the sea,
26 now we wanted to fish out of the deep the fisher and let him fall
27 upon the peasant, the peasant upon the shepherd, and so on; and
28 the web of life will be completed and we will be all happy. He was
29 not allowed to continue his driving business long. In a second
30 everyone was on his feet, and we could only hear a confusion of
31 voices--"Sun God and Moon God", "Chutney and Kali," "Freedom
32 holding up right understanding, sex, motherhood", "Never, the
33 fisherman must go back to the shore", etc. Whereupon Joe declared
34 that she was yearning to be the hunter for the time and chase them
35 all out of the house if they did not stop their nonsense.

36 Then was peace and calm restored, and I hasten to write you
37 about it.

38 Yours affly.,
39 Vivekananda

40
41
42 CLXIV

43 6 Place des
44 Etats Unis
45 Paris, France
46 10th
47 September, 1900
48 Dear Alberta,

1 I am surely coming this evening and of course will be very
2 glad to meet the princess (probably Princess Demidoff) and her
3 brother. But if it be too late to find my way out here, you will have to
4 find me a place to sleep in the house.

5 Yours with love and
6 blessings,

7 Vivekananda

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10 CLXV

11 The Math,
12 Belur
13 11th Dec.,
14 1900

15 Dear Joe,

16 I arrived night before last. Alas! my hurrying was of no use.

17 Poor Captain Sevier passed away, a few days ago--thus two
18 great Englishmen gave up their lives for us--us the Hindus. Thus is
19 martyrdom if anything is. Mrs. Sevier I have written to just now, to
20 know her decision.

21 I am well, things are well here--every way. Excuse this haste.
22 I will write longer ere long.

23 Ever yours in
24 truth,

25 Vivekananda

26
27 CLXVI

28 The Math,
29 Belur, Howrah
30 19th Dec., 1900

31 Dear Nivedita,

32 Just a voice across the continents to say, how do you do? Are
33 you not surprised? Verily I am a bird of passage. Gay and busy
34 Paris, grim old Constantinople, sparkling little Athens, and
35 pyramidal Cairo are left behind, and here I am writing in my room
36 on the Ganga, in the Math. It is so quiet and still! The broad river is
37 dancing in the bright sunshine, only now and then an occasional
38 cargo boat breaking the silence with the splashing of the oars. It is
39 the cold season here, but the middle of the day is warm and bright
40 every day. But it is the winter of Southern California. Everything is
41 green and gold, and the grass is like velvet; yet the air is cold and
42 crisp and delightful.

43 Yours etc.,

44 Vivekananda

The Math,
Belur, Howrah,

26th Dec., 1900

Dear Joe,

This mail brought your letter including that of Mother and Alberta. What the learned friend of Alberta says about Russia is about the same I think myself. Only there is one difficulty of thought: Is it possible for the Hindu race to be Russianised?

Dear Mr. Sevier passed away before I could arrive. He was cremated on the banks of the river that flows by his Ashrama, *a la* Hindu, covered with garlands, the Brahmins carrying the body and boys chanting the Vedas.

The cause has already two martyrs. It makes me love dear old England and its heroic breed. The Mother is watering the plant of future India with the best blood of England. Glory unto Her!

Dear Mrs. Sevier is calm. A letter she wrote me to Paris comes back this mail, I am going up tomorrow to pay her a visit. Lord bless her, dear brave soul!

I am calm and strong. Occasion never found me low yet; Mother will not make me now depressed.

It is very pleasant here, now the winter is on. The Himalayas will be still more beautiful with the uncovered snows.

The young man who started from New York, Mr. Johnston, has taken the vow of a Brahmacharin and is at Mayavati.

Send the money to Saradananda in the Math, as I will be away in the hills.

They have worked all right as far as they could; I am glad, and feel myself quite a fool on account of my nervous chagrin.

They are as good and as faithful as ever, and they are in good health. Write all this to Mrs. Bull and tell her she was always right and I was wrong, and I beg a hundred thousand pardons of her.

Oceans of love for her and for M__.

I look behind and after

And find that all is right.

In my deepest sorrows

There is a soul of light.

All love to M__, Mrs. C__, to Dear J. B.__, and to you, Dear Joe,
Pranams.

Vivekananda

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CLXVIII

Belur, The Math,
7th Sept.,
1901

Dear Nivedita,

We all work by bits, that is to say, in this cause. I try to keep down the spring, but something or other happens, and the spring goes whirr, and there you are--thinking, remembering, scribbling, scrawling, and all that!

Well, about the rains---they have come down now in right earnest, and it is a deluge, pouring, pouring, pouring night and day. The river is rising, flooding the banks; the ponds and tanks have overflowed. I have just now returned from lending a hand in cutting a deep drain to take off the water from the Math grounds. The rain-water stands at places some feet high. My huge stork is full of glee, and so are the ducks and geese. My tame antelope fled from the Math and gave us some days of anxiety in finding him out. One of my ducks unfortunately died yesterday. She had been gasping for breath more than a week. One of my waggish old monks says, "Sir, it is no use living in this Kali-Yuga when ducks catch cold from damp and rain, and frogs sneeze!"

One of the geese had her plumes falling off. Knowing no other method, I left her some minutes in a tub of water mixed with mild carbolic, so that it might either kill or heal; and she is all right now.

Yours etc.,

Vivekananda

CONVERSATIONS AND DIALOGUES

(From the Diary of a Disciple¹³³)

I

[Place: Calcutta, the house of the late Babu Priyanath Mukhopadhyaya, Baghbazar. Year: 1897.]

It is three or four days since Swamiji has set his foot in Calcutta¹³⁴ after his return from the West. The joy of the devotees of Shri Ramakrishna knows no bounds at enjoying his holy presence after a long time. And the well-to-do among them are considering themselves blessed to cordially invite Swamiji to their own houses. This afternoon Swamiji had an invitation to the house of Srijut Priyanath Mukhopadhyaya, a devotee of Shri Ramakrishna, at Rajballabhpara in Baghbazar. Receiving this news, many devotees assembled today in his house.

The disciple also, informed of it through indirect sources, reached the house of Mr. Mukherjee at about 2:30 p.m. He had not yet made his acquaintance with Swamiji. So this was to be his first meeting with the Swami.

On the disciple's reaching there, Swami Turiyananda took him to Swamiji and introduced him. After his return to the Math, the Swami had already heard about him, having read a Hymn on Shri Ramakrishna composed by the disciple.

Swamiji also had come to know that the disciple used to visit Nag Mahashaya, a foremost devotee of Shri Ramakrishna.¹³⁵

When the disciple prostrated himself before him and took his seat, Swamiji addressed him in Sanskrit and asked him about Nag Mahashaya and his health, and while referring to his superhuman renunciation, his unbounded love for God, and his humility, he said: {Sanskrit}¹³⁶--"We are undone by our vain quest after reality; while, O bee, you are indeed blessed with success!" He then asked the disciple to send these words to Nag Mahashaya. Afterwards, finding it rather inconvenient to talk to the disciple in the crowd, he called him and Swami Turiyananda to a small room to the west and, addressing himself to the disciple, began to recite these words from

¹³³ ?The disciple is Sharatchandra Chakravarty, who published his records in a Bengali book, *Swami-Shishya-Samvada*, in two parts. The present series of "Conversations and Dialogues" is a revised translation from this book. Five dialogues of this series have already appeared in the *Complete Works*, Vol. V.

¹³⁴ ?On February 20, 1897.

¹³⁵ ?Durgacharan Nag, the great saint and perfected soul, living as a householder, who wonderfully reflected in his life--in many of its phases--the greatness of the Master, Shri Ramakrishna.

¹³⁶ ?Words addressed by King Dushyanta to the bee which was teasing Shakuntala by darting at her lips--Kalidasa's *Shakuntalam*.

1 the *Vivekachudamani* (43): {Sanskrit}--"O wise one, fear not; you
2 have not to perish. Means there are for crossing the ocean of this
3 round of birth and death. I shall show you the same way by which
4 holy men of renunciation have crossed this ocean." He then asked
5 him to read Acharya Shankara's work named *Vivekachudamani*.

6 At these words, the disciple went on musing within himself.
7 Was the Swami in this way hinting at the desirability of his own
8 formal initiation? The disciple was at that time a staunch orthodox
9 man in his ways, and a Vedantin. He had not yet settled his mind as
10 regards the adoption of a Guru and was a devoted advocate of
11 Varnashrama or caste ordinances.

12 While various topics were going on, a man came in and
13 announced that Mr. Narendranath Sen, the Editor of the *Mirror*,
14 had come for an interview with Swamiji. Swamiji asked the bearer
15 of this news to show him into that small room. Narendra Babu came
16 and taking a seat there introduced various topics about England
17 and America. In answer to his questions Swamiji said, "Nowhere in
18 the world is to be found another nation like the Americans, so
19 generous, broad-minded, hospitable, and so sincerely eager to
20 accept new ideas." "Wherever work", he went on, "has been done in
21 America has not been done through my power. The people of
22 America have accepted the ideas of Vedanta, because they are so
23 good-hearted." Referring to England he said, "There is no nation in
24 the world so conservative as the English. They do not like so easily
25 to accept any new idea, but if through perseverance they can be
26 once made to understand any idea, they will never give it up by any
27 means. Such firm determination you will find in no other nation.
28 This is why they occupy the foremost position in the world in power
29 and civilisation."

30 Then declaring that if qualified preachers could be had, there
31 was greater likelihood of the Vedanta work being permanently
32 established in England than in America, he continued, "I have only
33 laid the foundation of the work. If future preachers follow my path,
34 a good deal of work may be done in time."

35 Narendra Babu asked, "What future prospect is there for us
36 in preaching religion in this way?"

37 Swamiji said: "In our country there is only this religion of
38 Vedanta. Compared with the Western civilisation, it may be said, we
39 have hardly got anything else. But by the preaching of this
40 universal religion of Vedanta, a religion which gives equal rights to
41 acquire spirituality to men of all creeds and all paths of religious
42 practice, the civilised West would come to know what a wonderful
43 degree of spirituality once developed in India and how that is still
44 existing. By the study of this religion, the Western nations will have
45 increasing regard and sympathy for us. Already these have grown
46 to some extent. In this way, if we have their real sympathy and
47 regard, we would learn from them the sciences bearing on our
48 material life, thereby qualifying ourselves better for the struggle for
49 existence. On the other hand, by learning this Vedanta from us, they
50 will be enabled to secure their own spiritual welfare."

51 Narendra Babu asked, "Is there any hope of our political

1 progress in this kind of interchange?"

2 Swamiji said, "They (the Westerners) are the children of the
3 great hero Virochana! Their power makes the five elements play
4 like puppets in their hands. If you people believe that we shall in
5 case of conflict with them gain freedom by applying those material
6 forces, you are profoundly mistaken. Just as a little piece of stone
7 figures before the Himalayas, so we differ from them in point of
8 skill in the use of those forces. Do you know what my idea is? By
9 preaching the profound secrets of the Vedanta religion in the
10 Western world, we shall attract the sympathy and regard of these
11 mighty nations, maintaining for ever the position of their teacher in
12 spiritual matters, and they will remain our teachers in all material
13 concerns. The day when, surrendering the spiritual into their
14 hands, our countrymen would sit at the feet of the West to learn
15 religion, that day indeed the nationality of this fallen nation will be
16 dead and gone for good. Nothing will come of crying day and night
17 before them, 'Give me this or give me that.' When there will grow a
18 link of sympathy and regard between both nations by this give-and-
19 take intercourse, there will be then no need for these noisy cries.
20 They will do everything of their own accord. I believe that by this
21 cultivation of religion and the wider diffusion of Vedanta, both this
22 country and the West will gain enormously. To me the pursuit of
23 politics is a secondary means in comparison with this. I will lay
24 down my life to carry out this belief practically. If you believe in any
25 other way of accomplishing the good of India, well, you may go on
26 working your own way."

27 Narendra Babu shortly left, expressing his unqualified
28 agreement with Swamiji's ideas. The disciple, hearing the above
29 words from Swamiji, astonishingly contemplated his luminous
30 features with steadfast gaze.

31 When Narendra Babu had departed, an enthusiastic preacher
32 belonging to the society for the protection of cows came for an
33 interview with Swamiji. He was dressed almost like a Sannyasin, if
34 not fully so--with a Gerua turban on the head; he was evidently an
35 up-country Indian. At the announcement of this preacher of cow-
36 protection Swamiji came out to the parlour room. The preacher
37 saluted Swamiji and presented him with a picture of the mother-
38 cow. Swamiji took that in his hand and, making it over to one
39 standing by, commenced the following conversation with the
40 preacher:

41 Swamiji: What is the object of your society?

42 Preacher: We protect the mother-cows of our country from
43 the hands of the butcher. Cow-infirmaries have been founded in
44 some places where the diseased, decrepit mother-cows or those
45 bought from the butchers are provided for.

46 Swamiji: That is very good indeed. What is the source of your
47 income?

48 Preacher: The work of the society is carried on only by gifts
49 kindly made by great men like you.

50 Swamiji: What amount of money have you now laid by?

1 Preacher: The Marwari traders' community are the special
2 supporters of this work. They have given a big amount for this
3 cause.

4 Swamiji: A terrible famine has now broken out in Central
5 India. The Indian Government has published a death-roll of nine
6 lakhs of starved people. Has your society done anything to render
7 help in this time of famine?

8 Preacher: We do not help during famine or other distresses.
9 This society has been established only for the protection of mother-
10 cows.

11 Swamiji: During a famine when lakhs of people, your own
12 brothers and sisters, have fallen into the jaws of death, you have
13 not thought it your duty, though having the means, to help them in
14 that terrible calamity with food!

15 Preacher: No. This famine broke out as a result of men's
16 Karma, their sins. It is a case of "like Karma, like fruit".

17 Hearing the words of the preacher, sparks of fire, as it were,
18 scintillated in Swamiji's large eyes; his face became flushed. But he
19 suppressed his feeling and said: "Those associations which do not
20 feel sympathy for men and, even seeing their own brothers dying
21 from starvation, do not give them a handful of rice to save their
22 lives, while giving away piles of food to save birds and beasts, I
23 have not the least sympathy for, and I do not believe that society
24 derives any good from them. If you make a plea of Karma by saying
25 that men die through their Karma, then it becomes a settled fact
26 that it is useless to try or struggle for anything in this world; and
27 your work for the protection of animals is no exception. With regard
28 to your cause also, it can be said--the mother-cows through their
29 own Karma fall into the hands of the butchers and die, and we need
30 not do anything in the matter."

31 The preacher was a little abashed and said: "Yes, what you
32 say is true, but the Shastras say that the cow is our mother."

33 Swamiji smilingly said, "Yes, that the cow is our mother, I
34 understand: who else could give birth to *such* accomplished
35 children?"

36 The up-country preacher did not speak further on the subject;
37 perhaps he could not understand the point of Swamiji's poignant
38 ridicule. He told Swamiji that he was begging something of him for
39 the objects of the society.

40 Swamiji: I am a Sannyasin, a fakir. Where shall I find money
41 enough to help you? But if ever I get money in my possession, I
42 shall first spend that in the service of man. Man is first to be saved;
43 he must be given food, education, and spirituality. If any money is
44 left after doing all these, then only something would be given to
45 your society.

46 At these words, the preacher went away after saluting
47 Swamiji. Then Swamiji began to speak to us: "What words, these,
48 forsooth! Says he that men are dying by reason of their Karma, so
49 what avails doing any kindness to them! This is decisive proof that

1 the country has gone to rack and ruin! Do you see how much
2 abused the Karma theory of your Hinduism has been? Those who
3 are men and yet have no feeling in the heart for man, well, are such
4 to be counted as men at all?" While speaking these words,
5 Swamiji's whole body seemed to shiver in anguish and grief.

6 Then, while smoking, Swamiji said to the disciple, "Well, see
7 me again."

8 Disciple: Where will you be staying, sir? Perhaps you might
9 put up in some rich man's house. Will he allow me there?

10 Swamiji: At present, I shall be living either at the Alambazar
11 Math or at the garden-house of Gopal Lal Seal at Cossipore. You
12 may come to either place.

13 Disciple: Sir, I very much wish to speak with you in solitude.

14 Swamiji: All right. Come one night. We shall speak plenty of
15 Vedanta.

16 Disciple: Sir, I have heard that some Europeans and
17 Americans have come with you. Will they not get offended at my
18 dress or my talk?

19 Swamiji: Why, they are also men, and moreover they are
20 devoted to the Vedanta religion. They will be glad to converse with
21 you.

22 Disciple: Sir, Vedanta speaks of some distinctive qualifications
23 for its aspirants; how could these come out in your Western
24 disciples? The Shastras say--he who has studied the Vedas and the
25 Vedanta, who has formally expiated his sins, who has performed all
26 the daily and occasional duties enjoined by the scriptures, who is
27 self-restrained in his food and general conduct, and specially he
28 who is accomplished in the four special Sadhanas (preliminary
29 disciplines), he alone has a right to the practice of Vedanta. Your
30 Western disciples are in the first place non-Brahmins, and then they
31 are lax in point of proper food and dress; how could they
32 understand the system of Vedanta?

33 Swamiji: When you speak with them, you will know at once
34 whether they have understood Vedanta or not.

35 Swamiji, perhaps, could now see that the disciple was rigidly
36 devoted to the external observances of orthodox Hinduism. Swamiji
37 then, surrounded by some devotees of Shri Ramakrishna, went over
38 to the house of Srijut Balaram Basu of Baghbazar. The disciple
39 bought the book *Vivekachudamani* at Bat-tala and went towards his
40 own home at Darjipara.

42 II

43 [Place: On the way from Calcutta to Cossipore and in the
44 garden of the late Gopal Lal Seal. Year: 1897.]

45 Today Swamiji was taking rest at noon in the house of Srijut
46 Girish Chandra Ghosh. The disciple arriving there saluted him and
47 found that Swamiji was just ready to go to the garden-house of

1 Gopal Lal Seal. A carriage was waiting outside. He said to the
2 disciple, "Well, come with me." The disciple agreeing, Swamiji got
3 up with him into the carriage and it started. When it drove up the
4 Chitpur road, on seeing the Ganga, Swamiji broke forth in a chant,
5 self-involved: {Sanskrit} etc.¹³⁷ The disciple listened in silent
6 wonder to that wave of music, when after a short while, seeing a
7 railway engine going towards the Chitpur hydraulic bridge, Swamiji
8 said to the disciple, "Look how it goes majestically like a lion!" The
9 disciple replied, "But that is inert matter. Behind it there is the
10 intelligence of man working, and hence it moves. In moving thus,
11 what credit is there for it?"

12 Swamiji: Well, say then, what is the sign of consciousness?

13 Disciple: Why, sir, that indeed is conscious which acts through
14 intelligence.

15 Swamiji: Everything is conscious which rebels against nature:
16 there, consciousness is manifested. Just try to kill a little ant, even it
17 will once resist to save its life. Where there is struggle, where there
18 is rebellion, there is the sign of life, there consciousness is
19 manifested.

20 Disciple: Sir, can that test be applied also in the case of men
21 and of nations?

22 Swamiji: Just read the history of the world and see whether it
23 applies or not. You will find that excepting yours, it holds good in
24 the case of all other nations. It is you only who are in this world
25 lying prostrate today like inert matter. You have been hypnotised.
26 From very old times, others have been telling you that you are
27 weak, that you have no power, and you also, accepting that, have
28 for about a thousand years gone on thinking, "We are wretched, we
29 are good for nothing." (Pointing to his own body:) This body also is
30 born of the soil of your country; but I never thought like that. And
31 hence you see how, through His will, even those who always think
32 us low and weak, have done and are still doing me divine honour. If
33 you can think that infinite power, infinite knowledge and
34 indomitable energy lie within you, and if you can bring out that
35 power, you also can become like me.

36 Disciple: Where is the capacity in us for thinking that way,
37 sir? Where is the teacher or preceptor who from our childhood will
38 speak thus before us and make us understand? What we have heard
39 and have learnt from all is that the object of having an education
40 nowadays is to secure some good job.

41 Swamiji: For that reason is it that we have come forward with
42 quite another precept and example. Learn that truth from us,
43 understand it, and realise it; and then spread that idea broadcast,
44 in cities, in towns, and in villages. Go and preach to all, "Arise,
45 awake, sleep no more; within each of you there is the power to
46 remove all wants and all miseries. Believe this, and that power will
47 be manifested." Teach this to all, and, with that, spread among the

1 ¹³⁷ ?From Vyasa's Hymn to Vishvanatha, meaning "whose matted locks look
2 charming with the waves of the Ganga playing among them".
3

1 masses in plain language the central truths of science, philosophy,
2 history, and geography. I have a plan to open a centre with the
3 unmarried youths; first of all I shall teach them, and then carry on
4 the work through them.

5 Disciple: But that requires a good deal of money. Where will
6 you get this money?

7 Swamiji: What do you talk! Isn't it man that makes money?
8 Where did you ever hear of money making man? If you can make
9 your thoughts and words perfectly at one, if you can, I say, make
10 yourself one in speech and action, money will pour in at your feet of
11 itself, like water.

12 Disciple: Well, sir, I take it for granted that money will come,
13 and you will begin that good work. But what will that matter?
14 Before this, also, many great men carried out many good deeds. But
15 where are they now? To be sure, the same fate awaits the work
16 which you are going to start. Then what is the good of such an
17 endeavour?

18 Swamiji: He who always speculates as to what awaits him in
19 future, accomplishes nothing whatsoever. What you have
20 understood as true and good, just do that at once. What's the good
21 of calculating what may or may not befall in future? The span of life
22 is so, so short--and can anything be accomplished in it if you go on
23 forecasting and computing results. God is the only dispenser of
24 results; leave it to Him to do all that. What have you got to do with
25 it? Don't look that way, but go on working.

26 While he was thus going on, the cab reached the garden-
27 house. Many people from Calcutta came to the garden that day to
28 see Swamiji. Swamiji got down from the carriage, took his seat in
29 the room, and began conversation with them all. Mr. Goodwin, a
30 Western disciple of Swamiji, was standing near by, like the
31 embodiment of service, as it were. The disciple had already made
32 his acquaintance; so he came to Mr. Goodwin, and both engaged in
33 a variety of talk about Swamiji.

34 In the evening Swamiji called the disciple and asked him,
35 "Have you got the Katha Upanishad by heart?"

36 Disciple: No, sir, I have only read it with Shankara's
37 commentary.

38 Swamiji: Among the Upanishads, one finds no other book so
39 beautiful as this. I wish you would all get it by heart. What will it do
40 only to read it? Rather try to bring into your life the faith, the
41 courage, the discrimination, and the renunciation of Nachiketa.

42 Disciple: Give your blessings, please, that I may realise these.

43 Swamiji: You have heard of Shri Ramakrishna's words,
44 haven't you? He used to say, "The breeze of mercy is already
45 blowing, do you only hoist the sail." Can anybody, my boy, thrust
46 realisation upon another? One's destiny is in one's hands--the Guru
47 only makes this much understood. Through the power of the seed
48 itself the tree grows, the air and water are only aids.

49 Disciple: There is, sir, the necessity also of extraneous help.

1 Swamiji: Yes, there is. But you should know that if there be no
2 substance within, no amount of outside help will avail anything. Yet
3 there comes a time for everyone to realise the Self. For everyone is
4 Brahman. The distinction of higher and lower is only in the degree
5 of manifestation of that Brahman. In time, everyone will have
6 perfect manifestation. Hence the Shastras say, "{Sanskrit}--In time,
7 That is realised in one's self."

8 Disciple: When, alas, will that happen, sir? From the
9 Shastras we hear how many births we have had to pass in
10 ignorance!

11 Swamiji: What's the fear? When you have come here this
12 time, the goal shall be attained in this life. Liberation or Samadhi--
13 all this consists in simply doing away with the obstacles to the
14 manifestation of Brahman. Otherwise the Self is always shining
15 forth like the sun. The cloud of ignorance has only veiled it. Remove
16 the cloud and the sun will manifest. Then you get into the state of
17 {Sanskrit} ("the knot of the heart is broken") etc. The various paths
18 that you find, all advise you to remove the obstacles on the way. The
19 way by which one realises the Self, is the way which he preached to
20 all. But the goal of all is the knowledge of the Self, the realisation of
21 this Self. To it all men, all beings have equal right. This is the view
22 acceptable to all.

23 Disciple: Sir, when I read or hear these words of the Shastras,
24 the thought that the Self has not yet been realised makes the heart
25 very disconsolate.

26 Swamiji: This is what is called longing. The more it grows the
27 more will the cloud of obstacles be dispelled, and stronger will faith
28 be established. Gradually the Self will be realised like a fruit on the
29 palm of one's hand. This realisation alone is the soul of religion.
30 Everyone can go on abiding by some observances and formalities.
31 Everyone can fulfil certain injunctions and prohibitions, but how
32 few have this longing for realisation! This intense longing--
33 becoming mad after realising God or getting the knowledge of the
34 Self-is real spirituality. The irresistible madness which the Gopis
35 had for the Lord, Shri Krishna, yea, it is intense longing like that
36 which is necessary for the realisation of the Self! Even in the Gopis'
37 mind there was a slight distinction of man and woman. But in real
38 Self-knowledge, there is not the slightest distinction of sex.

39 While speaking thus, Swamiji introduced the subject of *Gita-*
40 *Govindam* (of Jayadeva) and continued saying:

41 Jayadeva was the last poet in Sanskrit literature, though he
42 often cared more for the jingling of words than for depth of
43 sentiment. But just see how the poet has shown the culmination of
44 love and longing in the Shloka {Sanskrit} etc.¹³⁸ Such love indeed is
45 necessary for Self-realisation. There must be fretting and pining
46 within the heart. Now from His playful life at Vrindaban come to
47 the Krishna of Kurukshetra, and see how that also is fascinating--

138 ?{Sanskrit}--"At the flying of a bird or the stirring of a leaf, she fancies you
are coming; she arranges your bed with eyes all alert looking towards the way
you would come."

1 how, amidst all that horrible din and uproar of fighting, Krishna
2 remains calm, balanced, and peaceful. Ay, on the very battlefield,
3 He is speaking the Gita to Arjuna and getting him on to fight, which
4 is the Dharma of a Kshatriya! Himself an agent to bring about this
5 terrible warfare, Shri Krishna remains unattached to action--He did
6 not take up arms! To whichever phase of it you look, you will find
7 the character of Shri Krishna perfect. As if He was the embodiment
8 of knowledge, work, devotion, power of concentration, and
9 everything! In the present age, this aspect of Shri Krishna should
10 be specially studied. Only contemplating the Krishna of Vrindaban
11 with His flute won't do nowadays--that will not bring salvation to
12 humanity. Now is needed the worship of Shri Krishna uttering forth
13 the lion-roar of the Gita, of Rama with His bow and arrows, of
14 Mahavira, of Mother Kali. Then only will the people grow strong by
15 going to work with great energy and will. I have considered the
16 matter most carefully and come to the conclusion that of those who
17 profess and talk of religion nowadays in this country, the majority
18 are full of morbidity--crack-brained or fanatic. Without development
19 of an abundance of Rajas, you have hopes neither in this world, nor
20 in the next. The whole country is enveloped in intense Tamas; and
21 naturally the result is--servitude in this life and hell in the next.

22 Disciple: Do you expect in view of the Rajas in the Westerners
23 that they will gradually become Sattvika?

24 Swamiji: Certainly. Possessed of a plenitude of Rajas, they
25 have now reached the culmination of Bhoga, or enjoyment. Do you
26 think that it is not they, but you, who are going to achieve Yoga--you
27 who hang about for the sake of your bellies? At the sight of their
28 highly refined enjoyment, the delineation in *Meghaduta*--{Sanskrit}
29 etc.¹³⁹--comes to my mind. And your Bhoga consists in lying on a
30 ragged bed in a muggy room, multiplying progeny every year like a
31 hog!--Begetting a band of famished beggars and slaves! Hence do I
32 say, let people be made energetic and active in nature by the
33 stimulation of Rajas. Work, work, work; "{Sanskrit}--There is no
34 other path of liberation but this."

35 Disciple: Sir, did our forefathers possess this kind of Rajas?

36 Swamiji: Why, did they not? Does not history tell us that they
37 established colonies in many countries, and sent preachers of
38 religion to Tibet, China, Sumatra, and even to far-off Japan? Do you
39 think there is any other means of achieving progress except
40 through Rajas?

41 As conversation thus went on, night approached; and

1 ¹³⁹ ?{Sanskrit}--"The mansions of that city may well be compared with you, O
2 cloud, there is correspondence in features: while flashes of lightning play within
3 you, they have charmingly attired damsels moving within them; while you have
4 the rainbow, they have their paintings; you have your deep, rolling rumble, they
5 have their drums sounding forth music; you contain pellucid water within you,
6 they have their interior bedecked with transparent gems; you soar so high, their
7 roofs also kiss the sky" (*Meghaduta*, II. 1).

8 Kalidasa thus introduces his description of the enjoyments of Alakapuri. So the
9 reference here is not only to the first verse quoted, but also to the whole
10 description which follows.
11

1 meanwhile Miss Muller came there. She was an English lady,
2 having great reverence for Swamiji. Swamiji introduced the disciple
3 to her, and after a short talk Miss Muller went upstairs.

4 Swamiji: See, to what a heroic nation they belong! How far-
5 off is her home, and she is the daughter of a rich man--yet how long
6 a way has she come, only with the hope of realising the spiritual
7 ideal!

8 Disciple: Yes, sir, but your works are stranger still! How so
9 many Western ladies and gentlemen are always eager to serve you!
10 For this age, it is very strange indeed!

11 Swamiji: If this body lasts, you will see many more things. If I
12 can get some young men of heart and energy, I shall revolutionise
13 the whole country. There are a few in Madras. But I have more
14 hope in Bengal. Such clear brains are to be found scarcely in any
15 other country. But they have no strength in their muscles. The brain
16 and muscles must develop simultaneously. Iron nerves with an
17 intelligent brain--and the whole world is at your feet.

18 Word was brought that supper was ready for Swamiji. He said
19 to the disciple, "Come and have a look at my food." While going on
20 with the supper, he said, "It is not good to take much fatty or oily
21 substance. Roti is better than Luchi. Luchi is the food of the sick.
22 Take fish and meat and fresh vegetables, but sweets sparingly."
23 While thus talking, he inquired, "Well, how many Rotis have I
24 taken? Am I to take more?" He did not remember how much he took
25 and did not feel even if he yet had any appetite. The sense of body
26 faded away so much while he was talking!

27 He finished after taking a little more. The disciple also took
28 leave and went back to Calcutta. Getting no cab for hire, he had to
29 walk; and while walking, he thought over in his mind how soon
30 again he could come the next day to see Swamiji.

31

32

33 III

34 [Place: Cossipore, at the garden of the late Gopal Lal Seal.
35 Year: 1897.]

36 After his first return from the West, Swamiji resided for a few
37 days at the garden of the late Gopal Lal Seal at Cossipore. Some
38 well-known Pundits living at Barabazar, Calcutta, came to the
39 garden one day with a view to holding a disputation with him. The
40 disciple was present there on the occasion.

41 All the Pundits who came there could speak in Sanskrit
42 fluently. They came and greeting Swamiji, who sat surrounded by a
43 circle of visitors, began their conversation in Sanskrit. Swamiji also
44 responded to them in melodious Sanskrit. The disciple cannot
45 remember now the subject on which the Pundits argued with him
46 that day. But this much he remembers that the Pundits, almost all in
47 one strident voice, were rapping out to Swamiji in Sanskrit subtle
48 questions of philosophy, and he, in a dignified serious mood, was
49 giving out to them calmly his own well-argued conclusions about

1 those questions.

2 In the discussion with the Pundits Swamiji represented the
3 side of the Siddhanta or conclusions to be established, while the
4 Pundits represented that of the Purvapaksha or objections to be
5 raised. The disciple remembers that, while arguing, Swamiji
6 wrongly used in one place the word Asti instead of Svasti, which
7 made the Pundits laugh out. At this, Swamiji at once submitted:
8 "{Sanskrit}--I am but a servant of the Pundits, please excuse this
9 mistake." The Pundits also were charmed at this humility of
10 Swamiji. After a long dispute, the Pundits at last admitted that the
11 conclusions of the Siddhanta side were adequate, and preparing to
12 depart, they made their greetings to Swamiji.

13 After the Pundits had left, the disciple learnt from Swamiji
14 that these Pundits who took the side of the Purvapaksha were well
15 versed in the Purva-Mimamsa Shastras, Swamiji advocated the
16 philosophy of the Uttara-Mimamsa or Vedanta and proved to them
17 the superiority of the path of knowledge, and they were obliged to
18 accept his conclusions.

19 About the way the Pundits laughed at Swamiji, picking up one
20 grammatical mistake, he said that this error of his was due to the
21 fact of his not having spoken in Sanskrit for many years together.
22 He did not blame the Pundits a bit for all that. But he pointed out in
23 this connection that in the West it would imply a great incivility on
24 the part of an opponent to point out any such slip in language,
25 deviating from the real issue of dispute. A civilised society in such
26 cases would accept the idea, taking no notice of the language. "But
27 in your country, all the fighting is going on over the husk, nobody
28 searches for the kernel within." So saying, Swamiji began to talk
29 with the disciple in Sanskrit. The disciple also gave answers in
30 broken Sanskrit. Yet Swamiji praised him for the sake of
31 encouragement. From that day, at the request of Swamiji, the
32 disciple used to speak with him in Sanskrit off and on.

33 In reply to the question, what is civilisation, Swamiji said that
34 day: "The more advanced a society or nation is in spirituality, the
35 more is that society or nation civilised. No nation can be said to
36 have become civilised only because it has succeeded in increasing
37 the comforts of material life by bringing into use lots of machinery
38 and things of that sort. The present-day civilisation of the West is
39 multiplying day by day only the wants and distresses of men. On the
40 other hand, the ancient Indian civilisation, by showing people the
41 way to spiritual advancement, doubtless succeeded, if not in
42 removing once for all, at least in lessening, in a great measure, the
43 material needs of men. In the present age, it is to bring into
44 coalition both these civilisations that Bhagavan Shri Ramakrishna
45 was born. In this age, as on the one hand people have to be
46 intensely practical, so on the other hand they have to acquire deep
47 spiritual knowledge." Swamiji made us clearly understand that day
48 that from such interaction of the Indian civilisation with that of the
49 West would dawn on the world a new era. In the course of dilating
50 upon this, he happened to remark in one place, "Well, another
51 thing. People there in the West think that the more a man is
52 religious, the more demure he must be in his outward bearing--no

1 word about anything else from his lips! As the priests in the West
2 would on the one hand be struck with wonder at my liberal
3 religious discourses, they would be as much puzzled on the other
4 hand when they found me, after such discourses, talking frivolities
5 with my friends. Sometimes they would speak out to my face:
6 'Swami, you are a priest, you should not be joking and laughing in
7 this way like ordinary men. Such levity does not look well in you.' To
8 which I would reply, 'We are children of bliss, why should we look
9 morose and sombre?' But I doubt if they could rightly catch the drift
10 of my words."

11 That day Swamiji spoke many things about Bhava Samadhi
12 and Nirvikalpa Samadhi as well. These are produced below as far
13 as possible:

14 Suppose a man is cultivating that type of devotion to God
15 which Hanuman represents. The more intense the attitude
16 becomes, the more will the pose and demeanour of that aspirant,
17 nay even his physical configuration, be cast in that mould. It is in
18 this way that transmutation of species takes place. Taking up any
19 such emotional attitude, the worshipper becomes gradually shaped
20 into the very form of his ideal. The ultimate stage of any such
21 sentiment is called Bhava Samadhi. While the aspirant in the path
22 of Jnana, pursuing the process of Neti, Neti, "not this, not this",
23 such as "I am not the body, nor the mind, nor the intellect", and so
24 on, attains to the Nirvikalpa Samadhi when he is established in
25 absolute consciousness. It requires striving through many births to
26 reach perfection or the ultimate stage with regard to a single one of
27 these devotional attitudes. But Shri Ramakrishna, the king of the
28 realm of spiritual sentiment, perfected himself in no less than
29 eighteen different forms of devotion! He also used to say that his
30 body would not have endured, had he not held himself on to this
31 play of spiritual sentiment.

32 The disciple asked that day, "Sir, what sort of food did you use
33 to take in the West?"

34 Swamiji: The same as they take there. We are Sannyasins and
35 nothing can take away our caste!

36 On the subject of how he would work in future in this country,
37 Swamiji said that day that starting two centres, one in Madras and
38 another in Calcutta, he would rear up a new type of Sannyasins for
39 the good of all men in all its phases. He further said that by a
40 destructive method no progress either for the society or for the
41 country could be achieved. In all ages and times progress has been
42 effected by the constructive process, that is, by giving a new mould
43 to old methods and customs. Every religious preacher in India,
44 during the past ages, worked in that line. Only the religion of
45 Bhagavan Buddha was destructive. Hence that religion has been
46 extirpated from India.

47 The disciple remembers that while thus speaking on, he
48 remarked, "If the Brahman is manifested in one man, thousands of
49 men advance, finding their way out in that light. Only the knowers
50 of Brahman are the spiritual teachers of mankind. This is
51 corroborated by all scriptures and by reason too. It is only the

1 selfish Brahmins who have introduced into this country the system
2 of hereditary Gurus, which is against the Vedas and against the
3 Shastras. Hence it is that even through their spiritual practice men
4 do not now succeed in perfecting themselves or in realising
5 Brahman. To remove all this corruption in religion, the Lord has
6 incarnated Himself on earth in the present age in the person of Shri
7 Ramakrishna. The universal teachings that he offered, if spread all
8 over the world, will do good to humanity and the world. Not for
9 many a century past has India produced so great, so wonderful, a
10 teacher of religious synthesis."

11 A brother-disciple of Swamiji at that time asked him, "Why
12 did you not publicly preach Shri Ramakrishna as an Avatara in the
13 West?"

14 Swamiji: They make much flourish and fuss over their science
15 and philosophy. Hence, unless you first knock to pieces their
16 intellectual conceit through reasoning, scientific argument, and
17 philosophy, you cannot build anything there. Those who finding
18 themselves off their moorings through their utmost intellectual
19 reasoning would approach me in a real spirit of truth-seeking, to
20 them alone, I would speak of Shri Ramakrishna. If, otherwise, I had
21 forthwith spoken of the doctrine of incarnation, they might have
22 said, "Oh, you do not say anything new--why, we have our Lord
23 Jesus for all that!"

24 After thus spending some three or four delightful hours, the
25 disciple came back to Calcutta that day along with the other
26 visitors.

27 28 IV

29 [Place: The Kali-temple at Dakshineswar and the Alambazar
30 Math. Year: 1897, March.]

31 When Swamiji returned from England for the first time, the
32 Ramakrishna Math was located at Alambazar. The birthday
33 anniversary of Bhagavan Shri Ramakrishna was being celebrated
34 this year at the Kali-temple of Rani Rasmani at Dakshineswar.
35 Swamiji with some of his brother-disciples reached there from the
36 Alambazar Math at about 9 or 10 a.m. He was barefooted, with a
37 yellow turban on his head. Crowds of people were waiting to see
38 and hear him. In the temple of Mother Kali, Swamiji prostrated
39 himself before the Mother of the Universe, and thousands of heads,
40 following him, bent low. Then after prostrating himself before
41 Radhakantaji he came into the room which Shri Ramakrishna used
42 to occupy. There was not the least breathing space in the room.

43 Two European ladies who accompanied Swamiji to India
44 attended the festival. Swamiji took them along with himself to show
45 them the holy Panchavati and the Vilva tree.¹⁴⁰ Though the disciple
46 was not yet quite familiar with Swamiji, he followed him, and
47 presented him with the copy of a Sanskrit Ode about the Utsava

1 ¹⁴⁰ Panchavati is a grove of five special trees arranged and grown to serve
2 purposes of spiritual practice. The Vilva is also a holy tree of that sort.
3

1 (celebration) composed by himself. Swamiji read it while walking
2 towards the Panchavati. And on the way he once looked aside
3 towards the disciple and said, "Yes, it's done well. Attempt others
4 like it."

5 The householder devotees of Shri Ramakrishna happened to
6 be assembled on one side of the Panchavati, among whom was
7 Babu Girish Chandra Ghosh. Swamiji, accompanied by a throng,
8 came to Girish Babu and saluted him, saying, "Hallo! here is Mr.
9 Ghosh." Girish Babu returned his salutation with folded hands.
10 Reminding Girish Babu of the old days, Swamiji said, "Think of it,
11 Mr. Ghosh--from those days to these, what a transition!" Girish
12 Babu endorsed Swamiji's sentiment and said, "Yes, that is true; but
13 yet the mind longs to see more of it." After a short conversation,
14 Swamiji proceeded towards the Vilva tree situated on the north-east
15 of the Panchavati.

16 Now a huge crowd stood in keen expectancy to hear a lecture
17 from Swamiji. But though he tried his utmost, Swamiji could not
18 speak louder than the noise and clamour of the people. Hence he
19 had to give up attempting a lecture and left with the two European
20 ladies to show them sites connected with Shri Ramakrishna's
21 spiritual practices and introduce them to particular devotees and
22 followers of the Master.

23 After 3 p.m. Swamiji said to the disciple, "Fetch me a cab,
24 please; I must go to the Math now." The disciple brought one
25 accordingly. Swamiji himself sat on one side and asked Swami
26 Niranjanananda and the disciple to sit on the other and they drove
27 towards the Alambazar Math. On the way, Swamiji said to the
28 disciple, "It won't do to live on abstract ideas merely. These
29 festivals and the like are also necessary; for then only, these ideas
30 will spread gradually among the masses. You see, the Hindus have
31 got their festivals throughout the year, and the secret of it is to
32 infuse the great ideals of religion gradually into the minds of the
33 people. It has also its drawback, though. For people in general miss
34 their inner significance and become so much engrossed in externals
35 that no sooner are these festivities over than they become their old
36 selves again. Hence it is true that all these form the outer covering
37 of religion, which in a way hide real spirituality and self-knowledge.

38 "But there are those who cannot at all understand in the
39 abstract what 'religion' is or what the 'Self' is, and they try to
40 realise spirituality gradually through these festivals and
41 ceremonies. Just take this festival celebrated today; those that
42 attended it will at least once think of Shri Ramakrishna. The
43 thought will occur to their mind as to who he was, in whose name
44 such a great crowd assembled and why so many people came at all
45 in his name. And those who will not feel that much even, will come
46 once in a year to see all the devotional dancing and singing, or at
47 least to partake of the sacred food-offerings, and will also have a
48 look at the devotees of Shri Ramakrishna. This will rather benefit
49 them than do any harm."

50 Disciple: But, sir, suppose somebody thinks these festivals
51 and ceremonies to be the only thing essential, can he possibly

1 advance any further? They will gradually come down to the level of
2 commonplace observances, like the worship in our country of (the
3 goddesses) Shashthi, Mangala-chandi, and the like. People are
4 found to observe these rites till death; but where do we find even
5 one among them rising through such observances to the knowledge
6 of Brahman?

7 Swamiji: Why? In India so many spiritual heroes were born,
8 and did they not make them the means of scaling the heights of
9 greatness? When by persevering in practice through these props
10 they gained a vision of the Self, they ceased to be keen on them.
11 Yet, for the preservation of social balance even great men of the
12 type of Incarnations follow these observances.

13 Disciple: Yes, they may observe these for appearance only.
14 But when to a knower of the Self even this world itself becomes
15 unreal like magic, is it possible for him to recognise these external
16 observances as true?

17 Swamiji: Why not? Is not our idea of truth also a relative one,
18 varying in relation to time, place, and person? Hence all
19 observances have their utility, relatively to the varying
20 qualifications in men. It is just as Shri Ramakrishna used to say,
21 that the mother cooks Polao and Kalia (rich dishes) for one son, and
22 sago for another.

23 Now the disciple understood at last and kept quiet.
24 Meanwhile the carriage arrived at the Alambazar Math. The
25 disciple followed Swamiji into the Math where Swamiji, being
26 thirsty, drank some water. Then putting off his coat, he rested
27 recumbent on the blanket spread on the floor. Swami
28 Niranjanananda, seated by his side, said, "We never had such a
29 great crowd in any year's Utsava before! As if the whole of Calcutta
30 flocked there!"

31 Swamiji: It was quite natural; stranger things will happen
32 hereafter.

33 Disciple: Sir, in every religious sect are found to exist external
34 festivals of some kind or other. But there is no amity between one
35 sect and another in this matter. Even in the case of such a liberal
36 religion as that of Mohammed, I have found in Dacca that the Shias
37 and Sunnis go to loggerheads with each other.

38 Swamiji: That is incidental more or less wherever you have
39 sects. But do you know what the ruling sentiment amongst us is?--
40 non-sectarianism. Our Lord was born to point that out. He would
41 accept all forms, but would say withal that, looked at from the
42 standpoint of the knowledge of Brahman, they were only like
43 illusory Maya.

44 Disciple: Sir, I can't understand your point. Sometimes it
45 seems to me that, by thus celebrating these festivals, you are also
46 inaugurating another sect round the name of Sri Ramakrishna. I
47 have heard it from the lips of Nag Mahashaya that Shri
48 Ramakrishna did not belong to any sect. He used to pay great
49 respect to all creeds such as the Shaktas, the Vaishnavas, the
50 Brahmos, the Mohammedans, and the Christians.

1 Swamiji: How do you know that we do not also hold in great
2 esteem all the religious creeds?

3 So saying, Swamiji called out in evident amusement to Swami
4 Niranjanananda: "Just think what this Bangal is saying!"

5 Disciple: Kindly make me understand, sir, what you mean.

6 Swamiji: Well, you have, to be sure, read my lectures. But
7 where have I built on Shri Ramakrishna's name? It is only the pure
8 Upanishadic religion that I have gone about preaching in the world.

9 Disciple: That's true, indeed. But what I find by being familiar
10 with you is that you have surrendered yourself, body and soul, to
11 Ramakrishna. If you have understood Shri Ramakrishna to be the
12 Lord Himself, why not give it out to the people at large?

13 Swamiji: Well, I do preach what I have understood. And if you
14 have found the Advaitic principles of Vedanta to be the truest
15 religion, then why don't you go out and preach it to all men?

16 Disciple: But I must realise, before I can preach it to others. I
17 have only studied Advaitism in books.

18 Swamiji: Good; realise first and then preach. Now, therefore,
19 you have no right to say anything of the beliefs each man tries to
20 live by. For you also proceed now by merely putting your faith on
21 some such beliefs.

22 Disciple: True, I am also living now by believing in something;
23 but I have the Shastras for my authority. I do not accept any faith
24 opposed to the Shastras.

25 Swamiji: What do you mean by the Shastras? If the
26 Upanishads are authority, why not the Bible or the Zendavesta
27 equally so?

28 Disciple: Granted these scriptures are also good authority,
29 they are not, however, as old as the Vedas. And nowhere, moreover,
30 is the theory of the Atman better established than in the Vedas.

31 Swamiji: Supposing I admit that contention of yours, what
32 right have you to maintain that truth can be found nowhere except
33 in the Vedas?

34 Disciple: Yes, truth may also exist in all the scriptures other
35 than the Vedas, and I don't say anything to the contrary. But as for
36 me, I choose to abide by the teachings of the Upanishads, for I have
37 very great faith in them.

38 Swamiji: Quite welcome to do that, but if somebody else has
39 "very great" faith in any other set of doctrines, surely you should
40 allow him to abide by that. You will discover that in the long run
41 both he and yourself will arrive at the same goal. For haven't you
42 read in the *Mahimnah-stotram*, " {Sanskrit}--Thou art as the ocean
43 to the rivers falling into it"?

44

45

[Place: Alambazar Math. Year: 1897, May.]

It was the 19th Vaishakha (April-May) of the year 1303 B.S. Swamiji had agreed to initiate the disciple today. So, early in the morning, he reached the Alambazar Math. Seeing the disciple Swamiji jocosely said, "Well, you are to be 'sacrificed' today, are you not?"

After this remark to the disciple, Swamiji with a smile resumed his talk with others about American subjects. And in due relevancy came along such topics also as how one-pointed in devotion one has to be in order to build up a spiritual life, how firm faith and strong devotion to the Guru have to be kept up, how deep reliance has to be placed on the words of the Guru, and how even one's life has to be laid down for his sake. Then putting some questions to the disciple, Swamiji began to test his heart: "Well, are you ready to do my bidding to your utmost, whatever it be and whenever it may come? If I ask you to plunge into the Ganga or to jump from the roof of a house, meaning it all for your good, could you do even that without any hesitation? Just think of it even now; otherwise don't rush forward on the spur of the moment to accept me as your Guru." And the disciple nodded assent to all questions of the kind.

Swamiji then continued: "The real Guru is he who leads you beyond this Maya of endless birth and death--who graciously destroys all the griefs and maladies of the soul. The disciple of old used to repair to the hermitage of the Guru, fuel in hand; and the Guru, after ascertaining his competence, would teach him the Vedas after initiation, fastening round his waist the threefold filament of Munja, a kind of grass, as the emblem of his vow to keep his body, mind, and speech in control. With the help of this girdle, the disciples used to tie up their Kaupinas. Later on, the custom of wearing the sacred thread superseded this girdle of Munja grass."

Disciple: Would you, then, say, sir, that the use of the holy thread we have adopted is not really a Vedic custom?

Swamiji: Nowhere is there mention of thread being so used in the Vedas. The modern author of Smritis, Raghunandana Bhattacharya, also puts it thus: "At this stage, the sacrificial girdle should be put on." Neither in Gobhila's *Grihya-Sutras* do we find any mention of the girdle made of thread. In the Shastras, this first Vedic Samskara (purification ceremony) before the Guru has been called the Upanayana; but see, to what a sad pass our country has been brought! Straying away from the true path of the Shastras, the country has been overwhelmed with usages and observances originating in particular localities, or popular opinion, or with the womenfolk! That's why I ask you to proceed along the path of the Shastras as in olden times. Have faith within yourselves and thereby bring it back into the country. Plant in your heart the faith of Nachiketa. Even go up to the world of Yama like him. Yes, if to know the secrets of the Atman, to liberate your soul, to reach the true solution of the mystery of birth and death, you have to go to the very jaws of death and realise the truth thereby, well, go there

1 with an undaunted heart. It is fear alone that is death. You have to
2 go beyond all fear. So from this day be fearless. Off at once, to lay
3 down your life for your own liberation and for the good of others.
4 What good is it carrying along a load of bones and flesh! Initiated
5 into the Mantra of extreme self-sacrifice for the sake of God, go, lay
6 down for others this body of flesh and bones like the Muni
7 Dadhichi! Those alone, say the Shastras, are the real Gurus, who
8 have studied the Vedas and the Vedanta, who are knowers of the
9 Brahman, who are able to lead others beyond to fearlessness; when
10 such are at hand, get yourself initiated, "no speculation in such a
11 case". Do you know what has become of this principle now?--"like
12 the blind leading the blind"!

13 The initiation ceremony was duly gone through in the chapel.
14 After this Swamiji spoke out: "Give me the Guru-dakshina." The
15 disciple replied, "Oh, what shall I give?" On this Swamiji suggested,
16 "Well, fetch any fruit from the store-room." So the disciple ran to
17 the store-room and came back into the chapel with ten or twelve
18 lichis. These Swamiji took from his hand and ate them one by one,
19 saying, "Now, your Guru-dakshina is made."

20 A member of the Math, Brahmachari (now Swami)
21 Shuddhananda, also had his initiation from Swamiji on this
22 occasion.

23 Swamiji then had his dinner and went to take a short rest.

24 After the siesta, he came and sat in the hall of the upper
25 storey. The disciple finding this opportunity asked, "Sir, how and
26 whence came the ideas of virtue and vice?"

27 Swamiji: It is from the idea of the manifold that these have
28 evolved. The more a man advances towards oneness, the more
29 ideas of "I" and "you" subside, ideas from which all these pairs of
30 opposites such as virtue and vice have originated. When the idea
31 that So-and-so is different from me comes to the mind, all other
32 ideas of distinction begin to manifest, while with the complete
33 realisation of oneness, no more grief or illusion remains for man,
34 "{Sanskrit}--For him who sees oneness, where is there any grief or
35 delusion?" Sin may be said to be the feeling of every kind of
36 weakness. From this weakness spring jealousy, malice, and so forth.
37 Hence weakness is sin. The Self within is always shining forth
38 resplendent. Turning away from that people say "I", "I", "I", with
39 their attention held up by this material body, this queer cage of
40 flesh and bones. This is the root of all weakness. From that habit
41 only, the relative outlook on life has emerged in this world. The
42 absolute Truth lies beyond that duality.

43 Disciple: Well, is then all this relative experience not true?

1 Swamiji: As long as the idea of "I" remains, it is true. And the
2 instant the realisation of "I" as the Atman comes, this world of
3 relative existence becomes false. What people speak of as sin is the
4 result of weakness--is but another form of the egoistic idea, "I am
5 the body". When the mind gets steadfast in the truth, "I am the
6 Self", then you go beyond merit and demerit, virtue and vice. Shri
7 Ramakrishna used to say, "When the 'I' dies, all trouble is at an
8 end."

9 Disciple: Sir, this "I" has a most tenacious life. It is very
10 difficult to kill it.

11 Swamiji: Yes, in one sense, it is very difficult, but in another
12 sense, it is quite easy. Can you tell me where this "I" exists? How
13 can you speak of anything being killed, which never exists at all?
14 Man only remains hypnotised with the false idea of an ego. When
15 this ghost is off from us, all dreams vanish, and then it is found that
16 the one Self only exists from the highest Being to a blade of brass.
17 This will have to be known, to be realised. All practice or worship is
18 only for taking off this veil. When that will go, you will find that the
19 Sun of Absolute Knowledge is shining in Its own lustre. For the
20 Atman only is self-luminous and has to be realised by Itself. How
21 can that, which can be experienced only by itself, be known with
22 the help of any other thing? Hence the Shruti says, "{Sanskrit}--
23 Well, through what means is that to be known which is the
24 Knower?" Whatever you know, you know through the
25 instrumentality of your mind. But mind is something material. It is
26 active only because there is the pure Self behind it. So, how can you
27 know that Self through your mind? But this only becomes known,
28 after all, that the mind cannot reach the pure Self, no, nor even the
29 intellect. Our relative knowledge ends just there. Then, when the
30 mind is free from activity or functioning, it vanishes, and the Self is
31 revealed. This state has been described by the commentator
32 Shankara as {Sanskrit} or supersensuous perception.

33 Disciple: But, sir, the mind itself is the "I". If that mind is
34 gone, then the "I" also cannot remain.

35 Swamiji: Yes, the state that comes then is the real nature of
36 the ego. The "I" that remains then is omnipresent, all-pervading, the
37 Self of all. Just as the Ghatakasha, when the jar is broken, becomes
38 the Mahakasha,¹⁴¹ for with the destruction of the jar the enclosed
39 space is not destroyed. The puny "I" which you were thinking of as
40 confined in the body, becomes spread out and is thus realised in the
41 form of the all-pervading "I" or the Self. Hence what matters it to
42 the real "I" or the Self, whether the mind remains or is destroyed?
43 What I say you will realise in course of time. "{Sanskrit}--It is
44 realised within oneself in due time." As you go on with Shravana
45 and Manana (proper hearing and proper thinking), you will fully
46 understand it in due time and then you will go beyond mind. Then
47 there will be no room for any such question.

1 ¹⁴¹ ?Ghatakasha and Mahakasha are technical terms in Vedanta, meaning the
2 space enclosed by the jar and the omnipresent. The two are one and the same,
3 only the former is limited by the Upadhi (adjunct) of the Ghata or jar.
4

1 Hearing all this, the disciple remained quiet on his seat, and
2 Swamiji, as he gently smoked, continued: "How many Shastras have
3 been written to explain this simple thing, and yet men fail to
4 understand it! How they are wasting this precious human life on
5 the fleeting pleasures of some silver coins and the frail beauty of
6 women! Wonderful is the influence of Mahamaya (Divine Illusion)!
7 Mother! Oh Mother!"

8 9 VI

10 [Place: Baghbazar, Calcutta. Year: 1897.]

11 Swamiji has been staying for some days at the house of the
12 late Balaram Babu. At his wish, a large number of devotees of Shri
13 Ramakrishna have assembled at the house at 3 p.m. (on May 1,
14 1897). Swami Yogananda is amongst those present here. The object
15 of Swamiji is to form an Association. When all present had taken
16 their seats, Swamiji proceeded to speak as follows:

17 "The conviction has grown in my mind after all my travels in
18 various lands that no great cause can succeed without an
19 organisation. In a country like ours, however, it does not seem quite
20 practicable to me to start an organisation at once with a democratic
21 basis or work by general voting. People in the West are more
22 educated in this respect, and less jealous of one another than
23 ourselves. They have learnt to respect merit. Take for instance my
24 case. I was just an insignificant man there, and yet see how
25 cordially they received and entertained me. When with the spread
26 of education the masses in our country grow more sympathetic and
27 liberal, when they learn to have their thoughts expanded beyond
28 the limits of sect or party, then it will be possible to work on the
29 democratic basis of organisation. For this reason it is necessary to
30 have a dictator for this Society. Everybody should obey him, and
31 then in time we may work on the principle of general voting.

32 "Let this Association be named after him, in whose name,
33 indeed, we have embraced the monastic life, with whom as your
34 Ideal in life you all toil on the field of work from your station in
35 family life, within twenty years of whose passing away a wonderful
36 diffusion of his holy name and extraordinary life has taken place
37 both in the East and the West. We are the servants of the Lord. Be
38 you all helpers in this cause."

39 When Srijut Girish Chandra Ghosh and all other householder
40 disciples present had approved of the above proposal, the future
41 programme of the Society of Shri Ramakrishna was taken up for
42 discussion. The Society was named the Ramakrishna Mission.

43 Swamiji himself became the general president of the Mission
44 and other office-bearers also were elected. The rule was laid down
45 that the Association should hold meetings at the house of Balaram
46 Babu every Sunday at 4 p.m. Needless to say that Swamiji used to
47 attend these meetings whenever convenient.

48 When the meeting had broken up and the members departed,
49 addressing Swami Yogananda, Swamiji said, "So the work is now

1 begun this way; let us see how far it succeeds by the will of Shri
2 Ramakrishna."

3 Swami Yogananda: You are doing these things with Western
4 methods. Should you say Shri Ramakrishna left us any such
5 instructions?

6 Swamiji: Well, how do you know that all this is not on Shri
7 Ramakrishna's lines? He had an infinite breadth of feeling, and
8 dare you shut him up within your own limited views of life? I will
9 break down these limits and scatter broadcast over the earth his
10 boundless inspiration. He never instructed me to introduce any
11 rites of his own worship. We have to realise the teachings he has
12 left us about religious practice and devotion, concentration and
13 meditation, and such higher ideas and truths, and then preach
14 these to all men. The infinite number of faiths are only so many
15 paths. I haven't been born to found one more sect in a world
16 already teeming with sects. We have been blessed with obtaining
17 refuge at the feet of the Master, and we are born to carry his
18 message to the dwellers of the three worlds.

19 Swami Yogananda uttered no word of dissent, and so Swamiji
20 continued: Time and again have I received in this life marks of his
21 grace. He stands behind and gets all this work done by me. When
22 lying helpless under a tree in an agony of hunger, when I had not
23 even a scrap of cloth for Kaupina, when I was resolved on travelling
24 penniless round the world, even then help came in all ways by the
25 grace of Shri Ramakrishna. And again when crowds jostled with
26 one another in the streets of Chicago to have a sight of this
27 Vivekananda, then also, just because I had his grace, I could digest
28 without difficulty all that honour--a hundredth part of which would
29 have been enough to turn mad any ordinary man; and by his will,
30 victory followed everywhere. Now I must conclude by doing
31 something in this country. So casting all doubt away, please help my
32 work; and you will find everything fulfilled by his will.

33 Swami Yogananda: Yes, whatever you will, shall be fulfilled;
34 and are we not all ever obedient to you? Now and then I do clearly
35 see how Shri Ramakrishna is getting all these things done through
36 you. And yet, to speak plainly, some misgiving rises at intervals, for
37 as we saw it, his way of doing things was different. So I question
38 myself: "Are we sure that we are not going astray from Shri
39 Ramakrishna's teachings?" And so I take the opposing attitude and
40 warn you.

41 Swamiji: You see, the fact is that Shri Ramakrishna is not
42 exactly what the ordinary followers have comprehended him to be.
43 He had infinite moods and phases. Even if you might form an idea
44 of the limits of Brahmajnana, the knowledge of the Absolute, you
45 could not have any idea of the unfathomable depths of his mind!
46 Thousands of Vivekanandas may spring forth through one gracious
47 glance of his eyes! But instead of doing that, he has chosen to get
48 things done this time through me as his single instrument, and what
49 can I do in this matter, you see?

50 Saying this, Swamiji left to attend to something else waiting
51 for him, and Swami Yogananda went on praising Swamiji's versatile

1 gifts.

2 Meanwhile Swamiji returned and asked the disciple, "Do the
3 people in your part of the country know much of Shri
4 Ramakrishna?"

5 Disciple: Only one man, Nag Mahashaya, came to Shri
6 Ramakrishna from our part of Bengal; it is from him that many
7 came to hear of him and had their curiosity excited to know more.
8 But that Shri Ramakrishna was the Incarnation of God, the people
9 there have not yet come to know, and some would not believe it
10 even if told so.

11 Swamiji: Do you think it is an easy matter to believe so? We
12 who had actual dealings with him in every respect, we who heard of
13 that fact again and again from his own lips, we who lived and
14 stayed with him for twenty-four hours of the day--even we off and
15 on have doubts about it coming over us! So what to speak of others!

16 Disciple: Did Shri Ramakrishna, out of his own lips, ever say
17 that he was God, the all-perfect Brahman?

18 Swamiji: Yes, he did so many times. And he said this to all of
19 us. One day while he was staying at the Cossipore garden, his body
20 in imminent danger of falling off for ever, by the side of his bed I
21 was saying in my mind, "Well, now if you can declare that you are
22 God, then only will I believe you are really God Himself." It was only
23 two days before he passed away. Immediately, he looked up towards
24 me all on a sudden and said, "He who was Rama, He who was
25 Krishna, verily is He now Ramakrishna in this body. And that not
26 merely from the standpoint of your Vedanta!" At this I was struck
27 dumb. Even we haven't had yet the perfect faith, after hearing it
28 again and again from the holy lips of our Lord himself--our minds
29 still get disturbed now and then with doubt and despair--and so,
30 what shall we speak of others being slow to believe? It is indeed a
31 very difficult matter to be able to declare and believe a man with a
32 body like ours to be God Himself. We may just go to the length of
33 declaring him to be a "perfected one", or a "knower of Brahman".
34 Well, it matters nothing, whatever you may call him or think of him,
35 a saint, or a knower of Brahman, or anything. But take it from me,
36 never did come to this earth such an all-perfect man as Shri
37 Ramakrishna! In the utter darkness of the world, this great man is
38 like the shining pillar of illumination in this age! And by his light
39 alone will man now cross the ocean of Samsara!

40 Disciple: To me it seems, sir, that true faith comes only after
41 actually seeing or hearing something. Mathur Babu, I have heard,
42 actually saw so many things about Shri Ramakrishna, and thus he
43 had that wonderful faith in him.

44 Swamiji: He who believes not, believes not even after seeing,
45 and thinks that it is all hallucination, or dream and so on. The great
46 transfiguration of Krishna--the Vishvarupa (form universal)--was
47 seen alike by Duryodhana and by Arjuna. But only Arjuna believed,
48 while Duryodhana took it to be magic! Unless He makes us
49 understand, nothing can be stated or understood. Somebody comes
50 to the fullest faith even without seeing or hearing, while somebody

1 else remains plunged in doubt even after witnessing with his own
2 eyes various extraordinary powers for twelve years! The secret of it
3 all is His grace! But then one must persevere, so that the grace may
4 be received.

5 Disciple: Is there, sir, any law of grace?

6 Swamiji: Yes and no.

7 Disciple: How is that?

8 Swamiji: Those who are pure always in body, mind, and
9 speech, who have strong devotion, who discriminate between the
10 real and the unreal, who persevere in meditation and
11 contemplation--upon them alone the grace of the Lord descends.
12 The Lord, however, is beyond all natural laws--is not under any
13 rules and regulations, or just as Shri Ramakrishna used to say, He
14 has the child's nature--and that's why we find some failing to get
15 any response even after calling on Him for millions of births, while
16 some one else whom we regard as a sinful or penitent man or a
17 disbeliever, would have Illumination in a flash! --On the latter the
18 Lord perhaps lavishes His grace quite unsolicited! You may argue
19 that this man had good merits stored up from previous life, but the
20 mystery is really difficult to understand. Shri Ramakrishna used to
21 say sometimes, "Do rely on Him; be like the dry leaf at the mercy of
22 the wind"; and again he would say, "The wind of His grace is always
23 blowing, what you need to do is to unfurl your sail."

24 Disciple: But, sir, this is a most tremendous statement. No
25 reasoning, I see, can stand here.

26 Swamiji: Ah, all reasoning and arguing is within the limit of
27 the realm of Maya; it lies within the categories of space, time, and
28 causation. But He is beyond these categories. We speak of His law,
29 still He is beyond all law. He creates, or becomes, all that we speak
30 of as laws of nature, and yet He is outside of them all. He on whom
31 His grace descends, in a moment goes beyond all law. For this
32 reason there is no condition in grace. It is as His play or sport. And
33 this creation of the universe is like His play--"{Sanskrit}"--It is the
34 pure delight of sport, as in the case of men" (*Vedanta-Sutras*, II. i.
35 33). Is it not possible for Him who creates and destroys the
36 universe as if in play to grant salvation by grace to the greatest
37 sinner? But then it is just His pleasure, His play, to get somebody
38 through the practice of spiritual discipline and somebody else
39 without it.

40 Disciple: Sir, I can't understand this.

41 Swamiji: And you needn't. Only get your mind to cling to Him
42 as far as you can. For then only the great magic of this world will
43 break of itself. But then, you must persevere. You must take off your
44 mind from lust and lucre, must discriminate always between the
45 real and the unreal--must settle down into the mood of bodilessness
46 with the brooding thought that you are not this body, and must
47 always have the realisation that you are the all-pervading Atman.
48 This persevering practice is called Purushakara (self-exertion--as
49 distinguished from grace). By such self-exertion will come true
50 reliance on Him, and that is the goal of human achievement.

1 After a pause Swamiji resumed: Had you not been receiving
2 His grace, why else would you come here at all? Shri Ramakrishna
3 used to say, "Those who have had the grace of God cannot but come
4 here. Wherever they might be, whatever they might be doing, they
5 are sure to be affected by words or sentiments uttered from
6 here."¹⁴² Just take your own case--do you think it is possible without
7 the grace of God to have the blessed company of Nag Mahashaya, a
8 man who rose to spiritual perfection through the strength of divine
9 grace and came to know fully what this grace really means?
10 "{Sanskrit}"--One attains the highest stage after being perfected by
11 the practice of repeated births" (Gita, VI. 45). It is only by virtue of
12 great religious merit acquired through many births that one comes
13 across a great soul like him. All the characteristics of the highest
14 type of Bhakti, spoken of in the scriptures, have manifested
15 themselves in Nag Mahashaya. It is only in him that we actually see
16 fulfilled the widely quoted text, {Sanskrit}.¹⁴³ Blessed indeed is
17 your East Bengal to have been hallowed by the touch of Nag
18 Mahashaya's feet!

19 While speaking thus, Swamiji rose to pay a visit to the great
20 poet, Babu Girish Chandra Ghosh. Swami Yogananda and the
21 disciple followed him. Reaching Girish Babu's place, Swamiji seated
22 himself and said, "You see, G.C., the impulse is constantly coming
23 nowadays to my mind to do this and to do that, to scatter broadcast
24 on earth the message of Shri Ramakrishna and so on. But I pause
25 again to reflect, lest all this give rise to another sect in India. So I
26 have to work with a good deal of caution. Sometimes I think, what if
27 a sect does grow up. But then again the thought comes, 'No. Shri
28 Ramakrishna never disturbed anybody's own spiritual outlook; he
29 always looked at the inner sameness.' Often do I restrain myself
30 with this thought. Now, what do you say?"

31 Girish Babu: What can I say to this? You are the instrument in
32 his hand. You have to do just what he would have you do. I don't
33 trouble myself over the detail. But I see that the power of the Lord
34 is getting things done by you, I see it clear as daylight.

35 Swamiji: But I think we do things according to our own will.
36 Yet, that in misfortunes and adversities, in times of want and
37 poverty, he reveals himself to us and guides us along the true path--
38 this I have been able to realise. But alas, I still fail to comprehend in
39 any way the greatness of his power.

40 Girish Babu: Yes, he said, "If you understand it to the full,
41 everything will at once vanish. Who will work then, or who will be
42 made to work?"

43 After this the talk drifted on to America. And Swamiji grew
44 warm on his subject and went on describing the wonderful wealth

1 ¹⁴² ?With his egoism perfectly merged in the consciousness of the Mother, the
2 use of the word "here" by Shri Ramakrishna would often stand for the ordinary
3 reference to self. By "here" is evidently meant the centre of the Mother's self-
4 revelation.

5 ¹⁴³ ?"Lowlier far than the lowly stalk of grass."
6
7

1 of the country, the virtues and defects of men and women there,
2 their luxury and so on.

3 4 VII

5 [Place: Calcutta. Year: 1897.]

6 For some days past, Swamiji has been staying at Balaram
7 Bose's house, Baghbazar. There will be a total eclipse of the sun
8 today. The disciple is to cook for Swamiji this morning, and on his
9 presenting himself, Swamiji said, "Well, the cooking must be in the
10 East Bengal style; and we must finish our dinner before the eclipse
11 begins."

12 The inner apartments of the house were all unoccupied now.
13 So the disciple went inside into the kitchen and started his cooking.
14 Swamiji also was looking in now and then with a word of
15 encouragement and sometimes with a joke, as, "Take care, the soup
16 must be after the East Bengal fashion."

17 The cooking had been almost completed, when Swamiji came
18 in after his bath and sat down for dinner, putting up his own seat
19 and plate. "Do bring in anything finished, quick," he said, "I can't
20 wait, I'm burning with hunger!" While eating, Swamiji was pleased
21 with the curry with bitters and remarked, "Never have I enjoyed
22 such a nice thing! But none of the things is so hot as your soup."
23 "It's just after the style of the Burdwan District", said Swamiji
24 tasting the sour preparation. He then brought his dinner to a close
25 and after washing sat on the bedstead inside the room. While
26 having his after-dinner smoke, Swamiji remarked to the disciple,
27 "Whoever cannot cook well cannot become a good Sadhu; unless
28 the mind is pure, good tasteful cooking is not possible."

29 Soon after this, the sound of bells and conch-shells, etc., rose
30 from all quarters, when Swamiji said, "Now that the eclipse has
31 begun, let me sleep, and you please massage my feet!" Gradually
32 the eclipse covered the whole of the sun's disc and all around fell
33 the darkness of dusk.

34 While there were fifteen or twenty minutes left for the eclipse
35 to pass off, Swamiji rose from his siesta, and after washing, jocosely
36 said while taking a smoke, "Well, people say that whatever one does
37 during an eclipse, one gets that millionfold in future; so I thought
38 that the Mother, Mahamaya, did not ordain that this body might
39 have good sleep, and if I could get some sleep during the eclipse, I
40 might have plenty of it in future. But it all failed, for I slept only for
41 fifteen minutes at the most."

42 After this, at the behest of Swamiji some short speeches were
43 made. There was yet an hour left before dusk. When all had
44 assembled in the parlour, Swamiji told them to put him any question
45 they liked.

46 Swamiji Shuddhananda asked, "What is the real nature of
47 meditation, sir?"

48 Swamiji: Meditation is the focusing of the mind on some
49 object. If the mind acquires concentration on one object, it can be

1 so concentrated on any object whatsoever.

2 Disciple: Mention is made in the scriptures of two kinds of
3 meditation--one having some object and the other objectless. What
4 is meant by all that, and which of the two is the higher one?

5 Swamiji: First, the practice of meditation has to proceed with
6 some one object before the mind. Once I used to concentrate my
7 mind on some black point. Ultimately, during those days, I could not
8 see the point any more, nor notice that the point was before me at
9 all--the mind used to be no more--no wave of functioning would rise,
10 as if it were all an ocean without any breath of air. In that state I
11 used to experience glimpses of supersensuous truth. So I think, the
12 practice of meditation even with some trifling external object leads
13 to mental concentration. But it is true that the mind very easily
14 attains calmness when one practises meditation with anything on
15 which one's mind is most apt to settle down. This is the reason why
16 we have in this country so much worship of the images of gods and
17 goddesses. And what wonderful art developed from such worship!
18 But no more of that now. The fact, however, is that the objects of
19 meditation can never be the same in the case of all men. People
20 have proclaimed and preached to others only those external objects
21 to which they held on to become perfected in meditation. Oblivious
22 of the fact, later on, that these objects are aids to the attainment of
23 perfect mental calmness, men have extolled them beyond
24 everything else. They have wholly concerned themselves with the
25 means, getting comparatively unmindful of the end. The real aim is
26 to make the mind functionless, but this cannot be got at unless one
27 becomes absorbed in some subject.

28 Disciple: But if the mind becomes completely engrossed and
29 identified with some object, how can it give us the consciousness of
30 Brahman?

31 Swamiji: Yes, though the mind at first assumes the form of the
32 object, yet later on the consciousness of that object vanishes. Then
33 only the experience of pure "isness" remains.

34 Disciple: Well, sir, how is it that desires rise even after mental
35 concentration is acquired?

36 Swamiji: Those are the outcome of previous Samskaras
37 (deep-rooted impressions or tendencies). When Buddha was on the
38 point of merging in Samadhi (superconsciousness), Mara made his
39 appearance. There was really no Mara extraneous to the mind; it
40 was only the external reflection of the mind's previous Samskaras.

41 Disciple: But one hears of various fearful experiences prior to
42 the attainment of perfection. Are they all mental projections?

43 Swamiji: What else but that? The aspiring soul, of course,
44 does not make out at that time that all these are external
45 manifestations of his own mind. But all the same, there is nothing
46 outside of it. Even what you see as this world does not exist outside.
47 It is all a mental projection. When the mind becomes functionless, it
48 reflects the Brahman-consciousness. Then the vision of all spheres
49 of existence may supervene, "{Sanskrit}--Whatsoever sphere one
50 may call up in mind" (Mundaka, III.i.10). Whatsoever is resolved on

1 becomes realised at once. He who, even on attaining this state of
2 unfalsified self-determination, preserves his watchfulness and is
3 free from the bondage of desire, verily attains to the knowledge of
4 Brahman. But he who loses his balance after reaching this state
5 gets the manifold powers, but falls off from the supreme goal.

6 So saying, Swamiji began to repeat "Shiva, Shiva", and then
7 continued: There is no way, none whatsoever, to the solution of the
8 profound mystery of this life except through renunciation.
9 Renunciation, renunciation and renunciation--let this be the one
10 motto of your lives. "{Sanskrit}--For men, all things on earth are
11 infected with fear, Vairagya (renunciation) alone constitutes
12 fearlessness" (*Vairagya-Shatakam*).

VIII

[Place: Calcutta. Year: 1897, March or April.]

16 Today the disciple came to meet Swamiji at Baghbazar, but
17 found him ready for a visiting engagement. "Well, come along with
18 me", were the words with which Swamiji accosted him as he went
19 downstairs, and the disciple followed. They then put themselves
20 into a hired cab which proceeded southwards.

21 Disciple: Sir, where are you going to visit, please?

22 Swamiji: Well, come with me and you will see.

23 Thus keeping back the destination from the disciple, Swamiji
24 opened the following conversation as the carriage reached the
25 Beadon Street: One does not find any real endeavour in your
26 country to get the women educated. You, the men, are educating
27 yourselves to develop your manhood, but what are you doing to
28 educate and advance those who share all your happiness and
29 misery, who lay down their lives to serve you in your homes?

30 Disciple: Why, sir, just see how many schools and colleges
31 have sprung up nowadays for our women, and how many of them
32 are getting degrees of B.A. and M.A.

33 Swamiji: But all that is in the Western style. How many
34 schools have been started on your own national lines, in the spirit of
35 your own religious ordinances? But alas, such a system does not
36 obtain even among the men of your country, what to speak of
37 women! It is seen from the official statistics that only three or four
38 per cent of the people in India are educated, and not even one per
39 cent of the women.

40 Otherwise, how could the country come to such a fallen
41 condition? How can there be any progress of the country without
42 the spread of education, the dawning of knowledge? Even no real
43 effort or exertion in the cause is visible among the few in your
44 country who are the promise of the future, you who have received
45 the blessings of education. But know for certain that absolutely
46 nothing can be done to improve the state of things, unless there is
47 spread of education first among the women and the masses. And so
48 I have it in my mind to train up some Brahmacharins and
49 Brahmacharinis, the former of whom will eventually take the vow of

1 Sannyasa and try to carry the light of education among the masses,
2 from village to village, throughout the country, while the latter will
3 do the same among women. But the whole work must be done in
4 the style of our own country. Just as centres have to be started for
5 men, so also centres have to be started for teaching women.
6 Brahmacharinis of education and character should take up the task
7 of teaching at these different centres. History and the Puranas,
8 housekeeping and the arts, the duties of home-life and principles
9 that make for the development of an ideal character have to be
10 taught with the help of modern science, and the women students
11 must be trained up in ethical and spiritual life. We must see to their
12 growing up as ideal matrons of home in time. The children of such
13 mothers will make further progress in the virtues that distinguish
14 the mothers. It is only in the homes of educated and pious mothers
15 that great men are born. And you have reduced your women to
16 something like manufacturing machines; alas, for heaven's sake, is
17 this the outcome of your education? The uplift of the women, the
18 awakening of the masses must come first, and then only can any
19 real good come about for the country, for India.

20 Near Chorebagan Swamiji gave it out to the disciple that the
21 foundress of the Mahakali Pathashala, the Tapasvini Mataji (ascetic
22 mother), had invited him to visit her institution. When our carriage
23 stopped at its destination, three or four gentlemen greeted Swamiji
24 and showed him up to the first floor. There the Tapasvini mother
25 received him standing. Presently she escorted him into one of the
26 classes, where all the maidens stood up in greeting. At a word from
27 Mataji all of them commenced reciting the Sanskrit meditation of
28 Lord Shiva with proper intonation. Then they demonstrated at the
29 instance of the Mother how they were taught the ceremonies of
30 worship in their school. After watching all this with much delight
31 and interest, Swamiji proceeded to visit the other classes. After
32 this, Mataji sent for some particular girl and asked her to explain
33 before Swamiji the first verse of the third canto of Kalidasa's
34 *Raghuvamsham*, which she did in Sanskrit. Swamiji expressed his
35 great appreciation of the measure of success Mataji had attained by
36 her perseverance and application in the cause of diffusing
37 education among women. In reply, she said with much humility, "In
38 my service to my students, I look upon them as the Divine Mother;
39 well, in starting the school I have neither fame nor any other object
40 in view."

41 Being asked by Mataji, Swamiji recorded his opinion about
42 the institution in the Visitors' Book, the last line of which was: "The
43 movement is in the right direction."

44 After saluting Mataji, Swamiji went back to his carriage,
45 which then proceeded towards Baghbazar, while the following
46 conversation took place between Swamiji and the disciple.

47 Swamiji: How far is the birthplace of this venerable lady! She
48 has renounced everything of her worldly life, and yet how diligent
49 in the service of humanity! Had she not been a woman, could she
50 ever have undertaken the teaching of women in the way she is
51 doing? What I saw here was all good, but that some male
52 householders should be pitchforked as teachers is a thing I cannot

1 approve of. The duty of teaching in the school ought to devolve in
2 every respect on educated widows and Brahmacharinis. It is good
3 to avoid in this country any association of men with women's
4 schools.

5 Disciple: But, sir, how would you get now in this country
6 learned and virtuous women like Gargi, Khana, or Lilavati?

7 Swamiji: Do you think women of the type don't exist now in
8 the country? Still on this sacred soil of India, this land of Sita and
9 Savitri, among women may be found such character, such spirit of
10 service, such affection, compassion, contentment, and reverence, as
11 I could not find anywhere else in the world! In the West, the women
12 did not very often seem to me to be women at all, they appeared to
13 be quite the replicas of men! Driving vehicles, drudging in offices,
14 attending schools, doing professional duties! In India alone the
15 sight of feminine modesty and reserve soothes the eye! With such
16 materials of great promise, you could not, alas, work out their
17 uplift! You did not try to infuse the light of knowledge into them. If
18 they get the right sort of education, they may well turn out to be the
19 ideal women in the world.

20 Disciple: Do you think, sir, the same consummation would be
21 reached through the way Mataji is educating her students? These
22 students would soon grow up and get married and would presently
23 shade into the likeness of all other women of the common run. So I
24 think, if these girls might be made to adopt Brahmacharya, then
25 only could they devote their lives to the cause of the country's
26 progress and attain to the high ideals preached in our sacred books.

27 Swamiji: Yes, everything will come about in time. Such
28 educated men are not yet born in this country, who can keep their
29 girls unmarried without fear of social punishment. Just see how
30 before the girls exceed the age of twelve or thirteen, people hasten
31 to give them away in marriage out of this fear of their social equals.
32 Only the other day, when the Age of Consent Bill was being passed,
33 the leaders of society massed together millions of men to send up
34 the cry "We don't want the Bill." Had this been in any other country,
35 far from getting up meetings to send forth a cry like that, people
36 would have hidden their heads under their roofs in shame, that
37 such a calumny could yet stain their society.

38 Disciple: But, sir, I don't think the ancient law-givers
39 supported this custom of early marriage without any rhyme or
40 reason. There must have been some secret meaning in this attitude
41 of theirs.

42 Swamiji: Well, what might have been this secret meaning,
43 please?

44 Disciple: Take it, for instance, in the first place that if the girls
45 are married at an early age, they may come over to their husbands'
46 home to learn the particular ways and usages of the family from the
47 early years of their life. They may acquire adequate skill in the
48 duties of the household under the guidance of their parents-in-law.
49 In the homes of their own parents, on the other hand, there is the
50 likelihood of grown-up daughters going astray. But married early,

1 they have no chance of thus going wrong, and over and above this,
2 such feminine virtues as modesty, reserve, fortitude, and diligence
3 are apt to develop in them.

4 Swamiji: In favour of the other side of the question, again, it
5 may be argued that early marriage leads to premature child-
6 bearing, which accounts for most of our women dying early; their
7 progeny also, being of low vitality, go to swell the ranks of our
8 country's beggars! For if the physique of the parents be not strong
9 and healthy, how can strong and healthy children be born at all?
10 Married a little later and bred in culture, our mothers will give birth
11 to children who would be able to achieve the real good of the
12 country. The reason why you have so many widows in every home
13 lies here, in this custom of early marriage. If the number of early
14 marriages declines, that of widows is bound to follow suit.

15 Disciple: But, sir, it seems to me, if our women are married
16 late in life, they are apt to be less mindful of their household duties.
17 I have heard that the mothers-in-law in Calcutta very often do all
18 the cooking, while the educated daughters-in-law sit idle with red
19 paint round their feet! But in our East Bengal such a thing is never
20 allowed to take place.

21 Swamiji: But everywhere under the sun you find the same
22 blending of the good and the bad. In my opinion society in every
23 country shapes itself out of its own initiative. So we need not
24 trouble our heads prematurely about such reforms as the abolition
25 of early marriage, the remarriage of widows, and so on. Our part of
26 the duty lies in imparting true education to all men and women in
27 society. As an outcome of that education, they will of themselves be
28 able to know what is good for them and what is bad, and will
29 spontaneously eschew the latter. It will not be then necessary to
30 pull down or set up anything in society by coercion.

31 Disciple: What sort of education, do you think, is suited to our
32 women?

33 Swamiji: Religion, arts, science, housekeeping, cooking,
34 sewing, hygiene--the simple essential points in these subjects ought
35 to be taught to our women. It is not good to let them touch novels
36 and fiction. The Mahakali Pathashala is to a great extent moving in
37 the right direction. But only teaching rites of worship won't do;
38 their education must be an eye-opener in all matters. Ideal
39 characters must always be presented before the view of the girls to
40 imbue them with a devotion to lofty principles of selflessness. The
41 noble examples of Sita, Savitri, Damayanti, Lilavati, Khana, and
42 Mira should be brought home to their minds, and they should be
43 inspired to mould their own lives in the light of these.

44 Our cab now reached the house of the late Babu Balaram
45 Bose at Baghbazar. Swamiji alighted from it and went upstairs.
46 There he recounted the whole of his experience at the Mahakali
47 Pathashala to those who had assembled there to see him.

48 Then while discussing what the members of the newly formed
49 Ramakrishna Mission should do, Swamiji proceeded to establish by
50 various arguments the supreme importance of the "gift of learning"

1 and the "gift of knowledge". Turning to the disciple he said,
2 "Educate, educate, '{Sanskrit}'--Than this there is no other way'."
3 And referring in banter to the party who do not favour educational
4 propaganda, he said, "Well, don't go into the party of the
5 Prahladas!" Asked as to the meaning of the expression he replied,
6 "Oh, haven't you heard? Tears rushed out of the eyes of Prahlada at
7 the very sight of the first letter 'Ka' of the alphabet as it reminded
8 him of Krishna; so how could any studies be proceeded with? But
9 then the tears in Prahlada's eyes were tears of love, while your
10 fools affect tears in fright! Many of the devotees are also like that."
11 All of those present burst out laughing on hearing this, and Swami
12 Yogananda said to Swamiji, "Well, once you have the urge within
13 towards anything to be done, you won't have any peace until you
14 see the utmost done about it. Now what you have a mind to have
15 done shall be done no doubt."

16 17 18 19 IX

20 [Place: Calcutta. Year: 1897.]

21 For the last ten days, the disciple had been studying Sayana's
22 commentary on the Rig-Veda with Swamiji, who was staying then at
23 the house of the late Babu Balaram Bose at Baghbazar. Max
24 Muller's volumes on the Rig-Veda had been brought from a wealthy
25 friend's private library. Swamiji was correcting the disciple every
26 now and then and giving him the true pronunciation or construction
27 as necessary. Sometimes while explaining the arguments of Sayana
28 to establish the eternity of the Vedas, Swamiji was praising very
29 highly the commentator's wonderful ingenuity; sometimes again
30 while arguing out the deeper significance of the doctrine, he was
31 putting forward a difference in view and indulging in an innocent
32 squib at Sayana.

33 While our study had proceeded thus for a while, Swamiji
34 raised the topic about Max Muller and continued thus: Well, do you
35 know, my impression is that it is Sayana who is born again as Max
36 Muller to revive his own commentary on the Vedas? I have had this
37 notion for long. It became confirmed in my mind, it seems, after I
38 had seen Max Muller. Even here in this country, you don't find a
39 scholar so persevering, and so firmly grounded in the Vedas and the
40 Vedanta. Over and above this, what a deep, unfathomable respect
41 for Shri Ramakrishna! Do you know, he believes in his Divine
42 Incarnation! And what great hospitality towards me when I was his
43 guest! Seeing the old man and his lady, it seemed to me that they
44 were living their home-life like another Vasishtha and Arundhati! At
45 the time of parting with me, tears came into the eyes of the old
46 man.

47 Disciple: But, sir, if Sayana himself became Max Muller, then
48 why was he born as a Mlechchha instead of being born in the
49 sacred land of India?

1 Swamiji: The feeling and the distinction that I am an Aryan
2 and the other is a Mlechchha come from ignorance. But what are
3 Varnashrama and caste divisions to one who is the commentator of
4 the Vedas, the shining embodiment of knowledge? To him they are
5 wholly meaningless, and he can assume human birth wherever he
6 likes for doing good to mankind. Specially, if he did not choose to be
7 born in a land which excelled both in learning and wealth, where
8 would he secure the large expenses for publishing such stupendous
9 volumes? Didn't you hear that the East India Company paid nine
10 lakhs of rupees in cash to have the Rig-Veda published? Even this
11 money was not enough. Hundreds of Vedic Pundits had to be
12 employed in this country on monthly stipends. Has anybody seen in
13 this age, here in this country, such profound yearning for
14 knowledge, such prodigious investment of money for the sake of
15 light and learning? Max Muller himself has written it in his preface,
16 that for twenty-five years he prepared only the manuscripts. Then
17 the printing took another twenty years! It is not possible for an
18 ordinary man to drudge for forty-five years of his life with one
19 publication. Just think of it! Is it an idle fancy of mine to say he is
20 Sayana himself?

21 After this talk about Max Muller the reading of the Vedas was
22 resumed. Now Swamiji began variously to support the view of
23 Sayana that creation proceeded out of the Vedas. He said: Veda
24 means the sum total of eternal truths; the Vedic Rishis experienced
25 those truths; they can be experienced only by seers of the
26 supersensuous and not by common men like us. That is why in the
27 Vedas the term Rishi means "the seer of the truth of the Mantras",
28 and not any Brahmin with the holy thread hanging down the neck.
29 The division of society into castes came about later on. Veda is of
30 the nature of Shabda or of idea. It is but the sum total of ideas.
31 Shabda, according to the old Vedic meaning of the term, is the
32 subtle idea, which reveals itself by taking the gross form later on.
33 So owing to the dissolution of the creation the subtle seeds of the
34 future creation become involved in the Veda. Accordingly, in the
35 Puranas you find that during the first Divine Incarnation, the
36 Minavatara, the Veda is first made manifest. The Vedas having been
37 first revealed in this Incarnation, the other creative manifestations
38 followed. Or in other words, all the created objects began to take
39 concrete shape out of the Shabdas or ideas in the Veda. For in
40 Shabda or idea, all gross objects have their subtle forms. Creation
41 had proceeded in the same way in all previous cycles or Kalpas.
42 This you find in the Sandhya Mantra of the Vedas: "{Sanskrit}--The
43 Creator projected the sun, the moon, the earth, the atmosphere, the
44 heaven, and the upper spheres in the same manner and process as
45 in previous cycles." Do you understand?

46 Disciple: But, sir, how in the absence of an actual concrete
47 object can the Shabda or idea be applied and for what? And how
48 can the names too be given at all?

49 Swamiji: Yes, that is what on first thought seems to be the
50 difficulty. But just think of this. Supposing this jug breaks into
51 pieces; does the idea of a jug become null and void? No. Because,
52 the jug is the gross effect, while the idea, "jug", is the subtle state

1 of the Shabda-state of the jug. In the same way, the Shabda-state of
2 every object is its subtle state, and the things we see, hear, touch,
3 or perceive in any manner are the gross manifestations of entities
4 in the subtle or Shabda state. Just as we may speak of the effect
5 and its cause. Even when the whole creation is annihilated, the
6 Shabda, as the consciousness of the universe or the subtle reality of
7 all concrete things, exists in Brahman as the cause. At the point of
8 creative manifestation, this sum total of causal entities vibrates into
9 activity, as it were, and as being the sonant, material substance of it
10 all, the eternal, primal sound of "Om" continues to come out of
11 itself. And then from the causal totality comes out first the subtle
12 image or Shabda-form of each particular thing and then its gross
13 manifestation. Now that causal Shabda, or word-consciousness, is
14 Brahman, and it is the Veda. This is the purport of Sayana. Do you
15 now understand?

16 Disciple: No, sir, I can't clearly comprehend it.

17 Swamiji: Well, you understand, I suppose, that even if all the
18 jugs in the universe were to be destroyed, the idea or Shabda,
19 "jug", would still exist. So if the universe be destroyed--I mean if all
20 the things making up the universe be smashed to atoms--why
21 should not the ideas or Shabdas, representing all of them in
22 consciousness, be still existing? And why cannot a second creation
23 be supposed to come out of them in time?

24 Disciple: But, sir, if one cries out "jug", "jug", that does not
25 cause any jug to be produced!

26 Swamiji: No, nothing is produced if you or I cry out like that;
27 but a jug must be revealed if the idea of it rises in Brahman which
28 is perfect in Its creative determinations. When we see even those
29 established in the practice of religion (Sadhakas) bring about by
30 will-power things otherwise impossible to happen, what to speak of
31 Brahman with perfect creativeness of will? At the point of creation
32 Brahman becomes manifest as Shabda (Idea), and then assumes
33 the form of "Nada" or "Om". At the next stage, the particular
34 Shabdas or ideas, that variously existed in former cycles, such as
35 Bhuh, Bhuvah, Svah, cow, man, etc., begin to come out of the "Om".
36 As soon as these ideas appear in Brahman endowed with perfect
37 will, the corresponding concrete things also appear, and gradually
38 the diversified universe becomes manifest. Do you now understand
39 how Shabda is the source of creation?

40 Disciple: Yes, I just form some idea of it, but there is no clear
41 comprehension in the mind.

42 Swamiji: Well, clear comprehension, inward realisation, is no
43 small matter, my son. When the mind proceeds towards self-
44 absorption in Brahman, it passes through all these stages one by
45 one to reach the absolute (Nirvikalpa) state at last. In the process
46 of entering into Samadhi, first the universe appears as one mass of
47 ideas; then the whole thing loses itself in a profound "Om". Then
48 even that melts away, even that seems to be between being and
49 non-being. That is the experience of the eternal Nada. And then the
50 mind becomes lost in the Reality of Brahman, and then it is done!
51 All is peace!

1 The disciple sat mute, thinking that none could express and
2 explain it in the way Swamiji was doing, unless the whole thing
3 were a matter of one's own experience!

4 Swamiji then resumed the subject: Great men like Avataras,
5 in coming back from Samadhi to the realm of "I" and "mine", first
6 experience the unmanifest Nada, which by degrees grows distinct
7 and appears as Om, and then from Omkara, the subtle form of the
8 universe as a mass of ideas becomes experienced, and last, the
9 material universe comes into perception. But ordinary Sadhakas
10 somehow reach beyond Nada through immense practice, and when
11 once they attain to the direct realisation of Brahman, they cannot
12 again come back to the lower plane of material perception. They
13 melt away in Brahman, "{Sanskrit}"--Like water in milk."

14 When all this talk on the theory of creation was going on, the
15 great dramatist, Babu Girish Chandra Ghosh, appeared on the
16 scene. Swamiji gave him his courteous greetings and continued his
17 lessons to the disciple.

18 Shabdas are again divided into two classes, the Vedic
19 Shabdas and those in common human use. I found this position in
20 the Nyaya book called *Shabdashaktiprakashika*. There the
21 arguments no doubt indicate great power of thought; but, oh, the
22 terminology confounds the brain!

23 Now turning to Girish Babu Swamiji said: What do you say, G.
24 C.? Well, you do not care to study all this, you pass your days with
25 your adoration of this and that god, eh?

26 Girish Babu: What shall I study, brother? I have neither time
27 nor understanding enough to pry into all that. But this time, with
28 Shri Ramakrishna's grace, I shall pass by with greetings to your
29 Vedas and Vedanta, and take one leap to the far beyond! He gets
30 you through all these studies, because he wants to get many a thing
31 done by you. But we have no need of them. Saying this, Girish Babu
32 again and again touched the big Rig-Veda volumes with his head,
33 uttering, "All Victory to Ramakrishna in the form of Veda!"

34 Swamiji was now in a sort of deep reverie, when Girish Babu
35 suddenly called out to him and said: Well, hear me, please. A good
36 deal of study you have made in the Vedas and Vedanta, but say, did
37 you find anywhere in them any way for us out of all these profound
38 miseries in the country, all this starvation, all these crimes of
39 adultery, and the many horrible sins?

40 Saying this he painted over and over again the horrid pictures
41 of society. Swamiji remained perfectly quiet and speechless, while
42 at the thought of the sorrows and miseries of his fellow men, tears
43 began to flow out of his eyes, and seemingly to hide his feelings
44 from us, he rose and left the room.

45 Meanwhile, addressing the disciple, Girish Babu said: Did you
46 see, Bangal? What a great loving heart! I don't honour your Swamiji
47 simply for being a Pundit versed in the Vedas; but I honour him for
48 that great heart of his which just made him retire weeping at the
49 sorrows of his fellow beings.

1 The disciple and Girish Babu then went on conversing with
2 each other, the latter proving that knowledge and love were
3 ultimately the same.

4 In the meantime, Swamiji returned and asked the disciple,
5 "Well, what was all this talk going on between you?" The disciple
6 said, "Sir, we are talking about the Vedas, and the wonder of it is
7 that our Girish Babu has not studied these books but has grasped
8 the ultimate truths with clean precision!"

9 Swamiji: All truths reveal themselves to him who has got real
10 devotion to the Guru; he has hardly any need of studies. But such
11 devotion and faith are very rare in this world. He who possesses
12 those in the measure of our friend here need not study the
13 Shastras. But he who rushes forward to imitate him will only bring
14 about his own ruin. Always follow his advice, but never attempt to
15 imitate his ways.

16 Disciple: Yes, sir.

17 Swamiji: No saying ditto merely! Do grasp clearly the words I
18 say. Don't nod assent like a fool to everything said. Don't put
19 implicit faith, even if *I* declare something. First clearly grasp and
20 then accept. Shri Ramakrishna always used to insist on my
21 accepting every word of his only after clear comprehension of it.
22 Walk on your path, only with what sound principle, clear reasoning,
23 and scripture all declare as true. Thus by constant reflection, the
24 intellect will become clear, and then only can Brahman be reflected
25 therein. Do you understand?

26 Disciple: Yes, sir, I do. But the brain gets puzzled with the
27 different views of different men. This very moment I was being told
28 by Girish Babu, "What will you do with all this studying?" And then
29 you come and say, "Reflect on what you hear and read about." So
30 what exactly am I to do?

31 Swamiji: Both what he and I have advised you are true. The
32 only difference is that the advice of both has been given from
33 different standpoints. There is a stage of spiritual life where all
34 reasonings are hushed; "{Sanskrit}--Like some delicious taste
35 enjoyed by the dumb". And there is another mode of spiritual life in
36 which one has to realise the Truth through the pursuit of scriptural
37 learning, through studying and teaching. You have to proceed
38 through studies and reflection, that is *your* way to realisation. Do
39 you see?

40 Receiving such a mandate from Swamiji, the disciple in his
41 folly took it to imply Girish Babu's discomfiture, and so turning
42 towards him said: "Do you hear, sir? Swamiji's advice to me plainly
43 is just to study and reflect on the Vedas and Vedanta."

44 Girish Babu: Well, *you* go on doing so; with Swamiji's
45 blessings, you will, indeed, succeed in that way.

46 Swami Sadananda arrived there at that moment, and seeing
47 him, Swamiji at once said, "Do you know, my heart is sorely
48 troubled by the picture of our country's miseries G. C. was
49 depicting just now; well, can you do anything for our country?"

1 Sadananda: Maharaj, let the mandate once go forth; your
2 slave is ready.

3 Swamiji: First, on a pretty small scale, start a relief-centre,
4 where the poor and the distressed may obtain relief and the
5 diseased may be nursed. Helpless people having none to look after
6 them will be relieved and served there, irrespective of creed or
7 colour, do you see?

8 Sadananda: Just as you command, sir.

9 Swamiji: There is no greater Dharma than this service of
10 living beings. If this Dharma can be practised in the real spirit, then
11 "{Sanskrit}--Liberation comes as a fruit on the very palm of one's
12 hand".

13 Addressing Girish Babu now, Swamiji said, "Do you know,
14 Girish Babu, it occurs to me that even if a thousand births have to
15 be taken in order to relieve the sorrows of the world, surely I will
16 take them. If by my doing that, even a single soul may have a little
17 bit of his grief relieved, why, I will do it. Well, what avails it all to
18 have only one's own liberation? All men should be taken along with
19 oneself on that way. Can you say why a feeling like this comes up
20 foremost in my mind?

21 Girish Babu: Ah, otherwise why should Shri Ramakrishna
22 declare you to be greater than all others in spiritual competence?

23 Saying this, Girish Babu took leave of us all to go elsewhere
24 on some business.

25

26 X

27 [Place: The Alambazar Math. Year: 1897.]

28 After Swamiji's first return to Calcutta from the West, he
29 always used to place before the zealous young men who visited him
30 the lofty ideals of renunciation, and anyone expressing his desire of
31 accepting Sannyasa would receive from him great encouragement
32 and kindness. So, inspired by his enthusiasm some young men of
33 great good fortune gave up their worldly life in those days and
34 became initiated by him into Sannyasa. The disciple was present at
35 the Alambazar Math the day the first four of this batch were given
36 Sannyasa by Swamiji.

37 Often has the disciple heard it from the Sannyasins of the
38 Math that Swamiji was repeatedly requested by his brother-monks
39 not to admit one particular candidate into Sannyasa, whereupon
40 Swamiji replied: "Ah, if even we shrink from working out the
41 salvation of the sinful, the heavy-laden, the humiliated, and the
42 afflicted in soul, who else are to take care of them in this world?
43 No, don't you please stand against me in this matter." So Swamiji's
44 strong opinion triumphed, and always the refuge of the helpless, he
45 resolved out of his great love to give him Sannyasa.

46 The disciple had been staying at the Math for the last two
47 days, when Swamiji called him and said: "Well, you belong to the
48 priestly class; tomorrow you get them to perform their Shraddha,

1 and the next day I shall give them Sannyasa. So get yourself ready
2 by consulting the books of ceremonials today." The disciple bowed
3 to this mandate of Swamiji, and the ceremony was duly gone
4 through.

5 But the disciple became very much depressed at the thought
6 of the great sternness of Sannyasa. Swamiji detecting his mental
7 agitation asked him, "Well, I see, you feel some dread in your mind
8 at all this experience, is it not so?" And when the disciple confessed
9 it to be so, Swamiji said: "From this day these four are dead to the
10 world, and new bodies, new thoughts, new garments will be theirs
11 from tomorrow--and shining in the glory of Brahman they will live
12 like flaming fire! '{Sanskrit}'--Not by work, nor by progeny, nor by
13 wealth, but by renunciation alone some (rare ones) attained
14 Immortality' (Kaivalya Upanishad)."

15 After the ceremony, the four Brahmacharins bowed at the feet
16 of Swamiji. He blessed them and said, "You have the enthusiasm to
17 embrace the loftiest vow of human life; blessed indeed is your birth,
18 blessed your family, blessed the mothers who held you in their
19 womb! '{Sanskrit}'--The whole family-line becomes hallowed, the
20 mother achieves her highest!"

21 That day after supper, Swamiji talked of the ideal of Sannyasa
22 alone. To the zealous candidates for Sannyasa, he said: The real aim
23 of Sannyasa is "{Sanskrit}"--For one's highest freedom and for the
24 good of the world". Without having Sannyasa none can really be a
25 knower of Brahman--this is what the Vedas and the Vedanta
26 proclaim. Don't listen to the words of those who say, "We shall both
27 live the worldly life and be knowers of Brahman." That is the
28 flattering self-consolation of crypto-pleasure-seekers. He who has
29 the slightest desire for worldly pleasures, even a shred of some
30 such craving, will feel frightened at the thought of the path you are
31 going to tread; so, to give himself some consolation he goes about
32 preaching that impossible creed of harmonising Bhoga and Tyaga.
33 That is all the raving of lunatics, the frothings of the demented--idle
34 theories contrary to the scriptures, contrary to the Vedas. No
35 freedom without renunciation. Highest love for God can never be
36 achieved without renunciation. Renunciation is the
37 word--"{Sanskrit}"--There's no other way than this." Even the Gita
38 says, "{Sanskrit}"--The sages know Sannyasa to be the giving up of
39 all work that has desire for its end."

40 Nobody attains freedom without shaking off the coils of
41 worldly worries. The very fact that somebody lives the worldly life
42 proves that he is tied down to it as the bonds slave of some craving or
43 other. Why otherwise will he cling to that life at all? He is the slave
44 either of lust or of gold, of position or of fame, of learning or of
45 scholarship. It is only after freeing oneself from all this thralldom
46 that one can get on along the way of freedom. Let people argue as
47 loud as they please, I have got this conviction that unless all these
48 bonds are given up, unless the monastic life is embraced, none is
49 going to be saved, no attainment of Brahmajnana is possible.

50 Disciple: Do you mean, sir, that merely taking up Sannyasa
51 will lead one to the goal?

1 Swamiji: Whether the goal is attained or not is not the point
2 before us now. But until you get out of this wheel of Samsara, until
3 the slavery of desire is shaken off, you can't attain either Bhakti or
4 Mukti. To the knower of Brahman, supernatural powers or
5 prosperity are mere trivialities.

6 Disciple: Sir, is there any special time for Sannyasa, and are
7 there different kinds of it?

8 Swamiji: There is no special time prescribed for a life of
9 Sannyasa. The Shruti says: "{Sanskrit}--Directly the spirit of
10 renunciation comes, you should take to Sannyasa." The
11 *Yogavasishta* also says: {Sanskrit}--"Owing to life itself being frail
12 and uncertain, one should be devoted to religion even in one's
13 youth. For who knows when one's body may fall off?"

14 The Shastras are found to speak of four kinds of Sannyasa:
15 (1) Vidvat, (2) Vividisha, (3) Markata, (4) Atura. The awakening of
16 real renunciation all at once and the consequent giving up of the
17 world through Sannyasa is something that never happens unless
18 there are strong Samskaras or tendencies, developed from previous
19 birth. And this is called the Vidvat Sannyasa. Vividisha Sannyasa is
20 the case of one who, out of a strong yearning for the knowledge of
21 the Self through the pursuit of scriptural study and practice, goes
22 to the man of realisation and from him embraces Sannyasa to give
23 himself up to those pursuits. Markata Sannyasa is the case of a man
24 who is driven out of the world by some of its chastisements such as
25 the death of a relative or the like and then takes to Sannyasa,
26 though in such a case the renouncing spirit does not endure long.
27 Shri Ramakrishna used to say of it, "With this kind of renunciation
28 one hastens away to the up-country and then happens to get hold of
29 a nice job; and then eventually perhaps arranges to get his wife
30 brought over to him or perhaps takes to a new one!" And last, there
31 is another kind of Sannyasa which the Shastras prescribe for a man
32 who is lying on his death-bed, the hope of whose life has been given
33 up. For then, if he dies, he dies with the holiest of vows upon him,
34 and in his next birth the merit of it will accrue to him. And in case
35 he recovers, he shall not go back to his old life again but live the
36 rest of his days in the noble endeavour after Brahmajnana. Swami
37 Shivananda gave this kind of Sannyasa to your uncle. The poor man
38 died; but through that initiation he will come to a new birth of
39 higher excellence. After all, there is no other way to the knowledge
40 of the Self but through Sannyasa.

41 Disciple: What then, sir, will be the fate of the householders?

42 Swamiji: Why, through the merit of good Karma, they shall
43 have this renunciation in some future birth of theirs. And directly
44 this renunciation comes, there is an end of all troubles--with no
45 further delay he gets across this mystery of life and death. But then
46 all rules have their exceptions. A few men, one or two, may be seen
47 to attain the highest freedom by the true fulfilment of the
48 householder's Dharma, as we have amongst us Nag Mahashaya, for
49 instance.

50 Disciple: Sir, even the Upanishads etc. do not clearly teach
51 about renunciation and Sannyasa.

1 Swamiji: You are talking like a madman! Renunciation is the
2 very soul of the Upanishads. Illumination born of discriminative
3 reflection is the ultimate aim of Upanishadic knowledge. My belief,
4 however, is that it was since the time of Buddha that the monastic
5 vow was preached more thoroughly all over India, and
6 renunciation, the giving up of sense-enjoyment, was recognised as
7 the highest aim of religious life. And Hinduism has absorbed into
8 itself this Buddhistic spirit of renunciation. Never was a great man
9 of such renunciation born in this world as Buddha.

10 Disciple: Do you then mean, sir, that before Buddha's advent
11 there was very little of the spirit of renunciation in the country, and
12 there were hardly any Sannyasins at all?

13 Swamiji: Who says that? The monastic institution was there,
14 but the generality of people did not recognise it as the goal of life;
15 there was no such staunch spirit for it, there was no such firmness
16 in spiritual discrimination. So even when Buddha betook himself to
17 so many Yogis and Sadhus, nowhere did he acquire the peace he
18 wanted. And then to realise the Highest he fell back on his own
19 exertions, and seated on a spot with the famous words,
20 "{Sanskrit}--Let my body wither away on this seat" etc., rose from
21 it only after becoming the Buddha, the Illumined One. The many
22 monasteries that you now see in India occupied by monks were
23 once in the possession of Buddhism. The Hindus have only made
24 them their own now by modifying them in their own fashion. Really
25 speaking, the institution of Sannyasa originated with Buddha; it was
26 he who breathed life into the dead bones of this institution.

27 Swami Ramakrishnananda, a brother-disciple of Swamiji
28 interposed, "But the ancient law-books and Puranas are good
29 authority that all the four Ashramas had existed in India before
30 Buddha was born." Swamiji replied, "Most of the Puranas, the
31 codes of Manu and others, as well as much of the Mahabharata
32 form but recent literature. Bhagavan Buddha was much earlier than
33 all that." "On that supposition," rejoined Swami Ramakrishnananda,
34 "discussions about Buddhism would be found in the Vedas,
35 Upanishads, the law-books, Puranas, and the like. But since such
36 discussions are not found in these ancient books, how can you say
37 that Buddha antedated them all? In a few old Puranas, of course,
38 accounts of the Buddhistic doctrine are partially given; but from
39 these, it can't be concluded that the scriptures of the Hindus such
40 as the law-books and Puranas are of recent date."

41 Swamiji: Please read history,¹⁴⁴ and you will find that
42 Hinduism has become so great only by absorbing all the ideas of
43 Buddha.

44 Swami Ramakrishnananda: It seems to me that Buddha has

1 ¹⁴⁴ ?Evidently, during the argumentation, Swamiji was taking his stand on the
2 conclusions of modern historical studies, thereby giving his encouragement and
3 support to such new efforts and methods. But we know from one of his letters to
4 Swami Swarupananda (*C.W.* Vol. V, p. 171) that Swamiji broke off later on from
5 the position of these modern scholars and worked out the pre-Buddhistic origin of
6 much of modern Hinduism.
7

1 only left revived the great Hindu ideas, by thoroughly practising
2 in his life such principles as renunciation, non-attachment, and so
3 on.

4 Swamiji: But this position can't be proved. For we don't get
5 any history before Buddha was born. If we accept history only as
6 authority, we have to admit that in the midst of the profound
7 darkness of the ancient times, Buddha only shines forth as a figure
8 radiant with the light of knowledge.

9 Now the topic of Sannyasa was resumed and Swamiji said:
10 Wheresoever might lie the origin of Sannyasa, the goal of human
11 life is to become a knower of Brahman by embracing this vow of
12 renunciation. The supreme end is to enter the life of Sannyasa.
13 They alone are blessed indeed who have broken off from worldly
14 life through a spirit of renunciation.

15 Disciple: But many people are of opinion nowadays, sir, that
16 with the increase of wandering monks in the country, much harm
17 has been done to its material progress. They assert it on the ground
18 that these monks idly roam about depending on householders for
19 their living, that these are of no help to the cause of social and
20 national advancement.

21 Swamiji: But will you explain to me first what is meant by the
22 term material or secular advancement?

23 Disciple: Yes, it is to do as people in the West are doing by
24 securing the necessities of life through education, and promoting
25 through science such objects in life as commerce, industry,
26 communications, and so on.

27 Swamiji: But can all these be ever brought about, if real Rajas
28 is not awakened in man? Wandering all over India, nowhere I found
29 this Rajas manifesting itself. It is all Tamas and Tamas! The masses
30 lie engulfed in Tamas, and only among the monks could I find this
31 Rajas and Sattva. These people are like the backbone of the
32 country. The real Sannyasin is a teacher of householders. It is with
33 the light and teaching obtained from them that householders of old
34 triumphed many a time in the battles of life. The householders give
35 food and clothing to the Sadhus, only in return for the invaluable
36 teachings. Had there been no such mutual exchange in India, her
37 people would have become extinct like the American Indians by this
38 time. It is because the householders still give a few morsels of food
39 to the Sadhus that they are yet able to keep their foothold on the
40 path of progress. The Sannyasins are not idle. They are really the
41 fountain-head of all activity. The householders see lofty ideals
42 carried into practice in the lives of the Sadhus and accept from
43 them such noble ideas; and this it is that has up till now enabled
44 them to fight their battle of life from the sphere of Karma. The
45 example of holy Sadhus makes them work out holy ideas in life and
46 imbibe real energy for work. The Sannyasins inspire the
47 householders in all noble causes by embodying in their lives the
48 highest principle of giving up everything for the sake of God and
49 the good of the world, and as a return the householders give them a
50 few doles of food. And the very disposition and capacity to grow
51 that food develops in the people because of the blessings and good

1 wishes of the all-renouncing monks. It is because of their failure to
2 understand the deeper issues that people blame the monastic
3 institution. Whatever may be the case in other countries, in this
4 land the bark of householders' life does not sink only because the
5 Sannyasins are at its helm.

6 Disciple: But, sir, how many monks are to be found who are
7 truly devoted to the good of men?

8 Swamiji: Ah, quite enough if one great Sannyasin like Shri
9 Ramakrishna comes in a thousand years! For a thousand years after
10 his advent, people may well guide themselves by those ideas and
11 ideals he leaves behind. It is only because this monastic institution
12 exists in the country that men of his greatness are born here. There
13 are defects, more or less, in all the institutions of life. But what is
14 the reason that in spite of its faults, this noble institution stands yet
15 supreme over all the other institutions of life? It is because the true
16 Sannyasins forgo even their own liberation and live simply for doing
17 good to the world. If you don't feel grateful to such a noble
18 institution, fie on you again and again!

19 While speaking these words, Swamiji's countenance became
20 aglow. And before the eyes of the disciple he shone as the very
21 embodiment of Sannyasa.

22 Then, as if realising deep within his soul the greatness of this
23 institution, self-absorbed, he broke forth in sweetest symphony:

24 {Sanskrit}--"Brooding blissful in mind over the texts of the
25 Vedanta, quite contented with food obtained as alms and wandering
26 forth with a heart untouched by any feeling of grief, thrice blessed
27 are the Sannyasins, with only their loin-cloth for dress."

28 Resuming the talk, he went on: For the good of the many, for
29 the happiness of the many is the Sannyasin born. His life is all vain,
30 indeed, who, embracing Sannyasa, forgets this ideal. The
31 Sannyasin, verily, is born into this world to lay down his life for
32 others, to stop the bitter cries of men, to wipe the tears of the
33 widow, to bring peace to the soul of the bereaved mother, to equip
34 the ignorant masses for the struggle for existence, to accomplish
35 the secular and spiritual well-being of all through the diffusion of
36 spiritual teachings and to arouse the sleeping lion of Brahman in all
37 by throwing in the light of knowledge. Addressing then his brothers
38 of the Order, he said: Our life is "{Sanskrit}--for the sake of our
39 self-liberation as well as for the good of the world". So what are you
40 sitting idle for? Arise, awake; wake up yourselves, and awaken
41 others. Achieve the consummation of human life before you pass
42 off--"Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached."

43 44 XI

45 [Place: The house of the late Babu Navagopal Ghosh,
46 Ramakrishnapur, Howrah, 6th February, 1898.]

47 Today the festival of installing the image of Shri Ramakrishna
48 was to come off at the residence of Babu Navagopal Ghosh of
49 Ramakrishnapur, Howrah. The Sannyasins of the Math and the

1 householder devotees of Shri Ramakrishna had all been invited
2 there.

3 Swamiji with his party reached the bathing ghat at
4 Ramakrishnapur. He was dressed in the simplest garb of ochre with
5 turban on his head and was barefooted. On both sides of the road
6 were standing multitudes of people to see him. Swamiji commenced
7 singing the famous Nativity Hymn on Shri Ramakrishna--"Who art
8 Thou laid on the lap of a poor Brahmin mother", etc., and headed a
9 procession, himself playing on the Khol. All the devotees assembled
10 there followed, joining in the chorus.

11 Shortly after the procession reached its destination, Swamiji
12 went upstairs to see the chapel. The chapel was floored with
13 marble. In the centre was the throne and upon it was the porcelain
14 image of Shri Ramakrishna. The arrangement of materials was
15 perfect and Swamiji was much pleased to see this.

16 The wife of Navagopal Babu prostrated herself before
17 Swamiji with the other female members of the house and then took
18 to fanning him. Hearing Swamiji speaking highly of every
19 arrangement, she addressed him and said, "What have we got to
20 entitle us to the privilege of worshipping Thakur (the Master,
21 Lord)?--A poor home and poor means! Do bless us please by
22 installing him here out of your own kindness!"

23 In reply to this, Swamiji jocosely said, "Your Thakur never had
24 in his fourteen generations such a marble-floored house to live in!
25 He had his birth in that rural thatched cottage and lived his days on
26 indifferent means. And if he does not live here so excellently
27 served, where else should he live?" Swamiji's words made
28 everybody laugh out.

29 Now, with his body rubbed with ashes and gracing the seat of
30 the priest, Swamiji himself conducted the worship, with Swami
31 Prakashananda to assist him. After the worship was over, Swamiji
32 while still in the worship-room composed extempore this Mantra for
33 prostration before Bhagavan Shri Ramakrishna: {Sanskrit}--"I bow
34 down to Ramakrishna, who established *the* religion, embodying in
35 himself the reality of all religions and being thus the foremost of
36 divine Incarnations."

37 All prostrated before Shri Ramakrishna with this Mantra. In
38 the evening Swamiji returned to Baghbazar.

39 XII

40 [Place: Balaram Babu's residence, Calcutta. Year: 1898.]

41 Swamiji had been staying during the last two days at Balaram
42 Babu's residence at Baghbazar. He was taking a short stroll on the
43 roof of the house, and the disciple with four or five others was in
44 attendance. While walking to and fro, Swamiji took up the story of
45 Guru Govind Singh and with his great eloquence touched upon the
46 various points in his life--how the revival of the Sikh sect was
47 brought about by his great renunciation, austerities, fortitude, and
48 life-consecrating labours--how by his initiation he re-Hinduised
49

1 Mohammedan converts and took them back into the Sikh
2 community--and how on the banks of the Narmada he brought his
3 wonderful life to a close. Speaking of the great power that used to
4 be infused in those days into the initiates of Guru Govind, Swamiji
5 recited a popular Doha (couplet) of the Sikhs: {Sanskrit}

6 The meaning is: "When Guru Govind gives the Name, i.e. the
7 initiation, a single man becomes strong enough to triumph over a
8 lakh and a quarter of his foes." Each disciple, deriving from his
9 inspiration a real spiritual devotion, had his soul filled with such
10 wonderful heroism! While holding forth thus on the glories of
11 religion, Swamiji's eyes dilating with enthusiasm seemed to be
12 emitting fire, and his hearers, dumb-stricken and looking at his
13 face, kept watching the wonderful sight.

14 After a while the disciple said: "Sir, it was very remarkable
15 that Guru Govind could unite both Hindus and Mussulmans within
16 the fold of his religion and lead them both towards the same end. In
17 Indian history, no other example of this can be found."

18 Swamiji: Men can never be united unless there is a bond of
19 common interest. You can never unite people merely by getting up
20 meetings, societies, and lectures if their interests be not one and
21 the same. Guru Govind made it understood everywhere that the
22 men of his age, be they Hindus or Mussulmans, were living under a
23 regime of profound injustice and oppression. He did not create any
24 common interest, he only pointed it out to the masses. And so both
25 Hindus and Mussulmans followed him. He was a great worshipper
26 of Shakti. Yet, in Indian history, such an example is indeed very
27 rare.

28 Finding then that it was getting late into the night, Swamiji
29 came down with others into the parlour on the first floor, where the
30 following conversation on the subject of miracles took place.

31 Swamiji said, "It is possible to acquire miraculous powers by
32 some little degree of mental concentration", and turning to the
33 disciple he asked, "Well, should you like to learn thought-reading? I
34 can teach that to you in four or five days."

35 Disciple: Of what avail will it be to me, sir?

36 Swamiji: Why, you will be able to know others' minds.

37 Disciple: Will that help my attainment of the knowledge of
38 Brahman?

39 Swamiji: Not a bit.

40 Disciple: Then I have no need to learn that science. But, sir, I
41 would very much like to hear about what you have yourself seen of
42 the manifestation of such psychic powers.

43 Swamiji: Once when travelling in the Himalayas I had to take
44 up my abode for a night in a village of the hill-people. Hearing the
45 beating of drums in the village some time after nightfall, I came to
46 know upon inquiring of my host that one of the villagers had been
47 possessed by a Devata or good spirit. To meet his importunate
48 wishes and to satisfy my own curiosity, we went out to see what the
49 matter really was. Reaching the spot, I found a great concourse of

1 people. A tall man with long, bushy hair was pointed out to me, and
2 I was told that person had got the Devata on him. I noticed an axe
3 being heated in fire close by the man; and after a while, I found the
4 red-hot thing being seized and applied to parts of his body and also
5 to his hair! But wonder of wonders, no part of his body or hair thus
6 branded with the red-hot axe was found to be burnt, and there was
7 no expression of any pain in his face! I stood mute with surprise.
8 The headman of the village, meanwhile, came up to me and said,
9 "Maharaj, please exorcise this man out of your mercy." I felt myself
10 in a nice fix, but moved to do something, I had to go near the
11 possessed man. Once there, I felt a strong impulse to examine the
12 axe rather closely, but the instant I touched it, I burnt my fingers,
13 although the thing had been cooled down to blackness. The
14 smarting made me restless and all my theories about the axe
15 phenomenon were spirited away from my mind! However, smarting
16 with the burn, I placed my hand on the head of the man and
17 repeated for a short while the Japa. It was a matter of surprise to
18 find that the man came round in ten or twelve minutes. Then oh, the
19 gushing reverence the villagers showed to me! I was taken to be
20 some wonderful man! But, all the same, I couldn't make any head or
21 tail of the whole business. So without a word one way or the other, I
22 returned with my host to his hut. It was about midnight, and I went
23 to bed. But what with the smarting burn in the hand and the
24 impenetrable puzzle of the whole affair, I couldn't have any sleep
25 that night. Thinking of the burning axe failing to harm living human
26 flesh, it occurred again and again to my mind, "There are more
27 things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your
28 philosophy."

29 Disciple: But, could you later on ever explain the mystery, sir?

30 Swamiji: No. The event came back to me in passing just now,
31 and so I related it to you.

32 He then resumed: But Shri Ramakrishna used to disparage
33 these supernatural powers; his teaching was that one cannot attain
34 to the supreme truth if the mind is diverted to the manifestation of
35 these powers. The human mind, however, is so weak that, not to
36 speak of householders, even ninety per cent of the Sadhus happen
37 to be votaries of these powers. In the West, men are lost in
38 wonderment if they come across such miracles. It is only because
39 Shri Ramakrishna has mercifully made us understand the evil of
40 these powers as being hindrances to real spirituality that we are
41 able to take them at their proper value. Haven't you noticed how for
42 that reason the children of Shri Ramakrishna pay no heed to them?

43 Swami Yogananda said to Swamiji at this moment, "Well, why
44 don't you narrate to our Bangal that incident of yours in Madras
45 when you met the famous ghost-tamer?"

46 At the earnest entreaty of the disciple Swamiji was persuaded
47 to give the following account of his experience:

48 Once while I was putting up at Manmatha Babu's place, I
49 dreamt one night that my mother had died. My mind became much
50 distracted. Not to speak of corresponding with anybody at home, I
51 used to send no letters in those days even to our Math. The dream

1 being disclosed to Manmatha, he sent a wire to Calcutta to
2 ascertain facts about the matter. For the dream had made my mind
3 uneasy on the one hand, and on the other, our Madras friends, with
4 all arrangements ready, were insisting on my departing for America
5 immediately, and I felt rather unwilling to leave before getting any
6 news of my mother. So Manmatha who discerned this state of my
7 mind suggested our repairing to a man living some way off from
8 town, who having acquired mystic powers over spirits could tell
9 fortunes and read the past and the future of a man's life. So at
10 Manmatha's request and to get rid of my mental suspense, I agreed
11 to go to this man. Covering the distance partly by railway and partly
12 on foot, we four of us--Manmatha, Alasinga, myself, and another--
13 managed to reach the place, and what met our eyes there was a
14 man with a ghoulish, haggard, soot-black appearance, sitting close
15 to a cremation ground. His attendants used some jargon of South
16 Indian dialect to explain to us that this was the man with perfect
17 power over the ghosts. At first the man took absolutely no notice of
18 us; and then, when we were about to retire from the place, he made
19 a request for us to wait. Our Alasinga was acting as the interpreter,
20 and he explained the requests to us. Next, the man commenced
21 drawing some figures with a pencil, and presently I found him
22 getting perfectly still in mental concentration. Then he began to
23 give out my name, my genealogy, the history of my long line of
24 forefathers and said that Shri Ramakrishna was keeping close to
25 me all through my wanderings, intimating also to me good news
26 about my mother. He also foretold that I would have to go very soon
27 to far-off lands for preaching religion. Getting good news thus about
28 my mother, we all travelled back to town, and after arrival received
29 by wire from Calcutta the assurance of mother's doing well.

30 Turning to Swami Yogananda, Swamiji remarked, "Everything
31 that the man had foretold came to be fulfilled to the letter, call it
32 some fortuitous concurrence or anything you will."

33 Swami Yogananda said in reply, "It was because you would
34 not believe all this before that this experience was necessary for
35 you."

36 Swamiji: Well, I am not a fool to believe anything and
37 everything without direct proof. And coming into this realm of
38 Mahamaya, oh, the many magic mysteries I have come across
39 alongside this bigger magic conjuration of a universe! Maya, it is all
40 Maya! Goodness! What rubbish we have been talking so long this
41 day! By thinking constantly of ghosts, men become ghosts
42 themselves, while whoever repeats day and night, knowingly or
43 unknowingly, "I am the eternal, pure, free, self-illuminated Atman",
44 verily becomes the knower of Brahman.

45 Saying this, Swamiji affectionately turned to the disciple and
46 said, "Don't allow all that worthless nonsense to occupy your mind.
47 Always discriminate between the real and the unreal, and devote
48 yourself heart and soul to the attempt to realise the Atman. There is
49 nothing higher than this knowledge of the Atman; all else is Maya,
50 mere jugglery. The Atman is the one unchangeable Truth. This I
51 have come to understand, and that is why I try to bring it home to
52 you all. {Sanskrit}--"One Brahman there is without a second",

1 "There is nothing manifold in existence" (Brihadaranyaka, IV. iv. 19).
2 All this conversation continued up to eleven o'clock at night.
3 After that, his meal being finished, Swamiji retired for rest. The
4 disciple bowed down at his feet to bid him good-bye. Swamiji asked,
5 "Are you not coming tomorrow?"
6 Disciple: Yes, sir, I am coming, to be sure. The mind longs so
7 much to meet you at least once before the day is out.
8 Swamiji: So good-night now, it is getting very late.

INSPIRED TALKS

(Recorded by Miss S. E. Waldo, A Disciple)

Wednesday, June 19, 1895.

(This day marks the beginning of the regular teaching given daily by Swami Vivekananda to his disciples at Thousand Island Park. We had not yet all assembled there, but the Master's heart was always in his work, so he commenced at once to teach the three or four who were with him. He came on this first morning with the Bible in his hand and opened to the Book of John, saying that since we were all Christians, it was proper that he should begin with the Christian scriptures.)

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The Hindu calls this Maya, the manifestation of God, because it is the power of God. The Absolute reflecting through the universe is what we call nature. The Word has two manifestations--the general one of nature, and the special one of the great Incarnations of God--Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, and Ramakrishna. Christ, the special manifestation of the Absolute, is known and knowable. The absolute cannot be known: we cannot know the Father, only the Son. We can only see the Absolute through the "tint of humanity", through Christ.

In the first five verses of John is the whole essence of Christianity: each verse is full of the profoundest philosophy.

The Perfect never becomes imperfect. It is in the darkness, but is not affected by the darkness. God's mercy goes to all, but is not affected by their wickedness. The sun is not affected by any disease of our eyes which may make us see it distorted. In the twenty-ninth verse, "taketh away the sin of the world" means that Christ would show us the way to become perfect. God became Christ to show man his true nature, that we too are God. We are human coverings over the Divine; but as the divine Man, Christ and we are one.

The Trinitarian Christ is elevated above us; the Unitarian Christ is merely a moral man; neither can help us. The Christ who is the Incarnation of God, who has not forgotten His divinity, that Christ can help us, in Him there is no imperfection. These Incarnations are always conscious of their own divinity; they know it from their birth. They are like the actors whose play is over, but who, after their work is done, return to please others. These great Ones are untouched by aught of earth; they assume our form and our limitations for a time in order to teach us; but in reality they are never limited, they are ever free. . . .

Good is near Truth, but is not yet Truth. After learning not to be disturbed by evil, we have to learn not to be made happy by good. We must find that we are beyond both evil and good; we must study their adjustment and see that they are both necessary.

1 The idea of dualism is from the ancient Persians.¹⁴⁵ Really
2 good and evil are one¹⁴⁶ and are in our own mind. When the mind is
3 self-poised, neither good nor bad affects it. Be perfectly free; then
4 neither can affect it, and we enjoy freedom and bliss. Evil is the iron
5 chain, good is the gold one; both are chains. Be free, and know once
6 for all that there is no chain for you. Lay hold of the golden chain to
7 loosen the hold of the iron one, then throw both away. The thorn of
8 evil is in our flesh; take another thorn from the same bush and
9 extract the first thorn; then throw away both and be free. . . .

10 In the world take always the position of the giver. Give
11 everything and look for no return. Give love, give help, give service,
12 give any little thing you can, but *keep out barter*. Make no
13 conditions, and none will be imposed. Let us give out of our own
14 bounty, just as God gives to us.

15 The Lord is the only Giver, all the men in the world are only
16 shopkeepers. Get His cheque, and it must be honoured everywhere.

17 "God is the inexplicable, inexpressible essence of love", to be
18 known, but never defined.

19 In our miseries and struggles the world seems to us a very
20 dreadful place. But just as when we watch two puppies playing and
21 biting we do not concern ourselves at all, realising that it is only fun
22 and that even a sharp nip now and then will do no actual harm, so
23 all our struggles are but play in God's eyes. This world is all for play
24 and only amuses God; nothing in it can make God angry.

25 "Mother! In the sea of life my bark is sinking.

26 The whirlwind of illusion, the storm of attachment is growing
27 every moment.

28 My five oarsmen (senses) are foolish, and the helmsman
29 (mind) is weak.

30 My bearings are lost, my boat is sinking.

31 O Mother! Save me!"

32 "Mother, Thy light stops not for the saint or the sinner; it
33 animates the lover and the murderer." Mother is ever manifesting
34 through all. The light is not polluted by what it shines on, nor
35 benefited by it. The light is ever pure, ever changeless. Behind
36 every creature is the "Mother", pure, lovely, never changing.
37 "Mother, manifested as light in all beings, we bow down to Thee!"
38 She is equally in suffering, hunger, pleasure, sublimity. "When the
39 bee sucks honey, the Lord is eating." Knowing that the Lord is
40 everywhere, the sages give up praising and blaming. *Know* that
41 nothing can hurt you. How? Are you not free? Are you not Atman?
42 He is the Life of our lives, the hearing of our ears, the sight of our
43 eyes.

1 ¹⁴⁵ ?Parsees, the followers of Zoroaster who taught that the whole creation has
2 come out of two primary principles, one being called *Ormuzd* (the principle of
3 Good) and the other *Ahriman* (the principle of Evil).

5 ¹⁴⁶ ?Because they are both chains and products of Maya.
6

1 We go through the world like a man pursued by a policeman
2 and see the barest glimpses of the beauty of it. All this fear that
3 pursues us comes from believing in matter. Matter gets its whole
4 existence from the presence of mind behind it. What we see is God
5 percolating through nature.¹⁴⁷

6
7 *Sunday, June 23.*

8 Be brave and be sincere; then follow any path with devotion,
9 and you *must* reach the Whole. Once lay hold of one link of the
10 chain, and the whole chain must come by degrees. Water the roots
11 of the tree (that is, reach the Lord), and the whole tree is watered;
12 getting the Lord, we get all.

13 One-sidedness is the bane of the world. The more sides you
14 can develop the more souls you have, and you can see the universe
15 through all souls--through the Bhakta (devotee) and the Jnani
16 (philosopher). Determine your own nature and stick to it. Nishtha
17 (devotion to one ideal) is the only method for the beginner; but with
18 devotion and sincerity it will lead to all. Churches, doctrines, forms,
19 are the hedges to protect the tender plant, but they must later be
20 broken down that the plant may become a tree. So the various
21 religions, Bibles, Vedas, dogmas--all are just tubs for the little plant;
22 but it must get out of the tub. Nishtha is, in a manner, placing the
23 plant in the tub, shielding the struggling soul in its path. . . .

24 Look at the "ocean" and not at the "wave"; see no difference
25 between ant and angel. Every worm is the brother of the Nazarene.
26 How say one is greater and one less? Each is great in his own
27 place. We are in the sun and in the stars as much as here. Spirit is
28 beyond space and time and is everywhere. Every mouth praising
29 the Lord is my mouth, every eye seeing is my eye. We are confined
30 nowhere; we are not body, the universe is our body. We are
31 magicians waving magic wands and creating scenes before us at
32 will. We are the spider in his huge web, who can go on the varied
33 strands wheresoever he desires. The spider is now only conscious
34 of the spot where he is, but he will in time become conscious of the
35 whole web. We are now conscious only where the body is, we can
36 use only one brain; but when we reach ultra-consciousness, we
37 know all, we can use all brains. Even now we can "give the push" in
38 consciousness, and it goes beyond and acts in the superconscious.

39 We are striving "to be" and nothing more, no "I" even--just
40 pure crystal, reflecting all, but ever the same. When that state is
41 reached, there is no more doing; the body becomes a mere
42 mechanism, pure without care for it; it cannot become impure.

43 Know you are the Infinite, then fear must die. Say ever, "I
44 and my Father are one."

45 In time to come Christs will be in numbers like bunches of
46 grapes on a vine; then the play will be over and will pass out--as
47 water in a kettle beginning to boil shows first one bubble, then
48 another, then more and more, until all is in ebullition and passes out

1 ¹⁴⁷ ?Here "nature" means matter and mind.
2

1 as steam. Buddha and Christ are the two biggest "bubbles" the
2 world has yet produced. Moses was a tiny bubble, greater and
3 greater ones came. Sometime, however, all will be bubbles and
4 escape; but creation, ever new, will bring new water to go through
5 the process all over again.

6
7 *Monday, June 24. (The reading today was from the Bhakti-*
8 *Sutras by Narada)*

9 "Extreme love to God is Bhakti, and this love is the real
10 immortality, getting which a man becomes perfectly satisfied,
11 sorrows for no loss, and is never jealous; knowing which man
12 becomes mad."

13 My Master used to say, "This world is a huge lunatic asylum
14 where all men are mad, some after money, some after women, some
15 after name or fame, and a few after God. I prefer to be mad after
16 God. God is the philosophers' stone that turns us to gold in an
17 instant; the form remains, but the nature is changed--the human
18 form remains, but no more can we hurt or sin."

19 "Thinking of God, some weep, some sing, some laugh, some
20 dance, some say wonderful things, but all speak of nothing but
21 God."

22 Prophets preach, but the Incarnations like Jesus, Buddha,
23 Ramakrishna, can give religion; one glance, one touch is enough.
24 That is the power of the Holy Ghost, the "laying on of hands"; the
25 power was actually transmitted to the disciples by the Master--the
26 "chain of Guru-power". That, the real baptism, has been handed
27 down for untold ages.

28 "Bhakti cannot be used to fulfil any desires, itself being the
29 check to all desires." Narada gives these as the signs of love:
30 "When all thoughts, all words, and all deeds are given up unto the
31 Lord, and the least forgetfulness of God makes one intensely
32 miserable, then love has begun."

33 "This is the highest form of love because therein is no desire
34 for reciprocity, which desire is in all human love."

35 "A man who has gone beyond social and scriptural usage, he
36 is a Sannyasin. When the whole soul goes to God, when we take
37 refuge only in God, then we know that we are about to get this
38 love."

39 Obey the scriptures until you are strong enough to do
40 without them; then go beyond them. Books are not an end-all.
41 Verification is the only proof of religious truth. Each must verify for
42 himself; and no teacher who says, "I have seen, but *you* cannot", is
43 to be trusted, only that one who says, "You can see too". All
44 scriptures, all truths are Vedas in all times, in all countries; because
45 these truths are to be *seen*, and any one may discover them.

46 "When the sun of Love begins to break on the horizon, we
47 want to give up all our actions unto God; and when we forget Him
48 for a moment, it grieves us greatly."

1 Let nothing stand between God and your love for Him. Love
2 Him, love Him, love Him; and let the world say what it will. Love is
3 of three sorts--one demands, but gives nothing; the second is
4 exchange; and the third is love without thought of return--love like
5 that of the moth for the light.

6 "Love is higher than work, than Yoga, than knowledge."

7 Work is merely a schooling for the doer; it can do no good to
8 others. We must work out our own problem; the prophets only show
9 us how to work. "*What you think, you become* ", so if you throw
10 your burden on Jesus, you will have to think of Him and thus
11 become like Him--you *love* Him.

12 "Extreme love and highest knowledge are one."

13 But theorising about God will not do; we must love and work.
14 Give up the world and all worldly things, especially while the
15 "plant" is tender. Day and night think of God and think of nothing
16 else as far as possible. The daily necessary thoughts can all be
17 thought through God. Eat to Him, drink to Him, sleep to Him, see
18 Him in all. Talk of God to others; this is most beneficial.

19 Get the mercy of God and of His greatest children; these are
20 the two chief ways to God. The company of these children of light is
21 very hard to get; five minutes in their company will change a whole
22 life; and if you really want it enough, one will come to you. The
23 presence of those who love God makes a place holy, "such is the
24 glory of the children of the Lord". They are He; and when they
25 speak, their words are scriptures. The place where they have been
26 becomes filled with their vibrations, and those going there feel
27 them and have a tendency to become holy also.

28 "To such lovers there is no distinction of caste, learning,
29 beauty, birth, wealth, or occupation; because all are His."

30 Give up all evil company, especially at the beginning. Avoid
31 worldly company, that will distract your mind. Give up all "*me and*
32 *mine*". To him who has nothing in the universe the Lord comes. Cut
33 the bondage of all worldly affections; go beyond laziness and all
34 care as to what becomes of you. Never turn back to see the result
35 of what you have done. Give all to the Lord and go on and think not
36 of it. The whole soul pours in a continuous current to God; there is
37 no time to seek money, or name, or fame, no time to think of
38 anything but God; then will come into our hearts that infinite,
39 wonderful bliss of Love. All desires are but beads of glass. Love of
40 God increases every moment and is ever new, to be known only by
41 feeling it. Love is the easiest of all, it waits for no logic, it is natural.
42 We need no demonstration, no proof. Reasoning is limiting
43 something by our own minds. We throw a net and catch something,
44 and then say that we have demonstrated it; but never, never can we
45 catch God in a net.

46 Love should be unrelated. Even when we love wrongly, it is of
47 the true love, of the true bliss; the power is the same, use it as we
48 may. Its very nature is peace and bliss. The murderer when he
49 kisses his baby forgets for an instant all but love. Give up all self, all
50 egotism; get out of anger, lust, give *all* to God. "I am not, but Thou

1 art; the old man is all gone, only Thou remainest." "I am Thou."
2 Blame none; if evil comes, know the Lord is playing with you and be
3 exceeding glad.

4 Love is beyond time and space, it is absolute.

5
6 *Tuesday, June 25.*

7 After every happiness comes misery; they may be far apart
8 or near. The more advanced the soul, the more quickly does one
9 follow the other. *What we want is neither happiness nor misery.*
10 Both make us forget our true nature; both are chains--one iron, one
11 gold; behind both is the Atman, who knows neither happiness nor
12 misery. These are *states* and states must ever change; but the
13 nature of the Soul is bliss, peace, unchanging. We have not to get it,
14 we have it; only wash away the dross and see it.

15 Stand upon the Self, then only can we truly love the world.
16 Take a very, very high stand; knowing our universal nature, we must
17 look with perfect calmness upon all the *panorama* of the world. It
18 is but baby's play, and we know that, so cannot be disturbed by it. If
19 the mind is pleased with praise, it will be displeased with blame. All
20 pleasures of the senses or even of the mind are evanescent; but
21 within ourselves is the one true unrelated pleasure, dependent
22 upon nothing. It is perfectly free, it is bliss. *The more our bliss is*
23 *within, the more spiritual we are.* The pleasure of the Self is what
24 the world calls religion.

25 The internal universe, the *real*, is infinitely greater than the
26 external, which is only a shadowy projection of the true one. This
27 world is neither true nor untrue, it is the shadow of truth.
28 "Imagination is the gilded shadow of truth", says the poet.

29 We enter into creation, and then for us it becomes living.
30 Things are dead in themselves; only we give them life, and then,
31 like fools, we turn around and are afraid of them, or enjoy them.
32 But be not like certain fisherwomen, who, caught in a storm on
33 their way home from market, took refuge in the house of a florist.
34 They were lodged for the night in a room next to the garden where
35 the air was full of the fragrance of flowers. In vain did they try to
36 rest, until one of their number suggested that they wet their fishy
37 baskets and place them near their heads. Then they all fell into a
38 sound sleep.

39 The world is our fish basket, we must not depend upon it for
40 enjoyment. Those who do are the Tamasas or the bound. Then there
41 are the Rajasas or the egotistical, who talk always about "I", "I".
42 They do good work sometimes and may become spiritual. But the
43 highest are the Sattvikas, the introspective, those who live only in
44 the Self. These three qualities, Tamas, Rajas, and Sattva (idleness,
45 activity, and illumination), are in everyone, and different ones
46 predominate at different times.

47 Creation is not a "making" of something, it is the struggle to
48 regain the equilibrium, as when atoms of cork are thrown to the
49 bottom of a pail of water and rush to rise to the top, singly or in

1 clusters. *Life is and must be accompanied by evil.* A little evil is the
2 source of life; the little wickedness that is in the world is very good;
3 for when the balance is regained, the world will end, because
4 sameness and destruction are one. When this world goes, good and
5 evil go with it; but when we can transcend this world, we get rid of
6 both good and evil and have bliss.

7 There is no possibility of ever having pleasure without pain,
8 good without evil; for living itself is just the lost equilibrium. What
9 we want is freedom, not life, nor pleasure, nor good. Creation is
10 infinite, without beginning and without end--the ever-moving ripple
11 in an infinite lake. There are yet unreached depths and others
12 where the equilibrium has been regained; but the ripple is always
13 progressing, the struggle to regain the balance is eternal. Life and
14 death are only different names for the same fact, the two sides of
15 the one coin. Both are Maya, the inexplicable state of striving at
16 one time to live, and a moment later to die. Beyond this is the true
17 nature, the Atman. While we recognise a God, it is really only the
18 Self which we have separated ourselves from and worship as
19 outside of us; but it is our true Self all the time--the one and only
20 God.

21 To regain the balance we must counteract Tamas by Rajas;
22 then conquer Rajas by Sattva, the calm beautiful state that will
23 grow and grow until all else is gone. Give up bondage; become a
24 son, be free, and then you can "see the Father", as did Jesus.
25 Infinite strength is religion and God. Avoid weakness and slavery.
26 You are only a soul, *if* you are free; there is immortality for you, *if*
27 you are free; there is God, *if* He is free. . . .

28 The world for me, not I for the world. Good and evil are our
29 slaves, not we theirs. It is the nature of the brute to remain where
30 he is (not to progress); it is the nature of man to seek good and
31 avoid evil; it is the nature of God to seek neither, but just to be
32 eternally blissful. Let us be God! Make the heart like an ocean, go
33 beyond all the trifles of the world, be mad with joy even at evil; see
34 the world as a picture and then enjoy its beauty, knowing that
35 nothing affects you. Children finding glass beads in a mud puddle,
36 that is the good of the world. Look at it with calm complacency; see
37 good and evil as the same--both are merely "God's play"; enjoy all.

38 My Master used to say, "All is God; but tiger-God is to be
39 shunned. All water is water; but we avoid dirty water for drinking."

40 The whole sky is the censer of God, and sun and moon are
41 the lamps. What temple is needed? All eyes are Thine, yet Thou has
42 not an eye; all hands are Thine; yet Thou hast not a hand.

43 Neither seek nor avoid, take what comes. It is liberty to be
44 affected by nothing; do not merely endure, be unattached.
45 Remember the story of the bull. A mosquito sat long on the horn of
46 a certain bull. Then his conscience troubled him, and he said, "Mr.
47 Bull, I have been sitting here a long time, perhaps I annoy you. I am
48 sorry, I will go away." But the bull replied, "Oh no, not at all! Bring
49 your whole family and live on my horn; what can you do to me?"

1 Wednesday, June 26.

2 Our best work is done, our greatest influence is exerted,
3 when we are without thought of self. All great geniuses know this.
4 Let us open ourselves to the one Divine Actor, and let Him act, and
5 do nothing ourselves. "*O Arjuna! I have no duty in the whole world*",
6 says Krishna. Be perfectly resigned, perfectly unconcerned; then
7 alone can you do any true work. No eyes can see the real forces, we
8 can only see the results. Put our self, lose it, forget it; just let God
9 work, it is His business. We have nothing to do but stand aside and
10 let God work. The more we go away, the more God comes in. Get rid
11 of the little "I", and let only the great "I" live.

12 We are what our thoughts have made us; so take care of
13 what you think. Words are secondary. Thoughts live, they travel far.
14 Each thought we think is tinged with our own character, so that for
15 the pure and holy man, even his jests or abuse will have the twist of
16 his own love and purity and do good.

17 Desire nothing; think of God and look for no return. It is the
18 desireless who bring results. The begging monks carry religion to
19 every man's door; but they think that they do nothing, they claim
20 nothing, their work is unconsciously done. If they should eat of the
21 tree of knowledge, they would become egoists, and all the good
22 they do would fly away. As soon as we say "I", we are humbugged
23 all the time; and we call it "knowable", but it is only going round
24 and round like a bullock tied to a tree. The Lord has hidden Himself
25 best, and His work is best; so he who hides himself best,
26 accomplishes most. Conquer *yourself*, and the whole universe is
27 yours.

28 In the state of Sattva we see the very nature of things, we go
29 beyond the senses and beyond reason. The adamant wall that
30 shuts us in is egoism; we refer everything to ourselves, thinking. "I
31 do this, that, and the other." Get rid of this puny "I"; kill this
32 diabolism in us; "Not I, but Thou"--say it, feel it, live it. Until we give
33 up the world manufactured by the ego, never can we enter the
34 kingdom of heaven. None ever did, none ever will. To give up the
35 world is to forget the ego, to know it not at all--living *in* the body,
36 but not *of* it. This rascal ego must be obliterated. Bless men when
37 they revile you. Think how much good they are doing you; they can
38 only hurt themselves. Go where people hate you, let them thrash
39 the ego out of you, and you will get nearer to the Lord. Like the
40 mother-monkey, we hug our "baby", the world, as long as we can,
41 but at last when we are driven to put it under our feet and step on
42 it¹⁴⁸ then we are ready to come to God. Blessed it is to be
43 persecuted for the sake of righteousness. Blessed are we if we
44 cannot read, we have less to take us away from God.

45 Enjoyment is the million-headed serpent that we must tread
46 under foot. We renounce and go on, then find nothing and despair;
47 but hold on, *hold on*. The world is a demon. It is a kingdom of which

1 ¹⁴⁸ ?The mother-monkey is very fond of her young, but if an iron plate is heated
2 under her feet and it becomes unbearable, she throws down the baby and stands
3 on it to save herself.
4

1 the puny ego is king. Put it away and stand firm. Give up lust and
2 gold and fame and hold fast to the Lord, and at last we shall reach a
3 state of perfect indifference. The idea that the gratification of the
4 senses constitutes enjoyment is purely materialistic. There is not
5 one spark of real enjoyment there; all the joy there is, is a mere
6 reflection of the true bliss.

7 Those who give themselves up to the Lord do more for the
8 world than all the so-called workers. One man who has purified
9 himself thoroughly accomplishes more than a regiment of
10 preachers. *Out of purity and silence comes the word of power.*

11 "Be like a lily--stay in one place and expand your petals; and
12 the bees will come of themselves." There was a great contrast
13 between Keshab Chandra Sen and Shri Ramakrishna. The second
14 never recognised any sin or misery in the world, no evil to fight
15 against. The first was a great ethical reformer, leader, and founder
16 of the Brahmo-Samaj. After twelve years the quiet prophet of
17 Dakshineswar had worked a revolution not only in India, but in the
18 world. The power is with the silent ones, who only live and love and
19 then withdraw their personality. They never say "me" and "mine";
20 they are only blessed in being instruments. Such men are the
21 makers of Christs and Buddhas, ever living fully identified with God,
22 ideal existences, asking nothing, and not consciously doing
23 anything. They are the real movers, the Jivanmuktas,¹⁴⁹ absolutely
24 selfless, the little personality entirely blown away, ambition non-
25 existent. They are all principle, no personality.

26
27 *Thursday, June 27. (The Swami brought the New Testament*
28 *this morning and talked again on the book of John.)*

29 Mohammed claimed to be the "Comforter" that Christ
30 promised to send. He considered it unnecessary to claim a
31 supernatural birth for Jesus. Such claims have been common in all
32 ages and in all countries. All great men have claimed gods for their
33 fathers.

34 Knowing is only relative; we can be God, but never *know*
35 Him. Knowledge is a lower state; Adam's fall was when he came to
36 "know". Before that he was God, he was truth, he was purity. We
37 are our own faces, but can see only a reflection, never the real
38 thing. We are love, but when we think of it, we have to use a
39 phantasm, which proves that matter is only externalised thought.¹⁵⁰

40 Nivritti is turning aside from the world. Hindu mythology
41 says that the four first-created¹⁵¹ were warned by a Swan (God

1 ¹⁴⁹ ?Literally, free even while living.
2

3 ¹⁵⁰ ?Since the knower can know only his reflection and not himself, he is ever
4 unknowable. So knowledge is distinct and separate from the knower, and as such
5 it is externalised thought or thought standing outside the knower as a separate
6 entity. Since the knower goes by the name of Spirit, that which is distinct and
7 separate from it should go by the name of Matter. Hence the Swami says,
8 "Matter is only externalised thought."
9

10 ¹⁵¹ ?The four first-created were Sanaka, Sanandana, Sanatana, and

1 Himself) that manifestation was only secondary; so they remained
2 without creating. The meaning of this is that expression is
3 degeneration, because Spirit can only be expressed by the letter
4 and then the "letter killeth";¹⁵² yet principle is bound to be clothed
5 in matter, though we know that later we shall lose sight of the real
6 in the covering. Every great teacher understands this, and that is
7 why a continual succession of prophets has to come to show us the
8 principle and give it a new covering suited to the times. My Master
9 taught that religion is one; all prophets teach the same; but they
10 can only present the principle in a form; so they take it out of the
11 old form and put it before us in a new one. When we free ourselves
12 from name and form, especially from a body--when we need no
13 body, good or bad--then only do we escape from bondage. Eternal
14 progression is eternal bondage; annihilation of form is to be
15 preferred. We must get free from any body, even a "god-body". God
16 is the only real existence, there cannot be two. There is but One
17 Soul, and I am That.

18 Good works are only valuable as a means of escape; they do
19 good to the doer, never to any other.

20 Knowledge is mere classification. When we find many things
21 of the same kind we call the sum of them by a certain name and are
22 satisfied; we discover "facts", never "why". We take a circuit in a
23 wider field of darkness and think we know something! No "why"
24 can be answered in this world; for that we must go to God. The
25 Knower can never be expressed; it is as when a grain of salt drops
26 into the ocean, it is at once merged in the ocean.

27 Differentiation creates; homogeneity or sameness is God. Get
28 beyond differentiation; then you conquer life and death and reach
29 eternal sameness and are in God, are God. Get freedom, even at the
30 cost of life. All lives belong to us as leaves to a book; but we are
31 unchanged, the Witness, the Soul, upon whom the impression is
32 made, as when the impression of a circle is made upon the eyes
33 when a firebrand is rapidly whirled round and round. The Soul is
34 the unity of all personalities, and because It is at rest, eternal,
35 unchangeable. It is God, Atman. It is not life, but It is coined into
36 life. It is not pleasure, but It is manufactured into pleasure. . . .

37 Today God is being abandoned by the world because He does
38 not seem to be doing enough for the world. So they say, "Of what
39 good is He?" Shall we look upon God as a mere municipal
40 authority?

41 All we can do is put down all desires, hates, differences; put
42 down the lower self, commit mental suicide, as it were; keep the
43 body and mind pure and healthy, but only as instruments to help us
44 to God; that is their only true use. Seek truth for truth's sake alone,
45 look not for bliss. It may come, but do not let that be your incentive.
46 Have no motive except God. Dare to come to Truth even through
47 hell.

1 Sanatkumara.

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3 ¹⁵² ?Bible, 2 Cor. III. 6.
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Friday, June 28. (The entire party went on a picnic for the day, and although the Swami taught constantly, as he did wherever he was, no notes were taken and no record, therefore, of what he said remains. As he began his breakfast before setting out, however, he remarked:)

Be thankful for all food, it is Brahman. His universal energy is transmuted into our individual energy and helps us in all that we do.

Saturday, June 29. (The Swami came this morning with a Gita in his hand.)

Krishna, the "Lord of souls", talks to Arjuna or Gudakesha, "lord of sleep" (he who has conquered sleep). The "field of virtue" (the battle-field) is this world; the five brothers (representing righteousness) fight the hundred other brothers (all that we love and have to contend against); the most heroic brother, Arjuna (the awakened soul), is the general. We have to fight all sense-delights, the things to which we are most attached, to kill them. We have to stand alone; we are Brahman, all other ideas must be merged in this one.

Krishna did everything but without any attachment; he was in the world, but not of it. "Do all work but without attachment; work for work's sake, never for yourself."

Freedom can never be true of name and form; it is the clay out of which we (the pots) are made; then it is limited and not free, so that freedom can never be true of the related. One pot can never say "I am free" as a pot; only as it loses all ideas of form does it become free. The whole universe is only the Self with variations, the one tune made bearable by variation; sometimes there are discords, but they only make the subsequent harmony more perfect. In the universal melody three ideas stand out--freedom, strength, and sameness.

If your freedom hurts others, you are not free there. You must not hurt others.

"To be weak is to be miserable", says Milton. Doing and suffering are inseparably joined. (Often, too, the man who laughs most is the one who suffers most.) "To work you have the right, not to the fruits thereof."

Evil thoughts, looked at materially, are the disease bacilli.

Each thought is a little hammer blow on the lump of iron which our bodies are, manufacturing out of it what we want it to be.

We are heirs to all the good thoughts of the universe, if we open ourselves to them.

The book is all in us. Fool, hearest not thou? In thine own heart day and night is singing that Eternal Music--*Sachchidananda, soham, soham*--Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute, I am He, I am He.

1 The fountain of all knowledge is in every one of us, in the ant
2 as in the highest angel. Real religion is one, but we quarrel with the
3 forms, the symbols, the illustrations. The millennium exists already
4 for those who find it; we have lost ourselves and then think the
5 world is lost.

6 Perfect strength will have no activity in this world; it only is,
7 it does not act.

8 While real perfection is only one, relative perfections must
9 be many.

10
11 *Sunday, June 30.*

12 To try to think without a phantasm is to try to make the
13 impossible possible. We cannot think "mammalia" without a
14 concrete example. So with the idea of God.

15 The great abstraction of ideas in the world is what we call
16 God.

17 Each thought has two parts--the thinking and the word; and
18 we must have both. Neither idealists nor materialists are right; we
19 must take both idea and expression.

20 All knowledge is of the reflected, as we can only see our face
21 in a mirror. No one will ever know his own Self or God; but we are
22 that own Self, we are God.

23 In Nirvana you are when *you* are not. Buddha said, "You are
24 best, you are real, when you are not"--when the little self is gone.

25 The Light Divine within is obscured in most people. It is like
26 a lamp in a cask of iron, no gleam of light can shine through.
27 Gradually, by purity and unselfishness we can make the obscuring
28 medium less and less dense, until at last it becomes as transparent
29 as glass. Shri Ramakrishna was like the iron cask transformed into
30 a glass cask through which can be seen the inner light as it is. We
31 are all on the way to become the cask of glass and even higher and
32 higher reflections. As long as there is a "cask" at all, we must think
33 through material means. No impatient one can ever succeed.

34 Great saints are the object-lessons of the Principle. But the
35 disciples make the saint the Principle, and then they forget the
36 Principle in the person.

37 The result of Buddha's constant inveighing against a
38 personal God was the introduction of idols into India. In the Vedas
39 they knew them not, because they saw God everywhere, but the
40 reaction against the loss of God as Creator and Friend was to make
41 idols, and Buddha became an idol--so too with Jesus. The range of
42 idols is from wood and stone to Jesus and Buddha, but we must
43 have idols.

44 Violent attempts at reform always end by retarding reform.
45 Do not say, "You are bad"; say only, "You are good, but be better."

46 Priests are an evil in every country, because they denounce
47 and criticise, pulling at one string to mend it until two or three

1 others are out of place. Love never denounces, only ambition does
2 that. There is no such thing as "righteous" anger or justifiable
3 killing.

4 If you do not allow one to become a lion, he will become a
5 fox. Women are a power, only now it is more for evil because man
6 oppresses woman; she is the fox, but when she is no longer
7 oppressed, she will become the lion.

8 Ordinarily speaking, spiritual aspiration ought to be balanced
9 through the intellect; otherwise it may degenerate into mere
10 sentimentality. . . .

11 All theists agree that behind the changeable there is an
12 Unchangeable, though they vary in their conception of the Ultimate.
13 Buddha denied this *in toto*. "There is no Brahman, no Atman, no
14 soul," he said.

15 As a character Buddha was the greatest the world has ever
16 seen; next to him Christ. But the teachings of Krishna as taught by
17 the Gita are the grandest the world has ever known. He who wrote
18 that wonderful poem was one of those rare souls whose lives sent a
19 wave of regeneration through the world. The human race will never
20 again see such a brain as his who wrote the Gita.

21 There is only one Power, whether manifesting as evil or
22 good. God and the devil are the same river with the water flowing
23 in opposite directions.

24
25 *Monday, July 1. (Shri Ramakrishna Deva)*

26 Shri Ramakrishna was the son of a very orthodox Brahmin,
27 who would refuse even a gift from any but a special caste of
28 Brahmins; neither might he work, nor even be a priest in a temple,
29 nor sell books, nor serve anyone. He could only have "what fell from
30 the skies" (alms), and even then it must not come through a "fallen"
31 Brahmin. Temples have no hold on the Hindu religion; if they were
32 all destroyed, religion would not be affected a grain. A man must
33 only build a house for "God and guests", to build for himself would
34 be selfish; therefore he erects temples as dwelling places for God.

35 Owing to the extreme poverty of his family, Sri Ramakrishna
36 was obliged to become in his boyhood a priest in a temple
37 dedicated to the Divine Mother, also called Prakriti, or Kali,
38 represented by a female figure standing with feet on a male figure,
39 indicating that until Maya lifts, we can know nothing. Brahman is
40 neuter, unknown and unknowable, but to be objectified He covers
41 Himself with a veil of Maya, becomes the Mother of the Universe,
42 and so brings forth the creation. The prostrate figure (Shiva or God)
43 has become Shava (dead or lifeless) by being covered by Maya. The
44 Jnani says, "I will uncover God by force" (Advaitism); but the dualist
45 says, "I will uncover God by praying to Mother, begging Her to open
46 the door to which She alone has the key."

47 The daily service of the Mother Kali gradually awakened
48 such intense devotion in the heart of the young priest that he could
49 no longer carry on the regular temple worship. So he abandoned

1 his duties and retired to a small woodland in the temple compound,
2 where he gave himself up entirely to meditation. These woods were
3 on the bank of the river Ganga; and one day the swift current bore
4 to his very feet just the necessary materials to build him a little
5 enclosure. In this enclosure he stayed and wept and prayed, taking
6 no thought for the care of his body or for aught except his Divine
7 Mother. A relative fed him once a day and watched over him. Later
8 came a Sannyasini or lady ascetic, to help him find his "Mother".
9 Whatever teachers he needed came to him unsought; from every
10 sect some holy saint would come and offer to teach him and to each
11 he listened eagerly. But he worshipped only Mother; all to him was
12 Mother.

13 Shri Ramakrishna never spoke a harsh word against anyone.
14 So beautifully tolerant was he that every sect thought that he
15 belonged to them. He loved everyone. To him all religions were
16 true. He found a place for each one. He was free, but free in love,
17 not in "thunder". The mild type creates, the thundering type
18 spreads. Paul was the thundering type to spread the light.¹⁵³

19 The age of St. Paul, however, is gone; we are to be the new
20 lights for this day. A self-adjusting organisation is the great need of
21 our time. When we can get one, that will be the last religion of the
22 world. The wheel must turn, and we should help it, not hinder. The
23 waves of religious thought rise and fall, and on the topmost one
24 stands the "prophet of the period". Ramakrishna came to teach the
25 religion of today, constructive, not destructive. He had to go afresh
26 to Nature to ask for facts, and he got scientific religion which never
27 says "believe", but "see"; "I see, and you too can see." Use the same
28 means and you will reach the same vision. God will come to
29 everyone, harmony is within the reach of all. Shri Ramakrishna's
30 teachings are "the gist of Hinduism"; they were not peculiar to him.
31 Nor did he claim that they were: he cared naught for name or fame.

32 He began to preach when he was about forty; but he never
33 went out to do it. He waited for those who wanted his teachings to
34 come to him. In accordance with Hindu custom, he was married by
35 his parents in early youth to a little girl of five, who remained at
36 home with her family in a distant village, unconscious of the great
37 struggle through which her young husband was passing. When she
38 reached maturity, he was already deeply absorbed in religious
39 devotion. She travelled on foot from her home to the temple at
40 Dakshineswar where he was then living; and as soon as she saw
41 him, she recognised what he was, for she herself was a great soul,
42 pure and holy, who only desired to help his work, never to drag him
43 down to the level of the Grihastha (householder).

44 Shri Ramakrishna is worshipped in India as one of the great
45 Incarnations, and his birthday is celebrated there as a religious
46 festival. . . .

47 A curious round stone is the emblem of Vishnu, the
48 omnipresent. Each morning a priest comes in, offers sacrifice to the

1 ¹⁵³ ?And it has been said by many that Swami Vivekananda himself was a kind
2 of St. Paul to Shri Ramakrishna.
3

1 idol, waves incense before it, then puts it to bed and apologises to
2 God for worshipping Him in that way, because he can only conceive
3 of Him through an image or by means of some material object. He
4 bathes the idol, clothes it, and puts his divine self into the idol "to
5 make it alive".

6 There is a sect which says, "It is weakness to worship only
7 the good and beautiful, we ought also to love and worship the
8 hideous and the evil." This sect prevails all over Tibet, and they
9 have no marriage. In India proper they cannot exist openly, but
10 organise secret societies. No decent men will belong to them except
11 *sub rosa*. Thrice communism was tried in Tibet, and thrice it failed.
12 They use Tapas and with immense success as far as power is
13 concerned.

14 Tapas means literally "to burn". It is a kind of penance to
15 "heat" the higher nature. It is sometimes in the form of a sunrise to
16 sunset vow, such as repeating Om all day incessantly. These actions
17 will produce a certain power that you can convert into any form you
18 wish, spiritual or material. This idea of Tapas penetrates the whole
19 of Hindu religion. The Hindus even say that God made Tapas to
20 create the world. It is a mental instrument with which to do
21 everything. "Everything in the three worlds can be caught by
22 Tapas." . . .

23 People who report about sects with which they are not in
24 sympathy are both conscious and unconscious liars. A believer in
25 one sect can rarely see truth in others.

26 A great Bhakta (Hanuman) once said when asked what day
27 of the month it was, "God is my eternal date, no other date I care
28 for."

29
30 *Tuesday, July 2. (The Divine Mother.)*

31 Shaktas worship the Universal Energy as Mother, the
32 sweetest name they know; for the mother is the highest ideal of
33 womanhood in India. When God is worshipped as "Mother", as
34 Love, the Hindus call it the "right-handed" way, and it leads to
35 spirituality but never to material prosperity. When God is
36 worshipped on His terrible side, that is, in the "left-handed" way, it
37 leads usually to great material prosperity, but rarely to spirituality;
38 and eventually it leads to degeneration and the obliteration of the
39 race that practises it.

40 Mother is the first manifestation of power and is considered
41 a higher idea than father. With the name of Mother comes the idea
42 of Shakti, Divine Energy and Omnipotence, just as the baby
43 believes its mother to be all-powerful, able to do anything. The
44 Divine Mother is the Kundalini ("coiled up" power) sleeping in us;
45 without worshipping Her we can never know ourselves. All-
46 merciful, all-powerful, omnipresent are attributes of Divine Mother.
47 She is the sum total of the energy in the universe. Every
48 manifestation of power in the universe is "Mother". She is life, She
49 is intelligence, She is Love.

1 She is in the universe yet separate from it. She is a person
2 and can be seen and known (as Shri Ramakrishna saw and knew
3 Her). Established in the idea of Mother, we can do anything. She
4 quickly answers prayer.

5 She can show Herself to us in any form at any moment.
6 Divine Mother can have form (Rupa) and name (Nama) or name
7 without form; and as we worship Her in these various aspects we
8 can rise to pure Being, having neither form nor name.

9 The sum total of all the cells in an organism is one person; so
10 each soul is like one cell and the sum of them is God, and beyond
11 that is the Absolute. The sea calm is the Absolute; the same sea in
12 waves is Divine Mother. She is time, space, and causation. God is
13 Mother and has two natures, the conditioned and the
14 unconditioned. As the former, She is God, nature, and soul (man).
15 As the latter, She is unknown and unknowable. Out of the
16 Unconditioned came the trinity--God, nature, and soul, the triangle
17 of existence. This is the Vishishtadvaitist idea.

18 A bit of Mother, a drop, was Krishna, another was Buddha,
19 another was Christ. The worship of even one spark of Mother in our
20 earthly mother leads to greatness. Worship Her if you want love
21 and wisdom.

22
23 *Wednesday, July 3.*

24 Generally speaking, human religion begins with fear. "The
25 fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." But later comes the
26 higher idea. "Perfect love casteth out fear." Traces of fear will
27 remain with us until we get knowledge, know what God is. Christ,
28 being man, had to see impurity and denounced it; but God, infinitely
29 higher, does not see iniquity and cannot be angry. Denunciation is
30 never the highest. David's hands were smeared with blood; he
31 could not build the temple.¹⁵⁴

32 The more we grow in love and virtue and holiness, the more
33 we see love and virtue and holiness outside. All condemnation of
34 others really condemns ourselves. Adjust the microcosm (which is
35 in your power to do) and the macrocosm will adjust itself for you. It
36 is like the *hydrostatic paradox*, one drop of water can balance the
37 universe. We cannot see outside what we are not inside. The
38 universe is to us what the huge engine is to the miniature engine;
39 and indication of any error in the tiny engine leads us to imagine
40 trouble in the huge one.

41 Every step that has been really gained in the world has been
42 gained by love; criticising can never do any good, it has been tried
43 for thousands of years. Condemnation accomplishes nothing.

44 A real Vedantist must sympathise with all. Monism, or
45 absolute oneness is the very soul of Vedanta. Dualists naturally tend
46 to become intolerant, to think theirs as the only way. The
47 Vaishnavas in India, who are dualists, are a most intolerant sect.

1 ¹⁵⁴ ?Bible, Samuel, Chap. XVII--end.
2

1 Among the Shaivas, another dualistic sect, the story is told of a
2 devotee by the name of Ghantakarna or the Bell-eared, who was so
3 devout a worshipper of Shiva that he did not wish even to hear the
4 name of any other deity; so he wore two bells tied to his ears in
5 order to drown the sound of any voice uttering other Divine names.
6 On account of his intense devotion to Shiva, the latter wanted to
7 teach him that there was no difference between Shiva and Vishnu,
8 so He appeared before him as half Vishnu and half Shiva. At that
9 moment the devotee was waving incense before Him, but so great
10 was the bigotry of Ghantakarna that when he saw the fragrance of
11 the incense entering the nostril of Vishnu, he thrust his finger into it
12 to prevent the god from enjoying the sweet smell. . . .

13 The meat-eating animal, like the lion, gives one blow and
14 *subsides*, but the patient bullock goes on all day, eating and
15 sleeping as it walks. The "live Yankee" cannot compete with the
16 rice-eating Chinese coolie. While military power dominates, meat-
17 eating will prevail; but with the advance of science, fighting will
18 grow less, and then the vegetarians will come in.

19 We divide ourselves into two to love God, myself loving my
20 Self. God has created me and I have created God. We create God in
21 our image; it is we who create Him to be our master, it is not God
22 who makes us His servants. When we know that we are one with
23 God, that we and He are friends, then come equality and freedom.
24 So long as you hold yourself separated by a hair's breadth from this
25 Eternal One, fear cannot go.

26 Never ask that foolish question, what good will it do to the
27 world? Let the world go. Love and ask nothing; love and look for
28 nothing further. Love and forget all the "isms". Drink the cup of love
29 and become mad. Say "Thine, O Thine for ever, O Lord!" and plunge
30 in, forgetting all else. The very idea of God is love. Seeing a cat
31 loving her kittens stand and pray. God has become manifest there;
32 literally believe this. Repeat "I am Thine, I am Thine", for we can
33 see God everywhere. Do not seek for Him, just see Him.

34 "May the Lord ever keep you alive, Light of the world, Soul of
35 the universe!" . . .

36 The Absolute cannot be worshipped, so we must worship a
37 manifestation, such a one as has our nature. Jesus had our nature;
38 he became the Christ; so can we, and so *must* we. Christ and
39 Buddha were the names of a state to be attained; Jesus and
40 Gautama were the persons to manifest it. "Mother" is the first and
41 highest manifestation, next the Christs and Buddhas. We make our
42 own environment, and we strike the fetters off. The Atman is the
43 fearless. When we pray to a God outside, it is good, only we do not
44 know what we do. When we know the Self, we understand. The
45 highest expression of love is unification.

46 "There was a time when I was a woman and he was a man.

47 Still love grew until there was neither he nor I;

48 Only I remember faintly there was a time when there were
49 two.

1 But love came between and made them one."

2 --
3 *Persian Sufi Poem*

4 Knowledge exists eternally and is co-existent with God. The
5 man who discovers a spiritual law is inspired, and what he brings is
6 revelation; but revelation too is eternal, not to be crystallised as
7 final and then blindly followed. The Hindus have been criticised so
8 many years by their conquerors that they (the Hindus) dare to
9 criticise their religion themselves, and this makes them free. Their
10 foreign rulers struck off their fetters without knowing it. The most
11 religious people of earth, the Hindus have actually no sense of
12 blasphemy; to speak of holy things in any way is to them in itself a
13 sanctification. Nor have they any artificial respect for prophets or
14 books, or for hypocritical piety.

15 The Church tries to fit Christ into it, not the Church into
16 Christ; so only those writings were preserved that suited the
17 purpose in hand. Thus the books are not to be depended upon and
18 book-worship is the worst kind of idolatry to bind our feet. All has to
19 conform to the book--science, religion, philosophy; it is the most
20 horrible tyranny, this tyranny of the Protestant Bible. Every man in
21 Christian countries has a huge cathedral on his head and on top of
22 that a book, and yet man lives and grows! Does not this prove that
23 man is God?

24 Man is the highest being that exists, and this is the greatest
25 world. We can have no conception of God higher than man, so our
26 God is man, and man is God. When we rise and go beyond and find
27 something higher, we have to jump out of the mind, out of body and
28 the imagination and leave this world; when we rise to be the
29 Absolute, we are no longer in this world. Man is the apex of the only
30 world we can ever know. All we know of animals is only by analogy,
31 we judge them by what we do and feel ourselves.

32 The sum total of knowledge is ever the same, only sometimes
33 it is more manifested and sometimes less. The only source of it is
34 within, and there only is it found.

35 All poetry, painting, and music is feeling expressed through
36 words, through colour, through sound. . . .

37 Blessed are those upon whom their sins are quickly visited,
38 their account is the sooner balanced! Woe to those whose
39 punishment is deferred, it is the greater!

40 Those who have attained sameness are said to be living in
41 God. All hatred is killing the "Self by the self", therefore love is the
42 law of life. To rise to this is to be perfect; but the more perfect we
43 are, the less work (so-called) can we do. The Sattvika see and know
44 that all is mere child's play and do not trouble themselves about
45 anything.

46 It is easy to strike a blow, but tremendously hard to stay the
47 hand, stand still, and say, "In Thee, O Lord, I take refuge", and then
48 wait for Him to act.

49

1 *Friday, July 5.*

2 Until you are ready to change any minute, you can never see
3 the truth; but you must hold fast and be steady in the search for
4 truth. . . .

5 Charvakas, a very ancient sect in India, were rank
6 materialists. They have died out now, and most of their books are
7 lost. They claimed that the soul, being the product of the body and
8 its forces, died with it; that there was no proof of its further
9 existence. They denied inferential knowledge accepting only
10 perception by the senses.

11 Samadhi is when the Divine and human are in one, or it is
12 "bringing sameness". . . .

13 Materialism says, the voice of freedom is a delusion. Idealism
14 says, the voice that tells of bondage is delusion. Vedanta says, you
15 are free and not free at the same time--never free on the earthly
16 plane, but ever free on the spiritual.

17 Be beyond both freedom and bondage.

18 We are Shiva, we are immortal knowledge beyond the
19 senses.

20 Infinite power is back of everyone; pray to Mother, and it will
21 come to you.

22 "O Mother, giver of Vak (eloquence), Thou self-existent, come
23 as the Vak upon my lips," (Hindu invocation).

24 "That Mother whose voice is in the thunder, come Thou in
25 me! Kali, Thou time eternal, Thou force irresistible, Shakti, Power!"

26

27 *Saturday, July 6. (Today we had Shankaracharya's*
28 *commentary of Vyasa's Vedanta Sutras.)*

29 Om tat sat! According to Shankara, there are two phases of
30 the universe, one is I and the other thou; and they are as contrary
31 as light and darkness, so it goes without saying that neither can be
32 derived from the other. On the subject, the object has been
33 superimposed; the subject is the only reality, the other a mere
34 appearance. The opposite view is untenable. Matter and the
35 external world are but the soul in a certain state; in reality there is
36 only one.

37 All our world comes from truth and untruth coupled together.
38 Samsara (life) is the result of the contradictory forces acting upon
39 us, like the diagonal motion of a ball in a parallelogram of forces.
40 The world is God and is real, but that is not the world we see; just
41 as we see silver in the mother-of-pearl where it is not. This is what
42 is known as Adhyasa or superimposition, that is, a relative existence
43 dependent upon a real one, as when we recall a scene we have
44 seen; for the time it exists for us, but that existence is not real. Or
45 some say, it is as when we imagine heat in water, which does not
46 belong to it; so really it is something which has been put where it
47 does not belong, "taking the thing for what it is not". We see reality,
48 but distorted by the medium through which we see it.

1 You can never know yourself except as objectified. When we
2 mistake one thing for another, we always take the thing before us
3 as the real, never the unseen; thus we mistake the object for the
4 subject. The Atman never becomes the object. Mind is the internal
5 sense, the outer senses are its instruments. In the subject is a trifle
6 of the objectifying power that enables him to know "I am"; but the
7 subject is the object of its own Self, never of the mind or the senses.
8 You can, however, superimpose one idea on another idea, as when
9 we say, "The sky is blue", the sky itself being only an idea. Science
10 and nescience there are, but the Self is never affected by any
11 nescience. Relative knowledge is good, because it leads to absolute
12 knowledge; but neither the knowledge of the senses, nor of the
13 mind, nor even of the Vedas is true, since they are all within the
14 realm of relative knowledge. First get rid of the delusion, "I am the
15 body", then only can we want real knowledge. Man's knowledge is
16 only a higher degree of brute knowledge.

17 One part of the Vedas deals with Karma--form and
18 ceremonies. The other part deals with the knowledge of Brahman
19 and discusses religion. The Vedas in this part teach of the Self; and
20 because they do, their knowledge is approaching real knowledge.
21 Knowledge of the Absolute depends upon no book, nor upon
22 anything; it is absolute in itself. No amount of study will give this
23 knowledge; it is not theory, it is realisation. Cleanse the dust from
24 the mirror, purify your own mind, and in a flash you know that you
25 are Brahman.

26 God exists, not birth nor death, not pain nor misery, nor
27 murder, nor change, nor good nor evil; all is Brahman. We take the
28 "rope for the serpent", the error is ours. . . . We can only do good
29 when we love God and He reflects our love. The murderer is God,
30 and the "clothing of murderer" is only superimposed upon him. Take
31 him by the hand and tell him the truth.

32 Soul has no caste, and to think it has is a delusion; so are life
33 and death, or any motion or quality. The Atman never changes,
34 never goes nor comes. It is the eternal Witness of all Its own
35 manifestations, but we take It for the manifestation; an eternal
36 illusion, without beginning or end, ever going on. The Vedas,
37 however, have to come down to our level, for if they told us the
38 highest truth in the highest way, we could not understand it.

39 Heaven is a mere superstition arising from desire, and desire
40 is ever a yoke, a degeneration. Never approach anything except as
41 God; for if we do, we see evil, because we throw a veil of delusion
42 over what we look at, and then we see evil. Get free from these
43 illusions; be blessed. Freedom is to lose all illusions.

44 In one sense Brahman is known to every human being; he
45 knows, "I am"; but man does not know himself as he is. We all know
46 we are, but not how we are. All lower explanations are partial
47 truths; but the flower, the essence of the Vedas, is that the Self in
48 each of us is Brahman. Every phenomenon is included in birth,
49 growth, and death--appearance, continuance, and disappearance.
50 Our own realisation is beyond the Vedas, because even they depend
51 upon that. The highest Vedanta is the philosophy of the Beyond.

1 To say that creation has any beginning is to lay the axe at the
2 root of all philosophy.

3 Maya is the energy of the universe, potential and kinetic.
4 Until Mother releases us, we cannot get free.

5 The universe is ours to enjoy. But want nothing. To want is
6 weakness. Want makes us beggars, and we are sons of the king, not
7 beggars.

8

9 *Sunday Morning, July 7.*

10 Infinite manifestation dividing itself in portion still remains
11 infinite, and each portion is infinite.¹⁵⁵

12 Brahman is the same in two forms--changeable and
13 unchangeable, expressed and unexpressed. Know that the Knower
14 and the known are one. The Trinity--the Knower, the known, and
15 knowing--is manifesting as this universe. That God the Yogi sees in
16 meditation, he sees through the power of his own Self.

17 What we call nature, fate, is simply God's will.

18 So long as enjoyment is sought, bondage remains. Only
19 imperfection can enjoy, because enjoyment is the fulfilling of desire.
20 The human soul enjoys nature. The underlying reality of nature,
21 soul, and God is Brahman; but It (Brahman) is unseen, until we
22 bring It out. It may be brought out by *Pramantha* or friction, just as
23 we can produce fire by friction. The body is the lower piece of
24 wood, Om is the pointed piece and Dhyana (meditation) is the
25 friction. When this is used, that light which is the knowledge of
26 Brahman will burst forth in the soul.

27 Seek it through Tapas. Holding the body upright, sacrifice
28 the organs of sense in the mind. The sense-centres are within, and
29 their organs without; drive them into the mind and through
30 Dharana (concentration) fix the mind in Dhyana. Brahman is
31 omnipresent in the universe as is butter in milk, but friction makes
32 It manifest in one place. As churning brings out the butter in the
33 milk, so Dhyana brings the realisation of Brahman in the soul.

34 All Hindu philosophy declares that there is a sixth sense, the
35 superconscious, and through it comes inspiration.

36 The universe is motion, and friction will eventually bring
37 everything to an end; then comes a rest; and after that all begins
38 again. . . .

39 So long as the "skin sky" surrounds man, that is, so long as
40 he identifies himself with his body, he cannot see God.

41

42 *Sunday afternoon*

1 ¹⁵⁵ ?Infinity is one, without a second, ever indivisible, and unmanifested. By
2 "infinite manifestation" the Swami means the universe, both visible and invisible.
3 Although it is made up of countless forms which are limited by their very nature,
4 still as a whole it is always infinite; nay, even a portion of it is infinite, as each
5 such portion is inseparably united with it.
6

1 There are six schools of philosophy in India that are regarded
2 as orthodox, because they believe in the Vedas.

3 Vyasa's philosophy is *par excellence* that of the Upanishads.
4 He wrote in Sutra form, that is, in brief algebraical symbols without
5 nominative or verb. This caused so much ambiguity that out of the
6 Sutras came dualism, mono-dualism, and monism or "roaring
7 Vedanta"; and all the great commentators in these different schools
8 were at times "conscious liars" in order to make the texts suit their
9 philosophy.

10 The Upanishads contain very little history of the doings of
11 any man, but nearly all other scriptures are largely personal
12 histories. The Vedas deal almost entirely with philosophy. Religion
13 without philosophy runs into superstition; philosophy without
14 religion becomes dry atheism.

15 Vishishta-advaita is qualified Advaita (monism). Its
16 expounder was Ramanuja. He says, "Out of the ocean of milk of the
17 Vedas, Vyasa has churned this butter of philosophy, the better to
18 help mankind." He says again, "All virtues and all qualities belong
19 to Brahman, Lord of the universe. He is the greatest Purusha.
20 Madhva is a through-going dualist or Dvaitist. He claims that even
21 women might study the Vedas. He quotes chiefly from the Puranas.
22 He says that Brahman means Vishnu, not Shiva at all, because
23 there is no salvation except through Vishnu.

24
25 *Monday, July 8.*

26 There is no place for reasoning in Madhva's explanation, it is
27 all taken from the revelation in the Vedas.

28 Ramanuja says, the Vedas are the holiest study. Let the sons
29 of the three upper castes get the Sutra¹⁵⁶ and at eight, ten, or
30 eleven years of age begin the study, which means going to a Guru
31 and learning the Vedas word for word, with perfect intonation and
32 pronunciation.

33 Japa is repeating the Holy Name; through this the devotee
34 rises to the Infinite. This boat of sacrifice and ceremonies is very
35 frail, we need more than that to know Brahman, which alone is
36 freedom. Liberty is nothing more than destruction of ignorance, and
37 that can only go when we know Brahman. It is not necessary to go
38 through all these ceremonials to reach the meaning of the Vedanta.
39 Repeating Om is enough.

40 Seeing difference is the cause of all misery, and ignorance is
41 the cause of seeing difference. That is why ceremonials are not
42 needed, because they increase the idea of inequality; you practise
43 them to get rid of something or to obtain something.

44 Brahman is without action, Atman is Brahman, and we are
45 Atman; knowledge like this takes off all error. It must be heard,
46 apprehended intellectually, and lastly realised. Cogitating is
47 applying reason and establishing this knowledge in ourselves by

1 ¹⁵⁶ The holy thread.
2

1 reason. Realising is making it a part of our lives by constant
2 thinking of it. This constant thought or Dhyana is as oil that pours in
3 one unbroken line from vessel to vessel; Dhyana rolls the mind in
4 this thought day and night and so helps us to attain to liberation.
5 Think always "Soham, Soham"; this is almost as good as liberation.
6 Say it day and night; realisation will come as the result of this
7 continuous cogitation. This absolute and continuous remembrance
8 of the Lord is what is meant by Bhakti.

9 This Bhakti is indirectly helped by all good works. Good
10 thought and good works create less differentiation than bad ones;
11 so indirectly they lead to freedom. Work, but give up the results to
12 the Lord. Knowledge alone can make us perfect. He who follows the
13 God of Truth with devotion, to him the God of Truth reveals
14 Himself. . . . We are lamps, and our burning is what we call "life".
15 When the supply of oxygen gives out, then the lamp must go out. All
16 we can do is to keep the lamp clean. Life is a product, a compound,
17 and as such must resolve itself into its elements.

18
19 *Tuesday, July 9.*

20 Man as Atman is really free; as man he is bound, changed by
21 every physical condition. As man, he is a machine with an idea of
22 freedom; but this human body is the best and the human mind the
23 highest mind there is. When a man attains to the Atman state, he
24 can take a body, making it to suit himself; he is above law. This is a
25 statement and must be proved. Each one must prove it for himself;
26 we may satisfy ourselves, but we cannot satisfy another. Raja-Yoga
27 is the only science of religion that can be demonstrated; and only
28 what I myself have proved by experience, do I teach. The full
29 ripeness of reason is intuition, but intuition cannot antagonise
30 reason.

31 Work purifies the heart and so leads to Vidya (wisdom). The
32 Buddhists said, doing good to men and to animals were the only
33 works; the Brahmins said that worship and all ceremonials were
34 equally "work" and purified the mind. Shankara declares that "all
35 works, good and bad, are against knowledge". Actions tending to
36 ignorance are sins, not directly, but as causes, because they
37 te*****
38 *****
39 *****
40 *****
41 *****
42 *****
43 *****
44 *****hman is the *essence, the reality of all*
45 *knowledge*, and that all manifestations as knower, knowing, and
46 known are mere imaginings in Brahman. Ramanuja attributes
47 consciousness to God; the real monists attribute nothing, not even
48 existence in any meaning that we can attach to it. Ramanuja
49 declares that God is the essence of conscious knowledge.
50 Undifferentiated consciousness, when differentiated, becomes the
51 world. . . .

1 Buddhism, one of the most philosophical religions in the
2 world, spread all through the populace, the common people of
3 India. What a wonderful culture there must have been among the
4 Aryans twenty-five hundred years ago, to be able to grasp ideas!

5 Buddha was the only great Indian philosopher who would not
6 recognise caste, and not one of his followers remains in India. All
7 the other philosophers pandered more or less to social prejudices;
8 no matter how high they soared, still a bit of the vulture remained
9 in them. As my Master used to say, "The vulture soars high out of
10 sight in the sky, but his eye is ever on a bit of carrion on the earth."

11 The ancient Hindus were wonderful scholars, veritable living
12 encyclopaedias. They said, "Knowledge in books and money in other
13 people's hands is like no knowledge and no money at all."

14 Shankara was regarded by many as an incarnation of Shiva.

15
16 *Wednesday, July 10.*

17 There are sixty-five million Mohammedans in India, some of
18 them Sufis.¹⁵⁷ Sufis identify man with God, and through them this
19 idea came into Europe. They say, "I am that Truth"; but they have
20 an *esoteric* as well as an *exoteric* doctrine, although Mohammed
21 himself did not hold it.

22 "*Hashshashin*" ¹⁵⁸ has become our word "assassin", because
23 an old sect of Mohammedanism killed non-believers as a part of its
24 creed.

25 A pitcher of water has to be present in the Mohammedan
26 worship as a symbol of God filling the universe.

27 The Hindus believe that there will be ten Divine
28 Incarnations. Nine have been and the tenth is still to come.

29 Shankara sometimes resorts to sophistry in order to prove
30 that the ideas in the books go to uphold his philosophy. Buddha was
31 more brave and sincere than any teacher. He said: "Believe no
32 book; the Vedas are all humbug. If they agree with me, so much the
33 better for the books. I am the greatest book; sacrifice and prayer
34 are useless." Buddha was the first human being to give to the world
35 a complete system of morality. He was good for good's sake, he
36 loved for love's sake.

37 Shankara says: God is to be reasoned on, because the Vedas
38 say so. Reason helps inspiration; books and realised reason--or
39 individualised perception--both are proofs of God. The Vedas are,
40 according to him, a sort of incarnation of universal knowledge. The

1 ¹⁵⁷ ?The influence of Hinduism upon Mohammedanism in India gave rise to the
2 sect known as Sufis.

3
4 ¹⁵⁸ ?The name of a military and religious order existing in Syria in the 11th
5 century and notorious for the number of secret murders committed by its
6 members in obedience to the will of their chief. The literal meaning of the word is
7 "Hashish-eater" and was applied to the order because of their habitual use of this
8 special drug to fortify the murderers for their task.
9

1 proof of God is that He brought forth the Vedas, and the proof of
2 the Vedas is that such wonderful books could only have been given
3 out by Brahman. They are the mine of all knowledge, and they have
4 come out of Him as a man breathes out air; therefore we know that
5 He is infinite in power and knowledge. He may or may not have
6 created the world, that is a trifle; to have produced the Vedas is
7 more important! The world has come to know God through the
8 Vedas; no other way there is.

9 And so universal is this belief, held by Shankara, in the all-
10 inclusiveness of the Vedas that there is even a Hindu proverb that if
11 a man loses his cow, he goes to look for her in the Vedas!

12 Shankara further affirms that obedience to ceremonies is not
13 knowledge. Knowledge of God is independent of moral duties, or
14 sacrifice or ceremonies, or what we think or do not think, just as
15 the stump is not affected when one man takes it for a ghost and
16 another sees it as it is.

17 Vedanta is necessary because neither reasoning nor books
18 can show us God. He is only to be realised by superconscious
19 perception, and Vedanta teaches how to attain that. You must get
20 beyond personal God (Ishvara) and reach the Absolute Brahman.
21 God is the perception of every being: He is all there is to be
22 perceived. That which says "I" is Brahman, but although we, day
23 and night, perceive Him, we do not know that we are perceiving
24 Him. As soon as we become aware of this truth, all misery goes; so
25 we must get knowledge of the truth. Reach unity; no more duality
26 will come. But knowledge does not come by sacrifice, but by
27 seeking, worshipping, knowing the Atman.

28 Brahma-vidya is the highest knowledge, knowing the
29 Brahman; lower knowledge is science. This is the teaching of the
30 Mundakopanishad or the Upanishad for Sannyasins. There are two
31 sorts of knowledge--principle and secondary. The unessential is that
32 part of the Vedas dealing with worship and ceremonies, also all
33 secular knowledge. The essential is that by which we reach the
34 Absolute. It (the Absolute) creates all from Its own nature; there is
35 nothing to cause, nothing outside. It is all energy, It is all there is.
36 He who makes all sacrifices to himself, the Atman, he alone knows
37 Brahman. Fools think outside worship the highest; fools think works
38 can give us God. Only those who go through the Sushumna (the
39 "path" of the Yogis) reach the Atman. They must go to a Guru to
40 learn. Each part has the same nature as the whole; all springs from
41 the Atman. Meditation is the arrow, the whole soul going out to God
42 is the bow, which speeds the arrow to its mark, the Atman. As finite,
43 we can never express the Infinite, but we are the Infinite. Knowing
44 this we argue with no one.

45 Divine wisdom is to be got by devotion, meditation, and
46 chastity. "Truth alone triumphs, and not untruth. Through truth
47 alone the way is spread to Brahman"--where alone love and truth
48 are.

49
50 *Thursday, July 11.*

1 Without mother-love no creation could continue. Nothing is
2 entirely physical, nor yet entirely metaphysical; one presupposes
3 the other and explains the other. All Theists agree that there is a
4 background to this visible universe, they differ as to the nature or
5 character of that background. Materialists say there is no
6 background.

7 In all religions the superconscious state is identical. Hindus,
8 Christians, Mohammedans, Buddhists, and even those of no creed,
9 all have the very same experience when they transcend the
10 body. . . .

11 The purest Christians in the world were established in India
12 by the Apostle Thomas about twenty-five years after the death of
13 Jesus. This was while the Anglo-Saxons were still savages, painting
14 their bodies and living in caves. The Christians in India once
15 numbered about three millions, but now there are about one
16 million.

17 Christianity is always propagated by the sword. How
18 wonderful that the disciples of such a gentle soul should kill so
19 much! The three missionary religions are the Buddhist,
20 Mohammedan, and Christian. The three older ones, Hinduism,
21 Judaism and Zoroastrianism, never sought to make converts.
22 Buddhists never killed, but converted three-quarters of the world at
23 one time by pure gentleness.

24 The Buddhists were the most logical agnostics. You can
25 really stop nowhere between nihilism and absolutism. The
26 Buddhists were intellectually all-destroyers, carrying their theory to
27 its ultimate logical issue. The Advaitists also worked out their
28 theory to its logical conclusion and reached the Absolute--one
29 identified Unit Substance out of which all phenomena are being
30 manifested. Both Buddhists and Advaitists have a feeling of identity
31 and non-identity at the same time; one of these feelings must be
32 false, and the other true. The nihilist puts the reality in non-identity,
33 the realist puts the reality in identity; and this is the fight which
34 occupies the whole world. The is the "tug-of-war".

35 The realist asks, "How does the nihilist get any idea of
36 identity?" How does the revolving light appear a circle? A point of
37 rest alone explains motion. The nihilist can never explain the
38 genesis of the delusion that there is a background; neither can the
39 idealist explain how the One becomes the many. The only
40 explanation must come from beyond the sense-plane; we must rise
41 to the superconscious, to a state entirely beyond sense-perception.
42 That metaphysical power is the further instrument that the idealist
43 alone can use. He can experience the Absolute; the man
44 Vivekananda can resolve himself into the Absolute and then come
45 back to the man again. For him, then, the problem is solved and
46 secondarily for others, for he can show the way to others. Thus
47 religion begins where philosophy ends. The "good of the world" will
48 be that what is now superconscious for us will in ages to come be
49 the conscious for all. Religion is therefore the highest work the
50 world has; and because man has unconsciously felt this, he has
51 clung through all the ages to the idea of religion.

1 Religion, the great milch cow, has given many kicks, but
2 never mind, it gives a great deal of milk. The milkman does not
3 mind the kick of the cow which gives much milk. Religion is the
4 greatest child to be born, the great "moon of realisation"; let us
5 feed it and help it grow, and it will become a giant. King Desire and
6 King Knowledge fought, and just as the latter was about to be
7 defeated, he was reconciled to Queen Upanishad and a child was
8 born to him, Realisation, who saved the victory to him.¹⁵⁹

9 Love concentrates all the power of the will without effort, as
10 when a man falls in love with a woman.

11 The path of devotion is natural and pleasant. Philosophy is
12 taking the mountain stream back to its source by force. It is a
13 quicker method but very hard. Philosophy says, "Check everything."
14 Devotion says, "Give up all to the stream, have eternal self-
15 surrender." It is a longer way, but easier and happier.

16 "Thine am I for ever; henceforth whatever I do, it is Thou
17 doing it. No more is there any me or mine."

18 "Having no money to give, no brains to learn, no time to
19 practise Yoga, to Thee, O sweet One, I give myself, to Thee my body
20 and mind."

21 No amount of ignorance or wrong ideas can put a barrier
22 between the soul and God. Even if there be no God, still hold fast to
23 love. It is better to die seeking a God than as a dog seeking only
24 carrion. Choose the highest ideal, and give your life up to that.
25 "Death being so certain, it is the highest thing to give up life for a
26 great purpose."

27 Love will painlessly attain to philosophy; then after
28 knowledge comes Parabhakti (supreme devotion).

29 Knowledge is critical and makes a great fuss over
30 everything; but Love says, "God will show His real nature to me"
31 and accepts all.

32

33 RABBIA

34 Rabbia, sick upon her bed,
35 By two saints was visited--
36 Holy Malik, Hassan wise--
37 Men of mark in Moslem eyes.

38

39 Hassan said, "Whose prayer is pure
40 Will God's chastisements endure."
41 Malik, from a deeper sense
42 Uttered his experience:
43 "He who loves his master's choice
44 Will in chastisement *rejoice* ."

45

46 Rabbia saw some selfish will
47 In their maxims lingering still,

¹⁵⁹ ?From the *Prabodha-chandrodaya*, a Vedantic Sanskrit masque.

1 And replied: "O men of grace,
2 He who sees his Master's face,
3 Will not in his prayers recall
4 That he is chastised at all!"
5 --Persian Poem

6
7 *Friday, July 12. (Shankara's Commentary.)*

8 Fourth Vyasa Sutra. "Atman (is) the aim of all."

9 Ishvara is to be known from the Vedanta; all Vedas point to
10 Him (who is the Cause; the Creator, Preserver and Destroyer).
11 Ishvara is the unification of the Trinity, known as Brahma, Vishnu,
12 and Shiva, which stand at the head of the Hindu Pantheon. "Thou
13 art our Father who takest us to the other shore of the dark ocean"
14 (Disciple's words to the Master).

15 The Vedas cannot show you Brahman, you are That already;
16 they can only help to take away the veil that hides the truth from
17 our eyes. The first veil to vanish is ignorance; and when that is
18 gone, sin goes; next desire ceases, selfishness ends, and all misery
19 disappears. This cessation of ignorance can only come when I know
20 that God and I are one; in other words, identify yourself with
21 Atman, not with human limitations. *Dis*-identify yourself with the
22 body, and all pain will cease. This is the secret of healing. The
23 universe is a case of hypnotisation; de-hypnotise yourself and cease
24 to suffer.

25 In order to be free we have to pass through vice to virtue,
26 and then get rid of both. Tamas is to be conquered by Rajas, both
27 are to be submerged in Sattva; then go beyond the three qualities.
28 Reach a state where your very breathing is a prayer.

29 Whenever you learn (gain anything) from another man's
30 words, know that you had the experience in a previous existence,
31 because experience is the only teacher.

32 With all powers comes further misery, so kill desire. Getting
33 any desire is like putting a stick into a nest of hornets. Vairagya is
34 finding out that desires are but gilded balls of poison.

35 "Mind is not God" (Shankara). "Tat tvam asi", "Aham
36 Brahmasmi" ("That thou art", "I am Brahman"). When a man
37 realises this, "all the knots of his heart are cut asunder, all his
38 doubts vanish". Fearlessness is not possible as long as we have
39 even God *over us*; we must *be* God. What is disjoined will be for
40 ever disjoined; if you are separate from God, then you can never be
41 one with Him, and vice versa. If by virtue you are joined to God,
42 when that ceases, disjunction will come. The junction is eternal, and
43 virtue only helps to remove the veil. We are *azad* (free), we must
44 realise it. "Whom the Self chooses" means we are the Self and
45 choose ourselves.

46 Does seeing depend upon our own efforts or does it depend
47 upon something outside? It depends upon ourselves; our efforts
48 take off the dust, the mirror does not change. There is neither
49 knower, knowing, nor known. "He who knows that he does not

1 know, knows It. He who has a theory knows nothing.

2 The idea that we are bound is only an illusion.

3 Religion is not of this world; it is "heart-cleansing", and its
4 effect on this world is secondary. Freedom is inseparable from the
5 nature of the Atman. This is ever pure, ever perfect, ever
6 unchangeable. This Atman you can never know. We can say nothing
7 about the Atman but "not this, not this".

8 "Brahman is that which we can never drive out by any power
9 of mind or imagination." (Shankara).

10 The universe is thought, and the Vedas are the words of this
11 thought. We can create and uncreate this whole universe.
12 Repeating the words, the unseen thought is aroused, and as a result
13 a seen effect is produced. This is the claim of a certain sect of
14 Karmis. They think that each one of us is a creator. Pronounce the
15 words, the thought which corresponds will arise, and the result will
16 become visible. "Thought is the power of the word, the word is the
17 expression of the thought," say Mimamsakas, a Hindu philosophical
18 sect.

19

20 *Saturday, July 13th*

21 Everything we know is a compound, and all sense-knowledge
22 comes through analysis. To think that mind is a simple, single, or
23 independent is dualism. Philosophy is not got by studying books;
24 the more you read books, the more muddled becomes the mind. The
25 idea of unthinking philosophers was that the mind was a simple,
26 and this led them to believe in free will. Psychology, the analysis of
27 the mind, shows the mind to be a compound, and every compound
28 must be held together by some outside force; so the will is bound by
29 the combination of outside forces. Man cannot even will to eat
30 unless he is hungry. Will is subject to desire. But we are free;
31 everyone feels it.

32 The agnostic says this idea is a delusion. Then, how do you
33 prove the world? Its only proof is that we all see it and feel it; so
34 just as much we all feel freedom. If universal consensus affirms this
35 world, then it must be accepted as affirming freedom; but freedom
36 is not of the will as it is. The constitutional belief of man in freedom
37 is the basis of all reasoning. Freedom is of the will as it was before
38 it became bound. The very idea of free-will shows every moment
39 man's struggle against bondage. The free can be only one, the
40 Unconditioned, the Infinite, the Unlimited. Freedom in man is now a
41 memory, an attempt towards freedom.

42 Everything in the universe is struggling to complete a circle,
43 to return to its source, to return to its only real Source, Atman. The
44 search for happiness is a struggle to find the balance, to restore the
45 equilibrium. Morality is the struggle of the bound will to get free
46 and is the proof that we have come from perfection. . . .

47 The idea of duty is the midday sun of misery scorching the
48 very soul. "O king, drink this one drop of nectar and be happy." ("I
49 am not the doer", this is the nectar.)

1 Let there be action without reaction; action is pleasant, all
2 misery is reaction. The child puts its hand in the flame, that is
3 pleasure; but when its system reacts, then comes the pain of
4 burning. When we can stop that reaction, then we have nothing to
5 fear. Control the brain and do not let it read the record; be the
6 witness and do not react, only thus can you be happy. The happiest
7 moments we ever know are when we entirely forget ourselves.
8 Work of your own free will, not from duty. We have no duty. This
9 world is just a gymnasium in which we play; our life is an eternal
10 holiday.

11 The whole secret of existence is to have no fear. Never fear
12 what will become of you, depend on no one. Only the moment you
13 reject all help are you free. The full sponge can absorb no more.

14 Even fighting in self-defence is wrong, though it is higher
15 than fighting in aggression. There is no "righteous" indignation,
16 because indignation comes from not recognising sameness in all
17 things.

18
19 *Sunday, July 14.*

20 Philosophy in India means that through which we see God,
21 the rationale of religion; so no Hindu would ever ask for a link
22 between religion and philosophy.

23 Concrete, generalised, abstract are the three stages in the
24 process of philosophy. The highest abstraction in which all things
25 agree is the One. In religion we have first, symbols and forms; next,
26 mythology; and last, philosophy. The first two are for the time
27 being; philosophy is the underlying basis of all, and the others are
28 only stepping stones in the struggle to reach the Ultimate.

29 In Western religion the idea is that without the New
30 Testament and Christ there could be no religion. A similar belief
31 exists in Judaism with regard to Moses and the Prophets, because
32 these religions are dependent upon mythology only. Real religion,
33 the highest, rises above mythology; it can never rest upon that.
34 Modern science has really made the foundations of religion strong.
35 That the whole universe is one, is scientifically demonstrable. What
36 the metaphysicians call "being", the physicist calls "matter", but
37 there is no real fight between the two, for both are one. Though an
38 atom is invisible, unthinkable, yet in it are the whole power and
39 potency of the universe. That is exactly what the Vedantist says of
40 Atman. All sects are really saying the same thing in different words.

41 Vedanta and modern science both posit a self-evolving
42 Cause. In Itself are all the causes. Take for example the potter
43 shaping a pot. The potter is the primal cause, the clay the material
44 cause, and the wheel the instrumental cause; but the Atman is all
45 three. Atman is cause and manifestation too. The Vedantist says the
46 universe is not real, it is only apparent. Nature is God seen through
47 nescience. The Pantheists say, God has become nature or this
48 world; the Advaitists affirm that God is appearing as this world, but
49 He is not this world.

1 We can only know experience as a mental process, a fact in
2 the mind as well as a mark in the brain. We cannot push the brain
3 back or forward, but we can the mind; it can stretch over all time--
4 past, present, and future; and so facts in the mind are eternally
5 preserved. All facts are already generalised in mind, which is
6 omnipresent.¹⁶⁰

7 Kant's great achievement was the discovery that "time,
8 space, and causation are modes of thought," but Vedanta taught
9 this ages ago and called it "Maya." Schopenhauer stands on reason
10 only and rationalises the Vedas. . . . Shankara maintained the
11 orthodoxy of the Vedas.

12 "Treeness" or the idea of "tree", found out among trees is
13 knowledge, and the highest knowledge is One. . . .

14 Personal God is the last generalisation of the universe, only
15 hazy, not clear-cut and philosophic. . . .

16 Unity is self-evolving, out of which everything comes. . . .

17 Physical science is to find out facts, metaphysics is the
18 thread to bind the flowers into a bouquet. Every abstraction is
19 metaphysical; even putting manure at the root of a tree involves a
20 process of abstraction. . . .

21 Religion includes the concrete, the more generalised and the
22 ultimate unity. Do not stick to particularisations. Get to the
23 principle, to the One. . . .

24 Devils are machines of darkness, angels are machines of
25 light; but both are machines. Man alone is alive. Break the machine,
26 strike the balance,¹⁶¹ and then man can become free. This is the
27 only world where man can work out his salvation.

28 "Whom the Self chooses" is true. Election is true, but put it
29 within. As an external and fatalistic doctrine, it is horrible.

30
31 *Monday, July 15.*

32 Where there is polyandry, as in Tibet, women are physically
33 stronger than the men. When the English go there, these women
34 carry large men up the mountains.

35 In Malabar, although of course polyandry does not obtain
36 there, the women lead in everything. Exceptional cleanliness is
37 apparent everywhere and there is the greatest impetus to learning.
38 When I myself was in that country, I met many women who spoke
39 good Sanskrit, while in the rest of India not one woman in a million
40 can speak it. Mastery elevates, and servitude debases. Malabar has
41 never been conquered either by the Portuguese or by the

1 ¹⁶⁰ ?As the entire creation existing in space, time, and causation can never exist
2 beyond mind or memory, manifesting itself as thinking, feeling, and willing, the
3 whole of space, time, and causation must have to be in it. Hence mind is
4 omnipresent. Individual mind is a portion of the omnipresent or universal mind.
5

6 ¹⁶¹ ?Find out that the relationship between yourself and the machine is as
7 between a worker and his instrument. Never identify yourself with it.
8

1 Mussulmans.

2 The Dravidians were a non-Aryan race of Central Asia who
3 preceded the Aryans, and those of Southern India were the most
4 civilised. Women with them stood higher than men. They
5 subsequently divided, some going to Egypt, others to Babylonia,
6 and the rest remaining in India.

7

8 *Tuesday, July 16. (Shankara)*

9 The "unseen cause"¹⁶² leads us to sacrifice and worship,
10 which in turn produce seen results; but to attain liberation we must
11 first hear, then think or reason, and then meditate upon Brahman.

12 The result of works and the result of knowledge are two
13 different things. "Do" and "Do not do" are the background of all
14 morality, but they really belong only to the body and the mind. All
15 happiness and misery are inextricably connected with the senses,
16 and body is necessary to experience them. The higher the body, the
17 higher the standard of virtue, even up to Brahma; but all have
18 bodies. As long as there is a body, there must be pleasure and pain;
19 only when one has got rid of the body can one escape them. The
20 Atman is bodiless, says Shankara.

21 No law can make you free, you are free. Nothing can give
22 you freedom, if you have it not already. The Atman is self-illuminated.
23 Cause and effect do not reach there, and this disembodiedness is
24 freedom. Beyond what was, or is, or is to be, is Brahman. As an
25 effect, freedom would have no value; it would be a compound, and
26 as such would contain the seeds of bondage. It is the one real
27 factor, not to be attained, but the real nature of the soul.

28 Work and worship, however, are necessary to take away the
29 veil, to lift off the bondage and illusion. They do not give us
30 freedom; but all the same, without effort on our own part we do not
31 open our eyes and see what we are. Shankara says further that
32 Advaita-Vedanta is the crowning glory of the Vedas; but the lower
33 Vedas are also necessary, because they teach work and worship,
34 and through these many come to the Lord. Others may come
35 without any help but Advaita. Work and worship lead to the same
36 result as Advaita.

37 Books cannot teach God, but they can destroy ignorance;
38 their action is negative. To hold to the books and at the same time
39 open the way to freedom is Shankara's great achievement. But after
40 all, it is a kind of hair-splitting. Give man first the concrete, then
41 raise him to the highest by slow degrees. This is the effort of the
42 various religions and explains their existence and why each is
43 suited to some stage of development. The very books are a part of
44 the ignorance they help to dispel. Their duty is to drive out the
45 ignorance that has come upon knowledge. "Truth shall drive out
46 untruth." You are free and cannot be made so. So long as you have a
47 creed, you have no God. "He who knows he knows, knows nothing."
48 Who can know the Knower? There are two eternal facts in

1 ¹⁶² ?Or mass of subtle impressions.
2

1 existence, God and the universe, the former unchangeable, the
2 latter changeable. The world exists eternally. Where your mind
3 cannot grasp the amount of change, you call it eternally. . . . You see
4 the stone or the bas-relief on it, but not both at once; yet both are
5 one.

6 Can you make yourself at rest even for a second? All Yogis
7 say you can. . . .

8 *The greatest sin is to think yourself weak. No one is greater:*
9 Realise you are Brahman. Nothing has power except what you give
10 it. We are beyond the sun, the stars, the universe. Teach the
11 Godhood of man. Deny evil, create none. Stand up and say, I am the
12 master, the master of all. We forge the chain, and we alone can
13 break it.

14 No action can give you freedom; only knowledge can make
15 you free, Knowledge is irresistible; the mind cannot take it or reject
16 it. When it comes the mind has to accept it; so it is not a work of the
17 mind; only, its expression comes in the mind.

18 Work or worship is to bring you back to your own nature. It is
19 an entire illusion that the Self is the body; so even while living here
20 in the body, we can be free. The body has nothing in common with
21 the Self. Illusion is taking the real for the unreal--not "nothing at
22 all".

23
24 *Wednesday, July 17.*

25 Ramanuja divides the universe into Chit, Achit, and Ishvara--
26 man, nature, and God; conscious, subconscious, and
27 superconscious. Shankara, on the contrary, says that Chit, the soul,
28 is the same as God. God *is* truth, *is* knowledge, *is* infinity; these
29 are not qualities. Any thought of God is a qualification, and all that
30 can be said of Him is "Om tat sat".

31 Shankara further asks, can you see existence separate from
32 everything else? Where is the differentiation between two objects?
33 Not in sense-perception, else all would be one in it. We have to
34 perceive in sequence. In getting knowledge of what a thing is, we
35 get also something which it is not. The differentiae are in the
36 memory and are got by comparison with what is stored there.
37 Difference is not in the nature of a thing, it is in the brain.
38 Homogeneous one is outside, differentiae are inside (in the mind);
39 so the idea of "many" is the creation of the mind.

40 Differentiae become qualities when they are separate but
41 joined in one object. We cannot say positively what differentiation
42 is. All that we see and feel about things is pure and simple
43 existence, "*isness*". All else is in us. Being is the only positive proof
44 we have of anything. All differentiation is really "secondary reality",
45 as the snake in the rope, because the serpent, too, had a certain
46 reality, in that *something* was seen although misapprehended.
47 When the knowledge of the rope becomes negative, the knowledge
48 of the snake becomes positive, and vice versa; but the fact that you
49 see only one does not prove that the other is non-existent. The idea

1 of the world is an obstruction covering the idea of God and is to be
2 removed, but it does have an existence.

3 Shankara says again, perception is the last proof of
4 existence. It is self-effulgent and self-conscious, because to go
5 beyond the senses we should still need perception. Perception is
6 independent of the senses, of all instruments, unconditioned. There
7 can be no perception without consciousness; perception has self-
8 luminosity, which in a lesser degree is called consciousness. Not
9 one act of perception can be unconscious; in fact, consciousness is
10 the nature of perception. Existence and perception are one thing,
11 not two things joined together. That which needs no cause is
12 infinite; so, as perception is the last proof of itself, it is eternal. It is
13 always subjective; perception itself is its own perceiver. Perception
14 is not in the mind, but perception brings mind. It is absolute, the
15 only knower, so perception is really the Atman. Perception itself
16 perceives, but the Atman cannot be a knower, because a "knower"
17 becomes such by the action of knowledge; but, Shankara says, "This
18 Atman is not I", because the consciousness "I am" (Aham) is not in
19 the Atman. We are but the reflections of that Atman; and Atman and
20 Brahman are one.

21 When you talk and think of the Absolute, you have to do it in
22 the relative; so all these logical arguments apply. In Yoga,
23 perception and realisation are one. Vishishtadvaita, of which
24 Ramanuja is the exponent, is seeing partial unity and is a step
25 toward Advaita. Vishishta means differentiation. Prakriti is the
26 nature of the world, and change comes upon it. Changeful thoughts
27 expressed in changeful words can never prove the Absolute. You
28 reach only something that is minus certain qualities, not Brahman
29 Itself; only a verbal unification, the highest abstraction, but not the
30 non-existence of the relative.

31
32 *Thursday, July 18. (The lesson today was mainly Shankara's*
33 *argument against the conclusion of the Sankhya philosophy.)*

34 The Sankhyas say that consciousness is a compound, and
35 beyond that, the last analysis gives us the Purusha, Witness, but
36 that there are many Purushas--each of us is one. Advaita, on the
37 contrary, affirms that Purushas can be only One, that Purusha
38 cannot be conscious, unconscious, or have any qualification, for
39 either these qualities would bind, or they would eventually cease;
40 so the One must be without any qualities, even knowledge, and It
41 cannot be the cause of the universe or of anything. "In the
42 beginning, existence only, One without a second", says the Vedas.

43
44 The presence of Sattva with knowledge does not prove that
45 Sattva is the cause of knowledge; on the contrary, Sattva calls out
46 what was already existing in man, as the fire heats an iron ball
47 placed near it by arousing the heat latent in it, not by entering into
48 the ball.

49 Shankara says, knowledge is not a bondage, because it is the
50 nature of God. The world ever is, whether manifested or

1 unmanifested; so an eternal object exists.

2 *Jnana-bala-kriya* (knowledge, power, activity) is God.

1 Nor does He need form, because the finite only needs form
2 to interpose as an obstruction to catch and hold infinite knowledge;
3 but God really needs no such help. There is no "moving soul", there
4 is only one Atman. Jiva (individual soul) is the conscious ruler of this
5 body, in whom the five life principles come into unity, and yet that
6 very Jiva is the Atman, because all is Atman. What you think about it
7 is your delusion and not in the Jiva. You are God, and whatever else
8 you may think is wrong. You must worship the Self in Krishna, not
9 Krishna as Krishna. Only by worshipping the Self can freedom be
10 won. Even personal God is but the Self objectified. "Intense search
11 after my own reality is Bhakti", says Shankara.

12 All the means we take to reach God are true; it is only like
13 trying to find the pole-star by locating it through the stars that are
14 around it.

15 The Bhagavad Gita is the best authority on Vedanta.

16
17 *Friday, July 19.*

18 So long as I say "you", I have the right to speak of God
19 protecting us. When I see another, I must take all the consequences
20 and put in the third, the ideal, which stands between us; that is the
21 apex of the triangle. The vapour becomes snow, then water, then
22 Ganga; but when it is vapour, there is no Ganga, and when it is
23 water, we think of no vapour in it. The idea of creation or change is
24 inseparably connected with will. So long as we perceive this world
25 in motion, we have to conceive will behind it. Physics proves the
26 utter delusion of the senses; nothing really is as we see, hear, feel,
27 smell, taste it. Certain vibrations producing certain results affect
28 our senses; we know only relative truth.

29 The Sanskrit word for truth is "isness" (Sat). From our
30 present standpoint, this world appears to us as will and
31 consciousness. Personal God is as much an entity for Himself as we
32 are for ourselves, and no more. God can also be seen as a form, just
33 as we are seen. As men, we must have a God; as God, we need
34 none. This is why Shri Ramakrishna constantly saw the Divine
35 Mother ever present with him, more real than any other thing
36 around him; but in Samadhi all went but the Self. Personal God
37 comes nearer and nearer until He melts away, and there is no more
38 Personal God and no more "I", all is merged in Self.

39 Consciousness is a bondage. The argument from design
40 claims that intelligence precedes form; but if intelligence is the
41 cause of anything, it itself is in its turn an effect. It is Maya. God
42 creates us, and we create God, and this is Maya. The circle is
43 unbroken; mind creates body, and body creates mind; the egg
44 brings the chicken, the chicken the egg; the tree the seed, the seed
45 the tree. The world is neither entirely differentiated nor yet entirely
46 homogeneous. Man is free and must rise above both sides. Both are
47 right in their place; but to reach truth, "isness", we must transcend
48 all that we now know of existence, will, consciousness, doing,
49 going, knowing. There is no real individuality of the Jiva (separate
50 soul); eventually it, as a compound, will go to pieces. Only that

1 which is beyond further analysis is "simple", and that alone is truth,
2 freedom, immortality, bliss. All struggles for the preservation of this
3 illusive individuality are really vices. All struggles to lose this
4 individuality are virtues. Everything in the universe is trying to
5 break down this individuality, either consciously or unconsciously.
6 All morality is based upon the destruction of separateness or false
7 individuality, because that is the cause of all sin. Morality exists
8 first; later, religion codifies it. Customs come first, and then
9 mythology follows to explain them. While things are happening,
10 they come by a higher law than reasoning; that arises later in the
11 attempt to understand them. Reasoning is not the motive power, it
12 is "chewing the cud" afterwards. Reason is the historian of the
13 actions of the human being.

14 Buddha was a great Vedantist (for Buddhism was really only
15 an offshoot of Vedanta), and Shankara is often called a "hidden
16 Buddhist". Buddha made the analysis, Shankara made the synthesis
17 out of it. Buddha never bowed down to anything--neither Veda, nor
18 caste, nor priest, nor custom. He fearlessly reasoned so far as
19 reason could take him. Such a fearless search for truth and such
20 love for every living thing the world has never seen. Buddha was
21 the Washington of the religious world; he conquered a throne only
22 to give it to the world, as Washington did to the American people.
23 He sought nothing for himself.

24
25 *Saturday, July 20.*

26 Perception is our only real knowledge or religion. Talking
27 about it for ages will never make us know our soul. There is no
28 difference between theories and atheism. In fact, the atheist is the
29 truer man. Every step I take in the light is mine for ever. When you
30 go to a country and see it, then it is yours. We have each to see for
31 ourselves; teachers can only "bring the food", we must eat it to be
32 nourished. Argument can never prove God save as a logical
33 conclusion.

34 It is impossible to find God outside of ourselves. Our own
35 souls contribute all the divinity that is outside of us. We are the
36 greatest temple. The objectification is only a faint imitation of what
37 we see within ourselves.

38 Concentration of the powers of the mind is our only
39 instrument to help us see God. If you know one soul (your own), you
40 know all souls, past, present, and to come. The will concentrates
41 the mind, certain things excite and control this will, such as reason,
42 love, devotion, breathing. The concentrated mind is a lamp that
43 shows us every corner of the soul.

44 No one method can suit all. These different methods are not
45 steps necessary to be taken one after another. Ceremonials are the
46 lowest form; next God external, and after that God internal. In some
47 cases gradation may be needed, but in many only one way is
48 required. It would be the height of folly to say to everyone, "You
49 must pass through Karma and Bhakti before you can reach Jnana."

50 Stick to your reason until you reach something higher; and

1 you will know it to be higher, because it will not jar with reason.
2 The stage beyond consciousness is inspiration (Samadhi); but never
3 mistake hysterical trances for the real thing. It is a terrible thing to
4 claim this inspiration falsely, to mistake instinct for inspiration.
5 There is no external test for inspiration, we know it ourselves; our
6 guardian against mistake is negative--the voice of reason. All
7 religion is going beyond reason, but reason is the only guide to get
8 there. Instinct is like ice, reason is the water, and inspiration is the
9 subtlest form or vapour; one follows the other. Everywhere is this
10 eternal sequence--unconsciousness, consciousness, intelligence--
11 matter, body, mind--and to us it seems as if the chain began with the
12 particular link we first lay hold of. Arguments on both sides are of
13 equal weight, and both are true. We must reach beyond both, to
14 where there is neither the one nor the other. These successions are
15 all Maya.

16 Religion is above reason, supernatural. Faith is not belief, it
17 is the grasp on the Ultimate, an illumination. First hear, then reason
18 and find out all that reason can give about the Atman; let the flood
19 of reason flow over It, then take what remains. If nothing remains,
20 thank God you have escaped a superstition. When you have
21 determined that nothing *can* take away the Atman, that It stands
22 every test, hold fast to this and teach it to all. Truth cannot be
23 partial; it is for the good of all. Finally, in perfect rest and peace
24 meditate upon It, concentrate your mind upon It, make yourself one
25 with It. Then no speech is needed; silence will carry the truth. Do
26 not spend your energy in talking, but meditate in silence; and do
27 not let the rush of the outside world disturb you. When your mind is
28 in the highest state, you are unconscious of it. Accumulate power in
29 silence and become a dynamo of spirituality. What can a beggar
30 give? Only a king can give, and he only when he wants nothing
31 himself.

32 Hold your money merely as custodian for what is God's. Have
33 no attachment for it. Let name and fame and money go; they are a
34 terrible bondage. Feel the wonderful atmosphere of freedom. You
35 are free, free, free! Oh, blessed am I! Freedom am I! I am the
36 Infinite! In my soul I can find no beginning and no end. All is my
37 Self. Say this unceasingly.

38
39 *Sunday, July 21. (Patanjali's Yoga Aphorisms)*

40 *Yoga* is the science of restraining the Chitta (mind) from
41 breaking into Vrittis (modifications). Mind is a mixture of sensation
42 and feelings, or action and reaction; so it cannot be permanent. The
43 mind has a fine body and through this it works on the gross body.
44 Vedanta says that behind the mind is the real Self. It accepts the
45 other two, but posits a third, the Eternal, the Ultimate, the last
46 analysis, the unit, where there is no further compound. Birth is *re*-
47 composition, death is *de*-composition, and the final analysis is
48 where Atman is found; there being no further division possible, the
49 perdurable is reached.

50 The whole ocean is present at the back of each wave, and all
51 manifestations are waves, some very big, some small; yet all are the

1 ocean in their essence, the whole ocean; but as waves each is a
2 part. When the waves are stilled, then all is one; "a spectator
3 without a spectacle", says Patanjali. When the mind is active, the
4 Atman is mixed up with it. The repetition of old forms in quick
5 succession is memory.

6 Be unattached. Knowledge is power, and getting one you get
7 the other. By knowledge you can even banish the material world.
8 When you can mentally get rid of one quality after another from any
9 object until all are gone, you can at will make the object itself
10 disappear from your consciousness.

11 Those who are ready, advance very quickly and can become
12 Yogis in six months. The less developed may take several years; and
13 anyone by faithful work and by giving up everything else and
14 devoting himself solely to practice can reach the goal in twelve
15 years. Bhakti will bring you there without any of these mental
16 gymnastics, but it is a slower way.

17 Ishvara is the Atman as seen or grasped by mind. His highest
18 name is Om; so repeat it, meditate on it, and think of all its
19 wonderful nature and attributes. Repeating the Om continually is
20 the only true worship. It is not a word, it is God Himself.

21 Religion gives you nothing new; it only takes off obstacles
22 and lets you see your Self. Sickness is the first great obstacle; a
23 healthy body is the best instrument. Melancholy is an almost
24 insuperable barrier. If you have once known Brahman, never after
25 can you be melancholy. Doubt, want of perseverance, mistaken
26 ideas are other obstacles.

27 Pranas are subtle energies, sources of motion. There are ten
28 in all, five inward and five outward. One great current flows
29 upwards, and the other downwards. Pranayama is controlling the
30 Pranas through breathing. Breath is the fuel, Prana is the steam,
31 and the body is the engine. Pranayama has three parts, Puraka (in-
32 breathing), Kumbhaka (holding the breath), Rechaka (out-
33 breathing). . . .

34 The Guru is the conveyance in which the spiritual influence is
35 brought to you. Anyone can teach, but the spirit must be passed on
36 by the Guru to the Shishya (disciple), and that will fructify. The
37 relation between Shishyas is that of brotherhood, and this is
38 actually accepted by law in India. The Guru passes the thought
39 power, the Mantra, that he has received from those before him; and
40 nothing can be done without a Guru. In fact, great danger ensues.
41 Usually without a Guru, these Yoga practices lead to lust; but with
42 one, this seldom happens. Each Ishta has a Mantra. The Ishta is the
43 ideal peculiar to the particular worshipper; the Mantra is the
44 external word to express it. Constant repetition of the word helps to
45 fix the ideal firmly in the mind. This method of worship prevails
46 among religious devotees all over India.

47
48 *Tuesday, July 23. (Bhagavad-Gita, Karma-Yoga)*

49 To attain liberation through work, join yourself to work but

1 without desire, looking for no result. Such work leads to knowledge,
2 which in turn brings emancipation. To give up work before you
3 *know*, leads to misery. Work done for the Self gives no bondage.
4 Neither desire pleasure nor fear pain from work. It is the mind and
5 body that work, not I. Tell yourself this unceasingly and realise it.
6 Try not to know that you work.

7 Do all as a sacrifice or offering to the Lord. Be in the world,
8 but not of it, like the lotus leaf whose roots are in the mud but
9 which remains always pure. Let your love go to all, whatever they
10 do to you. A blind man cannot see colour, so how can we see evil
11 unless it is in us? We compare what we see outside with what we
12 find in ourselves and pronounce judgment accordingly. If we are
13 pure, we cannot see impurity. It may exist, but not for us. See only
14 God in every man, woman and child; see it by the *antarjyotis*, "inner
15 light", and seeing that, we can see naught else. Do not want this
16 world, because what you desire you get. Seek the Lord and the
17 Lord only. The more power there is, the more bondage, the more
18 fear. How much more afraid and miserable are we than the ant! Get
19 out of it all and come to the Lord. Seek the science of the maker
20 and not that of the made.

21 "I am the doer and the deed." "He who can stem the tide of
22 lust and anger is a great Yogi."

23 "Only by practice and non-attachment can we conquer mind."
24 . . .

25 Our Hindu ancestors sat down and thought on God and
26 morality, and so have we brains to use for the same ends; but in the
27 rush of trying to get gain, we are likely to lose them again.

28 The body has in itself a certain power of curing itself and
29 many things can rouse this curative power into action, such as
30 mental conditions, or medicine, or exercise, etc. As long as we are
31 disturbed by physical conditions, so long we need the help of
32 physical agencies. Not until we have got rid of bondage to the
33 nerves, can we disregard them.

34 There is the unconscious mind, but it is below consciousness,
35 which is just one part of the human organism. Philosophy is guess-
36 work about the mind. Religion is based upon sense contact, upon
37 seeing, the only basis of knowledge. What comes in contact with the
38 superconscious mind is fact. Aptas are those who have "sensed"
39 religion. The proof is that if you follow their method, you too will
40 see. Each science requires its own particular method and
41 instruments. An astronomer cannot show you the rings of Saturn by
42 the aid of all the pots and pans in the kitchen. He needs a
43 telescope. So, to see the great facts of religion, the methods of
44 those who have already seen must be followed. The greater the
45 science the more varied the means of studying it. Before we came
46 into the world, God provided the means to get out; so all we have to
47 do is to find the means. But do not fight over methods. Look only for
48 realisation and choose the best method you can find to suit you. Eat
49 the mangoes and let the rest quarrel over the basket. See Christ,
50 then you will be a Christian. All else is talk; the less talking the
51 better.

1 The message makes the messenger. The Lord makes the
2 temple; not vice versa.

3 Learn until "the glory of the Lord shines through your face",
4 as it shone through the face of Shvetaketu.

5 Guess against guess makes fight; but talk of what you have
6 been, and no human heart can resist it. Paul was converted against
7 his will by realisation.

8
9 *Tuesday afternoon. (After dinner there was a short*
10 *conversation in the course of which the Swami said:)*

11 Delusion creates delusion. Delusion creates itself and
12 destroys itself, such is Maya. All knowledge (so-called), being based
13 on Maya, is a vicious circle, and in time that very knowledge
14 destroys itself. "Let go the rope", delusion cannot touch the Atman.
15 When we lay hold of the rope--identify ourselves with Maya--she has
16 power over us. Let go of it, be the Witness only, then you can
17 admire the picture of the universe undisturbed.

18
19 *Wednesday, July 24.*

20 The powers acquired by the practice of Yoga are not
21 obstacles for the Yogi who is perfect, but are apt to be so for the
22 beginner, through the wonder and pleasure excited by their
23 exercise. Siddhis are the powers which mark success in the
24 practice; and they may be produced by various means, such as the
25 repetition of a Mantra, by Yoga practice, meditation, fasting, or
26 even by the use of herbs and drugs. The Yogi, who has conquered
27 all interest in the powers acquired and who renounces all virtue
28 arising from his actions, comes into the "cloud of virtue" (name of
29 one of the states of Samadhi) and radiates holiness as a cloud rains
30 water.

31 Meditation is on a series of objects, concentration is on one
32 object.

33 Mind is cognised by the Atman, but it is not self-illuminated.
34 The Atman cannot be the cause of anything. How can it be? How
35 can the Purusha join itself to Prakriti (nature)? It does not; it is only
36 illusively thought to do so. . . .

37 Learn to help without pitying or feeling that there is any
38 misery. Learn to be the same to enemy and to friend; then when you
39 can do that and no longer have any desire, the goal is attained.

40 Cut down the banyan tree of desire with the axe of non-
41 attachment, and it will vanish utterly. It is all illusion. "He from
42 whom blight and delusion have fallen, he who has conquered the
43 evils of association, he alone is *azad* (free)."

44 To love anyone personally is bondage. Love all alike, then all
45 desires fall off.

46 Time, the "eater of everything", comes, and all has to go.
47 Why try to improve the earth, to paint the butterfly? It all has to go

1 at last. Do not be mere white mice in a treadmill, working always
2 and never accomplishing anything. Every desire is fraught with evil,
3 whether the desire itself be good or evil. It is like a dog jumping for
4 a piece of meat which is ever receding from his reach, and dying a
5 dog's death at last. Do not be like that. Cut off all desire.

6 Paramatman as ruling Maya is Ishvara; Paramatman as
7 under Maya is Jivatman. Maya is the sum total of manifestation and
8 will utterly vanish.

9 Tree-nature is Maya, it is really God-nature which we see
10 under the veil of Maya. The "why" of anything is in Maya. To ask
11 why Maya came is a useless question, because the answer can
12 never be given in Maya, and beyond Maya who will ask it? Evil
13 creates "why", not "why" the evil, and it is evil that asks "why".
14 Illusion destroys illusion. Reason itself, being based upon
15 contradiction, is a circle and has to kill itself. Sense-perception is an
16 inference, and yet all inference comes from perception.

17 Ignorance reflecting the light of God is seen; but by itself it is
18 zero. The cloud would not appear except as the sunlight falls on it.

19 There were four travellers who came to a high wall. The first
20 one climbed with difficulty to the top and without looking back,
21 jumped over. The second clambered up the wall, looked over, and
22 with a shout of delight disappeared. The third in his turn climbed to
23 the top, looked where his companions had gone, laughed with joy,
24 and followed them. But the fourth one came back to tell what had
25 happened to his fellow-travellers. The sign to us that there is
26 something beyond is the laugh that rings back from those great
27 ones who have plunged from Maya's wall.

28 Separating ourselves from the Absolute and attributing
29 certain qualities to It give us Ishvara. It is the Reality of the
30 universe as seen through our mind. Personal devil is the misery of
31 the world seen through the minds of the superstitious.

32
33 *Thursday, July 25. (Patanjali's Yoga Aphorisms)*

34 "Things may be done, caused to be done, or approved of",
35 and the effect upon us is nearly equal.

36 Complete continence gives great intellectual and spiritual
37 power. The Brahmacharin must be sexually pure in thought, word,
38 and deed. Lose regard for the body; get rid of the consciousness of
39 it so far as possible.

40 Asana (posture) must be steady and pleasant; and constant
41 practice, identifying the mind with the Infinite, will bring this about.

42 Continual attention to one object is contemplation.

43 When a stone is thrown into still water, many circles are
44 made, each distinct but all interacting; so with our minds; only in us
45 the action is unconscious, while with the Yogi it is conscious. We are
46 spiders in a web, and Yoga practice will enable us like the spider to
47 pass along any strand of the web we please. Non-Yogis are bound to
48 the particular spot where they are.

1 To injure another creates bondage and hides the truth.
2 Negative virtues are not enough; we have to conquer Maya, and
3 then she will follow us. We only deserve things when they cease to
4 bind us. When the bondage ceases, really and truly, all things come
5 to us. Only those who want nothing are masters of nature.

6 Take refuge in some soul who has already broken his
7 bondage, and in time he will free you through his mercy. Higher still
8 is to take refuge in the Lord (Ishvara), but it is the most difficult;
9 only once in a century can one be found who has really done it. Feel
10 nothing, know nothing, do nothing, have nothing, give up all to God,
11 and say utterly, "Thy will be done". We only dream this bondage.
12 Wake up and let it go. Take refuge in God, only so can we cross the
13 desert of Maya. "Let go thy hold, Sannyasin bold, say, Om tat sat,
14 Om!"

15 It is our privilege to be allowed to be charitable, for only so
16 can we grow. The poor man suffers that we may be helped; let the
17 giver kneel down and give thanks, let the receiver stand up and
18 permit. See the Lord back of every being and give to Him. When we
19 cease to see evil, the world must end for us, since to rid us of that
20 mistake is its only object. To think there is any imperfection creates
21 it. Thoughts of strength and perfection alone can cure it. Do what
22 good you can, some evil will inhere in it; but do all without regard
23 to personal result, give up all results to the Lord, then neither good
24 nor evil will affect you.

25 Doing work is not religion, but work done rightly leads to
26 freedom. In reality all pity is darkness, because whom to pity? Can
27 you pity God? And is there anything else? Thank God for giving you
28 this world as a moral gymnasium to help your development, but
29 never imagine you can help the world. Be grateful to him who
30 curses you, for he gives you a mirror to show what cursing is, also a
31 chance to practise self-restraint; so bless him and be glad. Without
32 exercise, power cannot come out; without the mirror, we cannot see
33 ourselves.

34 *Unchaste imagination is as bad as unchaste action.*
35 Controlled desire leads to the highest result. Transform the sexual
36 energy into spiritual energy, but do not emasculate, because that is
37 throwing away the power. The stronger this force, the more can be
38 done with it. Only a powerful current of water can do hydraulic
39 mining.

40 What we need today is to know there is a God and that we
41 can see and feel Him here and now. A Chicago professor says, "Take
42 care of this world, God will take care of the next." What nonsense!
43 If we can take care of this world, what need of a gratuitous Lord to
44 take care of the other!

45
46 *Friday, July 26. (Brihadaranyakopanishad.)*

47 Love all things only through and for the Self. Yajnavalkya
48 said to Maitreyi, his wife, "Through the Atman we know all things."
49 The Atman can never be the object of knowledge, nor can the
50 Knower be known. He who knows he is the Atman, he is law unto

1 himself. He knows he is the universe and its creator. . . .

2 Perpetuating old myths in the form of allegories and giving
3 them undue importance fosters superstition and is really weakness.
4 Truth must have no compromise. Teach truth and make no apology
5 for any superstition; neither drag truth to the level of the listener.

6

7 *Saturday, July 27. (Kathopanishad)*

8 Learn not the truth of the Self save from one who has
9 realised it; in all others it is mere talk. Realisation is beyond virtue
10 and vice, beyond future and past; beyond all the pairs of opposites.
11 "The stainless one sees the Self, and an eternal calm comes in the
12 Soul." Talking, arguing, and reading books, the highest flights of the
13 intellect, the Vedas themselves, all these cannot give knowledge of
14 the Self.

15 In us are two--The God-soul and the man-soul. The sages
16 know that the latter is but the shadow, that the former is the only
17 real Sun.

18 Unless we join the mind with the senses, we get no report
19 from eyes, nose, ears, etc. The external organs are used by the
20 power of the mind. Do not let the senses go outside, and then you
21 can get rid of body and the external world.

22 This very "x" which we see here as an external world, the
23 departed see as heaven or hell according to their own mental
24 states. Here and hereafter are two dreams, the latter modelled on
25 the former; get rid of both, all is omnipresent, all is now. Nature,
26 body, and mind go to death, not we; we never go nor come. The
27 man Swami Vivekananda is in nature, is born, and dies; but the self
28 which we see as Swami Vivekananda is never born and never dies.
29 It is the eternal and unchangeable Reality.

30 The power of the mind is the same whether we divide it into
31 five senses or whether we see only one. A blind man says,
32 "Everything has a distinct echo, so I clap my hands and get that
33 echo, and then I can tell everything that is around me." So in a fog
34 the blind man can safely lead the seeing man. Fog or darkness
35 makes no difference to him.

36 Control the mind, cut off the senses, then you are a Yogi;
37 after that, all the rest will come. Refuse to hear, to see, to smell, to
38 taste; take away the mental power from the external organs. You
39 continually do it unconsciously as when your mind is absorbed; so
40 you can learn to do it consciously. The mind can put the senses
41 where it pleases. Get rid of the fundamental superstition that we
42 are obliged to act through the body. We are not. Go into your own
43 room and get the Upanishads out of your own Self. You are the
44 greatest book that ever was or ever will be, the infinite depository
45 of all that is. Until the inner teacher opens, all outside teaching is in
46 vain. It must lead to the opening of the book of the heart to have
47 any value.

48 The will is the "still small voice", the real Ruler who says "do"
49 and "do not". It has done all that binds us. The ignorant will leads to

1 bondage, the knowing will can free us. The will can be made strong
2 in thousands of ways; every way is a kind of Yoga, but the
3 systematised Yoga accomplishes the work more quickly. Bhakti,
4 Karma, Raja, and Jnana-Yoga get over the ground more effectively.
5 Put on all powers, philosophy, work, prayer, meditation--crowd all
6 sail, put on all head of steam--reach the goal. The sooner, the better.
7 . . .

8 Baptism is external purification symbolising the internal. It is
9 of Buddhist origin.

10 The Eucharist is a survival of a very ancient custom of savage
11 tribes. They sometimes killed their great chiefs and ate their flesh
12 in order to obtain in themselves the qualities that made their
13 leaders great. They believed that in such a way the characteristics
14 that made the chief brave and wise would become theirs and make
15 the whole tribe brave and wise, instead of only one man. Human
16 sacrifice was also a Jewish idea and one that clung to them despite
17 many chastisements from Jehovah. Jesus was gentle and loving, but
18 to fit him into Jewish beliefs, the idea of human sacrifice, in the
19 form of atonement or as a human scapegoat, had to come in. This
20 cruel idea made Christianity depart from the teachings of Jesus
21 himself and develop a spirit of persecution and bloodshed. . . .

22 Say, "it is my nature", never say, "It is my duty"--to do
23 anything whatever.

24 "Truth alone triumphs, not untruth." Stand upon Truth, and
25 you have got God.

26 From the earliest times in India the Brahmin caste have held
27 themselves beyond all law; they claim to be gods. They are poor, but
28 their weakness is that they seek power. Here are about sixty
29 millions of people who are good and moral and hold no property,
30 and they are what they are because from their birth they are taught
31 that they are above law, above punishment. They feel themselves to
32 be "twice-born", to be sons of God.

33
34 *Sunday, July 28. (Avadhuta Gita or "Song of the Purified" by*
35 *Dattatreya* ¹⁶³)

36 "All knowledge depends upon calmness of mind."

37 "He who has filled the universe, He who is Self in self, how
38 shall I salute Him!"

39 To know the Atman as my nature is both knowledge and
40 realisation. "I am He, there is not the least doubt of it."

41 "No thought, no word, no deed, creates a bondage for me. I
42 am beyond the senses, I am knowledge and bliss."

43 There is neither existence nor non-existence, all is Atman.
44 Shake off all ideas of relativity; shake off all superstitions; let caste
45 and birth and Devas and all else vanish. Why talk of being and

1 ¹⁶³ ?Dattatreya, the son of Atri and Anasuya, was an incarnation of Brahma,
2 Vishnu, and Shiva.
3

1 becoming? Give up talking of dualism and Advaitism! When were
2 you two, that you talk of two or one? The universe is this Holy One
3 and He alone. Talk not of Yoga to make you pure; you are pure by
4 your very nature. None can teach you.

5 Men like him who wrote this song are what keep religion
6 alive. They have actually realised; they care for nothing, feel
7 nothing done to the body, care not for heat and cold or danger or
8 anything. They sit still and enjoy the bliss of Atman, while red-hot
9 coals burn their body, and they feel them not.

10 "When the threefold bondage of knower, knowledge, and
11 known ceases, there is the Atman."

12 "Where the delusion of bondage and freedom ceases, there
13 the Atman is."

14 "What if you have controlled the mind, what if you have not?
15 What if you have money, what if you have not? You are the Atman
16 ever pure. Say, 'I am the Atman. No bondage ever came near me. I
17 am the changeless sky; clouds of belief may pass over me, but they
18 do not touch me.'"

19 "Burn virtue, burn vice. Freedom is baby talk. I am that
20 immortal Knowledge. I am that purity."

21 "No one was ever bound, none was ever free. There is none
22 but me. I am the Infinite, the Ever-free. Talk not to me! What can
23 change me, the essence of knowledge! Who can teach, who can be
24 taught?"

25 Throw argument, throw philosophy into the ditch.

26 "Only a slave sees slaves, the deluded delusion, the impure
27 impurity."

28 Place, time causation are all delusions. It is your disease that
29 you think you are bound and will be free.

30 You are the Unchangeable. Talk not. Sit down and let all
31 things melt away, they are but dreams. There is no differentiation,
32 no distinction, it is all superstition; therefore be silent and know
33 what you are.

34 "I am the essence of bliss." Follow no ideal, you are all there
35 is. Fear naught, you are the essence of existence. Be at peace. Do
36 not disturb yourself. You never were in bondage, you never were
37 virtuous or sinful. Get rid of all these delusions and be at peace.
38 Whom to worship? Who worships? All is the Atman. To speak, to
39 think is superstition. Repeat over and over, "I am Atman", "I am
40 Atman". Let everything else go.

41
42 *Monday, July 29.*

43 We sometimes indicate a thing by describing its
44 surroundings. When we say "Sachchidananda" (Existence-
45 Knowledge-Bliss), we are merely indicating the shores of an
46 indescribable Beyond. Not even can we say "is" about it, for that too
47 is relative. Any imagination, any concept is in vain. Neti, neti ("Not

1 this, not this") is all that can be said, for even to think is to limit and
2 so to lose.

3 The senses cheat you day and night. Vedanta found that out
4 ages ago; modern science is just discovering the same fact. A
5 picture has only length and breadth, and the painter copies nature
6 in her cheating by artificially giving the appearance of depth. No
7 two people see the same world. The highest knowledge will show
8 you that there is no motion, no change in anything; that the very
9 idea of it is all Maya. Study nature as a whole, that is, study motion.
10 Mind and body are not our real self; both belong to nature, but
11 eventually we can know the *ding an sich*. Then mind and body
12 being transcended, all that they conceive goes. When you cease
13 utterly to know and see the world, then you realise Atman. The
14 superseding of relative knowledge is what we want.

15 There is no infinite mind or infinite knowledge, because both
16 mind and knowledge are limited. We are now seeing through a veil;
17 then we reach the "x", which is the Reality of all our knowing.

18 If we look at a picture through a pin-hole in a cardboard, we
19 get an utterly mistaken notion; yet what we see is really the picture.
20 As we enlarge the hole, we get a clearer and clearer idea. Out of
21 the reality we manufacture the different views in conformity with
22 our mistaken perceptions of name and form. When we throw away
23 the cardboard, we see the same picture, but we see it as it is. We
24 put in all the attributes, all the errors; the picture itself is unaltered
25 thereby. That is because Atman is the reality of all; all we see is
26 Atman, but not as we see it, as name and form; they are all in our
27 veil, in Maya.

28 They are like spots in the object-glass of a telescope, yet it is
29 the light of the sun that shows us the spots; we could not even see
30 the illusion save for the background of reality which is Brahman.
31 Swami Vivekananda is just the speck on the object-glass; I am
32 Atman, real, unchangeable, and that reality alone enables me to see
33 Swami Vivekananda. Atman is the essence of every hallucination;
34 but the sun is never identified with the spots on the glass, it only
35 shows them to us. Our actions, as they are evil or good, increase or
36 decrease the "spots"; but they never affect the God within us.
37 Perfectly cleanse the mind of spots and instantly we see, "I and my
38 father are one".

39 We first perceive, then reason later. We must have this
40 perception as a fact, and it is called religion, realisation. No matter
41 if one never heard of creed or prophet or book. Let him get this
42 realisation, and he needs no more. Cleanse the mind, this is all of
43 religion; and until we ourselves clear off the spots, we cannot see
44 the Reality as it is. The baby sees no sun; he has not yet the
45 measure of it in himself. Get rid of the defects within yourself, and
46 you will not be able to see any without. A baby sees robbery done,
47 and it means nothing to him. Once you find the hidden object in a
48 puzzle picture, you see it ever more; so when once you are free and
49 stainless, you see only freedom and purity in the world around. That
50 moment all the knots of the heart are cut asunder, all crooked
51 places are made straight, and this world vanishes as a dream. And

1 when we awake, we wonder how we ever came to dream such
2 trash!

3 "Getting whom, misery mountain high has no power to move
4 the soul."

5 With the axe of knowledge cut the wheels asunder, and the
6 Atman stands free, even though the old momentum carries on the
7 wheel of mind and body. The wheel can now only go straight, can
8 only do good. If that body does anything bad, know that the man is
9 not Jivanmukta; he lies if he makes that claim. But it is only when
10 the wheels have got a good straight motion (from cleansing the
11 mind) that the axe can be applied. All purifying action deals
12 conscious or unconscious blows on delusion. To call another a
13 sinner is the worst thing you can do. Good action done ignorantly
14 produces the same result and helps to break the bondage.

15 To identify the sun with the spots on the object-glass is the
16 fundamental error. Know the sun, the "I", to be ever unaffected by
17 anything, and devote yourself to cleansing the spots. Man is the
18 greatest being that ever can be. The highest worship there is, is to
19 worship man as Krishna, Buddha, Christ. What you want, you
20 create. Get rid of desire. . . .

21 The angels and the departed are all here, seeing this world
22 as heaven. The same "x" is seen by all according to their mental
23 attitude. The best vision to be had of the "x" is here on this earth.
24 Never want to go to heaven, that is the worst delusion. Even here,
25 too much wealth and grinding poverty are both bondages and hold
26 us back from religion. Three great gifts we have: first, a human
27 body. (The human mind is the nearest reflection of God, we are "His
28 own image".) Second, the desire to be free. Third, the help of a
29 noble soul, who has crossed the ocean of delusion, as a teacher.
30 When you have these three, bless the Lord; you are sure to be free.

31 What you only grasp intellectually may be overthrown by a
32 new argument; but what you realise is yours for ever. Talking,
33 talking religion is but little good. Put God behind everything--man,
34 animal, food, work; make this a habit.

35 Ingersoll once said to me: "I believe in making the most out
36 of this world, in squeezing the orange dry, because this world is all
37 we are sure of." I replied: "I know a better way to squeeze the
38 orange of this world than you do, and I get more out of it. I *know* I
39 cannot die, so I am not in a hurry; I know there is no fear, so I enjoy
40 the squeezing. I have no duty, no bondage of wife and children and
41 property; I can love all men and women. Everyone is God to me.
42 Think of the joy of loving man as God! Squeeze your orange this
43 way and get ten thousandfold more out of it. Get every single drop."

44 That which seems to be the will is the Atman behind, it is
45 really free.

46
47 *Monday Afternoon.*

48 Jesus was imperfect because he did not live up fully to his
49 own ideal, and above all because he did not give woman a place

1 equal to man. Women did everything for him, and yet he was so
2 bound by the Jewish custom that not one was made an apostle. Still
3 he was the greatest character next to Buddha, who in his turn was
4 not fully perfect. Buddha, however, recognised woman's right to an
5 equal place in religion, and his first and one of his greatest disciples
6 was his own wife, who became the head of the whole Buddhistic
7 movement among the women of India. But we ought not to criticise
8 these great ones, we should only look upon them as far above
9 ourselves. Nonetheless we must not pin our faith to any man,
10 however great; we too must become Buddhas and Christs.

11 No man should be judged by his defects. The great virtues a
12 man has are his especially, his errors are the common weaknesses
13 of humanity and should never be counted in estimating his
14 character.

15 *Vira*, the Sanskrit word for "heroic", is the origin of our word
16 "virtue", because in ancient times the best fighter was regarded as
17 the most virtuous man.

18
19 *Tuesday, July 30.*

20 Christs and Buddhas are simply occasions upon which to
21 objectify our own inner powers. We really answer our own prayers.

22 It is blasphemy to think that if Jesus had never been born,
23 humanity would not have been saved. It is horrible to forget thus
24 the divinity in human nature, a divinity that must come out. Never
25 forget the glory of human nature. We are the greatest God that ever
26 was or ever will be. Christs and Buddhas are but waves on the
27 boundless ocean which *I am*. Bow down to nothing but your own
28 higher Self. Until you know that you are that very God of gods,
29 there will never be any freedom for you.

30 All our past actions are really good, because they lead us to
31 what we ultimately become. Of whom to beg? I am the real
32 existence, and all else is a dream save as it is I. I am the whole
33 ocean; do not call the little wave you have made "I"; know it for
34 nothing but a wave. Satyakama (lover of truth) heard the inner
35 voice telling him, "You are the infinite, the universal is in you.
36 Control yourself and listen to the voice of your true Self."

37 The great prophets who do the fighting have to be less
38 perfect than those who live silent lives of holiness, thinking great
39 thoughts and so helping the world. These men, passing out one
40 after another, produce as final outcome the man of power who
41 preaches.

42 Knowledge exists, man only discovers it. The Vedas are the
43 eternal knowledge through which God created the world. They talk
44 high philosophy--the highest--and make this tremendous claim. . . .

45 Tell the truth boldly, whether it hurts or not. Never pander to
46 weakness. If truth is too much for intelligent people and sweeps
47 them away, let them go; the sooner the better. Childish ideas are for
48 babies and savages; and these are not all in the nursery and the
49 forests, some of them have fallen into the pulpits.

1 It is bad to stay in the church after you are grown up
2 spiritually. Come out and die in the open air of freedom.

3 All progression is in the relative world. The human form is
4 the highest and man the greatest being, because here and now we
5 can get rid of the relative world entirely, can actually attain
6 freedom, and this is the goal. Not only we can, but some have
7 reached perfection; so no matter what finer bodies come, they
8 could only be on the relative plane and could do no more than we,
9 for to attain freedom is all that can be done.

10 The angels never do wicked deeds, so they never get
11 punished and never get saved. Blows are what awaken us and help
12 to break the dream. They show us the insufficiency of this world
13 and make us long to escape, to have freedom. . . .

14 A thing dimly perceived we call by one name; the same thing
15 when fully perceived we call by another. The higher the moral
16 nature, the higher the perception and the stronger the will.

17
18 *Tuesday Afternoon.*

19 The reason of the harmony between thought and matter is
20 that they are two sides of one thing, call it "x", which divides itself
21 into the internal and the external.

22 The English word "paradise" comes from the Sanskrit *para-*
23 *desa*, which was taken over into the Persian language and means
24 literally "the land beyond", or the other world. The old Aryans
25 always believed in a soul, never that man was the body. Their
26 heavens and hells were all temporary, because no effect can outlast
27 its cause and no cause is eternal; therefore all effects must come to
28 an end.

29 The whole of the Vedanta Philosophy is in this story: Two
30 birds of golden plumage sat on the same tree. The one above,
31 serene, majestic, immersed in his own glory; the one below restless
32 and eating the fruits of the tree, now sweet, now bitter. Once he ate
33 an exceptionally bitter fruit, then he paused and looked up at the
34 majestic bird above; but he soon forgot about the other bird and
35 went on eating the fruits of the tree as before. Again he ate a bitter
36 fruit, and this time he hopped up a few boughs nearer to the bird at
37 the top. This happened many times until at last the lower bird came
38 to the place of the upper bird and lost himself. He found all at once
39 that there had never been two birds, but that he was all the time
40 that upper bird, serene, majestic, and immersed in his own glory.

41
42 *Wednesday, July 31.*

43 Luther drove a nail into religion when he took away
44 renunciation and gave us morality instead. Atheists and materialists
45 can have ethics, but only believers in the Lord can have religion.

46 The wicked pay the price of the great soul's holiness. Think
47 of that when you see a wicked man. Just as the poor man's labour
48 pays for the rich man's luxury, so is it in the spiritual world. The

1 terrible degradation of the masses in India is the price nature pays
2 for the production of great souls like Mirabai, Buddha, etc.¹⁶⁴

3
4 "I am the holiness of the holy" (Gita). I am the root, each
5 uses it in his own way, but all is I. "I do everything, you are but the
6 occasion."

7 Do not talk much, but feel the spirit within you; then you are
8 a Jnani. This is knowledge, all else is ignorance. All that is to be
9 known is Brahman. It is the all. . . .

10 Sattva binds through the search for happiness and
11 knowledge, Rajas binds through desire, Tamas binds through wrong
12 perception and laziness. Conquer the two lower by Sattva, and then
13 give up all to the Lord and be free.

14 The Bhakti-Yogi realises Brahman very soon and goes beyond
15 the three qualities.¹⁶⁵

16 The will, the consciousness, the senses, desire, the passions,
17 all these combined make what we call the "soul".

18 There is first, the apparent self (body); second, the mental
19 self who mistakes the body for himself (the Absolute bound by
20 Maya); third, the Atman, the ever pure, the ever free. Seen
21 partially, It is nature; seen wholly, all nature goes, even the memory
22 of it is lost. There is the changeable (mortal), the eternally
23 changeable (nature), and the Unchangeable (Atman).

24 Be perfectly hopeless, that is the highest state. What is there
25 to hope for? Burst asunder the bonds of hope, stand on your Self,
26 be at rest, never mind what you do, give up all to God, but have no
27 hypocrisy about it.

28 Svastha, the Sanskrit word for "standing on your own Self",
29 is used colloquially in India to inquire, "Are you well, are you
30 happy?" And when Hindus would express, "I saw a thing", they say,
31 "I saw a word-meaning (Padartha)." Even this universe is a "word-
32 meaning".

33 A perfect man's body mechanically does right; it can do only
34 good because it is fully purified. The past momentum that carries on
35 the wheel of body is all good. All evil tendencies are burnt out.

36 "That day is indeed a bad day when we do not speak of the
37 Lord, not a stormy day."

38 Only love for the Supreme Lord is true Bhakti. Love for any
39 other being, however great, is not Bhakti. The "Supreme Lord" here
40 means Ishvara, the concept of which transcends what you in the
41 West mean by the personal God. "He from whom this universe

1 ¹⁶⁴ ?Just as in storming a fort ninety out of a hundred soldiers may die, so that
2 the remaining ten may win. It is only in a society with very lofty ideals that such
3 great souls are born, but the masses, failing to live up to those ideals, are
4 degraded.

5
6 ¹⁶⁵ ?Gita, Chapter XII.
7

1 proceeds, in whom it rests, and to whom it returns, He is Ishvara,
2 the Eternal, the Pure, the All-Merciful, the Almighty, the Ever-Free,
3 the All-Knowing, the Teacher of all teachers, the Lord who of His
4 own nature is inexpressible Love."

5 Man does not manufacture God out of his own brain; but he
6 can only see God in the light of his own capacity, and he attributes
7 to Him the best of all he knows. Each attribute is the whole of God,
8 and this signifying the whole by one quality is the metaphysical
9 explanation of the personal God. Ishvara is without form yet has all
10 forms, is without qualities yet has all qualities. As human beings,
11 we have to see the trinity of existence--God, man, nature; and we
12 cannot do otherwise.

13 But to the Bhakta all these philosophical distinctions are
14 mere idle talk. He cares nothing for argument, he does not reason,
15 he "senses", he perceives. He wants to love himself in pure love of
16 God, and there have been Bhaktas who maintain that this is more to
17 be desired than liberation, who say, "I do not want to *be* sugar. I
18 want to taste sugar; I want to love and enjoy the Beloved."

19 In Bhakti-Yoga the first essential is to want God honestly and
20 intensely. We want everything but God, because our ordinary
21 desires are fulfilled by the external world. So long as our needs are
22 confined within the limits of the physical universe, we do not feel
23 any need for God; it is only when we have had hard blows in our
24 lives and are disappointed with everything here that we feel the
25 need for something higher; then we seek God.

26 Bhakti is not destructive; it teaches that all our faculties may
27 become means to reach salvation. We must turn them all towards
28 God and give to Him that love which is usually wasted on the
29 fleeting objects of sense.

30 Bhakti differs from your Western idea of religion in that
31 Bhakti admits no elements of fear, no Being to be appeased or
32 propitiated. There are even Bhaktas who worship God as their own
33 child, so that there may remain no feeling even of awe or
34 reverence. There can be no fear in true love, and so long as there is
35 the least fear, Bhakti cannot even begin. In Bhakti there is also no
36 place for begging or bargaining with God. The idea of asking God
37 for anything is sacrilege to a Bhakta. He will not pray for health or
38 wealth or even to go to heaven.

39 One who wants to love God, to be a Bhakta, must make a
40 bundle of all these desires and leave them outside the door and
41 then enter. He who wants to enter the realms of light must make a
42 bundle of all "shop-keeping" religion and cast it away before he can
43 pass the gates. It is not that you do not get what you pray for; you
44 get everything, but it is low, vulgar, a beggar's religion. "Fool indeed
45 is he, who, living on the banks of the Ganga, digs a little well for
46 water. Fool indeed is the man who, coming to a mine of diamonds,
47 begins to search for glass beads." These prayers for health and
48 wealth and material prosperity are not Bhakti. They are the lowest
49 form of Karma. Bhakti is a higher thing. We are striving to come
50 into the presence of the King of kings. We cannot get there in a
51 beggar's dress. If we wanted to enter the presence of an emperor,

1 would we be admitted in a beggar's rags? Certainly not. The lackey
2 would drive us out of the gates. This is the Emperor of emperors
3 and never can we come before Him in a beggar's garb. Shop-
4 keepers never have admission there, buying and selling will not do
5 there at all. You read in the Bible that Jesus drove the buyers and
6 sellers out of the temple.

7 So it goes without saying that the first task in becoming a
8 Bhakta is to give up all desires of heaven and so on. Such a heaven
9 would be like this place, this earth, only a little better. The Christian
10 idea of heaven is a place of intensified enjoyment. How can that be
11 God? All this desire to go to heaven is a desire for enjoyment. This
12 has to be given up. The love of the Bhakta must be absolutely pure
13 and unselfish, seeking nothing for itself either here or hereafter.

14 "Giving up the desire of pleasure and pain, gain or loss,
15 worship God day and night; not a moment is to be lost in vain."

16 "Giving up all other thoughts, the whole mind day and night
17 worships God. Thus being worshipped day and night, He reveals
18 Himself and makes His worshippers feel Him."

19
20 *Thursday, August 1.*

21 The real Guru is the one through whom we have our spiritual
22 descent. He is the channel through which the spiritual current flows
23 to us, the link which joins us to the whole spiritual world. Too much
24 faith in personality has a tendency to produce weakness and
25 idolatry, but intense love for the Guru makes rapid growth possible,
26 he connects us with the internal Guru. Adore your Guru if there be
27 real truth in him; that Guru-bhakti (devotion to the teacher) will
28 quickly lead you to the highest.

29 Sri Ramakrishna's purity was that of a baby. He never
30 touched money in his life, and lust was absolutely annihilated in
31 him. Do not go to great religious teachers to learn physical science,
32 their whole energy has gone to the spiritual. In Sri Ramakrishna
33 Paramahansa the man was all dead and only God remained; he
34 actually could not see sin, he was literally "of purer eyes than to
35 behold iniquity". The purity of these few Paramahansas¹⁶⁶ is all that
36 holds the world together. If they should all die out and leave it, the
37 world would go to pieces. They do good by simply being, and they
38 know it not; they just are. . . .

39 Books suggest the inner light and the method of bringing
40 that out, but we can only understand them when we have earned
41 the knowledge ourselves. When the inner light has flashed for you,
42 let the books go, and look only within. You have in you all and a
43 thousand times more than is in all the books. Never lose faith in
44 yourself, you can do anything in this universe. Never weaken, all
45 power is yours.

46 If religion and life depend upon books or upon the existence
47 of any prophet whatsoever, then perish all religion and books!

1 ¹⁶⁶ ?Monks of the highest order.
2

1 Religion is in us. No books or teachers can do more than help us to
2 find it, and even without them we can get all truth within. You have
3 gratitude for books and teachers without bondage to them; and
4 worship your Guru as God, but do not obey him blindly; love him all
5 you will, but think for yourself. No blind belief can save you, work
6 out your own salvation. Have only one idea of God--that He is an
7 eternal help.

8 Freedom and highest love must go together, then neither can
9 become a bondage. We can give nothing to God; He gives all to us.
10 He is the Guru of Gurus. Then we find that He is the "Soul of our
11 souls", our very Self. No wonder we love Him, He is the Soul of our
12 souls; whom or what else can we love? We want to be the "steady
13 flame, burning without heat and without smoke". To whom can you
14 do good, when you see only God? You cannot do good to God! All
15 doubt goes, all is, "sameness". If you do good at all, you do it to
16 yourself; feel that the receiver is the higher one. You serve the
17 other because you are lower than he, not because he is low and you
18 are high. Give as the rose gives perfume, because it is its own
19 nature, utterly unconscious of giving.

20 The great Hindu reformer, Raja Ram Mohan Roy, was a
21 wonderful example of this unselfish work. He devoted his whole life
22 to helping India. It was he who stopped the burning of widows. It is
23 usually believed that this reform was due entirely to the English;
24 but it was Raja Ram Mohan Roy who started the agitation against
25 the custom and succeeded in obtaining the support of the
26 Government in suppressing it. Until he began the movement, the
27 English had done nothing. He also founded the important religious
28 Society called the Brahmo-Samaj, and subscribed a hundred
29 thousand dollars to found a university. He then stepped out and told
30 them to go ahead without him. He cared nothing for fame or for
31 results to himself.

32
33 *Thursday Afternoon.*

34 There are endless series of manifestations, like "merry-go-
35 round", in which the souls ride, so to speak. The series are eternal;
36 individual souls get out, but the events repeat themselves eternally;
37 and that is how one's past and future can be read, because all is
38 really present. When the soul is in a certain chain, it has to go
39 through the experiences of that chain. From one series souls go to
40 other series; from some series they escape for ever by realising that
41 they are Brahman. By getting hold of one prominent event in a
42 chain and holding on to it, the whole chain can be dragged in and
43 read. This power is easily acquired, but it is of no real value; and to
44 practise it takes just so much from our spiritual forces. Go not after
45 these things, worship God.

46
47 *Friday, August 2.*

48 Nishtha (devotion to one ideal) is the beginning of
49 realisation. "Take the honey out of all flowers; sit and be friendly
50 with all, pay reverence to all, say to all, 'Yes, brother, yes, brother',

1 but keep firm in your own way." A higher stage is actually to take
2 the position of the other. If I am all, why can I not really and actively
3 sympathise with my brother and see with his eyes? While I am
4 weak, I must stick to one course (Nishtha), but when I am strong, I
5 can feel with every other and perfectly sympathise with his ideas.

6 The old idea was: "Develop one idea at the expense of all the
7 rest". The modern way is "harmonious development". A third way is
8 to "develop the mind and control it", then put it where you will; the
9 result will come quickly. This is developing yourself in the truest
10 way. Learn concentration and use it in any direction. Thus you lose
11 nothing. He who gets the whole must have the parts too. Dualism is
12 included in Advaitism (monism).

13 "I first saw him and he saw me. There was a flash of eye from
14 me to him and from him to me."

15 This went on until the two souls became so closely united
16 that they actually became one. . . .

17 There are two kinds of Samadhi--I concentrate on myself,
18 then I concentrate and there is a unity of subject and object.

19 You must be able to sympathise fully with each particular,
20 then at once to jump back to the highest monism. After having
21 perfected yourself, you limit yourself voluntarily. Take the whole
22 power into each action. Be able to become a dualist for the time
23 being and forget Advaita, yet be able to take it up again at will.

24 Cause and effect are all Maya, and we shall grow to
25 understand that all we see is as disconnected as the child's fairy
26 tales now seem to us. There is really no such thing as cause and
27 effect and we shall come to know it. Then if you can, lower your
28 intellect to let any allegory pass through your mind without
29 questioning about connection. Develop love of imagery and
30 beautiful poetry and then enjoy all mythologies as poetry. Come not
31 to mythology with ideas of history and reasoning. Let it flow as a
32 current through your mind, let it be whirled as a candle before your
33 eyes, without asking who holds the candle, and you will get the
34 circle; the residuum of truth will remain in your mind.

35 The writers of all mythologies wrote in symbols of what they
36 saw and heard, they painted flowing pictures. Do not try to pick out
37 the themes and so destroy the pictures; take them as they are and
38 let them act on you. Judge them only by the effect and get the good
39 out of them.

40 Your own will is all that answers prayer, only it appears
41 under the guise of different religious conceptions to each mind. We
42 may call it Buddha, Jesus, Krishna, Jehovah, Allah, Agni, but it is
43 only the Self, the "I". . . .

44 Concepts grow, but there is no historical value in the
45 allegories which present them. Moses' visions are more likely to be
46 wrong than ours are, because we have more knowledge and are
47 less likely to be deceived by illusions.

48 Books are useless to us until our own book opens; then all
49 other books are good so far as they confirm our book. It is the

1 strong that understand strength, it is the elephant that understands
2 the lion, not the rat. How can we understand Jesus until we are his
3 equals? It is all in the dream to feed five thousand with two loaves,
4 or to feed two with five loaves; neither is real and neither affects
5 the other. Only grandeur appreciates grandeur, only God realises
6 God. The dream is only the dreamer, it has no other basis. It is not
7 one thing and the dreamer another. The keynote running through
8 the music is --"I am He, I am He", all other notes are but variations
9 and do not affect the real theme. We are the living books and books
10 are but the words we have spoken. Everything is the living God, the
11 living Christ; see it as such. Read man, he is the living poem. We
12 are the light that illumines all the Bibles and Christs and Buddhas
13 that ever were. Without that, these would be dead to us, not living.

14 Stand on your own Self.

15 The dead body resents nothing; let us make our bodies dead
16 and cease to identify ourselves with them.

17
18 *Saturday, August 3.*

19 Individuals who are to get freedom in this life have to live
20 thousands of years in one lifetime. They have to be ahead of their
21 times, but the masses can only crawl. Thus we have Christs and
22 Buddhas. . . .

23 There was once a Hindu queen, who so much desired that all
24 her children should attain freedom in this life that she herself took
25 all the care of them; and as she rocked them to sleep, she sang
26 always the one song to them--"Tat tvam asi, Tat tvam asi" ("That
27 thou art, That thou art").

28 Three of them became Sannyasins, but the fourth was taken
29 away to be brought up elsewhere to become a king. As he was
30 leaving home, the mother gave him a piece of paper which he was
31 to read when he grew to manhood. On that piece of paper was
32 written, "God alone is true. All else is false. The soul never kills or is
33 killed. Live alone or in the company of holy ones." When the young
34 prince read this, he too at once renounced the world and became a
35 Sannyasin.

36 Give up, renounce the world. Now we are like dogs strayed
37 into a kitchen and eating a piece of meat, looking round in fear lest
38 at any moment some one may come and drive them out. Instead of
39 that, be a king and know you own the world. This never comes until
40 you give it up and it ceases to bind. Give up mentally, if you do not
41 physically. Give up from the heart of your hearts. Have Vairagya
42 (renunciation). This is the real sacrifice, and without it, it is
43 impossible to attain spirituality. Do not desire, for what you desire
44 you get, and with it comes terrible bondage. It is nothing but
45 bringing "noses on us," as in the case of the man who had three
46 boons to ask.¹⁶⁷ We never get freedom until we are self-contained.

1 ¹⁶⁷ ?A poor man was once able to propitiate a certain god who gave him three
2 boons to ask along with three throws of dice. The happy man communicated this
3 news to his wife who at once told him to cast for wealth first. To this the man
4 said, "We both have very ugly little noses, for which people laugh at us. Let us

1 "Self is the Saviour of self, none else."

2 Learn to feel yourself in other bodies, to know that we are all
3 one. Throw all other nonsense to the winds. Spit out your actions,
4 good or bad, and never think of them again. What is done is done.
5 Throw off superstition. Have no weakness even in the face of death.
6 Do not repent, do not brood over past deeds, and do not remember
7 your good deeds; be *azad* (free). The weak, the fearful, the
8 ignorant will never reach Atman. You cannot undo, the effect must
9 come, face it, but be careful never to do the same thing again. Give
10 up the burden of all deeds to the Lord; give all, both good and bad.
11 Do not keep the good and give only the bad. God helps those who
12 do *not* help themselves.

13 "Drinking the cup of desire, the world becomes mad." Day
14 and night never come together, so desire and the Lord can never
15 come together. Give up desire.

16 There is a vast difference between saying "food, food" and
17 eating it, between saying "water, water" and drinking it. So by
18 merely repeating the words "God, God" we cannot hope to attain
19 realisation. We must strive and practise.

20 Only by the wave falling back into the sea can it become
21 unlimited, never as a wave can it be so. Then after it has become
22 the sea, it can become the wave again and as big a one as it
23 pleases. Break the identification of yourself with the current and
24 know that you are free.

25 True philosophy is the systematising of certain perceptions.
26 Intellect ends where religion begins. Inspiration is much higher
27 than reason, but it must not contradict it. Reason is the rough tool
28 to do the hard work; inspiration is the bright light which shows us
29 all truth. The will to do a thing is not necessarily inspiration. . . .

30 Progression in Maya is a circle that brings you back to the
31 starting point; but you start ignorant and come to the end with all
32 knowledge. Worship of God, worship of the holy ones, concentration
33 and meditation, and unselfish work, these are the ways of breaking
34 away from Maya's net; but we must first have the strong desire to
35 get free. The flash of light that will illuminate the darkness for us is
36 in us; it is the knowledge that is our nature--there is no "birthright",
37 we were never born. All that we have to do is to drive away the
38 clouds that cover it.

1 first cast for beautiful aquiline noses." But the wife was for wealth first and so she
2 caught hold of his hand to prevent him from throwing the dice. The man hastily
3 snatched his hand away and at once threw the dice, exclaiming, "Let us both
4 have beautiful noses and nothing but noses." All at once both their bodies were
5 covered over with many beautiful noses, but they proved such a great nuisance to
6 them that both of them agreed to throw for the second time asking for their
7 removal. It was done, but they also lost their own little ones by that! There was
8 only one boon more to ask. Having lost their noses they looked uglier than before.
9 They wanted to have two beautiful noses, but they feared to be questioned about
10 their transformation lest they should be regarded by all to be two big fools who
11 could not mend their circumstances even with the help of three boons. So both of
12 them agreed to get back their ugly little noses and the dice were accordingly
13 cast.
14

1 Give up all desire for enjoyment in earth or heaven. Control
2 the organs of the senses and control the mind. Bear every misery
3 without even knowing that you are miserable. Think of nothing but
4 liberation. Have faith in Guru, in his teachings, and in the surety
5 that you can get free. Say "Soham, Soham" whatever comes. Tell
6 yourself this even in eating, walking, suffering; tell the mind this
7 incessantly--that what we see never existed, that there is only "I".
8 Flash--the dream will break! Think day and night, this universe is
9 zero, only God is. Have intense desire to get free.

10 All relatives and friends are but "old dry wells"; we fall into
11 them and get dreams of duty and bondage, and there is no end. Do
12 not create illusion by *helping* anyone. It is like a banyan tree, that
13 spreads on and on. If you are a dualist, you are a fool to try to help
14 God. If you are a monist, you know that you are God; where find
15 duty? You have no duty to husband, child, friend. Take things as
16 they come, lie still, and when your body floats, go; rise with the
17 rising tide, fall with falling tide. Let the body die; this idea of body
18 is but a worn-out fable. "Be still and know that you are God."

19 The present only is existent. There is no past or future even
20 in thought, because to think it, you have to make it the present.
21 Give up everything, and let it float where it will. This world is all a
22 delusion, do not let it fool you again. You have known it for what it
23 is not, now know it for what it is. If the body is dragged anywhere,
24 let it go; do not care where the body is. This tyrannical idea of duty
25 is a terrible poison and is destroying the world.

26 Do not wait to have a harp and rest by degrees; why not take
27 a harp and begin here? Why wait for heaven? Make it here. In
28 heaven there is no marrying or giving in marriage; why not begin at
29 once and have none here? The yellow robe of the Sannyasin is the
30 sign of the free. Give up the beggar's dress of the world; wear the
31 flag of freedom, the ochre robe.

32
33 *Sunday, August 4.*

34 "Whom the ignorant worship, Him I preach unto thee."

35 This one and only God is the "knownest" of the known. He is
36 the one thing we see everywhere. All know their own Self, all know,
37 "I am", even animals. All we know is the projection of the Self.
38 Teach this to the children, they can grasp it. Every religion has
39 worshipped the Self, even though unconsciously, because there is
40 nothing else.

41 This indecent clinging to life as we know it here, is the
42 source of all evil. It causes all this cheating and stealing. It makes
43 money a god and all vices and fears ensue. Value nothing material
44 and do not cling to it. If you cling to nothing, not even life, then
45 there is no fear. "He goes from death to death who sees many in
46 this world." There can be no physical death for us and no mental
47 death, when we see that all is one. All bodies are mine; so even
48 body is eternal, because the tree, the animal, the sun, the moon, the
49 universe itself is my body; then how can it die? Every mind, every
50 thought is mine, then how can death come? The Self is never born

1 and never dies. When we realise this, all doubts vanish. "I am, I
2 know, I love"--these can never be doubted. There is no hunger, for
3 all that is eaten is eaten by me. If a hair falls out, we do not think
4 we die; so if one body dies, it is but a hair falling. . . .

5 The superconscious is God, is beyond speech beyond
6 thought, beyond consciousness. . . . There are three states,--
7 brutality (Tamas), humanity (Rajas), and divinity (Sattva). Those
8 attaining the highest state simply *are*. Duty dies there; they only
9 love and as a magnet draw others to them. This is freedom. No
10 more you do moral acts, but whatever you do is moral. The
11 Brahnavit (knower of God) is higher than all gods. The angels came
12 to worship Jesus when he had conquered delusion and had said,
13 "Get thee behind me, Satan." None can help a Brahnavit, the
14 universe itself bows down before him. His every desire is fulfilled,
15 his spirit purifies others; therefore worship the Brahnavit if you
16 wish to attain the highest. When we have the three great "gifts of
17 God"--a human body, intense desire to be free, and the help of a
18 great soul to show us the way--then liberation is certain for us.
19 Mukti is ours.

20 Death of the body for ever is Nirvana. It is the negative side
21 and says, "I am not this, nor this, nor this." Vedanta takes the
22 further step and asserts the positive side--Mukti or freedom. "I am
23 Existence absolute, Knowledge absolute, Bliss absolute, I am He",
24 this is Vedanta, the cap-stone of the perfect arch.

25 The great majority of the adherents of Northern Buddhism
26 believe in Mukti and are really Vedantists. Only the Ceylonese
27 accept Nirvana as annihilation.

28 No belief or disbelief can kill the "I". That which comes with
29 belief and goes with disbelief is only delusion. Nothing teaches the
30 Atman. "I salute my own Self." "Self-illuminated, I salute myself, I
31 am Brahman." The body is a dark room; when we enter it, it
32 becomes illuminated, it becomes alive. Nothing can ever affect the
33 illumination; it cannot be destroyed. It may be covered, but never
34 destroyed.

35 At the present time God should be worshipped as "Mother",
36 the Infinite Energy. This will lead to purity, and tremendous energy
37 will come here in America. Here no temples weigh us down, no one
38 suffers as they do in poorer countries. Woman has suffered for
39 aeons, and that has given her infinite patience and infinite
40 perseverance. She holds on to an idea. It is this which makes her
41 the support of even superstitious religions and of the priests in
42 every land, and it is this that will free her. We have to become
43 Vedantists and live this grand thought; the masses must get it, and
44 only in free America can this be done. In India these ideas were
45 brought out by individuals like Buddha, Shankara, and others, but
46 the masses did not retain them. The new cycle must see the masses
47 living Vedanta, and this will have to come through women.

48 "Keep the beloved beautiful Mother in the heart of your
49 hearts with all care."

1 "Throw out everything but the tongue, keep that to say,
2 "Mother, Mother!"

3 "Let no evil counsellors enter; let you and me, my heart,
4 alone see Mother."

5 "Thou art beyond all that lives!"

6 "My Moon of life, my Soul of soul!"

7
8 *Sunday Afternoon*

9 Mind is an instrument in the hand of Atman, just as body is
10 an instrument in the hand of mind. Matter is motion outside, mind
11 is motion inside. All change begins and ends in time. If the Atman is
12 unchangeable, It must be perfect; if perfect, It must be infinite; and
13 if It be infinite, It must be only One; there cannot be two infinities.
14 So the Atman, the Self, can be only One. Though It seems to be
15 various, It is really only One. If a man were to go toward the sun, at
16 every step he would see a different sun, and yet it would be the
17 same sun after all.

18 *Asti*, "isness", is the basis of all unity; and just as soon as the
19 basis is found, perfection ensues. If all colour could be resolved into
20 one colour, painting would cease. The perfect oneness is rest; we
21 refer all manifestations to one Being. Taoists, Confucianists,
22 Buddhists, Hindus, Jews, Mohammedans, Christians, and
23 Zoroastrians, all preached the golden rule and in almost the same
24 words; but only the Hindus have given the rationale, because they
25 saw the reason: Man must love others because those others are
26 himself. There is but One.

27 Of all the great religious teachers the world has known, only
28 Lao-tze, Buddha, and Jesus transcended the golden rule and said,
29 "Do good to your enemies", "Love them that hate you."

30 Principles exist; we do not create them, we only discover
31 them. . . . Religion consists solely in realisation. Doctrines are
32 methods, not religion. All the different religions are but applications
33 of the one religion adapted to suit the requirements of different
34 nations. Theories only lead to fighting; thus the name of God that
35 ought to bring peace has been the cause of half the bloodshed of
36 the world. Go to the direct source. Ask God what He is. Unless He
37 answers, He is not; but every religion teaches that He does answer.

38 Have something to say for yourself, else how can you have
39 any idea of what others have said? Do not cling to old superstitions;
40 be ever ready for new truths.

41 "Fools are they who would drink brackish water from a well
42 that their forefathers have dug would not drink pure water from a
43 well that others have dug Until we realise God for ourselves, we
44 can know nothing about Him. Each man is perfect by his nature;
45 prophets have manifested this perfection, but it is potential in us.
46 How can we understand that Moses saw God unless we too see
47 Him? If God ever came to anyone, He will come to me. I will go to
48 God direct; let Him talk to me. I cannot take belief as a basis; that is
49 atheism and blasphemy. If God spake to a man in the deserts of

1 Arabia two thousand years ago, He can also speak to me today, else
2 how can I know that He has not died? Come to God any way you
3 can; only come. But in coming do not push anyone down.

4 The knowing ones must have pity on the ignorant. One who
5 knows is willing to give up his body even for an ant, because he
6 knows that the body is nothing.

7
8 *Monday, August 5.*

9 The question is: Is it necessary to pass through all the lower
10 stages to reach the highest, or can a plunge be taken at once? The
11 modern American boy takes twenty-five years to attain that which
12 his forefathers took hundreds of years to do. The present-day Hindu
13 gets in twenty years to the height reached in eight thousand years
14 by his ancestors. On the physical side, the embryo goes from the
15 amoeba to man in the womb. These are the teachings of modern
16 science. Vedanta goes further and tells us that we not only have to
17 live the life of all past humanity, but also the future life of all
18 humanity. The man who does the first is the educated man, the
19 second is the Jivanmukta, for ever free (even while living).

20 Time is merely the measure of our thoughts, and thought
21 being inconceivably swift, there is no limit to the speed with which
22 we can live the life ahead. So it cannot be stated how long it would
23 take to live all future life. It might be in a second, or it might take
24 fifty lifetimes. It depends on the intensity of the desire. The
25 teaching must therefore be modified according to the needs of the
26 taught. The consuming fire is ready for all, even water and chunks
27 of ice quickly consume. Fire a mass of birdshot, one at least will
28 strike; give a man a whole museum of truths, he will at once take
29 what is suited to him. Past lives have moulded our tendencies; give
30 to the taught in accordance with his tendency. Intellectual, mystical,
31 devotional, practical--make one the basis, but teach the others with
32 it. Intellect must be balanced with love, the mystical nature with
33 reason, while practice must form part of every method. Take every
34 one where he stands and push him forward. Religious teaching
35 must always be constructive, not destructive.

36 Each tendency shows the life-work of the past, the line or
37 radius along which that man must move. All radii lead to the centre.
38 Never even attempt to disturb anyone's tendencies; to do that puts
39 back both teacher and taught. When you teach Jnana, you must
40 become a Jnani and stand mentally exactly where the taught stands.
41 Similarly in every other Yoga. Develop every faculty as if it were the
42 only one possessed, this is the true secret of so-called harmonious
43 development. That is, get extensity with intensity, but not at its
44 expense. We are infinite. There is no limitation in us, we can be as
45 intense as the most devoted Mohammedan and as broad as the
46 most roaring atheist.

47 The way to do this is not to put the mind on any one subject,
48 but to develop and control the mind itself; then you can turn it on
49 any side you choose. Thus you keep the intensity and extensity. Feel
50 Jnana as if it were all there was, then do the same with Bhakti, with

1 Raja (-Yoga), with Karma. Give up the waves and go to the ocean,
2 then you can have the waves as you please.

3 Control the "lake" of your own mind, else you cannot
4 understand the lake of another's mind.

5 The true teacher is one who can throw his whole force into
6 the tendency of the taught. Without real sympathy we can never
7 teach well. Give up the notion that man is a responsible being, only
8 the perfect man is responsible. The ignorant have drunk deep of the
9 cup of delusion and are not sane. You, who *know*, must have
10 infinite patience with these. Have nothing but love for them and
11 find out the disease that has made them see the world in a wrong
12 light, then help them to cure it and see aright. Remember always
13 that only the free have free will; all the rest are in bondage and are
14 not responsible for what they do. Will as will is bound. The water
15 when melting on the top of the Himalayas is free, but becoming the
16 river, it is bound by the banks; yet the original impetus carries it to
17 the sea, and it regains its freedom. The first is the "fall of man", the
18 second is the "resurrection". Not one atom can rest until it finds its
19 freedom.

20 Some imaginations help to break the bondage of the rest.
21 The whole universe is imagination, but one set of imaginations will
22 cure another set. Those which tell us that there is sin and sorrow
23 and death in the world are terrible; but the other set which says
24 ever, "I am holy, there is God, there is no pain", these are good and
25 help to break the bondage of the others. The highest imagination
26 that can break all the links of the chain is that of Personal God.

27 "Om tat sat" is the only thing beyond Maya, but God exists
28 eternally. As long as the Niagara Falls exist, the rainbow will exist;
29 but the water continually flows away. The falls are the universe, and
30 the rainbow is personal God; and both are eternal. While the
31 universe exists, God must exist. God creates the universe, and the
32 universe creates God; and both are eternal. Maya is neither
33 existence nor non-existence. Both the Niagara Falls and the
34 rainbow are eternally changeable. . . . Brahman seen through Maya.
35 Persians and Christians split Maya into two and call the good half
36 "God" and the bad half the "devil". Vedanta takes Maya as a whole
37 and recognises a unity beyond it--Brahman. . . .

38 Mohammed found that Christianity was straying out from the
39 Semitic fold and his teachings were to show what Christianity ought
40 to be as a Semitic religion, that it should hold to one God. The
41 Aryan idea that "I and my Father are one" disgusted and terrified
42 him. In reality the conception of the Trinity was a great advance
43 over the dualistic idea of Jehovah, who was for ever separate from
44 man. The theory of incarnation is the first link in the chain of ideas
45 leading to the recognition of the oneness of God and man. God
46 appearing first in one human form, then re-appearing at different
47 times in other human forms, is at last recognised as being in every
48 human form, or in all men. Monistic is the highest stage,
49 monotheistic is a lower stage. Imagination will lead you to the
50 highest even more rapidly and easily than reasoning.

51 Let a few stand out and live for God alone and save religion

1 for the world. Do not pretend to be like Janaka when you are only
2 the "progenitor" of delusions. (The name Janaka means 'progenitor'
3 and belonged to a king who, although he still held his kingdom for
4 the sake of his people, had given up everything mentally.) Be honest
5 and say, "I see the ideal but I cannot yet approach it"; but do not
6 pretend to give up when you do not. If you give up, stand fast. If a
7 hundred fall in the fight, seize the flag and carry it on. God is true
8 for all that, no matter who fails. Let him who falls hand on the flag
9 to another to carry on; it can never fall.

10 When I am washed and clean, why shall impurity be added
11 on to me? Seek first the kingdom of Heaven, and let everything else
12 go. Do not want anything "added unto you"; be only glad to get rid
13 of it. Give up and know that success will follow, even if you never
14 see it. Jesus left twelve fishermen, and yet those few blew up the
15 Roman Empire.

16 Sacrifice on God's altar earth's purest and best. He who
17 struggles is better than he who never attempts. Even to look on one
18 who has given up has a purifying effect. Stand up for God; let the
19 world go. Have no compromise. Give up the world, then alone you
20 are loosened from the body. When it dies, you are *azad*, free. Be
21 free. Death alone can never free us. Freedom must be attained by
22 our own efforts during life; then, when the body falls, there will be
23 no rebirth for the free.

24 Truth is to be judged by truth and by nothing else. Doing
25 good is not the test of truth; the Sun needs no torch by which to see
26 it. Even if truth destroys the whole universe, still it is truth; stand
27 by it.

28 Practising the concrete forms of religion is easy and attracts
29 the masses; but really there is nothing in the external.

30 "As the spider throws her web out of herself and draws it in,
31 even so this universe is thrown out and drawn in by God."

32
33 *Tuesday, August 6.*

34 Without the "I" there can be no "you" outside. From this
35 some philosophers came to the conclusion that the external world
36 did not exist save in the subject; that the "you" existed only in the
37 "I". Others have argued that the "I" can only be known through the
38 "you" and with equal logic. These two views are partial truths, each
39 wrong in part and each right in part. Thought is as much material
40 and as much in nature as body is. Both matter and mind exist in a
41 third, a unity which divides itself into the two. This unity is the
42 Atman, the real Self.

43 There is being, "x", which is manifesting itself as both mind
44 and matter. Its movements in the seen are along certain fixed lines
45 called law. As a unity, it is free; as many, it is bound by law. Still,
46 with all this bondage, an idea of freedom is ever present, and this is
47 Nivritti, or the "dragging from attachment". The materialising
48 forces which through desire lead us to take an active part in
49 worldly affairs are called Pravritti.

1 That action is moral which frees us from the bondage of
2 matter and vice versa. This world appears infinite, because
3 everything is in a circle; it returns to whence it came. The circle
4 meets, so there is no rest or peace here in any place. We must get
5 out. Mukti is the one end to be attained. . . .

6 Evil changes in form but remains the same in quality. In
7 ancient times force ruled, today it is cunning. Misery in India is not
8 so bad as in America, because the poor man here sees the greater
9 contrast to his own bad condition.

10 Good and evil are inextricably combined, and one cannot be
11 had without the other. The sum total of energy in this universe is
12 like a lake, every wave inevitably leads to a corresponding
13 depression. The sum total is absolutely the same; so to make one
14 man happy is to make another unhappy. External happiness is
15 material and the supply is fixed; so that not one grain can be had by
16 one person without taking from another. Only bliss beyond the
17 material world can be had without loss to any. Material happiness is
18 but a transformation of material sorrow.

19 Those who are born in the wave and kept in it do not see the
20 depression and what is there. Never think, you can make the world
21 better and happier. The bullock in the oil-mill never reaches the
22 wisp of hay tied in front of him, he only grinds out the oil. So we
23 chase the will-o'-the-wisp of happiness that always eludes us, and
24 we only grind nature's mill, then die, merely to begin again. If we
25 could get rid of evil, we should never catch a glimpse of anything
26 higher; we would be satisfied and never struggle to get free. When
27 man finds that all search for happiness in matter is nonsense, then
28 religion begins. All human knowledge is but a part of religion.

29 In the human body the balance between good and evil is so
30 even that there is a chance for man to wish to free himself from
31 both.

32 The free never became bound; to ask how he did, is an
33 illogical question. Where no bondage is, there is no cause and
34 effect. "I became a fox in a dream and a dog chased me." Now how
35 can I ask why the dog chased me? The fox was a part of the dream,
36 and the dog followed as a matter of course; but both belong to the
37 dream and have no existence outside. Science and religion are both
38 attempts to help us out of the bondage; only religion is the more
39 ancient, and we have the superstition that it is the more holy. In a
40 way it is, because it makes morality a vital point, and science does
41 not.

42 "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." This
43 sentence alone would save mankind if all books and prophets were
44 lost. This purity of heart will bring the vision of God. It is the theme
45 of the whole music of this universe. In purity is no bondage.
46 Remove the veils of ignorance by purity, then we manifest ourselves
47 as we really are and know that we were never in bondage. The
48 seeing of many is the great sin of all the world. See all as Self and
49 love all; let all idea of separateness go. . . .

50 The diabolical man is a part of my body as a wound or a burn

1 is. We have to nurse it and get it better; so continually nurse and
2 help the diabolical man, until he "heals" and is once happy and
3 healthy.

4 While we think on the relative plane, we have the right to
5 believe that as bodies we can be hurt by relative things and equally
6 that we can be helped by them. This idea of help, abstracted, is
7 what we call God. The sum total of all ideas of help is God.

8 God is the abstract compound of all that is merciful and good
9 and helpful; that should be the sole idea. As Atman, we have no
10 body; so to say, "I am God, and poison does not hurt me", is an
11 absurdity. While there is a body and we see it, we have not realised
12 God. Can the little whirlpool remain after the river vanishes? Cry
13 for help, and you will get it; and at last you will find that the one
14 crying for help has vanished, and so has the Helper, and the play is
15 over; only the Self remains.

16 This once done, come back and play as you will. This body
17 can then do no evil, because it is not until the evil forces are all
18 burned out that liberation comes. All dross has been burned out and
19 there remains "flame without heat and without smoke".

20 The past momentum carries on the body, but it can only do
21 good, because the bad was all gone before freedom came. The
22 dying thief on the cross reaped the effects of his past actions. He
23 had been a Yogi and had slipped; then he had to be born again;
24 again he slipped and became a thief; but the past good he had done
25 bore fruit, and he met Jesus in the moment when liberation could
26 come, and one word made him free.

27 Buddha set his greatest enemy free, because he, by hating
28 him (Buddha) so much, kept constantly thinking of him; that
29 thought purified his mind, and he became ready for freedom.
30 Therefore think of God all the time, and that will purify you. . . .

31 *(Thus ended the beautiful lessons of our beloved Guru. The*
32 *following Monday he left Thousand Island Park and returned to*
33 *New York.)*

CONVERSATIONS AND DIALOGUES

(From the Diary of a Disciple¹⁶⁸)

I

[Place: Belur, the rented Math premises. Year: 1898.]

Swamiji was staying at the time at the rented garden-house of Nilambar Babu where the Math had been removed from Alambazar. Arrangements had been made for Shri Ramakrishna's Tithipuja (Nativity) on a grand scale. On the morning of the auspicious day, Swamiji personally inspected the preliminaries of the worship. The inspection over, Swamiji asked the disciple, "Well, you have brought the holy threads, I hope?"

Disciple: Yes, sir, I have. Everything is ready, as you desired. But, sir, I can't make out why so many holy threads are in requisition.

Swamiji: Every Dwijati¹⁶⁹ (twice-born) has a right to investiture with the holy thread. The Vedas themselves are authority in this matter. Whoever will come here on this sacred birthday of Shri Ramakrishna, I shall invest him with the holy thread. These people have fallen from their true status, and the scriptures say that after proper expiation, those fallen in the way earn the right to investiture with the holy thread. This is the great day of Shri Ramakrishna's nativity, and men will be purified by taking his name. So the assembled devotees are to be invested with the holy thread today; do you now understand?

Disciple: I have collected, Sir, quite a good number of holy threads according to your instructions, and after the worship I shall with your permission invest the Bhaktas with them.

Swamiji: To the Bhaktas who are not Brahmins, give this Mantra of Gayatri (here Swamiji communicated to the disciple the special Gayatris for them.) By degrees all the people of the land have to be lifted to the position of Brahmins, not to speak of the Bhaktas of Shri Ramakrishna. Each Hindu, I say, is a brother of every other, and it is we who have degraded them by our outcry, "Don't touch, don't touch!" And so the whole country has been plunged to the utmost depths of meanness, cowardice, and ignorance. These men have to be uplifted; words of hope and faith have to be proclaimed to them. We have to tell them, "You are men like us, and you have all the rights that we have." Do you understand?

Disciple: Yes, sir, it should be so.

Swamiji: Now, ask those who will take the holy thread to finish their bath in the Ganga. Than after prostration before Shri Ramakrishna, they will have their investiture.

About forty to fifty Bhaktas then duly received the Gayatri

¹⁶⁸ ?Shri Sharat Chandra Chakravarty, B.A.

¹⁶⁹ ?Brahmins, Kshatriyas, and Vaishyas are the Dwijatis.

1 from the disciple and were invested with the holy thread. When
2 receiving them, Swamiji's face beamed with profound delight. A
3 little after this, Shri Girish Chandra Ghosh arrived at the Math from
4 Calcutta.

5 Now arrangements for music were made at the desire of
6 Swamiji, and Sannyasins of the Math decorated Swamiji as a Yogin.

7 Swamiji now chanted with the sweetest intonation to the
8 accompaniment of the Tanpura, the Sanskrit hymn beginning with
9 {Sanskrit} ("repeating in a low tone the name of Rama" etc.), and
10 when the chanting came to a close, he went on repeating with
11 exquisite charm the holy words "Rama, Rama, Shri Rama, Rama".
12 His eyes were half-closed, and the natural sublimity of his
13 countenance seemed today to have deepened a hundredfold.
14 Everybody remained spelled for over a half an hour.

15 After the chanting of Shri Rama's name, Swamiji continued
16 to sing a song of Tulsidas on Shri Ramachandra in the same
17 intoxicated strain of mind. Then other music followed.

18 After this, Swamiji suddenly took to putting off all the
19 decorations he had on his person and began to dress Girish Babu
20 with them. Then he declared, "Paramahansa-deva used to say our
21 brother is the incarnation of Bhairava.¹⁷⁰ There's no distinction
22 between him and us." Girish Babu sat speechless all the time. A
23 piece of *gerua* cloth was also brought, and he was draped in it and
24 uttered no word of remonstrance. For he had merged his self fully
25 today in the wishes of his brother disciples. Swamiji now said,
26 "Well, G. C., you are to speak to us today about Thakur (Lord). And
27 all of you (turning all round himself) sit quiet and attentive." Even
28 then, Girish Babu sat motionless, voiceless like marble, absolutely
29 lost in joy. And when at last he opened his lips, he did so to say, "Ah,
30 what can this humble self speak of our Lord of unbounded mercy!
31 Verily in this alone I realise his mercy, that to me, this lowly
32 creature, He has extended the privilege of sitting and mixing on the
33 same footing with you Sannyasins, pure from your childhood, who
34 have renounced all lust and lucre." While speaking thus, the words
35 choked in his throat, and he could not speak anything more.

36 After this, some pieces of Hindu music were rendered by
37 Swamiji. The devotees were now called to partake of refreshments.
38 After refreshments, Swamiji came and took his seat in the parlour
39 on the ground-floor, and all the many visitors sat round him.
40 Accosting a householder friend who had his investiture with the
41 holy thread that day, Swamiji said, "Really you all belong to the
42 twice-born castes, only it is long since you lost your status. From
43 this day again you become the twice-born. Repeat the Gayatri at
44 least a hundred times daily, won't you?" The householder expressed
45 his assent.

46 Meanwhile Srijut Mahendranath Gupta (Master Mahashaya
47 [Venerable], or "M") appeared on the scene. Swamiji cordially
48 received him and made him take his seat. "Master Mahashaya,"

170 ?Divine companion of Shiva.

1 said Swamiji, "this is the anniversary of Shri Ramakrishna's
2 birthday. So you shall have to relate to us something about him."
3 Master Mahashaya bent his head down smilingly in reply.

4 Just then it was announced that Swami Akhandananda had
5 come from Murshidabad with two Pantuas¹⁷¹ which weighed one
6 maund and a half! All of us hurried out to see these prodigious
7 Pantuas. When they were shown to Swamiji, he said, "Take them up
8 to the chapel for offering."

9 Making Swami Akhandananda the subject of his remarks,
10 Swamiji said to the disciple, "Mark you, what a great hero he is in
11 work! Of fear, death and the like he has no cognisance--doggedly
12 going on doing his own work--'work for the welfare of the many, for
13 the happiness of the many'."

14 Disciple: Sir, that power must have come to him as the result
15 of a good deal of austerities.

16 Swamiji: True, power comes of austerities; but again,
17 working for the sake of others itself constitutes Tapasya (practice of
18 austerity). The karma-yogins regard work itself as part of Tapasya.
19 As on the one hand the practice of Tapasya intensifies altruistic
20 feelings in the devotee and actuates him to unselfish work, so also
21 the pursuit of work for the sake of others carries the worker to the
22 last fruition of Tapasya, namely the purification of the heart, and
23 leads him thus to the realisation of the supreme Atman (Self).

24 Disciple: But, sir, how few of us can work whole-heartedly
25 for the sake of others from the very outset! How difficult it is for
26 such broad-mindedness to come at all as will make men sacrifice
27 the desire for their own happiness and devote their lives for others!

28 Swamiji: And how many have their minds going after
29 Tapasya? With the attraction for lust and lucre working the other
30 way, how many long for the realisation of God? In fact, disinterested
31 work is quite as difficult as Tapasya. So you have no right to say
32 anything against those who go in for work in the cause of others. If
33 you find Tapasya to be to your liking, well, go on with it. Another
34 may find work as congenial to himself, and you have no right to
35 make a prohibition in his case. You seem to have the settled idea in
36 your mind that work is no Tapasya at all!

37 Disciple: Yes, sir, before this I used to mean quite a different
38 thing by Tapasya.

39 Swamiji: As by continuing our religious practices we
40 gradually develop a certain determined tendency for it, so by
41 performing disinterested work over and over again, even
42 unwillingly, we gradually find the will merging itself in it. The
43 inclination to work for others develops in this way, do you see? Just
44 do some such work even though unwillingly, and then see if the
45 actual fruit of Tapasya is realised within or not. As the outcome of
46 work for the sake of others, the angularities of the mind get
47 smoothed down, and men are gradually prepared for sincere self-

1 ¹⁷¹ ?A sweetmeat usually about two inches in length, made mostly of fresh
2 cheese fried in ghee and put in syrup.
3

1 sacrifice for the good of others.

2 Disciple: But, sir, what is the necessity at all for doing good
3 to others?

4 Swamiji: Well, it is necessary for one's own good. We become
5 forgetful of the ego when we think of the body as dedicated to the
6 service of others--the body with which most complacently we
7 identify the ego. And in the long run comes the consciousness of
8 disembodiness. The more intently you think of the well-being of
9 others, the more oblivious of self you become. In this way, as
10 gradually your heart gets purified by work, you will come to feel the
11 truth that your own Self is pervading all beings and all things. Thus
12 it is that doing good to others constitutes a way, a means of
13 revealing one's own Self or Atman. Know this also to be one of the
14 spiritual practices, a discipline for God-realisation. Its aim also is
15 Self-realisation. Exactly as that aim is attained by Jnana
16 (knowledge), Bhakti (devotion) and so on, also by work for the sake
17 of others.

18 Disciple: But, sir, if I am to keep thinking of others day and
19 night, when shall I contemplate on the Atman? If I rest wholly
20 occupied with something particular and relative, how can I realise
21 the Atman which is Absolute?

22 Swamiji: The highest aim of all disciplines, all spiritual paths,
23 is the attainment of the knowledge of Atman. If you, by being
24 devoted to the service of others and by getting your heart purified
25 by such work, attain to the vision of all beings as the Self, what else
26 remains to be attained in the way of Self-realisation? Would you say
27 that Self-realisation is the state of existing as inert matter, as this
28 wall or as this piece of wood, for instance?

29 Disciple: Though that is not the meaning, yet what the
30 scriptures speak of as the withdrawal of the Self into Its real nature
31 consists in the arresting of all mind-functions and all work.

32 Swamiji: Yes, this Samadhi of which the scriptures speak is a
33 state not at all easy to attain. When very rarely it appears in
34 somebody, it does not last for long; so what will he keep himself
35 occupied with? Thus it is that after realising that state described in
36 the scriptures, the saint sees the Self in all beings and in that
37 consciousness devotes himself to service, so that any Karma that
38 was yet left to be worked out through the body may exhaust itself.
39 It is this state which has been described by the authors of the
40 Shastras (scriptures) as Jivanmukti, "Freedom while living".

41 Disciple: So after all it comes about, sir, that unless this state
42 of Jivanmukti is attained, work for the sake of others can never be
43 pursued in the truest sense of the term.

44 Swamiji: Yes, that is what the Shastras say, but they also say
45 that work or service for the good of others leads to this state of
46 Jivanmukti. Otherwise there would be no need on the part of the
47 Shastras to teach a separate path of religious practice, called the
48 Karma-Yoga.

49 The disciple now understood the point and became silent,

1 and Swamiji giving up the point commenced rendering in a voice of
2 superhuman sweetness the song composed by Babu Girish Chandra
3 Ghosh to commemorate Shri Ramakrishna's Nativity, and
4 beginning:

5 "Who art Thou lying on the lap of the poor Brahmin matron."

6
7 II

8 [*Place: The rented Math premises at Belur. Year: 1898.*]

9 Today Swamiji is to perform a sacrifice and install Shri
10 Ramakrishna on the site of the new Math. The disciple has been
11 staying at the Math since the night before, with a view to
12 witnessing the installation ceremony.

13 In the morning Swamiji had his bath in the Ganga and
14 entered the worship-room. Then he made offerings to the sacred
15 Padukas (slippers) of Shri Ramakrishna and fell to meditation.

16 Meditation and worship over, preparations were now made
17 for going to the new Math premises. Swamiji himself took on his
18 right shoulder the ashes of Shri Ramakrishna's body preserved in a
19 copper casket, and led the van. The disciple in company with other
20 Sannyasins brought up the rear. There was the music of bells and
21 conchs. On his way Swamiji said to the disciple, "Shri Ramakrishna
22 said to me, 'Wherever you will take me on your shoulders, there I
23 will go and stay, be it under a tree or in a hut.' It is therefore that I
24 am myself carrying him on my shoulders to the new Math grounds.
25 Know it for certain that Shri Ramakrishna will keep his seat fixed
26 there, for the welfare of many, for a long time to come."

27 Disciple: When was it that he said this to you?

28 Swamiji: Didn't you hear from them? It was at the Cossipur
29 garden.

30 Disciple: I see. It was on this occasion, I suppose, that the
31 split took place between Shri Ramakrishna's Sannyasin and
32 householder disciples regarding the privilege of serving him?

33 Swamiji: Yes, but not exactly a "split"--it was only a
34 misunderstanding, that's all. Rest assured that among those that
35 are Shri Ramakrishna's devotees, and have *truly* obtained his
36 grace, there is no sect or schism, there *cannot* be--be they
37 householders or Sannyasins. As to that kind of slight
38 misunderstanding, do you know what it was due to? Well, each
39 devotee colours Shri Ramakrishna in the light of his own
40 understanding and each forms his own idea of him from his peculiar
41 standpoint. He was, as it were, a great Sun and each one of us is
42 eyeing him, as it were, through a different kind of coloured glass
43 and coming to look upon that one Sun as parti-coloured. Of course,
44 it is quite true that this leads to schism in course of time. But then,
45 such schisms rarely occur in the lifetime of those who are fortunate
46 enough to have come in direct contact with an Avatara. The
47 effulgence of that Personality, who takes pleasure only in his Self,
48 dazzles their eyes and sweeps away pride, egotism, and narrow-
49 mindedness from their minds. Consequently they find no

1 opportunity to create sects and party factions. They are content to
2 offer him their heart's worship, each in his own fashion.

3 Disciple: Sir, do the devotees of the Avatara, then, view him
4 differently notwithstanding their knowing him to be God, and does
5 this lead to the succeeding generations of their followers to limit
6 themselves within narrow bounds and form various little sects?

7 Swamiji: Quite so. Hence sects are bound to form in course
8 of time. Look, for instance, how the followers of Chaitanya Deva
9 have been divided into two or three hundred sects; and those of
10 Jesus hold thousands of creeds. But all those sects without
11 exception follow Chaitanya Deva or Jesus, and none else.

12 Disciple: Then, perhaps, Shri Ramakrishna's followers, too,
13 will be divided in course of time into various sects?

14 Swamiji: Well, of course. But then this Math that we are
15 building will harmonise all creeds, all standpoints. Just as Shri
16 Ramakrishna held highly liberal views, this Math too, will be a
17 centre for propagating similar ideas. The blazing light of universal
18 harmony that will emanate from here will flood the whole world.

19 While all this was going on, the party reached the Math
20 premises. Swamiji took the casket down from his shoulder, placed
21 in on the carpet spread on the ground, and bowed before it
22 touching the ground with his forehead. Others too followed suit.

23 Then Swamiji again sat for worship. After going through the
24 Puja (worship), he lighted the sacrificial fire, made oblations to it,
25 and himself cooking Payasa (milk-rice with sugar) with the help of
26 his brother-disciples, offered it to Shri Ramakrishna. Probably also
27 he initiated certain householders on the spot that day. All this
28 ceremony being done, Swamiji cordially addressed the assembled
29 gentlemen and said, "Pray today all of you, heart and soul, to the
30 holy feet of Shri Ramakrishna, that the great Avatara of this cycle
31 that he is, he may "For the welfare of the many, and for the
32 happiness of the many--{Sanskrit}", reside in this holy spot from
33 this day for a great length of time, and ever continue to make it the
34 unique centre of harmony amongst all religions." Everyone prayed
35 like that with folded palms. Swamiji next called the disciple and
36 said, "None of us (Sannyasins) have any longer the right to take
37 back this casket of Shri Ramakrishna, for we have installed him
38 here today. It behoves you, therefore, to take it on your head back
39 (to Nilambar Babu's garden)". Seeing that the disciple hesitated to
40 touch the casket, Swamiji said, "No fear, touch it, you have my
41 order." The disciple gladly obeyed the injunction, lifted the casket
42 on his head, and moved on. He went first, next came Swamiji, and
43 the rest followed. Swamiji said to the disciple on the way, "Shri
44 Ramakrishna has today sat on your head and is blessing you. Take
45 care, never let your mind think of anything transitory, from this day
46 forth." Before crossing a small bridge, Swamiji again said to him,
47 "Beware, now, you must move very cautiously."

48 Thus all safely reached the Math and rejoiced. Swamiji now
49 entered into a conversation with the disciple, in the course of which
50 he said, "Through the will of Shri Ramakrishna, his

1 Dharmakshetra--sanctified spot--has been established today. A
2 twelve years' anxiety is off my head. Do you know what I am
3 thinking of at this moment?--This Math will be a centre of learning
4 and spiritual discipline. Householders of a virtuous turn like
5 yourselves will build houses on the surrounding land and live there,
6 and Sannyasins, men of renunciation, will live in the centre, while
7 on that plot of land on the south of the Math, buildings will be
8 erected for English and American disciples to live in. How do you
9 like this idea?

10 Disciple: Sir, it is indeed a wonderful fancy of yours.

11 Swamiji: A fancy do you call it? Not at all, everything will
12 come about in time. I am but laying the foundation. There will be
13 lots of further developments in future. Some portion of it I shall live
14 to work out. And I shall infuse into you fellows various ideas, which
15 you will work out in future. It will not do merely to listen to great
16 principles. You must apply them in the practical field, turn them into
17 constant practice. What will be the good of cramming the high-
18 sounding dicta of the scriptures? You have first to grasp the
19 teachings of the Shastras, and then to work them out in practical
20 life. Do you understand? This is called practical religion.

21 Thus the talk went on, and gradually drifted to the topic of
22 Shankaracharya. The disciple was a great adherent of Shankara,
23 almost to the point of fanaticism. He used to look upon Shankara's
24 Advaita philosophy as the crest of all philosophies and could not
25 bear any criticism of him. Swamiji was aware of this, and, as was
26 his wont, wanted to break this one-sidedness of the disciple.

27 Swamiji: Shankara's intellect was sharp like the razor. He
28 was a good arguer and a scholar, no doubt of that, but he had no
29 great liberality; his heart too seems to have been like that. Besides,
30 he used to take great pride in his Brahmanism--much like a
31 southern Brahmin of the priest class, you may say. How he has
32 defended in his commentary on the Vedanta-Sutras that the non-
33 Brahmin castes will not attain to a supreme knowledge of Brahman!
34 And what specious arguments! Referring to Vidura¹⁷² he has said
35 that he became a knower of Brahman by reason of his Brahmin
36 body in the previous incarnation. Well, if nowadays any Shudra
37 attains to a knowledge of Brahman, shall we have to side with your
38 Shankara and maintain that because he had been a Brahmin in his
39 previous birth, therefore he has attained to this knowledge?
40 Goodness! What is the use of dragging in Brahminism with so much
41 ado? The Vedas have entitled any one belonging to the three upper
42 castes to study the Vedas and the realisation of Brahman, haven't
43 they? So Shankara had no need whatsoever of displaying this
44 curious bit of pedantry on this subject, contrary to the Vedas. And
45 such was his heart that he burnt to death lots of Buddhist monks--
46 by defeating them in argument! And the Buddhists, too, were
47 foolish enough to burn themselves to death, simply because they
48 were worsted in argument! What can you call such an action on

1 ¹⁷² ?Uncle of the Pandava brothers, and a most saintly character, considered to
2 be an incarnation of Dharma.
3

1 Shankara's part except fanaticism? But look at Buddha's heart!
2 Ever ready to give his own life to save the life of even a kid--what to
3 speak of "{Sanskrit}"--For the welfare of the many, for the happiness
4 of the many"! See, what a large-heartedness--what a compassion!

5 Disciple: Can't we call that attitude of the Buddha, too,
6 another kind of fanaticism, sir? He went to the length of sacrificing
7 his own body for the sake of a beast!

8 Swamiji: But consider how much good to the world and its
9 beings came out of that 'fanaticism' of his--how many monasteries
10 and schools and colleges, how many public hospitals and veterinary
11 refuges were established, how developed architecture became--
12 think of that. What was there in this country before Buddha's
13 advent? Only a number of religious principles recorded on bundles
14 of palm leaves--and those too known only to a few. It was Lord
15 Buddha who brought them down to the practical field and showed
16 how to apply them in the everyday life of the people. In a sense, *he*
17 was the living embodiment of true Vedanta.

18 Disciple: But, sir, it was he who by breaking down the
19 Varnashrama Dharma (duty according to caste and order of life)
20 brought about a revolution within the fold of Hinduism in India, and
21 there seems to be some truth also in the remark that the religion he
22 preached was for this reason banished in course of time from the
23 soil of India.

24 Swamiji: It was not through his teachings that Buddhism
25 came to such degradation, it was the fault of his followers. By
26 becoming too philosophic they lost much of their breadth of heart.
27 Then gradually the corruption known as Vamachara (unrestrained
28 mixing with women in the name of religion) crept in and ruined
29 Buddhism. Such diabolical rites are not to be met with in any
30 modern Tantra! One of the principal centres of Buddhism was
31 Jagannatha or Puri, and you have simply to go there and look at the
32 abominable figures carved on the temple walls to be convinced of
33 this. Puri has come under the sway of the Vaishnavas since the time
34 of Ramanuja and Shri Chaitanya. Through the influence of great
35 personages like these the place now wears an altogether different
36 aspect.

37 Disciple: Sir, the Shastras tell us of various special influences
38 attaching to places of pilgrimage. How far is this claim true?

39 Swamiji: When the whole world is the Form Universal of the
40 Eternal Atman, the Ishvara (God), what is there to wonder at in
41 special influences attaching to particular places? There are places
42 where He manifests Himself specially, either spontaneously or
43 through the earnest longing of pure souls, and the ordinary man, if
44 he visits those places with eagerness, attains his end quite easily.
45 Therefore it may lead to the development of the Self in time to have
46 recourse to holy places. But know it for certain that there is no
47 greater Tirtha (holy spot) than the body of man. Nowhere else is
48 the Atman so manifest as here. That car of Jagannatha that you see
49 is but a concrete symbol of this corporeal car. You have to behold
50 the Atman in this car of the body. Haven't you read "{Sanskrit}"--
51 Know the Atman to be seated on the chariot" etc., "{Sanskrit}"--All

1 the gods worship the Vamana (the Supreme Being in a diminutive
2 form) seated in the interior of the body"? The sight of the Atman is
3 the real vision of Jagannatha. And the statement "{Sanskrit}--
4 Seeing the Vamana on the car, one is no more subject to rebirth",
5 means that if you can visualise the Atman which is within you, and
6 disregarding which you are always identifying yourself with this
7 curious mass of matter, this body of yours--if you can see that, then
8 there is no more rebirth for you. If the sight of the Lord's image on
9 a wooden framework confers liberation on people, then crores of
10 them would be liberated every year--specially with such facility of
11 communication by rail nowadays! But I do not mean to say that the
12 notion which devotees in general entertain towards Shri Jagannatha
13 is either nothing or erroneous. There is a class of people who
14 gradually rise to higher and higher truths with the help of that
15 image. So it is an undoubted fact that in and through that image
16 there is a special manifestation of the Lord.

17 Disciple: Sir, are there different religions then for the
18 ignorant and the wise?

19 Swamiji: Quite so. Otherwise why do your scriptures go to
20 such lengths over the specification of the qualifications of an
21 aspirant? All is truth no doubt, but relative truth, different in
22 degrees. Whatever man knows to be truth is of a like nature: some
23 are lesser truths, others, higher ones in comparison with them,
24 while the Absolute Truth is God alone. This Atman is altogether
25 dormant in matter; in man, designated as a living being, It is
26 partially conscious; while in personages like Shri Krishna, Buddha,
27 and Shankara the same Atman has reached the superconscious
28 stage. There is a state even beyond that, which cannot be
29 expressed in terms of thought or language--{Sanskrit}.

30 Disciple: Sir, there are certain Bhakti sects who hold that we
31 must practise devotion by placing ourselves in a particular attitude
32 or relation with God. They do not understand anything about the
33 glory of the Atman and so forth, and exclusively recommend this
34 constant devotional attitude.

35 Swamiji: What they say is true to their own case. By
36 continued practice along this line, they too shall feel an awakening
37 of Brahman within them. And what we (Sannyasins) are doing is
38 another kind of practice. We have renounced the world. So how will
39 it suit us to practise by putting ourselves in some worldly relation--
40 such as that of mother, or father, or wife or son, and so forth--with
41 God? To us all these ideals appear to be narrow. Of course it is very
42 difficult to qualify for the worship of God in His absolute,
43 unconditioned aspect. But must we go in for poison because we get
44 no nectar? Always talk and hear and reason about this Atman. By
45 continuing to practise in this way, you will find in time that the Lion
46 (Brahman) will wake up in you too. Go beyond all those relative
47 attitudes--mere sports of the mind. Listen to what Yama says in the
48 Katha Upanisad: {Sanskrit}¹⁷³ Arise! Awake! and stop not until the
49 goal is reached!

1 ¹⁷³ ?Arise, awake, and learn by approaching the elite.
2

1 Here the subject was brought to a close. The bell for taking
2 Prasada (consecrated food) rang, and Swamiji went to partake of it,
3 followed by the disciple.

4 5 III

6 [*Place: the rented Math premises at Belur. Time: February,*
7 *1898.*]

8 Swamiji has removed the Math from Alambazar to Nilambar
9 Babu's garden at Belur. He is very glad to have come to these new
10 premises. He said to the disciple when the latter came, "See how
11 the Ganga flows by and what a nice building! I like this place. This
12 is the ideal kind of place for a Math." It was then afternoon.

13 In the evening the disciple found Swamiji alone in the upper
14 storey, and the talk went on, on various topics, in the course of
15 which he wanted to know about Swamiji's boyhood days. Swamiji
16 began to say, "From my very boyhood I was a dare-devil sort of
17 fellow. Otherwise, do you think I could make a tour round the world
18 without a single copper in my pocket?"

19 In boyhood Swamiji had a great predilection for hearing the
20 chanting of the Ramayana by professional singers. Wherever such
21 chanting would take place in the neighbourhood, he would attend
22 it, leaving sport and all. Swamiji related how, while listening to the
23 Ramayana, on some days, he would be so deeply engrossed in it as
24 to forget all about home, and would have no idea that it was late at
25 night, and that he must return home, and so forth. One day during
26 the chant he heard that the monkey-god Hanuman lived in banana
27 orchards. Forthwith he was so much convinced that when the chant
28 was over, he did not go home straight that night, but loitered in a
29 banana orchard close to his house, with the hope of catching sight
30 of Hanuman, till it was very late in the night.

31 In his student life he used to pass the day-time only in
32 playing and gambolling with his mates, and study at night bolting
33 the doors. And none could know when he prepared his lessons.

34 The disciple asked, "Did you see any visions, sir, during your
35 school-days?"

36 Swamiji: While at school, one night I was meditating within
37 closed doors and had a fairly deep concentration of mind. How long
38 I meditated in that way, I cannot say. It was over, and I still kept my
39 seat, when from the southern wall of that room a luminous figure
40 stepped out and stood in front of me. There was a wonderful
41 radiance on its visage, yet there seemed to be no play of emotion on
42 it. It was the figure of a Sannyasin absolutely calm, shaven-headed,
43 and staff and Kamandalu (a Sannyasin's wooden water-bowl) in
44 hand. He gazed at me for some time and seemed as if he would
45 address me. I too gazed at him in speechless wonder. Then a kind of
46 fright seized me, I opened the door, and hurried out of the room.
47 Then it struck me that it was foolish of me to run away like that,
48 that perhaps he might say something to me. But I have never met
49 that figure since. Many a time and often I have thought that if again

1 I saw him, I would no more be afraid but would speak to him. But I
2 met him no more.

3 Disciple: Did you ever think on the matter afterwards?

4 Swamiji: Yes, but I could find no clue to its solution. I now
5 think it was the Lord Buddha whom I saw.

6 After a short pause, Swamiji said, "When the mind is purified,
7 when one is free from the attachment for lust and gold, one sees
8 lots of visions, most wonderful ones! But one should not pay heed to
9 them. The aspirant cannot advance further if he sets his mind
10 constantly on them. Haven't you heard that Shri Ramakrishna used
11 to say, 'Countless jewels lie uncared for in the outer courts of my
12 beloved Lord's sanctum'? We must come face to face with the
13 Atman; what is the use of setting one's mind on vagaries like
14 those?"

15 After saying these words, Swamiji sat silent for a while, lost
16 in thought over something. He then resumed:

17 "Well, while I was in America I had certain wonderful powers
18 developed in me. By looking into people's eyes I could fathom in a
19 trice the contents of their minds. The workings of everybody's mind
20 would be potent to me, like a fruit on the palm of one's hand. To
21 some I used to give out these things, and of those to whom I
22 communicated these, many would become my disciples; whereas
23 those who came to mix with me with some ulterior motive would
24 not, on coming across this power of mine, even venture into my
25 presence any more.

26 "When I began lecturing in Chicago and other cities, I had to
27 deliver every week some twelve or fifteen or even more lectures at
28 times. This excessive strain on the body and mind would exhaust
29 me to a degree. I seemed to run short of subjects for lectures and
30 was anxious where to find new topics for the morrow's lecture. New
31 thoughts seemed altogether scarce. One day, after the lecture, I lay
32 thinking of what means to adopt next. The thought induced a sort of
33 slumber, and in that state I heard as if somebody standing by me
34 was lecturing--many new ideas and new veins of thought, which I
35 had scarcely heard or thought of in my life. On awaking I
36 remembered them and reproduced them in my lecture. I cannot
37 enumerate how often this phenomenon took place. Many, many
38 days did I hear such lectures while lying in bed. Sometimes the
39 lecture would be delivered in such a loud voice that the inmates of
40 adjacent rooms would hear the sound and ask me the next day,
41 "With whom, Swamiji, were you talking so loudly last night?" I used
42 to avoid the question somehow. Ah, it was a wonderful
43 phenomenon."

44 The disciple was wonder-struck at Swamiji's words and after
45 thinking deeply on the matter said, "Sir, then you yourself must
46 have lectured like that in your subtle body, and sometimes it would
47 be echoed by the gross body also."

48 Swamiji listened and replied, "Well, may be."

49 The topic of his American experiences came up. Swamiji

1 said, "In that country the women are more learned than men. They
2 are all well versed in science and philosophy, and that is why they
3 would appreciate and honour me so much. The men are grinding all
4 day at their work and have very little leisure, whereas the women,
5 by studying and teaching in schools and colleges, have become
6 highly learned. Whichever side you turn your eyes in America, you
7 see the power and influence of women."

8 Disciple: Well, sir, did not the bigoted Christians oppose you?

9 Swamiji: Yes, they did. When people began to honour me,
10 then the Padris were after me. They spread many slanders about
11 me by publishing them in the newspapers. Many asked me to
12 contradict these slanders. But I never took the slightest notice of
13 them. It is my firm conviction that no great work is accomplished in
14 this world by low cunning; so without paying any heed to these vile
15 slanders, I used to work steadily at my mission. The upshot I used
16 to find was that often my slanderers, feeling repentant afterwards,
17 would surrender to me and offer apologies, by themselves
18 contradicting the slanders in the papers. Sometimes it so happened
19 that learning that I had been invited to a certain house, somebody
20 would communicate those slanders to my host, who hearing them,
21 would leave home, locking his door. When I went there to attend the
22 invitation, I found it was deserted and nobody was there. Again a
23 few days afterwards, they themselves, learning the truth, would
24 feel sorry for their previous conduct and come to offer themselves
25 as disciples. The fact is, my son, this whole world is full of mean
26 ways of worldliness. But men of real moral courage and
27 discrimination are never deceived by these. Let the world say what
28 it chooses, I shall tread the path of duty--know this to be the line of
29 action for a hero. Otherwise, if one has to attend day and night to
30 what this man says or that man writes, no great work is achieved in
31 this world. Do you know this Sanskrit Shloka: "Let those who are
32 versed in the ethical codes praise or blame, let Lakshmi, the
33 goddess of Fortune, come or go wherever she wisheth, let death
34 overtake him today or after a century, the wise man never swerves
35 from the path of rectitude."¹⁷⁴ Let people praise you or blame you,
36 let fortune smile or frown upon you, let your body fall today or after
37 a Yuga, see that you do not deviate from the path of Truth. How
38 much of tempest and waves one has to weather, before one reaches
39 the haven of Peace! The greater a man has become, the fiercer
40 ordeal he has had to pass through. Their lives have been tested true
41 by the touchstone of practical life, and only then have they been
42 acknowledged great by the world. Those who are faint-hearted and
43 cowardly sink their barks near the shore, frightened by the raging
44 of waves on the sea. He who is a hero never casts a glance at these.
45 Come what may, I must attain my ideal first--this is Purushakara,
46 manly endeavour; without such manly endeavour no amount of
47 Divine help will be of any avail to banish your inertia.

48 Disciple: Is, then, reliance on Divine help a sign of weakness?

49 Swamiji: In the Shastras real self-surrender and reliance on

¹⁷⁴ ?Bhartrihari's *Nitishataka*.

1 God has been indicated as the culmination of human achievement.
2 But in your country nowadays the way people speak of Daiva or
3 reliance on Divine dispensation is a sign of death, the outcome of
4 great cowardliness; conjuring up some monstrous idea of Godhead
5 and trying to saddle that with all your faults and shortcomings.
6 Haven't you heard Shri Ramakrishna's story about "the sin of killing
7 a cow"?¹⁷⁵ In the end the owner of the garden had to suffer for the
8 sin of killing the cow. Nowadays everybody says: "I am acting as I
9 am being directed by the Lord", and thus throws the burden of both
10 his sins and virtues on the Lord. As if he is himself the lotus-leaf in
11 the water (untouched by it)! If everybody can truly live always in
12 this mood, then he is a Free Soul. But what really happens is that
13 for the "good" I have the credit, but the "bad" Thou, God, art
14 responsible! Praise be to such reliance on God! Without the
15 attainment of the fullness of Knowledge or Divine Love, such a state
16 of absolute reliance on the Lord does not come. He who is truly and
17 sincerely reliant on the Lord goes beyond all idea of the duality of
18 good and bad. The brightest example of the attainment of this state
19 among us at the present time is Nag Mahashaya.¹⁷⁶

20 Then the conversation drifted to the subject of Nag
21 Mahashaya. Swamiji said, "One does not find a second devoted
22 Bhakta like him--Oh, when shall I see him again!"

23 Disciple: He will soon come to Calcutta to meet you, so
24 mother (Nag Mahashaya's wife) has written to me.

25 Swamiji: Shri Ramakrishna used to compare him to King
26 Janaka. A man with such control over all the senses one does not
27 hear of even, much less come across. You must associate with him
28 as much as you can. He is one of Shri Ramakrishna's nearest
29 disciples.

30 Disciple: Many in our part of the country call him a madcap.
31 But I have known him to be a great soul since the very first day of
32 my meeting him. He loves me much, and I have his fervent
33 blessings.

34 Swamiji: Since you have attained the company of such a
35 Mahapurusha (holy soul), what more have you to fear about? As an
36 effect of many lives of Tapasya one is blessed with the company of
37 such a great soul. How does he live at home?

38 Disciple: Sir, he has got no business or anything of the kind.
39 He is always busy in serving the guests who come to his house.
40 Beyond the small sum the Pal Babus give him, he has no other

1 ¹⁷⁵ ?A man had laid out a beautiful garden into which a cow strayed one day
2 and did much injury. The man in rage gave some blows to the cow which killed
3 her. Then to avoid the terrible sin he bethought himself of a trick; knowing that
4 Indra was the presiding deity of the land, he tried to lay the blame on him. Indra
5 perceiving his sophistry appeared on the scene in the guise of a Brahmin and by
6 a number of questions drew from him the answer that each and every item in
7 connection with that garden was the man's own handiwork; whereupon Indra
8 exposed his cunning with the cutting remark, "Well, everything here has been
9 done by you, and Indra alone is responsible for the killing of the cow, eh!"

10 ¹⁷⁶ ?Durga Charan Nag, a disciple of Shri Ramakrishna.
11
12

1 means of subsistence; his expenses, however, are like those in a
2 rich family. But he does not spend a pice for his own enjoyment, all
3 that expense is for the service of others. Service--service of others--
4 this seems to be the great mission of his life. It sometimes strikes
5 me that realising the Atman in all creatures, he is engrossed in
6 serving the whole world as a part and parcel of himself. In the
7 service of others he works incessantly and is not conscious even of
8 his body. I suppose, he always lives on the plane which you, sir, call
9 the superconscious state of the mind.

10 Swamiji: Why should not that be? How greatly was he
11 beloved of Shri Ramakrishna! In your East Bengal, one of Shri
12 Ramakrishna's divine companions has been born in the person of
13 Nag Mahashaya. By his radiance Eastern Bengal has become
14 effulgent.

15 16 17 IV

18 [Place: The rented Math Premises at Belur. Year: 1898,
19 November]

20 It is two or three days since Swamiji has returned from
21 Kashmir. His health is indifferent. When the disciple came to the
22 Math, Swami Brahmananda said, "Since returning from Kashmir,
23 Swamiji does not speak to anybody, he sits in one place rapt in
24 thought; you go to him and by conversation try to draw his mind a
25 little towards worldly objects."

26 The disciple coming to Swamiji's room in the upper storey
27 found him sitting as if immersed in deep mediation. There was no
28 smile on his face, his brilliant eyes had no outward look, as if intent
29 on seeing something within. Seeing the disciple, he only said, "You
30 have come, my son? Please take your seat", and lapsed into silence.
31 The disciple seeing the inside of his left eye reddened asked, "How
32 is it that your eye is red?" "That is nothing", said Swamiji and was
33 again silent. When even after along time Swamiji did not speak, the
34 disciple was a little troubled at heart and touching his feet said,
35 "Won't you relate to me what things you have seen at Amarnath?"
36 By the disciple's touching his feet, the tensy of his mood was
37 broken a little, as if his attention was diverted a little outwards. He
38 said, "Since visiting Amarnath, I feel as if Shiva is sitting on my
39 head for twenty-four hours and would not come down." The disciple
40 heard it with speechless wonder.

41 Swamiji: I underwent great religious austerities at Amarnath
42 and then in the temple of Kshir Bhavani. Go and prepare me some
43 tobacco, I will relate everything to you.

1 The disciple joyfully obeyed the order. Swamiji slowly
2 smoking began to say, "On the way to Amarnath, I made a very
3 steep ascent on the mountain. Pilgrims do not generally travel by
4 that path. But the determination came upon me that I must go by
5 that path, and so I did. The labour of the strenuous ascent has told
6 on my body. The cold there is so biting that you feel it like pin-
7 pricks."

8 Disciple: I have heard that it is the custom to visit the image
9 of Amarnath naked; is it so?

10 Swamiji: Yes, I entered the cave with only my Kaupina on and
11 my body smeared with holy ash; I did not then feel any cold or heat.
12 But when I came out of the temple, I was benumbed by the cold.

13 Disciple: Did you see the holy pigeons? I have heard, in that
14 cold no living creatures are found to live, but a flight of pigeons
15 from some unknown place frequents the place occasionally.

16 Swamiji: Yes, I saw three or four white pigeons; whether they
17 live in the cave or the neighbouring hills, I could not ascertain.

18 Disciple: Sir, I have heard people say that the sight of
19 pigeons on coming out of the temple indicates that one has really
20 been blessed with the vision of Shiva.

21 Swamiji: I have heard that the sight of the pigeons brings to
22 fruition whatever desires one may have.

23 Then Swamiji said that on the way back he returned to
24 Srinagar by the common route by which the pilgrims return. A few
25 days after returning to Srinagar, he went to visit Kshir Bhavani Devi
26 and staying there for seven days worshipped the Devi and made
27 Homa to her with offerings of Kshira (condensed milk). Every day
28 he used to worship the Devi with a maund of Kshira as offering.
29 One day, while worshipping, the thought arose in Swamiji's mind:
30 "Mother Bhavani has been manifesting Her Presence here for
31 untold years. The Mohammedans came and destroyed her temple,
32 yet the people of the place did nothing to protect Her. Alas, if I were
33 then living I could never have borne it silently." When, thinking in
34 this strain, his mind was much oppressed with sorrow and anguish,
35 he distinctly heard the voice of the Mother saying, "It was
36 according to My desire that the Mohammedans destroyed this
37 temple. It is My desire that I should live in a dilapidated temple,
38 otherwise, can I not immediately erect a seven-storied temple of
39 gold here if I like? What can you do? Shall I protect you or shall you
40 protect me!" Swamiji said, "Since hearing that divine voice, I
41 cherish no more plans. The idea of building Maths etc. I have given
42 up; as Mother wills, so it will be." The disciple, speechless with
43 wonder, began to think, "Did he not one day tell me that whatever I
44 saw and heard was but the echo of the Atman within me, that there
45 was nothing outside?"--and fearlessly spoke it out also--"Sir, you
46 used to say that Divine Voices are the echo of our inward thoughts
47 and feelings." Swamiji gravely said, "Whether it be internal or
48 external, if you actually hear with your ears such a disembodied
49 voice, as I have done, can you deny it and call it false? Divine Voices
50 are actually heard, just as you and I are talking."

1 The disciple, without controverting accepted Swamiji's
2 words, for his words always carried conviction.

3 He then brought up the subject of departed spirits, and said,
4 "Sir, these ghosts and departed spirits we hear about--which the
5 Shastras also amply corroborate--are all these true or not?

6 Swamiji: Certainly they are true. Whatever you don't see, are
7 they all false for that? Beyond your sight, millions of universes are
8 revolving at great distances. Because you do not see them, are they
9 non-existent for that? But then, do not put your mind on these
10 subjects of ghosts and spirits. Your mental attitude towards them
11 should be one of indifference. Your duty is to realise the Atman
12 within this body. When you realise the Atman, ghosts and spirits will
13 be your slaves.

14 Disciple: But sir, I think that, if one sees them, it strengthens
15 one's belief in the hereafter, and dispels all doubts about it.

16 Swamiji: You are heroes; do you mean to say that even you
17 shall have to strengthen your belief in the hereafter by seeing
18 ghosts and spirits! You have read so many sciences and scriptures--
19 have mastered so many secrets of this infinite universe--even with
20 such knowledge, you have to acquire the knowledge of the Atman
21 by seeing ghosts and spirits! What a shame!

22 Disciple: Well, sir, have you ever seen ghosts and spirits?

23 Swamiji narrated that a certain deceased relative of his used
24 to come to him as a disembodied spirit. Sometimes it used to bring
25 him information about distant events. But on verification, some of
26 its information was not found to be correct. Afterwards at a certain
27 place of pilgrimage Swamiji prayed for it mentally, wishing it might
28 be released--since then he did not see it again.

29 The disciple then questioned Swamiji if Shraddha or other
30 obsequial ceremonies appeased the departed spirits in any way.
31 Swamiji replied, "That is not impossible." On the disciple's asking
32 for the grounds of that belief Swamiji said, "I will explain the
33 subject to you at length some day. There are irrefutable arguments
34 to prove that the Shraddha ceremony appeases the departed
35 beings. Today I don't feel well. I shall explain it to you another day."
36 But the disciple did not get another opportunity to ask that question
37 to Swamiji.

38 39 V

40 [Place: The rented Math premises at Belur. Year: 1898,
41 November]

42 The Math is still situated in Nilambar Babu's garden house at
43 Belur. It is the month of November. Swamiji is now much engaged
44 in the study and discussion of Sanskrit scriptures. The couplet
45 beginning with "*Achandala-pratihatarayah* ", he composed about
46 this time. Today Swamiji composed the hymn, "*Om Hring Ritam* "
47 etc., and handing it over to the disciple said, "See if there is any
48 metrical defect in these stanzas." The disciple made a copy of the
49 poem for this purpose.

1 On this day it seemed as if the goddess of learning had
2 manifested herself on his tongue. With the disciple he fluently
3 talked about two hours at a stretch in exceedingly melodious
4 Sanskrit. After the disciple had copied the hymn, Swamiji said, "You
5 see, as I write immersed in thought, grammatical slips sometimes
6 occur; therefore I ask you all to look over them."

7 Disciple: Sir, these are not slips, but the licence of genius.

8 Swamiji: You may say so; but why will other people assent to
9 that? The other day I wrote an essay on "What is Hinduism", and
10 some amongst you even are complaining that it was written in a
11 very stiff Bengali. I think, language and thought also, like all other
12 things, become lifeless and monotonous in course of time. Such a
13 state seems to have happened now in this country. On the advent of
14 Shri Ramakrishna, however, a new current has set in, in thought
15 and language. Everything has now to be recast in new moulds.
16 Everything has to be propagated with the stamp of new genius.
17 Look, for example, how the old modes of Sannyasins are breaking,
18 yielding place to a new mould by degrees. The Sannyasins of the
19 present day have to go to distant countries for preaching, and if
20 they go in an ash-besmeared, half-nude body like the Sadhus (holy
21 men) of old, in the first place they won't be taken on board the
22 ships, and even if they anyhow reach foreign countries in that
23 dress, they will have to stay in jail. Everything requires to be
24 changed a little according to place, time, and civilisation.
25 Henceforth I am thinking of writing essays in Bengali. Litterateurs
26 will perhaps rail at them. Never mind--I shall try to cast the Bengali
27 language in a new mould. Nowadays, Bengali writers use too many
28 verbs in their writings; this takes away the force of the language. If
29 one can express the ideas of verbs with adjectives, it adds to the
30 force of the language; henceforth try to write in that style. Try to
31 write articles in that style in the *Udbodhan*. Do you know the
32 meaning of the use of verbs in language? It gives a pause to the
33 thought; hence the use of too many verbs in language is the sign of
34 weakness, like quick breathing, and indicates that there is not much
35 vitality in the language; that is why one cannot lecture well in the
36 Bengali language. He who has control over his language, does not
37 make frequent breaks in his thoughts. As your physique has been
38 rendered languid by living on a dietary of boiled rice and *dal*,
39 similar is the case with your language. In food, in modes of life, in
40 thought, and in language, energy has to be infused. With the
41 infusion of vitality all round and the circulation of blood in all
42 arteries and veins, one should feel the throbbing of new life in
43 everything--then only will the people of this land be able to survive
44 the present terrible struggle for existence; otherwise the country
45 and the race will vanish in the enveloping shadows of death at no
46 distant date.

47 Disciple: Sir, the constitution of the people of this country
48 has been moulded in a peculiar way through long ages. Is it
49 possible to change that within a short time?

50 Swamiji: If you have known the old ways to be wrong, then
51 why don't you, as I say, learn to live in a better way? By your
52 example ten other people will follow suit, and by theirs another fifty

1 people will learn. By this process in course of time the new idea will
2 awaken in the hearts of the whole race. But even if after
3 understanding, you do not act accordingly, I shall know that you are
4 wise in words only--but practically you are fools.

5 Disciple: Your words, sir, infuse great courage, enthusiasm,
6 energy and strength into the heart.

7 Swamiji: By degrees the heart has to be strengthened. If one
8 man is made, it equals the result of a hundred thousand lectures.
9 Making the mind and lips at one, the ideas have to be practised in
10 life. This is what Shri Ramakrishna meant by "allowing no theft in
11 the chamber of thought". You have to be practical in all spheres of
12 work. The whole country has been ruined by masses of theories. He
13 who is the true son of Shri Ramakrishna will manifest the practical
14 side of religious ideas and will set to work with one-pointed
15 devotion without paying heed to the prattling of men or of society.
16 Haven't you heard of the couplet of Tulsidas: "The elephant walks
17 the market-place and a thousand curs bark at him; so the Sadhus
18 have no ill-feeling if worldly people slander them." You have to walk
19 in this way. No count should be taken of the words of people. If one
20 has to pay heed to their praise or blame, no great work can be
21 accomplished in this life. "{Sanskrit}--The Atman is not to be
22 gained by the weak." If there is no strength in the body and mind,
23 the Atman cannot be realised. First you have to build the body by
24 good nutritious food--then only will the mind be strong. The mind is
25 but the subtle part of the body. You must retain great strength in
26 your mind and words. "I am low, I am low"--repeating these ideas in
27 the mind, man belittles and degrades himself. Therefore, the
28 Shastra (*Ashtavakra Samhita*, I.11) says: "{Sanskrit}--He who
29 thinks himself free, free he becomes; he who thinks himself bound,
30 bound he remains--this popular saying is true: 'As one thinks, so one
31 becomes'." He alone who is always awake to the idea of freedom,
32 becomes free; he who thinks he is bound, endures life after life in
33 the state of bondage. It is a fact. This truth holds good both in
34 spiritual and temporal matters. Those who are always down-
35 hearted and dispirited in this life can do no work; from life to life
36 they come and go wailing and moaning. "The earth is enjoyed by
37 heroes"--this is the unfailing truth. Be a hero. Always say, "I have no
38 fear." Tell this to everybody--"Have no fear". Fear is death, fear is
39 sin, fear is hell, fear is unrighteousness, fear is wrong life. All the
40 negative thoughts and ideas that are in this world have proceeded
41 from this evil spirit of fear. This fear alone has kept the sun, air and
42 death in their respective places and functions, allowing none to
43 escape from their bounds. Therefore the Shruti says (Katha
44 Upanishad, II.iii,3) says: "{Sanskrit}--Through fear of this, fire
45 burns, the sun heats; through fear Indra and Vayu are carrying on
46 their functions, and Death stalks upon this earth." When the gods
47 Indra, Chandra, Vayu, Varuna will attain to fearlessness, then will
48 they be one with Brahman, and all this phantasm of the world will
49 vanish. Therefore I say, "Be fearless, be fearless."

50 Swamiji, in saying these words, appeared in the eyes of the
51 disciple like the very embodiment of "fearlessness", and he thought,
52 "How in his presence even the fear of death leaves one and

1 vanishes into nothingness!"

2 Swamiji continued: In this embodied existence, you will be
3 tossed again and again on the waves of happiness and misery,
4 prosperity and adversity--but know them all to be of momentary
5 duration. Never care for them. "I am birthless, the deathless Atman,
6 whose nature is Intelligence"--implanting this idea firmly in your
7 heart, you should pass the days of your life. "I have no birth, no
8 death, I am the Atman untouched by anything"--lose yourself
9 completely in this idea. If you can once become one with this idea,
10 then in the hour of sorrow and tribulation, it will rise of itself in
11 your mind, and you will not have to strive with difficulty to bring it
12 up. The other day, I was a guest of Babu Priyanath Mukherjee at
13 Baidyanath. There I had such a spell of asthma that I felt like dying.
14 But from within, with every breath arose the deep-toned sound, "I
15 am He, I am He". Resting on the pillow, I was waiting for the vital
16 breath to depart, and observing all the time that from within was
17 being heard the sound of "I am He, I am He!" I could hear all along
18 "{Sanskrit}--The Brahman, the One without a second, alone exists,
19 nothing manifold exists in the world."

20 The disciple, struck with amazement said, "Sir, talking with
21 you and listening to your realisations, I feel no necessity for the
22 study of scriptures."

23 Swamiji: No! Scriptures have to be studied also. For the
24 attainment of Jnana, study of scriptures is essential. I shall soon
25 open classes in the Math for them. The Vedas, Upanishads, the
26 Gita, and *Bhagavata* should be studied in the classes, and I shall
27 teach the Panini's *Ashtadhyayi*.

28 Disciple: Have you studied the *Ashtadhyayi* of Panini?

29 Swamiji: When I was in Jaipur, I met a great grammarian and
30 felt a desire to study Sanskrit grammar with him. Although he was
31 a great scholar in that branch, he had not much aptitude for
32 teaching. He explained to me the commentary on the first aphorism
33 for three days continuously, still I could not grasp a bit of it. On the
34 fourth day the teacher got annoyed and said, "Swamiji, I could not
35 make you understand the meaning of the first aphorism even in
36 three days; I fear, you will not be much benefited by my teaching."
37 Hearing these words, a great self-reproach came over me. Putting
38 food and sleep aside, I set myself to study the commentary on the
39 first aphorism independently. Within three hours the sense of the
40 commentary stood explained before me as clearly as anything; then
41 going to my teacher I gave him the sense of the whole commentary.
42 My teacher, hearing me, said, "How could you gather the sense so
43 excellently within three hours, which I failed to explain to you in
44 three days?" After that, every day I began to read chapter after
45 chapter, with the greatest ease. Through concentration of mind
46 everything can be accomplished--even mountains can be crushed to
47 atoms.

48 Disciple: Sir, everything is wonderful about you.

49 Swamiji: There is nothing wonderful in this universe.
50 Ignorance constitutes the only darkness, which confers all things

1 and makes them look mysterious. When everything is lighted by
2 Knowledge, the sense of mystery vanishes from the face of things.
3 Even such an inscrutable thing as Maya, which brings the most
4 impossible things to pass, disappears. Know Him, think of Him, by
5 knowing whom everything else is known. And when that Atman is
6 realised, the purport of all scriptures will be perceived as clearly as
7 a fruit on the palm of one's hand. The Rishis of old attained
8 realisation, and must we fail? We are also men. What has happened
9 once in the life of one individual must, through proper endeavour,
10 be realised in the life of others. History repeats itself. This Atman is
11 the same in all, there is only a difference of manifestation in
12 different individuals. Try to manifest this Atman, and you will see
13 your intellect penetrating into all subjects. The intellect of one who
14 has not realised the Atman is one-sided, whereas the genius of the
15 knower of Atman is all-embracing. With the manifestation of the
16 Atman you will find that science, philosophy, and everything will be
17 easily mastered. Proclaim the glory of the Atman with the roar of a
18 lion, and impart fearlessness unto all beings by saying, "Arise,
19 awake, and stop not till the goal is reached."

20 21 22 VI

23 [*Place: The rented Math premises at Belur. Year: 1898.*]

24 The disciple is staying with Swamiji at the garden-house of
25 Nilambar Babu at Belur for the last two days.

26 Today, Swamiji has given permission to the disciple to stay in
27 his room at night. When the disciple was serving Swamiji and
28 massaging his feet, he spoke to him: "What folly! Leaving such a
29 place as this, you want to go back to Calcutta! See what an
30 atmosphere of holiness is here--the pure air of the Ganga--what an
31 assemblage of Sadhus--will you find anywhere a place like this!"

32 Disciple: Sir, as the fruition of great austerities in past lives, I
33 have been blessed with your company. Now bless me that I may not
34 be overcome by ignorance and delusion any more. Now my mind
35 sometimes is seized with a great longing for some direct spiritual
36 realisation.

37 Swamiji: I also felt like that many times. One day in the
38 Cossipore garden, I had expressed my prayer to Shri Ramakrishna
39 with great earnestness. Then in the evening, at the hour of
40 meditation, I lost the consciousness of the body, and felt that it was
41 absolutely non-existent. I felt that the sun, moon, space, time, ether,
42 and all had been reduced to a homogeneous mass and then melted
43 far away into the unknown; the body-consciousness had almost
44 vanished, and I had nearly merged in the Supreme. But I had just a
45 trace of the feeling of Ego, so I could again return to the world of
46 relativity from the Samadhi. In this state of Samadhi all the
47 difference between "I" and the "Brahman" goes away, everything is
48 reduced into unity, like the waters of the Infinite Ocean--water
49 everywhere, nothing else exists--language and thought, all fail
50 there. Then only is the state "beyond mind and speech" realised in

1 its actuality. Otherwise, so long as the religious aspirant thinks or
2 says, "I am the Brahman"--"I" and "the Brahman", these two entities
3 persist--there is the involved semblance of duality. After that
4 experience, even after trying repeatedly, I failed to bring back the
5 state of Samadhi. On informing Shri Ramakrishna about it, he said,
6 "If you remain day and night in that state, the work of the Divine
7 Mother will not be accomplished; therefore you won't be able to
8 induce that state again; when your work is finished, it will come
9 again."

10 Disciple: On the attainment of the absolute and transcendent
11 Nirvikalpa Samadhi can none return to the world of duality through
12 the consciousness of Egoism?

13 Swamiji: Shri Ramakrishna used to say that the Avataras
14 alone can descend to the ordinary plane from that state of Samadhi,
15 for the good of the world. Ordinary Jivas do not; immersed in that
16 state, they remain alive for a period of twenty-one days; after that,
17 their body drops like a sere leaf from the tree of Samsara (world).

18 Disciple: When in Samadhi the mind is merged, and there
19 remain no waves on the surface of consciousness, where then is the
20 possibility of mental activity and returning to the world through the
21 consciousness of Ego? When there is no mind, then who will
22 descend from Samadhi to the relative plane, and by what means?

23 Swamiji: The conclusion of the Vedanta is that when there is
24 absolute samadhi and cessation of all modifications, there is no
25 return from that state; as the Vedanta Aphorism says: "{Sanskrit}--
26 There is non-return, from scriptural texts." But the Avataras cherish
27 a few desires for the good of the world. By taking hold of that
28 thread, they come down from the superconscious to the conscious
29 state.

30 Disciple: But, sir, if one or two desires remain, how can that
31 state be called the absolute, transcendent Samadhi? For the
32 scriptures say that in that state all the modifications of the mind
33 and all desires are stamped out.

34 Swamiji: How then can there be projection of the universe
35 after Mahapralaya (final dissolution)? At Mahapralaya everything is
36 merged in the Brahman. But even after that, one hears and reads of
37 creation in the scriptures, that projection and contraction (of the
38 universe) go on in wave forms. Like the fresh creation and
39 dissolution of the universe after Mahapralaya, the superconscious
40 and conscious states of Avataras also stand to reason.

41 Disciple: If I argue that at the time of dissolution the seeds of
42 further creation remain almost merged in Brahman, and that it is
43 not absolute dissolution or Nirvikalpa Samadhi?

44 Swamiji: Then I shall ask you to answer how the projection of
45 the universe is possible from Brahman in which there is no shadow
46 of any qualification--which is unaffected and unqualified.

47 Disciple: Why, this is but a seeming projection. The reply to
48 the question is given in the scriptures in this way, that the
49 manifestation of creation from Brahman is only an appearance like

1 the mirage in the desert, but really there has been no creation or
2 anything of the kind. This illusion is produced by Maya, which is the
3 negation of the eternally existing Brahman, and hence unreal.

4 Swamiji: If the creation is false, then you can also regard the
5 Nirvikalpa Samadhi of Jiva and his return therefrom as seeming
6 appearances. Jiva is Brahman by his nature. How can he have any
7 experience of bondage? Your desire to realise the truth that you are
8 Brahman is also a hallucination in that case--for the scripture says,
9 "You are already that." Therefore, "{Sanskrit}--This is verily your
10 bondage that you are practising the attainment of Samadhi."

11 Disciple: This is a great dilemma. If I am Brahman, why don't
12 I always realise it?

13 Swamiji: In order to attain to that realisation in the conscious
14 plane, some instrumentality is required. The mind is that
15 instrument in us. But it is a non-intelligent substance. It only
16 appears to be intelligent through the light of the Atman behind.
17 Therefore the author of the Panchadashi (III.40) says: "{Sanskrit}--
18 The Shakti appears to be intelligent by the reflection of the
19 intelligence of the Atman." Hence the mind also appears to us like
20 an intelligent substance. Therefore it is certain that you won't be
21 able to know the Atman, the Essence of Intelligence, through the
22 mind. You have to go beyond the mind--for only the Atman exists
23 there--there the object of knowledge becomes the same as the
24 instrument of knowledge. The knower, knowledge, and the
25 instrument of knowledge become one and the same. It is therefore
26 that the Shruti says, "{Sanskrit}--Through what are you to know the
27 Eternal Subject?" The real fact is that there is a state beyond the
28 conscious plane, where there is no duality of the knower,
29 knowledge, and the instrument of knowledge etc. When the mind is
30 merged, that state is perceived. I say it is "perceived," because
31 there is no other word to express that state. Language cannot
32 express that state. Shankaracharya has styled it "Transcendent
33 Perception" (Aparokshanubhuti). Even after that transcendent
34 perception Avatars descend to the relative plane and give glimpses
35 of that--therefore it is said that the Vedas and other scriptures have
36 originated from the perception of Seers. The case of ordinary Jivas
37 is like that of the salt-doll which attempting to sound the depths of
38 the ocean melted into it. Do you see? The sum and substance of it
39 is--you have only got to know that you are Eternal Brahman.

40 You are already that, only the intervention of a non-
41 intelligent mind (which is called Maya in the scriptures) is hiding
42 that knowledge. When the mind composed of subtle matter is
43 quelled, the Atman is effulgent by Its own radiance. One proof of
44 the fact that Maya or mind is an illusion is that the mind by itself is
45 non-intelligent and of the nature of darkness; and it is the light of
46 the Atman behind, that makes it appear as intelligent. When you
47 will understand this, the mind will merge in the unbroken Ocean of
48 Intelligence; then you will realise: "{Sanskrit}--This Atman is
49 Brahman."

50 Then Swamiji, addressing the disciple, said, "You feel sleepy,
51 then go to sleep."

1 In the night the disciple had a wonderful dream, as a result
2 of which he earnestly begged Swamiji's permission to worship him.
3 Swamiji had to acquiesce, and after the ceremony was over he said
4 to the disciple, "Well, your worship is finished, but Premananda will
5 be in a rage at your sacrilegious act of worshipping my feet in the
6 flower-tray meant for Shri Ramakrishna's worship." Before his
7 words were finished, Swami Premananda came there, and Swamiji
8 said to him, "See what a sacrilege he has committed! With the
9 requisites of Shri Ramakrishna's worship, he has worshipped me!"
10 Swami Premananda, smiling, said, "Well done! Are you and Shri
11 Ramakrishna different?"--hearing which the disciple felt at ease.

12 The disciple is an orthodox Hindu. Not to speak of prohibited
13 food, he does not even take food touched by another. Therefore
14 Swamiji sometimes used to refer to him as "priest". Swamiji, while
15 he was eating biscuits with his breakfast, said to Swami
16 Sadananda, "Bring the priest in here." When the disciple came to
17 Swamiji, he gave some portion of his food to him to eat. Finding the
18 disciple accepting it without any demur, Swamiji said, "Do you know
19 what you have eaten now? These are made from eggs." In reply, the
20 disciple said, "Whatever may be in it, I have no need to know;
21 taking this sacramental food from you, I have become immortal."

22 Thereupon Swamiji said, "I bless you that from this day all
23 your egoism of caste, colour, high birth, religious merit and
24 demerit, and all, may vanish for ever!". . .

25 VII

26 [Place: The rented Math premises at Belur. Year: 1898]

27 The disciple has come to the Math this morning. As soon as
28 he stood after touching the feet of Swamiji, Swamiji said, "What's
29 the use of your continuing in service any more? Why not go in for
30 some business?" The disciple was then employed as a private tutor
31 in some family. Asked about the profession of teaching, Swamiji
32 said, "If one does the work of teaching boys for a long time, one
33 gets blunt in intellect; one's intelligence is not manifested. If one
34 stays among a crowd of boys day and night, gradually one gets
35 obtuse. So give up the working of teaching boys."

36 Disciple: What shall I do, then?

37 Swamiji: Why, if you want to live the life of a worldly man and
38 have a desire for earning money, then go over to America. I shall
39 give you directions for business. You will find that in five years you
40 will get together a lot of money.

41 Disciple: What business shall I go in for? And where am I to
42 get the money from?

43 Swamiji: What nonsense are you talking? Within you lies
44 indomitable power. Only thinking, "I am nothing, I am nothing", you
45 have become powerless. Why, you alone! The whole race has
46 become so. Go round the world once, and you will find how
47 vigorously the life-current of other nations is flowing. And what are
48 you doing? Even after learning so much, you go about the doors of
49

1 others, crying, "Give me employment". Trampled under others' feet
2 doing slavery for others, are you men any more? You are not worth
3 a pin's head! In this fertile country with abundant water-supply,
4 where nature produces wealth and harvest a thousand times more
5 than in others, you have no food for your stomach, no clothes to
6 cover your body! In this country of abundance, the produce of
7 which has been the cause of the spread of civilisation in other
8 countries, you are reduced to such straits! Your condition is even
9 worse than that of a dog. And you glory in your Vedas and Vedanta!
10 A nation that cannot provide for its simple food and clothing, which
11 always depends on others for its subsistence--what is there for it to
12 vaunt about? Throw your religious observances overboard for the
13 present and be first prepared for the struggle for existence. People
14 of foreign countries are turning out such golden results from the
15 raw materials produced in your country, and you, like asses of
16 burden, are only carrying their load. The people of foreign
17 countries import Indian raw goods, manufacture various
18 commodities by bringing their intelligence to bear upon them, and
19 become great; whereas you have locked up your intelligence,
20 thrown away your inherited wealth to others, and roam about
21 crying piteously for food.

22 Disciple: In what way, sir, can the means of subsistence be
23 procured?

24 Swamiji: Why, the means are in your hands. You blindfold
25 your eyes, and said, "I am blind and can see nothing." Tear off the
26 folds from your eyes and you will see the whole world lighted by the
27 rays of the midday sun. If you cannot procure money, go to foreign
28 countries, working your passage as a Lascar. Take Indian cloth,
29 towels, bamboo-work, and other indigenous products, and peddle in
30 the streets of Europe and America; you will find how greatly Indian
31 products are appreciated in foreign markets even now. In America I
32 found, some Mohammedans of the Hooghly district had grown rich
33 by peddling Indian commodities in this way. Have you even less
34 intelligence than they? Take, for example, such excellent fabric as
35 the Varanasi-made Saris of India, the like of which are not produced
36 anywhere else in the world. Go to America with this cloth. Have
37 gowns made out of this fabric and sell them, and you will see how
38 much you earn.

39 Disciple: Sir, why will they wear gowns made of the Saris of
40 Varanasi? I have heard that clothes designed diversely are not to
41 the taste of the ladies in those countries.

42 Swamiji: Whether they will receive or not, I shall look to that.
43 It is for you to exert yourself and go over there. I have many friends
44 in that country, to whom I shall introduce you. At first I shall
45 request them to take this cloth up among themselves. Then you will
46 find many will follow suit, and at last you won't be able to keep the
47 supply up to the enormous demand.

48 Disciple: Where shall I get the capital for the business?

49 Swamiji: I shall somehow give you a start; for the rest you
50 must depend on your own exertions. "If you die, you get to heaven;
51 and if you win, you enjoy the earth" (Gita). Even if you die in this

1 attempt, well and good, many will take up the work, following your
2 example. And if you succeed, you will live a life of great opulence.

3 Disciple: Yes, sir, so it is. But I cannot muster sufficient
4 courage.

5 Swamiji: That is what I say, my son, you have no Shraddha--
6 no faith in yourselves. What will you achieve? You will have neither
7 material nor spiritual advancement. Either put forth your energy in
8 the way I have suggested and be successful in life, or give up all
9 and take to the path we have chosen. Serve the people of all
10 countries through spiritual instruction--then only will you get your
11 dole of food like us. If there is no mutual exchange, do you think
12 anybody cares for anybody else? You observe in our case, that
13 because we give the householders some spiritual instructions, they
14 in return give us some morsels of food. If you do nothing, why will
15 they give you food? You observe so much misery in mere service
16 and slavery of others, still you are not waking up; and so your
17 misery also is never at an end. This is certainly the delusive power
18 of Maya! In the West I have found that those who are in the
19 employment of others have their seats fixed in the back rows in the
20 Parliament, while the front seats are reserved for those who have
21 made themselves famous by self-exertion, or education, or
22 intelligence. In Western countries there is no botheration of caste.
23 Those on whom Fortune smiles for their industry and exertion are
24 alone regarded as leaders of the country and the controllers of its
25 destiny. Whereas in your country, you are simply vaunting your
26 superiority in caste, till at last you cannot even get a morsel of food!
27 You have not the capacity to manufacture a needle, and you dare to
28 criticise the English! Fools! Sit at their feet and learn from them the
29 arts, industries, and the practicality necessary for the struggle for
30 existence. You will be esteemed once more when you will become
31 fit. Then they too will pay heed to your words. Without the
32 necessary preparation, what will mere shouting in the Congress
33 avail?

34 Disciple: But, sir, all the educated men of the country have
35 joined it.

36 Swamiji: Well, you consider a man as educated if only he can
37 pass some examinations and deliver good lectures. The education
38 which does not help the common mass of people to equip
39 themselves for the struggle for life, which does not bring out
40 strength of character, a spirit of philanthropy, and the courage of a
41 lion--is it worth the name? Real education is that which enables one
42 to stand on one's own legs. The education that you are receiving
43 now in schools and colleges is only making you a race of dyspeptics.
44 You are working like machines merely, and living a jelly-fish
45 existence.

46 The peasant, the shoemaker, the sweeper, and such other
47 lower classes of India have much greater capacity for work and self-
48 reliance than you. They have been silently working through long
49 ages and producing the entire wealth of the land, without a word of
50 complaint. Very soon they will get above you in position. Gradually
51 capital is drifting into their hands, and they are not so much

1 troubled with wants as you are. Modern education has changed
2 your fashion, but new avenues of wealth lie yet undiscovered for
3 want of the inventive genius. You have so long oppressed these
4 forbearing masses; now is the time for their retribution. And you
5 will become extinct in your vain search for employment, making it
6 the be-all and end-all of your life.

7 Disciple: Sir, although our power of originality is less than
8 that of other countries, still the lower classes of India are being
9 guided by our intelligence. So where will they get the power and
10 culture to overcome the higher classes in the struggle for
11 existence?

12 Swamiji: Never mind if they have not read a few books like
13 you--if they have not acquired your tailor-made civilisation. What do
14 these matter? But they are the backbone of the nation in all
15 countries. If these lower classes stop work, from where will you get
16 your food and clothing? If the sweepers of Calcutta stop work for a
17 day, it creates a panic; and if they strike for three days, the whole
18 town will be depopulated by the outbreak of epidemics. If the
19 labourers stop work, your supply of food and clothes also stops. And
20 you regard them as low-class people and vaunt your own culture!

21 Engrossed in the struggle for existence, they had not the
22 opportunity for the awakening of knowledge. They have worked so
23 long uniformly like machines guided by human intelligence, and the
24 clever educated section have taken the substantial part of the fruits
25 of their labour. In every country this has been the case. But times
26 have changed. The lower classes are gradually awakening to this
27 fact and making a united front against this, determined to exact
28 their legitimate dues. The masses of Europe and America have been
29 the first to awaken and have already begun the fight. Signs of this
30 awakening have shown themselves in India, too, as is evident from
31 the number of strikes among the lower classes nowadays. The
32 upper classes will no longer be able to repress the lower, try they
33 ever so much. The well-being of the higher classes now lies in
34 helping the lower to get their legitimate rights.

35 Therefore I say, set yourselves to the task of spreading
36 education among the masses. Tell them and make them understand,
37 "You are our brothers--a part and parcel of our bodies, and we love
38 you and never hate you." If they receive this sympathy from you,
39 their enthusiasm for work will be increased a hundredfold. Kindle
40 their knowledge with the help of modern science. Teach them
41 history, geography, science, literature, and along with these the
42 profound truths of religion. In exchange for that teaching, the
43 poverty of the teachers will also disappear. By mutual exchange
44 both parties will become friendly to each other.

45 Disciple: But, sir, with the spread of learning among them,
46 they too will in course of time have fertile brains but become idle
47 and inactive like us and live on the fruits of the labour of the next
48 lower classes.

49 Swamiji: Why shall it be so? Even with the awakening of
50 knowledge, the potter will remain a potter, the fisherman a
51 fisherman, the peasant a peasant. Why should they leave their

1 hereditary calling? "{Sanskrit} --Don't give up the work to which
2 you were born, even if it be attended with defects." If they are
3 taught in this way, why should they give up their respective
4 callings? Rather they will apply their knowledge to the better
5 performance of the work to which they have been born. A number
6 of geniuses are sure to arise from among them in the course of
7 time. You (the higher classes) will take these into your own fold.
8 The Brahmins acknowledged the valiant king Vishvamitra as a
9 Brahmin, and think how grateful the whole Kshatriya race became
10 to the Brahmins for this act! By such sympathy and co-operation
11 even birds and beasts become one's own--not to speak of men!

12 Disciple: Sir, what you say is true, but there yet seems to be
13 a wide gulf between the higher and lower classes. To bring the
14 higher classes to sympathise with the lower seems to be a difficult
15 affair in India.

16 Swamiji: But without that there is no well-being for your
17 upper classes. You will be destroyed by internecine quarrels and
18 fights--which you have been having so long. When the masses will
19 wake up, they will come to understand your oppression of them,
20 and by a puff of their mouth you will be entirely blown away! It is
21 they who have introduced civilisation amongst you; and it is they
22 who will then pull it down. Think how at the hands of the Gauls the
23 mighty ancient Roman civilisation crumbled into dust! Therefore I
24 say, try to rouse these lower classes from slumber by imparting
25 learning and culture to them. When they will awaken--and awaken
26 one day they must--they also will not forget your good services to
27 them and will remain grateful to you.

28 After such conversation Swamiji, addressing the disciple,
29 said: Let these subjects drop now--come, tell me what you have
30 decided. Do something, whatever it be. Either go in for some
31 business, or like us come to the path of real Sannyasa, "{Sanskrit}--
32 For one's own liberation and for the good of the world." The latter
33 path is of course the best way there is. What good will it do to be a
34 worthless householder? You have understood that everything in life
35 is transitory: "{Sanskrit}--Life is as unstable as the water on the
36 lotus leaf." Therefore if you have the enthusiasm for acquiring this
37 knowledge of the Atman, do not wait any more but come forward
38 immediately. "{Sanskrit} --The very day that you feel dispassion for
39 the world, that very day renounce and take to Sannyasa"
40 (Jabalopanisad, 4). Sacrifice your life for the good of others and go
41 round to the doors of people carrying this message of fearlessness
42 "{Sanskrit}--Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached."

44 VIII

45 [*Place: Calcutta. Year: 1898*]

46 Swamiji accompanied by Sister Nivedita, Swami Yogananda,
47 and others has come to visit the Zoological Gardens at Alipur in the
48 afternoon. Rai Rambrahma Sanyal Bahadur, Superintendent of the
49 Gardens, cordially received them and took them round the Gardens.
50 Swamiji, as he went on seeing the various species of animals,

1 casually referred to the Darwinian theory of the gradual evolution
2 of animals. The disciple remembers how, entering the room for
3 snakes, he pointed to a huge python with circular rings on its body,
4 with the remark: "From this the tortoise has evolved in course of
5 time. That very snake, by remaining stationary at one spot for a
6 long time, has gradually turned hard-backed." He further said in
7 fun to the disciple, "You eat tortoises, don't you? Darwin holds that
8 it is this snake that has evolved into the tortoise in the process of
9 time--then you eat snakes too!" The disciple protested, "Sir, when a
10 thing is metamorphosed into another thing through evolution, it has
11 no more its former shape and habits; then how can you say that
12 eating tortoise means eating snakes also?"

13 This answer created laughter among the party. After seeing
14 some other things, Swamiji went to Rambrahma Babu's quarters in
15 the Gardens, where he took tea, and others also did the same.
16 Finding that the disciples hesitated to sit at the same table and
17 partake of the sweets and tea which Sister Nivedita had touched,
18 Swamiji repeatedly urged him to take them, which he was induced
19 to do, and drinking water himself, he gave the rest of it to the
20 disciple to drink. After this there was a short conversation on
21 Darwin's evolution theory.

22 Rambrahma Babu: What is your opinion of the evolution
23 theory of Darwin and the causes he has put forward for it?

24 Swamiji: Taking for granted that Darwin is right, I cannot yet
25 admit that it is the final conclusion about the causes of evolution.

26 Rambrahma Babu: Did the ancient scholars of our country
27 discuss this subject?

28 Swamiji: The subject has been nicely discussed in the
29 Samkhya Philosophy. I am of opinion that the conclusion of the
30 ancient Indian philosophers is the last word on the causes of
31 evolution.

32 Rambrahma Babu: I shall be glad to hear of it, if it can be
33 explained in a few words.

34 Swamiji: You are certainly aware of the laws of struggle for
35 existence, survival of the fittest, natural selection, and so forth,
36 which have been held by the Western scholars to be the causes of
37 elevating a lower species to a higher. But none of these has been
38 advocated as the cause of that in the system of Patanjali. Patanjali
39 holds that the transformation of one species into another is effected
40 by the "in-filling of nature" {Sanskrit}. It is not that this is done by
41 the constant struggle against obstacles. In my opinion, struggle and
42 competition sometimes stand in the way of a being's attaining its
43 perfection. If the evolution of an animal is effected by the
44 destruction of a thousand others, then one must confess that this
45 evolution is doing very little good to the world. Taking it for granted
46 that it conduces to physical well-being, we cannot help admitting
47 that it is a serious obstacle to spiritual development. According to
48 the philosophers of our country, every being is a perfect Soul, and
49 the diversity of evolution and manifestation of nature is simply due
50 to the difference in the degree of manifestation of this Soul. The

1 moment the obstacles to the evolution and manifestation of nature
2 are completely removed, the Soul manifests Itself perfectly.
3 Whatever may happen in the lower strata of nature's evolutions, in
4 the higher strata at any rate, it is not true that it is only by
5 constantly struggling against obstacles that one has to go beyond
6 them. Rather it is observed that there the obstacles give way and a
7 greater manifestation of the Soul takes place through education
8 and culture, through concentration and meditation, and above all
9 through sacrifice. Therefore, to designate the obstacles not as the
10 effects but as the causes of the Soul-manifestation, and describe
11 them as aiding this wonderful diversity of nature, is not consonant
12 with reason. The attempt to remove evil from the world by killing a
13 thousand evil-doers, only adds to the evil in the world. But if the
14 people can be made to desist from evil-doing by means of spiritual
15 instruction, there is no more evil in the world. Now, see how
16 horrible the Western struggle theory becomes!

17 Rambrahma Babu was astonished to hear Swamiji's words
18 and said at length, "India badly needs at the present moment men
19 well versed in the Eastern and Western philosophies like you. Such
20 men alone are able to point out the mistakes of the educated people
21 who see only one side of the shield. I am extremely delighted to
22 hear your original explanation of the evolution theory."

23 Shortly after, Swamiji with the party left for Baghbazar and
24 reached Balaram Bose's house at about 8 p.m. After a short rest, he
25 came to the drawing-room, where there was a small gathering, all
26 eager to hear of the conversation at the Zoological Gardens in
27 detail. When Swamiji came to the room, the disciple, as the
28 spokesman of the meeting, raised that very topic.

29 Disciple: Sir, I have not been able to follow all your remarks
30 about the evolution theory at the Zoo. Will you kindly recapitulate
31 them in simple words?

32 Swamiji: Why, which points did you fail to grasp?

33 Disciple: You have often told us that it is the power to
34 struggle with the external forces which constitutes the sign of life
35 and the first step towards improvement. Today you seem to have
36 spoken just the opposite thing.

37 Swamiji: Why should I speak differently? It was you who
38 could not follow me. In the animal kingdom we really see such laws
39 as struggle for existence, survival of the fittest, etc., evidently at
40 work. Therefore Darwin's theory seems true to a certain extent. But
41 in the human kingdom, where there is the manifestation of
42 rationality, we find just the reverse of those laws. For instance, in
43 those whom we consider really great men or ideal characters, we
44 scarcely observe any external struggle. In the animal kingdom
45 instinct prevails; but the more a man advances, the more he
46 manifests rationality. For this reason, progress in the rational
47 human kingdom cannot be achieved, like that in the animal
48 kingdom, by the destruction of others! The highest evolution of man
49 is effected through sacrifice alone. A man is great among his
50 fellows in proportion as he can sacrifice for the sake of others,
51 while in the lower strata of the animal kingdom, that animal is the

1 strongest which can kill the greatest number of animals. Hence the
2 struggle theory is not equally applicable to both kingdoms. Man's
3 struggle is in the mental sphere. A man is greater in proportion as
4 he can control his mind. When the mind's activities are perfectly at
5 rest, the Atman manifests Itself. The struggle which we observe in
6 the animal kingdom for the preservation of the gross body obtains
7 in the human plane of existence for gaining mastery over the mind
8 or for attaining the state of balance. Like a living tree and its
9 reflection in the water of a tank, we find opposite kinds of struggle
10 in the animal and human kingdoms.

11 Disciple: Why then do you advocate so much the
12 improvement of our physique?

13 Swamiji: Well, do you consider yourselves as men? You have
14 got only a bit of rationality--that's all. How will you struggle with
15 the mind unless the physique be strong? Do you deserve to be
16 called men any longer--the highest evolution in the world? What
17 have you got besides eating, sleeping, and satisfying the creature-
18 comforts? Thank your stars that you have not developed into
19 quadrupeds yet! Shri Ramakrishna used to say, "He is the man who
20 is conscious of his dignity". You are but standing witnesses to the
21 lowest class of insect-like existence of which the scripture speaks,
22 that they simply undergo the round of births and deaths without
23 being allowed to go to any of the higher spheres! You are simply
24 living a life of jealousy among yourselves and are objects of hatred
25 in the eyes of the foreigner. You are animals, therefore I
26 recommend you to struggle. Leave aside theories and all that. Just
27 reflect calmly on your own everyday acts and dealings with others
28 and find out whether you are not a species of beings intermediate
29 between the animal and human planes of existence! First build up
30 your own physique. Then only you can get control over the mind.
31 "{Sanskrit}--This Self is not to be attained by the weak" (Katha
32 Upanishad, I.ii.23).

33 Disciple: But, sir, the commentator (Shankara) has
34 interpreted the word "weak" to mean "devoid of Brahmacharya or
35 continence".

36 Swamiji: Let him. I say, "The physically weak are unfit for the
37 realisation of the Self."

38 Disciple: But many dull-headed persons also have strong
39 bodies.

40 Swamiji: If you can take the pains to give them good ideas
41 once, they will be able to work them out sooner than physically unfit
42 people. Don't you find that in a weak physique it is difficult to
43 control the sex-appetite or anger? Lean people are quickly incensed
44 and are quickly overcome by the sex-instinct.

45 Disciple: But we find exceptions to the rule also.

46 Swamiji: Who denies it? Once a person gets control over the
47 mind, it matters little whether the body remains strong or becomes
48 emaciated. The gist of the thing is that unless one has a good
49 physique one can never aspire to Self-realisation. Shri Ramakrishna
50 used to say, "One fails to attain realisation if there be but a slight

1 defect in the body".

2 Finding that Swamiji had grown excited, the disciple did not
3 dare to push the topic further, but remained quiet accepting
4 Swamiji's view. Shortly after, Swamiji, addressing those present,
5 said, "By the bye, have you heard that this `priest' has today taken
6 food which was touched by Nivedita? That he took the sweets
7 touched by her did not matter so much, but--here he addressed the
8 disciple--"how did you drink the water she had touched?"

9 Disciple: But it was you, sir, who ordered me to do so. Under
10 the Guru's orders I can do anything. I was unwilling to drink the
11 water though. But you drank it and I had to take it as Prasada.

12 Swamiji: Well, your caste is gone for ever. Now nobody will
13 respect you as a Brahmin of the priest class.

14 Disciple: I don't care if they do not. I can take the rice from
15 the house of a Pariah if you order me to.

16 These words set Swamiji and all those present in a roar of
17 laughter.

18 The conversation lasted till it was past midnight, when the
19 disciple came back to his lodging, only to find it bolted. So he had to
20 pass the night out of doors.

21 The wheel of Time has rolled on in its unrelenting course,
22 and Swamiji, Swami Yogananda, and Sister Nivedita are now no
23 more on earth. Only the sacred memory of their lives remains--and
24 the disciple considers himself blessed to be able to record, in ever
25 so meagre a way, these reminiscences.

26

27 IX

28 [*Place: The rented Math premises at Belur. Year: 1898*]

29 The disciple has come to the Math (monastery) today. It has
30 now been removed to Nilambar Babu's garden-house, and the site
31 of the present Math has recently been purchased. Swamiji is out
32 visiting the new Math-grounds at about four o'clock, taking the
33 disciple with him. The site was then mostly jungle, but on the north
34 side of it there was a one-storied brick-built house. Swamiji began
35 to walk over the site and to discuss in the course of conversation
36 the plan of work of the future Math and its rules and regulations.

37 Reaching by degrees the veranda on the east side of the one-
38 storied house, Swamiji said, "Here would be the place for the
39 Sadhus to live. It is my wish to convert this Math into a chief centre
40 of spiritual practices and the culture of knowledge. The power that
41 will have its rise from here will flood the whole world and turn the
42 course of men's lives into different channels; from this place will
43 spring forth ideals which will be the harmony of Knowledge,
44 Devotion, Yoga, and Work; at a nod from the men of this Math a life-
45 giving impetus will in time be given to the remotest corners of the
46 globe; while all true seekers after spirituality will in course of time
47 assemble here. A thousand thoughts like these are arising in my
48 mind.

1 "Yonder plot of land on the south side of the Math will be the
2 centre of learning, where grammar, philosophy, science, literature,
3 rhetoric, the Shrutis, Bhakti scriptures, and English will be taught.
4 This Temple of Learning will be fashioned after the Tols of old days.
5 Boys who are Brahmacharins from their childhood will live there
6 and study the scriptures. Their food and clothing and all will be
7 supplied from the Math. After a course of five years' training these
8 Brahmacharins may, if they like, go back to their homes and lead
9 householders' lives; or they may embrace the monastic life with the
10 sanction of the venerable Superiors of the Math. The authorities of
11 the Math will have the power to turn out at once any of these
12 Brahmacharins who will be found refractory or of a bad character.
13 Teaching will be imparted here irrespective of caste or creed, and
14 those who will have objection to this will not be admitted. But those
15 who would like to observe their particular caste-rites, should make
16 separate arrangements for their food, etc. They will only attend the
17 classes along with the rest. The Math authorities shall keep a
18 vigilant watch over the character of these also. None but those that
19 are trained here shall be eligible for Sannyasa. Won't it be nice
20 when by degrees this Math will begin to work like this?"

21 Disciple: Then you want to reintroduce into the country the
22 ancient institution of living a Brahmacharin's life in the house of the
23 Guru?

24 Swamiji: Exactly. The modern system of education gives no
25 facility for the development of the knowledge of Brahman. We must
26 found Brahmacharya Homes as in times of old. But now we must lay
27 their foundations on a broad basis, that is to say, we must introduce
28 a good deal of change into it to suit the requirements of the times.
29 Of this I shall speak to you later on.

30 "That piece of land to the south of the Math," Swamiji
31 resumed, "we must also purchase in time. There we shall start an
32 Annasatra--a Feeding Home. There arrangements will be made for
33 serving really indigent people in the spirit of God. The Feeding
34 Home will be named after Shri Ramakrishna. Its scope will at first
35 be determined by the amount of funds. For the matter of that, we
36 may start it with two or three inmates. We must train energetic
37 Brahmacharins to conduct this Home. They will have to collect the
38 funds for its maintenance--ay, even by begging. The Math will not
39 be allowed to give any pecuniary help in this matter. The
40 Brahmacharins themselves shall have to raise funds for it. Only
41 after completing their five years' training in this Home of Service,
42 will they be allowed to join the Temple of Learning branch. After a
43 training of ten years--five in the Feeding Home and five in the
44 Temple of Learning--they will be allowed to enter the life of
45 Sannyasa, having initiation from the Math authorities--provided of
46 course they have a mind to become Sannyasins and the Math
47 authorities consider them fit for Sannyasa and are willing to admit
48 them into it. But the Head of the Math will be free to confer
49 Sannyasa on any exceptionally meritorious Brahmacharin, at any
50 time, in defiance of this rule. The ordinary Brahmacharins, however,
51 will have to qualify themselves for Sannyasa by degrees, as I have
52 just said. I have all these ideas in my brain."

1 Disciple: Sir, what will be the object of starting three such
2 sections in the Math?

3 Swamiji: Didn't you understand me? First of all, comes the
4 gift of food; next is the gift of learning, and the highest of all is the
5 gift of knowledge. We must harmonise these three ideals in the
6 Math. By continuously practising the gift of food, the
7 Brahmacharins will have the idea of practical work for the sake of
8 others and that of serving all beings in the spirit of the Lord firmly
9 impressed on their minds. This will gradually purify their minds and
10 lead to the manifestation of Sattvika (pure and unselfish) ideas. And
11 having this the Brahmacharins will in time acquire the fitness for
12 attaining the knowledge of Brahman and become eligible for
13 Sannyasa.

14 Disciple: Sir, if, as you say, the gift of (spiritual) knowledge is
15 the highest, why then start sections for the gift of food and the gift
16 of learning?

17 Swamiji: Can't you understand this point even now? Listen. If
18 in these days of food scarcity you can, for the disinterested service
19 of others, get together a few morsels of food by begging or any
20 other means, and give them to the poor and suffering, that will not
21 only be doing good to yourself and the world, but you will at the
22 same time get everybody's sympathy for this noble work. The
23 worldly-minded people, tied down to lust and wealth, will have faith
24 in you for this labour of love and come forward to help you. You will
25 attract a thousand times as many men by this unasked-for gift of
26 food, as you will by the gift of learning or of (spiritual) knowledge.
27 In no other work will you get so much public sympathy as you will
28 in this. In a truly noble work, not to speak of men, even God Himself
29 befriends the doer. When people have thus been attracted, you will
30 be able to stimulate the desire for learning and spirituality in them.
31 Therefore the gift of food comes first.

32 Disciple; Sir, to start Feeding Homes we want a site first,
33 then buildings, and then the funds to work them. Where will so
34 much money come from?

35 Swamiji: The southern portion of the Math premises I am
36 leaving at your disposal immediately, and I am getting a thatched
37 house erected under that Bael tree. You just find out one or two
38 blind or infirm people and apply yourself to their service. Go and
39 beg food for them yourself; cook with your own hands and feed
40 them. If you continue this for some days, you will find that lots of
41 people will be coming forward to assist you with plenty of money.
42 "{Sanskrit}--Never, my son, does a doer of good come to grief."
43 (Gita, VI.40)

44 Disciple: Yes, it is true. But may not that kind of continuous
45 work become a source of bondage in the long run?

46 Swamiji: If you have no eye to the fruits of work, and if you
47 have a passionate longing to go beyond all selfish desires, then
48 these good works will help to break your bonds, I tell you. How
49 thoughtless of you to say that such work will lead to bondage! Such
50 disinterested work is the only means of rooting out the bondage due

1 to selfish work. "{Sanskrit} There is no other way out"
2 (Shvetasvatara Upanishad, III.8).

3 Disciple: Your words encourage me to hear in detail about
4 your ideas of the Feeding Home and Home of Service.

5 Swamiji: We must build small well-ventilated rooms for the
6 poor. Only two or three of them will live in each room. They must be
7 given good bedding, clean clothes, and so on. There will be a doctor
8 for them, who will inspect them once or twice a week according to
9 his convenience. The Sevashrama (Home of Service) will be as a
10 ward attached to the Annasatra, where the sick will be nursed.
11 Then, gradually, as funds will accumulate, we shall build a big
12 kitchen. The Annasatra must be astir with constant shouts of food
13 demanded and supplied. The rice-gruel must run into the Ganga
14 and whiten its water! When I see such a Feeding Home started, it
15 will bring solace to my heart.

16 Disciple: When you have this kind of desire, most likely it will
17 materialise into action in course of time.

18 Hearing the disciple's words, Swamiji remained motionless
19 for a while, gazing on the Ganga. Then with a beaming countenance
20 he addressed the disciple, saying: "Who knows which of you will
21 have the lion roused up in him, and when? If in a single one
22 amongst you Mother rouses the fire, there will be hundreds of
23 Feeding Homes like that. Knowledge and Power and Devotion--
24 everything exists in the fullest measure in all beings. We only notice
25 the varying degrees of their manifestation and call one great and
26 another little. In the minds of all creatures a screen intervenes as it
27 were and hides the perfect manifestation from view. The moment
28 that is removed, everything is settled; whatever you want, whatever
29 you will desire, will come to pass."

30 Swamiji continued: "If the Lord wills, we shall make this
31 Math a great centre of harmony. Our Lord is the visible
32 embodiment of the harmony of all ideals. He will be established on
33 earth if we keep alive that spirit of harmony here. We must see to it
34 that people of all creeds and sects, from the Brahmana down to the
35 Chandala, may come here and find their respective ideals
36 manifested. The other day when I installed Shri Ramakrishna on
37 the Math grounds, I felt as if his ideas shot forth from this place and
38 flooded the whole universe, sentient and insentient. I, for one, am
39 doing my best, and shall continue to do so--all of you too explain to
40 people the liberal ideas of Shri Ramakrishna; what is the use of
41 merely reading the Vedanta? We must prove the truth of pure
42 Advaitism in practical life. Shankara left this Advaita philosophy in
43 the hills and forests, while I have come to bring it out of those
44 places and scatter it broadcast before the workaday world and
45 society. The lion-roar of Advaita must resound in every hearth and
46 home, in meadows and groves, over hills and plains. Come all of you
47 to my assistance and set yourselves to work."

48 Disciple: Sir, it appeals to me rather to realise that state
49 through meditation than to manifest it in action.

50 Swamiji: That is but a state of stupefaction, as under liquor.

1 What will be the use of merely remaining like that? Through the
2 urge of Advaitic realisation, you should sometimes dance wildly and
3 sometimes remain lost to outward sense. Does one feel happy to
4 taste of a good thing by oneself? One should share it with others.
5 Granted that you attain personal liberation by means of the
6 realisation of the Advaita, but what matters it to the world? You
7 must liberate the whole universe before you leave this body. Then
8 only you will be established in the eternal Truth. Has that bliss any
9 match, my boy? You will be established in that bliss of the Infinite
10 which is limitless like the skies. You will be struck dumb to find your
11 presence everywhere in the world of soul and matter. You will feel
12 the whole sentient and insentient world as your own self. Then you
13 can't help treating all with the same kindness as you show towards
14 yourself. This is indeed practical Vedanta. Do you understand me?
15 Brahman is one, but is at the same time appearing to us as many,
16 on the relative plane. Name and form are at the root of this
17 relativity. For instance, what do you find when you abstract name
18 and form from a jar? Only earth, which is its essence. Similarly,
19 through delusion you are thinking of and seeing a jar, a cloth, a
20 monastery, and so on. The phenomenal world depends on this
21 nescience which obstructs knowledge and which has no real
22 existence. One sees variety such as wife, children, body, mind--only
23 in the world created by nescience by means of name and form. As
24 soon as this nescience is removed, the realisation of Brahman
25 which eternally exists is the result.

26 Disciple: Where has the nescience come from?

27 Swamiji: Where it has come from I shall tell you later on.
28 When you began to run, mistaking the rope for the snake, did the
29 rope actually turn into a snake? Or was it not your ignorance which
30 put you to flight in that way?

31 Disciple: I did it from sheer ignorance.

32 Swamiji: Well, then, consider whether, when you will again
33 come to know the rope as rope, you will not laugh at your previous
34 ignorance. Will not name and form appear to be a delusion then?

35 Disciple: They will.

36 Swamiji: If that be so, the name and form turn out to be
37 unreal. Thus Brahman, the Eternal Existence, proves to be the only
38 reality. Only through this twilight of nescience you think this is your
39 wife, that is your child, this is your own, that is not your own, and so
40 on, and fail to realise the existence of the Atman, the illuminator of
41 everything. When through the Guru's instructions and your own
42 conviction you will see, not this world of name and form, but the
43 essence which lies as its substratum then only you will realise your
44 identity with the whole universe from the Creator down to a clump
45 of grass, then only you will get the state in which "{Sanskrit}--The
46 knots of the heart are cut asunder and all doubts are dispelled".

47 Disciple: Sir, one wishes to know of the origin and cessation
48 of this nescience.

49 Swamiji: You have understood, I presume, that a thing that
50 ceases to exist afterwards is a phenomenon merely? He who has

1 truly realised Brahman will say--where is nescience, in faith? He
2 sees the rope as rope only, and never as the snake. And he laughs at
3 the alarm of those who see it as the snake. For this reason,
4 nescience has no absolute reality. You can call nescience neither
5 real nor unreal; "{Sanskrit}--Neither real, nor unreal, nor a mixture
6 of both". About a thing that is thus proved to be false, neither
7 question nor answer is of any significance. Moreover, any question
8 on such a thing is unreasonable. I shall explain how. Are not this
9 question and answer made from the standpoint of name and form,
10 of time and space? And can you explain Brahman which transcends
11 time and space, by means of questions and answers? Hence the
12 Shastras and Mantras and such other things are only relatively, and
13 not absolutely, true. Nescience has verily no essence to call its own;
14 how then can you understand it? When Brahman will manifest
15 Itself, there will be no more room for such questions. Have you not
16 heard that story of Shri Ramakrishna about the shoemaker
17 coolie?¹⁷⁷ The moment one recognises nescience, it vanishes.

18 Disciple: But, sir, whence has this nescience come?

19 Swamiji: How can that come which has no existence at all? It
20 must exist first, to admit the possibility of coming.

21 Disciple: How then did this world of souls and matter
22 originate?

23 Swamiji: There is only one Existence--Brahman. You are but
24 seeing That under different forms and names, through the veil of
25 name and form which are unreal.

26 Disciple: But why this unreal name and form? Whence have
27 they come?

28 Swamiji: The Shastras have described this ingrained notion
29 or ignorance as almost endless in a series. But it has a termination,
30 while Brahman ever remains as It is, without suffering the least
31 change, like the rope which causes the delusion of the snake.
32 Therefore the conclusion of the Vedanta is that the whole universe
33 has been superimposed on Brahman--appearing like a juggler's
34 trick. It has not caused the least aberration of Brahman from Its
35 real nature. Do you understand me?

36 Disciple: One thing I cannot yet understand.

37 Swamiji: What is that?

38 Disciple: You have just said that creation, maintenance, and

1 ¹⁷⁷ ?Once a Brahmin, desirous of going to a disciple's house, was in need of a
2 coolie to carry his load. Not finding anyone belonging to a good caste, he at last
3 asked a shoemaker to perform the function. The man at first refused on the
4 ground that he was a man belonging to an untouchable caste. But the Brahmin
5 insisted on engaging him, telling him that he would escape detection by keeping
6 perfectly silent. The man was at last persuaded to go, and when the party
7 reached their destination, someone asked the shoemaker-servant to remove a
8 pair of shoes. The servant who thought it best to keep silent, as instructed, paid
9 no attention to the order, which was repeated, whereupon the man getting
10 annoyed shouted out, "Why dost thou not hear me, sirrah? Art thou a
11 shoemaker?" "O Master," cried the bewildered shoemaker, "I am discovered. I
12 cannot stay any longer." Saying this he immediately took to his heels.
13

dissolution, etc. are superimposed on Brahman, and have no absolute existence. But how can that be? One can never have the delusion of something that one has not already experienced. Just as one who has never seen a snake cannot mistake a rope for a snake, so how can one who has not experienced this creation, come to mistake Brahman for the creation? Therefore creation must have been, or is, to have given rise to the delusion of creation. But this brings in a dualistic position.

Swamiji: The man of realisation will in the first place refute your objection by stating that to his vision creation and things of that sort do not at all appear. He sees Brahman and Brahman alone. He sees the rope and not the snake. If you argue that you, at any rate, are seeing this creation, or snake--then he will try to bring home to you the real nature of the rope, with a view to curing your defective vision. When through his instructions and your reasoning you will be able to realise the truth of the rope, or Brahman, then this delusive idea of the snake, or creation, will vanish. At that time, what else can you call this delusive idea of creation, maintenance, and dissolution, but a superimposition on the Brahman? If this appearance of creation etc. has continued as a beginningless series, let it do so; no advantage will be gained by settling this question. Until Brahman is realised as vividly as a fruit on the palm of one's hand this question cannot be adequately settled, and then neither such a question crops up, nor is there need for a solution. The tasting of the reality of Brahman is then like a dumb man tasting something nice, but without the power to express his feelings.

Disciple: What then will be the use of reasoning about it so much?

Swamiji: Reasoning is necessary to understand the point intellectually. But the Reality transcends reasoning: "{Sanskrit}--This conviction cannot be reached through reasoning."

In the course of such conversation Swamiji reached the Math, accompanied by the disciple. Swamiji then explained to the Sannyasins and Brahmacharins of the Math the gist of the above discussion on Brahman. While going upstairs, he remarked to the disciple, "{Sanskrit}--This Atman cannot be attained by the weak."

X

[Place: The rented Math premises at Belur. Year: 1899.]

The Bengali fortnightly magazine, *Udbodhan*, was just started by Swami Trigunatita under the direction of Swamiji for spreading the religious views of Shri Ramakrishna among the general public. After the first number came out the disciple came to the Math at Nilambar Babu's garden one day. Swamiji started the following conversation with him about the *Udbodhan*.

Swamiji: (Humorously caricaturing the name of the magazine) Have you seen the *Udbandhana*?¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁸ ?The word means "suicide by hanging".

1 Disciple: Yes, sir; it is a good number.

2 Swamiji: We must mould the ideas, language, and everything
3 of this magazine in a new fashion.

4 Disciple: How?

5 Swamiji: Not only must we give out Shri Ramakrishna's ideas
6 to all, but we must also introduce a new vigour into the Bengali
7 language. For instance, the frequent use of verbs diminishes the
8 force of a language. We must restrict the use of verbs by the use of
9 adjectives. Begin to write articles in that way, and show them to me
10 before you give them to print in the *Udbodhan*.

11 Disciple: Sir, it is impossible for any other man to labour for
12 this magazine in the way Swami Trigunatita does.

13 Swamiji: Do you think these Sannyasin children of Shri
14 Ramakrishna are born simply to sit under trees lighting Dhuni-
15 fires? Whenever any of them will take up some work, people will be
16 astonished to see their energy. Learn from them how to work. Here,
17 for instance, Trigunatita has given up his spiritual practices, his
18 meditation and everything, to carry out my orders, and has set
19 himself to work. Is this a matter of small sacrifice? What an amount
20 of love for me is at the back of this spirit of work, do you see? He
21 will not stop short of success! Have you householders such
22 determination?

23 Disciple: But, sir, it looks rather odd in our eyes that
24 Sannyasins in ochre robe should go about from door to door as the
25 Swami is doing.

26 Swamiji: Why? The circulation of the magazine is only for the
27 good of the householders. By the spread of new ideas within the
28 country the public at large will be benefited. Do you think this
29 unselfish work is any way inferior to devotional practices? Our
30 object is to do good to humanity. We have no idea of making money
31 from the income of this paper. We have renounced everything and
32 have no wives or children to provide for after our death. If the
33 paper be a success, the whole of its income will be spent in the
34 service of humanity. Its surplus money will be profitably spent in the
35 opening of monasteries and homes of service in different places and
36 all sorts of work of public utility. We are not certainly working like
37 householders with the plan of filling our own pockets. Know for
38 certain that all our movements are for the good of others.

39 Disciple: Even then, all will not be able to appreciate this
40 spirit.

41 Swamiji: What if they cannot? It neither adds nor takes away
42 anything from us. We do not take up any work with an eye to
43 criticism.

44 Disciple: So this magazine will be a fortnightly. We should
45 like it to be a weekly.

46 Swamiji: Yes, but where are the funds? If through the grace
47 of Shri Ramakrishna funds are raised, it can be made into a daily
48 even, in future. A hundred thousand copies may be struck off daily
49 and distributed free in every street and lane of Calcutta.

1 Disciple: This idea of yours is a capital one.

2 Swamiji: I have a mind to make the paper self-supporting
3 first, and then set you up as its editor. You have not yet got the
4 capacity to make any enterprise stand on its legs. That is reserved
5 only for these all-renouncing Sannyasins to do. They will work
6 themselves to death, but never yield. Whereas a little resistance or
7 just a trifle of criticism is bewildering to you.

8 Disciple: Sir, the other day I saw that Swami Trigunatita
9 worshipped the photograph of Sri Ramakrishna in the Press before
10 opening the work and asked for your blessings for the success of
11 the work.

12 Swamiji: Well, Shri Ramakrishna is our centre. Each one of
13 us is a ray of that light-centre. So Trigunatita worshipped Shri
14 Ramakrishna before beginning the work, did he? It was excellently
15 done. But he told me nothing of it.

16 Disciple: Sir, he fears you and yesterday he told me to come
17 to you and ask your opinion of the first issue of the magazine, after
18 which, he said, he would see you.

19 Swamiji: Tell him when you go that I am exceedingly
20 delighted with his work. Give him my loving blessings. And all of
21 you help him as far as you can. You will be doing Shri
22 Ramakrishna's work by that.

23 Immediately after saying these words Swamiji called Swami
24 Brahmananda to him and directed him to give Swami Trigunatita
25 more money for the *Udbodhan* if it was needed.

26 The same evening, after supper, Swamiji again referred to
27 the topic of *Udbodhan* in the following words:

28 "In the *Udbodhan* we must give the public only positive
29 ideas. Negative thoughts weaken men. Do you not find that where
30 parents are constantly taxing their sons to read and write, telling
31 them they will never learn anything, and calling them fools and so
32 forth, the latter do actually turn out to be so in many cases? If you
33 speak kind words to boys and encourage them, they are bound to
34 improve in time. What holds good of children, also holds good of
35 children in the region of higher thoughts. If you can give them
36 positive ideas, people will grow up to be men and learn to stand on
37 their own legs. In language and literature, in poetry and the arts, in
38 everything we must point out not the mistakes that people are
39 making in their thoughts and actions, but the way in which they will
40 gradually be able to do these things better. Pointing out mistakes
41 wounds a man's feelings. We have seen how Shri Ramakrishna
42 would encourage even those whom we considered as worthless and
43 change the very course of their lives thereby! His very method of
44 teaching was a unique phenomenon."

45 After a short pause, Swamiji continued, "Never take the
46 preaching of religion to mean the turning up of one's nose at
47 everything and at everybody. In matters physical, mental, and
48 spiritual--in everything we must give men positive ideas and never
49 hate anybody. It is your hatred of one another that has brought

1 about your degradation. Now we shall have to raise men by
2 scattering broadcast only positive thoughts. First we must raise the
3 whole Hindu race in this way and then the whole world. That is why
4 Shri Ramakrishna incarnated. He never destroyed a single man's
5 special inclinations. He gave words of hope and encouragement
6 even to the most degraded of persons and lifted them up. We too
7 must follow in his footsteps and lift all up, and rouse them. Do you
8 understand?

9 "Your history, literature, mythology, and all other Shastras
10 are simply frightening people. They are only telling them, 'You will
11 go to hell, you are doomed!' Therefore has this lethargy crept into
12 the very vitals of India. Hence we must explain to men in simple
13 words the highest ideas of the Vedas and the Vedanta. Through the
14 imparting of moral principles, good behaviour, and education we
15 must make the Chandala come up to the level of the Brahmana.
16 Come, write out all these things in the *Udbodhan* and awaken
17 everyone, young and old, man and woman. Then only shall I know
18 that your study of the Vedas and Vedanta has been a success. What
19 do you say? Will you be able to do this?"

20 Disciple: Through your blessings and command I think I shall
21 succeed in everything.

22 Swamiji: Another thing. You must learn to make the physique
23 very strong and teach the same to others. Don't you find me
24 exercising every day with dumb-bells even now? Walk in the
25 morning and evenings and do physical labour. Body and mind must
26 run parallel. It won't do to depend on others in everything. When
27 the necessity of strengthening the physique is brought home to
28 people, they will exert themselves of their own accord. It is to make
29 them feel this need that education is necessary at the present
30 moment.

31 XI

32 [*Place: The Belur Math (under construction). Year: 1899.*]

33 Disciple: Why is it, Swamiji, that our society and country
34 have come to such degradation?

35 Swamiji: It is you who are responsible for it.

36 Disciple: How, sir? You surprise me.

37 Swamiji: You have been despising the lower classes of the
38 country for a very long time and, as a result, you have now become
39 the objects of contempt in the eyes of the world.

40 Disciple: When did you find us despising them?

41 Swamiji: Why, you priest-class never let the non-Brahmin
42 class read the Vedas and Vedanta and all such weighty Shastras--
43 never touch them even. You have only kept them down. It is you
44 who have always done like that through selfishness. It was the
45 Brahmins who made a monopoly of the religious books and kept the
46 question of sanction and prohibition in their own hands. And
47 repeatedly calling the other races of India low and vile, they put
48

1 this belief into their heads that they were really such. If you tell a
2 man, "You are low, you are vile", in season and out of season, then
3 he is bound to believe in course of time that he is really such. This
4 is called hypnotism. The non-Brahmin classes are now slowly
5 rousing themselves. Their faith in Brahminical scriptures and
6 Mantras is getting shaken. Through the spread of Western
7 education all the tricks of the Brahmins are giving way, like the
8 banks of the Padma in the rainy season. Do you not see that?

9 Disciple: Yes, sir, the stricture of orthodoxy is gradually
10 lessening nowadays.

11 Swamiji: It is as it should be. The Brahmins, in fact, gradually
12 took a course of gross immorality and oppression. Through
13 selfishness they introduced a large number of strange, non-Vedic,
14 immoral, and unreasonable doctrines--simply to keep intact their
15 own prestige. And the fruits of that they are reaping forthwith.

16 Disciple: What may these fruits be, sir?

17 Swamiji: Don't you perceive them? It is simply due to your
18 having despised the masses of India that you have now been living
19 a life of slavery for the last thousand years; it is therefore that you
20 are the objects of hatred in the eyes of foreigners and are looked
21 upon with indifference by your countrymen.

22 Disciple: But, sir, even now it is the Brahmins who direct all
23 ceremonials, and people are observing them according to the
24 opinions of the Brahmins. Why then do you speak like that?

25 Swamiji: I don't find it. Where do the tenfold Samskaras or
26 purifying ceremonies enjoined by the Shastras obtain still? Well, I
27 have travelled the whole of India, and everywhere I have found
28 society to be guided by local usages which are condemned by the
29 Shrutis and Smritis. Popular customs, local usages, and
30 observances prevalent among women only--have not these taken
31 the place of the Smritis everywhere? Who obeys, and whom? If you
32 can but spend enough money, the priest-class is ready to write out
33 whatever sanctions or prohibitions you want! How many of them
34 read the Vedic Kalpa (Ritual), Grihya and Shrauta Sutras? Then,
35 look, here in Bengal the code of Raghunandana is obeyed; a little
36 farther on you will find the code of Mitakshara in vogue; while in
37 another part the code of Manu holds sway! You seem to think that
38 the same laws hold good everywhere! What I want therefore is to
39 introduce the study of the Vedas by stimulating a greater regard for
40 them in the minds of the people, and to pass everywhere the
41 injunctions of the Vedas.

42 Disciple: Sir, is it possible nowadays to set them going?

43 Swamiji: It is true that all the ancient Vedic laws will not
44 have a go, but if we introduce additions and alterations in them to
45 suit the needs of the times, codify them, and hold them up as a new
46 model to society, why will they not pass current?

47 Disciple: Sir, I was under the impression that at least the
48 injunctions of Manu were being obeyed all over India even now.

49 Swamiji: Nothing of the kind. Just look to your own province

1 and see how the Vamachara (immoral practices) of the Tantras has
2 entered into your very marrow. Even modern Vaishnavism, which is
3 the skeleton of the defunct Buddhism, is saturated with Vamachara!
4 We must stem the tide of this Vamachara, which is contrary to the
5 spirit of the Vedas.

6 Disciple: Sir, is it possible now to cleanse this Aegean stable?

7 Swamiji: What nonsense do you say, you coward! You have
8 well-nigh thrown the country into ruin by crying, 'It is impossible, it
9 is impossible!' What cannot human effort achieve?

10 Disciple: But, sir, such a state of things seems impossible
11 unless sages like Manu and Yajnavalkya are again born in the
12 country.

13 Swamiji: Goodness gracious! Was it not purity and unselfish
14 labour that made them Manu and Yajnavalkya, or was it something
15 else? Well, we ourselves can be far greater than even Manu and
16 Yajnavalkya if we try to; why will not our views prevail then?

17 Disciple: Sir, it is you who said just now that we must revive
18 the ancient usages and observances within the country. How then
19 can we think lightly of sages like Manu and the rest?

20 Swamiji: What an absurd deduction! You altogether miss my
21 point. I have only said that the ancient Vedic customs must be
22 remodelled according to the need of the society and the times, and
23 passed under a new form in the land. Have I not?

24 Disciple: Yes, sir.

25 Swamiji: What, then, were you talking? You have read the
26 Shastras, and my hope and faith rest in men like you. Understand
27 my words in their true spirit, and apply yourselves to work in their
28 light.

29 Disciple: But, sir, who will listen to us? Why should our
30 countrymen accept them?

31 Swamiji: If you can truly convince them and practise what
32 you preach, they must. If, on the contrary, like a coward you simply
33 utter Shlokas as a parrot, be a mere talker and quote authority only,
34 without showing them in action--then who will care to listen to you?

35 Disciple: Please give me some advice in brief about social
36 reform.

37 Swamiji: Why, I have given you advice enough; now put at
38 least something in practice. Let the world see that your reading of
39 the scriptures and listening to me has been a success. The codes of
40 Manu and lots of other books that you have read--what is their basis
41 and underlying purpose? Keeping that basis intact, compile in the
42 manner of the ancient Rishis the essential truths of them and
43 supplement them with thoughts that are suited to the times; only
44 take care that all races and all sects throughout India be really
45 benefited by following these rules. Just write out a Smriti like that; I
46 shall revise it.

47 Disciple: Sir, it is not an easy task; and even if such a Smriti
48 be written, will it be accepted?

1 Swamiji: Why not? Just write it out. "{Sanskrit}--Time is
2 infinite, and the world is vast." If you write it in the proper way,
3 there must come a day when it will be accepted. Have faith in
4 yourself. You people were once the Vedic Rishis. Only, you have
5 come in different forms, that's all. I see it clear as daylight that you
6 all have infinite power in you. Rouse that up; arise, arise--apply
7 yourselves heart and soul, gird up your loins. What will you do with
8 wealth and fame that are so transitory? Do you know what I think? I
9 don't care for Mukti and all that. My mission is to arouse within you
10 all such ideas; I am ready to undergo a hundred thousand rebirths
11 to train up a single man.

12 Disciple: But, sir, what will be the use of undertaking such
13 works? Is not death stalking behind?

14 Swamiji: Fie upon you! If you die, you will die but once. Why
15 will you die every minute of your life by constantly harping on death
16 like a coward?

17 Disciple: All right, sir, I may not think of death, but what
18 good will come of any kind of work in this evanescent world?

19 Swamiji: My boy, when death is inevitable, is it not better to
20 die like heroes than as stocks and stones? And what is the use of
21 living a day or two more in this transitory world? It is better to wear
22 out than to rust out--specially for the sake of doing the least good to
23 others.

24 Disciple: It is true, sir. I beg pardon for troubling you so
25 much.

26 Swamiji: I don't feel tired even if I talk for two whole nights
27 to an earnest inquirer; I can give up food and sleep and talk and
28 talk. Well, if I have a mind, I can sit up in Samadhi in a Himalayan
29 cave. And you see that nowadays through the Mother's grace I have
30 not to think about food, it comes anyhow. Why then don't I do so?
31 And why am I here? Only the sight of the country's misery and the
32 thought of its future do not let me remain quiet any more!--Even
33 Samadhi and all that appear as futile--even the sphere of Brahma
34 with its enjoyments becomes insipid! My vow of life is to think of
35 your welfare. The day that vow will be fulfilled, I shall leave this
36 body and make a straight run up!

37 Hearing Swamiji's words the disciple sat speechless for a
38 while, gazing at him, wondering in his heart. Then, with a view to
39 taking his leave, he saluted Swamiji reverently and asked his
40 permission to go.

41 Swamiji: Why do you want to go? Why not live in the Math?
42 Your mind will again be polluted if you go back to the worldly-
43 minded. See here, how fresh is the air, there is the Ganga, and the
44 Sadhus (holy men) are practising meditation, and holding lofty
45 talks! While the moment you will go to Calcutta, you will be
46 thinking of nasty stuff.

47 The disciple joyfully replied, "All right, sir, I shall stay today
48 at the Math."

49 Swamiji: Why "today"? Can't you live here for good? What is

1 the use of going back to the world?

2 The disciple bent down his head, hearing Swamiji's words.
3 Various thoughts crowded into his brain and kept him speechless.

4
5 XII

6 [Place: The Belur Math (under construction). Year: beginning
7 of 1899.]

8 Today Swamiji is walking round the new Math grounds in the
9 afternoon in company with the disciple. Standing at a little distance
10 off the Bael tree Swamiji took to singing slowly a Bengali song:¹⁷⁹
11 "O Himalaya, Ganesh is auspicious to me" etc., ending with the
12 line--"And many Dandis (Sannyasins) and Yogis with matted hair
13 will also come." While singing the song Swamiji repeated this line
14 to the disciple and said, "Do you understand? In course of time
15 many Sadhus and Sannyasins will come here." Saying this he sat
16 under the tree and remarked, "The ground under the Bilva tree is
17 very holy. Meditating here quickly brings about an awakening of the
18 religious instinct. Shri Ramakrishna used to say so."

19 Disciple: Sir, those who are devoted to the discrimination
20 between the Self and not-Self--have they any need to consider the
21 auspiciousness of place, time, and so forth?

22 Swamiji: Those who are established in the knowledge of the
23 Atman have no need for such discrimination, but that state is not
24 attained off-hand. It comes as the result of long practice. Therefore
25 in the beginning one has to take the help of external aids and learn
26 to stand on one's own legs. Later on, when one is established in the
27 knowledge of the Atman, there is no more need for any external aid.

28 The various methods of spiritual practice that have been laid
29 down in the scriptures are all for the attainment of the knowledge
30 of the Atman. Of course these practices vary according to the
31 qualifications of different aspirants. But they also are a kind of
32 work, and so long as there is work, the Atman is not discovered.
33 The obstacles to the manifestation of the Atman are overcome by
34 practices as laid down in the scriptures; but work has no power of
35 directly manifesting the Atman, it is only effective in removing some
36 veils that cover knowledge. Then the Atman manifests by Its own
37 effulgence. Do you see? Therefore does your commentator
38 (Shankara) say, "In our knowledge of Brahman, there cannot be the
39 least touch of work."

40 Disciple: But, sir, since the obstacles to Self-manifestation
41 are not overcome without the performance of work in some form or
42 other, therefore indirectly work stands as a means to knowledge.

43 Swamiji: From the standpoint of the causal chain, it so
44 appears *prima facie*. Taking up this view it is stated in the Purva-
45 Mimamsa that work for a definite end infallibly produces a definite
46 result. But the vision of the Atman which is Absolute is not to be

1 ¹⁷⁹ ?This is one of the songs sung in the homes of Bengal on the eve of Durga
2 Puja.
3

1 compassed by means of work. For the rule with regard to a seeker
2 of the Atman is that he should undergo spiritual practice, but have
3 no eye to its results. It follows thence that these practices are
4 simply the cause of the purification of the aspirant's mind. For if the
5 Atman could be directly realised as a result of these practices, then
6 scriptures would not have enjoined on the aspirant to give up the
7 results of work. So it is with a view to combating the Purva-
8 Mimamsa doctrine of work with motive producing results, that the
9 philosophy of work without motive has been set forth in the Gita. Do
10 you see?

11 Disciple: But, sir, if one has to renounce the fruits of work,
12 why should one be induced to undertake work which is always
13 troublesome?

14 Swamiji: In this human life, one cannot help doing some kind
15 of work always. When man has perforce to do some work, Karma-
16 Yoga enjoins on him to do it in such a way as will bring freedom
17 through the realisation of the Atman. As to your objection that none
18 will be induced to work--the answer is, that whatever work you do
19 has some motive behind it; but when by the long performance of
20 work, one notices that one work merely leads to another, through a
21 round of births and rebirths, then the awakened discrimination of
22 man naturally begins to question itself, "Where is the end to this
23 interminable chain of work?" It is then that he appreciates the full
24 import of the words of the Lord in the Gita: "Inscrutable is the
25 course of work. "Therefore when the aspirant finds that work with
26 motive brings no happiness, then he renounces action. But man is
27 so constituted that to him the performance of work is a necessity, so
28 what work should he take up? He takes up some unselfish work, but
29 gives up all desire for its fruits. For he has known then that in those
30 fruits of work lie countless seeds of future births and deaths.
31 Therefore the knower of Brahman renounces all actions. Although
32 to outward appearances he engages himself in some work, he has
33 no attachment to it. Such men have been described in the
34 scriptures as Karma-Yogins.

35 Disciple: Is then the work without motive of the unselfish
36 knower of Brahman like the activities of a lunatic?

37 Swamiji: Why so? Giving up the fruits of work means not to
38 perform work for the good of one's own body or mind. The knower
39 of Brahman never seeks his own happiness. But what is there to
40 prevent him from doing work for the welfare of others? Whatever
41 work he does without attachment for its fruits brings only good to
42 the world--it is all "for the good of the many, for the happiness of
43 the many". Shri Ramakrishna used to say, "They never take a false
44 step". Haven't you read in the *Uttara-Rama-Charita* "{Sanskrit}--
45 The words of the ancient Rishis have always some meaning, they
46 are never false?" When the mind is merged in the Atman by the
47 suppression of all modifications, it produces "a dispassion for the
48 enjoyment of fruits of work here or hereafter"; there remains no
49 desire in the mind for any enjoyment here, or, after death, in any
50 heavenly sphere. There is no action and interaction of desires in the
51 mind. But when the mind descends from the superconscious state
52 into the world of "I and mine", then by the momentum of previous

1 work or habit, or Samskaras (impressions), the functions of the
2 body go on as before. The mind then is generally in the
3 superconscious state; eating and other functions of the body are
4 done from mere necessity, and the body-consciousness is very much
5 attenuated. Whatever work is done after reaching this
6 transcendental state is done rightly; it conduces to the real well-
7 being of men and the world; for then the mind of the doer is not
8 contaminated by selfishness or calculation of personal gain or loss.
9 The Lord has created this wonderful universe, remaining always in
10 the realm of superconsciousness; therefore there is nothing
11 imperfect in this world. So I was saying that the actions which the
12 knower of the Atman does without attachment for fruits are never
13 imperfect, but they conduce to the real well-being of men and the
14 world.

15 Disciple: Sir, you said just now that knowledge and work are
16 contradictory, that in the supreme knowledge there is no room at all
17 for work, or in other words, that by means of work the realisation of
18 Brahman cannot be attained. Why then do you now and then speak
19 words calculated to awaken great Rajas (activity)? You were telling
20 me the other day, "Work, work, work--there is no other way."

21 Swamiji: Going round the whole world, I find that people of
22 this country are immersed in great Tamas (inactivity), compared
23 with people of other countries. On the outside, there is a simulation
24 of the Sattvika (calm and balanced) state, but inside, downright
25 inertness like that of stocks and stones--what work will be done in
26 the world by such people? How long can such an inactive, lazy, and
27 sensual people live in the world? First travel in Western countries,
28 then contradict my words. How much of enterprise and devotion to
29 work, how much enthusiasm and manifestation of Rajas are there in
30 the lives of the Western people! While, in your own country, it is as
31 if the blood has become congealed in the heart, so that it cannot
32 circulate in the veins--as if paralysis has overtaken the body and it
33 has become languid. So my idea is first to make the people active by
34 developing their Rajas, and thus make them fit for the struggle for
35 existence. With no strength in the body, no enthusiasm at heart, and
36 no originality in the brain, what will they do--these lumps of dead
37 matter! By stimulating them I want to bring life into them--to this I
38 have dedicated my life. I will rouse them through the infallible
39 power of Vedic Mantras. I am born to proclaim to them that fearless
40 message--"Arise! Awake!" Be you my helpers in this work! Go from
41 village to village, from one portion of the country to another, and
42 preach this message of fearlessness to all, from the Brahmin to the
43 Chandala. Tell each and all that infinite power resides within them,
44 that they are sharers of immortal Bliss. Thus rouse up the Rajas
45 within them--make them fit for the struggle for existence, and then
46 speak to them about salvation. First make the people of the country
47 stand on their legs by rousing their inner power, first let them learn
48 to have good food and clothes and plenty of enjoyment--then tell
49 them how to be free from this bondage of enjoyment.

50 Laziness, meanness, and hypocrisy have covered the whole
51 length and breadth of the country. Can an intelligent man look on
52 all this and remain quiet? Does it not bring tears to the eyes?

1 Madras, Bombay, Punjab, Bengal--whichever way I look, I see no
2 signs of life. You are thinking yourselves highly educated. What
3 nonsense have you learnt? Getting by heart the thoughts of others
4 in a foreign language, and stuffing your brain with them and taking
5 some university degrees, you consider yourselves educated! Fie
6 upon you! Is this education? What is the goal of your education?
7 Either a clerkship, or being a roguish lawyer, or at the most a
8 Deputy Magistracy, which is another form of clerkship--isn't that
9 all? Open your eyes and see what a piteous cry for food is rising in
10 the land of Bharata, proverbial for its wealth! Will your education
11 fulfil this want? Never.

12 With the help of Western science set yourselves to dig the
13 earth and produce food-stuffs--not by means of mean servitude of
14 others--but by discovering new avenues to production, by your own
15 exertions aided by Western science. Therefore I teach the people of
16 this country to be full of activities, so as to be able to produce food
17 and clothing for themselves. For want of food and clothing and
18 plunged in anxiety for it, the country has come to ruin--what are you
19 doing to remedy this? Throw aside your scriptures in the Ganga and
20 teach the people first the means of procuring their food and
21 clothing, and then you will find time to read to them the scriptures.
22 If their material wants are not removed by the rousing of intense
23 activity, none will listen to words of spirituality. Therefore I say, first
24 rouse the inherent power of the Atman within you, then, rousing the
25 faith of the general people in that power as much as you can, teach
26 them first of all to make provision for food, and then teach them
27 religion. There is no time to sit idle--who knows when death will
28 overtake one?

29 While saying these words, a mingled expression of remorse,
30 sorrow, compassion, and power shone on his face. Looking at his
31 majestic appearance, the disciple was awed into silence. A little
32 while afterwards Swamiji said again, "That activity and self-reliance
33 must come in the people of the country in time--I see it clearly.
34 There is no escape. The intelligent man can distinctly see the vision
35 of the next three Yugas (ages) ahead. Ever since the advent of Shri
36 Ramakrishna the eastern horizon has been aglow with the dawning
37 rays of the sun which in course of time will illumine the country
38 with the splendour of the midday sun."

39 XIII

40 [Place: The Belur Math. Beginning of 1899.]

41 The present Math buildings are almost complete now.

42 Swamiji is not in good health; therefore doctors have advised
43 him to go out on a boat in the mornings and evenings on the Ganga.

44 Today is Sunday. The disciple is sitting in Swamiji's room and
45 conversing with him. About this time Swamiji framed certain rules
46 for the guidance of the Sannyasins and Brahmacharins of the Math,
47 the object of which was to keep them from indiscriminate mixing
48 with worldly people. The conversation turned on this topic.
49

1 Swamiji: Nowadays I feel a peculiar smell of lax self-control
2 in the dress and clothes of worldly people; therefore I have made it
3 a rule in the Math that householders should not sit or lie on the
4 beds of Sadhus. Formerly I used to read in the Shastras that such a
5 smell is felt, and therefore Sannyasins cannot bear the smell of
6 householders. Now I see it is true. By strictly observing the rules
7 that have been framed, the Brahmacharins will in time grow into
8 genuine Sannyasins. When they are established in the ideal of
9 Sannyasa, they will be able to mix on an equal footing with worldly
10 men without any harm. But now if they are not kept within the
11 barriers of strict rules, they will all go wrong. In order to attain to
12 ideal Brahmacharya one has in the beginning to observe strict rules
13 regarding chastity. Not only should one keep oneself strictly aloof
14 from the least association with the opposite sex, but also give up
15 the company of married people even.

16 The disciple who was a householder was awed at these
17 words of Swamiji, felt dejected that he would not be able to
18 associate freely as before with the Sadhus of the Math and said,
19 "Sir, I feel more intimacy with the Math and its inmates than with
20 my own family. As if they are known to me from a long long time.
21 The unbounded freedom that I enjoy in the Math, I feel nowhere
22 else in the world."

23 Swamiji: All those who are pure in spirit will feel like that
24 here. Those who do not feel so must be taken as not belonging to
25 this Math and its ideals. That is the reason why many people come
26 here out of mere sensation-mongering and then run away. Those
27 who are devoid of continence and are running after money day and
28 night will never be able to appreciate the ideals of the Math, nor
29 regard the Math people as their own. The Sannyasins of this Math
30 are not like those of old, ash-besmeared, with matted hair and iron
31 tongs in their hands, and curing disease by medicinal titbits;
32 therefore seeing the contrast, people cannot appreciate them. The
33 ways, movements and ideas of our Master were all cast in a new
34 mould, so we are also of a new type. Sometimes dressed like
35 gentlemen, we are engaged in lecturing; at other times, throwing
36 all aside, with "Hara, Hara, Vyom Vyom" on the lips, ash-clad, we
37 are immersed in meditation and austerities in mountains and
38 forests.

39 Now it won't do to merely quote the authority of our ancient
40 books. The tidal wave of Western civilisation is now rushing over
41 the length and breadth of the country. It won't do now simply to sit
42 in meditation on mountain tops without realising in the least its
43 usefulness. Now is wanted--as said in the Gita by the Lord--intense
44 Karma-Yoga, with unbounded courage and indomitable strength in
45 the heart. Then only will the people of the country be roused,
46 otherwise they will continue to be as much in the dark as you are.

47 The day is nearly ended. Swamiji came downstairs, dressed
48 for the boating excursion on the Ganga. Swamiji, accompanied by
49 the disciple and two others, boarded the boat, which passed the
50 Dakshineswar temple and reached Panihati where it was anchored
51 below the garden-house of Babu Govinda Kumar Chaudhury. It has
52 once been proposed to rent this house for the use of the Math.

1 Swamiji descended from the boat, went round the house and the
2 garden and looking over the place minutely said, "The garden is
3 nice but is at a great distance from Calcutta. The devotees of Shri
4 Ramakrishna would have been put to trouble to walk such a long
5 distance from Calcutta. It is fortunate that the Math has not been
6 established here." The boat then returned to the Math amid the
7 enveloping darkness.

8
9 XIV

10 [*Place: Belur Math. Beginning of 1899.*]

11 The disciple has today come to the Math with Nag
12 Mahashaya in company.

13 Swamiji to Nag Mahashaya (saluting him): You are all right, I
14 hope?

15 Nag Mahashaya: I have come today to visit you. Glory to
16 Shankara! Glory to Shankara! I am blessed today verily with the
17 sight of Shiva!

18 Saying these words, Nag Mahashaya out of reverence stood
19 with joined hands before him.

20 Swamiji: How is your health?

21 Nag Mahashaya: Why are you asking about this trifling
22 body--this cage of flesh and bones? Verily I am blessed today to see
23 you.

24 Saying these words, Nag Mahashaya prostrated before
25 Swamiji.

26 Swamiji (lifting him up): Why are you doing that to me?

27 Nag Mahashaya: I see with my inner eye that today I am
28 blessed with the vision of Shiva Himself. Glory to Ramakrishna!

29 Swamiji (addressing the disciple): Do you see? How real
30 Bhakti transforms human nature! Nag Mahashaya has lost himself
31 in the Divine, his body-consciousness has vanished altogether. (To
32 Swami Premananda) Get some Prasada for Nag Mahashaya.

33 Nag Mahashaya: Prasada! (To Swamiji with folded hands)
34 Seeing you, all my earthly hunger has vanished today.

35 The Brahmacharins and Sannyasins of the Math were
36 studying the Upanishads. Swamiji said to them, "Today a great
37 devotee of Shri Ramakrishna has come amongst us. Let it be a
38 holiday in honour of Nag Mahashaya's visit to the Math." So all
39 closed their books and sat in a circle round Nag Mahashaya;
40 Swamiji also sat in front of him.

41 Swamiji (addressing all): Do you see? Look at Nag
42 Mahashaya; he is a householder, yet he has no knowledge of the
43 mundane existence; he always lives lost in Divine consciousness.
44 (To Nag Mahashaya) Please tell us and these Brahmacharins
45 something about Shri Ramakrishna.

46 Nag Mahashaya (in reverence): What do you say, sir? What

1 shall I say? I have come to see you--the hero, the helper in the
2 divine play of Shri Ramakrishna. Now will people appreciate his
3 message and teachings. Glory to Ramakrishna!

4 Swamiji: It is you who have really appreciated and
5 understood Shri Ramakrishna. We are only spent in useless
6 wanderings.

7 Nag Mahashaya: What do you say, sir? You are the image of
8 Shri Ramakrishna--the obverse and reverse of the same coin. Those
9 who have eyes, let them see.

10 Swamiji: Is the starting of these Maths and Ashramas etc. a
11 step in the right direction?

12 Nag Mahashaya: I am an insignificant being, what do I
13 understand? Whatever you do, I know for a certainty, will conduce
14 to the well-being of the world--ay, of the world.

15 Many out of reverence proceeded to take the dust of Nag
16 Mahashaya's feet, which made him much agitated. Swamiji,
17 addressing all, said, "Don't act so as to cause pain to Nag
18 Mahashaya; he feels uncomfortable." Hearing this everybody
19 desisted.

20 Swamiji: Do please come and stay at the Math. You will be an
21 object-lesson to the boys here.

22 Nag Mahashaya: I once asked Shri Ramakrishna about that,
23 to which he replied, "Stay as a householder as you are doing."
24 Therefore I am continuing in that life. I see you all occasionally and
25 feel myself blessed.

26 Swamiji: I will go to your place once.

27 Nag Mahashaya, mad with joy, said, "Shall such a day dawn?
28 My place will be made holy by your visit, like Varanasi. Shall I be so
29 fortunate as that!"

30 Swamiji: Well, I have the desire. Now it depends on "Mother"
31 to take me there.

32 Nag Mahashaya: Who will understand you? Unless the inner
33 vision opens, nobody can understand you. Only Shri Ramakrishna
34 understood you; all else have simply put faith in his words, but none
35 has understood you really.

36 Swamiji: Now my one desire is to rouse the country--the
37 sleeping leviathan that has lost all faith in his power and makes no
38 response. If I can wake it up to a sense of the Eternal Religion then
39 I shall know that Shri Ramakrishna's advent and our birth are
40 fruitful. That is the one desire in my heart: Mukti and all else
41 appear of no consequence to me. Please give me your blessings that
42 I may succeed.

43 Nag Mahashaya: Your will and his have become one.
44 Whatever is your will is his. Glory to Shri Ramakrishna!

45 Swamiji: To work one requires a strong body; since coming to
46 this country, I am not doing well; in the West I was in very good
47 health.

1 Nag Mahashaya: "Whenever one is born in a body," Shri
2 Ramakrishna used to say, "one has to pay the house tax." Disease
3 and sorrow are the tax. But your body is a box of gold *mohurs*, and
4 very great care should be taken of it. But who will do it? Who will
5 understand? Only Shri Ramakrishna understood. Glory to
6 Ramakrishna!

7 Swamiji: All at the Math take great care of me.

8 Nag Mahashaya: It will be to their good if they do it, whether
9 they know it or not. If proper attention is not paid to your body, then
10 the chances are that it will fall off.

11 Swamiji: Nag Mahashaya, I do not fully understand whether
12 what I am doing is right or not. At particular times I feel a great
13 inclination to work in a certain direction, and I work according to
14 that. Whether it is for good or evil, I cannot understand.

15 Nag Mahashaya: Well, Shri Ramakrishna said, "The treasure
16 is now locked."--Therefore he does not let you know fully. The
17 moment you know it, your play of human life will be at an end.

18 Swamiji was pondering something with steadfast gaze. Then
19 Swami Premananda brought some Prasada for Nag Mahashaya who
20 was ecstatic with joy. Shortly after Nag Mahashaya found Swamiji
21 slowly digging the ground with a spade near the pond, and held him
22 by the hand saying, "When we are present, why should you do
23 that?" Swamiji leaving the spade walked about the garden talking
24 the while, and began to narrate to a disciple, "After Shri
25 Ramakrishna's passing away we heard one day that Nag
26 Mahashaya lay fasting in his humbled tiled lodgings in Calcutta.
27 Myself, Swami Turiyananda, and another went together and
28 appeared at Nag Mahashaya's cottage. Seeing us he rose from his
29 bed. We said, 'We shall have our Bhiksha (food) here today.' At once
30 Nag Mahashaya brought rice, cooking pot, fuel, etc. from the
31 bazaar and began to cook. We thought that we would eat and make
32 Nag Mahashaya also eat. Cooking over, he gave the food to us; we
33 set apart something for him and then sat down to eat. After this, we
34 requested him to take food; he at once broke the pot of rice and
35 striking his forehead began to say: 'Shall I give food to the body in
36 which God has not been realised?' Seeing this we were struck with
37 amazement. Later on after much persuasion we induced him to take
38 some food and then returned."

39 Swamiji: Will Nag Mahashaya stay in the Math tonight?

40 Disciple: No, he has some work; he must return today.

41 Swamiji: Then look for a boat. It is getting dark.

42 When the boat came, the disciple and Nag Mahashaya
43 saluted Swamiji and started for Calcutta.

1 Swamiji is now in very good health. The disciple has come to
2 the Math on a Sunday morning. After visiting Swamiji he has come
3 downstairs and is discussing the Vedantic scriptures with Swami
4 Nirmalananda. At this moment Swamiji himself came downstairs
5 and addressing the disciple, said, "What were you discussing with
6 Nirmalananda?"

7 Disciple: Sir, he was saying, "The Brahman of the Vedanta is
8 only known to you and your Swamiji. We on the contrary know that
9 "{Sanskrit}--Shri Krishna is the Lord Himself."

10 Swamiji: What did you say?

11 Disciple: I said that the Atman is the one Truth, and that
12 Krishna was merely a person who had realised this Atman. Swami
13 Nirmalananda is at heart a believer in the Advaita Vedanta, but
14 outwardly he takes up the dualistic side. His first idea seems to be
15 to moot the personal aspect of the Ishvara and then by a gradual
16 process of reasoning to strengthen the foundations of Vedanta.

17 But as soon as he calls me a "Vaishnava" I forget his real
18 intention and begin a heated discussion with him.

19 Swamiji: He loves you and so enjoys the fun of teasing you.
20 But why should you be upset by his words? You will also answer,
21 "You, sir, are an atheist, a believer in Nihilism."

22 Disciple: Sir, is there any such statement in the Upanishads
23 that Ishvara is an all-powerful Person? But people generally believe
24 in such an Ishvara.

25 Swamiji: The highest principle, the Lord of all, cannot be a
26 Person. The Jiva is an individual and the sum total of all Jivas is the
27 Ishvara. In the Jiva, Avidya, or nescience, is predominant, but
28 Ishvara controls Maya composed of Avidya and Vidya and
29 independently projects this world of moving and immovable things
30 out of Himself. But Brahman transcends both the individual and
31 collective aspects, the Jiva and Ishvara. In Brahman there is no
32 part. It is for the sake of easy comprehension that parts have been
33 imagined in It. That part of Brahman in which there is the
34 superimposition of creation, maintenance and dissolution of the
35 universe has been spoken of as Ishvara in the scriptures, while the
36 other unchangeable portion, with reference to which there is no
37 thought of duality, is indicated as Brahman. But do not on that
38 account think that Brahman is a distinct and separate substance
39 from the Jivas and the universe. The Qualified Monists hold that it is
40 Brahman that has transformed Itself into Jivas and the universe.
41 The Advaitins on the contrary maintain that Jivas and the universe
42 have been merely superimposed on Brahman. But in reality there
43 has been no modification in Brahman. The Advaitin says that the
44 universe consists only of name and form. It endures only so long as
45 there are name and form. When through meditation and other
46 practices name and form are dissolved, then only the transcendent
47 Brahman remains. Then the separate reality of Jivas and the
48 universe is felt no longer. Then it is realised that one is the Eternal
49 Pure Essence of Intelligence, or Brahman. The real nature of the
50 Jiva is Brahman. When the veil of name and form vanishes through

1 meditation etc., then that idea is simply realised. This is the
2 substance of pure Advaita. The Vedas, the Vedanta and all other
3 scriptures only explain this idea in different ways.

4 Disciple: How then is it true that Ishvara is an almighty
5 Person?

6 Swamiji: Man is man in so far as he is qualified by the
7 limiting adjunct of mind. Through the mind he has to understand
8 and grasp everything, and therefore whatever he thinks must be
9 limited by the mind. Hence it is the natural tendency of man to
10 argue, from the analogy of his own personality, the personality of
11 Ishvara (God). Man can only think of his ideal as a human being.
12 When buffeted by sorrow in this world of disease and death he is
13 driven to desperation and helplessness, then he seeks refuge with
14 someone, relying on whom he may feel safe. But where is that
15 refuge to be found? The omnipresent Atman which depends on
16 nothing else to support It is the only Refuge. At first man does not
17 find that. When discrimination and dispassion arise in the course of
18 meditation and spiritual practices, he comes to know it. But in
19 whatever way he may progress on the path of spirituality, everyone
20 is unconsciously awakening Brahman within him. But the means
21 may be different in different cases. Those who have faith in the
22 Personal God have to undergo spiritual practices holding on to that
23 idea. If there is sincerity, through that will come the awakening of
24 the lion of Brahman within. The knowledge of Brahman is the one
25 goal of all beings but the various ideas are the various paths to it.
26 Although the real nature of the Jiva is Brahman, still as he has
27 identification with the qualifying adjunct of the mind, he suffers
28 from all sorts of doubts and difficulties, pleasure and pain. But
29 everyone from Brahma down to a blade of grass is advancing
30 towards the realisation of his real nature. And none can escape the
31 round of births and deaths until he realises his identity with
32 Brahman. Getting the human birth, when the desire for freedom
33 becomes very strong, and along with it comes the grace of a person
34 of realisation, then man's desire for Self-knowledge becomes
35 intensified. Otherwise the mind of men given to lust and greed
36 never inclines that way. How should the desire to know Brahman
37 arise in one who has the hankering in his mind for the pleasures of
38 family life, for wealth and for fame? He who is prepared to
39 renounce all, who amid the strong current of the duality of good
40 and evil, happiness and misery, is calm, steady, balanced, and
41 awake to his Ideal, alone endeavours to attain to Self-knowledge.
42 He alone by the might of his own power tears asunder the net of
43 the world. "{Sanskrit}--Breaking the barriers of Maya, he emerges
44 like a mighty lion."

45 Disciple: Well then, is it true that without Sannyasa, there
46 can be no knowledge of Brahman?

47 Swamiji: That is true, a thousand times. One must have both
48 internal and external Sannyasa--renunciation in spirit as also formal
49 renunciation. Shankaracharya, in commenting on the Upanishadic
50 text, "Neither by Tapas (spiritual practice) devoid of the necessary

1 insignia",¹⁸⁰ he said that by practising Sadhana without the external
2 badge of Sannyasa (the Gerua-robe, the staff, Kamandalu, etc.),
3 Brahman, which is difficult to attain, is not realised. Without
4 dispassion for the world, without renunciation, without giving up
5 the desire for enjoyment, absolutely nothing can be accomplished in
6 the spiritual life. "It is not like a sweetmeat in the hands of a child
7 which you can snatch by a trick."¹⁸¹

8 Disciple: But, sir, in the course of spiritual practices, that
9 renunciation may come.

10 Swamiji: Let those to whom it will come gradually have it
11 that way. But why should you sit and wait for that? At once begin to
12 dig the channel which will bring the waters of spirituality to your
13 life. Shri Ramakrishna used to deprecate lukewarmness in spiritual
14 attainments as, for instance, saying that religion would come
15 gradually, and that there was no hurry for it. When one is thirsty,
16 can one sit idle? Does he not run about for water? Because your
17 thirst for spirituality has not come, therefore you are sitting idly.
18 The desire for knowledge has not grown strong, therefore you are
19 satisfied with the little pleasures of family life.

20 Disciple: Really I do not understand why I don't get that idea
21 of renouncing everything. Do make some way for that, please.

22 Swamiji: The end and the means are all in your hands. I can
23 only stimulate them. You have read so many scriptures and are
24 serving and associating with such Sadhus who have known
25 Brahman; if even this does not bring the idea of renunciation, then
26 your life is in vain. But it will not be altogether vain; the effects of
27 this will manifest in some way or other in time.

28 The disciple was much dejected and again said to Swamiji:
29 "Sir, I have come under your refuge, do open the path of Mukti for
30 me--that I may realise the Truth in this body."

31 Swamiji: What fear is there? Always discriminate--your body,
32 your house, these Jivas and the world are all absolutely unreal like a
33 dream. Always think that this body is only an inert instrument. And
34 the self-contained Purusha within is your real nature. The adjunct of
35 mind is His first and subtle covering, then, there is this body which
36 is His gross, outer covering. The indivisible changeless, self-
37 effulgent Purusha is lying hidden under these delusive veils,
38 therefore your real nature is unknown to you. The direction of the
39 mind which always runs after the senses has to be turned within.
40 The mind has to be killed. The body is but gross--it dies and
41 dissolves into the five elements. But the bundle of mental
42 impressions, which is the mind, does not die soon. It remains for
43 some time in seed-form and then sprouts and grows in the form of a
44 tree--it takes on another physical body and goes the round of birth
45 and death, until Self-knowledge arises. Therefore I say, by
46 meditation and concentration and by the power of philosophical
47 discrimination plunge this mind in the Ocean of Existence-

1 ¹⁸⁰ ?Mundaka Upanishad, III. ii. 4.
2

3 ¹⁸¹ ?Song of Ramprasad.
4

1 Knowledge-Bliss Absolute. When the mind dies, all limiting adjuncts
2 vanish and you are established in Brahman.

3 Disciple: Sir, it is so difficult to direct this uncontrolled mind
4 towards Brahman.

5 Swamiji: Is there anything difficult for the hero? Only men of
6 faint hearts speak so. "{Sanskrit}--Mukti is easy of attainment only
7 to the hero--but not to cowards." Says the Gita (VI. 35),
8 "{Sanskrit}--By renunciation and by practice is the mind brought
9 under control, O Arjuna." The Chitta or mind-stuff is like a
10 transparent lake, and the waves which rise in it by the impact of
11 sense-impressions constitute Manas or the mind. Therefore the
12 mind consists of a succession of thought-waves. From these mental
13 waves arises desire. Then that desire transforms itself into will and
14 works through its gross instrument, the body. Again, as work is
15 endless, so its fruits also are endless. Hence the mind is always
16 being tossed by countless myriads of waves--the fruits of work. This
17 mind has to be divested of all modifications (Vrittis) and
18 reconverted into the transparent lake, so that there remains not a
19 single wave of modification in it. Then will Brahman manifest Itself.
20 The scriptures give a glimpse of this state in such passages as:
21 "Then all the knots of the heart are cut asunder", etc. Do you
22 understand?

23 Disciple: Yes, sir, but meditation must base itself on some
24 object?

25 Swamiji: You yourself will be the object of your meditation.
26 Think and meditate that you are the omnipresent Atman. "I am
27 neither the body, nor the mind, nor the Buddhi (determinative
28 faculty), neither the gross nor the subtle body"--by this process of
29 elimination, immerse your mind in the transcendent knowledge
30 which is your real nature. Kill the mind by thus plunging it
31 repeatedly in this. Then only you will realise the Essence of
32 Intelligence, or be established in your real nature. Knower and
33 known, meditator and the object meditated upon will then become
34 one, and the cessation of all phenomenal superimpositions will
35 follow. This is styled in the Shastras as the transcendence of the
36 triad or relative knowledge (Tripitibheda). There is no relative or
37 conditioned knowledge in this state. When the Atman is the only
38 knower, by what means can you possibly know It? The Atman is
39 Knowledge, the Atman is Intelligence, the Atman is
40 Sachchidananda. It is through the inscrutable power of Maya,
41 which cannot be indicated as either existent or non-existent, that
42 the relative consciousness has come upon the Jiva who is none
43 other than Brahman. This is generally known as the conscious state.
44 And the state in which this duality of relative existence becomes
45 one in the pure Brahman is called in the scriptures the
46 superconscious state and described in such words as, "{Sanskrit}--
47 It is like an ocean perfectly at rest and without a name"
48 (*Vivekachudamani*, 410).

49 Swamiji spoke these words as if from the profound depths of
50 his realisation of Brahman.

51 Swamiji: All philosophy and scriptures have come from the

1 plane of relative knowledge of subject and object. But no thought or
2 language of the human mind can fully express the Reality which lies
3 beyond the plane of relative Knowledge! Science, philosophy, etc.
4 are only partial truths. So they can never be the adequate channels
5 of expression for the transcendent Reality. Hence viewed from the
6 transcendent standpoint, everything appears to be unreal--religious
7 creeds, and works, I and thou, and the universe--everything is
8 unreal! Then only it is perceived: "I am the only reality; I am the all-
9 pervading Atman, and I am the proof of my own existence." Where
10 is the room for a separate proof to establish the reality of my
11 existence? I am, as the scriptures say, "{Sanskrit}--Always known
12 to myself as the eternal subject" (*Vivekachudamani*, 409). I have
13 seen that state, realised it. You also see and realise it and preach
14 this truth of Brahman to all. Then only will you attain to peace.

15 While speaking these words, Swamiji's face wore a serious
16 expression and he was lost in thought. After some time he
17 continued: "Realise in your own life this knowledge of Brahman
18 which comprehends all theories and is the rationale of all truths,
19 and preach it to the world. This will conduce to your own good and
20 the good of others as well. I have told you today the essence of all
21 truths; there is nothing higher than this."

22 Disciple: Sir, now you are speaking of Jnana; but sometimes
23 you proclaim the superiority of Bhakti, sometimes of Karma, and
24 sometimes of Yoga. This confuses our understanding.

25 Swamiji: Well, the truth is this. The knowledge of Brahman is
26 the ultimate goal--the highest destiny of man. But man cannot
27 remain absorbed in Brahman all the time. When he comes out of it,
28 he must have something to engage himself. At that time he should
29 do such work as will contribute to the real well-being of people.
30 Therefore do I urge you in the service of Jivas in a spirit of oneness.
31 But, my son, such are the intricacies of work, that even great saints
32 are caught in them and become attached.

33 Therefore work has to be done without any desire for results.
34 This is the teaching of the Gita. But know that in the knowledge of
35 Brahman there is no touch of any relation to work. Good works, at
36 the most, purify the mind. Therefore has the commentator
37 Shankara so sharply criticised the doctrine of the combination of
38 Jnana and Karma. Some attain to the knowledge of Brahman by the
39 means of unselfish work. This is also a means, but the end is the
40 realisation of Brahman. Know this thoroughly that the goal of the
41 path of discrimination and of all other modes of practice is the
42 realisation of Brahman.

43 Disciple: Now, sir, please tell me about the utility of Raja-
44 Yoga and Bhakti-Yoga.

45 Swamiji: Striving in these paths also some attain to the
46 realisation of Brahman. The path of Bhakti or devotion of God is a
47 slow process, but is easy of practice. In the path of Yoga there are
48 many obstacles; perhaps the mind runs after psychic powers and
49 thus draws you away from attaining your real nature. Only the path
50 of Jnana is of quick fruition and the rationale of all other creeds;
51 hence it is equally esteemed in all countries and all ages. But even

1 in the path of discrimination there is the chance of the mind getting
2 stuck in the interminable net of vain argumentation. Therefore
3 along with it, meditation should be practised. By means of
4 discrimination and meditation, the goal or Brahman has to be
5 reached. One is sure to reach the goal by practising in this way.
6 This, in my opinion, is the easy path ensuring quick success.

7 Disciple: Now please tell me something about the doctrine of
8 Incarnation of God.

9 Swamiji: You want to master everything in a day, it seems!

10 Disciple: Sir, if the doubts and difficulties of the mind be
11 solved in one day, then I shall not have to trouble you time and
12 again.

13 Swamiji: Those by whose grace the knowledge of Atman,
14 which is extolled so much in the scriptures, is attained in a minute
15 are the moving Tirthas (seats of holiness)--the Incarnations. From
16 their very birth they are knowers of Brahman, and between
17 Brahman and the knower of Brahman there is not the least
18 difference. "{Sanskrit}--He who knows the Brahman becomes the
19 Brahman" (Mundaka, III.ii.9). The Atman cannot be known by the
20 mind for It is Itself the Knower--this I have already said. Therefore
21 man's relative knowledge reached up to the Avatars--those who
22 are always established in the Atman. The highest ideal of Ishvara
23 which the human mind can grasp is the Avatara. Beyond this there
24 is no relative knowledge. Such knowers of Brahman are rarely born
25 in the world. And very few people can understand them. They alone
26 are the proof of the truths of the scriptures--the towers of light in
27 the ocean of the world. By the company of such Avatars and by
28 their grace, the darkness of the mind disappears in a trice and
29 realisation flashes immediately in the heart. Why or by what
30 process it comes cannot be ascertained. But it does come. I have
31 seen it happen like that. Shri Krishna spoke the Gita, establishing
32 Himself in the Atman. Those passages of the Gita where He speaks
33 with the word "I", invariably indicate the Atman: "Take refuge in Me
34 alone" means, "Be established in the Atman". This knowledge of the
35 Atman is the highest aim of the Gita. The references to Yoga etc.
36 are but incidental to this realisation of the Atman. Those who have
37 not this knowledge of the Atman are "suicides". "They kill
38 themselves by the clinging to the unreal"; they lose their life in the
39 noose of sense-pleasures. You are also men, and can't you ignore
40 this trash of sensual enjoyment that won't last for two days? Should
41 you also swell the ranks of those who are born and die in utter
42 ignorance? Accept the "beneficial" and discard the "pleasant".
43 Speak of this Atman to all, even to the lowest. By continued
44 speaking your own intelligence also will clear up. And always
45 repeat the great Mantras--"{Sanskrit}--Thou art That",
46 "{Sanskrit}--I am That", "{Sanskrit}--All this is verily Brahman"--
47 and have the courage of a lion in the heart. What is there to fear?
48 Fear is death--fear is the greatest sin. The human soul, represented
49 by Arjuna, was touched with fear. Therefore Bhagavan Shri Krishna,
50 established in the Atman, spoke to him the teachings of the Gita.
51 Still his fear would not leave him. Later, when Arjuna saw the
52 Universal Form of the Lord, and became established in the Atman,

1 then with all bondages of Karma burnt by the fire of knowledge, he
2 fought the battle.

3 Disciple: Sir, can a man do work even after realisation?

4 Swamiji: After realisation, what is ordinarily called work does
5 not persist. It changes its character. The work which the Jnani does
6 only conduces to the well-being of the world. Whatever a man of
7 realisation says or does contributes to the welfare of all. We have
8 observed Shri Ramakrishna; he was, as it were "{Sanskrit}--In the
9 body, but not of it!" About the motive of the actions of such
10 personages only this can be said: "{Sanskrit}--Everything they do
11 like men, simply by way of sport" (*Brahma-Sutras* , II.i.33).

12 13 XVI

14 [*Place: Belur Math. Year: 1901.*]

15 The disciple has come to the Math today accompanied by
16 Shri Ranadaprasad Das Gupta, the founder and professor of the
17 Jubilee Art Academy, Calcutta. Ranada Babu is an expert artist, a
18 learned man and an admirer of Swamiji. After the exchange of
19 courtesies Swamiji began to talk with Ranada Babu on various
20 topics relating to art.

21 Swamiji: I had the opportunity of seeing the beauties of art of
22 nearly every civilised country in the world, but I saw nothing like
23 the development of art which took place in our country during the
24 Buddhistic period. During the regime of the Mogul Emperors also,
25 there was a marked development of art--and the Taj and the Jumma
26 Masjid etc. are standing monuments of that culture.

27 Art has its origin in the expression of some idea in whatever
28 man produces. Where there is no expression of idea, however much
29 there may be a display of colours and so on, it cannot be styled as
30 true art. Even the articles of everyday use, such as water vessels, or
31 cups and saucers, should be used to express an idea. In the Paris
32 Exhibition I saw a wonderful figure carved in marble. In explanation
33 of the figure, the following words were inscribed underneath: Art
34 unveiling Nature. That is how art sees the inner beauty of nature by
35 drawing away with its own hands the covering veils. The work has
36 been so designed as to indicate that the beauty of nature has not
37 yet become fully unveiled; but the artist is fascinated, as it were,
38 with the beauty of the little that has become manifest. One cannot
39 refrain from praising the sculptor who has tried to express this
40 exquisite idea. You should also try to produce something original
41 like this.

42 Ranada Babu: Yes, I also have the desire to do some original
43 modelling at leisure. But I meet with no encouragement in this
44 country; it is a poor country and there is want of appreciation.

45 Swamiji: If you can with your whole heart produce one real
46 thing, if you can rightly express a single idea in art, it must win
47 appreciation in course of time. A real thing never suffers from want
48 of appreciation in this world. It is also heard that some artists have
49 gained appreciation for their works a thousand years after their

1 death!

2 Ranada Babu: That is true. But we have become so worthless
3 that we haven't got the courage to spend a lot of energy to no
4 purpose. Through these five years' struggle I have succeeded to
5 some extent. Bless me that my efforts be not in vain.

6 Swamiji: If you set to work in right earnest, then you are sure
7 to be successful. Whoever works at a thing heart and soul not only
8 achieves success in it, but through his absorption in that he also
9 realises the supreme Truth--Brahman. Whoever works at a thing
10 with his whole heart receives help from God.

11 Ranada Babu: What difference did you find between the art
12 of the West and that of India?

13 Swamiji: It is nearly the same everywhere. Originality is
14 rarely found. In those countries pictures are painted with the help
15 of models obtained by photographing various objects. But no sooner
16 does one take the help of machinery than all originality vanishes--
17 one cannot give expression to one's ideas. The ancient artists used
18 to evolve original ideas from their brains and try to express them in
19 their paintings. Now the picture being a likeness of photographs,
20 the power of originality and the attempt to develop are getting
21 scarce. But each nation has a characteristic of its own. In its
22 manners and customs, in its mode of living, in painting and
23 sculpture is found the expression of that characteristic idea. For
24 instance, music and dancing in the West are all pointed in their
25 expression. In dance, they look as if jerking the limbs; in
26 instrumental music, the sounds prick the ear like a sword thrust, as
27 it were; so also in vocal music. In this country, on the other hand,
28 the dance has a rolling wave-like movement, and there is the same
29 rounded movement in the varieties of pitch in vocal song. So also in
30 instrumental music. Hence with regard to art also, a different
31 expression is found among different people. People who are very
32 materialistic take nature as their ideal, and try to express in art
33 ideas allied thereto, while the people whose ideal is the
34 transcendent Reality beyond nature try to express that in art
35 through the powers of nature. With regard to the former class of
36 people, nature is the primary basis of art, while with the second
37 class, ideality is the principal motive of artistic development. Thus,
38 though starting with two different ideals in art, they have advanced
39 in it each in its own way. Seeing some paintings in the West you will
40 mistake them for real natural objects. With respect to this country
41 also, when in ancient times sculpture attained a high degree of
42 perfection, if you look at a statue of the period it will make you
43 forget the material world and transport you to a new ideal world. As
44 in Western countries paintings like those of former times are not
45 produced now, so in our country also, attempts to give expression to
46 original ideas in art are no longer seen. For example, the paintings
47 from your art school have got no expression, as it were. It would be
48 well if you try to paint the objects of everyday meditation of the
49 Hindus by giving in them the expression of ancient ideals.

50 Ranada Babu: I feel much encouraged by your words. I shall
51 try to act up to your suggestions.

1 Swamiji: Take, for instance, the figure of Mother Kali. In it
2 there is the union of the blissful and the terrible aspects. But in
3 none of the pictures can be seen the true expression of these two
4 aspects. Far from this, there is no attempt to express adequately
5 even one of these two aspects! I have tried to put down some ideas
6 of the terrible aspects of Mother Kali in my English poem, *Kali the*
7 *Mother*. Can you express those ideas in a picture?

8 Ranada Babu: Please let me know them.

9 Swamiji had the poem brought from the library, and began to
10 read it out most impressively to Ranada Babu. Ranada Babu silently
11 listened to the poem, and after a while, as if visualising the figure
12 with his mind's eye, he turned to Swamiji with a frightened look.

13 Swamiji: Well, will you be able to express this idea in the
14 picture?

15 Ranada Babu: Yes, I shall try;¹⁸² but it turns one's head even
16 to imagine the idea.

17 Swamiji: After drawing the picture, please show it to me.
18 Then I will tell you about the points necessary to perfect it.

19 Then Swamiji had the design which he had sketched for the
20 seal¹⁸³ of the Ramakrishna Mission brought, showed it to Ranada
21 Babu and asked his opinion on it. It depicted a lake in which a lotus
22 blossomed, and there was a swan, and the whole was encircled by a
23 serpent. Ranada Babu at first could not catch the significance of it
24 and asked Swamiji to explain. Swamiji said, "The wavy waters in
25 the picture are symbolic of Karma; the lotus, of Bhakti; and the
26 rising-sun, of Jnana. The encircling serpent is indicative of Yoga and
27 the awakened Kundalini Shakti, while the sun in the picture stands
28 for the Paramatman (Supreme Self). Therefore the idea of the
29 picture is that by the union of Karma, Jnana, Bhakti, and Yoga, the
30 vision of the Paramatman is obtained."

31 Ranada Babu kept silent, gratified to hear the *motif* of the
32 picture. After a while he said, "I wish I could learn about art from
33 you!"

34 Then Swamiji showed to Ranada Babu a drawing, depicting
35 his plan of the future Ramakrishna Temple and Math. Then he
36 began to say, "In the building of this prospective Temple and Math I
37 have the desire to bring together all that is best in Eastern and
38 Western art. I shall try to apply in its construction all the ideas
39 about architecture which I have gathered in my travels all over the
40 world. A big prayer-hall will be built with roof supported on
41 numerous clustered pillars. In its walls, hundreds of lotuses will be
42 in full bloom. It must be big enough to accommodate a thousand
43 persons sitting in meditation. The Ramakrishna temple and prayer-
44 hall should be built together in such a way that from a distance it
45 would taken for a representation of the symbol, "Om". Within the

1 ¹⁸² ?Ranada Babu began to paint this picture the very next day, but it was never
2 finished, nor shown to Swamiji.

3
4 ¹⁸³ ?Printed on the title-page of this volume.
5

1 temple there would be a figure of Shri Ramakrishna seated on a
2 swan. On the two sides of the door will be represented the figure of
3 a lion and a lamb licking each other's body in love-expressing the
4 idea that great power and gentleness have become united in love. I
5 have these ideas in my mind; and if I live long enough I shall carry
6 them out. Otherwise future generations will try if they can do it by
7 degrees. It is my opinion that Shri Ramakrishna was born to vivify
8 all branches of art and culture in this country. Therefore this Math
9 has to be built up in such a way that religion, work, learning, Jnana,
10 and Bhakti may spread over the world from this centre. Be you my
11 helpers in this work."

12 Ranada Babu and the assembled Sannyasins and
13 Brahmacharins listened to Swamiji in mute wonder. After a while
14 Swamiji resumed, "I am discussing the subject at length with you as
15 you are yourself an adept in the line. Now please tell me what you
16 have learnt about the highest ideals of art as the result of your long
17 study of it."

18 Ranada Babu: What new thing can I tell you? On the
19 contrary, it is you who have opened my eyes on this subject. I have
20 never heard such instructive words on the subject of art in my life.
21 Bless me, sir, that I can work out the ideas that I have got from you.

22 Then Swamiji got up from his seat and paced the lawn,
23 remarking to the disciple, "He is a very spirited young man."

24 Disciple: Sir, he is astonished to hear your words.

25 Swamiji, without answering the disciple, began to hum the
26 lines of a song which Shri Ramakrishna used to sing, "The
27 controlled mind is a great treasure, the philosopher's stone, which
28 yields whatever you want."

29 After walking a while, Swamiji, washing his face, entered his
30 room with the disciple in company and read the article on Art in the
31 *Encyclopaedia Britannica* for some time. After finishing it, he
32 began to make fun with the disciple, caricaturing the words and
33 accents of East Bengal.

34 XVII

35 [Place: Belur Math. Year: 1901.]

36 Swamiji has just returned from East Bengal and Assam a few
37 days back. He is ill, and his feet have swollen. Coming to the Math,
38 the disciple went upstairs and prostrated himself at Swamiji's feet.
39 In spite of his ill health, Swamiji wore his usual smiling face and
40 affectionate look.

41 Disciple: How are you, Swamiji?

42 Swamiji: What shall I speak of my health, my son? The body
43 is getting unfit for work day by day. It has been born on the soil of
44 Bengal, and some disease or other is always overtaking it. The
45 physique of this country is not at all good. If you want to do some
46 strenuous work, it cannot bear the strain. But the few days that the
47 body lasts, I will work for you. I shall die in harness.

1 Disciple: If you give up work for some time and take rest,
2 then you will be all right. Your life means good to the world.

3 Swamiji: Am I able to sit quiet, my son! Two or three days
4 before Shri Ramakrishna's passing away, She whom he used to call
5 "Kali" entered this body. It is She who takes me here and there and
6 makes me work, without letting me remain quiet or allowing me to
7 look to my personal comforts.

8 Disciple: Are you speaking metaphorically ?

9 Swamiji: Oh, no; two or three days before his leaving the
10 body, he called me to his side one day, and asking me to sit before
11 him, looked steadfastly at me and fell into Samadhi. Then I really
12 felt that a subtle force like an electric shock was entering my body!
13 In a little while, I also lost outward consciousness and sat
14 motionless. How long I stayed in that condition I do not remember;
15 when consciousness returned I found Shri Ramakrishna shedding
16 tears. On questioning him, he answered me affectionately, "Today,
17 giving you my all, I have become a beggar. With this power you are
18 to do many works for the world's good before you will return." I feel
19 that power is constantly directing me to this or that work. This body
20 has not been made for remaining idle.

21 Hearing these words with speechless wonder the disciple
22 thought--who knows how common people will take these words?
23 Thereupon he changed the topic and said, "Sir, how did you like our
24 East Bengal?"

25 Swamiji: I liked it on the whole. The fields, I saw, were rich in
26 crops, the climate also is good, and the scenery on the hill-side is
27 charming. The Brahmaputra Valley is incomparable in its beauty.
28 The people of East Bengal are a little stronger and more active than
29 those of this part. It may be due to their taking plenty of fish and
30 meat. Whatever they do, they do with great persistence. They use a
31 great deal of oil and fat in their food, which is not good, because
32 taking too much of oily and fatty food produces fat in the body.

33 Disciple: How did you find their religious consciousness?

34 Swamiji: About religious ideas, I noticed the people are very
35 conservative, and many have turned into fanatics in trying to be
36 liberal in religion. One day a young man brought to me, in the
37 house of Mohini Babu at Dacca, a photograph and said, "Sir, please
38 tell me who he is. Is he an Avatara?" I told him gently many times
39 that I know nothing of it. When even on my telling him three or four
40 times the boy did not cease from his persistent questioning, I was
41 constrained to say at last, "My boy, henceforth take a little
42 nutritious food and then your brain will develop. Without nourishing
43 food, I see your brain has become dried up." At these words the
44 young man may have been much displeased. But what could I do?
45 Unless I spoke like this to the boys, they would turn into madcaps
46 by degrees.

47 Disciple: In our East Bengal a great many Avatars have
48 cropped up recently.

49 Swamiji: People may call their Guru an Avatara; they may

1 have any idea of him they like. But Incarnations of God are not born
2 anywhere and everywhere and at all seasons. At Dacca itself I
3 heard there were three or four Avataras!

4 Disciple: How did you find the women of that side?

5 Swamiji: The women are very nearly the same everywhere. I
6 found Vaishnavism strong at Dacca. The wife of H__ seemed to be
7 very intelligent. With great care she used to prepare food and send
8 it to me.

9 Disciple: I heard you have been to Nag Mahashaya's place.

10 Swamiji: Yes, going so far, should I not visit the birthplace of
11 such a great soul? His wife fed me with many delicacies prepared
12 by her own hand. The house is charming, like a peace retreat.
13 There I took a swimming bath in a village pond. After that I had
14 such a sound sleep that I woke at half past two in the afternoon. Of
15 the few days I had sound sleep in my life, that in Nag Mahashaya's
16 house was one. Rising from sleep I had a plentiful repast. Nag
17 Mahashaya's wife presented me a cloth which I tied round my head
18 as a turban and started for Dacca. I found that the photograph of
19 Nag Mahashaya was being worshipped there. The place where his
20 remains lie interred ought to be well kept. Even now it is not as it
21 should be.

22 Disciple: The people of that part have not been able to
23 appreciate Nag Mahashaya.

24 Swamiji: How can ordinary people appreciate a great man
25 like him? Those who had his company are blessed indeed.

26 Disciple: What did you see at Kamakhya?

27 Swamiji: The Shillong hills are very beautiful. There I met Sir
28 Henry Cotton, the Chief Commissioner of Assam. He asked me,
29 "Swamiji, after travelling through Europe and America, what have
30 you come to see here in these distant hills?" Such a good and kind-
31 hearted man as Sir Henry Cotton is rarely found. Hearing of my
32 illness, he sent the Civil Surgeon and inquired after my health
33 mornings and evenings. I could not do much lecturing there,
34 because my health was very bad. On the way Nitai served and
35 looked after me nicely.

36 Disciple: What did you find the religious ideas of that part to
37 be?

38 Swamiji: It is the land of the Tantras. I heard of one "Hankar
39 Deva" who is worshipped there as an Avatara. I heard his sect is
40 very wide-spread. I could not ascertain if "Hankar Deva" was but
41 another form of the name Shankaracharya. They are monks--
42 perhaps Tantrika Sannyasins, or perhaps one of the Shankara sects.

43 Disciple: The people of East Bengal have not been able to
44 appreciate you as is the case with Nag Mahashaya.

45 Swamiji: Whether they appreciate me or not, the people
46 there are more active and energetic than those of these parts. In
47 time it will develop more. What are nowadays known as refined or
48 civilised ways have not yet thoroughly entered those parts.

1 Gradually they will. In all times, etiquette and fashion spread to the
2 countryside from the capital. And this is happening in East Bengal
3 also. The land that has produced a great soul like Nag Mahashaya
4 is blessed and has a hopeful future. By the light of his personality
5 Eastern Bengal is radiant.

6 Disciple: But, sir, ordinary people did not know him as a
7 great soul. He hid himself in great obscurity.

8 Swamiji: There they used to make much fuss about my food
9 and say, "Why should you eat that food or eat from the hands of
10 such and such?"--and so on. To which I had to reply, "I am a
11 Sannyasin and a mendicant friar and what need have I to observe
12 so much outward formality with regard to food etc.? Do not your
13 scriptures say, "{Sanskrit}--One should beg one's food from door to
14 door, ay even from the house of an outcast"? But of course external
15 forms are necessary in the beginning, for the inner realisation of
16 religion, in order to make the truth of the scriptures practical in
17 one's life. Haven't you heard of Shri Ramakrishna's story of
18 "wringing out the almanac for water"?¹⁸⁴ Outward forms and
19 observances are only for the manifestation of the great inner
20 powers of man. The object of all scriptures is to awaken those inner
21 powers and make him understand and realise his real nature. The
22 means are of the nature of ordinances and prohibitions. If you lose
23 sight of the ideal fight over the means only, what will it avail? In
24 every country I have visited, I find this fighting over the means
25 going on, and people have no eye on the ideal. Shri Ramakrishna
26 came to show the truth of this.

27 Realisation of the truth is the essential thing. Whether you
28 bathe in the Ganga for a thousand years or live on vegetable food
29 for a like period, unless it helps towards the manifestation of the
30 Self, know that it is all of no use. If on the other hand, any one can
31 realise the Atman, without the observance of outward forms, then
32 that very non-observance of forms is the best means. But even after
33 the realisation of Atman, one should observe outward forms to a
34 certain extent for setting an example to the people. The thing is you
35 must make the mind steadfast on something. If it is steadfast on
36 one object, it attains to concentration, that is, its other
37 modifications die out and there is a uniform flow in one direction.
38 Many become wholly preoccupied with the outward forms and
39 observances merely and fail to direct their mind to thoughts of the
40 Atman! If you remain day and night within the narrow groove of
41 ordinances and prohibitions, how will there be any expression of
42 the soul? The more one has advanced in the realisation of the
43 Atman, the less is he dependent on the observances of forms.
44 Shankaracharya also has said, "{Sanskrit}--Where is there any
45 ordinance or prohibition for him whose mind is always above the
46 play of the Gunas?" Therefore the essential truth is realisation.
47 Know that to be the goal. Each distinct creed is but a way to the
48 Truth. The test of progress is the amount of renunciation that one

1 ¹⁸⁴ ?The Bengali almanac makes a forecast of the annual rainfall but not a drop
2 comes out of squeezing its pages! Similarly scriptures are useless unless their
3 truths are *realised* in life.
4

1 has attained. Where you find the attraction for lust and wealth
2 considerably diminished, to whatever creed he may belong, know
3 that his inner spirit is awakening. The door of Self-realisation has
4 surely opened for him. On the contrary if you observe a thousand
5 outward rules and quote a thousand scriptural texts, still, if it has
6 not brought the spirit of renunciation in you, know that your life is
7 in vain. Be earnest over this realisation and set your heart on it.
8 Well, you have read enough of scriptures. But tell me, of what avail
9 has it been? Some perhaps thinking of money have become
10 millionaires, whereas you have become a Pundit by thinking of
11 scriptures. But both are bondages. Attain the supreme knowledge
12 and go beyond Vidya and Avidya, relative knowledge and ignorance.

13 Disciple: Sir, through your grace I understand it all, but my
14 past Karma does not allow me to assimilate these teachings.

15 Swamiji: Throw aside your Karma and all such stuff. If it is a
16 truth that by your own past action you have got this body; then,
17 nullifying the effects of evil works by good works, why should you
18 not be a Jivanmukta in this very body? Know that freedom or Self-
19 Knowledge is in your own hands. In real knowledge there is no
20 touch of work. But those who work after being Jivanmuktas do so
21 for the good of others. They do not look to the results of works. No
22 seed of desire finds any room in their mind. And strictly speaking it
23 is almost impossible to work like that for the good of the world from
24 the householder's position. In the whole of Hindu scriptures there is
25 the single instance of King Janaka in this respect. But you nowadays
26 want to pose as Janakas (lit. fathers) in every home by begetting
27 children year after year, while he was without the body-
28 consciousness!

29 Disciple: Please bless me that I may attain Self-realisation in
30 this very life.

31 Swamiji: What fear? If there is sincerity of spirit, I tell you,
32 for a certainty, you will attain it in this very life. But manly
33 endeavour is wanted. Do you know what it is? "I shall certainly
34 attain Self-knowledge. Whatever obstacles may come, I shall
35 certainly overcome them"--a firm determination like this is
36 Purushakara. "Whether my mother, father, friends, brothers, wife,
37 and children live or die, whether this body remains or goes, I shall
38 never turn back till I attain to the vision of the Atman"--this resolute
39 endeavour to advance towards one's goal, setting at naught all
40 other considerations, is termed manly endeavour. Otherwise,
41 endeavour for creature comforts even beasts and birds show. Man
42 has got this body simply to realise Self-knowledge. If you follow the
43 common run of people in the world and float with the general
44 current, where then is your manliness? Well, the common people
45 are going to the jaws of death! But you have come to conquer it!
46 Advance like a hero. Don't be thwarted by anything. How many
47 days will this body last, with its happiness and misery? When you
48 have got the human body, then rouse the Atman within and say--I
49 have reached the state of fearlessness! Say--I am the Atman in
50 which my lower ego has become merged for ever. Be perfect in this
51 idea; and then as long as the body endures, speak unto others this
52 message of fearlessness: "Thou art That", "Arise, awake, and stop

1 not till the goal is reached!" If you can achieve this, then shall I
2 know that you are really a tenacious East Bengal man.

3
4 XVIII

5 [*Place: Belur Math. Year: 1901.*]

6 Swamiji is in indifferent health since his return to the Math
7 from the Shillong Hills. His feet have swollen. All this has made his
8 brother-disciples very anxious. At the request of Swami
9 Niranjanananda, Swamiji has agreed to take Ayurvedic medicine.
10 He is to begin this treatment from next Tuesday and entirely give
11 up taking water and salt. Today is Sunday. The disciple asked him,
12 "Sir, it is terribly hot now and you drink water very frequently; it
13 will be unbearable for you now to stop taking water altogether for
14 this treatment."

15 Swamiji: What do you say? I shall make a firm resolve, on the
16 morning of the day I shall begin this treatment, not to take any
17 water. After that no water shall pass down the throat any more. For
18 three weeks not a drop of water shall be able to go down the throat.
19 The body is but an outer covering of the mind and whatever the
20 mind will dictate to it, it will have to carry out. So there is nothing
21 to be afraid of. At the request of Niranjan I have to undergo this
22 treatment. Well, I cannot be indifferent to the request of my
23 brother-disciples.

24 It is now about ten o'clock. Swamiji cheerfully raised the
25 topic of his future Math for women, saying, "With the Holy Mother
26 as the centre of inspiration, a Math is to be established on the
27 eastern bank of the Ganga. As Brahmacharins and Sadhus will be
28 trained in this Math here, so in the other Math also,
29 Brahmacharinis and Sadhvis will be trained."

30 Disciple: Sir, history does not tell us of any Maths for women
31 in India in ancient times. Only during the Buddhistic period one
32 hears of Maths for women; but from it in course of time many
33 corruptions arose. The whole country was overrun by great evil
34 practices.

35 Swamiji: It is very difficult to understand why in this country
36 so much difference is made between men and women, whereas the
37 Vedanta declares that one and the same conscious Self is present in
38 all beings. You always criticise the women, but say what have you
39 done for their uplift? Writing down Smritis etc., and binding them
40 by hard rules, the men have turned the women into mere
41 manufacturing machines! If you do not raise the women, who are
42 the living embodiment of the Divine Mother, don't think that you
43 have any other way to rise.

44 Disciple: Women are a bondage and a snare to men. By their
45 Maya they cover the knowledge and dispassion of men. It is for this,
46 I suppose, that scriptural writers hint that knowledge and devotion
47 are difficult of attainment to them.

48 Swamiji: In what scriptures do you find statements that
49 women are not competent for knowledge and devotion? In the

1 period of degradation, when the priests made other castes
2 incompetent for the study of the Vedas, they deprived the women
3 also of all their rights. Otherwise you will find that in the Vedic or
4 Upanishad age Maitreyi, Gargi, and other ladies of revered memory
5 have taken the places of Rishis through their skill in discussing
6 about Brahman. In an assembly of a thousand Brahmanas who were
7 all erudite in the Vedas, Gargi boldly challenged Yajnavalkya in a
8 discussion about Brahman. Since such ideal women were entitled to
9 spiritual knowledge, why shall not the women have the same
10 privilege now? What has happened once can certainly happen
11 again. History repeats itself. All nations have attained greatness by
12 paying proper respect to women. That country and that nation
13 which do not respect women have never become great, nor will
14 ever be in future. The principal reason why your race has so much
15 degenerated is that you have no respect for these living images of
16 Shakti. Manu says, "Where women are respected, there the gods
17 delight; and where they are not, there all works and efforts come to
18 naught."¹⁸⁵ There is no hope of rise for that family or country where
19 there is no estimation of women, where they live in sadness. For
20 this reason, they have to be raised first; and an ideal Math has to be
21 started for them.

22 Disciple: Sir, when you first returned from the West, in your
23 lecture at the Star Theatre you sharply criticised the Tantras. Now
24 by your supporting the worship of women, as taught in the Tantras,
25 you are contradicting yourself.

26 Swamiji: I denounced only the present corrupted form of
27 Vamachara of the Tantras. I did not denounce the Mother-worship
28 of the Tantras, or even the real Vamachara. The purport of the
29 Tantras is to worship women in a spirit of Divinity. During the
30 downfall of Buddhism, the Vamachara became very much
31 corrupted, and that corrupted form obtains to the present day. Even
32 now the Tantra literature of India is influenced by those ideas. I
33 denounced only these corrupt and horrible practices--which I do
34 even now. I never objected to the worship of women who are the
35 living embodiment of Divine Mother, whose external manifestations,
36 appealing to the senses have maddened men, but whose internal
37 manifestations, such as knowledge, devotion, discrimination and
38 dispassion make man omniscient, of unfailing purpose, and a
39 knower of Brahman. "{Sanskrit}--She, when pleased, becomes
40 propitious and the cause of the freedom of man" (*Chandi*, I. 57).
41 Without propitiating the Mother by worship and obeisance, not
42 even Brahma and Vishnu have the power to elude Her grasp and
43 attain to freedom. Therefore for the worship of these family
44 goddesses, in order to manifest the Brahman within them, I shall
45 establish the women's Math.

46 Disciple: It may be a good idea but where will you get the
47 women inmates? With the present hard restrictions of society, who
48 will permit the ladies of their household to join your Math?

49 Swamiji: Why so? Even now there are women disciples of

¹⁸⁵ ?Manu, III. 56.

1 Shri Ramakrishna. With their help I shall start this Math. The Holy
2 Mother will be their central figure and the wives and daughters of
3 the devotees of Shri Ramakrishna will be its first inmates. For they
4 will easily appreciate the usefulness of such a Math. After that,
5 following their example, many householders will help in their noble
6 work.

7 Disciple: The devotees of Shri Ramakrishna will certainly join
8 this work. But I don't think the general public will help in this work.

9 Swamiji: No great work has been done in the world without
10 sacrifice. Who on seeing the tiny sprout of the banyan can imagine
11 that in course of time it will develop into a gigantic banyan tree? At
12 present I shall start the Math in this way. Later on you will see that
13 after a generation or two people of this country will appreciate the
14 worth of this Math. My women disciples will lay down their lives for
15 it. Casting off fear and cowardice, you also be helpers in this noble
16 mission and hold this high ideal before all. You will see, it will shed
17 its lustre over the whole country in time.

18 Disciple: Sir, please tell me all about your plan of this Math
19 for women.

20 Swamiji: On the other side of the Ganga a big plot of land
21 will be acquired, where unmarried girls or Brahmacharini widows
22 will live; devout married women will also be allowed to stay now
23 and then. Men will have no concern with this Math. The elderly
24 Sadhus of the Math will manage the affairs of this Math from a
25 distance. There shall be a girls' school attached to this women's
26 Math, in which religious scriptures, literature, Sanskrit, grammar,
27 and even some amount of English should be taught. Other matters
28 such as sewing, culinary art, rules of domestic work, and
29 upbringing of children, will also be taught while Japa, worship,
30 meditation, etc. shall form an indispensable part of the teaching.
31 Those who will be able to live here permanently, renouncing home
32 and family ties, will be provided with food and clothing from the
33 Math. Those who will not be able to do that will be allowed to study
34 in this Math as day-scholars. With the permission of the head of the
35 Math, the latter will be allowed even to stay in the Math
36 occasionally, and during such stay will be maintained by the Math.
37 The elder Brahmacharinis will take charge of the training of the girl
38 students in Brahmacharya. After five or six years' training in this
39 Math, the guardians of the girls may marry them. If deemed fit for
40 Yoga and religious life, with the permission of the guardians they
41 will be allowed to stay in this Math, taking the vow of celibacy.
42 These celibate nuns will in time be the teachers and preachers of
43 the Math. In villages and towns they will open centres and strive for
44 the spread of female education. Through such devout preachers of
45 character there will be the real spread of female education in the
46 country. So long as the students will remain in association with this
47 Math, they must observe Brahmacharya as the basic ideal of this
48 Math.

49 Spirituality, sacrifice, and self-control will be the motto of the
50 pupils of this Math, and service or Seva-dharma the vow of their
51 life. In view of such ideal lives, who will not respect and have faith

1 in them? If the life of the women of this country be moulded in such
2 fashion, then only will there be the reappearance of such ideal
3 characters as Sita, Savitri and Gargi. To what straits the strictures
4 of local usages have reduced the women of this country, rendering
5 them lifeless and inert, you could understand if only you visited the
6 Western countries. You alone are responsible for this miserable
7 condition of the women, and it rests with you also to raise them
8 again. Therefore I say, set to work. What will it do to memorise a
9 few religious books like the Vedas and so on?

10 Disciple: Sir, if the girl students after being trained in this
11 Math marry, how will one find ideal characters in them? Will it not
12 be better if the rule is made that those who will be educated in this
13 Math shall not marry?

14 Swamiji: Can that be brought about all at once? They must
15 be given education and left to themselves. After that they will act as
16 they think best. Even after marriage and entering the world, the
17 girls educated as above will inspire their husbands with noble
18 ideals and be the mothers of heroic sons. But there must be this
19 rule that the guardians of the students in the women's Math must
20 not even think of marrying them before they attain the age of
21 fifteen.

22 Disciple: Sir, then those girls will not command reputation in
23 society. Nobody would like to marry them.

24 Swamiji: Why will not they be wanted in marriage? You have
25 not yet understood the trend of society. These learned and
26 accomplished girls will never be in want of bridegrooms. Society
27 nowadays does not follow the texts recommending child-marriage
28 nor will do so in future. Even now don't you see?

29 Disciple: But there is sure to be a violent opposition against
30 this in the beginning.

31 Swamiji: Let it be. What is there to be afraid of in that?
32 Opposition to a righteous work initiated with moral courage will
33 only awaken the moral power of the initiators the more. That which
34 meets with no obstruction, no opposition, only takes men to the
35 path of moral death. Struggle is the sign of life.

36 Disciple: Yes, sir.

37 Swamiji: In the highest reality of the Parabrahman, there is
38 no distinction of sex. We notice this only in the relative plane. And
39 the more the mind becomes introspective, the more that idea of
40 difference vanishes. Ultimately, when the mind is wholly merged in
41 the homogeneous and undifferentiated Brahman, such ideas as this
42 is a man or that a woman do not remain at all. We have actually
43 seen this in the life of Shri Ramakrishna. Therefore do I say that
44 though outwardly there may be difference between men and
45 women, in their real nature there is none. Hence, if a man can be a
46 knower of Brahman, why cannot a woman attain to the same
47 knowledge? Therefore I was saying that if even one amongst the
48 women became a knower of Brahman, then by the radiance of her
49 personality thousands of women would be inspired and awakened
50 to truth, and great well-being of the country and society would

1 ensue. Do you understand?

2 Disciple: Sir, your teachings have opened my eyes today.

3 Swamiji: Not fully yet. When you realise that all-illuminating
4 reality of the Atman, then you will see that this idea of sex-
5 distinction has vanished altogether, then only will you look upon
6 women as the veritable manifestation of Brahman. We have seen in
7 Shri Ramakrishna how he had this idea of divine motherhood in
8 every woman, of whatever caste she might be, or whatever might
9 be her worth. It is because I have seen this that I ask you all so
10 earnestly to do likewise and open girls' schools in every village and
11 try to uplift them. If the women are raised, then their children will
12 by their noble actions glorify the name of the country--then will
13 culture, knowledge, power, and devotion awaken in the land.

14 Disciple: But, sir, contrary results appear to have come out of
15 the present female education. With just a smattering of education,
16 they take merely to the Western modes of living, but it is not clear
17 how far they are advancing in the spirit of renunciation, self-
18 control, austerity, Brahmacharya and other qualities conducive to
19 Brahmajana.

20 Swamiji: In the beginning a few mistakes like that are
21 unavoidable. When a new idea is preached in the country, some,
22 failing to grasp it properly, go wrong in that way. But what matters
23 it to the well-being of society at large? Well, those who are pioneers
24 of the little bit of female education that now obtains in the country
25 were undoubtedly very great-hearted. But the truth is that some
26 defect or other must creep into that learning or culture which is not
27 founded on a religious basis. But now female education is to be
28 spread with religion as its centre. All other training should be
29 secondary to religion. Religious training, the formation of character
30 and observance of the vow of celibacy--these should be attended to.
31 In the female education which has obtained up till now in India, it is
32 religion that has been made a secondary concern, hence those
33 defects you were speaking of have crept in. But no blame attaches
34 therefore to the women. Reformers having proceeded to start
35 female education without being Brahmacharins themselves have
36 stumbled like that. Founders of all good undertakings, before they
37 launch on their desired work, must attain to the knowledge of the
38 Atman through rigorous self-discipline. Otherwise defects are
39 bound to occur in their work.

40 Disciple: Yes, sir, it is observed that many educated women
41 spend their time in reading novels and so on; but in East Bengal
42 even with education women have not given up their religious
43 observances. Is it so here in this part?

44 Swamiji: In every country, nations have their good and bad
45 sides. Ours is to do good works in our lives and hold an example
46 before others. No work succeeds by condemnation. It only repels
47 people. Let anybody say what he likes, don't contradict him. In this
48 world of Maya, whatever work you will take up will be attended
49 with some defect. "{Sanskrit}--All works are covered with defects
50 as fire is with smoke" (Gita, XVIII.48). Every fire has a chance of
51 being attended with smoke. But will you, on that account, sit

1 inactive? As far as you can, you must go on doing good work.

2 Disciple: What is this good work?

3 Swamiji: Whatever helps in the manifestation of Brahman is
4 good work. Any work can be done so as to help, if not directly, at
5 least indirectly, the manifestation of the Atman. But following the
6 path laid down by the Rishis, that knowledge of the Atman
7 manifests quickly; on the contrary, the doing of works which have
8 been indicated by the scriptural writers as wrong, brings only
9 bondage of the soul and sometimes this bondage of delusion does
10 not vanish even in many lives. But in all ages and climes, freedom is
11 sure to be attained by Jivas ultimately. For the Atman is the real
12 nature of the Jiva. Can anybody give up his own nature? If you fight
13 with your shadow for a thousand years, can you drive it away from
14 you?--it will always remain with you.

15 Disciple: But, sir, according to Shankara, Karma is
16 antagonistic to Jnana. He has variously refuted the intermingling of
17 Jnana and Karma. So how can Karma be helpful to the
18 manifestation of Jnana?

19 Swamiji: Shankara after saying so has again described
20 Karma as indirect help to the manifestation of Jnana and the means
21 for the purification of the mind. But I do not contradict his
22 conclusion that in transcendent knowledge there is no touch of any
23 work whatsoever. So long as man is within the realm of the
24 consciousness of action, agent, and the result of action, he is
25 powerless to sit idle without doing some work. So, as work is thus
26 ingrained in the very nature of man, why don't you go on doing such
27 works as are helpful to the manifestation of the knowledge of the
28 Atman? That all work is the effect of ignorance may be true from
29 the absolute standpoint, but within the sphere of relative
30 consciousness it has a great utility. When you will realise the
31 Atman, the doing or non-doing of work will be within your control,
32 and whatever you will do in that state will be good work, conducive
33 to the well-being of Jivas and the world. With the manifestation of
34 Brahman, even the breath you draw will be to the good of Jiva. Then
35 you will no longer have to work by means of conscious planning. Do
36 you understand?

37 Disciple: Yes, it is a beautiful conclusion reconciling Karma
38 and Jnana from the Vedantic standpoint.

39 At this time, the bell for supper rang, and the disciple, before
40 going to partake of it, prayed with folded hands, "Bless me, sir, that
41 I may attain to the knowledge of Brahman in this very life." Swamiji
42 placing his hand on the disciple's head said, "Have no fear, my son.
43 You are not like ordinary worldly men--neither householders, nor
44 exactly Sannyasins--but quite a new type."

45
46 XIX

47 [*Place: Belur Math. Year: 1901.*]

48 Swamiji is in indifferent health. At the earnest request of
49 Swami Niranjanananda he has been taking Ayurvedic medicines for

1 six or seven days. According to this treatment, the drinking of water
2 is strictly forbidden. He has to appease his thirst with milk.

3 The disciple has come to the Math early in the day. Swamiji
4 on seeing him spoke with affection, "Oh, you have come? Well done,
5 I was thinking of you."

6 Disciple: I hear that you are living on milk for the last six or
7 seven days.

8 Swamiji: Yes, at the earnest entreaty of Niranjan, I had to
9 take to this medicine! I cannot disregard their request.

10 Disciple: You were in the habit of taking water very
11 frequently. How could you give it up altogether?

12 Swamiji: When I heard that according to this treatment
13 water had to be given up, I made a firm resolve immediately not to
14 take water. Now the idea of drinking water does not even occur to
15 the mind.

16 Disciple: The treatment is doing you good I hope?

17 Swamiji: That I don't know. I am simply obeying the orders of
18 my brother-disciples.

19 Disciple: I think that indigenous drugs such as the Vaidyas
20 use, are very well-suited to our constitution.

21 Swamiji: My idea is that it is better even to die under the
22 treatment of a scientific doctor than expect recovery from the
23 treatment of laymen who know nothing of modern science, but
24 blindly go by the ancient books, without gaining a mastery of the
25 subject--even though they may have cured a few cases.

26 Swamiji cooked certain dishes, one of which was prepared
27 with vermicelli. When the disciple, who partook of it, asked Swamiji
28 what it was, he replied, "It is a few English earthworms which I
29 have brought dried from London." This created laughter among
30 those present at the expense of the disciple. Despite his spare food
31 and scanty sleep, Swamiji is very active. A few days ago, a new set
32 of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* had been bought for the Math.
33 Seeing the new shining volumes, the disciple said to Swamiji, "It is
34 almost impossible to read all these books in a single lifetime." He
35 was unaware that Swamiji had already finished ten volumes and
36 had begun the eleventh.

37 Swamiji: What do you say? Ask me anything you like from
38 these ten volumes, and I will answer you all.

39 The disciple asked in wonder, "Have you read all these
40 books?"

41 Swamiji: Why should I ask you to question me otherwise?

42 Being examined, Swamiji not only reproduced the sense, but
43 at places the very language of the difficult topics selected from
44 each volume. The disciple, astonished, put aside the books, saying,
45 "This is not within human power!"

46 Swamiji: Do you see, simply by the observance of strict
47 Brahmacharya (continence) all learning can be mastered in a very

1 short time--one has an unfailing memory of what one hears or
2 knows but once. It is owing to this want of continence that
3 everything is on the brink of ruin in our country.

4 Disciple: Whatever you may say,sir, the manifestation of such
5 superhuman power cannot be the result of mere Brahmacharya,
6 something else there must be.

7 Swamiji did not say anything in reply.

8 Then Swamiji began to explain lucidly to the disciple the
9 arguments and conclusions about the difficult points in all
10 philosophies. In course of the conversation Swami Brahmananda
11 entered the room and said to the disciple, "You are a nice man!
12 Swamiji is unwell, and instead of trying to keep his mind cheerful
13 by light talk, you are making him talk incessantly, raising the most
14 abstruse subjects!" The disciple was abashed. But Swamiji said to
15 Swami Brahmananda, "Keep your regulation of Ayurvedic treatment
16 aside. These are my children; and if my body goes in teaching them,
17 I don't care." After this, some light talk followed. Then arose the
18 topic of the place of Bharatchandra in Bengali literature. From the
19 beginning Swamiji began to ridicule Bharatchandra in various ways
20 and satirised the life, manners, marriage-customs, and other usages
21 of society at the time of Bharatchandra, who was an advocate of
22 child-marriage. He expressed the opinion that the poems of
23 Bharatchandra, being full of bad taste and obscenities, had not
24 found acceptance in any cultured society except in Bengal, and he
25 said, "Care should be taken that such books do not come into the
26 hands of boys." Then raising the topic of Michael Madhusudan Dutt,
27 he added, "That was a wonderful genius born in your province.
28 There is not another epic in Bengali literature like the
29 *Meghnabadh*, no mistake in that; and it is difficult to come across a
30 poem like that in the whole of modern European literature."

31 Disciple: But, sir, I think Michael was very fond of a
32 bombastic style.

33 Swamiji: Well, if anybody in your country does anything new,
34 you at once hoot him. First examine well what he is saying, but
35 instead of that, the people of the country will chase after anything
36 which is not quite after the old modes. For example, in order to
37 bring to ridicule this *Meghnabadh Kavya*, which is the gem of
38 Bengali literature, the parody of *Chhuchhundaribadh Kavya* (The
39 Death of a Mole) was written. They may caricature as much as they
40 like, it does not matter. But the *Meghnadbadh Kavya* still stands
41 unshaken in its reputation like the Himalayas while the opinions
42 and writings of carping critics who are busy picking holes in it have
43 been washed away into oblivion. What will the vulgar public
44 understand of this epic Michael has written in such a vigorous
45 diction and an original metre? And at the present time Girish Babu
46 is writing wonderful books in a new metre which your otherwise
47 Pundits are criticising and finding fault with. But does G.C. care for
48 that? People will appreciate the book afterwards.

49 Thus speaking on the subject of Michael he said, "Go and get
50 the *Meghnadbadh Kavya* from the library downstairs." On the
51 disciple's bringing it he said, "Now read, let me see how you can

1 read it."

2 The disciple read a portion, but the reading not being to the
3 liking of Swamiji, he took the book and showed him how to read and
4 asked him to read again. Then he asked him, "Now, can you say
5 which portion of the Kavya is best?" The disciple failing to answer,
6 Swamiji said, "That portion of the book which describes how
7 Indrajit has been killed in battle and Mandodari, beside herself with
8 grief, is dissuading Ravana from the battle--but Ravana casting off
9 forcibly from his mind the grief for his son is firmly resolved on
10 battle like a great hero, and forgetting in a fury of rage and
11 vengeance all about his wife and children, is ready to rush out for
12 battle--that is the most finely conceived portion of the book. Come
13 what may, I shall not forget my duty, whether the world remains or
14 dissolves--these are the words of a great hero. Inspired by such
15 feelings, Michael has written that portion."

16 Saying this, Swamiji opened the particular passage and
17 began to read it in the most impressive manner.

18

19 XX

20 [*Place: Belur Math. Year: 1901.*]

21 Swamiji is much better under the Ayurvedic treatment. The
22 disciple is at the Math. While attending on Swamiji, he asked, "The
23 Atman is all-pervading, the very life of the life of all beings, and so
24 very near. Still why is It not perceived?"

25 Swamiji: Do you see yourself that you have eyes?

26 When others speak of the eyes, then you are reminded that
27 you have got eyes. Again when dust or sand enters into them and
28 sets up an irritation, then you feel quite well that you have got eyes.
29 Similarly the realisation of this universal Atman which is inner than
30 the innermost is not easily attained. Reading from scriptures or
31 hearing from the lips of the preceptor, one has some idea of It, but
32 when the hard lashes of the bitter sorrow and pain of the world
33 make the heart sore, when on the death of one's near and dear
34 relatives, man thinks himself helpless, when the impenetrable and
35 insurmountable darkness about the future life agitates his mind,
36 then does the Jiva pant for a realisation of the Atman. Therefore is
37 sorrow helpful to the knowledge of the Atman. But one should
38 remember the bitter lesson of experience. Those who die, merely
39 suffering the woes of life like cats and dogs, are they men? He is a
40 man who even when agitated by the sharp interaction of pleasure
41 and pain is discriminating, and knowing them to be of an
42 evanescent nature, becomes passionately devoted to the Atman.
43 This is all the difference between men and animals. That which is
44 nearest is least observed. The Atman is the nearest of the near,
45 therefore the careless and unsteady mind of man gets no clue to It.
46 But the man who is alert, calm, self-restrained, and discriminating,
47 ignores the external world and diving more and more into the inner
48 world, realises the glory of the Atman and becomes great. Then
49 only he attains to the knowledge of the Atman and realises the truth
50 of such scriptural texts as, "I am the Atman", "Thou art That, O

1 Shvetaketu," and so on. Do you understand?

2 Disciple: Yes, sir. But why this method of attaining Self-
3 knowledge through the path of pain and suffering? Instead of all
4 this, it would have been well if there had been no creation at all. We
5 were all at one time identified with Brahman. Why then this desire
6 for creation on the path of Brahman? Why again this going forth of
7 the Jiva (who is no other than Brahman) along the path of birth and
8 death, amidst the interaction of the dualities of life?

9 Swamiji: When a man is intoxicated, he sees many
10 hallucinations; but when the intoxication goes off, he understands
11 them as the imaginations of a heated brain. Whatever you see of
12 this creation which is without a beginning, but has an end, is only
13 an effect of your state of intoxication; when that passes off, such
14 questions will not arise at all.

15 Disciple: Then is there no reality in the creation, and
16 preservation, etc. of the Universe?

17 Swamiji: Why should not there be? So long as you identify
18 yourself with the body and have the ego-consciousness, all these
19 will remain. But when you are bereft of the body-consciousness and
20 devoted to the Atman and live in the Atman, then with respect to
21 you none of these will remain, and such questions as whether there
22 is any creation or birth or death will have no room. Then you will
23 have to say--

24 {Sanskrit}

25 --"Where is it gone, by whom is it taken, wherein is the world
26 merged? It was just observed by me and is it non-existent now?
27 What a wonder!" (*Vivekachudamani* 483).

28 Disciple: If there is no knowledge of the existence of the
29 universe, how can it be said, "Wherein is the world merged?"

30 Swamiji: Because one has to express the idea in language,
31 therefore that mode of expression has been used. The author has
32 tried to express in thought and language about the state where
33 thought or language cannot reach, and therefore he has stated the
34 fact that the world is wholly unreal, in a relative mode like the
35 above. The world has no absolute reality which only belongs to
36 Brahman, which is beyond the reach of mind and speech. Say what
37 more you have to ask. Today I will put an end to all your arguments.

38 The bell of the evening service in the worship-room rang at
39 the time, and everybody made for it. But the disciple stayed in
40 Swamiji's room, noticing which Swamiji said, "Won't you go to the
41 worship-room?"

42 Disciple: I should like to stay here.

43 Swamiji: All right.

44 After some time the disciple looking outside of the room said,
45 "It is the new-moon night and all the quarters are overspread with
46 darkness. It is the night for the worship of Mother Kali."

47 Swamiji without saying anything gazed at the eastern sky for
48 some time and said, "Do you see what a mysterious and solemn

1 beauty there is in this darkness!" Saying this and continuing to look
2 at the dense mass of darkness, he stood enwrapt. After some
3 minutes had passed, Swamiji slowly began to sing a Bengali song,
4 "O Mother, in deep darkness flashes Thy formless beauty", etc.
5 After the song Swamiji entered his room and sat down with an
6 occasional word like "Mother, Mother", or "Kali, Kali", on his lips.

7 Uneasy at Swamiji's profoundly abstracted mood, the
8 disciple said, "Now, sir, please speak with me."

9 Swamiji smilingly said, "Can you fathom the beauty and
10 profundity of the Atman whose external manifestation is so sweet
11 and beautiful?" The disciple wished for a change of topic, noticing
12 which, Swamiji began another song of Kali: "O Mother, Thou
13 flowing stream of nectar, in how many forms and aspects dost Thou
14 play in manifestation!" After the song he said, "This Kali is Brahman
15 in manifestation. Haven't you heard Shri Ramakrishna's illustration
16 of the 'snake moving and the snake at rest' (representing the
17 dynamic and static aspects of the same thing)?"

18 Disciple: Yes, sir.

19 Swamiji: This time, when I get well, I shall worship the
20 Mother with my heart's blood, then only will She be pleased. Your
21 Raghunandan also says like that. The Mother's child shall be a hero,
22 a Mahavira. In unhappiness, sorrow, death, and desolation, the
23 Mother's child shall always remain fearless.

24 XXI

25 [*Place: Belur Math. Year: 1901.*]

26 Swamiji is staying at the Math nowadays. His health is not
27 very good, but he goes out for a walk in the mornings and evenings.
28 The disciple, after bowing at the feet of Swamiji, inquired about his
29 health.
30

31 Swamiji: Well, this body is in such a pitiable condition, but
32 none of you are stepping forward to help in my work! What shall I
33 do single-handed? This time the body has come out of the soil of
34 Bengal, so can it bear the strain of much work? You who come here
35 are pure souls; and if you do not become my helpers in this work,
36 what shall I do alone?

37 Disciple: Sir, these self-sacrificing Brahmacharins and
38 Sannyasins are standing behind you, and I think that each one of
39 them can devote his life to your work--still why do you speak in this
40 way?

41 Swamiji: Well, I want a band of young Bengal--who alone are
42 the hope of this country. My hope of the future lies in the youths of
43 character--intelligent, renouncing all for the service of others, and
44 obedient--who can sacrifice their lives in working out my ideas and
45 thereby do good to themselves and the country at large. Otherwise,
46 boys of the common run are coming in groups and will come.
47 Dullness is written on their faces--their hearts are devoid of energy,
48 their bodies feeble and unfit for work, and minds devoid of courage.
49 What work will be done by these? If I get ten or twelve boys with

1 the faith of Nachiketa, I can turn the thoughts and pursuits of this
2 country in a new channel.

3 Disciple: Sir, so many young men are coming to you, and do
4 you find none among them of such a nature?

5 Swamiji: Among those who appear to me to be of good
6 calibre, some have bound themselves by matrimony; some have
7 sold themselves for the acquisition of worldly name, fame, or
8 wealth; while some are of feeble bodies. The rest, who form the
9 majority, are unable to receive any high idea. You are no doubt fit to
10 receive my high ideas, but you are not able to work them out in the
11 practical field. For these reasons sometimes an anguish comes into
12 the mind, and I think that taking this human body, I could not do
13 much work through untowardness of fortune. Of course, I have not
14 yet wholly given up hope, for, by the will of God, from among these
15 very boys may arise in time great heroes of action and spirituality
16 who will in future work out my ideas.

17 Disciple: It is my firm belief that your broad and liberal ideas
18 must find universal acceptance some day or other. For I see they
19 are all-sided and infusing vigour into every department of thought
20 and activity. And the people of the country are accepting, either
21 overtly or covertly, your ideas, and teaching them to the people.

22 Swamiji: What matters it if they acknowledge my name or
23 not? It is enough if they accept my ideas. Ninety-nine per cent of
24 the Sadhus, even after renouncing lust and wealth, get bound at the
25 last by the desire of name and fame. "Fame . . . that last infirmity of
26 noble mind"--haven't you read? We shall have to work, giving up
27 altogether all desire for results. People will call us both good and
28 bad. But we shall have to work like lions, keeping the ideal before
29 us, without caring whether "the wise ones praise or blame us".

30 Disciple: What ideal should we follow now?

31 Swamiji: You have now to make the character of Mahavira
32 your ideal. See how at the command of Ramachandra he crossed
33 the ocean. He had no care for life or death! He was a perfect
34 master of his senses and wonderfully sagacious. You have now to
35 build your life on this great ideal of personal service. Through that,
36 all other ideals will gradually manifest in life. Obedience to the
37 Guru without questioning, and strict observance of Brahmacharya--
38 this is the secret of success. As on the one hand Hanuman
39 represent the ideal of service, so on the other hand he represents
40 leonine courage, striking the whole world with awe. He has not the
41 least hesitation in sacrificing his life for the good of Rama. A
42 supreme indifference to everything except the service of Rama,
43 even to the attainment of the status of Brahma and Shiva, the great
44 World-Gods! Only the carrying out of Shri Rama's best is the one
45 vow of this life! Such whole-hearted devotion is wanted. Playing on
46 the Khol and Kartal and dancing in the frenzy of Kirtana has
47 degenerated the whole people. They are, in the first place, a race of
48 dyspeptics--and if in addition to this they dance and jump in that
49 way, how can they bear the strain? In trying to imitate the highest
50 Sadhana, the preliminary qualification for which is absolute purity,
51 they have been swallowed in dire Tamas. In every district and

1 village you may visit, you will find only the sound of the Khol and
2 Kartal! Are not drums made in the country? Are not trumpets and
3 kettle-drums available in India? Make the boys hear the deep-toned
4 sound of these instruments. Hearing from boyhood the sound of
5 these effeminate forms of music and listening to the kirtana, the
6 country is well-nigh converted into a country of women. What more
7 degradation can you expect? Even the poet's imagination fails to
8 draw this picture! The Damaru¹⁸⁶ and horn have to be sounded,
9 drums are to be beaten so as to raise the deep and martial notes,
10 and with "Mahavira, Mahavira" on your lips and shouting "Hara,
11 Hara, Vyom, Vyom", the quarters are to be reverberated. The music
12 which awakens only the softer feelings of man is to be stopped now
13 for some time. Stopping the light tunes such as Kheal and Tappa for
14 some time, the people are to be accustomed to hear the Dhrupad
15 music. Through the thunder-roll of the dignified Vedic hymns, life is
16 to be brought back into the country. In everything the austere spirit
17 of heroic manhood is to be revived. In following such an ideal lies
18 the good of the people and the country. If you can build your
19 character after such an ideal, then a thousand others will follow.
20 But take care that you do not swerve an inch from the ideal. Never
21 lose heart. In eating, dressing, or lying, in singing or playing, in
22 enjoyment or disease, always manifest the highest moral courage.
23 Then only will you attain the grace of Mahashakti, the Divine
24 Mother.

25 Disciple: Sir, at times I am overcome by low spirits, I don't
26 know how.

27 Swamiji: Then think like this: "Whose child am I? I associate
28 with him and shall I have such weak-mindedness and lowness of
29 spirits?" Stamping down such weakness of mind and heart, stand
30 up, saying, "I am possessed of heroism--I am possessed of a steady
31 intellect--I am a knower of Brahman, a man of illumination." Be fully
32 conscious of your dignity by remembering, "I am the disciple of
33 such and such who is the companion-in-life of Shri Ramakrishna,
34 the conqueror of lust and wealth." This will produce a good effect.
35 He who has not this pride has no awakening of Brahman within
36 him. Haven't you heard Ramprasad's song? He used to say, "Whom
37 do I fear in the world, whose sovereign is the Divine Mother!" Keep
38 such a pride always awake in the mind. Then weakness of mind and
39 heart will no longer be able to approach you. Never allow weakness
40 to overtake your mind. Remember Mahavira, remember the Divine
41 Mother! And you will see that all weakness, all cowardice will
42 vanish at once.

43 Saying these words, Swamiji came downstairs and took his
44 accustomed seat on a cot in the courtyard. Then, addressing the
45 assembled Sannyasins and Brahmacharins, he said, "Here is the
46 unveiled presence of Brahman. Fie upon those who disregarding It
47 set their mind on other things! Ah! here is Brahman as palpable as
48 a fruit in one's palm. Don't you see? Here!"

49 These words were spoken in such an appealing way, that

186 ?An hour-glass-shaped drum, held in Shiva's hand.

1 every one stood motionless like a figure painted on canvas and felt
2 as if he were suddenly drawn into the depth of meditation. . . . After
3 some time that tension of feeling passed and they regained their
4 normal consciousness.

5 Next, in the course of a walk, Swamiji spoke to the disciple.
6 "Did you see how everybody had become concentrated today?
7 These are all children of Shri Ramakrishna, and on the very
8 uttering of the words, they felt the truth."

9 Disciple: Sir, not to speak of them, even my heart was
10 overflowing with an unearthly bliss! But now it appears like a
11 vanished dream.

12 Swamiji: Everything will come in time. Now, go on working.
13 Set yourself to some work for the good of men sunk in ignorance
14 and delusion. You will see that such experiences will come of
15 themselves.

16 Disciple: I feel nervous to enter into its labyrinths--neither
17 have I the strength. The scriptures also say, "Impenetrable is the
18 path of Karma".

19 Swamiji: What do you wish to do then?

20 Disciple: To live and hold discussion with one like you, who
21 has realised the truth of all scriptures and through hearing,
22 thinking, and meditating on the Truth to realise Brahman in this
23 very life. I have no enthusiasm, nor perhaps the strength, for
24 anything else.

25 Swamiji: If you love that, well, you can go on doing it. And
26 speak about your thoughts and conclusions about the Shastras to
27 others, it will benefit them. So long as there is the body, one cannot
28 live without doing some work or other; therefore one should do
29 such work as is conducive to the good of others. Your own
30 realisations and conclusions about scriptural truths may benefit
31 many a seeker after Truth. Put them into writing which may help
32 many others.

33 Disciple: First let me realise the Truth, then I shall write.
34 Shri Ramakrishna used to say; "Without the badge of authority,
35 none will listen to you."

36 Swamiji: There may be many in the world who have got stuck
37 in that stage of spiritual discipline and reasoning through which you
38 are passing, without being able to pass beyond that stage. Your
39 experience and way of thinking, if recorded, may be of benefit to
40 them at least. If you put down in easy language the substance of the
41 discussions which you hold with the Sadhus of this Math, it may
42 help many.

43 Disciple: Since you wish it, I shall try to do it.

44 Swamiji: What is the good of that spiritual practice or
45 realisation which does not benefit others, does not conduce to the
46 well-being of people sunk in ignorance and delusion, does not help
47 in rescuing them from the clutches of lust and wealth? Do you
48 think, so long as one Jiva endures in bondage, you will have any
49 liberation? So long as he is not liberated--it may take several

1 lifetimes--you will have to be born to help him, to make him realise
2 Brahman. Every Jiva is part of yourself--which is the rationale of all
3 work for others. As you desire the whole-hearted good of your wife
4 and children, knowing them to be your own, so when a like amount
5 of love and attraction for every Jiva will awaken in you, then I shall
6 know that Brahman is awakening in you, not a moment before.
7 When this feeling of the all-round good of all without respect for
8 caste or colour will awaken in your heart, then I shall know you are
9 advancing towards the ideal.

10 Disciple: Sir, it is a most tremendous statement that without
11 the salvation of all, there shall be no salvation for an individual! I
12 have never heard of such a wonderful proposition.

13 Swamiji: There is a class of Vedantists who hold such a view.
14 They say that individual liberation is not the real and perfect form
15 of liberation, but universal and collective liberation is true Mukti. Of
16 course, both merits and defects can be pointed out in that view.

17 Disciple: According to Vedanta, the state of individualised
18 existence is the root of bondage, and the Infinite Intelligence,
19 through desires and effects of works, appears bound in that limiting
20 condition. When by means of discrimination that limiting condition
21 vanishes and the Jiva is bereft of all adjuncts, then how can there
22 be bondage for the Atman which is of the essence of transcendent
23 Intelligence? He for whom the idea of the Jiva and the world is a
24 persisting reality may think that without the liberation of all he has
25 no liberation. But when the mind becomes bereft of all limiting
26 adjuncts and is merged in Brahman, where is there any
27 differentiation for him? So nothing can operate as a bar to his
28 Mukti.

29 Swamiji: Yes, what you say is right, and most Vedantins hold
30 that view, which is also flawless. In that view, individual liberation is
31 not barred. But just consider the greatness of his heart who thinks
32 that he will take the whole universe with him to liberation!

33 Disciple: Sir, it may indicate boldness of heart, but it is not
34 supported by the scriptures.

35 Swamiji was in an abstracted mood and did not listen to the
36 words. After some time he said: "Day and night think and meditate
37 on Brahman, meditate with great one-pointedness of mind. And
38 during the time of awakeness to outward life, either do some work
39 for the sake of others or repeat in your mind, 'Let good happen to
40 Jivas and the world!' 'Let the mind of all flow in the direction of
41 Brahman!' Even by such continuous current of thought the world
42 will be benefited. Nothing good in the world becomes fruitless, be it
43 work or thought. Your thought-currents will perhaps rouse the
44 religious feeling of someone in America."

45 Disciple: Sir, please bless me that my mind may be
46 concentrated on the Truth.

47 Swamiji: So it will be. If you have earnestness of desire, it
48 will certainly be.

[*Place: The Belur Math. Year: 1901.*]

At the time Belur Math was established, many among the orthodox Hindus were wont to make sharp criticism of the ways of life in the Math. Hearing the report of such criticism from the disciple, Swamiji would say (in the words of the couplet of Tulasidas), "The elephant passes in the market-place, and a thousand curs begin barking after him; so the Sadhus have no ill-feeling when worldly people slander them." Or again he would say, "Without persecution no beneficent idea can enter into the heart of a society." He would exhort everybody, "Go on working without an eye to results. One day you are sure to reap the fruits of it." Again, on the lips of Swamiji were very often heard the words of the Gita, "A doer of good never comes to grief, my son."

In May or June, 1901, seeing the disciple at the Math Swamiji said, "Bring me a copy of *Ashtavimshati-tattva* (Twenty-eight Categories) of Raghunandan at an early date."

Disciple: Yes, sir, but what will you do with the Raghunandan Smriti, which the present educated India calls a heap of superstition?

Swamiji: Why? Raghunandan was a wonderful scholar of his time. Collecting the ancient Smritis, he codified the customs and observances of the Hindus, adapting them to the needs of the changed times and circumstances. All Bengal is following the rules laid down by him. But in the iron grip of his rules regulating the life of a Hindu from conception to death, the Hindu society was much oppressed. In matters of eating and sleeping, in even the ordinary functions of life, not to speak of the important ones, he tried to regulate every one by rules. In the altered circumstances of the times, that did not last long. At all times in all countries the Karma-kanda, comprising the social customs and observances, changes form. Only the Jnana-kanda endures. Even in the Vedic age you find that the rituals gradually changed in form. But the philosophic portion of the Upanishads has remained unchanged up till now--only there have been many interpreters, that is all.

Disciple: What will do you with the Smriti of Raghunandan?

Swamiji: This time I have a desire to celebrate the Durga Puja (worship of goddess Durga). If the expenses are forthcoming, I shall worship the Mahamaya. Therefore I have a mind to read the ceremonial forms of that worship. When you come to the Math next Sunday, you must bring a copy of the book with you.

Disciple: All right, sir.

Next Saturday the disciple brought a copy of the book, and Swamiji was much pleased to get it. Meeting the disciple a week after this he said, "I have finished the Raghunandan Smriti presented by you. If possible, I shall celebrate the Puja of the Divine Mother."

The Durga Puja took place with great eclat at the proper

1 time.

2 Shortly after this Swamiji performed a Homa before the
3 Mother Kali at Kalighat. Referring this incident he spoke to the
4 disciple, "Well, I was glad to see that there was yet a liberality of
5 view at Kalighat. The temple authorities did not object in the least
6 to my entering the temple, though they knew that I was a man who
7 had returned from the West. On the contrary, they very cordially
8 took me into the holy precincts and helped me to worship the
9 Mother to my heart's content."

10

11 XXIII

12 [*Place: The Math, Belur. Year: 1902.*]

13 Today is the anniversary celebration of Shri Ramakrishna--
14 the last that Swamiji ever saw. The disciple presented an invocatory
15 hymn on Shri Ramakrishna to Swamiji. He then proceeded to rub
16 Swamiji's feet gently. Before starting to read the poem, Swamiji
17 spoke to him: "Do it very gently as the feet have become very
18 tender."

19 After reading the poem Swamiji said, "It is well done."

20 Swamiji's illness had increased so much that the disciple,
21 observing it, felt sore at heart. Understanding his inner feeling,
22 Swamiji said, "What are you thinking? This body is born and it will
23 die. If I have been able to instil a few of my ideas into you all, then I
24 shall know that my birth has not been in vain."

25 Disciple: Are we fit objects of your mercy? If you bless me,
26 without taking my fitness into consideration, then I will consider
27 myself fortunate.

28 Swamiji: Always remember that renunciation is the root idea.
29 Unless one is initiated into this idea, not even Brahma and the
30 World-Gods have the power to attain Mukti.

31 Disciple: It is a matter of deep regret that even hearing this
32 from you almost every day, I have not been able to realise it.

33 Swamiji: Renunciation must come, but in the fulness of time.
34 "{Sanskrit}--In the fulness of time one attains to knowledge within
35 himself." When the few Samskaras (tendencies) of the previous life
36 are spent, then renunciation sprouts up in the heart.

37 After some time he said, "Why should you go outside and see
38 the big concourse of people? Stay with me now. And ask Niranjana to
39 sit at the door, so that nobody may disturb me today."

40 Then the following conversation took place between Swamiji
41 and the disciple:

42 Swamiji: I think that it will be better if from now the
43 anniversary is celebrated in a different way. The celebration should
44 extend to four or five days instead of one. On the first day, there
45 may be study and interpretation of scriptures; on the second,
46 discussion on the Vedas and the Vedanta and the solution of the
47 problems in connection with them; on the third day, there may be a

1 question class. The fourth day may be fixed for lectures. On the last
2 day, there will be a festival on the present lines. This will be like the
3 Durga Puja extending over four or five days. Of course, if the
4 celebration is on the above lines, none but the devotees of Shri
5 Ramakrishna will be able to attend on the other days except the
6 last. But that does not matter. A large promiscuous crowd of people
7 does not mean a great propagation of the message of Shri
8 Ramakrishna.

9 Disciple: Sir, it is a beautiful idea. Next time it will be done
10 according to your wishes.

11 Swamiji: Now, my son, you all will carry them out. I have no
12 more inclination for these things.

13 Disciple: Sir, this year many Kirtana parties have come.

14 Hearing these words Swamiji stood up holding the iron bars
15 of the window and looked at the assembled crowd of devotees.
16 After some time he sat down.

17 Swamiji: You are the actors in the Divine Lila (play) of Shri
18 Ramakrishna. After this, not to speak of ours, people will take your
19 names also. These hymns which you are writing will afterwards be
20 read by people for the acquirement of love and knowledge. Know
21 that the attainment of the knowledge of the Atman is the highest
22 object of life. If you have devotion for the Avatars who are the
23 world-teachers, that knowledge will manifest of itself in time.

24 Disciple: Sir, shall I attain to such knowledge?

25 Swamiji: By the blessings of Shri Ramakrishna you shall
26 attain to divine love and knowledge. You will not find much
27 happiness in the worldly life.

28 Disciple: Sir, if you condescend to destroy the weakness of
29 my mind, then only there is hope for me.

30 Swamiji: What fear! When you have chanced to come here,
31 you shall be free.

32 Disciple (with great entreaty): You must save me and lift me
33 from ignorance in this very life.

34 Swamiji: Say, who can save anybody? The Guru can only take
35 away some covering veils. When these veils are removed, the
36 Atman shines in Its own glory and manifests like the sun.

37 Disciple: Then why do we find mention of grace in the
38 scriptures?

39 Swamiji: Grace means this. He who has realised the Atman
40 becomes a storehouse of great power. Making him the centre and
41 with a certain radius a circle is formed, and whoever comes within
42 the circle becomes animated with the ideas of that saint, i.e. they
43 are overwhelmed by his ideas. Thus without much religious striving,
44 they inherit the results of his wonderful spirituality. If you call this
45 grace, you may do so.

46 Disciple: Is there no other grace than this?

47 Swamiji: Yes, there is. When the Avatara comes, then with

1 him are born liberated persons as helpers in his world-play. Only
2 Avatars have the power to dispel the darkness of a million souls
3 and give them salvation in one life. This is known as grace. Do you
4 understand?

5 Disciple: Yes, sir. But what is the way for those who have not
6 been blessed with the sight of him?

7 Swamiji: The way for them is to call on him. Calling on him,
8 many are blessed with his vision--can see him in human form just
9 like ours and obtain his grace.

10 Disciple: Have you ever had a vision of Shri Ramakrishna
11 after his passing away?

12 Swamiji: After leaving the body, I associated for some time
13 with Pavhari Baba of Ghazipur. There was a garden not far distant
14 from his Ashrama where I lived. People used to say it was a haunted
15 garden, but as you know, I am a sort of demon myself and have not
16 much fear of ghosts. In the garden there were many lemon trees
17 which bore numerous fruits. At that time I was suffering from
18 diarrhoea, and there no food could be had except bread. So, to
19 increase the digestive powers, I used to take plenty of lemons.
20 Mixing with Pavhari Baba, I liked him very much, and he also came
21 to love me deeply. One day I thought that I did not learn any art for
22 making this weak body strong, even though I lived with Shri
23 Ramakrishna for so many years. I had heard that Pavhari Baba
24 knew the science of Hatha-Yoga. So I thought I would learn the
25 practices of Hatha-Yoga from him, and through them strengthen the
26 body. You know, I have a dogged resolution, and whatever I set my
27 heart on, I always carry out. On the eve of the day on which I was to
28 take initiation, I was lying on a cot thinking; and just then I saw the
29 form of Sri Ramakrishna standing on my right side, looking
30 steadfastly at me, as if very much grieved. I had dedicated myself to
31 him, and at the thought that I was taking another Guru I was much
32 ashamed and kept looking at him. Thus perhaps two or three hours
33 passed, but no words escaped from my mouth. Then he disappeared
34 all on a sudden. My mind became upset seeing Shri Ramakrishna
35 that night, so I postponed the idea of initiation from Pavhari Baba
36 for the day. After a day or two again the idea of initiation from
37 Pavhari Baba arose in the mind--and again in the night there was
38 the appearance of Shri Ramakrishna as on the previous occasion.
39 Thus when for several nights in succession I had the vision of Shri
40 Ramakrishna, I gave up the idea of initiation altogether, thinking
41 that as every time I resolved on it, I was getting such a vision, then
42 no good but harm would come from it.

43 After some time he addressed the disciple, saying, "Those
44 who have seen Shri Ramakrishna are really blessed. Their family
45 and birth have become purified by it. All of you will also get his
46 vision. The very fact that you have come here, shows that you are
47 very near to him. Nobody has been able to understand who came on
48 earth as Sri Ramakrishna. Even his own nearest devotees have got
49 no real clue to it. Only some have got a little inkling of it. All will
50 understand it afterwards."

51 The conversation was thus going on when Swami

1 Niranjanananda knocked at the door. The disciple rose and
2 inquired, "Who has come?" Swami Niranjanananda replied, "Sister
3 Nivedita and some other English ladies." They were admitted into
4 the room, sat on the floor and inquired about the health of Swamiji.
5 After a few more words they went away. Then Swamiji said to the
6 disciple, "See how cultured they are! If they were Bengalis, they
7 would have made me talk at least for half an hour, even though they
8 found me unwell."

9 It is about half past two now, and there is a great gathering
10 of people outside. Understanding the disciple's mind, Swamiji said,
11 "Just go and have a look round--but come back soon."

12 XXIV

13 [Place: The Math, Belur. Year: 1902.]

14 After returning from Eastern Bengal Swamiji stayed in the
15 Math and lived a simple childlike life. Every year some Santal
16 labourers used to work in the Math. Swamiji would joke and make
17 fun with them and loved to hear their tales of weal and woe. One
18 day several noted gentlemen of Calcutta came to visit Swamiji in
19 the Math. That day Swamiji had started such a warm talk with the
20 Santals that, when he was informed of the arrival of those
21 gentlemen, he said, "I shan't be able to go now. I am happy with
22 these men." Really that day Swamiji did not leave the poor Santals
23 to see those visitors.

24 One among the Santals was named Keshta. Swamiji loved
25 Keshta very much. Whenever Swamiji came to talk with them,
26 Keshta used to say to Swamiji, "O my Swamiji, do not come to us
27 when we are working, for while talking with you our work stops and
28 the supervising Swami rebukes us afterwards." Swamiji would be
29 touched by these words and say, "No, no, he will not say anything;
30 tell me a little about your part of the country"--saying which he used
31 to introduce the topic of their worldly affairs.

32 One day Swamiji said to Keshta, "Well, will you take food
33 here one day?" Keshta said, "We do not take food touched by you; if
34 you put salt in our food and we eat it, we shall lose our caste."
35 Swamiji said, "Why should you take salt? We will prepare curry for
36 you without salt, will you then take it?" Keshta agreed to it. Then at
37 orders of Swamiji, bread, curry, sweets, curd, etc. were arranged
38 for the Santals, and he made them sit before him to eat. While
39 eating, Keshta said, "Whence have you got such a thing? We never
40 tasted anything like this." Feeding them sumptuously, Swamiji said,
41 "You are Narayanas, God manifest; today I have offered food to
42 Narayana." The service of "Daridra Narayana"--God in the poor--
43 about which Swamiji spoke, he himself performed one day like this.

44 After their meal, the Santals went for rest, and Swamiji,
45 addressing the disciple, said, "I found them the veritable
46 embodiment of God--such simplicity, such sincere guileless love I
47 have seen nowhere else." Then, addressing the Sannyasins of the
48 Math, he said, "See how simple they are. Can you mitigate their
49 misery a little? Otherwise, of what good is the wearing of the Gerua
50

1 robe? Sacrifice of everything for the good of others is real
2 Sannyasa. They have never enjoyed any good thing in life.
3 Sometimes I feel a desire to sell the Math and everything, and
4 distribute the money to the poor and destitute. We have made the
5 tree our shelter. Alas! the people of the country cannot get anything
6 to eat, and how can we have the heart to raise food to our mouths?
7 When I was in the Western countries, I prayed to the Divine
8 Mother, "People here are sleeping on a bed of flowers, they eat all
9 kinds of delicacies, and what do they not enjoy, while people in our
10 country are dying of starvation. Mother, will there be no way for
11 them! One of the objects of my going to the West to preach religion
12 was to see if I could find any means for feeding the people of this
13 country.

14 "Seeing the poor people of our country starving for food, a
15 desire comes to me to overthrow all ceremonial worship and
16 learning, and go round from village to village collecting money from
17 the rich by convincing them through force of character and
18 Sadhana, and to spend the whole life in serving the poor.

19 "Alas! nobody thinks of the poor of this land. They are the
20 backbone of the country, who by their labour are producing food--
21 these poor people, the sweepers and labourers, who if they stop
22 work for one day will create a panic in the town. But there is none
23 to sympathise with them, none to console them in their misery. Just
24 see, for want of sympathy from the Hindus, thousands of Pariahs in
25 Madras are turning Christians. Don't think this is simply due to the
26 pinch of hunger; it is because they do not get any sympathy from
27 us. We are day and night calling out to them, 'Don't touch us! Don't
28 touch us!' Is there any compassion or kindness of heart in the
29 country? Only a class of 'Don't-touchists'; kick such customs out! I
30 sometimes feel the urge to break the barriers of 'Don't-touchism',
31 to go at once and call out, 'Come, all who are poor, miserable,
32 wretched, and down-trodden', and to bring them all together in the
33 name of Shri Ramakrishna. Unless they rise, the Mother won't
34 awaken. We could not make any provision for food and clothes for
35 these--what have we done then? Alas! they know nothing of
36 worldliness, and therefore even after working day and night cannot
37 provide themselves with food and clothes. Let us open their eyes. I
38 see clear as daylight that there is the one Brahman in all, in them
39 and in me--one Shakti dwells in all. The only difference is of
40 manifestation. Unless the blood circulates over the whole body, has
41 any country risen at any time? If one limb is paralysed, then even
42 with the other limbs whole, not much can be done with that body--
43 know this for certain."

44 Disciple: Sir, there is such a diversity of religions and ideas
45 among the people of this country that it is a difficult affair to bring
46 harmony among them.

47 Swamiji (in anger): If you think any work difficult, then do
48 not come here. Through the grace of God all paths become easy.
49 Your work is to serve the poor and miserable, without any
50 distinction of caste or colour, and you have no need to think about
51 the results. Your duty is to go on working, and then everything will
52 follow of itself. My method of work is to construct and not to pull

1 down. Read the history of the world, and you will find that a great
2 soul stood as the central figure in a certain period of a country.
3 Animated by his ideas, hundreds of people did good to the world.
4 You are all intelligent boys, and have been coming here for a long
5 time. Say, what have you done? Couldn't you give one life for the
6 service of others? In the next life you may read Vedanta and other
7 philosophies. Give this life for the service of others, then I shall
8 know that your coming here has not been in vain.

9 Saying these words, Swamiji sat silent, wrapt in deep
10 thought. After some time, he added, "After so much austerity, I have
11 understood this as the real truth--God is present in every Jiva; there
12 is no other God besides that. 'Who serves Jiva, serves God indeed'.
13 After some pause Swamiji, addressing the disciple, said, "What I
14 have told you today, inscribe in your heart. See that you do not
15 forget it."

16 17 XXV

18 [*Place: The Math, Belur. Year: beginning of 1902.*]

19 It was Saturday, and the disciple came to the Math just
20 before evening. An austere routine was being followed now at the
21 Math regarding spiritual practices. Swamiji had issued an order
22 that all Brahmacharins and Sannyasins should get up very early in
23 the morning and practise Japa and meditation in the worship-room.
24 Swamiji was having little sleep during these days, and would rise
25 from bed at three in the morning.

26 On the disciple saluting Swamiji just after his appearance at
27 the Math, he said, "Well, see how they are practising religious
28 exercises here nowadays. Everyone passes a considerable time in
29 Japa and meditation on mornings and evenings. Look there--a bell
30 has been procured, which is used for rousing all from sleep.
31 Everyone has to get up before dawn. Shri Ramakrishna used to say,
32 'In the morning and evening the mind remains highly imbued with
33 Sattva ideas; those are the times when one should meditate with
34 earnestness.'

1 "After the passing away of Shri Ramakrishna we underwent
2 a lot of religious practice at the Baranagore Math. We used to get
3 up at 3 a.m. and after washing our face etc.--some after bath, and
4 others without it--we would sit in the worship-room and become
5 absorbed in Japa and meditation. What a strong spirit of dispassion
6 we had in those days! We had no thought even as to whether the
7 world existed or not. Ramakrishnananda busied himself day and
8 night with the duties pertaining to Shri Ramakrishna's worship and
9 service, and occupied the same position in the Math as the mistress
10 of the house does in a family. It was he who would procure, mostly
11 by begging, the requisite articles for Shri Ramakrishna's worship
12 and our subsistence. There have been days when the Japa and
13 meditation continued from morning till four or five in the afternoon.
14 Ramakrishnananda waited and waited with our meals ready, till at
15 last he would come and snatch us from our meditation by sheer
16 force. Oh, what a wonderful constancy of devotion we have noticed
17 in him!"

18 Disciple: Sir, how did you use to meet the Math expenses
19 then?

20 Swamiji: What a question! Well, we were Sadhus, and what
21 would come by begging and other means, would be utilised for
22 defraying the Math expenses. Today both Suresh Babu (Surendra
23 Nath Mitra) and Balaram Babu are no more; had they been alive
24 they would have been exceedingly glad to see this Math. You have
25 doubtless heard Suresh Babu's name. It was he who used to bear
26 all the expenses of the Baranagore Math. It was this Suresh Mitra
27 who used to think most for us in those days. His devotion and faith
28 have no parallel!

29 Disciple; Sir, I have heard that you did not see him very often
30 while he was dying.

31 Swamiji: We could only do so if we were allowed (by his
32 relatives). Well, it is a long tale. But know this for certain that
33 among worldly people it is of little count to your relatives and
34 kinsmen whether you live or die. If you succeed in leaving some
35 property, you will find even in your lifetime that there has been set
36 up a brawl over it in your household. You will have no one to
37 console you in your death-bed--not even your wife and sons! Such is
38 the way of the world!

39 Referring to the past condition of the Math, Swamiji went on,
40 "Owing to want of funds I would sometimes fight for abolishing the
41 Math altogether. But I could never induce Ramakrishnananda to
42 accede to the proposal. Know Ramakrishnananda to be the central
43 figure of the Math. There have been days when the Math was
44 without a grain of food. If some rice was collected by begging, there
45 was no salt to take it with! On some days there would be only rice
46 and salt, but nobody cared for it in the least. We were then being
47 carried away by a tidal wave of spiritual practice. Boiled Bimba
48 leaves, rice, and salt--this was the menu for a month at a stretch.
49 Oh, those wonderful days! The austerities of that period were
50 enough to dismay supernatural beings, not to speak of men. But it is
51 a tremendous truth that if there be real worth in you, the more are

1 circumstances against you, the more will that inner power manifest
2 itself. But the reason why I have provided for beds and a tolerable
3 living in this Math is that the Sannyasins that are enrolling
4 themselves nowadays will not be able to bear so much strain as we
5 did. There was the life of Shri Ramakrishna before us, and that was
6 why we did not care much for privations and hardships. Boys of this
7 generation will not be able to undergo so much hardship. Hence it
8 is that I have provided for some sort of habitation and a bare
9 subsistence for them. If they get just enough food and clothing, the
10 boys will devote themselves to religious practice and will learn to
11 sacrifice their lives for the good of humanity."

12 Disciple: Sir, outside people say a good deal against this sort
13 of bedding and furniture.

14 Swamiji: Let them say. Even in jest they will at least once
15 think of this Math. And they say, it is easier to attain liberation
16 through cherishing a hostile spirit. Shri Ramakrishna used to say,
17 "Men should be ignored like worms." Do you mean we have to
18 conduct ourselves according to the chance opinion of others?
19 Pshaw!

20 Disciple: Sir, you sometimes say, "All are Narayanas, the poor
21 and the needy are my Narayanas", and again you say, "Men should
22 be ignored like worms." What do you really mean?

23 Swamiji: Well, there is not the least doubt that all are
24 Narayanas. But all Narayanas do not criticise the furniture of the
25 Math. I shall go on working for the good of men, without caring in
26 the least for the criticisms of others--it is in this sense that the
27 expression, "Men are to be ignored like worms", has been used. He
28 who has a dogged determination like that shall have everything.
29 Only some may have it sooner, and others a little later, that is all.
30 But one is bound to reach the goal. It is because we had such a
31 determination that we have attained the little that we have.
32 Otherwise, what dire days of privation we have had to pass
33 through! One day, for want of food I fainted in the outer platform of
34 a house on the roadside and quite a shower of rain had passed over
35 my head before I recovered my senses! Another day, I had to do odd
36 jobs in Calcutta for the whole day without food, and had my meal on
37 my return to the Math at ten or eleven in the night. And these were
38 not solitary instances.

39 Saying these words, Swamiji sat for a while pursuing some
40 trend of thought. Then he resumed:

41 Real monasticism is not easy to attain. There is no order of
42 life so rigorous as this. If you stumble ever so little, you are hurled
43 down a precipice--and are smashed to pieces. One day I was
44 travelling on foot from Agra to Vrindaban. There was not a farthing
45 with me. I was about a couple of miles from Vrindaban when I
46 found a man smoking on the roadside, and I was seized with a
47 desire to smoke. I said to the man, "Hallo, will you let me have a
48 puff at your Chillum?" He seemed to be hesitating greatly and said,
49 "Sire, I am a sweeper." Well, there was the influence of old
50 Samskaras, and I immediately stepped back and resumed my
51 journey without smoking. I had gone a short distance when the

1 thought occurred to me that I was a Sannyasin, who had renounced
2 caste, family, prestige, and everything--and still I drew back as soon
3 as the man gave himself out as a sweeper, and could not smoke at
4 the Chillum touched by him! The thought made me restless at
5 heart; then I had walked on half a mile. Again I retraced my steps
6 and came to the sweeper whom I found still sitting there. I
7 hastened to tell him, "Do prepare a Chillum of tobacco for me, my
8 dear friend." I paid no heed to his objections and insisted on having
9 it. So the man was compelled to prepare a Chillum for me. Then I
10 gladly had a puff at it and proceeded to Vrindaban. When one has
11 embraced the monastic life, one has to test whether one has gone
12 beyond the prestige of caste and birth, etc. It is so difficult to
13 observe the monastic vow in right earnest! There must not be the
14 slightest divergence between one's words and actions.

15 Disciple: Sir, you sometimes hold before us the householder's
16 ideal and sometimes the ideal of the Sannyasin. Which one are we
17 to adopt?

18 Swamiji: Well, go on listening to all. Then stick to that one
19 which appeals to you--grip it hard like a bulldog.

20 Swamiji came downstairs accompanied by the disciple, while
21 speaking these words, and began to pace to and fro, uttering now
22 and then the name of Shiva or humming a song on the Divine
23 Mother, such as, "Who knows how diversely Thou playest, O
24 Mother, Thou flowing stream of nectar", and so on.

25 26 XXVI

27 [Place: The Math, Belur. Year: 1902.]

28 The disciple passed the preceding night in Swamiji's room.
29 At 4 a.m. Swamiji roused him and said "Go and knock up the
30 Sadhus and Brahmacharins from sleep with the bell." In pursuance
31 of the order, the disciple rang the bell near the Sadhus who slept.
32 The monastic inmates hastened to go to the worship-room for
33 meditation.

34 According to Swamiji's instructions, the disciple rang the bell
35 lustily near Swami Brahmananda's bed, which made the latter
36 exclaim, "Good heavens! The Bangal¹⁸⁷ has made it too hot for us to
37 stay in the Math!" On the disciple's communicating this to Swamiji,
38 he burst out into a hearty laugh, saying, "Well done!"

39 Then Swamiji, too, washed his face and entered the chapel
40 accompanied by the disciple.

41 The Sannyasins--Swami Brahmananda and others--were
42 already seated for meditation. A separate seat was kept for
43 Swamiji, on which he sat facing the east, and pointing to a seat in
44 front to the disciple, said, "Go and meditate, sitting there."

45 Shortly after taking his seat, Swamiji became perfectly calm

1 ¹⁸⁷ ?Meaning an East Bengal man, used as a term of endearing reproach for the
2 disciple.
3

1 and motionless, like a statue, and his breathing became very slow.
2 Everyone else kept his seat.

3 After about an hour and a half, Swamiji rose from meditation
4 with the words "Shiva, Shiva". His eyes were flushed, the
5 expression placid, calm, and grave. Bowing before Shri
6 Ramakrishna he came downstairs and paced the courtyard of the
7 Math. After a while he said to the disciple. "Do you see how the
8 Sadhus are practising meditation etc. nowadays? When the
9 meditation is deep, one sees many wonderful things. While
10 meditating at the Baranagore Math, one day I saw the nerves Ida
11 and Pingala. One can see them with a little effort. Then, when one
12 has a vision of the Shushumna, one can see anything one likes. If a
13 man has unflinching devotion to the Guru, spiritual practices--
14 meditation, Japa, and so forth--come quite naturally; one need not
15 struggle for them. `The Guru is Brahma, the Guru is Vishnu, and
16 the Guru is Shiva Himself.'"

17 Then the disciple prepared tobacco for Swamiji and when he
18 returned with it, Swamiji spoke as he puffed at it, "Within there is
19 the lion--the eternally pure, illumined, and ever free Atman; and
20 directly one realises Him through meditation and concentration,
21 this world of Maya vanishes. He is equally present in all; and the
22 more one practises, the quicker does the Kundalini (the `coiled-up'
23 power) awaken in him. When this power reaches the head, one's
24 vision is unobstructed--one realises the Atman."

25 Disciple: Sir, I have only read of these things in the
26 scriptures, but nothing has been realised as yet.

27 Swamiji: {Sanskrit}--It is bound to come in time. But some
28 attain this early, and others are a little late. One must stick to it--
29 determined never to let it go. This is true manliness. You must keep
30 the mind fixed on one object, like an unbroken stream of oil. The
31 ordinary man's mind is scattered on different objects, and at the
32 time of meditation, too, the mind is at first apt to wander. But let
33 any desire whatever arise in the mind, you must sit calmly and
34 watch what sort of ideas are coming. By continuing to watch in that
35 way, the mind becomes calm, and there are no more thought-waves
36 in it. These waves represent the thought-activity of the mind. Those
37 things that you have previously thought deeply, have transformed
38 themselves into a subconscious current, and therefore these come
39 up in the mind in meditation. The rise of these waves, or thoughts,
40 during meditation is an evidence that your mind is tending towards
41 concentration. Sometimes the mind is concentrated on a set of
42 ideas--this is called meditation with Vikalpa or oscillation. But when
43 the mind becomes almost free from all activities, it melts in the
44 inner Self, which is the essence of infinite Knowledge, One, and
45 Itself Its own support. This is what is called Nirvikalpa Samadhi,
46 free from all activities. In Shri Ramakrishna we have again and
47 again noticed both these forms of Samadhi. He had not to struggle
48 to get these states. They came to him spontaneously, then and
49 there. It was a wonderful phenomenon. It was by seeing him that
50 we could rightly understand these things. Meditate every day alone.
51 Everything will open up of itself. Now the Divine Mother--the
52 embodiment of illumination--is sleeping within, hence you do not

1 understand this. She is the Kundalini. When, before meditating, you
2 proceed to "purify the nerves", you must mentally strike hard on the
3 Kundalini in the Muladhara (sacral plexus), and repeat, "Arise,
4 Mother, arise!" One must practise these slowly. During meditation,
5 suppress the emotional side altogether. This is a great source of
6 danger. Those that are very emotional no doubt have their Kundalini
7 rushing quickly upwards, but it is as quick to come down as to go
8 up. And when it does come down, it leaves the devotee in a state of
9 utter ruin. It is for this reason that Kirtanas and other auxiliaries to
10 emotional development have a great drawback. It is true that by
11 dancing and jumping, etc. through a momentary impulse, that
12 power is made to course upwards, but it is never enduring. On the
13 contrary when it traces back its course, it rouses violent lust in the
14 individual. Listening to my lectures in America, through temporary
15 excitement many among the audience used to get into an ecstatic
16 state, and some would even become motionless like statues. But on
17 inquiry I afterwards found that many of them had an excess of the
18 carnal instinct immediately after that state. But this happens simply
19 owing to a lack of steady practice in meditation and concentration.

20 Disciple: Sir, in no scriptures have I ever read these secrets
21 of spiritual practice. Today I have heard quite new things.

22 Swamiji: Do you think the scriptures contain all the secrets
23 of spiritual practice? These are being handed down secretly
24 through a succession of Gurus and disciples. Practise meditation
25 and concentration with the utmost care. Place fragrant flowers in
26 front and burn incense. At the outset take such external help as will
27 make the mind pure. As you repeat the name of your Guru and
28 Ishta, say, "Peace be to all creatures and the universe!" First send
29 impulses of these good wishes to the north, south, east, west,
30 above, below--in all directions, and then sit down to meditate. One
31 has to do this during the early stages. Then sitting still (you may
32 face in any direction), meditate in the way I have taught you while
33 initiating. Don't leave out a single day. If you have too much
34 pressing work, go through the spiritual exercises for at least a
35 quarter of an hour. Can you reach the goal without steadfast
36 devotion, my son?

37 Now Swamiji went upstairs, and as he did so, he said, "You
38 people will have your spiritual insight opened without much
39 trouble. Now that you have chanced to come here, you have
40 liberation and all under your thumb. Besides practising meditation,
41 etc., set yourselves heart and soul to remove to a certain extent the
42 miseries of the world, so full of wails. Through hard austerities I
43 have almost ruined this body. There is hardly any energy left in this
44 pack of bones and flesh. You set yourselves to work now, and let me
45 rest a while. If you fail to do anything else, well, you can tell the
46 world at large about the scriptural truths you have studied so long.
47 There is no higher gift than this, for the gift of knowledge is the
48 highest gift in the world."

1 Swamiji was now staying at the Math. The disciple came to
2 the Math and towards the evening accompanied Swamiji and
3 Swami Premananda for a walk. Finding Swamiji absorbed in
4 thought, the disciple entered into a conversation with Swami
5 Premananda on what Shri Ramakrishna used to say of Swamiji's
6 greatness. After walking some distance Swamiji turned to go back
7 to the Math. Seeing Swami Premananda and the disciple near by,
8 he said, "Well, what were you talking?" The disciple said, "We were
9 talking about Shri Ramakrishna and his words." Swamiji only heard
10 the reply, but again lapsed into thought and walking along the road
11 returned to the Math. He sat on the camp-cot placed under the
12 mango-tree and, resting there some time, washed his face and then,
13 pacing the upper verandah, spoke to the disciple thus: "Why do you
14 not set about propagating Vedanta in your part of the country?
15 There Tantrikism prevails to a fearful extent. Rouse and agitate the
16 country with the lion-roar of Advaitavada (monism). Then I shall
17 know you to be a Vedantist. First open a Sanskrit school there and
18 teach the Upanishads and the *Brahma-Sutras* . Teach the boys the
19 system of Brahmacharya. I have heard that in your country there is
20 much logic-chopping of the Nyaya school. What is there in it? Only
21 Vyapti (pervasiveness) and Anumana (inference)--on these subjects
22 the Pandits of the Nyaya school discuss for months! What does it
23 help towards the Knowledge of the Atman? Either in your village or
24 Nag Mahashaya's, open a Chatushpathi (indigenous school) in
25 which the scriptures will be studied and also the life and teachings
26 of Shri Ramakrishna. In this way you will advance your own good as
27 well as the good of the people, and your fame will endure.

28 Disciple: Sir, I cherish no desire for name or fame. Only,
29 sometimes I feel to do as you are saying. But by marriage I have got
30 so entangled in the world that I fear my desire will always remain in
31 the mind only.

32 Swamiji: What if you have married? As you are maintaining
33 your parents and brothers with food and clothing, so do for your
34 wife likewise; and by giving her religious instruction draw her to
35 your path. Think her to be a partner and helper in the living of your
36 religious life. At other times look upon her with an even eye with
37 others. Thinking thus all the unsteadiness of the mind will die out.
38 What fear?

39 The disciple felt assured by these words. After his meal,
40 Swamiji sat on his own bed, and the disciple had an opportunity of
41 doing some personal service for him.

42 Swamiji began to speak to the disciple, enjoining him to be
43 reverential to the Math members: "These children of Shri
44 Ramakrishna whom you see, are wonderful Tyagis (selfless souls),
45 and by service to them you will attain to the purification of mind
46 and be blessed with the vision of the Atman. You remember the
47 words of the Gita: 'By interrogation and service to the great soul'.
48 Therefore you must serve them, by which you will attain your goal;
49 and you know how much they love you."

50 Disciple: But I find it very difficult to understand them. Each
51 one seems to be of a different type.

1 Swamiji: Shri Ramakrishna was a wonderful gardener.
2 Therefore he has made a bouquet of different flowers and formed
3 his Order. All different types and ideas have come into it, and many
4 more will come. Shri Ramakrishna used to say, "Whoever has
5 prayed to God sincerely for one day, must come here." Know each
6 of those who are here to be of great spiritual power. Because they
7 remain shrivelled before me, do not think them to be ordinary souls.
8 When they will go out, they will be the cause of the awakening of
9 spirituality in people. Know them to be part of the spiritual body of
10 Shri Ramakrishna, who was the embodiment of infinite religious
11 ideas. I look upon them with that eye. See, for instance,
12 Brahmananda, who is here--even I have not the spirituality which
13 he has. Shri Ramakrishna looked upon him as his mind-born son;
14 and he lived and walked, ate and slept with him. He is the ornament
15 of our Math--our king. Similarly Premananda, Turiyananda,
16 Trigunatitananda, Akhandananda, Saradananda,
17 Ramakrishnananda, Subodhananda, and others; you may go round
18 the world, but it is doubtful if you will find men of such spirituality
19 and faith in God like them. They are each a centre of religious
20 power, and in time that power will manifest.

21 The disciple listened in wonder, and Swamiji said again: "But
22 from your part of the country, except Nag Mahashaya none came to
23 Shri Ramakrishna. A few others who saw Shri Ramakrishna could
24 not appreciate him." At the thought of Nag Mahashaya, Swamiji
25 kept silent for some time. It was only four or five months since he
26 had passed away. Swamiji had heard that on one occasion a spring
27 of Ganga water rose in the house of Nag Mahashaya, and
28 recollecting this he asked the disciple, "Well, how did that event
29 take place? Tell me about it."

30 Disciple: I only heard about it, but did not see it with my own
31 eyes. I heard that in a Mahavaruni Yoga Nag Mahashaya started
32 with his father for Calcutta.

33 But not getting any accommodation in the railway train he
34 stayed for three or four days in Narayangunge in vain and returned
35 home. Then Nag Mahashaya said to his father, "If the mind is pure,
36 then the Mother Ganga will appear here." Then at the auspicious
37 hour of the holy bath, a jet of water rose, piercing the ground of his
38 courtyard. Many of those who saw it are living today. But that was
39 many years before I met him.

40 Swamiji: There was nothing strange in it. He was a saint of
41 unfalsified determination. I do not consider such a phenomenon at
42 all strange in his case.

43 Saying this, Swamiji, feeling sleepy, lay on his side. At this
44 the disciple came down to take his supper.

45 XXVIII

46 [Place: From Calcutta to the Math on a boat. Year: 1902.]

47 While walking on the banks of the Ganga at Calcutta one
48 afternoon, the disciple saw a Sannyasin in the distance approaching
49

1 towards Ahiritola Ghat. While he came near, the disciple found the
2 Sannyasin to be no other than his Guru, Swami Vivekananda. In his
3 left hand he had a leaf receptacle containing fried gram, which he
4 was eating like a boy, and was walking in great joy. When he stood
5 before him, the disciple fell at his feet and asked the reason for his
6 coming to Calcutta unexpectedly.

7 Swamiji: I came on business. Come, will you go to the Math?
8 Eat a little of the fried gram. It has a nice saline and pungent taste.

9 The disciple took the food with gladness and agreed to go to
10 the Math with him.

11 Swamiji: Then look for a boat.

12 The disciple hurried to hire a boat. He was settling the
13 amount of the boat-hire with the boatman, who demanded eight
14 annas, when Swamiji also appeared on the scene and stopped the
15 disciple saying, "Why are you higgling with them?" and said to the
16 boatman, "Very well, I will give you eight annas", and got into the
17 boat. That boat proceeded slowly against the current and took
18 nearly an hour and half to reach the Math. Being alone with
19 Swamiji in the boat, the disciple had an opportunity of asking him
20 freely about all subjects. Raising the topic of the glorificatory poem
21 which the disciple had recently composed singing the greatness of
22 the devotees of Shri Ramakrishna, Swamiji asked him, "How do you
23 know that those whom you have named in your hymn are the near
24 and intimate disciples of Shri Ramakrishna?"

25 Disciple: Sir, I have associated with the Sannyasin and
26 householder disciples of Shri Ramakrishna for so many years; I
27 have heard from them that they are all devotees of Shri
28 Ramakrishna.

29 Swamiji: Yes, they are devotees of Shri Ramakrishna. But all
30 devotees do not belong to the group of his most intimate and
31 nearest disciples. Staying in the Cossipore Garden, Shri
32 Ramakrishna said to us, "The Divine Mother showed me that all of
33 these are not my inner devotees." Shri Ramakrishna said so that
34 day with respect to both his men and women devotees.

35 Then speaking of the way Shri Ramakrishna would indicate
36 different grades among devotees, high and low, Swamiji began to
37 explain to the disciple at length the great difference there is
38 between the householder's and the Sannyasin's life.

39 Swamiji: Is it possible that one would serve the path of lust
40 and wealth and understand Shri Ramakrishna aright at the same
41 time? Or will it ever be possible? Never put your faith in such
42 words. Many among the devotees of Shri Ramakrishna are now
43 proclaiming themselves as Ishvara-koti (of Divine class), Antaranga
44 (of inner circle), etc. They could not imbibe his great renunciation
45 or dispassion, yet they say they are his intimate devotees! Sweep
46 away all such words. He was a prince of Tyagis (self-renouncers),
47 and obtaining his grace can anybody spend his life in the enjoyment
48 of lust and wealth?

1 Disciple: Is it then, sir, that those who came to him at
2 Dakshineswar were not his devotees?

3 Swamiji: Who says that? Everybody who has gone to Shri
4 Ramakrishna has advanced in spirituality, is advancing, and will
5 advance. Shri Ramakrishna used to say that the perfected Rishis of
6 a previous Kalpa (cycle) take human bodies and come on earth with
7 the Avatars. They are the associates of the Lord. God works
8 through them and propagates His religion. Know this for a truth
9 that they alone are the associates of the Avatara who have
10 renounced all self for the sake of others, who, giving up all sense-
11 enjoyments with repugnance, spend their lives for the good of the
12 world, for the welfare of the Jivas. The disciples of Jesus were all
13 Sannyasins. The direct recipients of the grace of Shankara,
14 Ramanuja, Shri Chaitanya and Buddha were the all-renouncing
15 Sannyasins. It is men of this stamp who have been through
16 succession of disciples spreading the Brahma-vidya (knowledge of
17 Brahman) in the world. Where and when have you heard that a man
18 being the slave of lust and wealth has been able to liberate another
19 or to show the path of God to him? Without himself free, how can he
20 make others free? In Veda, Vedanta, Itihasa (history), Purana
21 (ancient tradition), you will find everywhere that the Sannyasins
22 have been the teachers of religion in all ages and climes. History
23 repeats itself. It will also be likewise now. The capable Sannyasin
24 children of Shri Ramakrishna, the teacher of the great synthesis of
25 religions, will be honoured everywhere as the teachers of men. The
26 words of others will dissipate in the air like an empty sound. The
27 real self-sacrificing Sannyasins of the Math will be the centre of the
28 preservation and spread of religious ideas. Do you understand?

29 Disciple: Then is it not true--what the householder devotees
30 of Shri Ramakrishna are preaching about him in diverse ways?

31 Swamiji: It can't be said that they are altogether false; but
32 what they are saying about Shri Ramakrishna is only partial truth.
33 According to one's own capacity, one has understood Shri
34 Ramakrishna and so is discussing about him. It is not bad either to
35 do so. But if any of his devotees has concluded that what he has
36 understood of him is the only truth, then he is an object of pity.
37 Some are saying that Shri Ramakrishna was a Tantrika and Kaula,
38 some that he was Shri Chaitanya born on earth to preach "Naradiya
39 Bhakti" (Bhakti as taught by Narada); some again that to undertake
40 spiritual practices is opposed to faith in him as an Avatara while
41 some are opining that it is not agreeable to his teachings to take to
42 Sannyasa. You will hear such words from the householder devotees,
43 but do not listen to such one-sided estimates. He was the
44 concentrated embodiment of how many previous Avatars! Even
45 spending the whole life in religious austerity, we could not
46 understand it. Therefore one has to speak about him with caution
47 and restraint. As are one's capacities, so he fills one with spiritual
48 ideas. One spray from the full ocean of his spirituality, if realised,
49 will make gods of men. Such a synthesis of universal ideas you will
50 not find in the history of the world again. Understand from this who
51 was born in the person of Shri Ramakrishna. When he used to
52 instruct his Sannyasin disciples, he would rise from his seat and

1 look about to see if any householder was coming that way or not. If
2 he found none, then in glowing words he would depict the glory of
3 renunciation and austerity. As a result of the rousing power of that
4 fiery dispassion, we have renounced the world and become averse
5 to worldliness.

6 Disciple: He used to make such distinctions between
7 householders and Sannyasins!

8 Swamiji: Ask and learn from the householder devotees
9 themselves about it. And you yourself can think and know which are
10 greater--those of his children who for the realisation of God have
11 renounced all enjoyments of the worldly life and are spending
12 themselves in the practice of austerities on hills and forests, Tirthas
13 and Ashramas (holy places and hermitages), or those who are
14 praising and glorifying his name and practising his remembrance,
15 but are not able to rise above the delusion and bondage of the
16 world? Which are greater--those who are coming forward in the
17 service of humanity, regarding them as the Atman, those who are
18 continent since early age, who are the moving embodiments of
19 renunciation and dispassion, or those who like flies are at one time
20 sitting on a flower, and at the next moment on a dung heap? You
21 can yourself think and come to a conclusion.

22 Disciple: But, sir, what does the world really mean to those
23 who have obtained his grace? Whether they remain in the
24 householder's life or take to Sannyasa, it is immaterial--so it
25 appears to me.

26 Swamiji: The mind of those who have truly received his grace
27 cannot be attached to worldliness. The test of his grace is--
28 unattachment to lust or wealth. If that has not come in anyone's life,
29 then he has not truly received his grace.

30 When the above discussion ended thus, the disciple raising
31 another topic, asked Swamiji, "Sir, what is the outcome of all your
32 labours here and in foreign countries?"

33 Swamiji: You will see only a little manifestation of what has
34 been done. In time the whole world must accept the universal and
35 catholic ideas of Shri Ramakrishna and of this, only the beginning
36 has been made. Before this flood everybody will be swept off.

37 Disciple: Please tell me more about Shri Ramakrishna. I like
38 very much to hear of him from your lips.

39 Swamiji: You are hearing so much about him all the time,
40 what more? He himself is his own parallel. Has he any exemplar?

41 Disciple: What is the way for us who have not seen him?

42 Swamiji: You have been blessed with the company of these
43 Sadhus who are the direct recipients of his grace. How then can
44 you say you have not seen him? He is present among his Sannyasin
45 disciples. By service to them, he will in time be revealed in your
46 heart. In time you will realise everything.

47 Disciple: But, sir, you speak about others who have received
48 his grace, but never about what he used to say about yourself.

1 Swamiji: What shall I say about myself? You see, I must be
2 one of his demons. In his presence even, I would sometimes speak
3 ill of him, hearing which he would laugh.

4 Saying thus Swamiji's face assumed a grave aspect, and he
5 looked towards the river with an absent mind and sat still for some
6 time. Within a short time the evening fell and the boat also reached
7 the Math. Swamiji was then humming a tune to himself, "Now in
8 the evening of life, take the child back to his home."

9 When the song was finished, Swamiji said, "In your part of
10 the country (East Bengal) sweet-voiced singers are not born.
11 Without drinking the water of mother Ganga, a sweet, musical voice
12 is not acquired."

13 After paying the hire, Swamiji descended from the boat and
14 taking off his coat sat in the western verandah of the Math. His fair
15 complexion and ochre robe presented a beautiful sight.

16
17 XXIX

18 [*Place: Belur Math. Year: 1902.*]

19 Today is the first of Asharh (June-July). The disciple has come
20 to the Math before dusk from Bally, with his office-dress on, as he
21 has not found time to change it. Coming to the Math, he prostrated
22 himself at the feet of Swamiji and inquired about his health.
23 Swamiji replied that he was well, but looking at his dress, he said,
24 "You put on coat and trousers, why don't you put on collars?" Saying
25 this, he called Swami Saradananda who was near and said, "Give
26 him tomorrow two collars from my stock." Swami Saradananda
27 bowed assent to his order.

28 The disciple then changed his office-dress and came to
29 Swamiji, who, addressing him, said, "By giving up one's national
30 costume and ways of eating and living, one gets denationalised.
31 One can learn from all, but that learning which leads to
32 denationalisation does not help one's uplift but becomes the cause
33 of degradation."

34 Disciple: Sir, one cannot do without putting on dress
35 approved by superior European officers in official quarters.

36 Swamiji: No one prevents that. In the interests of your
37 service, you put on official dress in official quarters. But on
38 returning home you should be a regular Bengali Babu--with flowing
39 cloth, a native shirt, and with the Chudder on the shoulder. Do you
40 understand?

41 Disciple: Yes, sir.

1 Swamiji: You go about from house to house only with the
2 European shirt on. In the West, to go about visiting people with
3 simply the shirt on is ungentlemanly--one is considered naked.
4 Without putting on a coat over the shirt, you will not be welcomed
5 in a gentleman's house. What nonsense have you learnt to imitate in
6 the matter of dress! Boys and young men nowadays adopt a
7 peculiar manner of dress which is neither Indian nor Western, but a
8 queer combination.

9 After such talk Swamiji began to pace the bank of the river,
10 and the disciple was alone with him. He was hesitating to ask
11 Swamiji a question about religious practices.

12 Swamiji: What are you thinking? Out with it.

13 The disciple with great delicacy said, "Sir, I have been
14 thinking that if you can teach me some method by which the mind
15 becomes calm within a short time, by which I may be immersed in
16 meditation quickly, I shall feel much benefited. In the round of
17 worldly duties, I feel it difficult to make the mind steady in
18 meditation at the time of spiritual practice."

19 Swamiji seemed delighted at this humility and earnestness of
20 the disciple. In reply he affectionately said, "After some time come
21 to me when I am alone upstairs, I will talk to you about it."

22 Coming up shortly after, the disciple found that Swamiji was
23 sitting in meditation, facing the west. His face wore a wonderful
24 expression, and his whole body was completely motionless. The
25 disciple stood by, looking with speechless wonder on the figure of
26 Swamiji in meditation, and when even after standing long he found
27 no sign of external consciousness in Swamiji, he sat noiselessly by.
28 After half an hour, Swamiji seemed to show signs of a return to
29 external consciousness. The disciple found that his folded hands
30 began to quiver, and a few minutes later Swamiji opened his eyes
31 and looking at the disciple said, "When did you come?"

32 Disciple: A short while ago.

33 Swamiji: Very well, get me a glass of water.

34 The disciple hurriedly brought a glass of water and Swamiji
35 drinking a little, asked the disciple to put the glass back in its
36 proper place. The disciple did so and again sat by Swamiji.

37 Swamiji: Today I had a very deep meditation.

38 Disciple: Sir, please teach me so that my mind also may get
39 absorbed in meditation.

40 Swamiji: I have already told you all the methods. Meditate
41 every day accordingly, and in the fulness of time you will feel like
42 that. Now tell me what form of Sadhana appeals to you most.

43 Disciple: Sir, I practise every day as you have told me, still I
44 don't get a deep meditation. Sometimes I think it is useless for me
45 to practise meditation. So I feel that I shall not fare well in it, and
46 therefore now desire only eternal companionship with you.

47 Swamiji: Those are weaknesses of the mind. Always try to
48 get absorbed in the eternally present Atman. If you once get the

1 vision of the Atman, you will get everything--the bonds of birth and
2 death will be broken.

3 Disciple: You bless me to attain to it. You asked me, still I
4 don't get a deep meditation. By some means, do please make my
5 mind steady.

6 Swamiji: Meditate whenever you get time. If the mind once
7 enters the path of Sushumna, everything will get right. You will not
8 have to do much after that.

9 Disciple: You encourage me in many ways. But shall I be
10 blessed with a vision of the Truth? Shall I get freedom by attaining
11 true knowledge?

12 Swamiji: Yes, of course. Everybody will attain Mukti, from a
13 worm up to Brahma, and shall you alone fail? These are weaknesses
14 of the mind; never think of such things.

15 After this, he said again: "Be possessed of Shraddha (faith),
16 of Virya (courage), attain to the knowledge of the Atman, and
17 sacrifice your life for the good of others--this is my wish and
18 blessing."

19 The bell for the meal ringing at this moment, Swamiji asked
20 the disciple to go and partake of it. The disciple, prostrating himself
21 at the feet of Swamiji, prayed for his blessings. Swamiji putting his
22 hand on his head blessed him and said, "If my blessings be of any
23 good to you, I say--may Bhagavan Shri Ramakrishna give you his
24 grace! I know of no blessing higher than this." After meals, the
25 disciple did not go upstairs to Swamiji, who had retired early that
26 night. Next morning the disciple, having to return to Calcutta in the
27 interests of his business appeared before Swamiji upstairs.

28 Swamiji: Will you go immediately?

29 Disciple: Yes, sir.

30 Swamiji: Come again next Sunday, won't you?

31 Disciple: Yes, certainly.

32 Swamiji: All right, there is a boat coming.

33 The disciple took leave of Swamiji. He did not know that this
34 was to be his last meeting with his Ishtadeva (chosen Ideal) in the
35 physical body. Swamiji with a glad heart bade him farewell and
36 said, "Come on Sunday." The disciple replied, "Yes, I will," and got
37 downstairs.

38 The boatmen were calling for him, so he ran for the boat.
39 Boarding it, he saw Swamiji pacing the upper verandah, and
40 saluting him he entered the boat.

41 Seven days after this, Swamiji passed away from mortal life.
42 The disciple had no knowledge of the impending catastrophe.
43 Getting the news on the second day of Swamiji's passing away, he
44 came to the Math, and therefore he had not the good fortune to see
45 his physical form again!

We evince a sad lack of restraint in conversation or any conjoint action such as music and so on. Everyone tries to put himself foremost. The jostling at railway or steamer station is another illustration of his. A friend of Swamiji had a talk with him one day at the Math on this subject. Swamiji remarked, "You see, we have an old adage: 'If your son is not inclined to study, put him in the Durbars (Sabha).' The word Sabha here does not mean social meetings, such as take place occasionally at people's houses--it means royal Durbars. In the days of the independent kings of Bengal, they used to hold their courts mornings and evenings. There all the affairs of the State were discussed in the morning--and as there were no newspapers at that time, the king used to converse with the leading gentry of the capital and gather from them all information regarding the people and the State. These gentlemen had to attend these meetings, for if they did not do so, the king would inquire into the reason of their non-attendance. Such Durbars were the centres of culture in every country and not merely in ours. In the present day, the western parts of India, especially Rajputana, are much better off in this respect than Bengal, as something similar to these old Durbars still obtains there."

Q.--Then, Maharaj, have our people lost their own good manners because we have no kings of our own?

Swamiji: It is all a degeneration which has its root in selfishness. That in boarding a steamer one follows the vulgar maxim, "Uncle, save thy own precious skin", and in music and moments of recreation everyone tries to make a display of himself, is a typical picture of our mental state. Only a little training in self-sacrifice would take it away. It is the fault of the parents who do not teach their children good manners. Self-sacrifice, indeed, is the basis of all civilisation.

On the other hand, owing to the undue domination exercised by the parents, our boys do not get free scope for growth. The parents consider singing as improper. But the son, when he hears a fine piece of music, at once sets his whole mind on how to learn it, and naturally he must look out for an Adda.¹⁸⁸ Then again, "It is a sin to smoke!" So what else can the young man do than mix with the servants of the house, to indulge in this habit in secret? In everyone there are infinite tendencies, which require proper scope for satisfaction. But in our country that is not allowed; and to bring about a different order of things would require a fresh training of the parents. Such is the condition! What a pity! We have not yet developed a high grade of civilisation; and in spite of this, our educated Babus want the British to hand over the government to them to manage! It makes me laugh and cry as well. Well, where is that martial spirit which, at the very outset, requires one to know how to serve and obey and to practise self-restraint! The martial

¹⁸⁸ ?Something like a club. The word has got a bad odour about it in Bengali.

1 spirit is not self-assertion but self-sacrifice. One must be ready to
2 advance and lay down one's life at the word of command, before he
3 can command the hearts and lives of others. One must sacrifice
4 himself first.

5 A devotee of Shri Ramakrishna once passed some severe
6 remarks, in a book written by him, against those who did not
7 believe in Shri Ramakrishna as an Incarnation of God. Swamiji
8 summoned the writer to his presence and addressed him thus in a
9 spirited manner:

10 What right had you to write like that, abusing others? What
11 matters it if they do not believe in your Lord? Have we created a
12 sect? Are we Ramakrishnites, that we should look upon anyone who
13 will not worship him, as our enemy? By your bigotry you have only
14 lowered him, and made him small. If your Lord is God Himself, then
15 you ought to know that in whatsoever name one is calling upon him,
16 it is *his* worship only--and who are you to abuse others? Do you
17 think they will hear you if you inveigh against them? How foolish!
18 You can only win others' hearts when you have sacrificed yourself to
19 them, otherwise why should they hear you?

20 Regaining his natural composure after a short while, Swamiji
21 spoke in a sorrowful tone:

22 Can anyone, my dear friend, have faith or resignation in the
23 Lord, unless he himself is a hero? Never can hatred and malice
24 vanish from one's heart unless one becomes a hero, and unless one
25 is free from these, how can one become truly civilised? Where in
26 this country is that sturdy manliness, that spirit of heroism? Alas,
27 nowhere. Often have I looked for that, and I found only one instance
28 of it, and only one.

29 Q.--In whom have you found it, Swamiji?

30 Swamiji: In G. C.¹⁸⁹ alone I have seen that true resignation--
31 that true spirit of a servant of the Lord. And was it not because he
32 was ever ready to sacrifice himself that Shri Ramakrishna took
33 upon himself all his responsibility? What a unique spirit of
34 resignation to the Lord! I have not met his parallel. From him have I
35 learnt the lesson of self-surrender.

36 So saying, Swamiji raised his folded hands to his head out of
37 respect to him.

38
39 XXXI

40 [*Shri Priya Nath Sinha*]

189 ?Babu Girish Chandra Ghosh.

1 Arrangements were being made for Swamiji's leaving India
2 for America for the second time (1899 A.D.). He had gone to
3 Calcutta to see one of his friends, and returning from there stopped
4 for a few minutes at Balaram Babu's house at Baghbazar. He then
5 sent for another friend to accompany him to the Math. The friend
6 came, and the following conversation took place between him and
7 Swamiji:

8 Swamiji: A very funny thing happened today. I went to a
9 friend's house. He has had a picture painted, the subject of which is
10 "Shri Krishna addressing Arjuna on the battlefield of Kurukshetra".
11 Shri Krishna stands on the chariot, holding the reins in His hand
12 and preaching the Gita to Arjuna. He showed me the picture and
13 asked me how I liked it. "Fairly well", I said. But as he insisted on
14 having my criticism on it, I had to give my honest opinion by saying,
15 "There is nothing in it to commend itself to me; first, because the
16 chariot of the time of Shri Krishna was not like the modern pagoda-
17 shaped car, and also, there is no expression in the figure of Shri
18 Krishna."

19 Q.--Was not the pagoda-chariot in use then?

20 Swamiji: Don't you know that since the Buddhistic era, there
21 has been a great confusion in everything in our country? The kings
22 never used to fight in pagoda-chariots. There are chariots even
23 today in Rajputana that greatly resemble the chariots of old. Have
24 you seen the chariots in the pictures of Grecian mythology? They
25 have two wheels, and one mounts them from behind; we had that
26 sort of chariot. What good is it to paint a picture if the details are
27 wrong? An historical picture comes up to a standard of excellence
28 when after making proper study and research, things are portrayed
29 exactly as they were at that period. The truth must be represented,
30 otherwise the picture is nothing. In these days, our young men who
31 go in for painting are generally those who were unsuccessful at
32 school, and who have been given up at home as good-for-nothing;
33 what work of art can you expect from them? To paint a really good
34 picture requires as much talent as to produce a perfect drama.

35 Q.--How then should Shri Krishna be represented in the
36 picture in question?

37 Swamiji: Shri Krishna ought to be painted as He really was,
38 the Gita personified; and the central idea of the Gita should radiate
39 from His whole form as He was teaching the path of Dharma to
40 Arjuna, who had been overcome by infatuation and cowardice.

41 So saying Swamiji posed himself in the way in which Shri
42 Krishna should be portrayed, and continued: "Look here, thus does
43 he hold the bridle of the horses--so tight that they are brought to
44 their haunches, with their forelegs fighting the air, and their mouths
45 gaping. This will show a tremendous play of action in the figure of
46 Shri Krishna. His friend, the world-renowned hero, casting aside his
47 bow and arrows, has sunk down like a coward on the chariot, in the
48 midst of the two armies. And Shri Krishna, whip in one hand and
49 tightening the reins with the other, has turned Himself towards
50 Arjuna, with his childlike face beaming with unworldly love and
51 sympathy, and a calm and serene look--and is delivering the

1 message of the Gita to his beloved comrade. Now, tell me what idea
2 this picture of the Preacher of the Gita conveys to you."

3 The friend: Activity combined with firmness and serenity.

4 Swamiji: Ay, that's it! Intense action in the whole body, and
5 withal a face expressing the profound calmness and serenity of the
6 blue sky. This is the central idea of the Gita--to be calm and
7 steadfast in all circumstances, with one's body, mind, and soul
8 centred at His hallowed Feet!

9 {Sanskrit} (Gita IV.18)

10 He who even while doing action can keep his mind calm, and
11 in whom, even when not doing any outward action, flows the
12 current of activity in the form of the contemplation of Brahman, is
13 the intelligent one among men, he indeed is the Yogi, he indeed is
14 the perfect worker.

15 At this moment, the man who had been sent to arrange a
16 boat returned and said that it was ready; so Swamiji told his friend,
17 "Now let us go to the Math. You must have left word at home that
18 you were going there with me?"

19 They continued their talk as they walked to the boat.

20 Swamiji: This idea must be preached to everyone--work,
21 work, endless work--without looking at results, and always keeping
22 the whole mind and soul steadfast at the lotus feet of the Lord!

23 Q.--But is this not Karma-Yoga?

24 Swamiji: Yes, this is Karma-Yoga; but without spiritual
25 practices you will never be able to do this Karma-Yoga. You must
26 harmonise the four different Yogas; otherwise how can you always
27 keep your mind and heart wholly on the Lord?

28 Q.--It is generally said that work according to the Gita means
29 the performance of Vedic sacrifices and religious exercises; any
30 other kind of work is futile.

31 Swamiji: All right; but you must make it more
32 comprehensive. Who is responsible for every action you do, every
33 breath you take, and every thought you think? Isn't it you yourself?

34 The friend: Yes and no. I cannot solve this clearly. The truth
35 about it is that man is the instrument and the Lord is the agent. So
36 when I am directed by His will, I am not at all responsible for my
37 actions.

38 Swamiji: Well, that can be said only in the highest state of
39 realisation. When the mind will be purified by work and you will see
40 that it is He who is causing all to work, then only you will have a
41 right to speak like that. Otherwise it is all bosh, a mere cant.

42 Q.--Why so, if one is truly convinced by reasoning that the
43 Lord alone is causing all actions to be done?

44 Swamiji: It may hold good when one *has been so* convinced.
45 But it only lasts for that moment, and not a whit afterwards. Well,
46 consider this thoroughly, whether all that you do in your everyday
47 life, you are not doing with an egoistic idea that you yourself are

1 the agent.

2 How long do you remember that it is the Lord who is making
3 you work? But then, by repeatedly analysing like that, you will come
4 to a state when the ego will vanish and in its place the Lord will
5 come in. Then you will be able to say with justice "Thou, Lord, art
6 guarding all my actions from within." But, my friend, if the ego
7 occupies all the space within your heart, where forsooth will there
8 be room enough for the Lord to come in? The Lord is verily absent!

9 Q.--But it is He who is giving me the wicked impulse?

10 Swamiji: No, by no means. It would be blaspheming the Lord
11 to think in that way. He is not inciting you to evil action, it is all the
12 creation of your desire for self-gratification. If one says the Lord is
13 causing everything to be done, and wilfully persists in wrong-doing,
14 it only brings ruin on him. That is the origin of self-deception. Don't
15 you feel an elation after you have done a good deed? You then give
16 yourself the credit of doing something good--you can't help it, it is
17 very human. But how absurd to take the credit of doing the good
18 act on oneself and lay the blame for the evil act on the Lord! It is a
19 most dangerous idea--the effect of ill-digested Gita and Vedanta.
20 Never hold that view. Rather say that He is causing the good work
21 to be done while you are responsible for the evil action. That will
22 bring on devotion and faith, and you will see His grace manifested
23 at every step. The truth about it is that no one has created you--you
24 have created yourself. This is discrimination, this is Vedanta. But
25 one does not understand it before realisation. Therefore the
26 aspirant should begin with the dualistic standpoint, that the Lord is
27 causing the good actions, while he is doing the evil. This is the
28 easiest way to the purification of the mind. Hence you find dualism
29 so strong among the Vaishnavas. It is very difficult to entertain
30 Advaitic (non-dualistic) ideas at the outset. But the dualistic
31 standpoint gradually leads to the realisation of the Advaita.

32 Hypocrisy is always a dangerous thing. If there is no wilful
33 self-deception, that is to say, if one sincerely believes that the most
34 wicked impulse is also prompted by the Lord, rest assured that one
35 will not have to do those mean acts for long. All the impurities of
36 the mind are quickly destroyed. Our ancient scriptural writers
37 understood this well. And I think that the Tantrika form of worship
38 originated from the time that Buddhism began to decline and,
39 through the oppression of the Buddhists, people began to perform
40 their Vedic sacrifices in secret. They had no more opportunity to
41 conduct them for two months at a stretch, so they made clay
42 images, worshipped them, and consigned them to the water--
43 finishing everything in one night, without leaving the least trace!
44 Man longs for a concrete symbol, otherwise his heart is not
45 satisfied. So in every home that one-night sacrifice began to take
46 place. As Shri Ramakrishna used to say, "Some enter the house by
47 the scavenger's entrance", so the spiritual teachers of that time saw
48 that those who could not perform any religious rite owing to their
49 evil propensities, also needed some way of coming round by
50 degrees to the path of virtue. For them those queer Tantrika rites
51 came to be invented.

1 Q.--They went on doing evil actions thinking them to be good.
2 So how could this remove their evil tendencies?

3 Swamiji: Why, they gave a different direction to their
4 propensities; they did them, but with the object of realising the
5 Lord.

6 Q.--Can this really be done?

7 Swamiji: It comes to the same thing. The motive must be
8 right. And what should prevent them from succeeding?

9 Q.--But many are caught in the temptation for wine, meat,
10 etc. in trying to get along with such means.

11 Swamiji: It was therefore that Shri Ramakrishna came. The
12 days of practising the Tantra in that fashion are gone. He, too,
13 practised the Tantra, but not in that way. Where there is the
14 injunction of drinking wine, he would simply touch his forehead
15 with a drop of it. The Tantrika form of worship is a very slippery
16 ground. Hence I say that this province has had enough of the
17 Tantra. Now it must go beyond. The Vedas should be studied. A
18 harmony of the four kinds of Yogas must be practised and absolute
19 chastity must be preserved.

20 Q.--What do you mean by the harmony of the four Yogas?

21 Swamiji: Discrimination between the real and the unreal,
22 dispassion and devotion, work and practices in concentration, and
23 along with these there must be a reverential attitude towards
24 women.

25 Q.--How can one look with reverence on women?

26 Swamiji: Well, they are the representatives of the Divine
27 Mother. And real well-being of India will commence from the day
28 that the worship of the Divine Mother will truly begin, and every
29 man will sacrifice himself at the altar of the Mother. . . .

30 Q.--Swamiji, in your boyhood, when we asked you to marry,
31 you would reply, "I won't, but you will see what I shall become." You
32 have actually verified your words.

33 Swamiji: Yes, dear brother, you saw how I was in want of
34 food, and had to work hard besides. Oh, the tremendous labour!
35 Today the Americans out of love have given me this nice bed, and I
36 have something to eat also. But, also, I have not been destined to
37 enjoy physically--and lying on the mattress only aggravates my
38 illness. I feel suffocated, as it were. I have to come down and lie on
39 the floor for relief!

40
41
42 XXXII

43 VENGEANCE OF HISTORY

44 (*Mrs. Wright*)

45 [At the end of August 1893, Swami Vivekananda stayed at
46 Annisquam at the house of Prof. J. H. Wright. So astonishing a sight

1 did Swamiji present in this quiet little New England village that
2 speculations set in at once as to who this majestic and colourful
3 figure might be. From where had he come? At first they decided
4 that he was a Brahmin from India, but his manners did not fully
5 conform to their ideas.] It was something that needed explanation
6 and they unanimously repaired to the cottage after supper, to hear
7 this strange new discourse. . . .

8 "It was the other day," he said, in his musical voice, "only just
9 the other day--not more than four hundred years ago." And then
10 followed tales of cruelty and oppression, of a patient race and a
11 suffering people, and of a judgment to come! "Ah, the English!" he
12 said. "Only just a little while ago they were savages, the vermin
13 crawled on the ladies' bodies, . . . and they scented themselves to
14 disguise the abominable odour of their persons. . . . Most hor-r-ible!
15 Even now they are barely emerging from barbarism."

16 "Nonsense," said one of his scandalised hearers, "that was at
17 least five hundred years ago."

18 "And did I not say 'a little while ago'? What are a few
19 hundred years when you look at the antiquity of the human soul?"
20 Then with a turn of tone, quite reasonable and gentle, "They are
21 quite savage", he said. "The frightful cold, the want and privation of
22 their northern climate", going on more quickly and warmly, "has
23 made them *wild* . They only think to kill. . . . Where is their religion?
24 They take the name of that Holy One, they claim to love their
25 fellowmen, they civilise--by Christianity!--No! It is their hunger that
26 has civilised them, not their God. The love of man is on their lips, in
27 their hearts there is nothing but evil and every violence. 'I love you
28 my brother, I love you!' . . . *and all the while they cut his throat!*
29 Their hands are *red* with blood." . . . Then, going on more slowly,
30 his beautiful voice deepening till it sounded like a bell, "But the
31 judgment of God will fall upon them. 'Vengeance is mine; I will
32 repay, saith the Lord', and destruction is coming. What are your
33 Christians? Not one third of the world. Look at those Chinese,
34 millions of them. They are the vengeance of God that will light upon
35 you. There will be another invasion of the Huns", adding, with a
36 little chuckle, "they will sweep over Europe, they will not leave one
37 stone standing upon another. Men, women, children, all will go and
38 the dark ages will come again." His voice was indescribably sad and
39 pitiful; then suddenly and flippantly, dropping the seer, "Me--I don't
40 care! The world will rise up better from it, but it is coming. The
41 vengeance of God, it is coming soon."

42 "Soon?" they all asked.

43 "It will not be a thousand years before it is done."

44 They drew a breath of relief. It did not seem imminent.

45 "And God will have vengeance", he went on. "You may not
46 see it in religion, you may not see it in politics, but you must see it
47 in history, and as it has been; it will come to pass. If you grind down
48 the people, you will suffer. We in India are suffering the vengeance
49 of God. Look upon these things. They ground down those poor
50 people for their own wealth, they heard not the voice of distress,

1 they ate from gold and silver when the people cried for bread, and
2 the Mohammedans came upon them slaughtering and killing:
3 slaughtering and killing they overran them. India has been
4 conquered again and again for years, and last and worst of all came
5 the Englishman. You look about India, what has the Hindu left?
6 Wonderful temples, everywhere. What has the Mohammedan left?
7 Beautiful palaces. What has the Englishman left? Nothing but
8 mounds of broken brandy bottles! And God has had no mercy upon
9 my people because they had no mercy. By their cruelty they
10 degraded the populace; and when they needed them, the common
11 people had no strength to give for their aid. If man cannot believe
12 in the Vengeance of God, he certainly cannot deny the Vengeance of
13 History. And it will come upon the English; they have their heels on
14 our necks, they have sucked the last drop of our blood for their own
15 pleasures, they have carried away with them millions of our money,
16 while our people have starved by villages and provinces. And now
17 the Chinaman is the vengeance that will fall upon them; if the
18 Chinese rose today and swept the English into the sea, *as they well*
19 *deserve*, it would be no more than justice."

20 And then, having said his say, the Swami was silent. A babble
21 of thin-voiced chatter rose about him, to which he listened,
22 apparently unheeding. Occasionally he cast his eye up to the roof
23 and repeated softly, "Shiva! Shiva!" and the little company, shaken
24 and disturbed by the current of powerful feelings and vindictive
25 passion which seemed to be flowing like molten lava beneath the
26 silent surface of this strange being, broke up, perturbed.

27 He stayed days [actually it was only a long weekend]. . . . All
28 through, his discourses abounded in picturesque illustrations and
29 beautiful legends. . . .

30 One beautiful story he told was of a man whose wife
31 reproached him with his troubles, reviled him because of the
32 success of others, and recounted to him all his failures. "Is this
33 what your God has done for you", she said to him, "after you have
34 served Him so many years?" Then the man answered, "Am I a
35 trader in religion? Look at the mountain. What does it do for me, or
36 what have I done for it? And yet I love it because I am so made that
37 I love the beautiful. Thus I love God." . . . There was another story
38 he told of a king who offered a gift to a Rishi. The Rishi refused, but
39 the king insisted and begged that he would come with him. When
40 they came to the palace, he heard the king praying, and the king
41 begged for wealth, for power, for length of days from God. The
42 Rishi listened, wondering, until at last he picked up his mat and
43 started away. Then the king opened his eyes from his prayers and
44 saw him. "Why are you going?" he said. "You have not asked for
45 your gift." "I", said the Rishi, "ask from a beggar?"

46 When someone suggested to him that Christianity was a
47 saving power, he opened his great dark eyes upon him and said, "If
48 Christianity is a saving power in itself, why has it not saved the
49 Ethiopians, the Abyssinians?"

50 Often on Swamiji's lips was the phrase, "They would not dare
51 to do this to a monk." . . . At times he even expressed a great

1 longing that the English government would take him and shoot him.
2 "It would be the first nail in their coffin", he would say, with a little
3 gleam of his white teeth. "and my death would run through the land
4 like wild fire."

5 His great heroine was the dreadful [?] Ranee of the Indian
6 mutiny, who led her troops in person. Most of the old mutineers, he
7 said, had become monks in order to hide themselves, and this
8 accounted very well for the dangerous quality of the monks'
9 opinions. There was one man of them who had lost four sons and
10 could speak of them with composure, but whenever he mentioned
11 the Ranee, he would weep, with tears streaming down his face.
12 "That woman was a goddess", he said, "a *devi*. When overcome,
13 she fell on her sword and died like a man." It was strange to hear
14 the other side of the Indian mutiny, when you would never believe
15 that there was another side to it, and to be assured that a Hindu
16 could not possibly kill a woman. . . .

17
18 XXXIII

19 RELIGION, CIVILISATION, AND MIRACLES

20 (*The Appeal-Avalanche*)

21 "I am a monk," he said, as he sat in the parlors of La Salette
22 Academy,¹⁹⁰ which is his home while in Memphis, "and not a priest.
23 When at home I travel from place to place, teaching the people of
24 the villages and towns through which I pass. I am dependent upon
25 them for my sustenance, as I am not allowed to touch money."

26 "I was born," he continued, in answer to a question, "in
27 Bengal and become a monk and a celibate from choice. At my birth
28 my father had a horoscope taken of my life, but would never tell me
29 what it was. Some years ago when I visited my home, my father
30 having died, I came across the chart among some papers in my
31 mother's possession and saw from it that I was destined to become
32 a wanderer on the face of the earth."

33 There was a touch of pathos in the speaker's voice and a
34 murmur of sympathy ran around the group of listeners. Kananda¹⁹¹
35 knocked the ashes from his cigar and was silent for a space.

36 Presently some one asked:

37 "If your religion is all that you claim it is, if it is the only true
38 faith, how is it that your people are not more advanced in
39 civilisation than we are? Why has it not elevated them among the
40 nations of the world?"

41 "Because that is not the sphere of any religion," replied the
42 Hindu gravely. "My people are the most moral in the world, or quite
43 as much as any other race. They are more considerate of their
44 fellow man's rights, and even those of dumb animals, but they are

1 ¹⁹⁰ ?On January 21, 1894.
2

3 ¹⁹¹ ?American reporters generally spelt his name as Vive Kananda in those
4 days.
5

1 not materialists. No religion has ever advanced the thought or
2 inspiration of a nation or people. In fact, no great achievement has
3 ever been attained in the history of the world that religion has not
4 retarded. Your boasted Christianity has not proven an exception in
5 this respect. Your Darwins, your Mills, your Humes, have never
6 received the endorsement of your prelates. Why, then, criticise my
7 religion on this account?"

8 "I would not give a fig for a faith that does not tend to elevate
9 mankind's lot on earth as well as his spiritual condition," said one of
10 the group, 'and therein I am not prepared to admit the correctness
11 of your statements. Christianity has founded colleges, hospitals and
12 raised the degenerate. It has elevated the downcast and helped its
13 followers to live."

14 "You are right there to a certain extent," replied the monk
15 calmly, "and yet it is not shown that these things are directly the
16 result of your Christianity. There are many causes operating in the
17 West to produce these results.

18 "Religious thought should be directed to developing man's
19 spiritual side. Science, art, learning and metaphysical research all
20 have their proper functions in life, but if you seek to blend them,
21 you destroy their individual characteristics until, in time, you
22 eliminate the spiritual, for instance, from the religious altogether.
23 You Americans worship what? The dollar. In the mad rush for gold,
24 you forget the spiritual until you have become a nation of
25 materialists. Even your preachers and churches are tainted with the
26 all-pervading desire. Show me one in the history of your people,
27 who has led the spiritual lives that those whom I can name at home
28 have done. Where are those who, when death comes, could say, 'O
29 Brother Death, I welcome thee.' Your religion helps you to build
30 Ferris wheels and Eiffel towers, but does it aid you in the
31 development of your inner lives?"

32 The monk spoke earnestly, and his voice, rich and well
33 modulated, came through the dusk that pervaded the apartment,
34 half-sadly, half-accusingly. There was something of the weird in the
35 comments of this stranger from a land whose history dates back
36 6,000 years upon the civilisation of the Nineteenth Century
37 America.

38 "But, in pursuing the spiritual, you lost sight of the demands
39 of the present," said some one. "Your doctrine does not help men to
40 live."

41 "It helps them to die," was the answer.

42 "We are sure of the present."

43 "You are sure of nothing."

44 "The aim of the ideal religion should be to help one to live
45 and to prepare one to die at the same time."

46 "Exactly," said the Hindu, quickly, "and it is that which we are
47 seeking to attain. I believe that the Hindu faith has developed the
48 spiritual in its devotees at the expense of the material, and I think
49 that in the Western world the contrary is true. By uniting the

1 materialism of the West with the spiritualism of the East I believe
2 much can be accomplished. It may be that in the attempt the Hindu
3 faith will lose much of its individuality."

4 "Would not the entire social system of India have to be
5 revolutionised to do what you hope to do?"

6 "Yet, probably, still the religion would remain unimpaired."

7 The conversation here turned upon the form of worship of
8 the Hindus, and Kananda gave some interesting information on this
9 subject. There are agnostics and atheists in India as well as
10 elsewhere. "Realisation" is the one thing essential in the lives of the
11 followers of Brahma. Faith is not necessary. Theosophy is a subject
12 with which Kananda is not versed, nor is it a part of his creed
13 unless he chooses to make it so. It is more of a separate study.
14 Kananda never met Mme. Blavatsky, but has met Col. Olcott of the
15 American Theosophical Society. He is also acquainted with Annie
16 Besant. Speaking of the "fakirs" of India, the famous jugglers or
17 musicians [magicians?], whose feats have made for them a world-
18 wide reputation, Kananda told of a few episodes that had come
19 within his observation and which almost surpass belief.

20 "Five months ago," he said, when questioned on this subject,
21 "or just one month before I left India to come to this country, I
22 happened in company in a caravan or party of 25 to sojourn for a
23 space in a city in the interior. While there we learned of the
24 marvellous work of one of these itinerant magicians and had him
25 brought before us. He told us he would produce for us any article
26 we desired. We stripped him, at his request, until he was quite
27 naked and placed him in the corner of the room. I threw my
28 travelling blanket about him and then we called upon him to do as
29 he had promised. He asked what we should like, and I asked for a
30 bunch of California [?] grapes, and straightway the fellow brought
31 them forth from under his blanket. Oranges and other fruits were
32 produced, and finally great dishes of steaming rice."

33 Continuing, the monk said he believed in the existence of a
34 "sixth sense" and in telepathy. He offered no explanation of the
35 feats of the fakirs, merely saying that they were very wonderful.
36 The subject of idols came up and the monk said that idols formed a
37 part of his religion insomuch as the symbol is concerned.

38 "What do you worship?" said the monk, "What is your idea of
39 God?"

40 "The spirit," said a lady quietly.

41 "What is the spirit? Do you Protestants worship the words of
42 the Bible or something beyond? We worship the God through the
43 idol."

44 "That is, you attain the subjective through the objective,"
45 said a gentleman who had listened attentively to the words of the
46 stranger.

47 "Yes, that is it," said the monk, gratefully.

48 Vive Kananda discussed further in the same strain until the
49 call terminated as the hour for the Hindu's lecture approached.

RELIGIOUS HARMONY

(*The Detroit Free Press*, February 14, 1894)

Swami is a person of medium stature, with the dusky complexion common with people of his nationality, gentle in manner, deliberate in movement, and extremely courteous in every word, movement, and gesture. But the most striking feature of his personality are his eyes, which are of great brilliancy. The conversation naturally drifted upon the subject of religion, when Swami said among many other striking remarks:

"I make the distinction between religion and creed. Religion is the acceptance of all existing creeds, seeing in them the same striving towards the same destination. Creed is something antagonistic and combative. There are different creeds, because there are different people, and the creed is adapted to the commonwealth where it furnishes what people want. As the world is made up of infinite variety of persons of different natures, intellectually, spiritually, and materially, so these people take to themselves that form of belief in the existence of a great and good moral law, which is best fitted for them. Religion recognizes and is glad of the existence of all these forms because of the beautiful underlying principle.

The same goal is reached by different routes and my way would not be suited perhaps to the temperament of my Western neighbour, the same that his route would not commend itself to my disposition and philosophical way of thinking. I belong to the Hindu religion. That is not the Buddhists' creed, one of the sects of the Hindu religion. We never indulge in missionary work. We do not seek to thrust the principles of our religion upon anyone. The fundamental principles of our religion forbid that. Nor do we say anything against any missionaries whom you send from this country anywhere. For all of us they are entirely welcome to penetrate the innermost recesses of the earth. Many come to us, but we do not struggle for them; we have no missionaries striving to bring anyone to our way of thinking. With no effort from us many forms of the Hindu religion are spreading far and wide, and these manifestations have taken the form of Christian science, theosophy, and Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia*. Our religion is older than most religions and the Christian creed--I do not call it religion, because of its antagonistic features--came directly from the Hindu religion. It is one of the great offshoots. The Catholic religion also takes all its forms from us--the confessional, the belief in saints and so on--and a Catholic priest who saw this absolute similarity and recognised the truth of the origin of the Catholic religion was dethroned from his position because he dared to publish a volume explaining all that he observed and was convinced of."

"You recognise agnostics in your religion?" was asked.

"Oh, yes; philosophical agnostics and what you call infidels. When Buddha, who is with us a saint, was asked by one of his

1 followers: 'Does God exist?' He replied: 'God. When have I spoken
2 to you about God? This I tell you, be good and do good.' The
3 philosophical agnostics--there are many of us--believe in the great
4 moral law underlying everything in nature and in the ultimate
5 perfection. All the creeds which are accepted by all people are but
6 the endeavours of humanity to realise that infinity of Self which lies
7 in the great future."

8 "Is it beneath the dignity of your religion to resort to
9 missionary effort?"

10 For reply the visitor from the Orient turned to a little volume
11 and referred to an edict among other remarkable edicts.

12 "This," he said, "was written 200 B.C., and will be the best
13 answer I can give you on that question."

14 In delightfully clear, well modulated tones, he read:

15 "The King Piyadasi, beloved of the gods, honours all sects,
16 both ascetics and householders; he propitiates them by alms and
17 other gifts, but he attaches less importance to gifts and honours
18 than to endeavour to promote the essential moral virtues. It is true
19 the prevalence of essential virtues differs in different sects, but
20 there is a common basis. That is, gentleness, moderation in
21 language and morality. Thus one should not exalt one's own sect
22 and decry others, but tender them on every occasion the honour
23 they deserve. Striving thus, one promotes the welfare of his own
24 sect, while serving the others. Striving otherwise, one does not
25 serve his own sect, while disserving others; and whosoever, from
26 attachment to his own sect and with a view to promoting it, decries
27 others, only deals rude blows to his own sect. Hence concord alone
28 is meritorious, so that all bear and love to bear the beliefs of each
29 other. It is with this purpose that this edict has been inscribed; that
30 all people, whatever their fate may be, should be encouraged to
31 promote the essential moral doctrines in each and mutual respects
32 for all other sects. It is with this object that the ministers of
33 religion, the inspectors and other bodies of officers should all
34 work."

35 After reading this impressive passage Swami Vive Kananda
36 remarked that the same wise king who had caused this edict to be
37 inscribed had forbidden the indulgence of war, as its horrors were
38 antagonistic to all the principles of the great and universal moral
39 doctrine. "For this reason," remarked the visitor, "India has suffered
40 in its material aspect. Where brute strength and bloodshed has
41 advanced other nations, India has deprecated such brutal
42 manifestations; and by the law of the survival of the fittest, which
43 applies to nations as well as to individuals, it has fallen behind as a
44 power on the earth in the material sense."

45 "But will it not be an impossibility to find in the great
46 combative Western countries, where such tremendous energy is
47 needed to develop the pressing practical necessities of the
48 nineteenth century, this spirit which prevails in placid India?"

49 The brilliant eyes flashed, and a smile crossed the features of
50 the Eastern brother.

1 "May not one combine the energy of the lion with the
2 gentleness of the lamb?" he asked.

3 Continuing, he intimated that perhaps the future holds the
4 conjunction of the East and the West, a combination which would be
5 productive of marvellous results. A condition which speaks well for
6 the natures of the Western nation is the reverence in which women
7 are held and the gentle consideration with which they are treated.

8 He says with the dying Buddha, "Work out your own
9 salvation. I cannot help you. No man can help you. Help yourself."
10 Harmony and peace, and not dissension, is his watchword.

11 The following story is one which he related recently
12 regarding the practice of fault-finding among creeds:

13 "A frog lived in a well. It had lived there for a long time. It
14 was born there and brought up there, and yet was a little, small
15 frog. Of course the evolutionists were not there to tell us whether
16 the frog lost its eyes or not, but, for our story's sake, we must take
17 it for granted that it had eyes, and that it every day cleansed the
18 waters of all the worms and bacilli that lived in it, with an energy
19 that would give credit to our modern bacteriologists. In this way it
20 went on and became a little sleek and fat--perhaps as much so as
21 myself. Well, one day another frog that lived in the sea, came and
22 fell into the well.

23 "'Whence are you from?'

24 "'I am from the sea.'

25 "'The sea? How big is that? Is it as big as my well?' and he
26 took a leap from one side of the well to the other.

27 "'My friend,' says the frog of the sea, 'how do you compare
28 the sea with your little well?'

29 "'Then the frog took another leap and asked; 'Is your sea so
30 big?'

31 "'What nonsense you speak to compare the sea with your
32 well.'

33 "'Well, then,' said the frog of the well, 'nothing can be bigger
34 than my well; there can be nothing bigger than this; this fellow is a
35 liar, so turn him out.'

36 "That has been the difficulty all the while.

37 "I am a Hindu. I am sitting in my own little well, and thinking
38 that the world is my well. The Christian sits in his little well and the
39 whole world is his well. The Mohammedan sits in his well and
40 thinks the whole world that. I have to thank you of America for the
41 great attempt you are making to break down the barriers of this
42 little world of ours, and hope that, in the future, the Lord will help
43 you to accomplish that purpose."

FALLEN WOMEN

(*The Detroit Tribune*, March 17, 1894)

"Lalun is a member of the most ancient profession in the world. Lilith was her very great-grandmamma, and that was before the days of Eve, as everyone knows. In the West people say rude things about Lalun's profession and write lectures about it, and distribute the lectures to young persons in order that morality may be preserved. In the East, where the profession is hereditary, descending from mother to daughter, nobody writes lectures or takes any notice."--RUDYARD KIPLING.

The story of which the sentences that precede this one are a paragraph, was written in India. They were written by Rudyard Kipling, from whom most of us have learned all that we definitely know about India, with the exception of the fact that India raises wheat enough to be a great competitor of our own farmers, that men work there for two cents a day and that women throw their babies into the Ganga, which is the sacred river of the country.

But Vive Kananda, since he came to this country, has exploded the story about the women of India feeding their babies to the alligators, and now he says that he never heard of Rudyard Kipling until he came to America, and that it is not proper in India to talk of such a profession as that of Lalun, out of which Mr. Kipling has made one of his most delightful and instructive tales.

"In India," said Kananda yesterday, "we do not discuss such things. No one ever speaks of those unfortunate women. When a woman is discovered to be unchaste in India, she is hurled out from her caste. No one thereafter can touch or speak to her. If she went into the house, they would take up and clean the carpets and wash the walls she breathed against. No one can have anything to do with such a person. There are no women who are not virtuous in Indian society. It is not at all as it is in this country. Here there are bad women living side by side with virtuous women in your society. One cannot know who is bad and who is good in America. But in India once a woman slips, she is an outcast for ever--she and her children, sons and daughters. It is terrible, I admit, but it keeps society pure."

"How about the men?" was asked. "Does the same rule hold in regard to them? Are they outcast when they are proven to be unchaste?"

"Oh, no. It is quite different with them. It would be so, perhaps, if they could be found out. But the men move about. They can go from place to place. It is not possible to discover them. The women are shut up in the house. They are certainly discovered if they do anything wrong. And when they are discovered, they are thrown out. Nothing can save them. Sometimes it is very hard when a father has to give up his daughter or a husband his wife. But if they do not give them up, they will be banished with them too. It is very different in this country. Women cannot go about there and make associations as they do here. It is very terrible, but it makes society pure."

1 "I think that unchastity is the one great sin of your country. It
2 must be so, there is so much luxury here. A poor girl would sell
3 herself for a new bonnet. It must be so where there is so much
4 luxury."

5 Mr. Kipling says this about Lalun and her profession:

6 "Lalun's real husband, for even ladies of Lalun's profession
7 have husbands in the East, was a great, big jujube tree. Her mama,
8 who had married a fig, spent ten thousand rupees on Lalun's
9 wedding, which was blessed by forty-seven clergymen of mama's
10 church, and distributed 5,000 rupees in charity to the poor. And
11 that was a custom of the land."

12 In India when a woman is unfaithful to her husband she loses
13 her caste, but none of her civil or religious rights. She can still own
14 property and the temples are still open to her.

15 "Yes," said Kananda, "a bad woman is not allowed to marry.
16 She cannot marry any one without their being an outcast like
17 herself, so she marries a tree, or sometimes a sword. It is the
18 custom. Sometimes these women grow very rich and become very
19 charitable, but they can never regain their caste. In the interior
20 towns, where they still adhere to the old customs, she cannot ride
21 in a carriage, no matter how wealthy she may be; the best that she
22 is allowed is a pair of bullocks. And then in India she has to wear a
23 dress of her own, so that she can be distinguished. You can see
24 these people going by, but no one ever speaks to them. The greatest
25 number of these women is in the cities. A good many of them are
26 Jews too, but they all have different quarters of the cities, you know.
27 They all live apart. It is a singular thing that, bad as they are,
28 wretched as some of these women are, they will not admit a
29 Christian lover. They will not eat with them or touch them--the
30 'omnivorous barbarians', as they call them. They call them that
31 because they eat everything. Do you know what that disease, the
32 unspeakable disease, is called in India? It is called 'Bad Faringan',
33 which means 'the Christian disease'. It was the Christian that
34 brought it into India.

35 "Has there been any attempt in India to solve this question?
36 Is it a public question the way it is in America?"

37 "No, there has been very little done in India. There is a great
38 field for women missionaries if they would convert prostitutes in
39 India. They do nothing in India--very little. There is one sect, the
40 Veshnava [Vaishnava], who try to reclaim these women. This is a
41 religious sect. I think about 90 per cent [?] of all prostitutes belong
42 to this sect. This sect does not believe in caste and they go
43 everywhere without reference to caste. There are certain temples,
44 as the temple of Jagatnot [Jagannath], where there is no caste.
45 Everybody who goes into that town takes off his caste while he is
46 there, because that is holy ground and everything is supposed to be
47 pure there. When he goes outside, he resumes it again, for caste is
48 a mere worldly thing. You know some of the castes are so particular
49 that they will not eat any food unless it is prepared by themselves.
50 They will not touch any one outside their caste. But in the city they
51 all live together. This is the only sect in India that makes proselytes.

1 It makes everybody a member of its church. It goes into the
2 Himalayas and converts the wild men. You perhaps did not know
3 that there were wild men in India. Yes, there are. They dwell at the
4 foot of the Himalayas."

5 "Is there any ceremony by which a woman is declared
6 unchaste, a civil process?" Kananda was asked.

7 "No, it is not a civil process. It is just custom. Sometimes
8 there is a formal ceremony and sometimes there is not. They simply
9 make pariahs out of them. When any woman is suspected
10 sometimes they get together and give her a sort of trial, and if it is
11 decided that she is guilty, then a note is sent around to all the other
12 members of the caste, and she is banished.

13 "Mind you," he exclaimed, "I do not mean to say that this
14 is a solution of the question. The custom is terribly rigid. But you
15 have no solution of the question, either. It is a terrible thing. It is a
16 great wrong of the Western world."

MEMOIRS OF EUROPEAN TRAVEL

Om Namo Narayanaya,¹⁹² Swami.--Pronounce the last syllable of the second word in a high pitch, brother, in the Hrishikesh fashion. For seven days we have been on board the ship and every day I think of writing to you something about our mode of life, and of writing materials also you have given me enough, but the characteristic lethargy of a Bengali stands in the way and foils everything. In the first place, there is idleness; every day I think of writing--what do you call it--a diary, but then, on account of various preoccupations, it is postponed to the endless "tomorrow", and does not progress an inch. In the second place, I do not remember the dates etc., at all; you must do me the favour to fill these up yourselves. And, besides, if you be very generous, you may think that like the great devotee, Hanuman, it is impossible for me to remember dates and such other trivialities--owing to the presence of the Lord in the heart. But the real truth is that it is due to my foolishness and idleness. What nonsense! What comparison can there be between "the Solar Dynasty"¹⁹³--I beg your pardon--between Hanuman with his whole heart given to Shri Rama, the crown of the Solar Dynasty, and me, the lowest of the low! But then he crossed at one bound the ocean extending a hundred Yojanas, while we are crossing it confined within a wooden house, so to say, being pitched this side and that and somehow keeping ourselves on our feet with the help of posts and pillars. But there is one point of superiority on our side in that he had the blessed sight of Rakshasas and Rakshasis after reaching Lanka, whereas we are going in company with them. At dinner time that glittering of a hundred knives and the clattering of a hundred forks frightened brother T__¹⁹⁴ out of his wits. He now and then started lest his neighbour with auburn hair and grey, cat-like eyes, through inadvertence might plunge her knife into his flesh, and the more so, as he is rather sleek and fat. I say, did Hanuman have sea-sickness while crossing the sea? Do the ancient books say anything on that? You are all well-read men, proficient in the Ramayana and other scriptures, so you may settle that question. But our modern authorities are silent on that point. Perhaps he had not; but then the fact of his having entered into the jaws of somebody raises a doubt. Brother T__ is also of opinion that when the prow of the ship suddenly heaves up towards heaven as if to consult with the king of gods, and immediately after plunges to the bottom of the ocean as if

¹⁹² ?"Salutation to the Lord"; the usual form of addressing a Sannyasin. These memoirs of his second journey to the West were addressed to Swami Trigunatitananda, Editor, *Udbodhan* and hence this form of address.

¹⁹³ ?Swamiji here refers to Kalidasa's famous line of the *Raghuvamsham* : "O the difference between the majestic Solar Dynasty and my poor intellect!"

¹⁹⁴ ?Turiyananda.

1 to pierce king Vali, residing in the nether worlds--he at that time
2 feels that he is being swallowed by the terrible and wide-gaping
3 jaws of somebody.

4 I beg your pardon, you have entrusted your work to a nice
5 man! I owe you a description of the sea-voyage for seven days
6 which will be full of poetry and interest, and be written in a
7 polished, rhetorical style, but instead of that I am talking at
8 random. But the fact is, having striven all my life to eat the kernel
9 of Brahman, after throwing away the shell of Maya, how shall I now
10 get the power of appreciating nature's beauties all of a sudden? All
11 my life I have been on the move all over India, "from Varanasi to
12 Kashmir, and thence to Khorasan, and Gujarat".¹⁹⁵ How many hills
13 and rivers, mountains and springs, and valleys and dales, how many
14 cloud-belted peaks covered in perpetual snow, and oceans
15 tempestuous, roaring and foamy, have I not seen, and heard of, and
16 crossed! But sitting on a shabby wooden bedstead in a dark room of
17 the ground floor, requiring a lamp to be lighted in the day-time, with
18 the walls variegated by the stain of chewed betel leaves and made
19 noisy by the squeaking and tickling of rats and moles and lizards, by
20 the side of the main street resounding with the rattle of hackneys
21 and tram-cars and darkened by clouds of dust--in such poetic
22 environment, the pictures of the Himalayas, oceans, meadows,
23 deserts, etc., that poet Shyamacharan, puffing at the all too familiar
24 hookah, has drawn with such lifelike precision, to the glory of the
25 Bengalis--it is vain for us to try to imitate them! Shyamacharan in
26 his boyhood went for a change to the up-country, where the water is
27 so stimulating to the digestive functions that if you drink a
28 tumblerful of it even after a very heavy meal, every bit of it will be
29 digested and you will feel hungry again. Here it was that
30 Shyamacharan's intuitive genius caught a glimpse of the sublime
31 and beautiful aspects of nature. But there is one fly in the pot--they
32 say that Shyamacharan's peregrinations extended as far as
33 Burdwan (in Bengal) and no further!

34 But at your earnest request and also to prove that I am not
35 wholly devoid of the poetic instinct either, I set myself to the task
36 with God's name, and you, too, be all attention.

37 No ship generally leaves the port in the night--specially from
38 a commercial port like Calcutta and in a river like the Hooghly or
39 Ganga. Until the ship reaches the sea, it is in the charge of the
40 pilot, who acts as the Captain, and he gives the command. His duty
41 ends in either piloting the ship down to the sea or, if it be an
42 incoming ship, from the mouth of the sea to the port. We have got
43 two great dangers towards the mouth of the Hooghly--first, the
44 James and Mary Banks near Budge-Budge, and second, the
45 sandbank near the entrance to Diamond Harbour. Only in the high
46 tide and during the day, the pilot can very carefully steer his ship,
47 and in no other condition; consequently it took us two days to get
48 out of the Hooghly.

49 Do you remember the Ganga at Hrishikesh? That clear bluish

195 ?Tulsidas.

water--in which one can count the fins of fishes five yards below the surface--that wonderfully sweet, ice-cold "charming water of the Ganga",¹⁹⁶ and that wonderful sound of "Hara, Hara" of the running water, and the echo of "Hara, Hara" from the neighbouring mountain-falls? Do you remember that life in the forest, the begging of Madhukari¹⁹⁷ alms, eating on small islands of rock in the bed of the Ganga, hearty drinking of that water with the palms, and the fearless wandering of fishes all round for crumbs of bread? You remember that love for Ganga water, that glory of the Ganga, the touch of its water that makes the mind dispassionate, that Ganga flowing over the Himalayas, through Srinagar, Tehri, Uttarkasi, and Gangotri--some of you have seen even the source of the Ganga! But there is a certain unforgettable fascination in our Ganga of Calcutta, muddy, and whitish--as if from contact with Shiva's body--and bearing a large number of ships on her bosom. Is it merely patriotism or the impressions of childhood?--Who knows? What wonderful relation is this between mother Ganga and the Hindus? Is it merely superstition? May be. They spend their lives with the name of Ganga on their lips, they die immersed in the waters of the Ganga, men from far off places take away Ganga water with them, keep it carefully in copper vessels, and sip drops of it on holy festive occasions. Kings and princes keep it in jars, and at considerable expense take the water from Gangotri to pour it on the head of Shiva at Rameshwaram! The Hindus visit foreign countries--Rangoon, Java, Hongkong, Madagascar, Suez, Aden, Malta--and they take with them Ganga water and the Gita.

The Gita and the sacred waters of the Ganga constitute the Hinduism of the Hindus. Last time I went to the West, I also took a little of it with me, fearing it might be needed, and whenever opportunities occurred I used to drink a few drops of it. And every time I drank, in the midst of the stream of humanity, amid that bustle of civilisation, that hurry of frenzied footsteps of millions of men and women in the West, the mind at once became calm and still, as it were. That stream of men, that intense activity of the West, that clash and competition at every step, those seats of luxury and celestial opulence--Paris, London, New York, Berlin, Rome--all would disappear and I used to hear that wonderful sound of "Hara, Hara", to see that lonely forest on the sides of the Himalayas, and feel the murmuring heavenly river coursing through the heart and brain and every artery of the body and thundering forth, "Hara, Hara, Hara!"

This time you, too, I see, have sent Mother Ganga, for Madras. But, dear brother, what a strange vessel have you put Mother in! Brother T__ is a Brahmacharin from his boyhood, and looks "like burning fire through the force of his spirituality".¹⁹⁸ Formerly as a Brahmana he used to be saluted as "Namo

¹⁹⁶ ?From Valmiki's hymn.

¹⁹⁷ ?Meaning, collected from door to door, in small bits.

¹⁹⁸ ?Kalidasa's *Kumarasambhavam*.

1 Brahmane", and now it is--oh, the sublimity of it!--"Namo
2 Narayanaya", as he is a Sannyasin. And it is perhaps due to that,
3 that Mother, in his custody, has left her seat in the Kamandalu of
4 Brahma, and been forced to enter a jar! Anyhow, getting up from
5 bed late at night I found that Mother evidently could not bear
6 staying in that awkward vessel and was trying to force her passage
7 out of it. I thought it most dangerous, for if Mother chose to re-
8 enact here those previous scenes of her life, such as piercing the
9 Himalayas, washing away the great elephant Airavata, and pulling
10 down the hut of the sage Jahnu, then it would be a terrible affair. I
11 offered many prayers to Mother and said to her in various
12 supplicatory phrases, "Mother, do wait a little, let us reach Madras
13 tomorrow, and there you can do whatever you like. There are many
14 there more thick-skulled than elephants--most of them with huts
15 like that of Jahnu--while those half-shaven, shining heads with
16 ample hair-tufts are almost made of stone, compared to which even
17 the Himalayas would be soft as butter! You may break them as
18 much as you like; now pray wait a little." But all my supplications
19 were in vain. Mother would not listen to them. Then I hit upon a
20 plan, and said to her, "Mother, look at those turbaned servants with
21 jackets on, moving to and fro on the ship, they are Mohammedans,
22 real, beef-eating Mohammedans, and those whom you find moving
23 about sweeping and cleaning the rooms etc., are real scavengers,
24 disciples of Lal Beg; and if you do not hear me, I will call them and
25 ask them to touch you! Even if that is not sufficient to quiet you, I
26 will just send you to your father's home; you see that room there, if
27 you are shut in there, you will get back to your primitive condition
28 in the Himalayas, when all your restlessness will be silenced, and
29 you shall remain frozen into a block of ice." That silenced her. So it
30 is everywhere, not only in the case of gods, but among men also--
31 whenever they get a devotee, they take an undue advantage over
32 him.

33 See, how I have again strayed from my subject and am
34 talking at random. I have already told you at the outset that those
35 things are not in my line, but if you bear with me, I shall try again.

36 There is a certain beauty in one's own people which is not to
37 be found anywhere else. Even the denizens of Paradise cannot
38 compare in point of beauty with our brothers and sisters, or sons
39 and daughters, however uncouth they may be. But, if, even roaming
40 over Paradise and seeing the people there, you find your own
41 people coming out really beautiful, then there is no bound to your
42 delight. There is also a special beauty in our Bengal, covered with
43 endless verdant stretches of grass, and bearing as garlands a
44 thousand rivers and streams. A little of this beauty one finds in
45 Malabar, and also in Kashmir. Is there not beauty in water? When
46 there is water everywhere, and heavy showers of rain are running
47 down arum leaves, while clumps of cocoanut and date palms
48 slightly bend their heads under that downpour, and there is the
49 continuous croaking of frogs all round--is there no beauty in such a
50 scene as this? And one cannot appreciate the beauty of the banks of
51 our Ganga, unless one is returning from foreign countries and
52 entering the river by its mouth at Diamond Harbour. That blue, blue

1 sky, containing in its bosom black clouds, with golden-fringed
2 whitish clouds below them, underneath which clumps of cocoanut
3 and date palms toss their tufted heads like a thousand chowries,
4 and below them again is an assemblage of light, deep, yellowish,
5 slightly dark, and other varieties of green massed together--these
6 being the mango, lichi, blackberry, and jack-fruit trees, with an
7 exuberance of leaves and foliage that entirely hide the trunk,
8 branches, and twigs--while, close by, clusters of bamboos toss in the
9 wind, and at the foot of all lies that grass, before whose soft and
10 glossy surface the carpets of Yarkand, Persia, and Turkistan are
11 almost as nothing--as far as the eye can reach that green, green
12 grass looking as even as if some one had trimmed and pruned it,
13 and stretching right down to the edge of the river--as far down the
14 banks as where the gentle waves of the Ganga have submerged and
15 are pushing playfully against, the land is framed with green grass,
16 and just below this is the sacred water of the Ganga. And if you
17 sweep your eye from the horizon right up to the zenith, you will
18 notice within a single line such a play of diverse colours, such
19 manifold shades of the same colour, as you have witnessed nowhere
20 else. I say, have you ever come under the fascination of colours--the
21 sort of fascination which impels the moths to die in the flame, and
22 the bees to starve themselves to death in the prison of flowers? I
23 tell you one thing--if you want to enjoy the beauty of Gangetic
24 scenery, enjoy it to your heart's content now, for very soon the
25 whole aspect will be altered. In the hands of money-grabbing
26 merchants, everything will disappear. In place of that green grass,
27 brick kilns will be reared and burrow-pits for the brickfields will be
28 sunk. Where, now, the tiny wavelets of the Ganga are playing with
29 the grass, there will be moored the jute-laden flats and those cargo-
30 boats; and those variegated colours of cocoanuts and palms, of
31 mangoes and lichis, that blue sky, the beauty of the clouds--these
32 you will altogether miss hereafter; and you will find instead the
33 enveloping smoke of coal, and standing ghostlike in the midst of
34 that smoke, the half-distinct chimneys of the factories!

35 Now our ship has reached the sea. The description, which
36 you read in Kalidasa's *Raghuvamsham* of the shores "of the sea
37 appearing blue with forests of palm and other trees" and "looking
38 like a slender rim of rust on the tyre of an iron wheel" etc.--is not at
39 all accurate and faithful. With all my respects for the great poet, it
40 is my belief that he never in his life saw either the ocean or the
41 Himalayas.¹⁹⁹

42 Here there is a blending of white and black waters,
43 somewhat resembling the confluence of the Ganga and Jamuna at
44 Allahabad. Though Mukti (liberation) may be rare in most places, it
45 is sure at "Hardwar, Allahabad, and the mouth of the Ganga". But
46 they say that this is not the real mouth of the river. However, let me
47 salute the Lord here, for "He has His eyes, and head and face
48 everywhere".²⁰⁰

1 ¹⁹⁹ ?Swamiji afterwards changed his opinion with regard to the last part, i.e.,
2 Kalidasa's acquaintance with the Himalayas.

3 ²⁰⁰ ?Gita, XIII, 13.
4

1 How beautiful! As far as the eye reaches, the deep blue
2 waters of the sea are rising into foamy waves and dancing
3 rhythmically to the winds. Behind us lie the sacred waters of the
4 Ganga, whitened with the ashes of Shiva's body, as we read in the
5 description, "Shiva's matted locks whitened by the foam of the
6 Ganga".²⁰¹ The water of the Ganga is comparatively still. In front of
7 us lies the parting line between the waters. There ends the white
8 water. Now begin the blue waters of the ocean--before, behind and
9 all round there is only blue, blue water everywhere, breaking
10 incessantly into waves. The sea has blue hair, his body is of a blue
11 complexion, and his garment is also blue. We read in the Puranas
12 that millions of Asuras hid themselves under the ocean through fear
13 of the gods. Today their opportunity has come, today Neptune is
14 their ally, and Aeolus is at their back. With hideous roars and
15 thundering shouts they are today dancing a terrible war-dance on
16 the surface of the ocean, and the foamy waves are their grim
17 laughter! In the midst of this tumult is our ship, and on board the
18 ship, pacing the deck with lordly steps, are men and women of that
19 nation which rules the sea-girt world, dressed in charming attire,
20 with a complexion like the moonbeams--looking like self-reliance
21 and self-confidence personified, and appearing to the black races as
22 pictures of pride and haughtiness. Overhead, the thunder of the
23 cloudy monsoon sky, on all sides the dance and roar of foam-crested
24 waves, and the din of the powerful engines of our ship setting at
25 naught the might of the sea--it was a grand conglomeration of
26 sounds, to which I was listening, lost in wonder, as if in a half-
27 waking state, when, all of a sudden, drowning all these sounds,
28 there fell upon my ears the deep and sonorous music of
29 commingled male and female voices singing in chorus the national
30 anthem, "Rule Britannia, Britannia rules the waves!" Startled, I
31 looked around and found that the ship was rolling heavily, and
32 brother T__, holding his head with his hands was struggling against
33 an attack of sea-sickness.

34 In the second class are two Bengali youths going to the West
35 for study, whose condition is worse. One of them looks so frightened
36 that he would be only too glad to scuttle straight home if he were
37 allowed to land. These two lads and we two are the only Indians on
38 the ship--the representatives of modern India. During the two days
39 the ship was in the Ganga, brother T__, under the secret
40 instructions of the Editor, *Udbodhan*, used to urge me very much to
41 finish my article on "Modern India" quickly. I too found an
42 opportunity today and asked him, "Brother, what do you think is the
43 condition of modern India?" And he, casting a look towards the
44 second class and another at himself, said, with a sigh, "Very sad,
45 getting very much muddled up!"

46 The reason why so much importance is attached to the
47 Hooghly branch of the Ganga, instead of the bigger one, Padma, is,
48 according to many, that the Hooghly was the primary and principal
49 course of the river, and latterly the river shifted its course, and

1
2 ²⁰¹ ?Shankaracharya's hymn.
3

1 created an outlet by the Padma. Similarly the present "Tolley's
2 Nullah" represents the ancient course of the Ganga, and is known
3 as the Adi-Ganga. The sailing merchant, the hero of Kavikankan's
4 work, makes his voyage to Ceylon along that channel. Formerly the
5 Ganga was navigable for big ships up to Triveni. The ancient port of
6 Saptagram was situated a little distance off Triveni ghat, on the
7 river Saraswati. From very ancient times Saptagram was the
8 principal port for Bengal's foreign trade. Gradually the mouth of the
9 Saraswati got silted up. In the year 1539 it silted up so much that
10 the Portuguese settlers had to take up a site further down the
11 Ganga, for their ships to come up. The site afterwards developed
12 into the famous town of Hooghly. From the commencement of the
13 sixteenth century both Indian and foreign merchants were feeling
14 much anxiety about the silting up of the Ganga. But what of that?
15 Human engineering skill has hitherto proved ineffectual against the
16 gradual silting up of the river-bed which continues to the present
17 day. In 1666 a French Missionary writes that the Ganga near Suti
18 got completely silted up at the time. Holwell, of Black-Hole fame, on
19 his way to Murshidabad was compelled to resort to small country-
20 boats on account of the shallowness of the river at Santipur. In
21 1797 Captain Colebrook writes that country-boats could not ply in
22 the Hooghly and the Jalangi during summer. During the years 1822-
23 1884, the Hooghly was closed to all boat-traffic. For twenty-four
24 years within this period the water was only two or three feet deep.
25 In the seventeenth century, the Dutch planted a trade settlement at
26 Chinsura, one mile below Hooghly. The French, who came still later,
27 established their settlement at Chandernagore, still further down
28 the river. In 1723 the German Ostend Company opened a factory at
29 Bankipore, five miles below Chandernagore on the other side of the
30 river. In 1616 the Danes had started a factory at Serampore, eight
31 miles below Chandernagore, and then the English established the
32 city of Calcutta still further down the river. None of the above
33 places are now accessible to ships, only Calcutta being open now.
34 But everybody is afraid of its future.

35 There is one curious reason why there remains so much
36 water in the Ganga up to about Santipur even during summer.
37 When the flow of the surface water has ceased, large quantities of
38 water percolating through the subsoil find their way into the river.
39 The bed of the Ganga is even now considerably below the level of
40 the land on either side. If the level of the river-bed should gradually
41 rise owing to the subsidence of fresh soil, then the trouble will
42 begin. And there is talk about another danger. Even near Calcutta,
43 through earthquakes or other causes, the river at times dried up so
44 much that one could wade across. It is said that in 1770 such a
45 state of things happened. There is another report that on Thursday,
46 the 9th October, 1734, during ebb-tide in the noon, the river dried
47 up completely. Had it happened a little later, during the
48 inauspicious last portion of the day, I leave it to you to infer the
49 result. Perhaps then the river would not have returned to its bed
50 again.

1 So far, then, as regards the upper portion of the Hooghly;
2 now as regards the portion below Calcutta. The great dangers to be
3 faced in this portion are the James and Mary Banks. Formerly the
4 river Damodar had its confluence with the Ganga thirty miles above
5 Calcutta, but now, through the curious transformations of time, the
6 confluence is over thirty-one miles to the south of it. Some six miles
7 below this point the Rupnarayan pours its waters into the Ganga.
8 The fact is there, that these two feeders rush themselves into the
9 Ganga in happy combination--but how shall this huge quantity of
10 mud be disposed of? Consequently big sandbanks are formed in the
11 bed of the river, which constantly shift their position and are
12 sometimes rather loose and sometimes a compact mass, causing no
13 end of fear. Day and night soundings of the river's depth are being
14 taken, the omission of which for a few days, through carelessness,
15 would mean the destruction of ships. No sooner will a ship strike
16 against them than it will either capsize or be straightway swallowed
17 up in them! Cases are even recorded that within half an hour of a
18 big three-masted ship striking one of these sandbanks, the whole of
19 it disappeared in the sand, leaving only the top of the masts visible.
20 These sandbanks may rightly be considered as the mouth of the
21 Damodar-Rupnarayan.²⁰² The Damodar is not now satisfied with
22 Santhal villages, and is swallowing ships and steamers etc. as a
23 sauce by way of variety. In 1877 a ship named "County of Sterling",
24 with a cargo of 1,444 tons of wheat from Calcutta, had no sooner
25 struck one of these terrible sandbanks than within eight minutes
26 there was no trace left of it. In 1874 a steamer carrying a load of
27 2,400 tons suffered the same fate in two minutes. Blessed be thy
28 mouth, O Mother Ganga! I salute thee for allowing us to get off
29 scot-free. Brother T__ says, "Sir, a goat ought to be offered to the
30 Mother for her benignity." I replied, "Exactly so, brother, but why
31 offer only one day, instead of everyday!" Next day brother T__
32 readverted to the topic, but I kept silent. The next day after that I
33 pointed out to him at dinner-time to what an extent the offering of
34 goats was progressing. Brother seemed rather puzzled and said,
35 "What do you mean? It is only you who are eating." Then at
36 considerable pains I had to explain to him how it was said that a
37 youth of Calcutta once visited his father-in-law's place in a remote
38 village far from the Ganga. There at dinner-time he found people
39 waiting about with drums etc., and his mother-in-law insisted on his
40 taking a little milk before sitting to dinner. The son-in-law
41 considered it might perhaps be a local custom which he had better
42 obey; but no sooner had he taken a sip of the milk than the drums
43 began to play all around and his mother-in-law, with tears of joy,
44 placed her hand on his head and blessed him, saying, "My son, you
45 have really discharged the duties of a son today; look here, you
46 have in your stomach the water of the Ganga, as you live on its
47 banks, and in the milk there was the powdered bone of your
48 deceased father-in-law; so by this act of yours his bones have
49 reached the Ganga and his spirit has obtained all the merits

1 ²⁰² ?There is a pun on the words Damodar-Rupnarayan which not only imply the
2 two rivers, but also mean "Narayana as Damodara, or swallowing everything
3 (Damodara-rupa-Narayana)."
4

1 thereof." So here was a man from Calcutta, and on board the ship
2 there was plenty of meat preparations and every time one ate them,
3 meat was being offered to mother Ganga. So he need not be at all
4 anxious on the subject. Brother T__ is of such a grave disposition
5 that it was difficult to discover what impression the lecture made on
6 him.

7 What a wonderful thing a ship is! The sea, which from the
8 shore looks so fearful, in the heart of which the sky seems to bend
9 down and meet, from whose bosom the sun slowly rises and in
10 which it sinks again, and the least frown of which makes the heart
11 quail--that sea has been turned into a highway, the cheapest of all
12 routes, by ships. Who invented the ship? No one in particular. That
13 is to say, like all machinery indispensable to men--without which
14 they cannot do for a single moment, and by the combination and
15 adjustment of which all kinds of factory plants have been
16 constructed--the ship also is the outcome of joint labour. Take for
17 instance the wheels; how absolutely indispensable they are! From
18 the creaking bullock-cart to the car of Jagannath, from the spinning
19 wheel to the stupendous machinery of factories, everywhere there
20 is use for the wheel. Who invented the wheel? No one in particular,
21 that is to say, all jointly. The primitive man used to fell trees with
22 axes, roll big trunks along inclined planes; by degrees they were cut
23 into the shape of solid wheels, and gradually the naves and spokes
24 of the modern wheel came into vogue. Who knows how many
25 millions of years it took to do this? But in India all the successive
26 stages of improvement are preserved. However much they may be
27 improved or transformed, there are always found men to occupy the
28 lower stages of evolution, and consequently the whole series is
29 preserved. First of all a musical instrument was formed with a
30 string fixed to a piece of bamboo. Gradually it came to be played by
31 a horsehair bow, and the first violin was made; then it passed
32 through various transformations, with different sorts of strings and
33 guts, and the bow also assumed different forms and names, till at
34 last the highly finished guitar and *sarang* etc., came into existence.
35 But in spite of this, do not the Mohammedan cabmen even now with
36 a shabby horsehair bow play on the crude instrument made of a
37 bamboo pipe fixed to an earthen pot, and sing the story of Majwar
38 Kahar weaving his fishing net? Go to the Central Provinces, and you
39 will find even now solid wheels rolling on the roads--though it
40 bespeaks a dense intellect on the part of the people, specially in
41 these days of rubber tyres.

42 In very ancient times, that is, in the golden age, when the
43 common run of people were so sincere and truthful that they would
44 not even cover their bodies for fear of hypocrisy--making the
45 exterior look different from the interior--would not marry lest they
46 might contract selfishness, and banishing all ideas of distinction
47 between *meum* and *tuum* always used to look upon the property of
48 others "as mere clods of earth", on the strength of bludgeons,
49 stones, etc.²⁰³--in those blessed times, for voyaging over water, they

1 ²⁰³ ?Swamiji is ironically describing the naked primitive man, to whom marriage
2 was unknown, and who had no respect for person or property.
3

1 constructed canoes and rafts and so forth, burning out the interior
2 of a tree, or by fastening together a few logs of trees. Haven't you
3 seen catamarans along the sea-coast from Orissa to Colombo? And
4 you must have observed how far into the sea the rafts can go. There
5 you have rudiments of ship-building.

6 And that boat of the East Bengal boatmen boarding which
7 you have to call on the five patron-saints of the river for your safety;
8 your house-boat manned by Chittagong boatmen, which even in a
9 light storm makes its helmsmen declare his inability to control the
10 helm, and all the passengers are asked to take the names of their
11 respective gods as a last resort; that big up-country boat with a pair
12 of fantastic brass eyes at the prow, rowed by the oarsmen in a
13 standing posture; that boat of merchant Shrimanta's voyage
14 (according to Kavikankan, Shrimanta crossed the Bay of Bengal
15 simply by rowing, and was about to be drowned owing to his boat
16 getting caught in the antennae of a shoal of lobsters, and almost
17 capsizing! Also he mistook a shell for a tiny fish, and so on), in other
18 words the Gangasagar boat--nicely roofed above and having a floor
19 of split bamboos, and containing in its hold rows of jars filled with
20 Ganga water (which is deliciously cool, I beg your pardon, you visit
21 Gangasagar during hard winter, and the chill north wind drives
22 away all your relish for cooling drinks); and that small-sized boat
23 which daily takes the Bengali Babus to their office and brings them
24 back home, and is superintended over by the boatman of Bally, very
25 expert and very clever--no sooner does he sight a cloud so far away
26 as Konnagar than he puts the boat in safety!--they are now passing
27 into the hands of the strong-bodied men from Jaunpur who speak a
28 peculiar dialect, and whom your Mahant Maharaj, out of fun
29 ordered to catch a heron--which he facetiously styled as
30 "Bakasur",²⁰⁴ and this puzzled them hopelessly and they stammered
31 out, "Please, sire, where are we to get this demon? It is an enigma
32 to us"; then that bulky, slow-moving (cargo) boat nicknamed "Gadha
33 (donkey)" in Bengali, which never goes straight, but always goes
34 sideways; and that big species of boats, like the schooner, having
35 from one to three masts, which imports cargoes of cocoanuts, dates
36 and dried fish from Ceylon, the Maldives, or Arabia;--these and
37 many others too numerous to mention, represent the subsequent
38 development in naval construction.

39 To steer a ship by means of sails is a wonderful discovery. To
40 whichever direction the wind may be blowing, by a clever
41 manipulation of the sails, the ship is sure to reach her destination.
42 But she takes more time when the wind is contrary. A sailing ship is
43 a most beautiful sight, and from a distance looks like a many-
44 winged great bird descending from the skies. Sails, however, do not
45 allow a ship to steer straight ahead, and if the wind is a little
46 contrary, she has to take a zigzag course. But when there is a
47 perfect lull, the ship is helpless and has to lower her sails and stand
48 still. In the equatorial regions it frequently happens even now.
49 Nowadays sailing ships also have very little of wood in them and
50 are mostly made of iron. It is much more difficult to be the captain

1 ²⁰⁴ ?A demon of the shape of a big heron, mentioned in the *Bhagavata*.
2

1 or sailor of a sailing ship than in a steamer, and no one can be a
2 good captain in sailing ship without experience. To know the
3 direction of the wind at every step and to be on one's guard against
4 danger-spots long ahead--these two qualifications are indispensably
5 necessary in a sailing ship, more than in a steamer. A steamer is to
6 a great extent under human control--the engines can be stopped in
7 a moment. It can be steered ahead, or astern, sideways or in any
8 desired direction, within a very short time, but the sailing ship is at
9 the mercy of the wind. By the time the sails can be lowered or the
10 helm turned, the ship may strike a bank or run up on a submarine
11 rock or collide with another ship. Nowadays sailing ships very
12 seldom carry passengers, except coolies. They generally carry
13 cargo, and that also inferior stuff, such as salt etc. Small sailing
14 ships such as the schooner, do coasting trade. Sailing ships cannot
15 afford to hire steamers to tow them along the Suez Canal and spend
16 thousands of rupees as toll, so they can go to England in six months
17 by rounding Africa.

18 Due to all these disadvantages of sailing ships, naval warfare
19 in the past was a risky affair. A slight change in the course of the
20 wind or in the ocean-current would decide the fate of a battle.
21 Again, those ships, being made of wood, would frequently catch
22 fire, which had to be put out. Their construction also was of a
23 different type; one end was flat and very high, with five or six decks.
24 On the uppermost deck at this end there used to be a wooden
25 verandah, in front of which were the commander's room and office
26 and on either side were the officers' cabins. Then there was a large
27 open space, at the other end of which were a few cabins. The lower
28 decks also had similar roofed halls, one underneath the other. In the
29 lowermost deck or hold were the sailor's sleeping and dining
30 rooms, etc. On either side of each deck were ranged cannon, their
31 muzzles projecting through the rows of apertures in the ships'
32 walls; and on both sides were heaps of cannon balls (and powder
33 bags in times of war). All the decks of these ancient men-of-war had
34 very low roofs and one had to carry his head down when moving
35 about. Then it was a troublesome business to secure marines for
36 naval warfare. There was a standing order of the Government to
37 enlist men by force or guile wherever they could be found. Sons
38 were violently snatched away from their mothers, and husbands
39 from their wives. Once they were made to board the ship, (which
40 perhaps the poor fellows had never done in their lives), they were
41 ordered straightway to climb the masts! And if through fear they
42 failed to carry out the order, they were flogged. Some would also
43 die under the ordeal. It was the rich and influential men of the
44 country who made these laws, it was they who would appropriate
45 the benefits of commerce, or ravage, or conquest of different
46 countries, and the poor people were simply to shed their blood and
47 sacrifice their lives--as has been the rule throughout the world's
48 history! Now those laws exist no longer, and the name of the
49 Pressgang does not now send a shiver through the hearts of the
50 peasantry and poor folk. Now it is voluntary service, but many
51 juvenile criminals are trained as sailors in men-of-war, instead of
52 being thrown into prison.

1 Steam-power has revolutionised all this, and sails are almost
2 superfluous ornaments in ships nowadays. They depend very little
3 on winds now, and there is much less danger from gales and the
4 like. Ships have now only to take care that they do not strike
5 against submarine rocks. And men-of-war of the present day are
6 totally different from those of the past. In the first place, they do not
7 at all look like ships, but rather like floating iron fortresses of
8 varying dimensions. The number of cannon also has been much
9 reduced, but compared with the modern turret-guns, those of the
10 past were mere child's play. And how fast these men-of-war are!
11 The smallest of these are the torpedo-boats; those that are a little
12 bigger are for capturing hostile merchant-ships, and the big ones
13 are the ponderous instruments for the actual naval fight.

14 During the Civil War of the United States of America, the
15 Unionist party fixed rows of iron rails against the outer walls of a
16 wooden ship so as to cover them. The enemy's cannon-balls striking
17 against them were repulsed without doing any harm to the ship.
18 After this, as a rule, the ship's sides began to be clad in iron, so that
19 hostile balls might not penetrate the wood. The ship's cannon also
20 began to improve--bigger and bigger cannon were constructed and
21 the work of moving, loading, and firing them came to be executed
22 by machinery, instead of with the hand. A cannon which even five
23 hundred men cannot move an inch, can now be turned vertically or
24 horizontally, loaded and fired by a little boy pressing a button, and
25 all this in a second! As the iron wall of ships began to increase in
26 thickness, so cannon with the power of thunder also began to be
27 manufactured. At the present day, a battle-ship is a fortress with
28 walls of steel, and the guns are almost as Death itself. A single shot
29 is enough to smash the biggest ship into fragments. But this "iron
30 bridal-chamber"--which Nakindar's father (in the popular Bengali
31 tale) never even dreamt of, and which, instead of standing on the
32 top of "Satali Hill" moves dancing on seventy thousand mountain-
33 like billows, even this is mortally afraid of torpedoes! The torpedo is
34 a tube somewhat shaped like a cigar, and if fired at an object
35 travels under water like a fish. The, the moment it hits its object,
36 the highly explosive materials it contains explode with a terrific
37 noise, and the ship under which this takes place is reduced to its
38 original condition, that is, partly into iron and wooden fragments,
39 and partly into smoke and fire! And no trace is found of the men
40 who are caught in this explosion of the torpedo--the little that is
41 found, is almost in a state of mince-meat! Since the invention of
42 these torpedoes, naval wars cannot last long. One or two fights, and
43 a big victory is scored or a total defeat. But the wholesale loss of
44 men of both parties in naval fight which men apprehended before
45 the introduction of these men-of-war has been greatly falsified by
46 facts.

47 If a fraction of the volley of balls discharged during a field-
48 fight from the guns and rifles of each hostile army on the opponents
49 hit their aim, then both rival armies would be killed to a man in two
50 minutes. Similarly if only one of five hundred shots fired from a
51 battle-ship in action hit its mark, then no trace would be left of the
52 ships on both sides. But the wonder is that, as guns and rifles are

1 improving in quality, as the latter are being made lighter, and the
2 rifling in their barrels finer, as the range is increasing, as machinery
3 for loading is being multiplied, and rate of firing quickened--the
4 more they seem to miss their aim! Armed with the old fashioned
5 unusually longbarrelled musket--which has to be supported on a
6 two-legged wooden stand while firing, and ignited by actually
7 setting fire and blowing into it--the Barakhjais and the Afridis can
8 fire with unerring precision, while the modern trained soldier with
9 the highly complex machine-guns of the present day fires 150
10 rounds in a minute and serves merely to heat the atmosphere!
11 Machinery in a small proportion is good, but too much of it kills
12 man's initiative and makes a lifeless machine of him. The men in
13 factories are doing the same monotonous work, day after day, night
14 after night, year after year, each batch of men doing one special bit
15 of work--such as fashioning the heads of pins, or uniting the ends of
16 threads, or moving backwards or forwards with the loom--for a
17 whole life. And the result is that the loss of that special job means
18 death to them--they find no other means of living and starve. Doing
19 routine work like a machine, one becomes a lifeless machine. For
20 that reason, one serving as a schoolmaster or a clerk for a whole
21 lifetime ends by turning a stupendous fool.

22 The form of merchantmen and passenger-ships is of a
23 different type. Although some merchant-ships are so constructed
24 that in times of war they can easily be equipped with a few guns
25 and give chase to unarmed hostile merchant-ships, for which they
26 get remuneration from their respective Governments, still they
27 generally differ widely from warships. These are now mostly
28 steamships and generally so big and expensive that they are seldom
29 owned by individuals, but by companies. Among the carrying
30 companies for Indian and European trade, the P. & O. Company is
31 the oldest and richest, then comes the B. I. S. N. Company, and
32 there are many others. Among those of foreign nationalities, the
33 Messageries Maritimes (French) the Austrian Lloyd, the German
34 Lloyd, and the Rubattino Company (Italian), are the most famous.
35 Of these the passenger-ships of the P. & O. Company are generally
36 believed to be the safest and fastest. And the arrangements of food
37 in the Messageries Maritimes are excellent.

1 When we left for Europe this time, the last two companies
2 had stopped booking "native" passengers for fear of the plague-
3 infection. And there is a law of the Indian Government that no
4 "native" of India can go abroad without a certificate from the
5 Emigration Office, in order to make sure that nobody is enticing him
6 away to foreign countries to sell him as a slave or to impress him as
7 a coolie, but that he is going of his own free will. This written
8 document must be produced before they will take him into the ship.
9 This law was so long silent against the Indian gentry going to
10 foreign countries. Now on account of the plague epidemic it has
11 been revived, so that the Government may be informed about every
12 "native" going out. Well, in our country we hear much about some
13 people belonging to the gentry and some to the lower classes. But
14 in the eyes of the Government all are "natives" without exception.
15 Maharajas, Rajas, Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Shudras--all
16 belong to one and the same class--that of "natives". The law, and the
17 test which applies to coolies, is applicable to all "natives" without
18 distinction. Thanks to you, O English Government, through your
19 grace, for a moment at least I feel myself one with the whole body
20 of "natives". It is all the more welcome, because this body of mine
21 having come of a Kayastha family, I have become the target of
22 attack of many sections. Nowadays we hear it from the lips of
23 people of all castes in India that they are all full-blooded Aryans--
24 only there is some difference of opinion amongst them about the
25 exact percentage of Aryan blood in their veins, some claiming to
26 have the full measure of it, while others may have one ounce more
27 or less than another--that is all. But in this they are all unanimous
28 that their castes are all superior to the Kayastha! And it is also
29 reported that they and the English race belong to the same stock--
30 that they are cousins-german to each other, and that they are not
31 "natives". And they have come to this country out of humanitarian
32 principles, like the English. And such evil customs as child-
33 marriage, polygamy, image-worship, the *sutti*, the *zenana*-system,
34 and so forth have no place in their religion--but these have been
35 introduced by the ancestors of the Kayasthas, and people of that ilk.
36 Their religion also is of the same pattern as that of the English! And
37 their forefathers looked just like the English, only living under the
38 tropical sun of India has turned them black! Now come forward
39 with your pretensions, if you dare! "You are all *natives*", the
40 Government says. Amongst that mass of black, a shade deeper or
41 lighter cannot be distinguished. The Government says, "They are all
42 *natives*". Now it is useless for you to dress yourselves after the
43 English fashion. Your European hats etc., will avail you little
44 henceforth. If you throw all the blame on the Hindus, and try to
45 fraternise with the English, you would thereby come in for a greater
46 share of cuffs and blows and not less. Blessings to you, O English
47 Government! You have already become the favoured child of
48 Fortune; may your prosperity increase ever more! We shall be
49 happy once more to wear our loin-cloth and Dhoti--the native dress.
50 Through your grace we shall continue to travel from one end of the
51 country to the other, bare-headed, and barefooted, and heartily eat
52 our habitual food of rice and Dal with our fingers, right in the
53 Indian fashion. Bless the Lord! We had well-nigh been tempted by

1 Anglo-Indian fashions and been duped by its glamour. We heard it
2 said that no sooner did we give up our native dress, native religion,
3 and native manners and customs, than the English people would
4 take us on their shoulders and lionise us. And we were about to do
5 so, when smack came the whip of the Englishman and the thud of
6 British boots--and immediately men were seized by a panic and
7 turned away, bidding good-bye to English ways, eager to confess
8 their "native" birth.

9 "The English ways we'd copy with such pains,

10 The British boots did stamp out from our brains!"

11 Blessed be the English Government! May their throne be
12 firm and their rule permanent. And the little tendency that
13 remained in me for taking to European ways vanished, thanks to
14 the Americans. I was sorely troubled by an overgrown beard, but no
15 sooner did I peep into a hair-cutting saloon than somebody called
16 out, "This is no place for such shabby-looking people as you." I
17 thought that perhaps seeing me so quaintly dressed in turban and
18 Gerua cloak, the man was prejudiced against me. So I should go
19 and buy an English coat and hat. I was about to do this when
20 fortunately I met an American gentleman who explained to me that
21 it was much better that I was dressed in my Gerua cloak, for now
22 the gentlemen would not take me amiss, but if I dressed in
23 European fashion, everybody would chase me away. I met the same
24 kind of treatment in one or two other saloons. After which I began
25 the practice of shaving with my own hands. Once I was burning
26 with hunger, and went into a restaurant, and asked for a particular
27 thing, whereupon the man said, "We do not stock it." "Why, it is
28 there." "Well, my good man, in plain language it means there is no
29 place here for you to sit and take your meal." "And why?" "Because
30 nobody will eat at the same table with you, for he will be
31 outcasted." Then America began to look agreeable to me, somewhat
32 like my own caste-ridden country. Out with these differences of
33 white and black, and this nicety about the proportion of Aryan blood
34 among the "natives"! How awkward it looks for slaves to be over-
35 fastidious about pedigree! There was a Dom (a man of the sweeper-
36 caste) who used to say, "You won't find anywhere on earth a caste
37 superior to ours. You must know we are Dom-m-m-s!" But do you
38 see the fun of it? The excesses about caste distinctions obtain most
39 among peoples who are least honoured among mankind.

40 Steamships are generally much bigger than sailing ships.
41 The steamships that ply across the Atlantic are just half as much
42 bigger than the "Golconda".²⁰⁵ The ship on which I crossed the
43 Pacific from Japan was also very big. In the centre of the biggest
44 ships are the first class compartments with some open space on
45 either side; then comes the second class, flanked by the "steerage"
46 on either side. At one end are the sailors' and servants' quarters.
47 The steerage corresponds to the third class, in which very poor
48 people go as passengers, as, for instance, those who are emigrating

1 ²⁰⁵ ?The B.I.S.N. steamer in which Swami Vivekananda went to the West for the
2 second time.
3

1 to America, Australia, etc. The accommodation for them is very
2 small and the food is served not on tables but from hand to hand.
3 There is no steerage in ships which ply between England and India,
4 but they take deck-passengers. The open space between the first
5 and second classes is used by them for sitting or sleeping purposes.
6 But I did not notice a single deck-passenger bound for a long
7 journey. Only in 1893, on my way to China, I found a number of
8 Chinamen going as deck-passengers from Bombay to Hongkong.

9 During stormy weather, the deck-passengers suffer great
10 inconvenience, and also to a certain extent at ports when the cargo
11 is unloaded. Excepting in the hurricane-deck which is on top of all,
12 there is a square opening in all other decks, through which cargo is
13 loaded and unloaded, at which times the deck-passengers are put to
14 some trouble. Otherwise, it is very pleasant on the deck at night
15 from Calcutta to Suez, and in summer, through Europe also. When
16 the first and second class passengers are about to melt in their
17 furnished compartments on account of the excessive heat, then the
18 deck is almost a heaven in comparison.

19 The second class in ships of this type is very uncomfortable.
20 Only, in the ships of the newly started German Lloyd Company
21 plying between Bergen, in Germany and Australia, the second class
22 arrangements are excellent; there are cabins even in the hurricane-
23 deck, and food arrangements are almost on a par with those of the
24 first class in the "Golconda". That line touches Colombo on the way.

25 In the "Golconda" there are only two cabins on the hurricane-
26 deck, one on each side; one is for the doctor, and the other was
27 allotted to us. But owing to the excessive heat, we had to take
28 shelter in the lower deck, for our cabin was just above the engine-
29 room of the ship. Although the ship is made of iron, yet the
30 passengers' cabins are made of wood. And there are many holes
31 along the top and bottom of the wooden walls of these, for the free
32 passage of air. The walls are painted over with ivory-paint which
33 has cost nearly £25 per room. There is a small carpet spread on the
34 floor and against one of the walls are fixed two frameworks
35 somewhat resembling iron bedsteads without legs, one on top of
36 the other. Similarly on the opposite wall. Just opposite the entrance
37 there is a wash-basin, over which there is a looking-glass, two
38 bottles, and two tumblers for drinking water. Against the sides of
39 each bed is attached a netting in brass frames which can be fixed
40 up to the wall and again lowered down. In it the passengers put
41 their watch and other important personal necessities before
42 retiring. Below the lower bedstead, there is room for storing the
43 trunks and bags. The second class arrangements are on a similar
44 plan, only the space is narrower and the furniture of an inferior
45 quality. The shipping business is almost a monopoly of the English.
46 Therefore in the ships constructed by other nations also, the food
47 arrangements, as well as the regulation of the time, have to be
48 made in the English fashion, to suit the large number of English
49 passengers in them. There are great differences between England,
50 France, Germany, and Russia, as regards food and time. Just as in
51 our country, there are great differences between Bengal, Northern
52 India, the Mahratta country, and Gujarat. But these differences are

1 very little observed in the ships, because there, owing to a majority
2 of English-speaking passengers, everything is being moulded after
3 the English fashion.

4 The Captain is the highest authority in a ship. Formerly the
5 Captain used to rule in the ship in the high seas, punishing
6 offenders, hanging pirates, and so forth. Now he does not go so far,
7 but his word is law on board a ship. Under him are four officers (or
8 *malims*, in Indian vernacular). Then come four or five engineers, the
9 chief engineer ranking equally with an officer and getting first class
10 food. And there are four or five steersmen (*sukanis*, in Indian
11 vernacular) who hold the helm by turns--they are also Europeans.
12 The rest, comprising the servants, the sailors, and the coalmen are
13 all Indian, and all of them Mohammedans; Hindu sailors I saw only
14 on the Bombay side, in P. & O. ships. The servants and the sailors
15 are from Calcutta, while the coalmen belong to East Bengal; the
16 cooks also are Catholic Christians of East Bengal. There are four
17 sweepers besides, whose duty it is to clear out dirty water from the
18 compartments, make arrangements for bath and keep the latrines
19 etc. clean and tidy. The Mohammedan servants and lascars do not
20 take food cooked by Christians; besides, every day there are
21 preparations of ham or bacon on board the ship. But they manage
22 to set up some sort of privacy for themselves. They have no
23 objection to taking bread prepared in the ship's kitchen, and those
24 servants from Calcutta who have received the "new light" of
25 civilisation, do not observe any restrictions in matters of food.
26 There are three messes for the men, one for the servants, one for
27 the sailors, and one for the coalmen. The company provides each
28 mess with a cook and a servant; every mess has got a separate
29 place for cooking. A few Hindu passengers, were going from
30 Calcutta to Colombo, and they used to do their cooking in one of
31 these kitchens after the servants had finished theirs. The servants
32 draw their own drinking water. On every deck two pumps are fixed
33 against the wall, one on each side; the one is for sweet and the
34 other for salt water, and the Mohammedans draw sweet water from
35 this for their own use. Those Hindus who have no objection to
36 taking pipe-water can very easily go on these ships to England and
37 elsewhere, observing all their orthodoxy in matters of food and
38 drink. They can get a kitchen, and drinking water free from the
39 touch of any, and even the bathing water need not be touched by
40 anybody else; all kinds of food such as rice, pulse, vegetables, fish,
41 meat, milk, and ghee are available on the ship, especially on these
42 ships where mostly Indians are employed, to whom rice, pulse,
43 radish, cabbage, and potato, etc. have to be supplied every day. The
44 one thing necessary is money. With money you can proceed
45 anywhere alone, observing full orthodoxy.

46 These Bengali servants are employed nowadays in almost all
47 ships that ply between Calcutta and Europe. They are gradually
48 forming into a class by themselves. Several nautical terms also are
49 being coined by them; for instance, the captain is termed
50 *bariwallah* (landlord); the officer *malim*; the mast 'dol'; a sail *sarh*;
51 bring down *aria*; raise *habish* (heave), etc.

52 The body of lascars and coalmen have each a head who is

1 called *serang*, under whom are two or three *tindals*, and under
2 these come the lascars and coalmen.

3 The head of the *khansamas*, or "boys", is the butler, over
4 whom there is a European steward. The lascars wash and cleanse
5 the ship, throw or wind up the cables, set down or lift the boats and
6 hoist or strike sail (though this last is a rare occurrence in
7 steamships) and do similar kind of work. The Serang and the Tindal
8 are always moving about watching them and assisting in their work.
9 The coalmen keep the fire steady in the engine-room; their duty is
10 to fight day and night with fire and to keep the engines neat and
11 clean. And it is no easy task to keep that stupendous engine and all
12 its parts neat and tidy. The Serang and his assistant (or "Brother",
13 in the lascar's parlance) are from Calcutta and speak Bengali; they
14 look gentlemanly and can read and write, having studied in school;
15 they speak tolerable English also. The Serang has a son, thirteen
16 years of age, who is a servant of the Captain and waits at his door
17 as an orderly. Seeing these Bengali lascars, coalmen, servants, and
18 boys at work, the feeling of despair with regard to my countrymen
19 which I had, was much abated. How they are slowly developing
20 their manhood, with a strong physique--how fearless, yet docile!
21 That cringing, sycophant attitude common to "natives" even the
22 sweepers do not possess--what a transformation!

23 The Indian lascars do excellent work without murmur, and go
24 on a quarter of a European sailor's pay. This has dissatisfied many
25 in England, especially as many Europeans are losing their living
26 thereby. They sometimes set up an agitation. Having nothing else to
27 say against them--for the lascars are smarter in work than
28 Europeans--they only complain that in rough weather, when the ship
29 is in danger, they lose all courage. Good God! In actual
30 circumstances, that infamy is found to be baseless. In times of
31 danger, the European sailors freely drink through fear and make
32 themselves stupid and out of use. Indian sailors never take a drop
33 of liquor in their life, and up to now, not one of them has ever
34 shown cowardice in times of great danger. Does the Indian soldier
35 display any cowardice on the field of battle? No, but they must have
36 leaders. An English friend of mine, named General Strong, was in
37 India during the Sepoy Mutiny. He used to tell many stories about
38 it. One day, in the course of conversation, I asked him how it was
39 that the sepoys who had enough of guns, ammunition, and
40 provisions at their disposal, and were also trained veterans, came
41 to suffer such a defeat. He replied that the leaders among them,
42 instead of advancing forward, only kept shouting from a safe
43 position in the rear, "Fight on, brave lads", and so forth; but unless
44 the commanding officer goes ahead and faces death, the rank and
45 file will never fight with heart. It is the same in every branch. "A
46 captain must sacrifice his head," they say. If you can lay down your
47 life for a cause, then only you can be a leader. But we all want to be
48 leaders without making the necessary sacrifice. And the result is
49 zero--nobody listens to us!

1 However much you may parade your descent from Aryan
2 ancestors and sing the glories of ancient India day and night, and
3 however much you may be strutting in the pride of your birth, you,
4 the upper classes of India, do you think you are alive? You are but
5 mummies ten thousand years old! It is among those whom your
6 ancestors despised as "walking carrion" that the little of vitality
7 there is still in India is to be found; and it is you who are the real
8 "walking corpses". Your houses, your furniture, look like museum
9 specimens, so lifeless and antiquated they are; and even an eye-
10 witness of your manners and customs, your movements and modes
11 of life, is inclined to think that he is listening to a grandmother's
12 tale! When, even after making a personal acquaintance with you,
13 one returns home, one seems to think one had been to visit the
14 paintings in an art gallery! In this world of Maya, you are the real
15 illusions, the mystery, the real mirage in the desert, you, the upper
16 classes of India! You represent the past tense, with all its varieties
17 of form jumbled into one. That one still seems to see you at the
18 present time, is nothing but a nightmare brought on by indigestion.
19 You are the void, the unsubstantial nonentities of the future.
20 Denizens of the dreamland, why are you loitering any longer?
21 Fleshless and bloodless skeletons of the dead body of Past India you
22 are, why do you not quickly reduce yourselves into dust and
23 disappear in the air? Ay, on your bony fingers are some priceless
24 rings of jewel, treasured up by your ancestors, and within the
25 embrace of your stinking corpses are preserved a good many
26 ancient treasure-chests. Up to now you have not had the
27 opportunity to hand them over. Now under the British rule, in these
28 days of free education and enlightenment, pass them on to your
29 heirs, ay, do it as quickly as you can. You merge yourselves in the
30 void and disappear, and let New India arise in your place. Let her
31 arise--out of the peasants' cottage, grasping the plough; out of the
32 huts of the fisherman, the cobbler, and the sweeper. Let her spring
33 from the grocer's shop, from beside the oven of the fritter-seller.
34 Let her emanate from the factory, from marts, and from markets.
35 Let her emerge from groves and forests, from hills and mountains.
36 These common people have suffered oppression for thousands of
37 years--suffered it without murmur, and as a result have got
38 wonderful fortitude. They have suffered eternal misery, which has
39 given them unflinching vitality. Living on a handful of grain, they
40 can convulse the world; give them only half a piece of bread, and
41 the whole world will not be big enough to contain their energy; they
42 are endowed with the inexhaustible vitality of a Raktabija.²⁰⁶ And,
43 besides, they have got the wonderful strength that comes of a pure
44 and moral life, which is not to be found anywhere else in the world.
45 Such peacefulness, such contentment, such love, such power of
46 silent and incessant work, and such manifestation of lion's strength
47 in times of action--where else will you find these! Skeletons of the
48 Past, there, before you, are your successors, the India that is to be.
49 Throw those treasure-chests of yours and those jewelled rings
50 among them, as soon as you can; and you vanish into the air, and be

1 ²⁰⁶ ?A demon, in the *Durga-Saptashati*, every drop of whose blood falling on the
2 ground produced another demon like him.
3

1 seen no more--only keep your ears open. No sooner will you
2 disappear than you will hear the inaugural shout of Renaissant
3 India, ringing with the voice of a million thunders and reverberating
4 throughout the universe, "Wah Guru Ki Fateh"--victory to the Guru!

5 Our ship is now in the Bay of Bengal, which is reported to be
6 very deep. The little of it that was shallow has been silted up by the
7 Ganga crumbling the Himalayas and washing down the North-
8 Western Provinces (U.P.). That alluvial region is our Bengal. There is
9 no indication of Bengal extending further beyond the Sunderbans.
10 Some say that the Sunderbans were formerly the site of many
11 villages and towns and were an elevated region. But many do not
12 admit this now. However, the Sunderbans and the northern part of
13 the Bay of Bengal have been the scene of many historic events.
14 These were the rendezvous of the Portuguese pirates; the king of
15 Arakan made repeated attempts to occupy this region, and here
16 also the representative of the Mogul Emperor tried his best to
17 punish the Portuguese pirates headed by Gonzalez; and this has
18 frequently been the scene of many fights between the Christians,
19 Moguls, Mugs, and Bengalis.

20 The Bay of Bengal is naturally rough, and to add to this, it is
21 the monsoon season, so our ship is rolling heavily. But then, this is
22 only the beginning and there is no knowing what is to follow, as we
23 are going to Madras. The greater part of Southern India belongs
24 now to the Madras Presidency. What is there in mere extent of
25 land? Even a desert turns into heaven when it falls to the care of a
26 fortunate owner. The unknown petty village of Madras, formerly
27 called Chinnapattanam or Madraspattanam, was sold by the Raja of
28 Chandragiri to a company of merchants. Then the English had their
29 principal trade in Java, and Bantam was the centre of England's
30 Asiatic trade. Madras and other English trade settlements in India
31 were under the control of Bantam. Where is that Bantam now? And
32 what development that Madras has made! It is not whole truth to
33 say that fortune favours the enterprising man; behind there must be
34 the strength that comes of the Divine Mother. But I also admit that
35 it is the enterprising men unto whom Mother gives strength.

36 Madras reminds one of a typical South Indian province;
37 though even at the Jagannath Ghat of Calcutta, one can get a
38 glimpse of the South by seeing the Orissa Brahmin with his border-
39 shaven head and tufted hair, his variously painted forehead, the
40 involuted slippers, in which only the toes may enter; that nose
41 irritated with snuff and with that habit of covering the bodies of
42 their children with sandalpaste prints. The Gujarati Brahmin, the
43 jet-black Maharashtra Brahmin, and the exceptionally fair, cat-eyed
44 square-headed Brahmin of Konkan--though all of them dress in the
45 same way, and are all known as Deccanis, yet the typical southern
46 Brahmin is to be found in Madras. That forehead covered over with
47 the ample caste-mark of the Ramanuja sect--which to the
48 uninitiated looks anything but sublime, (and whose imitation--the
49 caste-mark of the Ramananda sect of Northern India--is hailed with
50 many a facetious rhyme--and which completely throws into the
51 shade the custom prevailing in Bengal among leaders of the
52 Vaishnavite sect, of frightfully imprinting their whole body); that

1 Telugu, Tamil, and Malayalam speech of which you won't
2 understand a single syllable even if you hear it spoken for six years
3 and in which there is a play of all possible varieties of 'l' and 'd'
4 sounds; that eating of rice with 'black-peppered dal soup'--each
5 morsel of which sends a shiver through the heart (so pungent and
6 so acid!); that addition of *margosa* leaves, oats, etc., by way of
7 flavour, that taking of "rice-and-curd" etc., that bath with gingili oil
8 rubbed over the body, and the frying of fish in the same oil--without
9 these how can one conceive the southern country?

10 Again, the South has Hinduism alive during the
11 Mohammedan rule and even for some time previous to it. It was in
12 the South that Shankaracharya was born, among that caste who
13 wear a tuft on the front of the head and eat food prepared with
14 cocoanut oil: this was the country that produced Ramanuja: it was
15 also the birthplace of Madhva Muni. Modern Hinduism owes its
16 allegiance to these alone. The Vaishnavas of the Chaitanya sect
17 form merely a recension of the Madhva sect; the religious
18 reformers of the North such as Kabir, Dadu, Nanak, and Ramsanehi
19 are all an echo of Shankaracharya; there you find the disciples of
20 Ramanuja occupying Ayodhya and other places. These Brahmins of
21 the South do not recognise those of the North as true Brahmins, nor
22 accept them as disciples, and even to the other day would not admit
23 them to Sannyasa. The people of Madras even now occupy the
24 principal seats of religion. It was in the South that when people of
25 North India were hiding themselves in woods and forests, giving up
26 their treasures, their household deities, and wives and children,
27 before the triumphant war-cry of Mohammedan invaders-- the
28 suzerainty of the King of Vidyanagar was established firm as ever.
29 In the South, again, was born the wonderful Sayanacharya--the
30 strength of whose arms, vanquishing the Mohammedans, kept King
31 Bukka on his throne, whose wise counsels gave stability to the
32 Vidyanagar Kingdom, whose state-policy established lasting peace
33 and prosperity in the Deccan, whose superhuman genius and
34 extraordinary industry produced the commentaries on the whole
35 Vedas--and the product of whose wonderful sacrifice, renunciation,
36 and researches was the Vedanta treatise named *Panchadashi*--that
37 Sannyasin Vidyaranya Muni or Sayana²⁰⁷ was born in this land. The
38 Madras Presidency is the habitat of that Tamil race whose
39 civilisation was the most ancient, and a branch of whom, called the
40 Sumerians, spread a vast civilisation on the banks of the Euphrates
41 in very ancient times; whose astrology, religious lore, morals, rites,
42 etc., furnished the foundation for the Assyrian and Babylonian
43 civilisations; and whose mythology was the source of the Christian
44 Bible. Another branch of these Tamils spread from the Malabar
45 coast and gave rise to the wonderful Egyptian civilisation, and the
46 Aryans also are indebted to this race in many respects. Their
47 colossal temples in the South proclaim the triumph of the Veera
48 Shaiva and Veera Vaishnava sects. The great Vaishnava religion of
49 India has also sprung from a Tamil Pariah--Shathakopa--"who was a
50 dealer in winnowing-fans but was a Yogin all the while". And the

1 ²⁰⁷ ?According to some, Sayana, the commentator of the Vedas, was the brother
2 of Vidyaranya Muni.
3

1 Tamil Alwars or devotees still command the respect of the whole
2 Vaishnava sect. Even now the study of the Dvaita, Vishishtadvaita
3 and Advaita systems of Vedanta is cultivated more in South India
4 than anywhere else. Even now the thirst for religion is stronger
5 here than in any other place.

6 In the night of the 24th June, our ship reached Madras.
7 Getting up from bed in the morning, I found that we were within
8 the enclosed space of the Madras harbour. Within the harbour the
9 water was still, but without, towering waves were roaring, which
10 occasionally dashing against the harbour-wall were shooting up
11 fifteen or twenty feet high into the air and breaking in a mass of
12 foam. In front lay the well-known Strand Road of Madras. Two
13 European Police Inspectors, a Jamadar of Madras and a dozen
14 Constables boarded our ship and told me with great courtesy that
15 "natives" were not allowed to land on the shore, but the Europeans
16 were. A "native", whoever he might be, was of such dirty habits that
17 there was every chance of his carrying plague germs about; but the
18 Madrasis had asked for a special permit for me, which they might
19 obtain. By degrees the friends of Madras began to come near our
20 vessel on boats in small groups. As all contact was strictly
21 forbidden, we could only speak from the ship, keeping some space
22 between. I found all my friends--Alasinga, Biligiri, Narasimachary,
23 Dr. Nanjunda Rao, Kidi, and others on the boats. Basketfuls of
24 mangoes, plantains, cocoanuts, cooked rice-and-curd, and heaps of
25 sweet and salt delicacies, etc. began to come in. Gradually the
26 crowd thickened--men, women, and children in boats everywhere. I
27 found also Mr. Chamier, my English friend who had come out to
28 Madras as a barrister-at-law. Ramakrishnananda and
29 Nirbhayananda made some trips near to the ship. They insisted on
30 staying on the boat the whole day in the hot sun, and I had to
31 remonstrate with them, when they gave up the idea. And as the
32 news of my not being permitted to land got abroad, the crowd of
33 boats began to increase still more. I, too, began to feel exhaustion
34 from leaning against the railings too long. Then I bade farewell to
35 my Madras friends and entered my cabin. Alasinga got no
36 opportunity to consult me about the *Brahmavadin* and the Madras
37 work; so he was going to accompany me to Colombo. The ship left
38 the harbour in the evening, when I heard a great shout, and
39 peeping through the cabin-window, I found that about a thousand
40 men, women, and children of Madras who had been sitting on the
41 harbour-walls, gave this farewell shout when the ship started. On a
42 joyous occasion the people of Madras also, like the Bengalis, make
43 the peculiar sound with the tongue known as the Hulu.

44 It took us four days to go from Madras to Ceylon. That rising
45 and heaving of waves which had commenced from the mouth of the
46 Ganga began to increase as we advanced, and after we had left
47 Madras it increased still more. The ship began to roll heavily, and
48 the passengers felt terribly sea-sick, and so did the two Bengali
49 boys.

50 One of them was certain he was going to die, and we had to
51 console him with great difficulty, assuring him that there was
52 nothing to be afraid of, as it was quite a common experience and

1 nobody ever died of it. The second class, again, was right over the
2 screw of the ship. The two Bengali lads, being natives, were put
3 into a cabin almost like a black-hole, where neither air nor light had
4 any access. So the boys could not remain in the room, and on the
5 deck the rolling was terrible. Again, when the prow of the ship
6 settled into the hollow of a wave and the stern was pitched up, the
7 screw rose clear out of the water and continued to wheel in the air,
8 giving a tremendous jolting to the whole vessel. And the second
9 class then shook as when a rat is seized by a cat and shaken.

10 However, this was the monsoon season. The more the ship
11 would proceed westwards, the more gale and wind she would have
12 to encounter. The people of Madras had given plenty of fruits, the
13 greater part of which, and the sweets, and rice-and-curd, etc., I
14 gave to the boys. Alasinga had hurriedly bought a ticket and
15 boarded the ship barefooted. He says he wears shoes now and then.
16 Ways and manners differ in different countries. In Europe it is a
17 great shame on the part of ladies to show their feet, but they feel no
18 delicacy in exposing half their bust. In our country, the head must
19 be covered by all means, no matter if the rest of the body is well
20 covered or not. Alasinga, the editor of the *Brahmavadin*, who is a
21 Mysore Brahmin of the Ramanuja sect, having a fondness for
22 Rasam²⁰⁸ with shaven head and forehead overspread with the caste-
23 mark of the Tengale sect, has brought with him with great care, as
24 his provision for the voyage, two small bundles, in one of which
25 there is fried flattened rice, and in another popped rice and fried
26 peas! His idea is to live upon these during the voyage to Ceylon, so
27 that his caste may remain intact. Alasinga had been to Ceylon once
28 before, at which his caste-people tried to put him into some trouble,
29 without success. That is a saving feature in the caste-system of
30 India--if one's caste-people do not object, no one else has any right
31 to say anything against him. And as for the South India castes--
32 some consist of five hundred souls in all, some even hundred, or at
33 most a thousand, and so circumscribed is their limit that for want of
34 any other likely bride, one marries one's sister's daughter! When
35 railways were first introduced in Mysore, the Brahmins who went
36 from a distance to see the trains were outcasted! However, one
37 rarely finds men like our Alasinga in this world--one so unselfish, so
38 hard-working and devoted to his Guru, and such an obedient
39 disciple is indeed very rare on earth. A South Indian by birth, with
40 his head shaven so as to leave a tuft in the centre, bare-footed, and
41 wearing the Dhoti, he got into the first class; he was strolling now
42 and then on the deck and when hungry, was chewing some of the
43 popped rice and peas! The ship's servants generally take all South
44 Indians to be Chettis (merchants) and say that they have lots of
45 money, but will not spend a bit of it on either dress or food! But the
46 servants are of opinion that in our company Alasinga's purity as a
47 Brahmin is getting contaminated. And it is true--for the South
48 Indians lose much of their caste-rigours through contact with us.

49 Alasinga did not feel sea-sick. Brother T- felt a little trouble
50 at the beginning but is now all right. So the four days passed in

1 ²⁰⁸ ?Pungent and sour dal soup.
2

1 various pleasant talks and gossip. In front of us is Colombo. Here
2 we have Sinhal--Lanka. Shri Ramachandra crossed over to Lanka by
3 building a bridge across and conquered Ravana, her King. Well, I
4 have seen the bridge, and also, in the palace of the Setupati
5 Maharaja of Ramnad, the stone slab on which Bhagavan
6 Ramachandra installed his ancestor as Setupati for the first time.
7 But the Buddhist Ceylonese of these sophisticated times will not
8 admit this. They say that in their country there is not even a
9 tradition to indicate it. But what matters their denial? Are not our
10 "old books" authorities enough? Then again, they call their country
11 Sinhal and will not term it Lanka²⁰⁹--and how should they? There is
12 no piquancy either in their words, or in their work, or in their
13 nature, or in their appearance! Wearing gowns, with plaited hair,
14 and in that a big comb--quite a feminine appearance! Again, they
15 have slim, short, and tender womanlike bodies. These--the
16 descendants of Ravana and Kumbhakarna! Not a bit of it! Tradition
17 says they have migrated from Bengal--and it was well done. That
18 new type of people who are springing in Bengal--dressed like
19 women, speaking in soft and delicate accents, walking with a timid,
20 faltering gait, unable to look any one in the face and from their very
21 birth given to writing love poems and suffering the pangs of
22 separation from their beloved--well, why do they not go to Ceylon,
23 where they will find their fellows! Are the Government asleep? The
24 other day they created a great row trying to capture some people in
25 Puri. Why, in the metropolis itself are many worth seizing and
26 packing off!

27 There was a very naughty Bengali Prince, named Vijaya
28 Sinha, who quarrelled with his father, and getting together a few
29 more fellows like him set sail in a ship, and finally came upon the
30 Island of Ceylon. That country was then inhabited by an aboriginal
31 tribe whose descendants are now known as the Bedouins. The
32 aboriginal king received him very cordially and gave him his
33 daughter in marriage. There he remained quietly for some time,
34 when one night, conspiring with his wife, with a number of fellows,
35 he took the king and his nobles by surprise and massacred them.
36 Then Vijaya Sinha ascended the throne of Ceylon. But his
37 wickedness did not end here. After a time he got tired of his
38 aboriginal queen, and got more men and more girls from India and
39 himself married a girl named Anuradha, discarding his first
40 aboriginal wife. Then he began to extirpate the whole race of the
41 aborigines, almost all of whom were killed, leaving only a small
42 remnant who are still to be met with in the forests and jungles. In
43 this way Lanka came to be called Sinhal and became, to start with,
44 colony of Bengali ruffians!

45 In course of time, under the regime of Emperor Asoka, his
46 son Mahinda and his daughter Sanghamitta, who had taken the vow
47 of Sannyasa, came to the Island of Ceylon as religious missionaries.
48 Reaching there, they found the people had grown quite barbarous,
49 and, devoting their whole lives, they brought them back to
50 civilisation as far as possible; they framed good moral laws for them

1 ²⁰⁹ ?Means also "Chillies" in Bengal.
2

1 and converted them to Buddhism. Soon the Ceylonese grew very
2 staunch Buddhists, and built a great city in the centre of the island
3 and called it Anuradhapuram. The sight of the remains of this city
4 strikes one dumb even today--huge *stupas*, and dilapidated stone
5 building extending for miles and miles are standing to this day; and
6 a great part of it is overgrown with jungles which have not yet been
7 cleared. Shaven-headed monks and nuns, with the begging bowl in
8 hand and clothed in yellow robes, spread all over Ceylon. In places
9 colossal temples were reared containing huge figure of Buddha in
10 meditation, of Buddha preaching the Law, and of Buddha in a
11 reclining posture--entering into Nirvana. And the Ceylonese, out of
12 mischief, painted on the walls of the temples the supposed state of
13 things in Purgatory--some are being thrashed by ghosts, some are
14 being sawed, some burnt, some fried in hot oil, and some being
15 flayed--altogether a hideous spectacle! Who could know that in this
16 religion, which preached "noninjury as the highest virtue", there
17 would be room for such things! Such is the case in China, too, so
18 also in Japan. While preaching non-killing so much in theory, they
19 provide for such an array of punishments as curdles up one's blood
20 to see. Once a thief broke into the house of a man of this non-killing
21 type. The boys of the house caught hold of the thief and were giving
22 him a sound beating. The master hearing a great row came out on
23 the upper balcony and after making inquiries shouted out, "Cease
24 from beating, my boys. Don't beat him. Non-injury is the highest
25 virtue." The fraternity of junior non-killers stopped beating and
26 asked the master what they were to do with the thief. The master
27 ordered, "Put him in a bag, and throw him into water." The thief,
28 much obliged at this humane dispensation, with folded hands said,
29 "Oh! How great is the master's compassion!" I had heard that the
30 Buddhists were very quiet people and equally tolerant of all
31 religions. Buddhist preachers come to Calcutta and abuse us with
32 choice epithets, although we offer them enough respect. Once I was
33 preaching at Anuradhapuram among the Hindus--not Buddhists--
34 and that in an open maidan, not on anybody's property--when a
35 whole host of Buddhist monks and laymen, men and women, came
36 out beating drums and cymbals and set up an awful uproar. The
37 lecture had to stop, of course, and there was the imminent risk of
38 bloodshed. With great difficulty I had to persuade the Hindus that
39 we at any rate might practise a bit of non-injury, if they did not.
40 Then the matter ended peacefully.

41 Gradually Tamilian Hindus from the north began slowly to
42 migrate into Ceylon. The Buddhists, finding themselves in untoward
43 circumstances, left their capital to establish a hill-station called
44 Kandy, which, too, the Tamilians wrested from them in a short time
45 and placed a Hindu king on the throne. Then came hordes of
46 Europeans--the Spaniards, the Portuguese, and the Dutch. Lastly
47 the English have made themselves kings. The royal family of Kandy
48 have been sent to Tanjore, where they are living on pension and
49 Mulagutanni Rasam.

50 In northern Ceylon there is a great majority of Hindus, while
51 in the southern part, Buddhists and hybrid Eurasians of different
52 types preponderate. The principal seat of the Buddhists is Columbo,

1 the present capital, and that of the Hindus is Jaffna. The restrictions
2 of caste are here much less than in India; the Buddhists have a few
3 in marriage affairs, but none in matters of food, in which respect
4 the Hindus observe some restrictions. All the butchers of Ceylon
5 were formerly Buddhists; now the number is decreasing owing to
6 the revival of Buddhism. Most of the Buddhists are now changing
7 their anglicised titles for native ones. All the Hindu castes have
8 mixed together and formed a single Hindu caste, in which, like the
9 Punjabi Jats, one can marry a girl of any caste--even a European girl
10 at that. The son goes into a temple, puts the sacred trilinear mark
11 on the forehead, utters "Shiva, Shiva", and becomes a Hindu. The
12 husband may be a Hindu, while the wife is a Christian. The
13 Christian rubs some sacred ash on the forehead, utters "Namah
14 Parvatipataye" (salutation to Shiva), and she straightway becomes a
15 Hindu. This is what has made the Christian missionaries so cross
16 with you. Since your coming into Ceylon, many Christians, putting
17 sacred ash on their head and repeating "Salutation to Shiva", have
18 become Hindus and gone back to their caste. Advaitavada and Vira-
19 Shaivavada are the prevailing religions here. In place of the word
20 "Hindu" one has to say "Shiva". The religious dance and Sankirtana
21 which Shri Chaitanya introduced into Bengal had their origin in the
22 South, among the Tamil race. The Tamil of Ceylon is pure Tamil and
23 the religion of Ceylon is equally pure Tamil religion. That ecstatic
24 chant of a hundred thousand men, and their singing of devotional
25 hymns to Shiva, the noise of a thousand Mridangas²¹⁰ with the
26 metallic sound of big cymbals, and the frenzied dance of these ash-
27 covered, red-eyed athletic Tamilians with stout rosaries of
28 Rudraksha beads on their neck, looking just like the great devotee,
29 Hanuman--you can form no idea of these, unless you personally see
30 the phenomenon.

31 Our Colombo friends had procured a permit for our landing,
32 so we landed and met our friends there. Sir Coomara Swami is the
33 foremost man among the Hindus: his wife is an English lady, and his
34 son is barefooted and wears the sacred ashes on his forehead. Mr.
35 Arunachalam and other friends came to meet me. After a long time
36 I partook of Mulagutanni and the king-cocoanut. They put some
37 green cocoanuts into my cabin. I met Mrs. Higgins and visited her
38 boarding school for Buddhist girls. I also visited the monastery and
39 school of our old acquaintance, the Countess of Canovara. The
40 Countess' house is more spacious and furnished than Mrs.
41 Higgins's. The Countess has invested her own money, whereas Mrs.
42 Higgins has collected the money by begging. The Countess herself
43 wears a Gerua cloth after the mode of the Bengali Sari. The
44 Ceylonese Buddhists have taken a great fancy to this fashion, I
45 found. I noticed carriage after carriage of women, all wearing the
46 same Bengali Sari.

47 The principal place of pilgrimage for the Buddhists is the
48 Dalada Maligawa or Tooth-temple at Kandy, which contains a tooth
49 of Lord Buddha. The Ceylonese say it was at first in the Jagannath
50 Temple at Puri and after many vicissitudes reached Ceylon, where

²¹⁰ ?A kind of Indian drum.

1 also there was no little trouble over it. Now it is lying safe. The
2 Ceylonese have kept good historical records of themselves, not like
3 those of ours--merely cock and bull stories. And the Buddhist
4 scriptures also are well preserved here in the ancient Magadhi
5 dialect. From here the Buddhist religion spread to Burma, Siam,
6 and other countries. The Ceylonese Buddhists recognise only
7 Shakyamuni mentioned in their scriptures and try to follow his
8 precepts. They do not, like the people of Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan,
9 Ladak, China, and Japan, worship Shiva and do not know the
10 worship with mystical Mantras of such goddesses as Tara Devi and
11 so forth. But they believe in possession by spirits and things of that
12 sort. The Buddhists have now split into two schools, the Northern
13 and the Southern; the Northern school calls itself the Mahayana,
14 and the Southern school, comprising the Ceylonese, Burmese,
15 Siamese, etc., Hinayana. The Mahayana branch worships Buddha in
16 name only; their real worship is of Tara Devi and of
17 Avalokiteshwara (whom the Japanese, Chinese and Koreans call
18 Wanyin); and there is much use of various cryptic rites and
19 Mantras. The Tibetans are the real demons of Shiva. They all
20 worship Hindu gods, play the Damaru,²¹¹ keep human skulls, blow
21 horns made of the bones of dead monks, are much given to wine
22 and meat, and are always exorcising evil spirits and curing diseases
23 by means of mystical incantations. In China and Japan, on the walls
24 of all the temples I have observed various monosyllabic Mantras
25 written in big gilt letters, which approach the Bengali characters so
26 much that you can easily make out the resemblance.

27 Alasinga returned to Madras from Colombo, and we also got
28 on board our ship, with presents of some lemons from the orchard
29 of Coomara Swami, some king-cocoanuts, and two bottles of syrup,
30 etc. (The god Kartikeya has various names, such as Subrahmanya,
31 Kamara Swami etc. In the South the worship of this god is much in
32 vogue; they call Kartikeya an incarnation of the sacred formula
33 "Om".)

34 The ship left Colombo on the morning of 25th June. Now we
35 have to encounter full monsoon conditions. The more our ship is
36 advancing, the more is the storm increasing and the louder is the
37 wind howling--there is incessant rain, and enveloping darkness;
38 huge waves are dashing on the ship's deck with a terrible noise, so
39 that it is impossible to stay on the deck. The dining table has been
40 divided into small squares by means of wood partitions, placed
41 lengthwise and breadthwise, called fiddle, out of which the food
42 articles are jumping up. The ship is creaking, as if it were going to
43 break to pieces. The Captain says, "Well, this year's monsoon seems
44 to be unusually rough". The Captain is a very interesting person
45 who spent many years in the Chinese Sea and Indian Ocean; a very
46 entertaining fellow, very clever in telling cock and bull stories.
47 Numerous stories of pirates--how Chinese coolies used to kill ship's
48 officers, loot the whole ship and escape--and other stories of that ilk
49 he is narrating. And there is nothing else to do, for reading or
50 writing is out of the question in such heavy rolling. It is extremely

1 ²¹¹ ?A tabor shaped like an hour-glass.
2

1 difficult to sit inside the cabin; the window has been shut for fear of
2 the waves getting in. One day Brother T- kept it slightly ajar and a
3 fragment of a wave entered and flooded the whole cabin! And who
4 can describe the heaving and tossing on the deck! Amid such
5 conditions, you must remember, the work for your *Udbodhan* is
6 going on to a certain extent.

7 There are two Christian missionary passengers on our ship,
8 one of whom is an American, with a family--a very good man, named
9 Bogesh. He has been married seven years, and his children number
10 half-a-dozen. The servants call it God's special grace--though the
11 children perhaps, feel differently. Spreading a shabby bed on the
12 deck, Mrs. Bogesh makes all the children lie on it and goes away.
13 They make themselves dirty and roll on the deck, crying aloud. The
14 passengers on the deck are always nervous and cannot walk about
15 on the deck, lest they might tread on any of Bogesh's children.
16 Making the youngest baby lie in a square basket with high sides,
17 Mr. and Mrs. Bogesh sit in a corner for four hours, huddled
18 together. One finds it hard to appreciate your European civilisation.
19 If we rinse our mouth or wash our teeth in public--they say it is
20 barbarous, these things ought to be done in private. All right, but I
21 put it to you, if it is not also decent to avoid such acts as the one
22 above referred to, in public. And you run after this civilisation!
23 However you cannot understand what good Protestantism has done
24 to North Europe, unless you see the Protestant clergy. If then ten
25 crores of English people die, and only the priests survive, in twenty
26 years another ten crores will be raised!

27 Owing to the rolling of the ship most of the passengers are
28 suffering from headache. A little girl named Tootle is accompanying
29 her father; she has lost her mother. Our Nivedita has become a
30 mother to Tootle and Bogesh's children. Tootle has been brought up
31 in Mysore with her father who is a planter. I asked her, "Tootle, how
32 are you?" She replied, "This Bungalow is not good and rolls very
33 much, which makes me sick." To her every house is a bungalow.
34 One sickly child of Bogesh suffers specially from want of care; the
35 poor thing is rolling on the wooden deck the whole day. The old
36 Captain now and then comes out of his cabin and feeds him with
37 some soup with a spoon, and pointing to his slender legs says,
38 "What a sickly child--how sadly neglected!"

39 Many desire eternal happiness. But if happiness were
40 eternal, misery also would be eternal, just think of that. Could we in
41 that case have ever reached Aden! Fortunately neither happiness
42 nor misery is eternal; therefore in spite of our six days' journey
43 being prolonged into fourteen days, and our buffeting terrible wind
44 and rain night and day, we at last did reach Aden. The more we
45 were ahead of Colombo, the more the storm and rain increased, the
46 sky became a lake, and the wind and the waves grew fierce; and it
47 was almost impossible for the ship to proceed, breasting such wind
48 and wave, and her speed was halved. Near the island of Socotra,
49 the monsoon was at its worst. The Captain remarked that this was
50 the centre of the monsoon, and that if we could pass this, we should
51 gradually reach calmer waters. And so we did. And this nightmare
52 also ended.

1 On the evening of the 8th, we reached Aden. No one, white
2 or black, is allowed to land, neither is any cargo allowed into the
3 ship. And there are not many things worth seeing here. You have
4 only barren stretches of sand, bearing some resemblance to
5 Rajputana, and treeless, verdureless hills. In between the hills
6 there are forts and on the top are the soldiers' barracks. In front
7 are the hotels and shops arranged in the form of a crescent, which
8 are discernible from the ship. Many ships are lying in anchor. One
9 English, and one German man-of-war came in; the rest are either
10 cargo or passenger ships. I had visited the town last time. Behind
11 the hills are the native barracks and the bazar. A few miles from
12 there, there are big pits dug into the sides of the hills, where the
13 rain-water accumulates. Formerly that was the only source of water.
14 Now by means of an apparatus they distil the sea water and get
15 good fresh water, which, however, is very dear. Aden is just like an
16 Indian town--with its large percentage of Indian civil and military
17 population. There are a good many Parsee shopkeepers and Sindhi
18 merchants. Aden is a very ancient place--the Roman Emperor
19 Constantius sent a batch of missionaries here to preach
20 Christianity. Then the Arabs rose and killed these Christians,
21 whereupon the Roman Emperor asked the King of Abyssinia--long a
22 Christian country--to punish them. The Abyssinian King sent an
23 army and severely punished the Arabs of Aden. Afterwards Aden
24 passed into the hands of the Samanidi Kings of Persia. It is they
25 who are reputed to have first excavated those caves for the
26 accumulation of water. Then, after the rise of Mohammedanism,
27 Aden passed into the hands of the Arabs. After a certain time, a
28 Portuguese general made ineffectual attempts to capture the place.
29 Then the Sultan of Turkey made the place a naval base with the
30 object of expelling the Portuguese from the Indian Ocean.

31 Again it passed into the possession of the neighbouring
32 Arabian ruler. Afterwards, the English purchased it and they built
33 the present town. Now the warships of all the powerful nations are
34 cruising all over the world, and everyone wants to have a voice in
35 every trouble that arises in any part of it. Every nation wants to
36 safeguard its supremacy, political interest, and commerce. Hence
37 they are in need of coal every now and then. As it would not be
38 possible to get a supply of coal from an enemy country in times of
39 war, every Power wants to have a coaling station of its own. The
40 best sites have been already occupied by the English; the French
41 have come in for the next best; and after them the other Powers of
42 Europe have secured, and are securing, sites for themselves either
43 by force or by purchase, or by friendly overture. The Suez Canal is
44 now the link between Europe and Asia, and it is under the control of
45 the French. Consequently the English have made their position very
46 strong at Aden, and the other Powers also have each made a base
47 for themselves along the Red Sea. Sometimes this rage for land
48 brings disastrous consequences. Italy, trodden under foreign feet
49 for seven centuries, stood on her legs after enormous difficulties.
50 But immediately after doing this, she began to think a lot of herself
51 and became ambitious of foreign conquest. In Europe no nation can
52 seize a bit of land belonging to another; for all the Powers would
53 unite to crush the usurper. In Asia also, the big Powers--the English,

1 Russians, French, and Dutch--have left little space unoccupied. Now
2 there remained only a few bits of Africa, and thither Italy directed
3 her attention. First she tried in North Africa, where she met with
4 opposition from the French and desisted. Then the English gave her
5 a piece of land on the Red Sea, with the ulterior object that from
6 that centre Italy might absorb the Abyssinian territory. Italy, too,
7 came on with an army. But the Abyssinian King, Manalik, gave her
8 such a beating that Italy found it difficult to save herself by fleeing
9 from Africa. Besides, Russian and Abyssinian Christianity being, as
10 is alleged, very much alike, the Russian Czar is an ally of the
11 Abyssinians at bottom.

12 Well, our ship is now passing through the Red Sea. The
13 missionary said, "This is the Red Sea, which the Jewish leader
14 Moses crossed on foot with his followers. And the army which the
15 Egyptian King Pharaoh sent for their capture was drowned in the
16 sea, the wheels of their war-chariots having stuck in the mud"--like
17 Karna's in the Mahabharata story. He further said that this could
18 now be proved by modern scientific reasons. Nowadays in every
19 country it has become a fashion to support the miracles of religion
20 by scientific argument. My friend, if these phenomena were the
21 outcome of natural forces, where then is there room for their
22 intervention of your god "Yave"? A great dilemma! --If they are
23 opposed to science, those miracles are mere myths, and your
24 religion is false. And even if they are borne out by science, the glory
25 of your god is superfluous, and they are just like any other natural
26 phenomena. To this, Priest Bogesh replied, "I do not know all the
27 issues involved in it, I simply believe." This is all right--one can
28 tolerate that. But then there is a party of men, who are very clear in
29 criticising others' views and bringing forward arguments against
30 them, but where they themselves are concerned, they simply say, "I
31 only believe, my mind testifies to their veracity." These are simply
32 unbearable. Pooh! What weight has their intellect? Absolutely
33 nothing! They are very quick to label the religious beliefs of others
34 as superstitious, especially those which have been condemned by
35 the Europeans, while in their own case they concoct some fantastic
36 notions of Godhead and are beside themselves with emotions over
37 them.

38 The ship is steadily sailing north. The borders of this Red Sea
39 were a great centre of ancient civilisation. There, on the other side,
40 are the deserts of Arabia, and on this--Egypt. This is that ancient
41 Egypt. Thousands of years ago, these Egyptians starting from Punt
42 (probably Malabar) crossed the Red Sea, and steadily extended
43 their kingdom till they reached Egypt. Wonderful was the expansion
44 of their power, their territory, and their civilisation. The Greeks
45 were the disciples of these. The wonderful mausoleums of their
46 kings, the Pyramids, with figures of the Sphinx, and even their dead
47 bodies are preserved to this day. Here lived the ancient Egyptian
48 peoples, with curling hair and ear-rings, and wearing snow-white
49 *dhotis* without one end being tucked up behind. This is Egypt--the
50 memorable stage where the Hyksos, the Pharaohs, the Persian
51 Emperors, Alexander the Great, and the Ptolemies, and the Roman
52 and Arab conquerors played their part. So many centuries ago, they

1 left their history inscribed in great detail in hieroglyphic characters
2 on papyrus paper, on stone slabs, and on the sides of earthen
3 vessels.

4 This is the land where Isis was worshipped and Horus
5 flourished. According to these ancient Egyptians, when a man dies,
6 his subtle body moves about; but any injury done to the dead body
7 affects the subtle body, and the destruction of the former means the
8 total annihilation of the latter. Hence they took so much pains to
9 preserve the corpse. Hence the pyramids of the kings and
10 emperors. What devices, how much labour--alas, all in vain! Lured
11 by the treasures, robbers have dug into the pyramids, and
12 penetrating the mysteries of the labyrinths, have stolen the royal
13 bodies. Not now--it was the work of the ancient Egyptians
14 themselves. Some five or six centuries ago, these desiccated
15 mummies the Jewish and Arab physicians looked upon as
16 possessing great medicinal virtues and prescribed them for patients
17 all over Europe. To this day, perhaps, it is the genuine "Mumia" of
18 Unani and Hakimi methods of treatment!

19 Emperor Asoka sent preachers to this Egypt during the reign
20 of the Ptolemy dynasty. They used to preach religion, cure diseases,
21 live on vegetable food, lead celibate lives, and make Sannyasin
22 disciples. They came to found many sects--the Therapeutae,
23 Essenes, Manichaeans, and the like; from which modern
24 Christianity has sprung. It was Egypt that became, during the
25 Ptolemaic rule, the nursery of all learning. Here was that city of
26 Alexandria, famous all over the world for its university, its library,
27 and its literati--that Alexandria which, falling into the hands of
28 illiterate, bigoted, and vulgar Christians suffered destruction, with
29 its library burnt to ashes and learning stamped out! Finally, the
30 Christians killed the lady savant, Hypatia, subjected her dead body
31 to all sorts of abominable insult, and dragged it through the streets,
32 till every bit of flesh was removed from the bones!

33 And to the south lie the deserts of Arabia--the mother of
34 heroes. Have you ever seen a Bedouin Arab, with a cloak on, and a
35 big kerchief tied on his head with a bunch of woollen strings?--That
36 gait, that pose of standing, and that look, you will find in no other
37 country. From head to foot emanates the freedom of open
38 unconfined desert air--there you have the Arab. When the bigotry of
39 the Christians and the barbarity of the Goths extinguished the
40 ancient Greek and Roman civilisation, when Persia was trying to
41 hide her internal putrefaction by adding layer after layer of gold-
42 leaf upon it, when, in India, the sun of splendour of Pataliputra and
43 Ujjain had set, leaving some illiterate, tyrant kings to rule over her,
44 and the corruptions of dreadful obscenities and the worship of lust
45 festering within--when such was the state of the world, this
46 insignificant, semi-brutal Arab race spread like lightning over its
47 surface.

48 There you see a steamer coming from Mecca, with a cargo of
49 pilgrims; behold--the Turk in European dress, the Egyptian in half-
50 European costume, the Syrian Mussalman in Iranian attire, and the
51 real Arab wearing a cloth reaching down the knee. Before the time
52 of Mohammed, it was the custom to circumambulate round the

1 Cabba temple in a state of nudity; since his time they have to wrap
2 round a cloth. It is for this reason, that our Mohammedans unloose
3 the strings of their trousers, and let their cloth hang down to the
4 feet. Gone are those days for the Arabs. A continual influx of Kaffir,
5 Sidi, and Abyssinian blood has changed their physique, energy, and
6 all--the Arab of the desert is completely shorn of his former glory.
7 Those that live in the north are peaceful citizens of the Turkish
8 State. But the Christian subjects of the Sultan hate the Turks and
9 love the Arabs. They say that the Arabs are amenable to education,
10 become gentlemen, and are not so troublesome, while the real
11 Turks oppress the Christians very much.

12 Though the desert is very hot, that heat is not enervating.
13 There is no further trouble if you cover your body and head against
14 it. Dry heat is not only not enervating, on the contrary it has a
15 marked toning effect. The people of Rajputana, Arabia, and Africa
16 are illustrations of this. In certain districts of Marwar, men, cattle,
17 horses, and all are strong and of great stature. It is a joy to look at
18 the Arabs and Sidis. Where the heat is moist, as in Bengal, the body
19 is very much enervated, and every animal is weak.

20 The very name of the Red Sea strikes terror into the hearts
21 of the passengers--it is so dreadfully hot, specially in summer, as it
22 is now. Everyone is seated on the deck and recounts a story of some
23 terrible accident, according to his knowledge. The Captain has
24 outbidden them all.

25 He says that a few days ago a Chinese man-of-war was
26 passing through the Red Sea, and her Captain and eight sailors who
27 worked in the coal-room died of heat.

28 Indeed, those who work in the coal-room have in the first
29 place to stand in a pit of fire, and then there is the terrible heat of
30 the Red Sea. Sometimes they run mad, rush up to the deck, plunge
31 into the sea, and are drowned; or sometimes they die of heat in the
32 engine-room itself.

33 These stories were enough to throw us out of our wits,
34 nearly. But fortunately we did not experience so much heat. The
35 breeze, instead of being a south-wind, continued to blow from the
36 north, and it was the cool breeze of the Mediterranean.

37 On the 14th of July the steamer cleared the Red Sea and
38 reached Suez. In front is the Suez Canal. The steamer has cargo for
39 Suez. Well, Egypt is now under a visitation of plague, and possibly
40 we are also carrying its germs. So there is the risk of contagion on
41 both sides. Compared with the precautions taken here against
42 mutual contact, well, those of our country are as nothing. The goods
43 have to be unloaded, but the coolie of Suez must not touch the ship.
44 It meant a good deal of extra trouble for the ship's sailors. They
45 have to serve as coolies, lift up the cargo by means of cranes and
46 drop it, without touching, on the Suez boats which carry it ashore.
47 The agent of the Company has come near the ship in a small launch,
48 but he is not allowed to board her. From the launch he is talking
49 with the Captain who is in his ship. You must know this is not India,
50 where the white man is beyond the plague regulations and all--here
51 is the beginning of Europe. And all this precaution is taken lest the

1 rat-borne plague finds an entrance into this heaven. The incubation
2 period of plague-germs is ten days; hence the quarantine for ten
3 days. We have however passed that period, so the disaster has been
4 averted for us. But we shall be quarantined for ten days more if we
5 but touch any Egyptian. In that case no passengers will be landed
6 either at Naples or at Marseilles. Therefore every kind of work is
7 being done from a distance, free from contact. Consequently it will
8 take them the whole day to unload the cargo in this slow process.
9 The ship can easily cross the Canal in the night, if she be provided
10 with a searchlight; but if that is to be fitted, the Suez people will
11 have to touch the ship--there, you have ten days' quarantine. She is
12 therefore not to start in the night, and we must remain as we are in
13 this Suez harbour for twenty-four hours! This is a very beautiful
14 natural harbour, surrounded almost on three sides by sandy mounds
15 and hillocks, and the water also is very deep. There are
16 innumerable fish and sharks swimming in it. Nowhere else on earth
17 are sharks in such plenty as in this port and in the port of Sydney, in
18 Australia--they are ready to swallow men at the slightest
19 opportunity! Nobody dares to descend into the water. Men, too, on
20 their part are dead against the snakes and sharks and never let slip
21 an opportunity to kill them.

22 In the morning, even before breakfast, we came to learn that
23 big sharks were moving about behind the ship. I had never before
24 an opportunity to see live sharks--the last time I came, the ship
25 called at Suez for only a very short time, and that too, close to the
26 town. As soon as we heard of the sharks, we hastened to the spot.
27 The second class was at the stern of the ship, and from its deck,
28 crowds of men, women and children were leaning over the railings
29 to see the sharks. But our friends, the sharks, had moved off a little
30 when we appeared on the spot, which damped our spirit very much.
31 But we noticed that shoals of a kind of fish with bill-like heads were
32 swimming in the water, and there was a species of very tiny fish in
33 great abundance. Now and then a big fish, greatly resembling the
34 *hilsa*, was flitting like an arrow hither and thither. I thought, he
35 might be a young shark, but on inquiry I found it was not. Bonito
36 was his name. Of course I had formerly read of him, and this also I
37 had read that he was imported into Bengal from the Maldives as
38 dried fish, on big-sized boats. It was also a matter of report that his
39 meat was red and very tasteful. And we were now glad to see his
40 energy and speed. Such a large fish was flitting through the water
41 like an arrow, and in that glassy sea-water every movement of his
42 body was noticeable. We were thus watching the bonito's circuits
43 and the restless movements of the tiny fish for twenty minutes of
44 half an hour. Half an hour--three quarters--we were almost tired of
45 it, when somebody announced--there he was. About a dozen people
46 shouted, "There he is coming!" Casting my eyes I found that at
47 some distance a huge black thing was moving towards us, six or
48 seven inches below the surface of the water. Gradually the thing
49 approached nearer and nearer. The huge flat head was visible; now
50 massive his movement, there was nothing of the bonito's flitting in
51 it. But once he turned his head, a big circuit was made. A gigantic
52 fish; on he comes in a solemn gait, while in front of him are one or
53 two small fish, and a number of tiny ones are playing on his back

1 and all about his body. Some of them are holding fast on to his neck.
2 He is your shark with retinue and followers. The fish which are
3 preceding him are called the pilot fish. Their duty is to show the
4 shark his prey, and perhaps be favoured with crumbs of his meal.
5 But as one looks at the terrible gaping jaws of the shark, one
6 doubts whether they succeed much in this latter respect. The fish
7 which are moving about the shark and climbing on his back, are the
8 "suckers". About their chest there is a flat, round portion, nearly
9 four by two inches, which is furrowed and grooved, like the rubber
10 soles of many English shoes. That portion the fish applies to the
11 shark's body and sticks to it; that makes them appear as if riding on
12 the shark's body and back. They are supposed to live on the worms
13 etc. that grow on the shark's body. The shark must always have his
14 retinue of these two classes of fish. And he never injures them,
15 considering them perhaps as his followers and companions. One of
16 these fish was caught with a small hook and line. Someone slightly
17 pressed the sole of his shoe against its chest and when he raised his
18 foot, it too was found to adhere to it. In the same way it sticks to the
19 body of the shark.

20 The second class passengers have got their mettle highly
21 roused. One of them is a military man and his enthusiasm knows no
22 bounds. Rummaging the ship they found out a terrible hook--it
23 outvied the hooks that are used in Bengal for recovering water-pots
24 that have accidentally dropped into wells. To this they tightly
25 fastened about two pounds of meat with a strong cord, and a stout
26 cable was tied to it. About six feet from it, a big piece of wood was
27 attached to act as a float. Then the hook with the float was dropped
28 in the water. Below the ship a police boat was keeping guard ever
29 since we came, lest there might be any contact between us and the
30 people ashore. On this boat there were two men comfortably
31 asleep, which made them much despised in the eyes of the
32 passengers. At this moment they turned out to be great friends.
33 Roused by the tremendous shouts, our friend, the Arab, rubbed his
34 eyes and stood up. He was preparing to tuck up his dress,
35 imagining some trouble was at hand, when he came to understand
36 that so much shouting was nothing more than a request to him to
37 remove the beam that was meant as a float to catch the shark,
38 along with the hook, to a short distance. Then he breathed a sigh of
39 relief, and grinning from ear to ear he managed to push the float to
40 some distance by means of a pole. While we in eagerness stood on
41 tiptoe, leaning over the railing, and anxiously waited for the shark
42 "watching his advent with restless eyes";²¹² and as is always the
43 case with those for whom somebody may be waiting with suspense,
44 we suffered a similar fate--in other words, "the Beloved did not turn
45 up". But all miseries have an end, and suddenly about a hundred
46 yards from the ship, something of the shape of a watercarrier's
47 leather bag, but much larger, appeared above the surface of the
48 water, and immediately there was the hue and cry, "There is the
49 shark!" "Silence, you boys and girls! --the shark may run off".
50 --"Hallo, you people there, why don't you doff your white hats for a
51 while? --the shark may shy". --While shouts like these were reaching

²¹² ?From Jayadeva, the famous Sanskrit Poet of Bengal.

1 the ear, the shark, denizen of the salt sea, rushed close by, like a
2 boat under canvas, with a view to doing justice to the lump of pork
3 attached to the hook. Seven or eight feet more and the shark's jaws
4 would touch the bait. But that massive tail moved a little, and the
5 straight course was transformed into a curve. Alas, the shark has
6 made off! Again the tail slightly moved, and the gigantic body
7 turned and faced the hook. Again he is rushing on--gaping, there,
8 he is about to snap at the bait! Again the cursed tail moved, and the
9 shark wheeled his body off to a distance. Again he is taking a circuit
10 and coming on, he is gaping again; look now, he has put the bait
11 into his jaws, there, he is tilting on his side; yes, he has swallowed
12 the bait--pull, pull, forty or fifty pull together, pull on with all your
13 might! What tremendous strength the fish has, what struggles he
14 makes, how widely he gapes! Pull, pull! He is about to come above
15 the surface, there he is turning in the water, and again turning on
16 his side, pull, pull! Alas, he has extricated himself from the bait!
17 The shark has fled. Indeed, what fussy people you all are! You could
18 not wait to give him some time to swallow the bait! And you were
19 impatient enough to pull so soon as he turned on his side! However,
20 it is no use crying over spilt milk. The shark was rid of the hook and
21 made a clean run ahead. Whether he taught the pilot fish a good
22 lesson, we have got no information, but the fact was that the shark
23 was clean off. And he was tiger-like, having black stripes over his
24 body like a tiger. However, the "Tiger", with a view to avoiding the
25 dangerous vicinity of the hook, disappeared, with his retinue of
26 pilots and suckers.

27 But there is no need of giving up hopes altogether, for there,
28 just by the side of the retreating "Tiger" is coming on another, a
29 huge flat-headed creature! Alas, sharks have no language!
30 Otherwise "Tiger" would surely have made an open breast of his
31 secret to the newcomer and thus warned him. He would certainly
32 have said, "Hallo, my friend, beware there is a new creature come
33 over there, whose flesh is very tasteful and savoury, but what hard
34 bones! Well, I have been born and brought up as a shark these
35 many years and have devoured lots of animals--living, dead, and
36 half-dead, and filled my stomach with lots of bones, bricks, and
37 stones, and wooden stuff; but compared with these bones they are
38 as butter, I tell you. Look, what has become of my teeth and jaws".
39 And along with this he would certainly have shown to the new-
40 comer those gaping jaws reaching almost to half his body. And the
41 other too, with characteristic experience of maturer years, would
42 have prescribed for him one or other of such infallible marine
43 remedies as the bile of one fish, the spleen of another, the cooling
44 broth of oysters, and so forth. But since nothing of the kind took
45 place, we must conclude that either the sharks are sadly in want of
46 a language, or that they may have one, but it is impossible to talk
47 under water; therefore until some characters fit for the sharks are
48 discovered, it is impossible to use that language. Or it may be that
49 "Tiger", mixing too much in human company, has imbibed a bit of
50 human disposition too, and therefore, instead of giving out the real
51 truth, asked "Flat-head", with a smile, if he was doing well, and
52 bade him good-bye: "Shall I alone be befooled?"

1 Then Bengali poem has it, "First goes Bhagiratha blowing his
2 conch, then comes Ganga bringing up the rear" etc. Well, of course,
3 no blowing of the conch is heard, but first are going the pilot fish,
4 and behind them comes "Flat-head", moving his massive body, while
5 round about him dance the suckers. Ah, who can resist such a
6 tempting bait? For a space of five yards on all sides, the surface of
7 the sea is glossy with a film of fat, and it is for "Flat-head" himself
8 to say how far the fragrance thereof has spread. Besides, what a
9 spectacle it is! White, and red, and yellow--all in one place! It was
10 real English pork, tied round a huge black hook, heaving under
11 water most temptingly!

12 Silence now, every one--don't move about, and see that you
13 don't be too hasty. But take care to keep close to the cable. There,
14 he is moving near the hook, and examining the bait, putting it in his
15 jaws! Let him do so. Hush--now he has turned on his side--look, he
16 is swallowing it whole, silence--give him time to do it. Then, as
17 "Flat-head", turning on his side, had leisurely swallowed the bait,
18 and was about to depart, immediately there was the pull behind! "
19 Flat-head", astonished, jerked his head and wanted to throw the
20 bait off, but it made matters worse! The hook pierced him, and from
21 above, men, young and old, began to pull violently at the cable.
22 Look, the head of the shark is above water--pull, brothers, pull!
23 There, about half the shark's body is above water! Oh, what jaws! It
24 is all jaws and throat, it seems! Pull on! Ah, the whole of it is clear
25 of water. There, the hook has pierced his jaws through and
26 through--pull on! Wait, wait! --Hallo, you Arab Police boatman, will
27 you tie a string round his tail? --He is such a huge monster that it is
28 difficult to haul him up otherwise. Take care, brother, a blow from
29 that tail is enough to fracture a horse's leg! Pull on--Oh, how very
30 heavy! Good God, what have we here! Indeed, what is it that hangs
31 down from under the shark's belly? Are they not the entrails! His
32 own weight has forced them out! All right, cut them off, and let
33 them drop into the sea, that will make the weight lighter. Pull on,
34 brothers! Oh, it is a fountain of blood! No, there is no use trying to
35 save the clothes. Pull, he is almost within reach. Now, set him on
36 the deck; take care, brother, be very careful, if he but charges on
37 anybody, he will bite off a whole arm! And beware of that tail! Now,
38 slacken the rope--thud! Lord! What a big shark! And with what a
39 thud he fell on board the ship! Well, one cannot be too careful--
40 strike his head with that beam--hallo, military man, you are a
41 soldier, you are the man to do it. --"Quite so". The military
42 passenger, with body and clothes splashed with blood, raised the
43 beam and began to land heavy blows on the shark's head. And the
44 women went on shrieking, "Oh dear! How cruel! Don't kill him!"
45 and so forth, but never stopped seeing the spectacle. Let that
46 gruesome scene end here. How the shark's belly was ripped open,
47 how a torrent of blood flowed, how the monster continued to shake
48 and move for a long time even after his entrails and heart had been
49 taken off and his body dismembered, how from his stomach a heap
50 of bones, skin, flesh, and wood, etc. came out--let all these topics
51 go. Suffice it to say, that I had my meal almost spoilt that day--
52 everything smelt of that shark.

1 This Suez Canal is a triumph of canal engineering. It was dug
2 by a French engineer, Ferdinand de Lesseps. By connecting the
3 Mediterranean with the Red Sea, it has greatly facilitated the
4 commerce between Europe and India.

5 Of all the causes which have worked for the present state of
6 human civilisation from the ancient times, the commerce of India is
7 perhaps the most important. From time immemorial India has
8 beaten all other countries in point of fertility and commercial
9 industries. Up till a century ago, the whole of the world's demand
10 for cotton cloth, cotton, jute, indigo, lac, rice, diamonds, and pearls,
11 etc. used to be supplied from India. Moreover, no other country
12 could produce such excellent silk and woollen fabrics, like the
13 kincob etc. as India. Again, India has been the land of various
14 spices such as cloves, cardamom, pepper, nutmeg, and mace.
15 Naturally, therefore, from very ancient times, whatever country
16 became civilised at any particular epoch, depended upon India for
17 those commodities. This trade used to follow two main routes--one
18 was through land, via Afghanistan and Persia, and the other was by
19 sea--through the Red Sea. After his conquest of Persia, Alexander
20 the Great despatched a general named Niarchus to explore a sea-
21 route, passing by the mouth of the Indus, across the ocean, and
22 through the Red Sea. Most people are ignorant of the extent to
23 which the opulence of ancient countries like Babylon, Persia,
24 Greece, and Rome depended on Indian commerce. After the
25 downfall of Rome, Baghdad in Mohammedan territory, and Venice
26 and Genoa in Italy, became the chief Western marts of Indian
27 commerce. And when the Turks made themselves masters of the
28 Roman Empire and closed the trade-route to India for the Italians,
29 then Christopher Columbus (Christobal Colon), a Spaniard or
30 Genoese, tried to explore a new route to India across the Atlantic,
31 which resulted in the discovery of the American continent. Even
32 after reaching America, Columbus could not get rid of the delusion
33 that it was India. It is therefore that the aborigines of America are
34 to this day designated as Indians. In the Vedas we find both names,
35 "Sindhu" and "Indu", for the Indus; the Persians transformed them
36 into "Hindu", and the Greeks into "Indus", whence we derived the
37 words "India" and "Indian". With the rise of Mohammedanism the
38 word "Hindu" became degraded and meant "a dark-skinned fellow",
39 as is the case with the word "native" now.

40 The Portuguese, in the meantime, discovered a new route to
41 India, doubling Africa. The fortune of India smiled on Portugal--then
42 came the turn of the French, the Dutch, the Danes, and the English.
43 Indian commerce, Indian revenue and all are now in the possession
44 of the English; it is therefore that they are the foremost of all
45 nations now. But now, Indian products are being grown in countries
46 like America and elsewhere, even better than in India, and she has
47 therefore lost something of her prestige. This the Europeans are
48 unwilling to admit. That India, the India of "natives", is the chief
49 means and resources of their wealth and civilisation, is a fact which
50 they refuse to admit, or even understand. We too, on our part, must
51 not cease to bring it home to them.

52 Just weigh the matter in your mind. Those uncared-for lower

1 classes of India--the peasants and weavers and the rest, who have
2 been conquered by foreigners and are looked down upon by their
3 own people--it is they who from time immemorial have been
4 working silently, without even getting the remuneration of their
5 labours! But what great changes are taking place slowly, all over
6 the world, in pursuance of nature's law! Countries, civilisations, and
7 supremacy are undergoing revolutions. Ye labouring classes of
8 India, as a result of your silent, constant labours Babylon, Persia,
9 Alexandria, Greece, Rome, Venice, Genoa, Baghdad, Samargand,
10 Spain, Portugal, France, Denmark, Holland, and England have
11 successively attained supremacy and eminence! And you? --Well,
12 who cares to think of you! My dear Swami, your ancestors wrote a
13 few philosophical works, penned a dozen or so epics, or built a
14 number of temples--that is all, and you rend the skies with
15 triumphal shouts; while those whose heart's blood has contributed
16 to all the progress that has been made in the world--well, who cares
17 to praise them? The world-conquering heroes of spirituality, war,
18 and poetry are in the eyes of all, and they have received the
19 homage of mankind. But where nobody looks, no one gives a word
20 of encouragement, where everybody hates--that living amid such
21 circumstances and displaying boundless patience, infinite love, and
22 dauntless practicality, our proletariat are doing their duty in their
23 homes day and night, without the slightest murmur--well, is there
24 no heroism in this? Many turn out to be heroes when they have got
25 some great task to perform. Even a coward easily gives up his life,
26 and the most selfish man behaves disinterestedly, when there is a
27 multitude to cheer them on; but blessed indeed is he who manifests
28 the same unselfishness and devotion to duty in the smallest of acts,
29 unnoticed by all--and it is you who are actually doing this ye ever-
30 trampled labouring classes of India! I bow to you.

31 This Suez Canal is also a thing of remote antiquity. During
32 the reign of the Pharaohs in Egypt, a number of lagoons were
33 connected with one another by a channel and formed a canal
34 touching both seas. During the rule of the Roman Empire in Egypt
35 also, attempts were made now and then to keep that channel open.
36 Then the Mohammedan General Amru, after his conquest of Egypt,
37 dug out the sand and changed certain features of it, so that it
38 became almost transformed.

39 After that nobody paid much attention to it. The present
40 canal was excavated by Khedive Ismail of Egypt, the Viceroy of the
41 Sultan of Turkey, according to the advice of the French, and mostly
42 through French capital. The difficulty with this canal is that owing
43 to its running through a desert, it again and again becomes filled
44 with sand. Only one good-sized merchant-ship can pass through it
45 at a time, and it is said that very big men-of-war or merchantmen
46 can never pass through it. Now, with a view to preventing incoming
47 and outgoing ships from colliding against each other, the whole
48 canal has been divided into a number of sections, and at both ends
49 of each section there are open spaces broad enough for two or
50 three ships to lie at anchor together. The Head Office is at the
51 entrance to the Mediterranean, and there are stations in every
52 section like railway stations. As soon as a ship enters the canal,

1 messages are continually wired to this Head Office, where reports
2 of how many ships are coming in and how many are going out, with
3 their position at particular moments are telegraphed, and are
4 marked on a big map. To prevent one ship confronting another, no
5 ship is allowed to leave any station without a line-clear.

6 The Suez Canal is in the hands of the French. Though the
7 majority of shares of the Canal Company are now owned by the
8 English, yet, by a political agreement, the entire management rests
9 with the French.

10 Now comes the Mediterranean. There is no more memorable
11 region than this, outside India. It marks the end of Asia, Africa, and
12 of ancient civilisation. One type of manners and customs and modes
13 of living ends here and another type of features and temperament,
14 food and dress, customs and habits begins--we enter Europe. Not
15 only this, but here also is the great centre of that historical
16 admixture of colours, races, civilisations, culture, and customs,
17 which extending over many centuries has led to the birth of modern
18 civilisation. That religion, and culture, and civilisation, and
19 extraordinary prowess which today have encircled the globe were
20 born here in the regions surrounding the Mediterranean. There, on
21 the south, is the very, very ancient Egypt, the birthplace of
22 sculpture--overflowing in wealth and food-stuffs; on the east is Asia
23 Minor, the ancient arena of the Phoenician, Philistine, Jewish,
24 valiant Babylonian, Assyrian, and Persian civilisations; and on the
25 north, the land where the Greeks--wonders of the world--flourished
26 in ancient times.

27 Well, Swami, you have had enough of countries, and rivers,
28 and mountains, and seas--now listen to a little of ancient history.
29 Most wonderful are these annals of ancient days; not fiction, but
30 truth--the true history of the human race. These ancient countries
31 were almost buried in oblivion for eternity--the little that people
32 knew of them consisted almost exclusively of the curiously fictitious
33 compositions of the ancient Greek historians, or the miraculous
34 descriptions of the Jewish mythology called the Bible. Now the
35 inscriptions on ancient stones, buildings, rooms, and tiles, and
36 linguistic analysis are voluble in their narration of the history of
37 those countries. This recounting has but just commenced, but even
38 now it has unearthed most wonderful tales, and who knows what
39 more it will do in future? Great scholars of all countries are
40 puzzling their heads day and night over a bit of rock inscription or a
41 broken utensil, a building or a tile, and discovering the tales of
42 ancient days sunk in oblivion.

43 When the Mohammedan leader Osman occupied
44 Constantinople, and the banner of Islam began to flutter
45 triumphantly over the whole of eastern Europe, then those books
46 and that learning and culture of the ancient Greeks which were
47 kept hidden with their powerless descendants spread over western
48 Europe in the wake of the retreating Greeks. Though subjected for
49 a long time to the Roman rule, the Greeks were the teachers of the
50 Romans in point of learning and culture. So much so that owing to
51 the Greeks embracing Christianity and the Christian Bible being
52 written in the Greek tongue, Christianity got a hold over the whole

1 Roman Empire. But the ancient Greeks, whom we call the Yavanas,
2 and who were the first teachers of European civilisation, attained
3 the zenith of their culture long before the Christians. Ever since
4 they became Christians, all their learning and culture was
5 extinguished. But as some part of the culture of their ancestors is
6 still preserved in the Hindu homes, so it was with the Christian
7 Greeks; these books found their way all over Europe. This it was
8 that gave the first impetus to civilisation among the English,
9 German, French, and other nations. There was a craze for learning
10 the Greek language and Greek arts. First of all, they swallowed
11 everything that was in those books. Then, as their own intelligence
12 began to brighten up, and sciences began to develop, they
13 commenced researches as to the date, author, subject, and
14 authenticity, etc. of those books. There was no restriction whatever
15 in passing free opinions on all books of the non-Christian Greeks,
16 barring only the scriptures of the Christians, and consequently
17 there cropped up a new science--that of external and internal
18 criticism.

19 Suppose, for instance, that it is written in a book that such
20 and such an incident took place on such and such a date. But must
21 a thing be accepted as authentic, simply because some one has
22 been pleased to write something about it in a book? It was
23 customary with people, specially of those times, to write many
24 things from imagination; moreover, they had very scanty knowledge
25 about nature, and even of this earth we live in. All these raised
26 grave doubts as to the authenticity of the subject-matter of a book.
27 Suppose, for instance, that a Greek historian has written that on
28 such and such a date there was a king in India called
29 Chandragupta. If now, the books of India, too, mention that king
30 under that particular date, the matter is certainly proved to a great
31 extent. If a few coins of Chandragupta's reign be found, or a
32 building of his time which contains references to him, the veracity
33 of the matter is then assured.

34 Suppose another book records a particular incident as taking
35 place in the reign of Alexander the Great, but there is mention of
36 one or two Roman Emperors in such a way that they cannot be
37 taken as interpolations--then that book is proved not to belong to
38 Alexander's time.

39 Or again, language. Every language undergoes some change
40 through the lapse of time, and authors have also their own peculiar
41 style. If in any book there is suddenly introduced a description
42 which has no bearing on the subject, and is in a style quite different
43 from the author's, it will readily be suspected as an interpolation.
44 Thus a new science of ascertaining the truth about a book, by
45 means of doubting and testing and proving in various ways, was
46 discovered.

47 To add to this, modern science began, with rapid strides, to
48 throw new light on things from all sides, with the results that any
49 book that contained a reference to supernatural incidents came to
50 be wholly disbelieved.

51 To crown all, there were the entrance of the tidal wave of

1 Sanskrit into Europe and the deciphering of ancient lapidary
2 inscriptions found in India, on the banks of the Euphrates, and in
3 Egypt, as well as the discovery of temples etc., hidden for ages
4 under the earth or on hill-sides, and the correct reading of their
5 history.

6 I have already said that this new science of research set the
7 Bible or the New Testament books quite apart. Now there are no
8 longer the tortures of the Inquisition, there is only the fear of social
9 obloquy; disregarding that, many scholars have subjected those
10 books also to a stringent analysis. Let us hope that as they
11 mercilessly hack the Hindu and other scriptures to pieces, they will
12 in time show the same moral courage towards the Jewish and
13 Christian scriptures also. Let me give an illustration to explain why
14 I say this. Maspero, a great savant and a highly reputed author on
15 Egyptology, has written a voluminous history of the Egyptians and
16 Babylonians entitled *Histoire Ancienne Orientale*. A few years ago
17 I read an English translation of the book by an English
18 archaeologist. This time, on my asking a Librarian of the British
19 Museum about certain books on Egypt and Babylon, Maspero's
20 book was mentioned. And when he learnt that I had with me an
21 English translation of the book, he said that it would not do, for the
22 translator was a rather bigoted Christian, and wherever Maspero's
23 researches hit Christianity in any way, he (the translator) had
24 managed to twist and torture those passages! He recommended me
25 to read the book in original French. And on reading I found it was
26 just as he had said--a terrible problem indeed! You know very well
27 what a queer thing religious bigotry is; it makes a mess of truth and
28 untruth. Thenceforth my faith in the translations of those research
29 works has been greatly shaken.

30 Another new science has developed--ethnology, that is, the
31 classification of men from an examination of their colour, hair,
32 physique, shape of the head, language, and so forth.

33 The Germans, though masters in all sciences, are specially
34 expert in Sanskrit and ancient Assyrian culture; Benfey and other
35 German scholars are illustrations of this. The French are skilled in
36 Egyptology-scholars like Maspero are French. The Dutch are
37 famous for their analysis of Jewish and ancient Christian religions--
38 writers like Kuenen have attained a world-celebrity. The English
39 inaugurate many sciences and then leave off.

40 Let me now tell you some of the opinions of these scholars. If
41 you do not like their views, you may fight them; but pray, do not lay
42 the blame on me.

43 According to the Hindus, Jews, ancient Babylonians,
44 Egyptians, and other ancient races, all mankind have descended
45 from the same primaeval parents. People do not much believe in
46 this now.

47 Have you ever seen jet-black, flat-nosed, thick-lipped, curly-
48 haired Kaffirs with receding foreheads? And have you seen the
49 Santals, and Andamanese, and Bhils with about the same features,
50 but of shorter stature, and with hair less curly? The first class are
51 called Negroes; these live in Africa. The second class are called

1 Negritos (little Negroes); in ancient times these used to inhabit
2 certain parts of Arabia, portions of the banks of the Euphrates, the
3 southern part of Persia, the whole of India, the Andamans, and
4 other islands, even as far as Australia. In modern times they are to
5 be met with in certain forests and jungles of India, in the
6 Andamans, and in Australia.

7 Have you seen the Lepchas, Bhutias, and Chinese--white or
8 yellow in colour, and with straight black hair? They have dark eyes--
9 but these are set so as to form an angle--scanty beard and
10 moustache, a flat face, and very prominent malar bones. Have you
11 seen the Nepalese, Burmese, Siamese, Malays, and Japanese? They
12 have the same shape, but have shorter stature.

13 The two species of this type are called Mongols and
14 Mongoloids (little Mongols). The Mongolians have now occupied the
15 greater part of Asia. It is they who, divided into many branches
16 such as the Mongols, Kalmucks, Huns, Chinese, Tartars, Turks,
17 Manchus, Kirghiz, etc. lead a nomadic life, carrying tents, and
18 tending sheep, goats, cattle, and horses, and whenever an
19 opportunity occurs, sweep like a swarm of locusts and unhinge the
20 world. These Chinese and Tibetans alone are an exception to this.
21 They are also known by the name of Turanians. It is the Turan
22 which you find in the popular phrase, "Iran and Turan."

23 A race of a dark colour but with straight hair, straight nose
24 and straight dark eyes, used to inhabit ancient Egypt and ancient
25 Babylonia and now live all over India, specially in the southern
26 portion; in Europe also one finds traces of them in rare places. They
27 form one race, and have the technical name of Dravidians.

28 Another race has white colour, straight eyes, but ears and
29 noses curved and thick towards the tip, receding foreheads, and
30 thick lips--as, for instance, the people of north Arabia, the modern
31 Jews and the ancient Babylonians, Assyrians, Phoenicians, etc.;
32 their languages also have a common stock; these are called the
33 Semitic race.

34 And those who speak a language allied to Sanskrit, who have
35 straight noses, mouths, and eyes, a white complexion, black or
36 brown hair, dark or blue eyes, are called Aryans.

37 All the modern races have sprung from an admixture of these
38 races. A country which has a preponderance of one or other of
39 these races, has also its language and physiognomy mostly like
40 those of that particular race.

41 It is not a generally accepted theory in the West that a warm
42 country produces dark complexion and a cold country white
43 complexion. Many are of opinion that the existing shades between
44 black and white have been the outcome of a fusion of races.

45 According to scholars, the civilisations of Egypt and ancient
46 Babylonia are the oldest. Houses and remains of buildings are to be
47 met with in these countries dating 6,000 B.C. or even earlier. In
48 India the oldest building that may have been discovered date back
49 to Chandragupta's time at the most; that is, only 300 B.C. Houses of

greater antiquity have not yet been discovered.²¹³ But there are books, etc., of a far earlier date, which one cannot find in any other country. Pandit Bal Gangadhar Tilak has brought evidence to show that the Vedas of the Hindus existed in the present form at least five thousand years before the Christian era.

The borders of this Mediterranean were the birthplace of that European civilisation which has now conquered the world. On these shores the Semitic races such as the Egyptians, Babylonians, Phoenicians, and Jews, and the Aryan races such as the Persians, Greeks, and Romans, fused together--to form the modern European civilisation.

A big stone slab with inscriptions on it, called the Rosetta Stone, was discovered in Egypt. On this there are inscriptions in hieroglyphics, below which there is another kind of writing, and below them all there are inscriptions resembling Greek characters. A scholar conjectured that those three sets of inscriptions represented the same thing, and he deciphered these ancient Egyptian inscriptions with the help of Coptic characters--the Copts being the Christian race who yet inhabit Egypt and who are known as the descendants of the ancient Egyptians. Similarly the cuneiform characters inscribed on the bricks and tiles of the Babylonians were also gradually deciphered. Meanwhile certain Indian inscriptions in plough-shaped characters were discovered as belonging to the time of Emperor Asoka. No earlier inscriptions than these have been discovered in India.²¹⁴ The hieroglyphics inscribed on various kinds of temples, columns, and sarcophagi all over Egypt are being gradually deciphered and making Egyptian antiquity more lucid.

The Egyptians entered into Egypt from a southern country called Punt, across the seas. Some say that that Punt is the modern Malabar, and that the Egyptians and Dravidians belong to the same race. Their first king was named Menes, and their ancient religion too resembles in some parts our mythological tales. The god Shibu was enveloped by the goddess Nui; later on another god Shu came and forcibly removed Nui. Nui's body became the sky, and her two hands and two legs became the four pillars of that sky. And Shibu became the earth. Osiris and Isis, the son and daughter of Nui, are the chief god and goddess in Egypt, and their son Horus is the object of universal worship. These three used to be worshipped in a group. Isis, again, is worshipped in the form of the cow.

Like the Nile on earth there is another Nile in the sky, of which the terrestrial Nile is only a part. According to the Egyptians, the Sun travels round the earth in a boat; now and then a serpent called Ahi devours him, then an eclipse takes place. The Moon is periodically attacked by a boar and torn to pieces, from which he

²¹³ ?The ancient remains at Harappa, Mohenjo-daro, etc., in the Indus Valley in Northwest India, which prove the existence of an advanced city civilisation in India dating back to more than 3000 B.C., were not dug out before 1922.--Ed.

²¹⁴ ?The Indus script is now known to be contemporary with Sumerian and Egyptian.--Ed.

1 takes fifteen days to recover. The deities of Egypt are some of them
2 jackal-faced, some hawk-faced, others cow-faced, and so on.

3 Simultaneously with this, another civilisation had its rise on
4 the banks of the Euphrates. Baal, Moloch, Istarte, and Damuzi were
5 the chief of deities here. Istarte fell in love with a shepherd named
6 Damuzi. A boar killed the latter and Istarte went to Hades, below
7 the earth, in search of him. There she was subjected to various
8 tortures by the terrible goddess Alat. At last Istarte declared that
9 she would no more return to earth unless she got Damuzi back. This
10 was a great difficulty; she was the goddess of sex-impulse, and
11 unless she went back, neither men, nor animals, nor vegetables
12 would multiply. Then the gods made a compromise that every year
13 Damuzi was to reside in Hades for four months and live on earth
14 during the remaining eight months. Then Istarte returned, there
15 was the advent of spring and a good harvest followed.

16 Thus Damuzi again is known under the name of Adunoi or
17 Adonis! The religion of all the Semitic races, with slight minor
18 variations, was almost the same. The Babylonians, Jews,
19 Phoenicians, and Arabs of a later date used the same form of
20 worship. Almost every god was called Moloch--the word which
21 persists to this day in the Bengali language as Malik (ruler), Mulluk
22 (kingdom) and so forth--or Baal; but of course there were minor
23 differences. According to some, the god called Alat afterwards
24 turned into Allah of the Arab.

25 The worship of these gods also included certain terrible and
26 abominable rites. Before Moloch or Baal children used to be burnt
27 alive. In the temple of Istarte the natural and unnatural satisfaction
28 of lust was the principal feature.

29 The history of the Jewish race is much more recent than that
30 of Babylon. According to scholars the scripture known as the Bible
31 was composed from 500 B.C. to several years after the Christian
32 era. Many portions of the Bible which are generally supposed to be
33 of earlier origin belong to a much later date. The main topics of the
34 Bible concern the Babylonians. The Babylonian cosmology and
35 description of the Deluge have in many parts been incorporated
36 wholesale into the Bible. Over and above this, during the rule of the
37 Persian Emperors in Asia Minor, many Persian doctrines found
38 acceptance among the Jews. According to the Old Testament, this
39 world is all; there is neither soul nor an after-life. In the New
40 Testament there is mention of the Parsee doctrines of an after-life
41 and resurrection of the dead, while the theory of Satan exclusively
42 belongs to the Parsis.

43 The principal feature of the Jewish religion is the worship of
44 Yave-Moloch. But this name does not belong to the Jewish
45 language; according to some it is an Egyptian word. But nobody
46 knows whence it came. There are descriptions in the Bible that the
47 Israelites lived confined in Egypt for a long time, but all this is
48 seldom accepted now, and the patriarchs such as Abraham, and
49 Isaac, and Joseph are proved to be mere allegories.

50 The Jews would not utter the name "Yave", in place of which
51 they used to say "Adunoi". When the Jews became divided into two

1 branches, Israel and Ephraim, two principal temples were
2 constructed in the two countries. In the temple that was built by the
3 Israelites in Jerusalem, an image of Yave, consisting of a male and
4 female figure united, was preserved in a coffer (ark), and there was
5 a big phallic column at the door. In Ephraim, Yave used to be
6 worshipped in the form of a gold-covered Bull.

7 In both places it was the practice to consign the eldest son
8 alive to the flames before the god, and a band of women used to live
9 in both the temples, within the very precincts of which they used to
10 lead most immoral lives and their earnings were utilised for temple
11 expenditure.

12 In course of time there appeared among the Jews a class of
13 men who used to invoke the presence of deities in their person by
14 means of music or dance. They were called Prophets. Many of
15 these, through association with the Persians, set themselves against
16 image-worship, sacrifice of sons, immorality, prostitution, and such
17 other practices. By degrees, circumcision took the place of human
18 sacrifice; and prostitution and image-worship etc. gradually
19 disappeared. In course of time from among these Prophets
20 Christianity had its rise.

21 There is a great dispute as to whether there ever was born a
22 man with the name of Jesus. Of the four books comprising the New
23 Testament, the Book of St. John has been rejected by some as
24 spurious. As to the remaining three, the verdict is that they have
25 been copied from some ancient book; and that, too, long after the
26 date ascribed to Jesus Christ.

27 Moreover, about the time that Jesus is believed to have been
28 born among the Jews themselves, there were born two historians,
29 Josephus and Philo. They have mentioned even petty sects among
30 the Jews, but not made the least reference to Jesus or the
31 Christians, or that the Roman Judge sentenced him to death on the
32 cross. Josephus' book had a single line about it, which has now been
33 proved to be an interpolation. The Romans used to rule over the
34 Jews at that time, and the Greeks taught all sciences and arts. They
35 have all written a good many things about the Jews, but made no
36 mention of either Jesus or the Christians.

37 Another difficulty is that the sayings, precepts, or doctrines
38 which the New Testament preaches were already in existence
39 among the Jews before the Christian era, having come from
40 different quarters, and were being preached by Rabbis like Hillel
41 and others. These are what scholars say; but they cannot, with
42 safety to their reputation, give oracular verdicts off-hand on their
43 own religion, as they are wont to do with regard to alien religions.
44 So they proceed slowly. This is what is called Higher Criticism.

45 The Western scholars are thus studying the religions,
46 customs, races, etc., of different and far-off countries. But we have
47 nothing of the kind in Bengali! And how is it possible? If a man after
48 ten years of hard labour translates a book of this kind, well, what
49 will he himself live upon, and where will he get the funds to publish
50 his book?

1 In the first place, our country is very poor, and in the second
2 place, there is practically no cultivation of learning. Shall such a
3 day dawn for our country when we shall be cultivating various kinds
4 of arts and sciences?--"She whose grace makes the dumb eloquent
5 and the lame to scale mountains"--She, the Divine Mother, only
6 knows!

7 The ship touched Naples--we reached Italy. The capital of
8 Italy is Rome--Rome, the capital of that ancient, most powerful
9 Roman Empire, whose politics, military science, art of colonisation,
10 and foreign conquest are to this day the model for the whole world!

11 After leaving Naples the ship called at Marseilles, and thence
12 straight at London.

13 You have already heard a good deal about Europe--what they
14 eat, how they dress, what are their manners and customs, and so
15 forth--so I need not write on this. But about European civilisation,
16 its origin, its relation to us, and the extent to which we should adopt
17 it--about such things I shall have much to say in future. The body is
18 no respecter of persons, dear brother, so I shall try to speak about
19 them some other time. Or what is the use? Well, who on earth can
20 vie with us (specially the Bengalis) as regards talking and
21 discussing? Show it in action if you can. Let your work proclaim,
22 and let the tongue rest. But let me mention one thing in passing,
23 viz. that Europe began to advance from the date that learning and
24 power began to flow in among the poor lower classes. Lots of
25 suffering poor people of other countries, cast off like refuse as it
26 were, find a house and shelter in America, and these are the very
27 backbone of America! It matters little whether rich men and
28 scholars listen to you, understand you, and praise or blame you--
29 they are merely the ornaments, the decorations of the country! --It
30 is the millions of poor lower class people who are its life. Numbers
31 do not count, nor does wealth or poverty; a handful of men can
32 throw the world off its hinges, provided they are united in thought,
33 word, and deed--never forget this conviction. The more opposition
34 there is, the better. Does a river acquire velocity unless there is
35 resistance? The newer and better a thing is, the more opposition it
36 will meet with at the outset. It is opposition which foretells success.
37 Where there is no opposition there is no success either. Good-bye!

38 39 II

40 We have an adage among us that one that has a disc-like
41 pattern on the soles of his feet becomes a vagabond. I fear, I have
42 my soles inscribed all over with them. And there is not much room
43 for probability, either. I have tried my best to discover them by
44 scrutinising the soles, but all to no purpose--the feet have been
45 dreadfully cracked through the severity of cold, and no discs or
46 anything of the kind could be traced. However, when there is the
47 tradition, I take it for granted that my soles are full of those signs.
48 But the results are quite patent--it was my cherished desire to
49 remain in Paris for some time and study the French language and
50 civilisation; I left my old friends and acquaintances and put up with
51 a new friend, a Frenchman of ordinary means, who knew no

1 English, and my French--well, it was something quite extraordinary!
2 I had this in mind that the inability to live like a dumb man would
3 naturally force me to talk French, and I would attain fluency in that
4 language in no time--but on the contrary I am now on a tour
5 through Vienna, Turkey, Greece, Egypt, and Jerusalem! Well, who
6 can stem the course of the inevitable! --And this letter I am writing
7 to you from the last remaining capital of Mohammedan supremacy--
8 from Constantinople!

9 I have three travelling companions--two of them French and
10 the third an American. The American is Miss MacLeod whom you
11 know very well; the French male companion is Monsieur Jules Bois,
12 a famous philosopher and litterateur of France; and the French lady
13 friend is the world-renowned singer, Mademoiselle Calve. "Mister"
14 is "Monsieur" in the French language, and "Miss" is
15 "Mademoiselle"--with a Z-sound. Mademoiselle Calve is the
16 foremost singer--opera singer--of the present day. Her musical
17 performances are so highly appreciated that she has an annual
18 income of three to four lakhs of rupees, solely from singing. I had
19 previously been acquainted with her. The foremost actress in the
20 West, Madame Sarah Bernhardt, and the foremost singer, Calve,
21 are both of them of French extraction, and both totally ignorant of
22 English, but they visit England and America occasionally and earn
23 millions of dollars by acting and singing. French is the language of
24 the civilised world, the mark of gentility in the West, and everybody
25 knows it; consequently these two ladies have neither the leisure nor
26 the inclination to learn English. Madame Bernhardt is an aged lady;
27 but when she steps on the stage after dressing, her imitation of the
28 age and sex of the role she plays is perfect! A girl or a boy--
29 whatever part you want her to play, she is an exact representation
30 of that. And that wonderful voice!

31 People here say her voice has the ring of silver strings!
32 Madame Bernhardt has a special regard for India; she tells me
33 again and again that our country is "*tres ancien, tres civilise*"--very
34 ancient and very civilised. One year she performed a drama
35 touching on India, in which she set up a whole Indian street-scene
36 on the stage--men, women, and children, Sadhus and Nagas, and
37 everything--an exact picture of India! After the performance she
38 told me that for about a month she had visited every museum and
39 made herself acquainted with the men and women and their dress,
40 the streets and bathing ghats and everything relating to India.
41 Madame Bernhardt has a very strong desire to visit India. --"*C'est*
42 *mon rave!*" --It is the dream of my life", she says. Again, the Prince of
43 Wales²¹⁵ has promised to take her over to a tiger and elephant
44 hunting excursion. But then she said she must spend some two
45 lakhs of rupees if she went to India! She is of course in no want of
46 money. "*La divine Sarah*"--the divine Sarah--is her name; how can
47 she want money, she who never travels but by a special train! That
48 pomp and luxury many a prince of Europe cannot afford to indulge
49 in! One can only secure a seat for her performance by paying
50 double the fees, and that a month in advance! Well, she is not going

²¹⁵ ?His late Majesty King Edward VII, the then Prince of Wales.

1 to suffer want of money! But Sarah Bernhardt is given to spending
2 lavishly. Her travel to India is therefore put off for the present.

3 Mademoiselle Calve will not sing this winter, she will take a
4 rest and is going to temperate climates like Egypt etc. I am going as
5 her guest. Calve has not devoted herself to music alone, she is
6 sufficiently learned and has a great love for philosophical and
7 religious literature. She was born amidst very poor circumstances;
8 gradually, through her own genius and undergoing great labour and
9 much hardship, she has now amassed a large fortune and has
10 become the object of adoration of kings and potentates!

11 There are famous lady singers, such as Madame Melba,
12 Madame Emma Ames, and others; and very distinguished singers,
13 such as Jean de Reszke, Plancon, and the rest--all of whom earn two
14 or three lakhs of rupees a year! But with Calve's art is coupled a
15 unique genius. Extraordinary beauty, youth, genius, and a celestial
16 voice--all these have conspired to raise Calve to the forefront of all
17 singers. But there is no better teacher than pain and poverty! That
18 extreme penury and pain and hardship of childhood, a constant
19 struggle against which has won for Calve this victory, have
20 engendered a remarkable sympathy and a profound seriousness in
21 her life. Again, in the West, there are ample opportunities along
22 with the enterprising spirit. But in our country, there is a sad dearth
23 of opportunities, even if the spirit of enterprise be not absent. The
24 Bengali woman may be keen after acquiring education, but it comes
25 to nought for want of opportunities. And what is there to learn from
26 in the Bengali language? At best some poor novels and dramas!
27 Then again, learning is confined at present to a foreign tongue or to
28 Sanskrit and is only for the chosen few. In these Western countries
29 there are innumerable books in the mother-tongue; over and above
30 that, whenever something new comes out in a foreign tongue, it is
31 at once translated and placed before the public.

32 Monsieur Jules Bois is a famous writer; he is particularly an
33 adept in the discovery of historical truths in the different religions
34 and superstitions. He has written a famous book putting into
35 historical form the devil-worship, sorcery, necromancy, incantation,
36 and such other rites that were in vogue in Mediaeval Europe, and
37 the traces of those that obtain to this day. He is a good poet, and is
38 an advocate of the Indian Vedantic ideas that have crept into the
39 great French poets, such as Victor Hugo and Lamartine and others,
40 and the great German poets, such as Goethe, Schiller, and the rest.
41 The influence of Vedanta on European poetry and philosophy is very
42 great. Every good poet is a Vedantin, I find; and whoever writes
43 some philosophical treatise has to draw upon Vedanta in some
44 shape or other. Only some of them do not care to admit this
45 indebtedness, and want to establish their complete originality, as
46 Herbert Spencer and others, for instance. But the majority do
47 openly acknowledge. And how can they help it--in these days of
48 telegraphs and railways and newspapers? M. Jules Bois is very
49 modest and gentle, and though a man of ordinary means, he very
50 cordially received me as a guest into his house in Paris. Now he is
51 accompanying us for travel.

52 We have two other companions on the journey as far as

1 Constantinople--Pere Hyacinthe and his wife. Pere, i.e. Father
2 Hyacinthe was a monk of a strict ascetic section of the Roman
3 Catholic Church. His scholarship, extraordinary eloquence, and
4 great austerities won for him a high reputation in France and in the
5 whole Catholic Order. The great poet, Victor Hugh, used to praise
6 the French style of two men--one of these was Pere Hyacinthe. At
7 forty years of age Pere Hyacinthe fell in love with an American
8 woman and eventually married her. This created a great sensation,
9 and of course the Catholic Order immediately gave him up.
10 Discarding his ascetic garb of bare feet and loose-fitting cloak, Pere
11 Hyacinthe took up the hat, coat, and boots of the householder and
12 became--Monsieur Loyson. I, however, call him by his former name.
13 It is an old, old tale, and the matter was the talk of the whole
14 continent. The Protestants received him with honour, but the
15 Catholics began to hate him. The Pope, in consideration of his
16 attainments, was unwilling to part with him and asked him to
17 remain a Greek Catholic priest, and not abandon the Roman
18 Church. (The priests of the Greek Catholic section are allowed to
19 marry but once, but do not get any high position). Mrs. Loyson,
20 however, forcibly dragged him out of the Pope's fold. In course of
21 time they had children and grandchildren; now the very aged
22 Loyson is going to Jerusalem to try to establish cordial relations
23 among the Christians and Mussulmans. His wife had perhaps seen
24 many visions that Loyson might possibly turn out to be a second
25 Martin Luther and overthrow the Pope's throne--into the
26 Mediterranean. But nothing of the kind took place; and the only
27 result was, as the French say, that he was placed between two
28 stools. But Madame Loyson still cherishes her curious day-dreams!
29 Old Loyson is very affable in speech, modest, and of a distinctly
30 devotional turn of mind. Whenever he meets me, he holds pretty
31 long talks about various religions and creeds. But being of a
32 devotional temperament, he is a little afraid of the Advaita.
33 Madame Loyson's attitude towards me is, I fear, rather
34 unfavourable. When I discuss with the old man such topics as
35 renunciation and monasticism etc., all those long-cherished
36 sentiments wake up in his aged breast, and his wife most probably
37 smarts all the while. Besides, all French people, of both sexes, lay
38 the whole blame on the wife; they say, "That woman has spoilt one
39 of our great ascetic monks!" Madame Loyson is really in a sorry
40 predicament--specially as they live in Paris, in a Catholic country.
41 They hate the very sight of a married priest; no Catholic would ever
42 tolerate the preaching of religion by a man with family. And
43 Madame Loyson has a bit of animus also. Once she expressed her
44 dislike of an actress, saying, "It is very bad of you to live with Mr.
45 So-and-so without marrying him". The actress immediately retorted,
46 "I am a thousand times better than you. I live with a common man;
47 it may be, I have not legally married him; whereas you are a great
48 sinner--you have made such a great monk break his religious vows!
49 If you were so desperately in love with the monk, why, you might as
50 well live as his attending maid; but why did you bring ruin on him
51 by marrying him and thus converting him into a householder?"

52 However I hear all and keep silent. But old Pere Hyacinthe is
53 a really sweet-natured and peaceful man, he is happy with his wife

1 and family--and what can the whole French people have to say
2 against this? I think, everything would be settled if but his wife
3 climbed down a bit. But one thing I notice, viz. that men and
4 women, in every country, have different ways of understanding and
5 judging things. Men have one angle of vision, women another; men
6 argue from one standpoint, women from another. Men extenuate
7 women and lay the blame on men; while women exonerate men and
8 heap all the blame on women.

9 One special benefit I get from the company of these ladies
10 and gentlemen is that, except the one American lady, no one knows
11 English; talking in English is wholly eschewed,²¹⁶ and consequently
12 somehow or other I have to talk as well as hear French.

13 From Paris our friend Maxim has supplied me with letters of
14 introduction to various places, so that the countries may be
15 properly seen. Maxim is the inventor of the famous Maxim gun--the
16 gun that sends off a continuous round of balls and is loaded and
17 discharged automatically without intermission. Maxim is by birth an
18 American; now he has settled in England, where he has his gun-
19 factories etc. Maxim is vexed if anybody alludes too frequently to
20 his guns in his presence and says, "My friend, have I done nothing
21 else except invent that engine of destruction?" Maxim is an admirer
22 of China and India and is a good writer on religion and philosophy
23 etc. Having read my works long since, he holds me in great--I
24 should say, excessive--admiration. He supplies guns to all kings and
25 rulers and is well known in every country, though his particular
26 friend is Li Hung Chang, his special regard is for China and his
27 devotion, for Confucianism. He is in the habit of writing
28 occasionally in the newspapers, under Chinese pseudonyms,
29 against the Christians--about what takes them to China, their real
30 motive, and so forth. He cannot at all bear the Christian
31 missionaries preaching their religion in China! His wife also is just
32 like her husband in her regard for China and hatred of Christianity!
33 Maxim has no issue; he is an old man, and immensely rich.

34 The tour programme was as follows--from Paris to Vienna,
35 and thence to Constantinople, by rail; then by steamer to Athens
36 and Greece, then across the Mediterranean to Egypt, then Asia
37 Minor, Jerusalem, and so on. The "Oriental Express" runs daily from
38 Paris to Constantinople, and is provided with sleeping, sitting, and
39 dining accommodations after the American model. Though not
40 perfect like the American cars, they are fairly well furnished. I am
41 to leave Paris by that train on October 24 (1900).

42 Today is the 23rd October; tomorrow evening I am to take
43 leave of Paris. This year Paris is a centre of the civilised world, for it
44 is the year of the Paris Exhibition, and there has been an
45 assemblage of eminent men and women from all quarters of the
46 globe. The master-minds of all countries have met today in Paris to
47 spread the glory of their respective countries by means of their
48 genius. The fortunate man whose name the bells of this great

1 ²¹⁶ ?It is not etiquette in the West to talk in company any language but one
2 known to all the party.
3

1 centre will ring today will at the same time crown his country also
2 with glory, before the world. And where art thou, my Motherland,
3 Bengal, in the great capital city swarming with German, French,
4 English, Italian, and other scholars? Who is there to utter thy
5 name? Who is there to proclaim thy existence? From among that
6 white galaxy of geniuses there stepped forth one distinguished
7 youthful hero to proclaim the name of our Motherland, Bengal--it
8 was the world-renowned scientist, Dr.²¹⁷ J. C. Bose! Alone, the
9 youthful Bengali physicist, with galvanic quickness, charmed the
10 Western audience today with his splendid genius; that electric
11 charge infused pulsations of new life into the half-dead body of the
12 Motherland! At the top of all physicists today is--Jagadish Chandra
13 Bose, an Indian, a Bengali! Well done, hero! Whichever countries,
14 Dr. Bose and his accomplished, ideal wife may visit, everywhere
15 they glorify India--add fresh laurels to the crown of Bengal. Blessed
16 pair!

17 And the daily reunion of numbers of distinguished men and
18 women which Mr. Leggett brought about at an enormous expense
19 in his Parisian mansion, by inviting them to at-homes--that too ends
20 today.

21 All types of distinguished personages--poets, philosophers,
22 scientists, moralists, politicians, singers, professors, painters,
23 artists, sculptors, musicians, and so on, of both sexes--used to be
24 assembled in Mr. Leggett's residence, attracted by his hospitality
25 and kindness. That incessant outflow of words, clear and limpid like
26 a mountainfall, that expression of sentiments emanating from all
27 sides like sparks of fire, bewitching music, the magic current of
28 thoughts from master minds coming into conflict with one another--
29 which used to hold all spellbound, making them forgetful of time
30 and place--these too shall end.

31 Everything on earth has an end. Once again I took a round
32 over the Paris Exhibition today--this accumulated mass of dazzling
33 ideas, like lightning held steady as it were, this unique assemblage
34 of celestial panorama on earth!

35 It has been raining in Paris for the last two or three days.
36 During all this time the sun who is ever kind to France has held
37 back his accustomed grace. Perhaps his face has been darkened
38 over with clouds in disgust to witness the secretly flowing current
39 of sensuality behind this assemblage of arts and artists, learning
40 and learned folk, or perhaps he has hid his face under a pall of
41 cloud in grief over the impending destruction of this illusive heaven
42 of particoloured wood and canvas.

43 We too shall be happy to escape. The breaking up of the
44 Exhibition is a big affair; the streets of this heaven on earth, the
45 Eden-like Paris, will be filled with knee-deep mud and mortar. With
46 the exception of one or two main buildings, all the houses and their
47 parts are but a display of wood and rags and whitewashing--just as
48 the whole world is! And when they are demolished, the lime-dust
49 flies about and is suffocating; rags and sand etc. make the streets

²¹⁷ ?Later, Sir.

1 exceedingly dirty; and, if it rains in addition, it is an awful mess.

2 In the evening of October 24 the train left Paris. The night
3 was dark and nothing could be seen. Monsieur Bois and myself
4 occupied one compartment--and early went to bed. On awakening
5 from sleep we found we had crossed the French frontier and
6 entered German territory. I had already seen Germany thoroughly;
7 but Germany, after France, produces quite a jarring effect. "On the
8 one hand the moon is setting"²¹⁸--the world-encompassing France is
9 slowly consuming herself in the fire of contemplated retribution--
10 while on the other hand, centralised, young, and mighty Germany
11 has begun her upward march above the horizon with rapid strides.
12 On one side is the artistic workmanship of the dark-haired,
13 comparatively short-statured, luxurious, highly civilised French
14 people, to whom art means life; and on the other, the clumsy
15 daubing, the unskilful manipulation, of tawny-haired, tall, gigantic
16 German. After Paris there is no other city in the Western world;
17 everywhere it is an imitation of Paris--or at least an attempt at it.
18 But in France that art is full of grace and ethereal beauty, while in
19 Germany,

1 ²¹⁸ ?{Sanskrit}--From Kalidasa's *Shakuntala*.
2

1 England, and America the imitation is coarse and clumsy.
2 Even the application of force on the part of the French is beautiful,
3 as it were, whereas the attempt of the Germans to display beauty
4 even is terrible. The countenance of French genius, even when
5 frowning in anger, is beautiful; that of German genius, even when
6 beaming with smiles, appears frightful, as it were. French
7 civilisation is full of nerve, like camphor or musk--it volatilises and
8 pervades the room in a moment; while German civilisation is full of
9 muscle, heavy like lead or mercury--it remains motionless and inert
10 wherever it lies. The German muscle can go on striking small blows
11 untiringly, till death; the French have tender, feminine bodies, but
12 when they do concentrate and strike, it is a sledge-hammer blow
13 and is irresistible.

14 The Germans are constructing after the French fashion big
15 houses and mansions, and placing big statues, equestrian figures,
16 etc. on top of them, but on seeing a double-storeyed German
17 building one is tempted to ask--is it a dwelling-house for men, or a
18 stable for elephants and camels, while one mistakes a five-storeyed
19 French stable for elephants and horses as a habitation for fairies.

20 America is inspired by German ideals; hundreds of thousand
21 Germans are in every town. The language is of course English, but
22 nevertheless America is being slowly Germanised. Germany is fast
23 multiplying her population and is exceptionally hardy. Today
24 Germany is the dictator to all Europe, her place is above all! Long
25 before all other nations, Germany has given man and woman
26 compulsory education, making illiteracy punishable by law, and
27 today she is enjoying the fruits of that tree. The German army is the
28 foremost in reputation, and Germany has vowed to become
29 foremost in her navy also. German manufacture of commodities has
30 beaten even England! German merchandise and the Germans
31 themselves are slowly obtaining a monopoly even in the English
32 colonies. At the behest of the German Emperor all the nations have
33 ungrudgingly submitted to the lead of the German Generalissimo in
34 the battle-fields of China!

35 The whole day the train rushed through Germany, till in the
36 afternoon it reached the frontiers of Austria, the ancient sphere of
37 German supremacy, but now an alien territory. There are certain
38 troubles in travelling through Europe. In every country enormous
39 duties are levied upon certain things, or some articles of
40 merchandise are the monopoly of the Government, as for instance,
41 tobacco. Again, in Russia and Turkey, you are totally forbidden to
42 enter without a royal passport; a passport you must always have.
43 Besides, in Russia and Turkey, all your books and papers will be
44 seized; and when on perusal the authorities are satisfied that there
45 is nothing in them against the Russian or Turkish Government and
46 religion, then only they will be returned, otherwise they will all be
47 confiscated. In other countries your tobacco is a source of great
48 trouble. You must open your chest, and trunk and packages for
49 inspection whether they contain tobacco etc. or not. And to come to
50 Constantinople one has to pass through two big States--Germany
51 and Austria, and many petty ones; the latter had formerly been
52 districts of Turkey, but later on the independent Christian kings

1 made a common cause and wrested as many of these Christian
2 districts from Mohammedan hands as they could. The bite of these
3 tiny ants is much worse than even that of the bigger ones.

4 In the evening of October 25 the train reached Vienna, the
5 capital of Austria. The members of the royal family in Austria and
6 Russia are styled Archdukes and Archduchesses. Two Archdukes
7 are to get down at Vienna by this train; and until they have done so
8 the other passengers are not allowed to get down. So we had to
9 wait. A few officers in laced uniform and some soldiers with
10 feathered caps were waiting for the Archdukes, who got down
11 surrounded by them. We too felt relieved and made haste to get
12 down and have our luggage passed. There were few passengers,
13 and it did not take us much time to show our luggage and have it
14 passed. A hotel had already been arranged for, and a man from the
15 hotel was waiting for us with a carriage. We reached the hotel duly.
16 It was out of the question to go out for sight-seeing during the
17 night; so the next morning we started to see the town. In all hotels,
18 and almost in all the countries of Europe except England and
19 Germany, the French fashion prevails. They eat twice a day like the
20 Hindus; in the morning by twelve o'clock, and in the evening by
21 eight. Early in the morning, that is, about eight or nine, they take a
22 little coffee. Tea is very little in vogue except in England and Russia.
23 The morning meal is called in French *dejeuner*--that is, breakfast,
24 and the evening meal *diner*--that is, dinner. Tea is very much in use
25 in Russia--it is too cold, and China is near enough. Chinese tea is
26 excellent, and most of it goes to Russia. The Russian mode of
27 drinking tea is also analogous to the Chinese, that is, without
28 mixing milk. Tea or coffee becomes injurious like poison if you mix
29 milk with it. The real tea-drinking races, the Chinese, Japanese,
30 Russians, and the inhabitants of Central Asia, take tea without milk.
31 Similarly, the original coffee-drinking races, such as the Turks,
32 drink coffee without milk. Only in Russia they put a slice of lemon
33 and a lump of sugar into the tea. The poor people place a lump of
34 sugar in the mouth and drink tea over it, and when one has finished
35 drinking, one passes that lump on to another, who repeats the
36 process.

37 Vienna is a small city after the model of Paris. But the
38 Austrians are German by race. The Austrian Emperor was hitherto
39 the Emperor of almost the whole of Germany. In the present times,
40 owing to the far-sightedness of King Wilhelm of Prussia, the
41 wonderful diplomacy of his able minister, Bismark, and the military
42 genius of General Von Moltke, the King of Prussia is the Emperor of
43 the whole of Germany barring Austria. Austria, shorn of her glory
44 and robbed of her power, is somehow maintaining her ancient name
45 and prestige. The Austrian royal line--the Hapsburg Dynasty--is the
46 oldest and most aristocratic dynasty in Europe. It was this Austrian
47 dynasty which hitherto rules Germany as Emperors--Germany
48 whose princes are seated on the thrones of almost all the countries
49 of Europe, and whose petty feudatory chiefs even occupy the
50 thrones of such powerful empires as England and Russia. The
51 desire for that honour and prestige Austria still cherishes in full,
52 only she lacks the power. Turkey is called "the sick man" of Europe;

1 then Austria should be called "the sick dame". Austria belongs to
2 the Catholic sect, and until recently the Austrian Empire used to be
3 called "the Holy Roman Empire". Modern Germany has a
4 preponderance of Protestants. The Austrian Emperor has always
5 been the right-hand man of the Pope, his faithful follower, and the
6 leader of the Roman Catholic sect. Now the Austrian Emperor is the
7 only Catholic Ruler in Europe; France, the eldest daughter of the
8 Catholic Church, is now a Republic, while Spain and Portugal are
9 downfallen! Italy has given only room enough for the Papal throne
10 to be established, robbing the Pope's entire splendour and
11 dominion; between the King of Italy and the Pope of Rome there is
12 no love lost, they cannot bear each other's sight. Rome, the capital
13 of the Pope, is now the capital of Italy. The King lives in the Pope's
14 ancient palace which he has seized, and the ancient Italian kingdom
15 of the Pope is now confined within the precincts of the Vatican. But
16 the Pope has still great influence in religious matters--and the chief
17 supporter of this is Austria. As a result of the struggle against
18 Austria--against the age-long thralldom of Austria, the ally of the
19 Pope--up rose modern Italy. Consequently Austria is against Italy--
20 against, because she lost her. Unfortunately, however, young Italy,
21 under England's misdirection, set herself to create a powerful army
22 and navy. But where was the money? So, involved in debt, Italy is on
23 the way to ruin; and to her misfortune, she brought on herself a
24 fresh trouble by proceeding to extend her empire in Africa.
25 Defeated by the Abyssinian monarch, she has sunk down, bereft of
26 glory and prestige. Prussia in the meantime defeated Austria in a
27 great war and thrust her off to a great distance. Austria is slowly
28 dying, while Italy has similarly fettered herself by the misuse of her
29 new life.

30 The Austrian royal line is still the proudest of all European
31 royal families. It boasts of being a very ancient and very aristocratic
32 dynasty. The marriages and other connections of this line are
33 contracted with the greatest circumspection, and no such
34 relationship can be established with families that are not Roman
35 Catholic. It was the glamour of a connection with this line that led
36 to the fall of Napoleon the Great. Quaintly enough, he took it into
37 his head to marry a daughter of some noble royal family and found
38 a great dynasty through a succession of descendents. The hero
39 who, questioned as to his pedigree, had replied, "I owe the title to
40 my nobility to none--I am to be the founder of a great dynasty"--that
41 is to say, that he would originate a powerful dynasty, and that he
42 was not born to glorify himself with the borrowed plumes of some
43 ancestor--that hero fell into this abyss of family prestige.

1 The divorce of the Empress Josephine, the defeat of the
2 Austrian Emperor in battle and taking his daughter to wife, the
3 marriage of Bonaparte in great pomp with Marie Louise, the
4 Princess of Austria, the birth of a son, the installation of the new-
5 born babe as the King of Rome, the fall of Napoleon, the enmity of
6 his father-in-law, Leipsic, Waterloo, St. Helena, Empress Marie
7 Louise living in her father's house with her child, the marriage of
8 Napoleon's royal consort with an ordinary soldier, the death of his
9 only son, the King of Rome, in the house of his maternal
10 grandfather--all these are well-known incidents of history.

11 Fallen in a comparatively weakened condition, France is now
12 ruminating on her past glory--nowadays there are very many books
13 on Napoleon. Dramatists like Sardou are writing many dramas on
14 Napoleon dead and gone; and actresses like Madame Bernhardt
15 and Rejane are performing those plays every night before bumper
16 houses. Recently Madame Bernhardt has created a great attraction
17 in Paris by playing a drama entitled *L'aiglon* (the Young Eagle).

18 The young Eagle is the only son of Napoleon, practically
19 interned in his maternal grandfather's residence, the Palace of
20 Vienna. The Austrian Emperor's minister, the Machiavellian
21 Metternich, is always careful not to allow the tales of heroism of his
22 father to enter into the boy's mind. But a few of Bonaparte's
23 veterans contrived to get themselves admitted into the boy's service
24 in the Schonbrunn Palace, incognito; their idea was to somehow
25 take the boy over to France and found the Bonaparte line by driving
26 out the Bourbons reinstated by the combined European potentates.
27 The child was the son of a great hero, and very soon that latent
28 heroism woke up in him to hear the glorious tales of battle of his
29 father. One day the boy fled from the Schonbrunn Palace
30 accompanied by the conspirators. But Metternich's keen intellect
31 had already scented the matter, and he cut off the journey. The son
32 of Bonaparte was carried back to the Schonbrunn Palace and the
33 Young Eagle, with his wings tied, as it were, very soon died of a
34 broken heart!

35 This Schonbrunn Palace is an ordinary palace. Of course, the
36 rooms etc. are lavishly decorated; in one of them perhaps one
37 meets with only Chinese workmanship, in another only works of
38 Hindu art, in a third the productions of some other country, and so
39 on; and the garden attached to the Palace is very charming indeed.
40 But all the people that now go to visit this Palace go there with the
41 object of seeing the room where Bonaparte's son used to lie, or his
42 study, or the room in which he died, and so forth. Many thoughtless
43 French men and women are interrogating the guard, which room
44 belonged to "*L'aiglon*", which bed did "*L'aiglon*" use to occupy, and
45 so on. What silly questions, these! The Austrians only know that he
46 was the son of Bonaparte, and the relation was established by
47 forcibly taking their girl in marriage; that hatred they have not yet
48 forgotten. The Prince was a grandchild of the Emperor, and
49 homeless, so they could not help giving him a shelter, but they could
50 give him no such title as "King of Rome"; only, being the grandson
51 of the Austrian Emperor, he was an Archduke, that was all. It may
52 be that you French people have now written a book on him, making

1 him the Young Eagle, and the addition of imaginary settings and the
2 genius of Madame Bernhardt have created a great interest in the
3 story, but how should an Austrian guard know that name? Besides,
4 it has been written in that book that the Austrian Emperor,
5 following the advice of his minister Metternich, in a way killed
6 Napoleon's son!

7 Hearing the name "*L'aiglon*", the guard put on a long face
8 and went on showing the rooms and other things thoroughly
9 disgusted at heart; what else could he do?--it was too much for him
10 to give up the tips. Moreover, in countries like Austria etc., the
11 military department is too poorly paid, they have to live almost on a
12 bare pittance; of course they are allowed to go back home after a
13 few years' service. The guard's countenance darkened as an
14 expression of his patriotism, but the hand instinctively moved
15 towards the tip. The French visitors put some silver pieces into the
16 guard's hand and returned home talking of "*L'aiglon*" and abusing
17 Metternich, while the guard shut the doors with a long salute. In his
18 heart he must have given sweet names to the ancestors of the
19 whole French people.

20 The thing most worth seeing in Vienna is the Museum,
21 specially the Scientific Museum, an institution of great benefit to
22 the student. There is a fine collection of the skeletons of various
23 species of ancient extinct animals. In the Art Gallery, paintings by
24 Dutch artists form the major portion. In the Dutch school, there is
25 very little attempt at suggestiveness; this school is famous for its
26 exact copy of natural objects and creatures. One artist has spent
27 years over the drawing of a basketful of fish, or a lump of flesh, or a
28 tumbler of water--and that fish, or flesh, or water in the tumbler is
29 wonderful. But the female figures of the Dutch school look just like
30 athletes.

31 There is of course German scholarship and German
32 intellectuality in Vienna, but the causes which helped the gradual
33 decay of Turkey are at work here also--that is to say, the mixture of
34 various races and languages. The population of Austria proper
35 speaks German; the people of Hungary belong to the Tartar stock,
36 and have a different language; while there are some who are
37 Greek-speaking and are Christians belonging to the Greek Church.
38 Austria has not the power to fuse together so many different sects.
39 Hence she has fallen.

40 In the present times a huge wave of nationalism is sweeping
41 over Europe, where people speaking the same tongue, professing
42 the same religion, and belonging to the same race want to unite
43 together. Wherever such union is being effectively accomplished,
44 there is great power being manifested; and where this is
45 impossible, death is inevitable. After the death of the present
46 Austrian Emperor,²¹⁹ Germany will surely try to absorb the German-
47 speaking portion of the Austrian Empire--and Russia and others are
48 sure to oppose her; so there is the possibility of a dreadful war. The
49 present Emperor being very old, that catastrophe may take place

1 ²¹⁹ ?Francis Joseph II died in 1916.
2

1 very early. The German Emperor is nowadays an ally of the Sultan
2 of Turkey; and when Germany will attempt to seize Austrian
3 territory, Turkey, which is Russia's enemy, will certainly offer some
4 resistance to Russia; so the German Emperor is very friendly
5 towards Turkey.

6 Three days in Vienna were sufficient to tire me. To visit
7 Europe after Paris is like tasting an inferior preparation after a
8 sumptuous feast--that dress, and style of eating, that same fashion
9 everywhere; throughout the land you meet with that same black
10 suit, and the same queer hat--disgusting! Besides, you have clouds
11 above, and this swarm of people with black hats and black coats
12 below--one feels suffocated, as it were. All Europe is gradually
13 taking up that same style of dress, and that same mode of living! It
14 is a law of nature that such are the symptoms of death! By
15 hundreds of years of drill, our ancestors have so fashioned us that
16 we all clean our teeth, wash our face, eat our meals, and do
17 everything in the same way, and the result is that we have gradually
18 become mere automata; the life has gone out, and we are moving
19 about, simply like so many machines! Machines never say "yea" or
20 "nay", never trouble their heads about anything, they move on "in
21 the way their forefathers have gone", and then rot and die. The
22 Europeans too will share the same fate! "The course of time is ever
23 changing! If all people take to the same dress, same food, same
24 manner of talking, and same everything, gradually they will become
25 like so many machines, will gradually tread the path their
26 forefathers have trod", and as an inevitable consequence of that--
27 they will rot and die!

28 On the 28th October, at 9 p.m., we again took that Orient
29 Express train, which reached Constantinople on the 30th. These
30 two nights and one day the train ran through Hungary, Serbia, and
31 Bulgaria. The people of Hungary are subjects of the Austrian
32 Emperor, whose title, however, is "Emperor of Austria and King of
33 Hungary". The Hungarians and Turks are of the same race, akin to
34 the Tibetans. The Hungarians entered Europe along the north of
35 the Caspian Sea, while the Turks slowly occupied Europe through
36 the western borders of Persia and through Asia Minor. The people
37 of Hungary are Christians, and the Turks are Mohammedans, but
38 the martial spirit characteristic of Tartar blood is noticeable in both.
39 The Hungarians have fought again and again for separation from
40 Austria and are now but nominally united. The Austrian Emperor is
41 King of Hungary in name only. Their capital, Budapest, is a very
42 neat and beautiful city. The Hungarians are a pleasure-loving race
43 and fond of music, and you will find Hungarian bands all over Paris.

44 Serbia, Bulgaria, and the rest were districts of Turkey and
45 have become practically independent after the Russo-Turkish War;
46 but the Sultan of Turkey is yet their Emperor; and Serbia and
47 Bulgaria have no right regarding foreign affairs. There are three
48 civilised nations in Europe--the French, the Germans, and the
49 English. The rest are almost as badly off as we are, and the majority
50 of them are so uncivilised that you can find no race in Asia so
51 degraded. Throughout Serbia and Bulgaria you find the same mud
52 houses, and people dressed in tattered rags, and heaps of filth--and

1 I was almost inclined to think I was back to India! Again, as they
2 are Christians, they must have a number of hogs; and a single hog
3 will make a place more dirty than two hundred barbarous men will
4 be able to do. Living in a mud house with mud roof, with tattered
5 rags on his person, and surrounded by hogs--there you have your
6 Serb or Bulgarian! After much bloodshed and many wars, they have
7 thrown off the yoke of Turkey; but along with this they have got a
8 serious disadvantage--they must construct their army after the
9 European model, otherwise the existence of not one of them is safe
10 for a day. Of course, sooner or later they will all one day be
11 absorbed by Russia; but even this two days' existence is impossible
12 without an army. So they must have conscription.

13 In an evil hour, did France suffer defeat from Germany.
14 Through anger and fear she made every citizen a soldier. Every man
15 must serve for some time in the army and learn the military
16 science; there is no exemption for anybody. He must have to live in
17 the barracks for three years and learn to fight, shouldering his gun,
18 be he a millionaire by birth. The government will provide for his
19 food and clothing, and the salary will be a centime (one pice) a day.
20 After this he must be always ready for active service for two years
21 at his home; and another fifteen years he must be ready to present
22 himself for service at the first call. Germany set a lion to fury, so she
23 too had to be ready. In other countries also conscription has been
24 introduced in mutual dread of one another--so throughout Europe,
25 excepting only England. England, being an island, is continually
26 strengthening her navy, but who knows if the lessons of the Boer
27 War will not force her to introduce conscription. Russia has the
28 largest population of all, so she can amass the biggest army in
29 Europe. Now, the titular states, like Serbia and Bulgaria, which the
30 European Powers are creating by dismembering Turkey--they, too,
31 as soon as they are born, must have up-to-date trained and well-
32 equipped armies and guns etc. But ultimately who is to supply the
33 funds? Consequently the peasants have had to put on tattered
34 rags--while in the towns you will find soldiers dressed in gorgeous
35 uniforms. Throughout Europe there is a craze for soldiers--soldiers
36 everywhere. Still, liberty is one thing and slavery another; even
37 best work loses its charm if one is forced to do it by another.
38 Without the idea of personal responsibility, no one can achieve
39 anything great. Freedom with but one meal a day and tattered rags
40 on is a million times better than slavery in gold chains. A slave
41 suffers the miseries of hell both here and hereafter. The people of
42 Europe joke about the Serbs and Bulgarians etc., and taunt them
43 with their mistakes and shortcomings. But can they attain
44 proficiency all in a day, after so many years of servitude? Mistakes
45 they are bound to commit--ay, by the hundreds--but they will learn
46 through these mistakes and set them right when they have learnt.
47 Give him responsibility and the weakest man will become strong,
48 and the ignorant man sagacious.

49 The train is traversing Hungary, Rumania, and other
50 countries. Among the races that inhabit the moribund Austrian
51 Empire, the Hungarians yet possess vitality. All the races of Europe,
52 except one or two small ones, belong to the great stock which

1 European scholars term the Indo-European or Aryan race. The
2 Hungarians are among the few races which do not speak a
3 Sanskritic language. The Hungarians and Turks, as already stated,
4 belong to the same race. In comparatively modern times this very
5 powerful race established their sovereignty in Asia and Europe. The
6 country now called Turkistan, lying to the north of the Western
7 Himalayas and the Hindukush range, was the original home of the
8 Turks. The Turkish name for that country is Chagwoi. The Mogul
9 dynasty of Delhi, the present Persian royal line, the dynasty of the
10 Turkish Sultan of Constantinople, and the Hungarians have all
11 gradually extended their dominion from that country, beginning
12 with India, and pushing right up to Europe, and even today these
13 dynasties style themselves as Chagwois and speak a common
14 language. Of course these Turks were uncivilised ages ago, and
15 used to roam with herds of sheep, horses, and cattle, taking their
16 wives and children and every earthly possession with them, and
17 encamp for some time wherever they could find enough pasture for
18 their beasts. And when grass and water ran short there, they used
19 to remove somewhere else. Even now many families of this race
20 lead nomadic lives in this way in Central Asia. They have got a
21 perfect similarity with the races of Central Asia as regards
22 language, but some difference in point of physiognomy. The Turk's
23 face resembles that of the Mongolian in the shape of the head and
24 in the prominence of the cheek-bone, but the Turk's nose is not flat,
25 but rather long, and the eyes are straight and large, though the
26 space between the eyes of comparatively wide, as with the
27 Mongolians. It appears that from a long time past Aryan and
28 Semitic blood has found its way into this Turkish race. From time
29 immemorial the Turks have been exceedingly fond of war. And the
30 mixture with them of Sanskrit-speaking races and the people of
31 Kandahar and Persia has produced the war-loving races such as the
32 Afghans, Khiljis, Hazaras, Barakhais, Usufjais, etc., to whom war is
33 a passion and who have frequently oppressed India.

34 In very ancient times this Turkish race repeatedly conquered
35 the western provinces of India and founded extensive kingdoms.
36 They were Buddhists, or would turn Buddhists after occupying
37 Indian territory. In the ancient history of Kashmir there is mention
38 of these famous Turkish Emperors, Hushka, Yushka, and Kanishka.
39 It was this Kanishka who founded the Northern school of Buddhism
40 called the Mahayana. Long after, the majority of them took to
41 Mohammedanism and completely devastated the chief Buddhistic
42 seats of Central Asia such as Kandahar and Kabul. Before their
43 conversion to Mohammedanism they used to imbibe the learning
44 and culture of the countries they conquered, and by assimilating
45 the culture of other countries would try to propagate civilisation.
46 But ever since they became Mohammedans, they have only the
47 instinct for war left in them; they have not got the least vestige of
48 learning and culture; on the contrary, the countries that come under
49 their sway gradually have their civilisation extinguished. In many
50 places of modern Afghanistan and Kandahar etc., there yet exist
51 wonderful Stupas, monasteries, temples and gigantic statues built
52 by their Buddhistic ancestors. As a result of Turkish admixture and
53 their conversion to Mohammedanism, those temples etc. are almost

1 in ruins, and the present Afghans and allied races have grown so
2 uncivilised and illiterate that far from imitating those ancient works
3 of architecture, they believe them to be the creation of supernatural
4 spirits like the Jinn etc., and are firmly convinced that such great
5 undertakings are beyond the power of man to accomplish. The
6 principal cause of the present degradation of Persia is that the royal
7 line belongs to the powerful, uncivilised Turkish stock, whereas the
8 subjects are the descendants of the highly civilised ancient
9 Persians, who were Aryans. In this way the Empire of
10 Constantinople--the last political arena of the Greeks and Romans,
11 the descendants of civilised Aryans--has been ruined under the
12 blasting feet of powerful, barbarous Turkey. The Mogul Emperors
13 of India were the only exceptions to this rule; perhaps that was due
14 to an admixture of Hindu ideas and Hindu blood. In the chronicles
15 of Rajput bards and minstrels all the Mohammedan dynasties who
16 conquered India are styled as Turks. This is a very correct
17 appellation, for, or whatever races the conquering Mohammedan
18 armies might be made up, the leadership was always vested in the
19 Turks alone.

20 What is called the Mohammedan invasion, conquest, or
21 colonisation of India means only this that, under the leadership of
22 Mohammedan Turks who were renegades from Buddhism, those
23 sections of the Hindu race who continued in the faith of their
24 ancestors were repeatedly conquered by the other section of that
25 very race who also were renegades from Buddhism or the Vedic
26 religion and served under the Turks, having been forcibly converted
27 to Mohammedanism by their superior strength. Of course, the
28 language of the Turks has, like their physiognomy, been
29 considerably mixed up; specially those sections that have gone
30 farthest from their native place.

31 Chagwoi have got the most hybrid form of language. This
32 year the Shah of Persia visited the Paris Exhibition and returned to
33 his country by rail *via* Constantinople. Despite the immense
34 difference in time and place, the Sultan and the Shah talked with
35 each other in their ancient Turkish mother tongue. But the Sultan's
36 Turkish was mixed up with Persian, Arabic, and a few Greek words,
37 while that of the Shah was comparatively pure.

38 In ancient times these Chagwoi Turks were divided into two
39 sections; one was called the "white sheep", and the other, "black
40 sheep". But these sections started from their birthplace on the
41 north of Kashmir, tending their flocks of sheep and ravaging
42 countries, till they reached the shore of the Caspian Sea. The "white
43 sheep" penetrated into Europe along the north of the Caspian Sea
44 and founded the Kingdom of Hungary, seizing a fragment of the
45 Roman Empire then almost in ruins, while the "black sheep",
46 advancing along the south of the Caspian Sea, gradually occupied
47 the western portion of Persia and, crossing the Caucasus, by
48 degrees made themselves masters of Arabian territory such as Asia
49 Minor and so forth; gradually they seized the throne of the Caliph,
50 and bit by bit annexed the small remnant of the western Roman
51 Empire. In very remote ages these Turks were great snake-
52 worshippers. Most probably it was these dynasties whom the

1 ancient Hindus used to designate as Nagas and Takshakas. Later on
2 they became Buddhists; and afterwards they very often used to
3 embrace the religion of any particular country they might conquer
4 at any particular time. In comparatively recent times, of the two
5 sections we are speaking about, the "white sheep" conquered the
6 Christians and became converts to Christianity, while the "black
7 sheep" conquered the Mohammedans and adopted their religion.
8 But in their Christianity or Mohammedanism one may even now
9 trace on research the strata of serpent-worship and of Buddhism.

10 The Hungarians, though Turks by race and language, are
11 Christians--Roman Catholics--in religion. In the past, religious
12 fanaticism had no respect for any tie--neither the tie of language,
13 nor that of blood, nor that of country. The Hungarians are ever the
14 deadly enemies of Turkey; and but for the Hungarians' aid Christian
15 states, such as Austria etc., would not have been able to maintain
16 their existence on many an occasion. In modern times, owing to the
17 spread of education and the discovery of Linguistics and Ethnology,
18 people are being more attracted to the kinship of language and
19 blood, while religious solidarity is gradually slackening. So, among
20 the educated Hungarians and Turks, there is growing up a feeling
21 of racial unity. Though a part of the Austrian Empire, Hungary has
22 repeatedly tried to cut off from her. The result of many revolutions
23 and rebellions has been that Hungary is now only nominally a
24 province of the Austrian Empire, but practically independent in all
25 respects. The Austrian Emperor is styled "the Emperor of Austria
26 and King of Hungary". Hungary manages all her internal affairs
27 independently of Austria and in these the subjects have full power.
28 The Austrian Emperor continues to be a titular leader here, but
29 even this bit of relation, it appears, will not last long. Skill in war,
30 magnanimity and other characteristic virtues of the Turkish race
31 are sufficiently present in the Hungarian also. Besides, not being
32 converted to Mohammedanism they do not consider such heavenly
33 arts as music etc. as the devil's snare, and consequently the
34 Hungarians are great adepts in music and are renowned for this all
35 over Europe.

36 Formerly I had the notion that people of cold climates did not
37 take hot chillies, which was merely a bad habit of warm climate
38 people. But the habit of taking chillies, which we observed to begin
39 with Hungary and which reached its climax in Rumania and
40 Bulgaria etc., appeared to me to beat even your South Indians.

41 42 **ADDENDA**²²⁰

43
44 The first view of Constantinople we had from the train. It is
45 an ancient city, with big drains running across the walls, narrow
46 and crooked lanes full of dirt, and wooden houses, etc., but in them
47 there is a certain beauty owing to their novelty. At the station we
48 had great trouble over our books. Mademoiselle Calve and Jules

1 ²²⁰ ?These interesting jottings were found among Swamiji's papers.--Ed.
2

1 Bois tried much, in French, to reason with the octroi officers, which
2 gradually led to a quarrel between the parties. The head of the
3 officers was a Turk, and his dinner was ready; so the quarrel ended
4 without further complications. They returned all the books with the
5 exception of two which they held back. They promised to send them
6 to the hotel immediately, which they never did. We went round the
7 town and bazar of Stamboul or Constantinople. Beyond the Pont or
8 creek is the Pera or foreigners' quarters, hotels, etc., whence we
9 got into a carriage, saw the town, and then took some rest. In the
10 evening we went to visit Woods Pasha, and the next day started on
11 an excursion along the Bosphorus in a boat. It was extremely cold
12 and there was a strong wind. So I and Miss MacLeod got down at
13 the first station. It was decided that we would cross over to Scutari
14 and see Pere Hyacinthe. Not knowing the language we engaged a
15 boat by signs merely, crossed over, and hired a carriage. On the
16 way we saw the seat of a Sufi Fakir. These Fakirs cure people's
17 diseases, which they do in the following manner. First they read a
18 portion of their scriptures, moving their body backward and
19 forward; then they begin to dance and gradually get a sort of
20 inspiration, after which they heal the disease by treading on the
21 patient's body.

22 We had a long talk with Pere Hyacinthe about the American
23 Colleges, after which we went to an Arab shop where we met a
24 Turkish student. Then we returned from Scutari.-- We had found out
25 a boat, but it failed to reach its exact destination. However, we took
26 a tram from the place where we were landed and returned to our
27 quarters at the hotel at Stamboul. The Museum at Stamboul is
28 situated where the ancient harem of the Greek Emperors once
29 stood. We saw some remarkable sarcophagi and other things, and
30 had a charming view of the city from above Topkhana. I enjoyed
31 taking fried chick peas here after such a long time, and had spiced
32 rice and some other dishes, prepared in the Turkish fashion. After
33 visiting the cemetery of Scutari we went to see the ancient walls.
34 Within the walls was the prison--a dreadful place. Next we met
35 Woods Pasha and started for the Bosphorus. We had our dinner
36 with the French charge d'affaires and met a Greek Pasha and an
37 Albanian gentleman. The Police have prohibited Pere Hyacinthe's
38 lectures; so I too cannot lecture. We saw Mr. Devanmall and
39 Chobeji--a Gujarati Brahmin. There are a good many Indians here--
40 Hindustanis, Mussalmans, etc. We had a talk on Turkish Philosophy
41 and heard of Noor Bey, whose grandfather was a Frenchman. They
42 say he is as handsome as a Kashmari. The women here have got no
43 purdah system and are very free. Prostitution is chiefly a
44 Mohammedan practice. We heard of Kurd Pasha and the massacre
45 of Armenians. The Armenians have really no country of their own,
46 and those countries which they inhabit have generally a
47 preponderating Mohammedan population. A particular tract called
48 Armenia is unknown. The present Sultan is constructing a Hamidian
49 cavalry out of the Kurds who will be trained in the manner of the
50 Cossacks and they will be exempted from conscription.

51 The Sultan called the Armenian and Greek Patriarchs and
52 proposed to them conscription as an alternative for payment of

1 taxes. They might thus serve to protect their motherland. They
2 replied that if they went as soldiers to fight and died by the side of
3 the Mohammedans, there would be some confusion about the
4 interment of Christian soldiers. The Sultan's rejoinder to this was
5 that it might be remedied by providing for both Mohammedan and
6 Christian priests in each regiment, who would conduct the funeral
7 service together when in the exigencies of battle the dead bodies of
8 Christian and Mohammedan soldiers would have to be buried in a
9 heap all together, and there could possibly be no harm if the souls
10 of men of one religion heard in addition the funeral services meant
11 for those of the the other religion. But the Christians did not agree--
12 so they continue to pay taxes. The surest reason of their not
13 acquiescing in the proposal was their fear lest by living with the
14 Mohammedans they might turn Mohammedan wholesale. The
15 present Sultan of Stamboul is a very hard-working man and he
16 personally supervises everything, including even the arrangement
17 of amusements, such as theatrical performances etc., in the palace.
18 His predecessor, Murad, was really a most unfit man, but the
19 present Sultan is very intelligent. The amount of improvement he
20 has made in the condition of the State in which he found it at his
21 accession is simply wonderful. The Parliamentary system will not be
22 successful in this country.

23 At 10 in the morning we left Constantinople, passing a night
24 and a day on the sea, which was perfectly placid. By degrees we
25 reached the Golden Horn and the Sea of Marmora. In one of the
26 islands of the Marmora we saw a monastery of the Greek religion.
27 Formerly there was ample opportunity for religious education here,
28 for it was situated between Asia on one side and Europe on the
29 other. While out in the morning on a visit of the Mediterranean
30 Archipelago we came across Profesor Liper, whose acquaintance I
31 had already made in the Pachiappa College at Madras. In one of the
32 islands we came upon the ruins of a temple, which had probably
33 been dedicated to Neptune, judging from its position on the sea-
34 shore. In the evening we reached Athens, and after passing a whole
35 night under quarantine we obtained permission for landing in the
36 morning. Port Peiraeus is a small town, but very beautiful, having a
37 European air about it in all respects, except that one meets now
38 and then with one or two Greeks dressed in gowns. From there we
39 drove five miles to have a look at the ancient walls of Athens which
40 used to connect the city with the port. Then we went through the
41 town; the Acropolis, the hotels, houses, and streets, and all were
42 very neat and clean. The palace is a small one. The same day, again,
43 we climbed the hillock and had a view of the Acropolis, the temple
44 of the Wingless Victory, and the Parthenon, etc. The temple is made
45 of white marble. Some standing remains of columns also we saw.
46 The next day we again went to see these with Mademoiselle
47 Melcarvi, who explained to us various historical facts relating
48 thereto. On the second day we visited the temple of Olympian Zeus,
49 Theatre Dionysius etc., as far as the sea-shore. The third day we set
50 out for Eleusis, which was the chief religious seat of the Greeks.
51 Here it was that the famous Eleusinian Mysteries used to be played.
52 The ancient theatre of this place has been built anew by a rich
53 Greek. The Olympian games too have been revived in the present

1 times. They are held at a place near Sparta, the Americans carrying
2 off the palm in them in many respects. But the Greeks won in the
3 race from that place to this theatre of Athens. This year they gave
4 undisputed proof of this trait of theirs in a competition with the
5 Turks also. At 10 a.m. on the fourth day we got on board the
6 Russian steamer, *Czar*, bound for Egypt. After reaching the dock we
7 came to learn that the steamer was to start at 4 a.m.--perhaps we
8 were too early or there would be some extra delay in loading the
9 cargo. So, having no other alternative, we went round and made a
10 cursory acquaintance with the sculpture of Ageladas and his three
11 pupils, Phidias, Myron, and Polycletus, who had flourished between
12 576 B.C. and 486 B.C. Even here we began to feel the great heat. In
13 a Russian ship the first class is over the screw, and the rest is only
14 deck--full of passengers, and cattle, and sheep. Besides, no ice was
15 available in this steamer.

16 From a visit to the Louvre Museum in Paris I came to
17 understand the three stages of Greek art. First, there was the
18 Mycenaean art, then Greek art proper. The Achaean kingdom had
19 spread its sway over the neighbouring islands and also mastered all
20 the arts that flourished there, being imported from Asia. Thus did
21 art first make its appearance in Greece. From the prehistoric times
22 up to 776 B.C. was the age of the Mycenaean art. This art
23 principally engaged itself in merely copying Asiatic art. Then from
24 776 B.C. to 146 B.C. was the age of Hellenic or true Greek art. After
25 the destruction of the Achaean Empire by the Dorian race, the
26 Greeks living on the continent and in the Archipelago founded many
27 colonies in Asia. This led to a close conflict between them and
28 Babylon and Egypt, which first gave rise to Greek art. This art in
29 course of time gave up its Asiatic tinge and applied itself to an
30 exact imitation of nature. The difference between Greek art and the
31 art of other countries consists in this, that the former faithfully
32 delineates the living phenomena of natural life.

33 From 776 B.C. to 475 B.C. is the age of Archaic Greek art.
34 The figures are yet stiff--not lifelike. The lips are slightly parted, as
35 if always in smiles. In this respect they resemble the works of
36 Egyptian artists. All the statues stand erect on their legs--quite stiff.
37 The hair and beard etc. and all carved in regular lines and the
38 clothes in the statues are all wrapped close round the body, in a
39 jumble--not like flowing dress.

40 Next to Archaic Greek art comes the age of Classic Greek
41 art--from 475 B.C. to 323 B.C., that is to say, from the hegemony of
42 Athens up to the death of Alexander the Great. Peloponnesus and
43 Attica were the states where the art of this period flourished most.
44 Athens was the chief city of Attica. A learned French art critic has
45 written, "(Classic) Greek art at its highest development freed itself
46 completely from the fetters of all established canons and became
47 independent. It then recognised the art regulations of no country,
48 nor guided itself according to them. The more we study the fifth
49 century B.C., so brilliant in its art development--during which
50 period all the perfect specimens of sculpture were turned out--the
51 more is the idea brought home to our mind that Greek art owed its
52 life and vigour to its cutting loose from the pale of stereotyped

1 rules". This Classic Greek art had two schools--first, the Attic, and
2 second, the Peloponnesian. In the Attic school, again, there were
3 two different types--the first was the outcome of the genius of the
4 gifted sculptor, Phidias, which a French scholar has described in
5 the following terms: "A marvel of perfection in beauty and a
6 glorious specimen of pure and sublime ideas, which will never lose
7 their hold upon the human mind". The masters in the second type of
8 the Attic school were Scopas and Praxiteles. The work of this school
9 was to completely divorce art from religion and keep it restricted to
10 the delineation of merely human life.

11 The chief exponents of the second or Peloponnesian school of
12 Classic Greek art were Polycletus and Lysippus. One of these was
13 born in the fifth century B.C., and the other in the fourth century
14 B.C. They chiefly aimed at laying down the rule that the proportion
15 of the human body must be faithfully reproduced in art.

16 From 323 B.C. to 146 B.C., that is, from the death of
17 Alexander to the conquest of Attica by the Romans, is the period of
18 decadence in Greek art. One notices in the Greek art of this period
19 an undue attention to gorgeous embellishments, and an attempt to
20 make the statues unusually large in bulk. Then at the time of the
21 Roman occupation of Greece, Greek art contented itself merely by
22 copying the works of previous artists of that country; and the only
23 novelty there was, consisted in reproducing exactly the face of
24 some particular individual.

NOTES OF CLASS TALKS AND LECTURES

ON ART

In art, interest must be centred on the principal theme. Drama is the most difficult of all arts. In it two things are to be satisfied--first, the ears, and second, the eyes. To paint a scene, if one thing be painted, it is easy enough; but to paint different things and yet to keep up the central interest is very difficult. Another difficult thing is stage-management, that is, combining different things in such a manner as to keep the central interest intact.

ON MUSIC

There is science in Dhruvad, Kheyal, etc., but it is in Kirtana, i.e. in Mathura and Viraha and other like compositions that there is real music--for there is feeling. Feeling is the soul, the secret of everything. There is more music in common people's songs, and they should be collected together. The science of Dhruvad etc., applied to the music of Kirtana will produce the perfect music.

ON MANTRA AND MANTRA-CHAITANYA

The Mantra-Shastris (upholders of the Mantra theory) believe that some words have been handed down through a succession of teachers and disciples, and the mere utterance of them will lead to some form of realisation. There are two different meanings of the word Mantra-chaitanya. According to some, if you practise the repetition of a certain Mantra, you will see the Ishta-Devata who is the object or deity of that Mantra. But according to others, the word means that if you practise the repetition of a certain Mantra received from a Guru not competent, you will have to perform certain ceremonials by which that Mantra will become Chetana or living, and then its repetition will be successful. Different Mantras, when they are thus "living", show different signs, but the general sign is that one will be able to repeat it for a long time without feeling any strain and that his mind will very soon be concentrated. This is about the Tantrika Mantras.

From the time of the Vedas, two different opinions have been held about Mantras. Yaska and others say that the Vedas have meanings, but the ancient Mantra-shastris say that they have no meaning, and that their use consists only in uttering them in connection with certain sacrifices, when they will surely produce effect in the form of various material enjoyments or spiritual knowledge. The latter arises from the utterance of the Upanishads.

ON CONCEPTIONS OF GODHEAD

Man's inner hankering is to find some one who is free, that is, beyond the laws of nature. The Vedantins believe in such an

1 Eternal Ishvara, while the Buddhists and the Sankhyas believe only
2 a Janyeshvara (created God), that is, a God who was a man before,
3 but has become God through spiritual practice. The Puranas
4 reconcile these two positions by the doctrine of Incarnation. That is,
5 they say that the Janyeshvara is nothing but the Nitya (Eternal)
6 Ishvara, taking by Maya the form of a Janyeshvara. The argument of
7 the Sankhyas against the doctrine of Eternal Ishvara, viz "how a
8 liberated soul can create the universe", is based on false grounds.
9 For you cannot dictate anything to a liberated soul. He is free, that
10 is, he may do whatever he likes. According to the Vedanta, the
11 Janyeshvaras cannot create, preserve, or destroy the universe.

12 13 **ON FOOD**

14 You preach to others to be men but cannot give them good
15 food. I have been thinking over this problem for the last four years.
16 I wish to make an experiment whether something of the nature of
17 flattened rice can be made out of wheat. Then we can get a
18 different food every day. About drinking water, I searched for a
19 filter which would suit our country. I found one pan-like porcelain
20 vessel through which water was made to pass, and all the bacilli
21 remained in the porcelain pan. But gradually that filter would itself
22 become the hotbed of all germs. This is the danger of all filters.
23 After continued searching I found one method by which water was
24 distilled and then oxygen was passed into it. After this the water
25 became so pure that great improvement of health was sure to result
26 from its use.

27 28 **ON SANNYASA AND FAMILY LIFE**

29 Talking of the respective duties of a monk and a householder,
30 Swamiji said:

31 A Sannyasin should avoid the food, bedding, etc., which have
32 been touched or used by householders, in order *to save himself* --
33 not from hatred towards them--so long as he has not risen to the
34 highest grade, that is, become a Paramahansa. A householder
35 should salute him with "Namo Narayanaya", and a Sannyasin
36 should bless the former.

37 {Sanskrit}

38 --Like the difference between the biggest mountain and a
39 mustard-seed, between the sun and a glow-worm, between the
40 ocean and a streamlet, is the wide gulf between a Sannyasin and a
41 householder.

42 Swami Vivekananda made everyone utter this and, chanting
43 some Vedanta stanzas, said, "You should always repeat to
44 yourselves these Shlokas. 'Shravana' not only means hearing from
45 the Guru, but also repetition to our own selves. '{Sanskrit}'--
46 Scriptural truth should be often repeated for such has been
47 repeatedly enjoined'--In this Sutra of Vedanta, Vyasa lays stress on
48 repetition."

ON QUESTIONING THE COMPETENCY OF THE GURU

In the course of a conversation Swamiji spiritedly remarked, "Leave off your commercial calculating ideas. If you can get rid of your attachment to a single thing, you are on the way to liberation. Do not see a public woman, or sinner, or Sadhu. That vile woman also is the Divine Mother. A Sannyasin says once, twice, that she is Mother; then he gets deluded again and says, 'Hence, O vile, unchaste woman!' At a moment all your ignorance may vanish. It is foolish talk that ignorance disperses gradually. There are disciples who have been devoted to the Guru even when he has fallen from the ideal. I have seen in Rajputana one whose spiritual teacher had turned a Christian, but who nevertheless went on giving him his regular dues. Give up your Western ideas. Once you have pledged your faith to a particular teacher, stick to him with all force. It is children who say that there is no morality in the Vedanta. Yes, they are right. Vedanta is above morality. Talk of high things, as you have become Sannyasins."

SHRI RAMAKRISHNA: THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HIS LIFE AND TEACHINGS

In a narrow society there is depth and intensity of spirituality. The narrow stream is very rapid. In a catholic society, along with the breadth of vision we find a proportionate loss in depth and intensity. But the life of Sri Ramakrishna upsets all records of history. It is a remarkable phenomenon that in Sri Ramakrishna there has been an assemblage of ideas deeper than the sea and vaster than the skies.

We must interpret the Vedas in the light of the experience of Sri Ramakrishna. Shankaracharya and all other commentators made the tremendous mistake to think that the whole of the Vedas spoke the same truth. Therefore they were guilty of torturing those of the apparently conflicting Vedic texts which go against their own doctrines, into the meaning of their particular schools. As, in the olden times, it was the Lord alone, the deliverer of the *Gita*, who partially harmonised these apparently conflicting statements, so with a view to completely settling this dispute, immensely magnified in the process of time, He Himself has come as Sri Ramakrishna. Therefore no one can truly understand the Vedas and Vedanta, unless one studies them in the light of the utterance of Sri Ramakrishna who first exemplified in his life and taught that these scriptural statements which appear to the cursory view as contradictory, are meant for different grades of aspirants and are arranged in the order of evolution. The whole world will undoubtedly forget its fights and disputes and be united in a fraternal tie in religious and other matters as a consequence of these teachings.

If there is anything which Sri Ramakrishna has urged us to give up as carefully as lust and wealth, it is the limiting of the

1 infinitude of God by circumscribing it within narrow bounds.
2 Whoever, therefore, will try to limit the infinite ideals of Sri
3 Ramakrishna in that way, will go against him and be his enemy.

4 One of his own utterances is that those who have seen the
5 chameleon only once, know only one colour of the animal, but those
6 who have lived under the tree, know all the colours that it puts on.
7 For this reason, no saying of Sri Ramakrishna can be accepted as
8 authentic, unless it is verified by those who constantly lived with
9 him and whom he brought up to fulfil his life's mission.

10 Such a unique personality, such a synthesis of the utmost of
11 Jnana, Yoga, Bhakti and Karma, has never before appeared among
12 mankind. The life of Sri Ramakrishna proves that the greatest
13 breadth, the highest catholicity and the utmost intensity can exist
14 side by side in the same individual, and that society also can be
15 constructed like that, for society is nothing but an aggregate of
16 individuals.

17 He is the true disciple and follower of Sri Ramakrishna,
18 whose character is perfect and all-sided like this. The formation of
19 such a perfect character is the ideal of this age, and everyone
20 should strive for that alone.

21 22 **ON SHRI RAMAKRISHNA AND HIS VIEWS**

23 By force, think of one thing at least as Brahman. Of course it
24 is easier to think of Ramakrishna as God, but the danger is that we
25 cannot form Ishvara-buddhi (vision of Divinity) in others. God is
26 eternal, without any form, omnipresent. To think of Him as
27 possessing any form is blasphemy. But the secret of image-worship
28 is that you are trying to develop your vision of Divinity in one thing.

29 Shri Ramakrishna used to consider himself as an Incarnation
30 in the ordinary sense of the term, though I could not understand it.
31 I used to say that he was Brahman in the Vedantic sense; but just
32 before his passing away, when he was suffering from the
33 characteristic difficulty in breathing, he said to me as I was
34 cogitating in my mind whether he could even in that pain say that
35 he was an Incarnation, "He who was Rama and Krishna has now
36 actually become Ramakrishna--but not in your Vedantic sense!" He
37 used to love me intensely, which made many quite jealous of me. He
38 knew one's character by sight, and never changed his opinion. He
39 could perceive, as it were, supersensual things, while we try to
40 know one's character by reason, with the result that our judgments
41 are often fallacious. He called some persons his Antarangas or
42 'belonging to the inner circle', and he used to teach them the
43 secrets of his own nature and those of Yoga. To the outsiders or
44 Bahirangas he taught those parables now known as "Sayings". He
45 used to prepare those young men (the former class) for his work,
46 and though many complained to him about them, he paid no heed. I
47 may have perhaps a better opinion of a Bahiranga than an
48 Antaranga through his actions, but I have a superstitious regard for
49 the latter. "Love me, love my dog", as they say. I love that Brahmin
50 priest intensely, and therefore, love whatever he used to love,

1 whatever he used to regard! He was afraid about me that I might
2 create a sect, if left to myself.

3 He used to say to some, "You will not attain spirituality in this
4 life." He sensed everything, and this will explain his apparent
5 partiality to some. He, as a scientist, used to see that different
6 people required different treatment. None except those of the
7 "inner circle" were allowed to sleep in his room. It is not true that
8 those who have not seen him will not attain salvation; neither is it
9 true that a man who has seen him thrice will attain Mukti
10 (liberation).

11 Devotion as taught by Narada, he used to preach to the
12 masses, those who were incapable of any higher training.

13 He used generally to teach dualism. As a rule, he never
14 taught Advaitism. But he taught it to me. I had been a dualist
15 before.

16 17 **SHRI RAMAKRISHNA: THE NATION'S IDEAL**

18 In order that a nation may rise, it must have a high ideal.
19 Now, that ideal is, of course, the abstract Brahman. But as you all
20 cannot be inspired by an abstract ideal, you must have a personal
21 ideal. You have got that, in the person of Shri Ramakrishna. The
22 reason why other personages cannot be our ideal now is, that their
23 days are gone; and in order that Vedanta may come to everyone,
24 there must be a person who is in sympathy with the present
25 generation. This is fulfilled in Shri Ramakrishna. So now you should
26 place him before everyone. Whether one accepts him as a Sadhu or
27 an Avatara does not matter.

28 He said he would come once more with us. Then, I think, he
29 will embrace Videha-Mukti (Absolute Emancipation). If you wish to
30 work, you must have such an Ishta-Devata, or Guardian Angel, as
31 the Christian nations call it. I sometimes imagine that different
32 nations have different Ishta-Devatas, and these are each trying for
33 supremacy. Sometimes I fancy, such an Ishta-Devata becomes
34 powerless to do service to a nation.

35 36 **NOTES OF LECTURES**

37 38 **MERCENARIES IN RELIGION**

39 *(Delivered in Minneapolis on November 26, 1893: Reported*
40 *in the Minneapolis Journal)*

1 The Unitarian church was crowded yesterday morning by an
2 audience anxious to learn something of eastern religious thought as
3 outlined by Swami Vivekananda, a Brahmin priest, who was
4 prominent in the Parliament of Religions at Chicago last summer.
5 The distinguished representative of the Brahmin faith was brought
6 to Minneapolis by the Peripatetic Club, and he addressed that body
7 last Friday evening. He was induced to remain until this week, in
8 order that he might deliver the address yesterday. . . .

9 Dr. H.M. Simmons, the pastor, . . . read from Paul's lesson of
10 faith, hope and charity, and "the greatest of these is charity",
11 supplementing that reading by a selection from the Brahmin
12 scripture which teaches the same lesson, and also a selection from
13 the Moslem faith, and poems from the Hindu literature, all of which
14 are in harmony with Paul's utterances.

15 After a second hymn Swami Vivekandi [*sic*] was introduced.
16 He stepped to the edge of the platform and at once had his
17 audience interested by the recital of a Hindu story. He said in
18 excellent English:

19 "I will tell you a story of five blind men. There was a
20 procession in a village in India, and all the people turned out to see
21 the procession, and specially the gaily caparisoned elephant. The
22 people were delighted, and as the five blind men could not see, they
23 determined to touch the elephant that they might acquaint
24 themselves with its form. They were given the privilege, and after
25 the procession had passed, they returned home together with the
26 people, and they began to talk about the elephant. 'It was just like a
27 wall,' said one. 'No it wasn't,' said another, 'it was like a piece of
28 rope.' 'You are mistaken,' said a third, 'I felt him and it was just a
29 serpent.' The discussion grew excited, and the fourth declared the
30 elephant was like a pillow. The argument soon broke into more
31 angry expressions, and the five blind men took to fighting. Along
32 came a man with two eyes, and he said, 'My friends, what is the
33 matter?' The disputation was explained, whereupon the new-comer
34 said, 'Men, you are all right: the trouble is you touched the elephant
35 at different points. The wall was the side, the rope was the tail, the
36 serpent was the trunk, and the toes were the pillow. Stop your
37 quarrelling; you are all right, only you have been viewing the
38 elephant from different standpoints."

39 Religion, he said, had become involved in such a quarrel. The
40 people of the West thought they had the only religion of God, and
41 the people of the East held the same prejudice. Both were wrong;
42 God was in every religion.

43 There were many bright criticisms on Western thought. The
44 Christians were characterised as having a "shopkeeping religion".
45 They were always begging of God--"O God, give me this and give
46 me that; O God, do this and do that." The Hindu couldn't
47 understand this. He thought it wrong to be begging of God. Instead
48 of begging, the religious man should give. The Hindu believed in
49 giving to God, to his fellows, instead of asking God to give to them.
50 He had observed that the people of the West, very many of them,
51 thought a great deal of God, so long as they got along all right, but

1 when the reverse came, then God was forgotten: not so with the
2 Hindu, who had come to look upon God as a being of love. The
3 Hindu faith recognised the motherhood of God as well as the
4 fatherhood, because the former was a better fulfilment of the idea
5 of love. The Western Christian would work all the week for the
6 dollar, and when he succeeded he would pray, "O God, we thank
7 thee for giving us this benefit", and then he would put all the money
8 into his pocket; the Hindu would make the money and then give it
9 to God by helping the poor and the less fortunate. And so
10 comparisons were made between the ideas of the West and the
11 ideas of the East. In speaking of God, Vivekanandi said in
12 substance: "You people of the West think you have God. What is it to
13 have God? If you have Him, why is it that so much criminality exists,
14 that nine out of ten people are hypocrites? Hypocrisy cannot exist
15 where God is. You have your palaces for the worship of God, and
16 you attend them in part for a time once a week, but how few go to
17 worship God. It is the fashion in the West to attend church, and
18 many of you attend for no other reason. Have you then, you people
19 of the West, any right to lay exclusive claim to the possession of
20 God?"

21 Here the speaker was interrupted by spontaneous applause.
22 He proceeded: "We of the Hindu faith believe in worshipping God
23 for love's sake, not for what He gives us, but because God is love,
24 and no nation, no people, no religion has God until it is willing to
25 worship Him for love's sake. You of the West are practical in
26 business, practical in great inventions, but we of the East are
27 practical in religion. You make commerce your business; we make
28 religion our business. If you will come to India and talk with the
29 workman in the field, you will find he has no opinion on politics. He
30 knows nothing of politics. But you talk to him of religion, and the
31 humblest knows about monotheism, deism, and all the isms of
32 religion. You ask:

33 "What government do you live under?" and he will reply: 'I
34 don't know. I pay my taxes, and that's all I know about it.' I have
35 talked with your labourers, your farmers, and I find that in politics
36 they are all posted. They are either Democrat or Republican, and
37 they know whether they prefer free silver or a gold standard. But
38 you talk to them of religion; they are like the Indian farmer, they
39 don't know, they attend such a church, but they don't know what it
40 believes; they just pay their pew rent, and that's all they know
41 about it--or God."

42 The superstitions of India were admitted, "but what nation
43 doesn't have them?" he asked. In summing up, he held that the
44 nations had been looking at God as a monopoly. All nations had
45 God, and any impulse for good was God. The Western people, as
46 well as the Eastern people, must learn to "want God", and this
47 "want" was compared to the man under water, struggling for air; he
48 wanted it, he couldn't live without it. When the people of the West
49 "wanted" God in that manner, then they would be welcome in India,
50 because the missionaries would then come to them with God, not
51 with the idea that India knows not God, but with love in their hearts
52 and not dogma.

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THE DESTINY OF MAN

(Delivered in Memphis on January 17, 1894: Reported in Appeal-Avalanche)

The audience was moderately large, and was made up of the best literary and musical talent of the city, including some of the most distinguished members of the legal fraternity and financial institutions.

The speaker differs in one respect in particular from some American orators. He advances his ideas with as much deliberation as a professor of mathematics demonstrates an example in algebra to his students. Kananda²²¹ speaks with perfect faith in his own powers and ability to hold successfully his position against all argument. He advances no ideas, nor make assertions that he does not follow up to a logical conclusion. Much of his lecture is something on the order of Ingersoll's philosophy. He does not believe in future punishment nor in God as Christians believe in Him. He does not believe the mind is immortal, from the fact that it is dependent, and nothing can be immortal except it is independent of all things. He says: "God is not a king sitting away in one corner of the universe to deal out punishment or rewards according to a man's deeds here on earth, and the time will come when man will know the truth, and stand up and say, 'I am God,' am life of His life. Why teach that God is far away when our real nature, our immortal principle is God?

"Be not deluded by your religion teaching original sin, for the same religion teaches original purity. When Adam fell, he fell from purity. (Applause) Purity is our real nature, and to regain that is the object of all religion. All men are pure; all men are good. Some objections can be raised to them, and you ask why some men are brutes? That man you call a brute is like the diamond in the dirt and dust--brush the dust off and it is a diamond, just as pure as if the dust had never been on it, and we must admit that every soul is a big diamond.

"Nothing is baser than calling our brother a sinner. A lioness once fell upon a flock of sheep and killed a lamb. A sheep found a very young lion, and it followed her, and he gave it suck, and it grew up with the sheep and learned to eat grass like a sheep. One day an old lion saw the sheep lion and tried to get it away from the sheep, but it ran away as he approached. The big lion waited till he caught the sheep lion alone, and he seized it and carried it to a clear pool of water and said, 'You are not a sheep, but a lion; look at your picture in the water.' The sheep lion, seeing its picture reflected from the water, said, 'I am a lion and not a sheep.' Let us not think we are sheep, but be lions, and don't bleat and eat grass like a sheep.

"For four months I have been in America. In Massachusetts I

²²¹ ?In those days Swamiji was generally referred to by American press as Vive Kananda.

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1 visited a reformatory prison. The jailor at that prison never knows
2 for what crimes the prisoners are incarcerated. The mantle of
3 charity is thrown around them. In another city there were three
4 newspapers, edited by very learned men, trying to prove that
5 severe punishment was a necessity, while one other paper
6 contended that mercy was better than punishment. The editor of
7 one paper proved by statistics that only fifty per cent of criminals
8 who received severe punishment returned to honest lives, while
9 ninety per cent of those who received light punishment returned to
10 useful pursuits in life.

11 "Religion is not the outcome of the weakness of human
12 nature; religion is not here because we fear a tyrant; religion is
13 love, unfolding, expanding, growing. Take the watch--within the
14 little case is machinery and a spring. The spring, when wound up,
15 tries to regain its natural state. You are like the spring in the watch,
16 and it is not necessary that all watches have the same kind of a
17 spring, and it is not necessary that we all have the same religion.
18 And why should we quarrel? If we all had the same ideas the world
19 would be dead. External motion we call action; internal motion is
20 human thought. The stone falls to the earth. You say it is caused by
21 the law of gravitation. The horse draws the cart and God draws the
22 horse. That is the law of motion. Whirlpools show the strength of
23 the current; stop the current and stagnation ensues. Motion is life.
24 We must have unity and variety. The rose would smell as sweet by
25 any other name, and it does not matter what your religion is called.

26 "Six blind men lived in a village. They could not see the
27 elephant, but they went out and felt of him. One put his hand on the
28 elephant's tail, one of them on his side, one on his tongue[trunk],
29 one on his ear. They began to describe the elephant. One said he
30 was like a rope; one said he was like a great wall; one said he was
31 like a boa constrictor, and another said he was like a fan. They
32 finally came to blows and went to pummelling each other. A man
33 who could see came along and inquired the trouble, and the blind
34 men said they had seen the elephant and disagreed because one
35 accused the other of lying. 'Well,' said the man, 'you have all lied;
36 you are blind, and neither of you have seen it.' That is what is the
37 matter with our religion. We let the blind see the elephant.
38 (Applause).

39 "A monk of India said, 'I would believe you if you were to say
40 that I could press the sands of the desert and get oil, or that I could
41 pluck the tooth from the mouth of the crocodile without being
42 bitten, but I cannot believe you when you say a bigot can be
43 changed.' You ask why is there so much variance in religions? The
44 answer is this: The little streams that ripple down a thousand
45 mountain sides are destined to come at last to the mighty ocean. So
46 with the different religions. They are destined at last to bring us to
47 the bosom of God. For 1,900 years you have been trying to crush
48 the Jews. Why could you not crush them? Echo answers: Ignorance
49 and bigotry can never crush truth."

50 The speaker continued in this strain of reasoning for nearly
51 two hours, and concluded by saying: "Let us help, and not destroy."

REINCARNATION

(Delivered in Memphis on January 19, 1894: Reported in Appeal-Avalanche)

Swami Vive Kananda, the beturbaned and yellow-robed monk, lectured again last night to a fair-sized and appreciative audience at the La Salette Academy on Third street.

The subject was "Transmigration of the Soul, or "metempsychosis". Possibly Vive Kananda never appeared to greater advantage than in this role, so to speak. Metempsychosis is one of the most widely-accepted beliefs among the Eastern races, and one that they are ever ready to defend, at home or abroad. As Kananda said:

"Many of you do not know that it is one of the oldest religious doctrines of all the old religions. It was known among the Pharisees, among the Jews, among the first fathers of the Christian Church, and was a common belief among the Arabs. And it lingers still with the Hindus and the Buddhists.

"This state of things went on until the days of science which is merely a contemplation of energies. Now, you Western people believe this doctrine to be subversive of morality. In order to have a full survey of the argument, its logical and metaphysical features, we will have to go over all the ground. All of us believe in a moral governor of this universe; yet nature reveals to us instead of justice, injustice. One man is born under the best of circumstances. Throughout his entire life circumstances come ready made to his hands--all conducive to happiness and a higher order of things. Another is born, and at every point his life is at variance with that of his neighbour. He dies in depravity, exiled from society. Why so much impartiality [partiality] in the distribution of happiness?

"The theory of metempsychosis reconciles this disharmonious chord in your common beliefs. Instead of making us immoral, this theory give us the idea of justice. Some of you say: 'It is God's will.' This is no answer. It is unscientific. Everything has a cause. The sole cause and whole theory of causation being left with God, makes Him a most immoral creature. But materialism is as much illogical as the other. So far as we go, perception [causation?] involves all things. Therefore, this doctrine of the transmigration of the soul is necessary on these grounds. Here we are all born. Is this the first creation? Is creation something coming out of nothing? Analysed completely, this sentence is nonsense. It is not creation, but manifestation.

"A something cannot be the effect of a cause that is not. If I put my finger in the fire, the burn is a simultaneous effect, and I know that the cause of the burn was the action of my placing my finger in contact with the fire. And as in the case of nature, there never was a time when nature did not exist, because the cause has always existed. But for argument['s] sake, admit that there was a time when there was no existence. Where was all this mass of matter? To create something new would be the introduction of so

1 much more energy into the universe. This is impossible. Old things
2 can be re-created, but there can be no addition to the universe.

3 "No mathematical demonstration could be made that would
4 have this theory of metempsychosis. According to logic, hypothesis
5 and theory must not be believed. But my contention is that no
6 better hypothesis has been forwarded by the human intellect to
7 explain the phenomena of life.

8 "I met with a peculiar incident while on a train leaving the
9 city of Minneapolis. There was a cowboy on the train. He was a
10 rough sort of a fellow and a Presbyterian of the blue nose type. He
11 walked up and asked me where I was from. I told him India. 'What
12 are you?' he said. 'Hindu', I replied. 'Then you must go to hell', he
13 remarked. I told him of this theory, and after [my] explaining it, he
14 said he had always believed in it because he said that one day when
15 he was chopping a log, his little sister came out in her clothes and
16 said that she used to be a man. That is why he believed in the
17 transmigration of souls. The whole basis of the theory is this: If a
18 man's actions be good, he must be a higher being, and vice versa.

19 "There is another beauty in this theory--the moral motor
20 [motive] it supplies. What is done is done. It says, 'Ah, that it were
21 done better.' Do not put your finger in the fire again. Every moment
22 is a new chance."

23 24 COMPARATIVE THEOLOGY

25 *(Delivered in Memphis on January 21, 1894: Reported in*
26 *Appeal-Avalanche)*

27 "Comparative Theology" was the subject of a discourse last
28 night by Swami Vive Kananda at the Young Men's Hebrew
29 Association Hall. It was the blue-ribbon lecture of the series, and no
30 doubt increased the general admiration the people of this city
31 entertain for the learned gentleman.

32 Heretofore Vive Kananda has lectured for the benefit of one
33 charity-worthy object or another, and it can be safely said that he
34 has rendered them material aid. Last night, however, he lectured
35 for his own benefit. The lecture was planned and sustained by Mr.
36 Hu L. Brinkley, one of Vive Kananda's warmest friends and most
37 ardent admirers. In the neighbourhood of two hundred gathered at
38 the hall last night to hear the eminent Easterner for the last time in
39 this city.

40 The first question the speaker asserted in connection with
41 the subject was: "Can there be such a distinction between religions
42 as their creeds would imply?"

43 He asserted that no differences existed now, and he retraced
44 the line of progress made by all religions and brought it back to the
45 present day. He showed that such variance of opinion must of
46 necessity have existed with primitive man in regard to the idea of
47 God, but that as the world advanced step by step in a moral and
48 intellectual way, the distinctions became more and more indistinct,
49 until finally it had faded away entirely, and now there was one all-

1 prevalent doctrine--that of an absolute existence.

2 "No savage", said the speaker, "can be found who does not
3 believe in some kind of a god."

4 "Modern science does not say whether it looks upon this as a
5 revelation or not. Love among savage nations is not very strong.
6 They live in terror. To their superstitious imaginations is pictured
7 some malignant spirit, before the thought of which they quake in
8 fear and terror. Whatever he likes he thinks will please the evil
9 spirit. What will pacify him he thinks will appease the wrath of the
10 spirit. To this end he labours even against his fellow-savage."

11 The speaker went on to show by historical facts that the
12 savage man went from ancestral worship to the worship of
13 elephants, and later to gods, such as the God of Thunder and
14 Storms. Then the religion of the world was polytheism. "The beauty
15 of the sunrise, the grandeur of the sunset, the mystifying
16 appearance of the star-bedecked skies, and the weirdness of
17 thunder and lightning[nature] impressed primitive man with a force
18 that he could not explain, and suggested the idea of a higher and
19 more powerful being controlling the infinities that flocked before
20 his gaze," said Vive Kananda.

21 Then came another period--the period of monotheism. All the
22 gods disappeared and blended into one, the God of Gods, the ruler
23 of the universe. Then the speaker traced the Aryan race up to that
24 period, where they said: "We live and move in God. He is motion."
25 Then there came another period known to metaphysics as the
26 "period of Pantheism". This race rejected Polytheism and
27 Monotheism, and the idea that God was the universe, and said "the
28 soul of my soul is the only true existence. My nature is my existence
29 and will expand to me."

30 Vive Kananda then took up Buddhism. He said that they
31 neither asserted nor denied the existence of a God. Buddha would
32 simply say, when his counsel was sought: "You see misery. Then try
33 to lessen it." To a Buddhist misery is ever present, and society
34 measures the scope of his existence. Mohammedans, he said,
35 believed in the Old Testament of the Hindu [Hebrew] and the New
36 Testament of the Christian. They do not like the Christians, for they
37 say they are heretics and teach man-worship. Mohammed ever
38 forbade his followers having a picture of himself.

39 "The next question that arises," said he, "are these religions
40 true or are some of them true and some of them false? They have
41 all reached one conclusion, that of an absolute and infinite
42 existence. Unity is the object of religion. The multiple of
43 phenomena that is seen at every hand is only the infinite variety of
44 unity. an analysis of religion shows that man does not travel from
45 fallacy to truth, but from a lower truth to a higher truth.

46 "A man brings in a coat to a lot of people. Some say the coat
47 does not fit them. Well, you get out; you can't have a coat. Ask one
48 Christian minister what is the matter with all the other sects that
49 are opposed to his doctrines and dogmas, and he will answer: 'Oh,
50 they're not Christians.' But we have better instruction than these.

1 Our own natures, love, and science--they teach us better. Like the
2 eddies to a river, take them away and stagnation follows. Kill the
3 difference in opinions, and it is the death of thought. Motion is
4 necessity. Thought is the motion of the mind, and when that ceases
5 death begins.

6 "If you put a simple molecule of air in the bottom of a glass of
7 water it at once begins a struggle to join the infinite atmosphere
8 above. So it is with the soul. It is struggling to regain its pure
9 nature and to free itself from this material body. It wants to regain
10 its own infinite expansion. This is everywhere the same. Among
11 Christians, Buddhists, Mohammedans, agnostic, or priest, the soul
12 is struggling. A river flows a thousand miles down the circuitous
13 mountain side to where it joins the seas, and a man is standing
14 there to tell it to go back and start anew and assume a more direct
15 course! That man is a fool. You are a river that flows from the
16 heights of Zion. I flow from the lofty peaks of the Himalayas. I don't
17 say to you, go back and come down as I did, you're wrong. That is
18 more wrong than foolish. Stick to your beliefs. The truth is never
19 lost. Books may perish, nations may go down in a crash, but the
20 truth is preserved and is taken up by some man and handed back to
21 society, which proves a grand and continuous revelation of God."

22
23 *BUDDHISM, THE RELIGION OF THE LIGHT OF ASIA*

24 *(Delivered in Detroit on March 19, 1894: Reported in Detroit*
25 *Tribune)*

26 Vive Kananda lectured to an audience of about 150
27 [according to the *Journal*, 500] at the Auditorium last night upon
28 "Buddhism, the Religion of the Light of Asia." Honourable Don M.
29 Dickinson introduced him to the audience.

30 "Who shall say that this system of religion is divine and that
31 doomed?" asked Mr. Dickinson in his introductory remarks. "Who
32 shall draw the mystic line?"

33 Vive Kananda reviewed at length the early religions of India.
34 He told of the great slaughter of animals on the altar of sacrifice; of
35 Buddha's birth and life; of his puzzling questions to himself over the
36 causes of creation and the reasons for existence; of the earnest
37 struggle of Buddha to find the solution of creation and life; of the
38 final result.

39 Buddha, he said, stood head and shoulders above all other
40 men. He was one, he said, [of] whom his friends or enemies could
41 never say that he drew a breath or ate a crumb of bread but for the
42 good of all.

43 "He never preached transmigration of the soul," said
44 Kananda, "except he believed one soul was to its successor like the
45 wave of the ocean that grew and died away, leaving naught to the
46 succeeding wave but its force. He never preached that there was a
47 God, nor did he deny there was a God.

48 "'Why should we be good?' his disciples asked of him.

49 "'Because', he said, 'you inherited good. Let you in your turn

1 leave some heritage of good to your successors. Let us all help the
2 onward march of accumulated goodness, for goodness' sake.'

3 "He was the first prophet. He never abused any one or
4 arrogated anything to himself. He believed in our working out our
5 own salvation in religion.

6 "'I can't tell you,' he said, on his deathbed, 'nor any one.
7 Depend not on any one. Work out your own religion [salvation].'

8 "He protested against the inequality of man and man, or of
9 man and beast. All life was equal, he preached. He was the first
10 man to uphold the doctrine of prohibition in liquors. 'Be good and
11 do good', he said. 'If there is a God, you have Him by being good. If
12 there is no God, being good is good. He is to be blamed for all he
13 suffers. He is to be praised for all his good.'

14 "He was the first who brought the missionaries into
15 existence. He came as a saviour to the downtrodden millions of
16 India. They could not understand his philosophy, but they saw the
17 man and his teachings, and they followed him."

18 In conclusion Kananda said that Buddhism was the
19 foundation of the Christian religion; that the catholic church came
20 from Buddhism.

22 THE SCIENCE OF YOGA²²²

23 (*Delivered at Tucker Hall, Alameda, California, on April 13,*
24 *1900*)

25 The old Sanskrit word Yoga is defined as
26 [Chittavrittinirodha]. It means that Yoga is the science that teaches
27 us to bring the Chitta under control from the state of change. The
28 Chitta is the stuff from which our minds are made and which is
29 being constantly churned into waves by external and internal
30 influences. Yoga teaches us how to control the mind so that it is not
31 thrown out of balance into wave forms. . . .

32 What does this mean? To the student of religion almost
33 ninety-nine per cent of the books and thoughts of religion are mere
34 speculations. One man thinks religion is this and another, that. If
35 one man is more clever than the others, he overthrows their
36 speculations and starts a new one. Men have been studying new
37 religious systems for the last two thousand, four thousand, years--
38 how long exactly nobody knows. . . . When they could not reason
39 them out, they said, "Believe!" If they were powerful, they forced
40 their beliefs. This is going on even now.

41 But there are a set of people who are not entirely satisfied
42 with this sort of thing. "Is there no way out?" they ask. You do not
43 speculate that way in physics, chemistry, and mathematics. Why
44 cannot the science of religion be like any other science? They
45 proposed this way: If such a thing as the soul of man really exists, if

1 ²²² ?Fragmentary notes of a lecture recorded by Ida Ansell and reprinted from
2 *Vedanta and the West*, July-August, 1957.
3

1 it is immortal, if God really exists as the ruler of this universe--He
2 must be [known] here; and all that must be [realised] in [your own]
3 consciousness.

4 The mind cannot be analysed by any external machine.
5 Supposing you could look into my brain while I am thinking, you
6 would only see certain molecules interchanged. You could not see
7 thought, consciousness, ideas, images. You would simply see the
8 mass of vibrations--chemical and physical changes. From this
9 example we see that this sort of analysis would not do.

10 Is there any other method by which the mind can be analysed
11 as mind? If there is, then the real science of religion is possible. The
12 science of Raja-Yoga claims there is such a possibility. We can all
13 attempt it and succeed to a certain degree. There is this great
14 difficulty: In external sciences the object is [comparatively easy to
15 observe]. The instruments of analysis are rigid; and both are
16 external. But in the analysis of the mind the object and the
17 instruments of analysis are the same thing. . . . The subject and the
18 object become one. . . .

19 External analysis will go to the brain and find physical and
20 chemical changes. It would never succeed [in answering the
21 questions]: What is the consciousness? What is your imagination?
22 Where does this vast mass of ideas you have come from, and where
23 do they go? We cannot deny them. They are facts. I never saw my
24 own brain. I have to take for granted I have one. But man can never
25 deny his own conscious imagination. . . .

26 The great problem is ourselves. Am I the long chain I do not
27 see--one piece following the other in rapid succession but quite
28 unconnected? Am I such a state of consciousness [for ever in a
29 flux]? Or am I something more than that--a substance, an entity,
30 what we call the soul? In other words, has man a soul or not? Is he
31 a bundle of states of consciousness without any connection, or is he
32 a unified substance? That is the great controversy. If we are merely
33 bundles of consciousness, . . . such a question as immortality would
34 be merely delusion. . . . On the other hand, if there is something in
35 me which is a unit, a substance, then of course I am immortal. The
36 unit cannot be destroyed or broken into pieces. Only compounds
37 can be broken up. . . .

38 All religions except Buddhism believe and struggle in some
39 way or other to reach such a substance. Buddhism denies the
40 substance and is quite satisfied with that. It says, this business
41 about God, the soul, immortality, and all that--do not vex yourselves
42 with such questions. But all the other religions of the world cling to
43 this substance. They all believe that the soul is the substance in
44 man in spite of all the changes, that God is the substance which is
45 in the universe. They all believe in the immortality of the soul.
46 These are speculations. Who is to decide the controversy between
47 the Buddhists and the Christians? Christianity says there is a
48 substance that will live for ever. The Christian says, "My Bible says
49 so." The Buddhist says, "I do not believe in your book." . . .

50 The question is: Are we the substance [the soul] or this
51 subtle matter, the changing, billowing mind? . . . Our minds are

1 constantly changing. Where is the substance within? We do not find
2 it. I am now this and now that. I will believe in the substance if for a
3 moment you can stop these changes. . . .

4 Of course all the beliefs in God and heaven are little beliefs
5 of organised religions. Any scientific religion never proposes such
6 things.

7 Yoga is the science that teaches us to stop the Chitta [the
8 mind-stuff] from getting into these changes. Suppose you succeed
9 in leading the mind to a perfect state of Yoga. That moment you
10 have solved the problem. You have known what you are. You have
11 mastered all the changes. After that you may let the mind run
12 about, but it is not the same mind any more. It is perfectly under
13 your control. No more like wild horses that dash you down. . . . You
14 have seen God. This is no longer a matter of speculation. There is
15 no more Mr. So-and-So, . . . no more books or Vedas, or controversy
16 of preachers, or anything. You have been yourself: I am the
17 substance beyond all these changes. I am not the changes; if I
18 were, I could not stop them. I *can* stop the changes, and therefore I
19 can never be the changes. This is the proposition of the science of
20 Yoga. . . .

21 We do not like these changes. We do not like changes at all.
22 Every change is being forced upon us. . . . In our country bullocks
23 carry a yoke on their shoulders [which is connected by a pole with
24 an oil press]. From the yoke projects a piece of wood [to which is
25 tied a bundle of grass] just far enough to tempt the bullock, but he
26 cannot reach it. He wants to eat the grass and goes a little farther
27 [thereby turning the oil press]. . . . We are like these bullocks,
28 always trying to eat the grass and stretching our necks to reach it.
29 We go round and round this way. Nobody likes these changes.
30 Certainly not! . . . All these changes are forced upon us. . . . We
31 cannot help it. Once we have put ourselves in the machine, we must
32 go on and on. The moment we stop, there is greater evil than if we
33 continued forward. . . .

34 Of course misery comes to us. It is all misery because it is all
35 unwilling. It is all forced. Nature orders us and we obey, but there
36 is not much love lost between us and nature. All our work is an
37 attempt to escape nature. We say we are enjoying nature. If we
38 analyse ourselves, we find that we are trying to escape everything
39 and invent ways to enjoy this and that. . . . [Nature is] like the
40 Frenchman who had invited an English friend and told him of his
41 old wines in the cellar. He called for a bottle of old wine. It was so
42 beautiful, and the light sparkled inside like a piece of gold. His
43 butler poured out a glass, and the Englishman quietly drank it. The
44 butler had brought in a bottle of castor oil! We are drinking castor
45 oil all the time; we cannot help it. . . .

46 [People in general] . . . are so reduced to machinery they do
47 not . . . even think. Just like cats, dogs and other animals, they are
48 also driven with the whip by nature. They never disobey, never
49 think of it. But even they have some experience of life. . . .

50 [Some, however,] begin to question: What is this? What are
51 all these experiences for? What is the Self? Is there any escape?

1 Any meaning to life? . . .

2 The good will die. The wicked will die. Kings will die, and
3 beggars will die. The great misery is death. . . .

4 All the time we are trying to avoid it. And if we die in a
5 comfortable religion, we think we will see Johns and Jacks
6 afterwards and have a good time.

7 In your country they bring Johns and Jacks down to show you
8 [in Seances]. I saw such people numbers of times and shook hands
9 with them. Many of you may have seen them. They bang the piano
10 and sing "Beulah Land": America is a vast land. My home is on the
11 other side of the world. I do not know where Beulah Land is. You
12 will not find it in any geography. See our good comfortable religion!
13 The old, old moth-eaten belief!

14 Those people cannot think. What can be done for them? They
15 have been eaten up by the world. There is nothing in them to think.
16 Their bones have become hollow, their brains are like cheese. . . . I
17 sympathise with them. Let them have their comfort! Some people
18 are evidently very much comforted by seeing their ancestors from
19 Beulah Land.

20 One of these mediums offered to bring my ancestors down to
21 me. I said, "Stop there. Do anything you like, but if you bring my
22 ancestors, I don't know if I can restrain myself." The medium was
23 very kind and stopped.

24 In our country, when we begin to get worried by things, we
25 pay something to the priests and make a bargain with God. . . . For
26 the time being we feel comforted, otherwise we will not pay the
27 priests. A little comfort comes, but [it turns] into reaction shortly. . .
28 . So again misery comes. The same misery is here all the time. Your
29 people in our country says, "If you believe in our doctrine you are
30 safe." Our people among the lower classes believe in your
31 doctrines. The only change is that they become beggars. . . . But is
32 that religion? It is politics--not religion. You may call it religion,
33 dragging the word religion down to that sense. But it is not
34 spiritual.

35 Among thousands of men and women a few are inclined to
36 something higher than this life. The others are like sheep. . . . Some
37 among thousands try to understand things, to find a way out. The
38 question is: Is there a way out? If there is a way out, it is in the soul
39 and nowhere else. The ways out from other sources have been tried
40 enough, and all [have been found wanting]. People do not find
41 satisfaction. The very fact that those myriads of theories and sects
42 exist show that people do not find satisfaction.

43 The science of Yoga proposes this, that the one way out is
44 through ourselves. We have to individualise ourselves. If there is
45 any truth, we can [realise it as our very essence]. . . . We will cease
46 being driven about by nature from place to place. . . .

47 The phenomenal world is always changing: [to reach the
48 Changeless] that is our goal. We want to be That, to realise that
49 Absolute, the [changeless] Reality. What is preventing us from

1 realising that Reality? It is the fact of creation. The creative mind is
2 creating all the time and gets mixed up with its own creation. [But
3 we must also remember that] it is creation that discovered God. It
4 is creation that discovered the Absolute in every individual soul. . . .

5 Going back to our definition: Yoga is stopping the Chitta, the
6 mind-stuff, from getting into these changes. When all this creation
7 has been stopped--if it is possible to stop it--then we shall see for
8 ourselves what we are in reality. . . . The Uncreated, the One that
9 creates, manifests itself.

10 The methods of Yoga are various. Some of them are very
11 difficult; it takes long training to succeed. Some are easy. Those
12 who have the perseverance and strength to follow it through attain
13 to great results. Those who do not may take a simpler method and
14 get some benefit out of it.

15 As to the proper analysis of the mind, we see at once how
16 difficult it is to grapple with the mind itself. We have become
17 bodies. That we are souls we have forgotten entirely. When we
18 think of ourselves, it is the body that comes into our imagination.
19 We behave as bodies. We talk as bodies. We are all body. From this
20 body we have to separate the soul. Therefore the training begins
21 with the body itself, [until ultimately] the spirit manifests itself. . . .
22 The central idea in all this training is to attain to that power of
23 concentration, the power of meditation.

24
25 I

26 *Glory to Ramakrishna!*

27 Baidyanath

28 25th December, 1889

29 {original in Bengali}

30 Dear Sir {Balaram Bose},

31 I have been staying for the last few days at Baidyanath in
32 Purna Babu's Lodge. It is not so cold, and my health too is
33 indifferent. I am suffering from indigestion, probably due to excess
34 of iron in the water. I have found nothing agreeable here--neither
35 the place, nor the season, nor the company. I leave for Varanasi
36 tomorrow. Achyutananda stopped at Govinda Chaudhury's place at
37 Deoghar, and the latter, as soon as he got news of us, earnestly
38 insisted on our becoming his guests. Finally, he met us once again
39 and prevailed on us to accede to his request. The man is a great
40 worker, but has a number of women with him--old women most of
41 them, of the ordinary Vaishnava type. . . . His clerks too revere us
42 much; some of them are very much ill-disposed towards him, and
43 they spoke of his misdeeds. Incidentally, I raised the topic of __. You
44 have many wrong ideas or doubts about her; hence I write all this
45 after particular investigation. Even the aged clerks of this
46 establishment highly respect and revere her. She came to stop with
47 __ while she was a mere child, and ever lived as his wife. . . .
48 Everyone admits in one voice that her character is spotless. She
49 was all along a perfectly chaste woman and never behaved with __

1 in any relation but that of wife to husband, and she was absolutely
2 faithful. She came at too early an age to have incurred any moral
3 taint. After she had separated from __, she wrote to him to say that
4 she had never treated him as anything but her husband, but that it
5 was impossible for her to live with a man with a loose character. His
6 old office-bearers too believe him to be satanic in character; but
7 they consider __ a Devi (angel), and remark that it was following
8 her departure that __ lost all sense of shame.

9 My object in writing all this is that formerly I was not a
10 believer in the tale of the lady's early life. The idea that there might
11 be such purity in the midst of a relation which society does not
12 recognise, I used to consider as romance. But after thorough
13 investigation I have come to know that it is all right. She is very
14 pure, pure from her infancy--I have not the least doubt about it. For
15 entertaining those doubts, you and I and everyone are guilty to her;
16 I make repeated salutations to her, and ask her pardon for my guilt.
17 She is not a liar.

18 I take this opportunity to record that such courage is
19 impossible in a lying and unchaste woman. I have also been told
20 that she had a lifelong ardent faith in religion also.

21 Well, your disease is not yet improving! I don't think this is a
22 place for patients unless one is ready to spend a good deal of
23 money. Please think out some judicious course. Here every article
24 will have to be procured from elsewhere.

25 Yours sincerely,

26 Vivekananda

27
28 II

29 *Glory to Ramakrishna!*

30 Allahabad

31 30th December, 1889

32 {original in Bengali}

33 Dear Sir {Balam Bose},

34 Gupta left a slip when coming and the next day a letter from
35 Yogananda gave me all the news and I immediately started for
36 Allahabad which I reached the day after, to find that Yogananda had
37 completely recovered. He had chicken-pox (with one or two
38 smallpox rashes also). The doctor is a noble soul, and they have got
39 a brotherhood, who are all great pious men and highly devoted to
40 the service of Sadhus. They are particularly anxious that I pass the
41 month of Magh here, but I am leaving for Varanasi. . . . How are
42 you? I pray to God for the welfare of yourself and your family.
43 Please convey my compliments to Tulasiram, Chuni Babu, and the
44 rest.

45 Yours affectionately,

46 Vivekananda

III

Ghazipur

30th January, 1890

{original in Bengali}

Revered Sir {Balaram Bose},

I am now stopping with Satish Babu at Ghazipur. Of the few places I have recently visited, this is the healthiest. The water of Baidyanath is very bad--it leads to indigestion. Allahabad is very congested. The few days I passed at Varanasi, I suffered from fever day and night--the place is so malarious! Ghazipur has a very salubrious climate--specially the quarter I am living in. I have visited Pavhari Baba's house--there are high walls all round, and it is fashioned like an English bungalow. There is a garden inside and big rooms and chimneys, etc. He allows nobody to enter. If he is so inclined, he comes up to the door and speaks from inside--that is all. One day I went and waited and waited in the cold and had to return. I shall go to Varanasi on Sunday next. If the meeting with the Babaji takes place in the meantime, all right, otherwise I bid him good-bye. About Pramada Babu's place I shall write definitely from Varanasi. If Kali Bhattacharya is determined to come, let him do so after I leave for Varanasi on Sunday, but he should rather not. After a few days' stay at Varanasi, I shall start for Hrishikesh. Pramada Babu may accompany me. Please accept all of you my cordial greetings--and blessing to Fakir, Ram, Krishnamayi, etc.

Yours affectionately,

Vivekananda

PS. In my opinion, it will do you much good if you come and stay for some time at Ghazipur. Here Satish will be able to secure a bungalow for you, and there is a gentleman, Gagan Chandra Ray by name, who is the head of the Opium Office and is exceedingly courteous, philanthropic, and social--they will arrange for everything. The house-rent is fifteen to twenty rupees; rice is dear, and milk sells at sixteen to twenty seers a rupee; all other things are very cheap. Besides, under the care of these gentlemen, there is no chance of any difficulty. But it is slightly expensive--it will cost over forty to fifty rupees. Varanasi is horribly malarious. I have never lived in Pramada Babu's garden. He likes to have me always in his company. The garden is indeed very beautiful, richly laid out, spacious, and open. This time when I go, I shall live there and report to you.

IV

Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna!

c/o Satish Mukherji

Gorabazar, Ghazipur

14th February, 1890

{original in Bengali}

Revered Sir {Balaram Bose},

I am in receipt of your letter of contrition. I am not leaving this place soon--it is impossible to avoid the Babaji's request. You have expressed remorse at not having reaped any appreciable results by serving the Sadhus. It is true, and yet not true; it is true if you look towards ideal bliss; but if you look behind to the place from which you started, you will find that before you were an animal, now you are a man, and will be a god or God Himself in future. Moreover, that sort of regret and dissatisfaction is very good; it is the prelude to improvement. Without this none can rise. He who puts on a turban and immediately sees the Lord, progresses thus far and no farther. You are blessed indeed to have that constant dissatisfaction preying upon your mind--rest assured that there is no danger for you. . . . You are a keenly intelligent man, and know full well that patience is the best means of success. In this respect I have no doubt that we light-headed boys have much to learn from you. . . . You are a considerate man, and I need not add anything. Man has two ears but one mouth. You specially are given to plain-speaking and are chary of making large promises--things that sometimes make me cross with you, but upon reflection I find that it is you who have acted with discretion. "Slow but sure." "What is lost in power is gained in speed." However, in this world everything depends upon one's words. To get an insight behind the words (specially, with your economical spirit masking all) is not given to all, and one must associate long with a man to be able to understand him. . . . Religion is not in sects, nor in making a fuss--why do you forget these teachings of our revered Master? Please help as far as it lies in you, but to judge what came of it, whether it was turned to good or evil account, is perhaps beyond our jurisdiction. . . . Considering the great shock which Girish Babu has received, it will give him immense peace to serve Mother at this moment. He is a very keen-witted person. And our beloved Master had perfect confidence in you, used to dine nowhere else except at your place, and, I have heard, Mother too has the fullest confidence in you. In view of these, you will please bear and forbear all shortcomings of us fickle boys, treating them as if they were done by your own boy. This is all I have got to say. Please let me know by return of post when the Anniversary is to take place. A pain in the loins is giving me much trouble. In a few days the place will look exceedingly beautiful, with miles and miles of rose-banks all in flower. Satish says he will then send some fresh roses and cuttings for the Festival. . . . May the Lord ordain that your son becomes a man, and never a coward!

Yours affectionately,

Vivekananda

PS. If Mother has come, please convey to her my countless salutations, and ask her to bless me that I may have unflinching

1 perseverance. Or, if that be impossible in this body, may it fall off
2 soon!

3
4
5 V

6 Ghazipur

7 14th Feb.,1890

8 {original in Bengali}

9 My dear Gupta {Sadananda},

10 I hope you are doing well. Do your own spiritual exercises,
11 and knowing yourself to be the humblest servant of all, serve them.
12 Those with whom you are staying are such that even I am not
13 worthy to call myself their humblest servant and take the dust of
14 their feet. Knowing this, serve them and have devotion for them.
15 Don't be angry even if they abuse or even hurt you grievously.
16 Never mix with women. Try to be hardy little by little, and gradually
17 accustom yourself to maintaining the body out of the proceeds of
18 begging. Whoever takes the name of Ramakrishna, know him to be
19 your Guru. Everyone can play the role of a master, but it is very
20 difficult to be a servant. Specially you should follow Shashi. Know it
21 for certain that without steady devotion for the Guru and
22 unflinching patience and perseverance, nothing is to be achieved.
23 You must have strict morality. Deviate an inch from this, and you
24 are gone forever.

25 Yours affectionately,

26 Vivekananda

27
28
29 VI

30 *Glory to Ramakrishna!*

31 Ghazipur,

32 15th March, 1890

33 {original in Bengali}

34 Revered Sir {Balaram Bose},

35 Received your kind note yesterday. I am very sorry to learn
36 that Suresh Babu's illness is extremely serious. What is destined
37 will surely happen. It is a matter of great regret that you too have
38 fallen ill. So long as egoism lasts, any shortcoming in adopting
39 remedial measures is to be considered as idleness--it is a fault and a
40 guilt. For one who has not that egoistic idea, the best course is to
41 forbear. The dwelling-place of the Jivatman, this body, is a veritable
42 means of work, and he who converts this into an infernal den is
43 guilty, and he who neglects it is also to blame. Please act according
44 to circumstances as they present themselves, without the least
45 hesitation.

1 {Sanskrit}

2 --"The highest duty consists in doing the little that lies in
3 one's power, seeking neither death nor life, and bidding one's time
4 like a servant ready to do any behest."

5 There is a dreadful outbreak of influenza at Varanasi and
6 Pramada Babu has gone to Allahabad. Baburam has suddenly come
7 here. He has got fever; he was wrong to start under such
8 circumstances. . . . I am leaving this place tomorrow. . . . My
9 countless salutations to Mother. You all bless me that I may have
10 sameness of vision, that after avoiding the bondages which one is
11 heir to by one's very birth, I may not again get stuck in self-imposed
12 bondages. If there be any Doer of good and if He have the power
13 and the opportunity, may He vouchsafe the highest blessings unto
14 you all--this is my constant prayer.

15 Yours affectionately,
16 Vivekananda

17

18

19 VII

20 Ghazipur,

21 15th March, 1890

22 {original in Bengali}

23 Dear Atul Babu {Atul Chandra Ghosh},

24 I am extremely sorry to hear that you are passing through
25 mental afflictions. Please do only what is agreeable to you.

26 {Sanskrit}

27 --"While there is birth there is death, and again entering the
28 mother's womb. This is the manifest evil of transmigration. How, O
29 man, dost thou want satisfaction in such a world!"

30 Yours affectionately,
31 Vivekananda

32 PS. I am leaving this place tomorrow. Let me see which way
33 destiny leads!

34

35

36 VIII

37 Salem (USA)

38 30th Aug., 1893

39 Dear Adhyapakji (Honourable Professor) {Prof. John Henry
40 Wright},

41 I am going off from here today. I hope you have received
42 some reply from Chicago. I have received an invitation with full
43 directions from Mr. Sanborn. So I am going to Saratoga on Monday.

1 My respects to your wife. And my love to Austin and all the
2 children. You are a real Mahatma (a great soul) and Mrs. Wright is
3 nonpareil.

4 Yours affectionately,
5 Vivekananda

6
7
8 IX

9 Salem

10 Saturday, 4th Sept., 1893

11 Dear Adhyapakji {Prof. John Henry Wright},

12 I hasten to tender my heartfelt gratitude to you for your
13 letters of introduction. I have received a letter from Mr. Theles of
14 Chicago giving me the names of some of the delegates and other
15 things about the Congress.

16 Your professor of Sanskrit in his note to Miss Sanborn
17 mistakes me for Purushottama Joshi and states that there is a
18 Sanskrit library in Boston the like of which can scarcely be met with
19 in India. I would be so happy to see it.

20 Mr. Sanborn has written to me to come over to Saratoga on
21 Monday and I am going accordingly. I would stop then at a boarding
22 house called Sanatorium. If any news come from Chicago in the
23 meanwhile I hope you will kindly send it over to the Sanatorium,
24 Saratoga.

25 You and your noble wife and sweet children have made an
26 impression in my brain which is simply indelible, and I thought
27 myself so much nearer to heaven when living with you. May He, the
28 giver of all gifts, shower on your head His choicest blessings.

29 Here are a few lines written as an attempt at poetry. Hoping
30 your love will pardon this infliction.

31 Ever your friend,
32 Vivekananda

33 O'er hill and dale and mountain range,
34 In temple, church, and mosque,
35 In Vedas, Bible, Al Koran
36 I had searched for Thee in vain.
37 Like a child in the wildest forest lost
38 I have cried and cried alone,
39 "Where art Thou gone, my God, my love?"
40 The echo answered, "gone."

41
42 And days and nights and years then passed--
43 A fire was in the brain;
44 I knew not when day changed in night,
45 The heart seemed rent in twain.
46 I laid me down on Ganga's shore,

1 Exposed to sun and rain;
2 With burning tears I laid the dust
3 And wailed with waters' roar.
4
5 I called on all the holy names
6 Of every clime and creed,
7 "Show me the way, in mercy, ye
8 Great ones who have reached the goal".
9
10 Years then passed in bitter cry,
11 Each moment seemed an age,
12 Till one day midst my cries and groans
13 Some one seemed calling me.
14
15 A gentle soft and soothing voice
16 That said "my son", "my son",
17 That seemed to thrill in unison
18 With all the chords of my soul.
19
20 I stood on my feet and tried to find
21 The place the voice came from;
22 I searched and searched and turned to see
23 Round me, before, behind.
24 Again, again it seemed to speak--
25 The voice divine to me.
26 In rapture all my soul was hushed,
27 Entranced, enthralled in bliss.
28
29 A flash illumined all my soul;
30 The heart of my heart opened wide.
31 O joy, O bliss, what do I find!
32 My love, my love, you are here,
33 And you are here, my love, my all!
34
35 And I was searching thee!
36 From all eternity you were there
37 Enthroned in majesty!
38
39 From that day forth, where'er I roam,
40 I feel Him standing by
41 O'er hill and dale, high mount and vale,
42 Far far away and high.
43
44 The moon's soft light, the stars so bright,
45 The glorious orb of day,
46 He shines in them; His beauty--might--
47 Reflected lights are they.
48 The majestic morn, the melting eve,
49 The boundless billowy sea,
50 In nature's beauty, songs of birds,
51 I see through them--it is He.
52
53 When dire calamity seizes me,

1 The heart seems weak and faint,
 2 All nature seems to crush me down,
 3 With laws that never bend.
 4
 5 Meseems I hear Thee whispering sweet
 6 My love, "I am near", "I am near".
 7 My heart gets strong. With Thee, my love,
 8 A thousand deaths no fear.
 9 Thou speakest in the mother's lay
 10 That shuts the baby's eye;
 11 When innocent children laugh and play
 12 I see Thee standing by.
 13
 14 When holy friendship shakes the hand,
 15 He stands between them too;
 16 He pours the nectar in mother's kiss
 17 And the baby's sweet "mama".
 18 Thou wert my God with prophets old;
 19 All creeds do come from Thee;
 20 The Vedas, Bible, and Koran bold
 21 Sing Thee in harmony.
 22
 23 "Thou art", "Thou art" the Soul of souls
 24 In the rushing stream of life.
 25 "Om tat Sat om."²²³ Thou art my God.
 26 My love, I am thine, I am thine.

27

28

29 X

30 Chicago

31 2nd October, 1893

32 Dear Adhyapakji {Prof. John Henry Wright},

33 I do not know what you are thinking of my long silence. In
 34 the first place I dropped in on the Congress in the eleventh hour,
 35 and quite unprepared; and that kept me very very busy for some
 36 time. Secondly, I was speaking almost every day in the Congress
 37 and had no time to write; and last and greatest of all--my kind
 38 friend, I owe so much to you that it would have been an insult to
 39 your *ahetuka* (unselfish) friendship to have written you business-
 40 like letters in a hurry. The Congress is now over.

41 Dear brother, I was so so afraid to stand before that great
 42 assembly of fine speakers and thinkers from all over the world and
 43 speak; but the Lord gave me strength, and I almost every day
 44 heroically (?) faced the platform and the audience. If I have done
 45 well, He gave me the strength for it; if I have miserably failed--I
 46 knew that beforehand--for I am hopelessly ignorant.

47 Your friend Prof. Bradley was very kind to me and he always

1 ²²³ ?Tat Sat means that only real existence. [Swamiji's note].

1 cheered me on. And oh! everybody is so kind here to me who am
2 nothing--that it is beyond my power of expression. Glory unto Him
3 in the highest in whose sight the poor ignorant monk from India is
4 the same as the learned divines of this mighty land. And how the
5 Lord is helping me every day of my life, brother--I sometimes wish
6 for a life of [a] million million ages to serve Him through the work,
7 dressed in rags and fed by charity.

8 Oh, how I wished that you were here to see some of our
9 sweet ones from India--the tender-hearted Buddhist Dharmapala,
10 the orator Mazoomdar--and realise that in that far-off and poor
11 India there are hearts that beat in sympathy to yours, born and
12 brought up in this mighty and great country.

13 My eternal respects to your holy wife; and to your sweet
14 children my eternal love and blessings.

15 Col. Higginson, a very broad man, told me that your
16 daughter had written to his daughter about me; and he was very
17 sympathetic to me. I am going to Evanston tomorrow and hope to
18 see Prof. Bradley there.

19 May He make us all more and more pure and holy so that we
20 may live a perfect spiritual life even before throwing off this earthly
21 body.

22 Vivekananda

23 [The letter continues on a separate sheet of paper:]

24 I am now going to be reconciled to my life here. All my life I
25 have been taking every circumstance as coming from Him and
26 calmly adapting myself to it. At first in America I was almost out of
27 my water. I was afraid I would have to give up the accustomed way
28 of being guided by the Lord and *cater* for myself--and what a horrid
29 piece of mischief and ingratitude was that. I now clearly see that
30 He who was guiding me on the snow tops of the Himalayas and the
31 burning plains of India is here to help me and guide me. *Glory unto*
32 *Him* in the highest. So I have calmly fallen into my old ways.
33 Somebody or other gives me a shelter and food, somebody or other
34 comes to ask me to speak about Him, and I know He sends them
35 and mine is to obey. And then He is supplying my necessities, and
36 His *will be done* !

37 "He who rests [in] Me and gives up all other self-assertion
38 and struggles I carry to him whatever he needs" (Gita).

39 So it is in Asia. So in Europe. So in America. So in the deserts
40 of India. So in the rush of business in America. For is He not here
41 also? And if He does not, I only would take for granted that He
42 wants that I should lay aside this three minutes' body of clay--and
43 hope to lay it down gladly.

44 We may or may not meet, brother. He knows. You are great,
45 learned, and holy. I dare not preach to you or your wife; but to your
46 children I quote these passages from the Vedas--

47 "The four Vedas, sciences, languages, philosophy, and all
48 other learnings are only ornamental. The real learning, the true
49 knowledge is that which enables us to reach Him who is

unchangeable in His love."

"How real, how tangible, how visible is He through whom the skin touches, the eyes see, and the world gets its reality!"

"Hearing Him nothing remains to be heard,

Seeing Him nothing remains to be seen,

Attaining Him nothing remains to be attained."

"He is the eye of our eyes, the ear of our ears, the Soul of our souls."

He is nearer to you, my dears, than even your father and mother. You are innocent and pure as flowers. Remain so, and He will reveal Himself unto you. Dear Austin, when you are playing, there is another playmate playing with you who loves you more than anybody else; and Oh, He is so full of fun. He is always playing--sometimes with great big balls which we call the sun and earth, sometimes with little children like you and laughing and playing with you. How funny it would be to see Him and play with Him! My dear, think of it.

Dear Adhyapakji, I am moving about just now. Only when I come to Chicago, I always go to see Mr. and Mrs. Lyons, one of the noblest couples I have seen here. If you would be kind enough to write to me, kindly address it to the care of Mr. John B. Lyon, 262 Michigan Ave., Chicago.

"He who gets hold of the One in this world of many--the one constant existence in a world of flitting shadows--the one life in a world of death--he alone crosses this sea of misery and struggle. None else, none else" (Vedas).

"He who is the Brahman of the Vedantins, Ishvara of the Naiyayikas, Purusha of the Sankhyas, *cause* of the Mimamsakas, *law* of the Buddhists, *absolute zero* of the Atheists, and love infinite unto those that love, may [He] take us all under His merciful protection": Udayanacharya--a great philosopher of the Nyaya or Dualistic school. And this is the Benediction pronounced at the very beginning of his wonderful book *Kusumanjali* (A handful of flowers), in which he attempts to establish the existence of a personal creator and moral ruler of infinite love independently of revelation.

Your ever grateful friend,

Vivekananda

XI

Chicago

10th October, 1893

Dear Mrs. Tannatt Woods,

I received your letter yesterday. Just now I am lecturing about Chicago--and am doing as I think very well; it is ranging from

1 30 to 80 dollars a lecture, and just now I have been so well
2 advertised in Chicago gratis by the Parliament of Religions that it is
3 not advisable to give up this field now. To which *I am sure you will*
4 *agree* . However I may come soon to Boston, but when I cannot say.
5 Yesterday I returned from Streator where I got 87 dollars for a
6 lecture. I have engagements every day this week. And hope more
7 will come by the end of the week. My love to Mr. Woods and
8 compliments to all our friends.

9 Yours truly,
10 Vivekananda

11
12 XII

13 c/o J. Lyon,
14 262 Michigan Avenue,
15 Chicago

16 26th October, 1893

17 Dear Adhyapakji {Prof. John Henry Wright},

18 You would be glad to know that I am doing well here and that
19 almost everybody has been very kind to me, except of course the
20 very orthodox. Many of the men brought together here from far-off
21 lands have got projects and ideas and missions to carry out, and
22 America is the only place where there is a chance of success for
23 everything. But I thought better and have given up speaking about
24 my project entirely--because I am sure now--the heathen draws
25 more than his project. So I want to go to work earnestly for my own
26 project only keeping the project in the background and working like
27 any other lecturer.

28 He who has brought me hither and has not left me yet will
29 not leave me ever I am here. You will be glad to know that I am
30 doing well and expect to do very well in the way of getting money.
31 Of course I am too green in the business but would soon learn my
32 trade. I am very popular in Chicago. So I want to stay here a little
33 more and get *money*.

34 Tomorrow I am going to lecture on Buddhism at the ladies'
35 fortnightly club--which is the most influential in this city. How to
36 thank you my kind friend or Him who brought you to me; for now I
37 think the success of my project probable, and it is you who have
38 made it so.

39 May blessings and happiness attend every step of your
40 progress in this world.

41 My love and blessings to your children.

42 Yours affectionately ever,
43 Vivekananda

44
45 XIII

46 541 Dearborn Avenue,

1 Chicago

2 19th November, 1893

3 Dear Mrs. Woods,

4 Excuse my delay in answering your letter. I do not know
5 when I will be able to see you again. I am starting tomorrow for
6 Madison and Minneapolis.

7 The English gentleman you speak of is Dr. Momerie of
8 London. He is a well-known worker amongst the poor of London
9 and is a very sweet man. You perhaps do not know that the English
10 church was the only religious denomination in the world who did
11 not send to us a representative, and Dr. Momerie came to the
12 Parliament in spite of the Archbishop of Canterbury's denouncing of
13 the Parliament of Religions.

14 My love for you, my kind friend, and your noble son is all the
15 same whether I write pretty often or not.

16 Can you express my books and the cover-all to the care of
17 Mr. Hale? I am in need of them. The express will be paid here.

18 The blessings of the Lord on you and yours.

19 Ever your friend,

20 Vivekananda

21 PS. If you have the occasion to write to Miss Sanborn and
22 others of our friends in the east, kindly give them my deepest
23 respects.

24 Yours truly,

25 Vivekananda

26

27 XIV

28 Detroit,

29 17th March, 1894

30 Dear Sister {Harriet McKindley},

31 Got your package yesterday. Sorry that you send those
32 stockings--I could have got some myself here. Glad that it shows
33 your love. After all, the satchel has become more than a thoroughly
34 stuffed sausage. I do not know how to carry it along.

35 I have returned today to Mrs. Bagley's as she was sorry that
36 I would remain so long with Mr. Palmer. Of course in Palmer's
37 house there was real "good time". He is a real jovial heartwhole
38 fellow, and likes "good time" a little too much and his "hot Scotch".
39 But he is right along innocent and childlike in his simplicity.

40 He was very sorry that I came away, but I could not help.
41 Here is a beautiful young girl. I saw her twice, I do not remember
42 her name. So brainy, so beautiful, so spiritual, so unworldly! Lord
43 bless her! She came this morning with Mrs. McDuvell and talked so
44 beautifully and deep and spiritually--that I was quite astounded.
45 She knows everything about the Yogis and is herself much

1 advanced in practice!!

2 "Thy ways are beyond searching out." Lord bless her--so
3 innocent, holy, and pure! This is the grandest recompense in my
4 terribly toilsome, miserable life--the finding of holy happy faces like
5 you from time to time. The great Buddhist prayer is, "I bow down to
6 all holy men on earth". I feel the real meaning of this prayer
7 whenever I see a face upon which the finger of the Lord has written
8 in unmistakable letters "mine". May you all be happy, blessed, good
9 and pure as you are for ever and ever. May your feet never touch
10 the mud and dirt of this terrible world. May you live and pass away
11 like flowers as you are born--is the constant prayer of your brother.

12 Vivekananda

13
14
15 XV

16 Detroit

17 29th March, 1894

18 Dear Brother {Rev. Hume},²²⁴

19 Your letter just reached me here. I am in a hurry, so excuse a
20 few points which I would take the liberty of correcting you in.

21 In the first place, I have not one word to say against any
22 religion or founder of religion in the world--whatever you may think
23 of our religion. All religions are sacred to me. Secondly, it is a
24 misstatement that I said that missionaries do not learn our
25 vernaculars. I still stick to my statement that few, if any, of them
26 pay any attention to Sanskrit; nor is it true that I said anything
27 against any religious body--except that I do insist on my statement
28 that India can never be converted to Christianity, and further I deny
29 that the conditions of the lower classes are made any better by
30 Christianity, and add that the majority of southern Indian Christians
31 are not only Catholics, but what they call themselves, caste
32 Christians, that is, they stick close to their castes, and I am
33 thoroughly persuaded that if the Hindu society gives up its
34 exclusive policy, ninety per cent of them would rush back to
35 Hinduism with all its defects.

36 Lastly, I thank you from the bottom of my heart for calling me
37 your fellow-countryman. This is the first time any European
38 foreigner, born in India though he be, has dared to call a detested
39 native by that name--missionary or no missionary. Would you dare
40 call me the same in India? Ask your missionaries, born in India, to

1 ²²⁴ ?Reverend R.A. Hume, the Director of a Mission in India, who wrote to
2 Swami Vivekananda from Auburndale, Massachusetts, on March 21, 1894, in an
3 obvious attempt to draw him into a public debate. Mr. Hume was born in India
4 and started his letter with "Swami Vivekananda, my fellow-countryman from
5 India". His thesis was that the Missionaries were justified in what they did in
6 India and how they spoke about her abroad and that Swamiji was
7 misrepresenting India and the Christian Missionaries in Detroit and other places
8 in the U.S.A.--Ed.
9

1 do the same--and those not born, to treat them as fellow human
2 beings. As to the rest, you yourself would call me a fool if I admit
3 that my religion or society submits to be judged by strolling globe-
4 trotters or story-writers' narratives.

5 My brother--excuse me--what do you know of my society or
6 religion, though born in India? It is absolutely impossible--the
7 society is so closed; and over and above, everyone judges from his
8 preconceived standard of race and religion, does he not? Lord bless
9 you for calling me a fellow-countryman. There may still come a
10 brotherly love and fellowship between the East and West.

11 Yours fraternally,

12 Vivekananda

13
14
15 XVI

16 New York,

17 25th April, 1894

18 Dear Professor {Prof. John Henry Wright},

19 I am very very grateful for your invitation. And will come on
20 May 7th. As for the bed--my friend, your love and noble heart can
21 convert the stone into down.

22 I am sorry I am not going to the authors' breakfast at Salem.

23 I am coming home by May 7th.

24 Yours truly,

25 Vivekananda

26
27 XVII

28 New York

29 26th April, 1894

30 Dear Sister {Isabelle McKindley},

31 Your letter reached me yesterday. You were perfectly right--I
32 enjoyed the fun of the lunatic Interior,²²⁵ but the mail you sent
33 yesterday from India was really, as Mother Church says in her
34 letter, a good news after a long interval. There is a beautiful letter
35 from Dewanji. The old man--Lord bless him--offers as usual to help
36 me. Then there was a little pamphlet published in Calcutta about
37 me--revealing that once at least in my life the prophet has been
38 honoured in his own country. There are extracts from American and
39 Indian papers and magazines about me. The extracts printed from
40 Calcutta papers were especially gratifying, although the strain is so
41 fulsome that I refuse to send the pamphlet over to you. They call me
42 illustrious, wonderful, and all sorts of nonsense, but they forward

1 ²²⁵ ?*Chicago Interior*, a Presbyterian newspaper which opposed Swamiji.--Ed.
2

1 me the gratitude of the whole nation. Now I do not care what they
2 even of my own people say about me--except for one thing. I have
3 an old mother. She has suffered much all her life and in the midst of
4 all she could bear to give me up for the service of God and man; but
5 to have given up the most beloved of her children--her hope--to live
6 a beastly immoral life in a far distant country, as Mazoomdar was
7 telling in Calcutta, would have simply killed her. But the Lord is
8 great, none can injure His children.

9 The cat is out of the bag--without my seeking at all. And who
10 do you think is the editor of one of our leading papers which praise
11 me so much and thank God that I came to America to represent
12 Hinduism? Mazoomdar's cousin!--Poor Mazoomdar--he has injured
13 his cause by telling lies through jealousy. Lord knows I never
14 attempted any defence.

15 I read the article of Mr. Gandhi in the *Forum* before this.

16 If you have got the *Review of Reviews* of last month--read to
17 mother the testimony about the Hindus in connection with the
18 opium question in India by one of the highest officials of the English
19 in India. He compares the English with the Hindus and lauds the
20 Hindu to the skies. Sir Lepel Griffin was one of the bitterest
21 enemies of our race. What made this change of front?

22 I had a very good time in Boston at Mrs. Breed's--and saw
23 Prof. Wright. I am going to Boston again. The tailor is making my
24 new gown. I am going to speak at Cambridge University [Harvard]
25 and would be the guest of Prof. Wright there. They write grand
26 welcomes to me in the Boston papers.

27 I am tired of all this nonsense. Towards the latter part of May
28 I will come back to Chicago, and after a few day's stay would come
29 back to the East again.

30 I spoke last night at the Waldorf hotel. Mrs. Smith sold
31 tickets at \$2 each. I had a full hall which by the way was a small
32 one. I have not seen anything of the money yet. Hope to see in the
33 course of the day.

34 I made a hundred dollars at Lynn which I do not send
35 because I have to make my new gown and other nonsense.

36 Do not expect to make any money at Boston. Still I must
37 touch the brain of America and stir it up if I can.

38 Your loving brother,
39 Vivekananda

40
41 XVIII

42 New York,

43 2nd [actually 1st] May, 1894

44 Dear Sister {Isabelle McKindley},

45 I am afraid I cannot send you the pamphlet just now. But I
46 got a little bit of a newspaper cutting from India yesterday which I

1 send you up. After you have read it kindly send it over to Mrs.
2 Bagley. The editor of this paper is a relative of Mr. Mazoomdar. I
3 am now sorry for poor Mazoomdar!!²²⁶

4 I could not find the exact orange colour of my coat here, so I
5 have been obliged to satisfy myself with the next best--a cardinal
6 red with more of yellow.

7 The coat will be ready in a few days.

8 Got about \$70 the other day by lecturing at Waldorf. And
9 hope to get some more by tomorrow's lecture.

10 From 7th to 19th there are engagements in Boston, but they
11 pay very little.

12 Yesterday I bought a pipe for \$13--meerschaum do not tell it
13 to father Pope. The coat will cost \$30. I am all right getting food . . .
14 and money enough. Hope very soon to put something in the bank
15 after the coming lecture.

16 . . . in the evening I am going to speak in a vegetarian
17 dinner! Well, I am a vegetarian . . ., because I prefer it when I can
18 get it. I have another invitation to lunch with Lyman Abbott day
19 after tomorrow. After all, I am having very nice time and hope to
20 have very nice time in Boston--only that nasty nasty lecturing--
21 disgusting. However as soon as 19th is over--one leap from Boston .
22 . . to Chicago . . . and then I will have a long long breath and rest,
23 rest for two three weeks. I will simply sit down and talk--talk and
24 smoke.

25 By the by, your New York people are very good--only more
26 money than brains.

27 I am going to speak to the students of the Harvard
28 University. Three lectures at Boston, three at Harvard--all arranged
29 by Mrs. Breed. They are arranging something here too, so that I
30 will, on my way to Chicago, come to New York once more--give
31 them a few hard raps and pocket the boodle and fly to Chicago.

32 If you want anything from New York or Boston which cannot
33 be had at Chicago--write sharp. I have plenty of dollars now. I will
34 send you over anything you want in a minute. Don't think it would
35 be indelicate anyway--no humbug about me. If I am a brother so I
36 am. I hate only one thing in the world--hypocrisy.

37 Your affectionate brother,
38 Vivekananda

39
40
41 XIX

42 New York,
43 4th May, 1894

44 Dear Adhyapakji {Prof. John Henry Wright},

1 ²²⁶ ?The last two sentences were written crosswise on the left margin.
2

1 I have received your kind note just now. And it is
2 unnecessary for me to say that I will be very happy to do as you say.

3 I have also received Col. Higginson's letter. I will reply to
4 him.

5 I will be in Boston on Sunday [May 6]. On Monday I lecture
6 at the Women's Club of Mrs. Howe.

7 Yours ever truly,

8 Vivekananda

9
10 XX

11 17 Beacon Street, Boston,

12 May, 1894

13 Dear Adhyapakji {Prof. John Henry Wright},

14 By this time you have got the pamphlet and the letters. If you
15 like, I would send you over from Chicago some letters from Indian
16 Princes and ministers--one of these ministers was one of the
17 Commissioners of the late opium commission that sat under Royal
18 Commission in India. If you like, I will have them write to you to
19 convince you of my not being a cheat. But, my brother, our ideal of
20 life is to hide, to suppress, and to deny.

21 We are to give up and not to take. Had I not the "Fad" in my
22 head, I would never have come over here. And it was with a hope
23 that it would help my cause that I joined the Parliament of
24 Religions--having always refused it when our people wanted to send
25 me for it. I came over telling them--"that I may or may not join that
26 assembly--and you may send me over if you like". They sent me over
27 leaving me quite free.

28 You did the rest.

29 I am morally bound to afford you every satisfaction, my kind
30 friend; but for the rest of the world I do not care what they say--the
31 Sannyasin must not have self-defence. So I beg of you not to publish
32 or show anybody anything in that pamphlet or the letters. I do not
33 care for the attempts of the old missionary; but the fever of jealousy
34 which attacked Mazoomdar gave me a terrible shock, and I pray
35 that he would know better--for he is a great and good man who has
36 tried all his life to do good. But this proves one of my Master's
37 sayings, "Living in a room covered with black soot--however careful
38 you may be--some spots must stick to your clothes." So, however
39 one may try to be good and holy, so long he is in the world, some
40 part of his nature must gravitate downwards.

41 The way to God is the opposite to that of the world. And to
42 few, very few, are given to have God and mammon at the same time.

43 I was never a *missionary*, nor ever would be one--my place is
44 in the Himalayas. I have satisfied myself so far that I can with a full
45 conscience say, "My God, I saw terrible misery amongst my
46 brethren; I searched and discovered the way out of it, tried my best
47 to apply the remedy, but failed. So Thy will be done."

1 May his blessings be on you and yours for ever and ever.

2 Yours affectionately,

3 Vivekananda

4 541 Dearborn Ave., Chicago

5 I go to Chicago tomorrow or day after.

6 Yours

7 V.

8

9

10 XXI

11 541 Dearborn Avenue,

12 Chicago

13 24th May, 1894

14 Dear Adhyapakji {Prof. John Henry Wright},

15 Herewith I forward to you a letter from one of our ruling
16 princes of Rajputana, His Highness the Maharaja of Khetri, and
17 another from the opium commissioner, late minister of Junagad, one
18 of the largest states in India, and a man who is called the Gladstone
19 of India. These I hope would convince you of my being no fraud.

20 One thing I forgot to tell you. I *never* identified myself
21 anyway with Mr. Mazoomdar's party chief.²²⁷ If he says so, he does
22 not speak the truth.

23 I hope, after your perusal, you will kindly send the letters
24 over to me, except the pamphlet which I do not care for.

25 I am bound, my dear friend, to give you every satisfaction of
26 my being a genuine Sannyasin, but to *you* alone. I do not care what
27 the rabbles say or think about me.

28 "Some would call you a saint, some a *chandala* ; some a
29 lunatic, others a demon. Go on then straight to thy work without
30 heeding either"--thus saith one of our great Sannyasins, an old
31 emperor of India, King Bhartihari, who joined the order in old
32 times.

33 May the Lord bless you for ever and ever. My love to all your
34 children and my respects to your noble wife.

35 I remain ever your friend,

36 Vivekananda

37 PS--I had connection with Pundit Shiva Nath Shastri's party--
38 but only on points of social reform. Mazoomdar and Chandra Sen--I
39 always considered as not sincere, and I have no reason to change
40 my opinion even now. Of course in religious matters even with my
41 friend Punditji I differed much, the chief being, I thinking Sannyasa
42 or (giving up the world) the highest ideal, and he, a sin. So the

1 ²²⁷ ?Evidently, Keshab Chandra Sen.

Brahmo Samajists consider becoming a monk a sin!!

Yours,

V.

The Brahmo Samaj, like Christian Science in your country, spread in Calcutta for a certain time and then died out. I am not sorry, neither glad that it died. It has done its work--viz social reform. Its religion was not worth a cent, and so it must die out. If Mazoomdar thinks I was one of the causes of its death, he errs. I am even now a great sympathiser of its reforms; but the "booby" religion could not hold its own against the old "Vedanta". What shall I do? Is that my fault? Mazoomdar has become childish in his old age and takes to tactics not a whit better than some of your Christian missionaries. Lord bless him and show him better ways.

Yours,

Vivekananda

When are you going to Annisquam? My love to Austin and Bime. My respects to your wife; and for you my love and gratitude is too deep for expression.

Yours ever affectionately,

Vivekananda

XVII

541 Dearborn Avenue,

18th June, 1894

Dear Adhyapakji {Prof. John Henry Wright},

Excuse my delay in sending the other letters; I could not find them earlier. I am going to New York in a week.

I do not know whether I will come to Annisquam or not. The letters need not be sent over to me until I write you again. Mrs. Bagley seems to be unsettled by that article in the Boston paper against me.²²⁸ She sent me over a copy from Detroit and has ceased correspondence with me. Lord bless her. She has been very kind to me.

Stout hearts like yours are not common, my brother. This is a queer place--this world of ours. On the whole I am very very thankful to the Lord for the amount of kindness I have received at the hands of the people of this country--I, a complete stranger here without even "credentials". Everything works for the best.

Yours ever in gratitude,

228 ?Her silence subsequent to sending Swamiji the article in the Boston paper was surely misconstrued by him, but the fact remained that, beleaguered on all sides, he *thought* that Mrs. Bagley had lost faith in him, and this must surely have hurt him deeply.--Ed.

Vivekananda

PS. The East India stamps are for your children if they like.

XXIII

U.S.A.

5th September, 1894

{original in Bengali}

Dear Mr. Bhattacharya {Manmatha Nath Bhattacharya},

I was much pleased to read your affectionate letter. I shall make inquiries about the weaving machine as soon as I can, and let you know. Now I am resting at Annisquam, a village on the seacoast; soon I shall go to the city and attend to the matter of the machine. These seaside places are filled with people during the summer; some come to bathe in the sea, some to take rest, and some to catch husbands.

There is a strong sense of decorum in this country.

You have to keep yourself always covered from neck to foot in the presence of women. You cannot so much as mention the normal functions of the body: nobody knows when anyone goes to the toilet—one has to live so circumspectly. In this country, you can blow your nose a thousand times into your handkerchief—there is no harm in that; but it is highly uncivilised to belch. Women sometimes are not embarrassed to expose their bodies above the waist—you must have seen the kind of low-cut gown they wear—but they say that to go bare-foot is as bad as being naked. Just as we always dwell on the soul, so they take care of the body, and there is no end to the cleaning and embellishing of it. One who fails to do this has no place in society.

Our method of cooking with cow-dung fuel and eating on the floor they consider eating like pigs: they say that the Hindus have no sense of disgust and that, like pigs, they eat cow-dung. The word "cow-dung" is taboo in English. On the other hand, numbers of people will drink water with the same glass without thinking of washing it, and they rarely observe the rule that things must be washed before cooking. But should the clothes of the cook be a little soiled, they will throw her out. The table-ware is all spick and span. They are the richest people on earth; their enjoyments and luxuries beggar description.

In Rajputana they imitate the Mohammedans in their mode of dining, which is, on the whole, good. They sit on a low seat and place their plate of rice on a low table. This is much better than spreading a banana leaf on the earthen floor plastered with cow-dung and filth. And how disastrous if the leaf gets torn! The Hindus did not know much about clothes or food. Moreover, whatever Hindu civilisation there was existed in the Punjab and the north-west provinces. . . .

1 Our women lose caste if they put on shoes, but the Rajput
2 women lose their caste if they don't put on shoes! Says Manu: "One
3 shall always wear shoes". There is no denying that people should
4 have a decent enough standard of living. I say they should be neat
5 and clean even though not luxurious. . . . I say, why do we have to
6 be Englishmen? It is enough for the present if we imitate our
7 brothers of the western provinces. If group after group of Indians
8 travel all over the world and back for some years, the face of India
9 will be changed within twenty years by that alone; nothing else
10 need be done. But how will anything happen if the people of one
11 village do not visit the next? However, everything will take place by
12 and by. By and by, the stubborn Bengali boys will awaken the
13 country. But Manmatha Babu, you will have to stop this shameful
14 business of marrying off nine-year-old girls. That is the root of all
15 sins. It is a very great sin, my boy. Consider further what a terrible
16 thing it was that when the government wanted to pass a law
17 stopping early marriage, our worthless people raised a tremendous
18 howl! If we don't stop it ourselves, the government will naturally
19 intervene, and that is just what it wants to do. All the world cries fie
20 upon us. You remain shut up in your homes, but the people outside
21 spit upon you. How far can I quarrel with them? What a horror--
22 even a father and mother allow their ten-year-old daughter to be
23 given in marriage to a full-grown fat husband! O Lord, is there any
24 punishment unless there has been a sin? It is all the fruit of Karma.
25 If ours were not a terribly sinful nation, then why should it have
26 been booted and beaten for seven hundred years?

27 Now, just as in our country the parents suffer a lot to have
28 their daughter married, here in the same way the girls suffer--the
29 parents only a little--it is the job of the girls to capture husbands. I
30 am now closely associated with them in all their affairs; I am, as it
31 were, a woman amongst women. Therefore, I have seen, and am
32 seeing, all their play. To give dinners, to dance, to go to musical
33 parties, go to the watering places--all that is all right. But all the
34 while the young women are scheming within themselves how to
35 capture husbands. They hang round the boys. The boys, on the
36 other hand, are so cautious that, though they mingle with the girls
37 and flirt with them all the time, when it is time to surrender they
38 run away. The boys place the girls above themselves; they show
39 them respect and slave for them; but the moment the girls stretch
40 their hands to catch them, they run away beyond their reach. After
41 many efforts of this kind, a girl succeeds in capturing a boy. If the
42 girl has money, then many a boy dances attendance upon her, but
43 the poor have great difficulty. If a poor girl is exceedingly beautiful,
44 she can marry quickly; otherwise, she has to wait all her life. Just as
45 in our country, so here, one marriage in a thousand takes place
46 through love and courtship; the rest are based on money. After that,
47 quarrel, and then, 'Get out!--divorce. We do not have this; the only
48 way out is to hang oneself. It is the same in all countries. Only, here
49 the girls take matters into their own hands; and in our country, we
50 get the help of the parents to give their married life a decent
51 appearance. The result is the same in either case.

52 Nowadays, however, American girls don't want to marry.

1 During the Civil War a large number of men were killed and women
2 began to do all kinds of work. Since then, they have not wanted to
3 give up the rights they have acquired. They earn their own living,
4 and therefore they say, "There is no use in marrying. If we truly fall
5 in love, then we shall marry; otherwise, we shall earn and meet our
6 own expenses". Even if the father is a millionaire, the son has to
7 earn enough before he marries. One may not marry depending on
8 an allowance from the father. The girls also want the same thing
9 now. When a son marries he becomes like a stranger to his own
10 family, but when a girl marries she brings her husband, as it were,
11 into her parents' home. Men will visit their wives' parents ten times,
12 but rarely go to their own parents. Yet they are very much afraid of
13 having their mothers-in-law on their neck.

14 In this country, there are rivers of wealth and waves of
15 beauty, and an abundance of knowledge everywhere. The country is
16 very healthy; they know how to enjoy this earth. . . . When princes
17 of Europe become poor they come to marry here. The average
18 American doesn't like this; but some rich, beautiful women fall for
19 the titles. Yet it is very difficult for American women to live in
20 Europe. The husbands of this country are slaves of their wives; but
21 the European wives are slaves to their husbands--this the American
22 women don't like. In everything, the men here have to say, 'Yes
23 dear'; otherwise the wives lose face before people.

24 The women in America are very sentimental and have a
25 mania for romance. I am, however, a strange sort of animal who
26 hasn't any romantic feeling, and therefore they could not sustain
27 any such feeling toward me and they show me great respect. I
28 make all of them call me "father" or "brother". I don't allow them to
29 come near me with any other feeling, and gradually they have all
30 been straightened out. . . .

31 The ministers in this country . . . are eager to throw sinners
32 into hell. A few of them are very good, however. . . . I have a great
33 reputation among the women in this country. I have not as yet seen
34 a single unchaste girl among the unmarried. It is either a widow or
35 a married woman who turn unchaste. The unmarried girls are
36 exceedingly good, because their future is bright. . . .

37 Those emaciated Western women, looking like old dried-up
38 fruit, whom you see in India, are English, and the English are an
39 ugly race amongst the Europeans. In America, the best blood
40 strains of Europe have been blended, and therefore, the American
41 women are very beautiful. And how they take care of their beauty!
42 Can a woman retain her beauty if she gives birth to children . . .
43 every hour from her tenth year on? Damn nonsense! What a terrible
44 sin! Even the most beautiful woman of our country will look like a
45 black owl here. Yet it must be admitted that the women of the
46 Punjab have very well-drawn features. Many of the American
47 women are very well educated and put many a learned professor to
48 shame; nor do they care for anyone's opinion. And as regards their
49 virtues: what kindness, what noble thought and action! Just think, if
50 a man of this country were to visit India, nobody would even touch
51 him; yet here I am allowed to do as I please in the houses of the
52 best families--like their own son! I am like a child; their women

shop for me, run errands for me. For example: I have just written to a girl for information about the machine, which she will gather carefully and send to me. Again, a phonograph was sent to the Maharaj of Khetri: the girls managed the whole affair very well. Lord! Lord! It is the difference between heaven and hell! "They are the goddess Lakshmi in beauty and the goddess Saraswati in talents and accomplishments." This cannot be achieved through the study of books. I say, can you send out some men and women to see the world? Only then will the country wake up--not through the reading of books. The men here are very clever in earning wealth. Where others do not see even dust, there they see gold. Whoever will leave India and visit another country will earn great merit.

Keeping aloof from the community of nations is the only cause for the downfall of India. Since the English came, they have been forcing you back into communion with other nations, and you are visibly rising again. Everyone that comes out of the country confers a benefit on the whole nation; for it is by doing that alone that your horizon will expand. And as women cannot avail themselves of this advantage, they have made almost no progress in India. There is no station of rest; either you progress upwards or you go back and die out. The only sign of life is going outward and forward and expansion. Contraction is death. Why should you do good to others? Because that is the only condition of life; thereby you expand beyond your little self; you live and grow. All narrowness, all contraction, all selfishness is simply slow suicide, and when a nation commits the fatal mistake of contracting itself and of thus cutting off all expansion and life, it must die. Women similarly must go forward or become idiots and soulless tools in the hands of their tyrannical lords. The children are the result of the combination of the tyrant and the idiot, and they are *slaves*. And this is the whole history of modern India. Oh, who would break this horrible crystallisation of death? Lord help us!²²⁹

Gradually all this will come about: "One should cross a road slowly and cautiously; one should patch a quilt carefully and cautiously; so should one be slow and cautious in crossing a mountain".

The papers have arrived duly and in good shape; there has not been any difficulty about that. The enemy has been silenced. Consider this: They have allowed me, an unknown young man, to live among their grown-up young daughters, and when my own countryman, Mazoomdar, says I am a rogue, they don't pay any attention! How noble they are, and how kind! I shall not be able to repay this debt even in a hundred lives, I am like a foster son to the American women; they are really my mother. If they don't flourish in every way, who would?

A while back several hundred intellectual men and women were gathered in a place called Greenacre, and I was there for nearly two months. Every day I would sit in our Hindu fashion under a tree, and my followers and disciples would sit on the grass

²²⁹ ?This paragraph was written in English.

1 all around me. Every morning I would instruct them, and how
2 earnest they were!

3 The whole country now knows me. The ministers are very
4 angry; but, naturally, not all of them. There are many followers of
5 mine amongst the learned ministers of this country. The ignorant
6 and the stubborn amongst them don't understand anything but only
7 make trouble, and thereby they only hurt themselves. But abusing
8 me, Mazoomdar has lost three-fourths of what little popularity he
9 had in this country. I have been adopted by them. When anyone
10 abuses me he is condemned everywhere by the women.

11 I cannot say when I shall return to India, possibly next
12 winter. There I shall have to wander, and here also I do the same.

13 There is nothing more to add. Please don't make this letter
14 public. You understand, I have to be careful about every word I
15 say--I am now a public man. Everybody is watching, particularly the
16 clergy.

17 Yours faithfully,
18 Vivekananda

19
20
21 XXIV

22 U.S.A.

23 (November?) 1894

24 {original in Bengali}

25 Dear Kali {Abhedananda},

26 Thanks for all that I come to know from your letter. I had no
27 news of the telegram in question having appeared in the *Tribune* .
28 It is six months since I left Chicago, and I have not been yet free to
29 return. So I could not keep myself well posted. You have taken great
30 pains indeed! And for this how can I thank you adequately? You
31 have all evinced a wonderful capacity for work. And how can Shri
32 Ramakrishna's words prove false?--You have got wonderful spirit in
33 you. About Shashi Sanyal, I have already written. Nothing remains
34 undetected, through the grace of Shri Ramakrishna. But let him
35 found a sect or whatever he will, what harm? "{Sanskrit}--May
36 blessings attend your path!" Secondly, I could not catch the drift of
37 your letter. I shall collect my own funds to build a monastery for
38 ourselves, and if people criticise me for it, I see nothing in this to
39 affect us either way. You have your minds pitched high and steady,
40 it will do you no harm. May you have exceeding love for one
41 another among yourselves, and it would be enough to have an
42 attitude of indifference towards public criticisms. Kalikrishna Babu
43 has deep love for the cause and is a great man. Please convey my
44 special love to him. So long as there is no feeling of disunion
45 amongst you, through the grace of the Lord, I assure you, there is
46 no danger for you, "{Sanskrit}--be it in battle, in the forest, or on
47 the top of mountains". "{Sanskrit}--All noble undertakings are
48 fraught with obstacles". It is quite in the nature of things. Keep up

1 the deepest mental poise. Take not even the slightest notice of what
2 puerile creatures may be saying against you. Indifference,
3 indifference, indifference! I have already written to Shashi
4 (Ramakrishnananda) in detail. Please do not send newspapers and
5 tracts any more. "Take the husking hammer to heaven, and there it
6 will do its husking", as the Bengali saying goes. The same trudging
7 about here as it was in India, only with the carrying of others' loads
8 added! How can I procure customers for people's books in this
9 land? I am only one amongst the many here and nothing more.
10 Whatever the papers and things of that sort in this country write
11 about me, I make an offering of to the Fire-God. You also do the
12 same. That is the proper course.

13 A bit of public demonstration was necessary for Guru
14 Maharaja's work. It is done, and so far so good. Now you must on
15 no account pay any heed to what the rabble may be prattling about
16 us. Whether I make my pile or do whatever else I am reported to,
17 shall the opinions of the riff-raff stand in the way of His work? My
18 dear brother, you are yet a boy, while I am growing grey. What
19 regard I have for the pronouncements and opinions of such people,
20 you should guess from this. So long as you gird up your loins and
21 rally behind me, there is no fear even if the whole world combine
22 against us. This much I understand that I shall have to take up a
23 very lofty attitude, I should not, I think, write to anyone except to
24 you. By the by, where is Gunanidhi? Try to find him out and bring
25 him to the Math with all kindness. He is a very sincere man and
26 highly learned. You must try your best to secure two plots of land,
27 let people say what they will. Let anyone write anything for or
28 against me in the papers; you shouldn't take the slightest notice.
29 And my dear brother, I beseech you repeatedly not to send me any
30 more newspapers by the basketful. How can you talk of rest now?
31 We shall have rest awhile only when we give up this body. Just do
32 once get up the celebration, brother, in that spirit, so that all the
33 country around may burn with enthusiasm. Bravo! Capital indeed!
34 The whole band of scoffers will be swept away by the tidal wave of
35 love. You are elephants, forsooth, what do you fear from an ant-
36 bite?

37 The address²³⁰ you sent me reached me long ago and the
38 reply to it has also been despatched to Pyari Babu (18 Nov. 1894).

39 Bear in mind--the eyes are two in number and so the ears,
40 but the mouth is but one! Indifference, indifference, indifference!
41 "{Sanskrit}"--The doer of good deeds never comes to grief, my
42 dear". Ah! To fear! and whom are we going to fear, brother? Here
43 the missionaries and their ilk have howled themselves into silence--
44 and the whole world will but do likewise.

45 "{Sanskrit}"

46 --Whether people skilled in policy praise or blame, whether
47 the Goddess of Fortune favours or goes her way, whether death

1 ²³⁰ ?The Address presented by the citizens of Calcutta who gathered at a
2 meeting at the Town Hall on September 5, 1894, under the Presidentship of Raja
3 Pyari Mohan Mookherjee.
4

befalls today or after hundreds of years--persons of steady mind never swerve from the path of righteousness" (Bhartrihari, *Nitishataka*)

You need not even mix with the humdrub people, nor beg of them either. The Lord is supplying everything and will do so in future. What fear, my brother? All great undertakings are achieved through mighty obstacles. {Sanskrit}--You valiant one, put forth your manly efforts; wretched people under the grip of lust and gold deserve to be looked upon with indifference. Now I have got a firm footing in this country, and therefore need no assistance. But my one prayer to you all is that you should apply to the service of the Lord that active impulse of manliness which your eagerness to help me through brotherly love has brought out in you. Do not open out your mind, unless you feel it will be positively beneficial. Use agreeable and wholesome language towards even the greatest enemy. The desire for fame, for riches, for enjoyment is quite natural to every mortal, dear brother, and if that agrees well with serving both ways (i. e. serving both God and mammon), why, all men would exhibit great zeal! It is only the great saint who can work, making a mountain of an atom of virtue in others and cherishing no desire but that of the good of the world--"{Sanskrit}" etc., (Bhartrihari, *Nitishataka*, 70). Therefore let dullards whose intellect is steeped in ignorance and who look upon the non-Self as all in all, play out their boyish pranks. They will of themselves leave off the moment they find it too hot. Let them try to spit upon the moon--it will but recoil upon themselves. {Sanskrit}--Godspeed to them! If they have got anything substantial in them, who can bar their success? But if it be only empty swagger due to jealousy, then all will be in vain. Haramohan has sent rosaries. All right. But you should know that religion of the type that obtains in our country does not go here. You must suit it to the taste of the people. If you ask them to become Hindus, they will all give you a wide berth and hate you, as we do the Christian missionaries. They like some of the ideas of the Hindu scriptures--that is all. Nothing more than that, you should know. The men, most of them, do not trouble about religion and all that. The women are a little interested--that is all, but no large doses of it! A few thousands of people have faith in the Advaita doctrine. But they will give you the go-by if you talk obscure mannerisms about sacred writings, caste, or women. Everything proceeds slowly, by degrees. Patience, purity, perseverance.

Yours etc.,

Vivekananda

XXV

U.S.A.

1894

{original in Bengali}

Dear Brother Shivananda,

1 Your letter just reached me. Perhaps by this time you have
2 received my other letters and learnt that it is not necessary to send
3 anything to America any more. Too much of everything is bad. This
4 newspaper booming has given me popularity no doubt, but its effect
5 is more in India than here. Here, on the other hand, constant
6 booming creates a distaste in the minds of the higher class people;
7 so enough. Now try to organise yourselves in India on the lines of
8 these meetings. You need not send anything more in this country. As
9 to money, I have determined first to build some place for Mother,²³¹
10 for women require it first. . . . I can send nearly Rs. 7,000 for a
11 place for Mother. If the place is first secured, then I do not care for
12 anything else. I hope to be able to get Rs. 1,600 a year from this
13 country even when I am gone. That sum I will make over to the
14 support of the Women's place, and then it will grow. I have written
15 to you already to secure a place. . . .

16 I would have, before this, returned to India, but India has no
17 money. Thousands honour Ramakrishna Paramahansa, but nobody
18 will give a cent--that is India. . . . In the meanwhile live in harmony
19 at any price. The world cares little for principles. They care for
20 persons. They will hear with patience the words of a man they like,
21 however nonsense, and will not listen to anyone they do not like.
22 Think of this and modify your conduct accordingly. Everything will
23 come all right. Be the servant if you will rule. That is the real
24 secret. Your love will tell even if your words be harsh. Instinctively
25 men feel the love clothed in whatever language.²³²

26 My dear brother, that Ramakrishna Paramahansa was God
27 incarnate, I have not the least doubt; but then you must let people
28 find out for themselves what he used to teach--you cannot thrust
29 these things upon them--this is my only objection.

30 Let people speak out their own opinions, why should we
31 object? Without studying Ramakrishna Paramahansa first, one can
32 never understand the real import of the Vedas, the Vedanta, of the
33 *Bhagavata* and the other Puranas. His life is a searchlight of
34 infinite power thrown upon the whole mass of Indian religious
35 thought. He was the living commentary to the Vedas and to their
36 aim. He had lived in one life the whole cycle of the national
37 religious existence in India.

38 Whether Bhagavan Shri Krishna was born at all we are not
39 sure; and Avataras like Buddha and Chaitanya are monotonous;
40 Ramakrishna Paramahansa is the latest and the most perfect--the
41 concentrated embodiment of knowledge, love, renunciation,
42 catholicity, and the desire to serve mankind. So where is anyone to
43 compare with him? He must have been born in vain who cannot
44 appreciate him! My supreme good fortune is that I am his servant
45 through life after life. A single word of his is to me far weightier
46 than the Vedas and the Vedanta. {Sanskrit}--Oh, I am the servant of
47 the servants of his servants. But narrow bigotry militates against

1 ²³¹ ?Holy Mother, Shri Sarada Devi.
2

3 ²³² ?These two paragraphs and the last half of the fourth were written in
4 English.
5

1 his principles, and this makes me cross. Rather let his name be
2 drowned in oblivion, and his teachings bear fruit instead! Why, was
3 he a slave to fame? Certain fishermen and illiterate people called
4 Jesus Christ a God, but the literate people killed him. Buddha was
5 honoured in his lifetime by a number of merchants and cowherds.
6 But Ramakrishna has been worshipped in his lifetime--towards the
7 end of this nineteenth century--by the demons and giants of the
8 university as God incarnate. . . . Only a few things have been jotted
9 down in the books about them (Krishna, Buddha, Christ, etc.). "One
10 must be a wonderful housekeeper with whom we have never yet
11 lived!" so the Bengali proverb goes. But here is a man in whose
12 company we have been day and night and yet consider him to be a
13 far greater personality than any of them. Can you understand this
14 phenomenon?

15 You have not yet understood the wonderful significance of
16 Mother's life--none of you. But gradually you will know. Without
17 Shakti (Power) there is no regeneration for the world. Why is it that
18 our country is the weakest and the most backward of all
19 countries?--Because Shakti is held in dishonour there. Mother has
20 been born to revive that wonderful Shakti in India; and making her
21 the nucleus, once more will Gargis and Maitreyis be born into the
22 world. Dear brother, you understand little now, but by degrees you
23 will come to know it all. Hence it is her Math that I want first. . . .
24 Without the grace of Shakti nothing is to be accomplished. What do
25 I find in America and Europe?--the worship of Shakti, the worship of
26 Power. Yet they worship Her ignorantly through sense-gratification.
27 Imagine, then, what a lot of good they will achieve who will worship
28 Her with all purity, in a Sattvika spirit, looking upon Her as their
29 mother! I am coming to understand things clearer every day, my
30 insight is opening out more and more. Hence we must first build a
31 Math for Mother. First Mother and Mother's daughters, then Father
32 and Father's sons--can you understand this? . . . To me, Mother's
33 grace is a hundred thousand times more valuable than Father's.
34 Mother's grace, Mother's blessings are all paramount to me. . . .
35 Please pardon me. I am a little bigoted there, as regards Mother. If
36 but Mother orders, her demons can work anything. Brother, before
37 proceeding to America I wrote to Mother to bless me. Her blessings
38 came, and at one bound I cleared the ocean. There, you see. In this
39 terrible winter I am lecturing from place to place and fighting
40 against odds, so that funds may be collected for Mother's Math.
41 Baburam's mother must have lost her sense owing to old age and
42 that is why she is about to worship Durga in the earthen image,
43 ignoring the living one.²³³ Brother, faith is very difficult to achieve.
44 Brother, I shall show how to worship the living Durga and then only
45 shall I be worthy of my name. I shall be relieved when you will have
46 purchased a plot of land and established there the living Durga, the
47 Mother. Till then I am not returning to my native land. As soon as
48 you can do that, I shall have a sigh of relief after sending the
49 money. Do you accomplish this festival of Durga of mine by making
50 all the necessary arrangements. Girish Ghosh is adoring the Mother
51 splendidly; blessed is he, and blessed are his followers. Brother,

²³³ ?Viz Holy Mother Shri Sarada Devi.

1 often enough, when I am reminded of the Mother, I ejaculate, "What
2 after all is Rama?" Brother, that is where my fanaticism lies, I tell
3 you. Of Ramakrishna, you may aver, my brother, that he was an
4 Incarnation or whatever else you may like but fie on him who has no
5 devotion for the Mother. Niranjan has a militant disposition, but he
6 has great devotion for Mother and all his vagaries I can easily put
7 up with. He is now doing the most marvellous work. I am keeping
8 myself well posted. And you too have done excellently in co-
9 operating with the Madrasis. Dear brother, I expect much from you,
10 you should organise all for conjoint work. As soon as you have
11 secured the land for Mother, I go to India straight. It must be a big
12 plot; let there be a mud-house to begin with, in due course I shall
13 erect a decent building, don't be afraid.

14 The chief cause of malaria lies in water. Why do you not
15 construct two or three filters? If you first boil the water and then
16 filter it, it will be harmless. . . . Please buy two big Pasteur's
17 bacteria-proof filters. Let the cooking be done in that water and use
18 it for drinking purposes also, and you will never hear of malaria any
19 more. . . . On and on, work, work, work, this is only the beginning.

20 Yours ever,

21 Vivekananda

22
23
24 XXVI

25 *Salutation to Bhagavan*

26 *Ramakrishna!*

27 1894

28 {original in Bengali}

29 Dear and Beloved {Swami Brahmananda},

30 . . . Well, do you think there is any religion left in India! The
31 paths of knowledge, devotion, and Yoga--all have gone, and now
32 there remains only that of Don't touchism--"Don't touch me! Don't
33 touch me!" The whole world is impure, and I alone am pure. Lucid
34 Brahmajnana! Bravo! Great God! Nowadays Brahman is neither in
35 the recesses of the heart, nor in the highest heaven, nor in all
36 beings--now He is in the cooking-pot. Formerly the characteristic of
37 a noble-minded man was "{Sanskrit}--Pleasing the whole universe
38 by one's numerous acts of service" but now it is--I am pure and the
39 whole world is impure--go and get money and set it at my feet. . . .
40 Tell the sapient sage who writes to me to finish my preaching work
41 here and return home, . . . that this country is more my home. What
42 is there in Hindusthan? Who appreciates religion? Who appreciates
43 learning?

1 To return home! Where is the home! I do not care for
2 liberation, or for devotion, I would rather go to a hundred thousand
3 hells, "{Sanskrit}"—Doing good to others (silently) like the spring"—
4 this is my religion. I do not want to have any connection with lazy,
5 hard-hearted, cruel and selfish men. He whose good fortune it is,
6 may help in this great cause.

7 . . . Please convey to all my love, I want the help of everyone.
8 *Neither money pays, nor name, nor fame, nor learning; it is*
9 *character that can cleave through adamant walls of difficulties .*
10 Bear this in mind. . . .

11 Ever yours in love,

12 Vivekananda

13
14
15 XXVII

16 1895

17 Dear Alasinga,

18 We have no organisation, nor want to build any. Each one is
19 quite independent to teach, quite free to preach whatever he or she
20 likes.

21 If you have the spirit within, you will never fail to attract
22 others. Theosophists' method can never be ours, for the very simple
23 reason that they are an organised sect, we are not.

24 Individuality is my motto. I have no ambition beyond training
25 individuals up. I know very little; that little I teach without reserve;
26 where I am ignorant, I confess it as such, and never am I so glad as
27 when I find people being helped by Theosophists, Christians,
28 Mohammedans, or anybody in the world. I am a Sannyasin; as such
29 I consider myself as a servant, not as a master in the world. . . . If
30 people love me, they are welcome, if they hate, they are also
31 welcome.

32 Each one will have to save himself, each one to do his own
33 work. I seek no help, I reject none. Nor have I any right in the world
34 to be helped. Whosoever has helped me or will help, it will be their
35 mercy to me, not my right, and as such I am eternally grateful.

36 When I became a Sannyasin, I consciously took the step,
37 knowing that this body would have to die of starvation. What of
38 that, I am a beggar. My friends are poor, I love the poor, I welcome
39 poverty. I am glad that I sometimes have to starve. I ask help of
40 none. What is the use? Truth will preach itself, it will not die for the
41 want of the helping hands of me! "Making happiness and misery the
42 same, making success and failure the same, fight thou on" (Gita). It
43 is that eternal love, unruffled equanimity under all circumstances,
44 and perfect freedom from jealousy or animosity that will tell. That
45 will tell, nothing else.

46 Yours,

47 Vivekananda

1
2
3 XXVIII

4 54 W. 33 New York

5 25th April, 1895

6 Dear Brother {Dr. I. Janes},

7 I was away in the Catskill mountains and it was almost
8 impossible to get a letter regularly posted from where I was--so
9 accept my apology for the delay in offering you my most heartfelt
10 thanks for your letter in the "Eagle".

11 It was so scholarly, truthful and noble and withal so
12 permeated with your natural universal love for the good and true
13 everywhere. It is a great work to bring this world into a spirit of
14 sympathy with each other but it should be done no doubt when such
15 brave souls as you still hold your own. Lord help you ever and ever
16 my brother and may you live long to carry on the mighty work you
17 and your society has undertaken.

18 With my gratitude and love to you and to the members of the
19 Ethical Society.

20 I remain Yours ever truly,

21 Vivekananda
22
23

24 XXIX

25 54 W. 33 New York

26 May, 1895

27 Dear __,

28 Since writing to you my pupils have come round me with
29 help, and the classes will go on nicely now no doubt.

30 I was so glad at it because teaching has become a part of my
31 life, as necessary to my life as eating or breathing.

32 Yours,

33 Vivekananda

34 PS. I saw a lot of things about __ in an English paper, the
35 *Borderland* . __ is doing good work in India, making the Hindus,
36 very much to appreciate their own religion. . . . I do not find any
37 scholarship in __'s writing, . . . nor do I find any spirituality
38 whatever. However Godspeed to anyone who wants to do good to
39 the world.

40 How easily this world can be duped by humbugs and what a
41 mass of fraud has gathered over the devoted head of poor humanity
42 since the dawn of civilisation.
43

XXX

19 West 38th Street
New York, August, 1895

Beloved Rakhal,

. . . I am now in New York City. The city is hot in summer, exactly like Calcutta. You perspire profusely, and there is not a breath of air. I made a tour in the north for a couple of months. Please answer this letter by return of post to England, for which I shall start before this will have reached you.

Yours affectionately,

Vivekananda

XXXI

U.S.A.

March, 1896

Dear Alasinga,

Last week I wrote you about the *Brahmavadin*. I forgot to write about the Bhakti lectures. They ought to be published in a book all together. A few hundreds may be sent to America to Goodyear in New York. Within twenty days I sail for England. I have other big books on Karma, Jnana, and Raja Yogas--the Karma is out already, the Raja will be a very big book and is already in the Press. The Jnana will have to be published, I think, in England.

A letter you published from Kripananda in the *Brahmavadin* was rather unfortunate. Kripananda is smarting under the blows the Christians have given him and that sort of letter is vulgar, pitching into everybody. It is not in accord with the tone of the *Brahmavadin*. So in future when Kripananda writes, tone down everything that is an attack upon any sect, however cranky or crude. Nothing which is against any sect, good or bad, should get into the *Brahmavadin*. Of course, we must not show active sympathy with frauds. Again let me remind you that the paper is too technical to find any subscriber here. The average Western neither knows nor cares to know all about jaw-breaking Sanskrit terms and technicalities. The paper is well fitted for India--that is all that I see. Every word of special pleading should be eliminated from the Editorials, and you must always remember that you are addressing the whole world, not India alone, and that the same world is entirely ignorant of what you have got to tell them. Use the translation of every Sanskrit term carefully and make things as easy as possible.

Before this reaches you I will be in England. So address me c/o E. T. Sturdy, Esq., High View, Caversham, Eng.

Yours etc.,

Vivekananda

XXXII

High View, Caversham,

Reading,

27th April, 1896

{original in Bengali}

Dear {members of the Alambazar Math},

. . . Let me write something for you all. It is not for gaining personal authority that I do this, but for your good and for fulfilling the purpose for which the Lord came. He gave me the charge of you all, and you shall contribute to the great well-being of the world--though most of you are not yet aware of it--this is the special reason of my writing to you. It will be a great pity if any feeling of jealousy or egotism gain ground amongst you. Is it possible for those to establish cordial relations on earth who cannot cordially live with one another for any length of time? No doubt it is an evil to be bound by laws, but it is necessary at the immature stage to be guided by rules; in other words, as the Master used to say that the sapling must be hedged round, and so on. Secondly, it is quite natural for idle minds to indulge in gossip, and faction-mongering, and so forth. Hence I jot down the following hints. If you follow them, you will undoubtedly prosper, but if you don't do so, then there is a danger of all our labours coming to naught.

First let me write about the management of the Math:

1. For the purposes of the Math please hire a commodious house or garden, where everyone may have a small room to himself. There must be a spacious hall where the books may be kept, and a smaller room for meeting the visitors. If possible, there should be another big hall in the house where study of the scriptures and religious discourses will be held every day for the public.

2. Anyone wishing to visit anybody in the Math should see him only and depart, without troubling others.

3. By turns someone should be present in the hall for a few hours every day for the public, so that they may get satisfactory replies to what they come to ask.

4. Everyone must keep to his room and except on special business must not go to others' rooms. Anyone who wishes may go to the Library and read, but it should be strictly forbidden to smoke there or talk with others. The reading should be silent.

5. It shall be wholly forbidden to huddle together in a room and chat the whole day away, with any number of outsiders coming and joining in the hubbub.

6. Only those that are seekers after religion may come and peacefully wait in the Visitors' Hall and when they have seen the

1 particular persons they want, they should depart. Or, if they have
2 any general question to ask, they should refer to the person in
3 charge of that function for the day and leave.

4 7. Tale-bearing, caballing, or reporting scandals about others
5 should be altogether eschewed.

6 8. A small room should serve as the office. The Secretary
7 should live in that room, which should contain paper, ink, and other
8 materials for letter-writing. He should keep an account of the
9 income and expenditure. All correspondence should come to him,
10 and he should deliver all letters *unopened* to their addressees.
11 Books and pamphlets should be sent to the Library.

12 9. There will be a small room for smoking, which should not
13 be indulged in outside this room.

14 10. He who wants to indulge in invectives or show temper
15 must do so outside the boundaries of the Math. This should not be
16 deviated from even by an inch.

17 18 THE GOVERNING BODY

19 1. Every year a President should be elected by a majority of
20 votes. The next year, another, and so on.

21 2. For this year make Brahmananda the President and
22 likewise make another the Secretary, and elect a third man for
23 superintending the worship etc., as well as the arrangement of
24 food.

25 3. The Secretary shall have another function, viz to keep
26 watch over the general health. Regarding this I have three
27 instructions to give:

28 (i) In every room for each man there shall be a *Nair*
29 charpoy, mattress, etc. Everyone must keep his room clean.

30 (ii) All arrangements must be made to provide clear and
31 pure water for drinking and cooking purposes, for it is a deadly sin
32 to cook sacramental food in impure or unclean water.

33 (iii) Give everyone two ochre cloaks of the type that you
34 have made for Saradananda, and see that clothing is kept clean.

35 4. Anyone wishing to be a Sannyasin should be admitted as a
36 Brahmacharin first. He should live one year at the Math and one
37 year outside, after which he may be initiated into Sannyasa.

38 5. Make over charge of the worship to one of these
39 Brahmacharins, and change them now and then.

40 41 DEPARTMENTS

42 There shall be the following departments in the Math:

43 I. *Study* . II. *Propaganda* . III. *Religious Practice* .

1 I. *Study* --The object of this department is to provide books
2 and teachers for those who want to study. Every morning and
3 evening the teachers should be ready for them.

4 II. *Propaganda* --Within the Math, and abroad. The preachers
5 in the Math should teach the inquirers by reading out scriptures to
6 them and by means of question-classes. The preachers abroad will
7 preach from village to village and try to start Maths like the above
8 in different places.

9 III. *Religious Practice* --This department will try to provide
10 those who want to practise with the requisites for this. But it should
11 not be allowed that because one has taken to religious practice he
12 will prevent others from study or preaching. Any one infringing this
13 rule shall be immediately asked to clear out, and this is imperative.

14 The preachers at home should give lessons on devotion,
15 knowledge, Yoga, and work by turns; for this, the days and hours
16 should be fixed, and the routine hung up at the door of the class-
17 room. That is to say, a seeker after devotion may not present
18 himself on the day fixed for knowledge and feel wounded thereby;
19 and so on.

20 None of you are fit for the Vamachara form of practice.
21 Therefore this should on no account be practised at the Math.
22 Anyone demurring to this must step out of this Order. This form of
23 practice must never even be mentioned in the Math. Ruin shall
24 seize the wicked man, both here and hereafter, who would
25 introduce vile Vamachara into His fold!

26 27 SOME GENERAL REMARKS

28 1. If any woman comes to have a talk with a Sannyasin, she
29 should do it in the Visitors' Hall. No woman shall be allowed to
30 enter any other room--except the Worship-room.

31 2. No Sannyasin shall be allowed to reside in the Women's
32 Math. Anyone refusing to obey this rule shall be expelled from the
33 Math. "Better an empty fold than a wicked herd."

34 3. Men of evil character shall be rigorously kept out. On no
35 pretence shall their shadow even cross the threshold of my room. If
36 anyone amongst you become wicked, turn him out at once, whoever
37 he be. We want no black sheep. The Lord will bring lots of good
38 people.

39 4. Any woman can come to the class-room (or preaching hall)
40 during class time or preaching hour, but must leave the place
41 directly when that period is over.

42 5. Never show temper, or harbour jealousy, or backbite
43 another in secret. It would be the height of cruelty and hard-
44 heartedness to take note of others' shortcoming instead of
45 rectifying one's own.

46 6. There should be fixed hours of meals. Everyone must have
47 a seat and a low dining table. He will sit on the former and put his
48 plate on the latter, as is the custom in Rajputana.

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THE OFFICE-BEARERS

All the office-bearers you should elect by ballot, as was the mandate of Lord Buddha. That is to say, one should propose that such and such should be the President this year; and all should write on bits of paper 'yes' or 'no' and put them in a pitcher. If the 'yes' have a majority, he should be elected President, and so on. Though you should elect office-bearers in this way, yet I suggest that this year Brahmananda should be President, Nirmalananda, Secretary and Treasurer, Sadananda Librarian, and Ramakrishnananda, Abhedananda, Turiyananda, and Trigunatitananda should take charge of the teaching and preaching work by turns, and so on.

It is no doubt a good idea that Trigunatita has of starting a magazine. But I shall consent to it if only you can work jointly.

About doctrines and so forth I have to say only this, that if anyone accepts Paramahansa Deva as Avatara etc., it is all right; if he doesn't do so, it is just the same. The truth about it is that in point of character, Paramahansa Deva beats all previous records; and as regards teaching, he was more liberal, more original, and more progressive than all his predecessors. In other words, the older Teachers were rather one-sided, while the teaching of this new Incarnation or Teacher is that the best point of Yoga, devotion, knowledge, and work must be combined now so as to form a new society. . . . The older ones were no doubt good, but this is the new religion of this age--the synthesis of Yoga, knowledge, devotion, and work--the propagation of knowledge and devotion to all, down to the very lowest, without distinction of age or sex. The previous Incarnations were all right, but they have been synthesised in the person of Ramakrishna. For the ordinary man and the beginner, steady devotion (Nishtha) to an ideal is of paramount importance. That is to say, teach them that all great Personalities should be duly honoured, but homage should be paid now to Ramakrishna. There can be no vigour without steady devotion. Without it one cannot preach with the intensity of a Mahavira (Hanuman). Besides, the previous ones have become rather old. Now we have a new India, with its new God, new religion, and new Vedas. When, O Lord, shall our land be free from this eternal dwelling upon the past? Well, a little bigotry also is a necessity. But we must harbour no antagonistic feelings towards others.

If you consider it wise to be guided by my ideas and if you follow these rules, then I shall supply on all necessary funds. . . . Moreover, please show this letter to Gour-Ma, Yogin-Ma, and others, and through them establish a Women's Math. Let Gour-Ma be the President there for one year, and so on. But none of you shall be allowed to visit the place. They will manage their own affairs. They will not have to work at your dictation. I shall supply all necessary expenses for that work also.

May the Lord guide you in the right direction! Two persons went to see the Lord Jagannatha. One of them beheld the Deity--while the other saw some trash that was haunting his mind! My

1 friends, many have no doubt served the Master, but whenever
2 anyone would be disposed to consider himself an extraordinary
3 personage, he should think that although he was associated with
4 Shri Ramakrishna, he has seen only the trash that was uppermost
5 in his mind! Were it not so, he would manifest the results. The
6 Master himself used to quote, "They would sing and dance in the
7 name of the Lord but come to grief in the end." The root of that
8 degeneration is egotism--to think that one is just as great as any
9 other, indeed! "He used to love me too!"--one would plead. Alas,
10 Nick Bottom, would you then be thus translated? Would such a man
11 envy or quarrel with another and degrade himself? Bear in mind
12 that through His grace lots of men will be turned out with the
13 nobility of gods--ay, wherever His mercy would drop! . . . Obedience
14 is the first duty. Well, just do with alacrity what I ask you to. Let me
15 see how you carry out these few small things. Then gradually great
16 things will come to pass.

17 Yours,

18 Vivekananda

19
20 PS. Please read the contents of this letter to all, and let me
21 know whether you consider the suggestions worth carrying out.
22 Please tell Brahmananda that he who is the servant of all is their
23 true master. He never becomes a leader in whose love there is a
24 consideration of high or low. He whose love knows no end, and
25 never stops to consider high or low, has the whole world lying at his
26 feet.

27 V.

28
29
30 XXXIII

31 63 St. George's Road,
32 London

33 May, 1896

34 Dear Sister,

35 In London once more. The climate now in England is nice
36 and cool. We have fire in the grate. We have a whole house to
37 ourselves, you know, this time. It is small but convenient, and in
38 London they do not cost so much as in America. Don't you know
39 what I was thinking--about your mother! I just wrote her a letter
40 and duly posted it to her, care of Monroe & Co., 7 Rue Scribe, Paris.
41 Some old friends are here, and Miss MacLeod came over from the
42 Continent. She is good as gold, and as kind as ever. We have a nice
43 little family, in the house, with another monk from India. Poor
44 man!--a typical Hindu with nothing of that pluck and go which I
45 have, he is always dreamy and gentle and sweet! That won't do. I
46 will try to put a little activity into him. I have had two classes
47 already--they will go on for four or five months and after that to
48 India I go. But it is to Amerique--there where the heart is. I love the

1 Yankee land. I like to see new things. I do not care a fig to loaf
2 about old ruins and mope a life out about old histories and keep
3 sighing about the ancients. I have too much vigour in my blood for
4 that. In America is the place, the people, the opportunity for
5 everything. I have become horribly radical. I am just going to India
6 to see what I can do in that awful mass of conservative jelly-fish,
7 and start a new thing, entirely new--simple, strong, new and fresh
8 as the first born baby. The eternal, the infinite, the omnipresent, the
9 omniscient is a principle, not a person. You, I, and everyone are but
10 embodiments of that principle, and the more of this infinite
11 principle is embodied in a person, the greater is he, and all in the
12 end will be the perfect embodiment of that and thus all will be one
13 as they are now essentially. This is all there is of religion, and the
14 practice is through this feeling of oneness that is love. All old foggy
15 forms are mere old superstitions. Now, why struggle to keep them
16 alive? Why give thirsty people ditch-water to drink whilst the river
17 of life and truth flows by? This is only human selfishness, nothing
18 else. Life is short--time is flying--that place and people where one's
19 ideas work best should be the country and the people for everyone.
20 Ay, for a dozen bold hearts, large, noble, and sincere!

21 I am very well indeed and enjoying life immensely.

22 Yours ever with love,

23 Vivekananda

24
25
26 XXXIV

27 C/o E. T. Sturdy, Esq.

28 High View, Caversham,

29 Reading

30 May (?) 1896

31 {original in Bengali}

32 Dear Shashi {Ramakrishnananda},

33 . . . This City of London is a sea of human heads--ten or
34 fifteen Calcuttas put together. One is apt to be lost in the mazes
35 unless he arranges for somebody to meet him on arrival. . . .
36 However, let Kali start at once. If he be late in starting like Sharat,
37 better let no one come. It won't do to loiter and procrastinate like
38 that. It is a task that requires the height of Rajas (activity). . . . Our
39 whole country is steeped in Tamas, and nothing but that. We want
40 Rajas first, and Sattva will come afterwards--a thing far, far
41 removed.

42 Yours affectionately,

43 Vivekananda

44
45
46 XXXV

1 63 St. George's Road
2 London, S.W.
3 16th May, 1896

4 Dear Adhyapakji {Prof. John Henry Wright},²³⁴

5 Last mail brought the very very sad news of the blow that
6 has fallen on you.

7 This is the world my brother--this illusion of Maya--the Lord
8 alone is true. The forms are evanescent; but the spirit, being in the
9 Lord and of the Lord, is immortal and omnipresent. All that we ever
10 had are round us this minute, for the spirit can neither come nor
11 go, it only changes its plane of manifestation.

12 You are strong and pure and so is Mrs. Wright, and I am sure
13 that the Divine in you has arisen and thrown away the lie and
14 delusion that there can be death for anyone.

15 "He who sees in this world of manifoldness that one support
16 of everything, in the midst of a world of unconsciousness that one
17 eternal consciousness, in this evanescent world that one eternal
18 and unchangeable, unto him belongs eternal peace."

19 May the peace of the Lord descend upon you and yours in
20 abundance is the prayer of

21 Your ever loving friend,
22 Vivekananda

23
24 XXXVI
25 63 St. George's Road,
26 London
27 7th June, 1896

28 Dear Miss Noble {Nivedita},

29 My ideal indeed can be put into a few words and that is: to
30 preach unto mankind their divinity, and how to make it manifest in
31 every movement of life.

32 This world is in chain of superstition. I pity the oppressed,
33 whether man or woman, and I pity more the oppressors.

34 One idea that I see clear as daylight is that misery is caused
35 by ignorance and nothing else. Who will give the world light?
36 Sacrifice in the past has been the Law, it will be, alas, for ages to
37 come. The earth's bravest and best will have to sacrifice themselves
38 for the good of many, for the welfare of all. Buddhas by the hundred
39 are necessary with eternal love and pity.

40 Religions of the world have become lifeless mockeries. What
41 the world wants is character. The world is in need of those whose
42 life is one burning love, selfless. That love will make every word tell
43 like thunderbolt.

1 ²³⁴ ?The letter was written on the death of his daughter, aged 16.
2

1 It is no superstition with you, I am sure, you have the making
2 in you of a world-mover, and others will also come. Bold words and
3 bolder deeds are what we want. Awake, awake, great ones! The
4 world is burning with misery. Can you sleep? Let us call and call till
5 the sleeping gods awake, till the god within answers to the call.
6 What more is in life? What greater work? The details come to me as
7 I go. I never make plans. Plans grow and work themselves. I only
8 say, awake, awake!

9 May all blessings attend you for ever!

10 Yours affectionately,
11 Vivekananda

12
13 XXXVII

14 63 St. George's Road
15 London, S.W.
16 6th July, 1896

17 Dear Friend and Brother {Dr. Lewis I. Janes},

18 Yours of the 25th June has duly reached and gave me great
19 pleasure. I am so glad to see the noble work progressing. I had
20 learnt with the greatest delight from Mrs. Bull of the work that is
21 going to be done in Cambridge this winter and no better person
22 could have been selected to direct it as yourself. May all power
23 attend you. I will be only too glad to write for the magazine from
24 time to time and my first instalment was to be in a few weeks, when
25 I hope to get some leisure. Certainly it goes without saying that no
26 one of the types we call religious ought to die--they like races
27 require fresh infusion of blood in the form of ideas. It is wonderful
28 to be able to sympathise with others from their standpoints of view.

29 By this time Goodwin and the other Swami must have
30 reached America. They I trust will be of help to you in your noble
31 work. Godspeed to all good work and infinite blessings on all
32 workers for good.

33 Yours ever in the truth,
34 Vivekananda

35
36 Darjeeling
37 19th March, 1897

38 *Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna!*

39 May you prosper! May this letter conveying blessings and
40 cordial embrace make you happy! Nowadays this fleshy tabernacle
41 of mine is comparatively well. Meseems, the snow-capped peaks of
42 the Himalayas, the Chief among mountains, bring even the
43 moribund back to life. And the fatigue of the journeys also seems to
44 have somewhat abated. I have already felt that yearning for
45 Freedom--potent enough to put the heart into turmoil--which your
46 letter suggests you are experiencing. It is this yearning that

1 gradually brings on a concentration of the mind on the eternal
2 Brahman. "There is no other way to go by." May this desire blaze up
3 more and more in you, until all your past Karma and future
4 tendencies are absolutely annihilated. Close upon the heels of that
5 will follow, all on a sudden, the manifestation of Brahman, and with
6 it the destruction of all craving for the sense-world. That this
7 freedom-in-life is approaching for your welfare is easily to be
8 inferred from the strength of your fervour. Now I pray to that world-
9 teacher, Shri Ramakrishna, the Preacher of the gospel of universal
10 synthesis, to manifest himself in the region of your heart, so that,
11 having attained the consummation of your desires, you may with an
12 undaunted heart try your best to deliver others from this dreadful
13 ocean of infatuation. May you be ever possessed of valour! It is the
14 hero alone, not the coward, who has liberation within his easy
15 reach. Gird up your loins, ye heroes, for before you are your
16 enemies--the dire army of infatuation. It is undoubtedly true that
17 "all great achievements are fraught with numerous impediments";
18 still you should exert your utmost for your end. Behold, how men
19 are already in the jaws of the shark of infatuation! Oh, listen to
20 their piteous heart-rending wails. Advance, forward, O ye brave
21 souls, to set free those that are in fetters, to lessen the burden of
22 woe of the miserable, and to illumine the abysmal darkness of
23 ignorant hearts! Look, how the Vedanta proclaims by beat of drums,
24 "Be fearless!" May that solemn sound remove the heart's knot of all
25 denizens of the earth.

26 Ever your well-wisher,
27 Vivekananda

28
29 XXXIX

30 Alambazar Math, Calcutta
31 May 5th, 1897

32 Dear Mrs. Bull,

33 I have been to Darjeeling for a month to recuperate my
34 shattered health. I am very much better now. The disease
35 disappeared altogether in Darjeeling. I am going tomorrow to
36 Almora, another hill station, to perfect this improvement.

37 Things are looking not very hopeful here as I have already
38 written you--though the whole nation has risen as one man to
39 honour me and people went almost mad over me! The practical part
40 cannot be had in India. Again, the price of the land has gone up
41 very much near Calcutta. My idea at present is to start three
42 centres at three capitals. These would be my normal schools, from
43 thence I want to invade India.

44 India is already Ramakrishna's whether I live a few years
45 more or not.

46 I have a very kind letter from Prof. Janes in which he points
47 out my remarks about degraded Buddhism. You also write that
48 Dharmapala is very wroth about it. Mr. Dharmapala is a good man,
49 and I love him; but it would be entirely wrong for him to go into fits

1 over things Indian.

2 I am perfectly convinced that what they call modern
3 Hinduism with all its ugliness is only stranded Buddhism. Let the
4 Hindus understand this clearly, and then it would be easier for them
5 to reject it without murmur. As for the ancient form which the
6 Buddha preached, I have the greatest respect for it, as well as for
7 His person. And you well know that we Hindus worship Him as an
8 Incarnation. Neither is the Buddhism of Ceylon any good. My visit
9 to Ceylon has entirely disillusioned me, and the only living people
10 there are the Hindus. The Buddhists are all much Europeanised--
11 even Mr. Dharmapala and his father had European names, which
12 they have since changed. The only respect the Buddhists pay to
13 their great tenet of non-killing is by opening "butcher-stalls" in
14 every place! And the priests encourage this. The real Buddhism, I
15 once thought, would yet do *much good*. But I have given up the
16 idea entirely, and I clearly see the reason why Buddhism was driven
17 out of India, and we will only be too glad if the Ceylonese carry off
18 the remnant of this religion with its hideous idols and licentious
19 rites.

20 About the Theosophists, you must remember first that in
21 India Theosophists and Buddhists are nonentities. They publish a
22 few papers and make a lot of splash and try to catch Occidental
23 ears. . . .

24 I was one man in America and another here. Here the whole
25 nation is looking upon me as their authority--there I was a much
26 reviled preacher. Here Princes draw my carriage, there I would not
27 be admitted to a decent hotel. My utterances here, therefore, must
28 be for the good of the race, my people--however unpleasant they
29 might appear to a few. Acceptance, love, toleration for everything
30 sincere and honest--but never for hypocrisy. The Theosophists tried
31 to fawn upon and flatter me as I am the authority now in India, and
32 therefore it was necessary for me to stop my work giving any
33 sanction to their humbugs, by a few bold, decisive words; and the
34 thing is done. I am very glad. If my health had permitted, I would
35 have cleared India by this time of these upstart humbugs, at least
36 tried my best. . . . Let me tell you that India is already
37 Ramakrishna's and for a purified Hinduism I have organised my
38 work here a bit.

39 Yours,
40 Vivekananda

41
42 XL
43 Almora
44 11th July, 1897

45 My dear Shuddhananda,

46 I was very glad to receive your last report. I have very little
47 criticism to make except that you ought to write a bit more legibly.

48 I am quite satisfied with the work done so far, but it must be

1 pushed forward. I have not learnt as yet of the suggestion I made
2 before as to getting a set of chemical and physical apparatus and
3 starting classes in elementary and experimental Chemistry and
4 Physics, especially in Physiology.

5 What about the other suggestion of buying sets of all the
6 scientific books that have been translated into Bengali?

7 It now seems to me that there must at least be three
8 Mahantas (heads) elected at a time--one to direct the business part,
9 one the experimental, the other the intellectual part.

10 The difficulty is to get the director of education.
11 Brahmananda and Turiyananda may well fill the other two. Of
12 visitors I am sorry to learn that you are only getting Babus from
13 Calcutta. They are no good. What we want are brave young men
14 who will work, not tomfools.

15 Ask Brahmananda to write to both Abhedananda and
16 Saradananda to send weekly reports to the Math without fail, also
17 to send Bengali articles and notes for the would-be paper. Is G. C.
18 Ghosh getting up things for the paper? Work on with a will and be
19 ready.

20 Akhandananda is working wonderfully at Mahula, but the
21 system is not good. It seems they are frittering away their energies
22 in one little village and that only doling out rice. I do not hear that
23 any preaching has been done along with this helping. All the wealth
24 of the world cannot help one little Indian village if the people are
25 not taught to help themselves. Our work should be mainly
26 *educational*, both moral and intellectual. I have not learnt anything
27 about it--only so many *beggars are helped* ! Ask Brahmananda to
28 open centres in different districts so as to cover the largest space
29 with our small means.

30 And then, so far it seems to have been ineffectual, for they
31 have not succeeded in rousing the people of the place to start
32 societies to educate the people, so that they may learn to be self-
33 reliant, frugal, and not given to marrying, and thus save themselves
34 from future famine. Charity opens the heart, but work on through
35 that wedge.

36 The easiest way is to take a hut--make it a temple of Guru
37 Maharaj! Let the poor come here to be helped, also to worship. Let
38 there be Katha (Puranic recitals) morning and evening there--
39 through that you may teach all you want to teach the people. By
40 degrees the people will be interested. They will keep up the temple
41 themselves; maybe the hut temple will evolve into a great
42 institution in a few years. Let those that go to relief-work first select
43 a central spot in each district and start such a hut-temple, from
44 which all our little work is to proceed.

45 Even the greatest fool can accomplish a task if it be after his
46 heart. But the intelligent man is he who can convert every work into
47 one that suits his taste. No work is petty. Everything in this world is
48 like a banyan-seed, which, though appearing tiny as a mustard-
49 seed, has yet the gigantic banyan tree latent within it. He indeed is
50 intelligent who notices this and succeeds in making all work truly

1 present is Madras and Calcutta. Mr. Goodwin working in Madras.
2 Also one has gone to Colombo. From the next week a monthly
3 report of the whole work will be forwarded to you if it has not
4 already reached you. I am away from the centre of work, so things
5 go a little slow, you see; but the work is satisfactory on the whole.

6 You can do more work for us from England than by coming
7 here. Lord bless you for your great self-sacrifice for the poor
8 Indians.

9 I entirely agree with you that the work in England will look
10 up when I am there. But all the same it is not proper to leave India
11 before the machine is moving at some rate and I am sure that there
12 are many to guide it in my absence. That will be done in a few
13 months. "God willing", as the Mussulmans say. One of my best
14 workers is now in England, the Raja of Khetri. I expect him soon in
15 India, and he will be of great service to me no doubt.

16 With everlasting love and blessings,

17 Yours,

18 Vivekananda

19
20 XLII

21 Almora

22 29th July, 1897

23 My dear Miss Noble {Nivedita},

24 A letter from Sturdy reached me yesterday, informing me
25 that you are determined to come to India and see things with your
26 own eyes. I replied to that yesterday, but what I learnt from Miss
27 Muller about your plans makes this further note necessary, and it is
28 better that it should be direct.

29 Let me tell you frankly that I am now convinced that you
30 have a great future in the work for India. What was wanted was not
31 a man, but a woman--a real lioness--to work for the Indians, women
32 specially.

33 India cannot yet produce great women, she must borrow
34 them from other nations. Your education, sincerity, purity, immense
35 love, determination, and above all, the Celtic blood make you just
36 the woman wanted.

37 Yet the difficulties are many. You cannot form any idea of
38 misery, the superstition, and the slavery that are here. You will be in
39 the midst of a mass of half-naked men and women with quaint ideas
40 of caste and isolation, shunning the white skin through fear or
41 hatred and hated by them intensely. On the other hand, you will be
42 looked upon by the white as a crank, and every one of your
43 movements will be watched with suspicion.

44 Then the climate is fearfully hot; our winter in most places
45 being like your summer, and in the south it is always blazing.

46 Not one European comfort is to be had in places out of the

1 cities. If in spite of all this, you dare venture into the work, you are
2 welcome, a hundred times welcome. As for me, I am nobody here as
3 elsewhere, but what little influence I have shall be devoted to your
4 service.

5 You must think well before you plunge in; and after work, if
6 you fail in this or get disgusted, on my part I promise you, *I will*
7 *stand by you unto death* whether you work for India or not,
8 whether you give up Vedanta or remain in it. "The tusks of the
9 elephant come out, but never go back"; so are the words of a man
10 never retracted. I promise you that. Again, I must give you a bit of
11 warning. You must stand on your own feet and not be under the
12 wings of Miss Muller or anybody else. Miss Muller is a good lady in
13 her own way, but unfortunately it got into her head, when she was a
14 girl, that she was a born leader and that no other qualifications
15 were necessary to move world but money! This idea is coming on
16 the surface again and again in spite of herself, and you will find it
17 impossible to pull on with her in a few days. She now intends to
18 take a house in Calcutta for herself and yourself and other
19 European or American friends who may come.

20 It is very kind and good of her, but her Lady Abbess plan will
21 never be carried out for two reasons--her violent temper and
22 overbearing conduct, and her awfully vacillating mind. Friendship
23 with many is best at a distance, and everything goes well with the
24 person who stands on his own feet.

25 Mrs. Sevier is a jewel of a lady--so good, so kind! The Seviers
26 are the *only* English people who do not hate the *natives*, Sturdy
27 not excepted. Mr. and Mrs. Sevier are the only persons who *did not*
28 *come* to patronise us, but they have no fixed plans yet. When you
29 come, you may get them to work with you, and that will be really
30 helpful to them and to you. But after all it is absolutely necessary to
31 stand on one's own feet.

32 I learn from America that two friends of mine, Mrs. Ole Bull
33 of Boston and Miss MacLeod, are coming on a visit to India this
34 autumn. Miss MacLeod you already know in London, that Paris-
35 dressed young American lady; Mrs. Ole Bull is about fifty and has
36 been a kind friend to me in America. I may suggest that your joining
37 the party may while away the tedium of the journey, as they also are
38 coming by way of Europe.

39 I am glad to receive a note at least from Sturdy after long.
40 But it was so stiff and cold. It seems he is disappointed at the
41 collapse of the London work.

42 With everlasting love,

43 Yours ever in the Lord,
44 Vivekananda

47 XLIII

48 Belur Math

16th April, 1899

{original in Bengali}

Dear Madam {Shrimati Sarala Ghosal},

Very glad to receive your kind note. If by the sacrifice of some specially cherished object of either myself or my brother-disciples many pure and genuinely patriotic souls come forward to help our cause, rest assured, we will not hesitate in the least to make that sacrifice nor shed a tear-drop--you will see this verified in action. But up till now I have seen nobody coming forward to assist in this way. Only some have wished to put their own hobby in place of ours--that is all. If it really help our country or humanity--not to speak of giving up Guru-worship--believe me, we are prepared to commit any dire iniquity and suffer the eternal damnation of the Christians. But my hairs have turned grey since I began the study of man. This world is a most trying place, and it is long since I have taken to wandering with the lantern of the Grecian Philosopher in hand. A popular song my Master often used to sing comes to my mind:

"He who's a man after one's heart
Betrays himself by his very looks.
Rare indeed is such a one!
He's a man of aesthetic perceptions
Who treads a path contrary to others."

This much from my side. Please know that not one word of it is exaggerated--which you will find to be actually the case.

But then I have some doubts about those patriotic souls who can join with us if only we give up the worship of the Guru. Well, if, as they pose, they are indeed panting and struggling so much--almost to the point of dissolution from their body--to serve the country, how can the single accident of Guru-worship stop everything!

This impetuous river with rolling waves which bade fair to sweep away whole hills and mountains--was a bit of Guru-worship sufficient to turn it back to the Himalayas! I put it to you, do you think anything great will come of such patriotism, or any substantial good proceed from such assistance? It is for you to say; I can make nothing out of it. For a thirsty man to weigh so much the merits of water, or for a man about to die of hunger to cogitate so much and turn up his nose at the food presented! Well, people have strange ways of thinking. I, for one, am inclined to think that those people were best in a glass-case; the more they keep away from actual work, the better.

"Love stops not for questions of birth.

Nor the hungry man for stale food."

This is what I know. But I may be wholly mistaken. Well, if this trifle of Guru-worship sticks in one's throat to choke one to death, we had better extricate him from this predicament.

However, I have a great longing to talk over these points with you in detail. For talking these things over, disease, affliction and

1 death have given me leave till now, and I hope they will do so yet.

2 May all your wishes be fulfilled in this New Year!

3 Yours sincerely,

4 Vivekananda

7 XLIV

8 C/o F. H. Leggett

9 21 West Thirty-fourth Street

10 New York

11 Nov., 1899

12 My Dear Sturdy,

13 This is not to defend my conduct. Words cannot wipe off the
14 evils I have done, nor any censor stop from working the good
15 deeds, if any.

16 For the last few months I have been hearing so much of the
17 luxuries I was given to enjoy by the people of the West--luxuries
18 which the hypocrite myself has been enjoying, although preaching
19 renunciation all the while: luxuries, the enjoyment of which has
20 been the great stumbling-block in my way, in England at least. I
21 nearly hypnotised myself into the belief that there has at least been
22 a little oasis in the dreary desert of my life, a little spot of light in
23 one whole life of misery and gloom; one moment of relaxation in a
24 life of hard work and harder curses--even that oasis, that spot, that
25 moment was only one of sense-enjoyment!!

26 I was glad, I blessed a hundred times a day those that had
27 helped me to get it, when, lo, your last letter comes like a
28 thunderclap, and the dream is vanished. I begin to disbelieve your
29 criticisms--have little faith left in all this talk of *luxuries* and
30 enjoyments and other visions memory calls up. These I state. Hope
31 you will send it round to friends, if you think fit, and correct me
32 where I am wrong.

33 I remember your place at Reading, where I was fed with
34 boiled cabbage and potatoes and boiled rice and boiled lentils,
35 three times a day, with your wife's curses for sauce all the time. I do
36 not remember your giving me any cigar to smoke--shilling or penny
37 ones. Nor do I remember myself as complaining of either the food
38 or your wife's incessant curses, though I *lived as a thief*, shaking
39 through fear all the time, and working every day for you.

40 The next memory is of the house on St. George's Road--you
41 and Miss Muller at the head. My poor brother was ill there and
42 Miss Muller drove him away. There too I don't remember to have
43 had any luxuries as to food or drink or bed or even *the room given*
44 *to me*.

45 The next was Miss Muller's place. Though she has been very
46 kind to me, I was living on nuts and fruits. The next memory is that

1 of the black hole of London where I had to work almost day and
2 night and cook the meals oft-times for five or six, and most nights
3 with a bite of bread and butter.

4 I remember Mrs. Sturdy giving me a dinner and a night's
5 lodging in her place, and then the next day criticising the black
6 savage--so dirty and smoking all over the house.

7 With the exception of Capt. and Mrs. Sevier, I do not
8 remember even one piece of rag as big as a handkerchief I got from
9 England. On the other hand, the incessant demand on my body and
10 mind in England is the cause of my breakdown in health. This was
11 all you English people gave me, whilst working me to death; and
12 now I am cursed for the luxuries I lived in!! Whosoever of you have
13 given me a coat? Whosoever a cigar? Whosoever a bit of fish or
14 flesh? Whosoever of you dare say I asked food or drink or smoke or
15 dress or money from you? Ask, Sturdy, ask for God's sake, ask your
16 friends, and first ask your own "God within who never sleeps."

17 You have given me money for my work. Every penny of it is
18 there. Before your eyes I sent my brother away, perhaps to his
19 death; and I would not give him a farthing of the money which was
20 not my private property.

21 On the other hand, I remember in England Capt. and Mrs.
22 Sevier, who have clad me when I was cold, nursed me better than
23 my own mother would have, borne with me in my weakness, my
24 trials; and they have nothing but blessings for me. And that Mrs.
25 Sevier, because she did not care for honours, has the worship of
26 thousands today; and when she is dead millions will remember her
27 as one of the great benefactresses of the poor Indians. And they
28 never cursed me for my luxuries, though they are ready to give me
29 luxuries, if I need or wish.

30 I need not tell you of Mrs. Bull, Miss MacLeod, Mr. and Mrs.
31 Leggett. You know their love and kindness for me; and Mrs. Bull
32 and Miss MacLeod have been to our country, moved and lived with
33 us as no foreigner ever did, roughing it all, and they do not ever
34 curse me and my luxuries either; they will be only too glad to have
35 me eat well and smoke dollar cigars if I wish. And there Leggetts
36 and Bulls were the people whose bread whose money bought my
37 smokes and several times paid my rent, whilst I was killing myself
38 for your people, when you were taking *my pound of flesh* for the
39 dirty hole and starvation and reserving all this accusation of luxury.

40 "The clouds of autumn make great noise but send no rain;

41 The clouds of the rainy season without a word flood the
42 earth."

43 See Sturdy, those that have helped or are still helping have
44 no criticism, no curses: it is only those who do nothing, who only
45 come to grind their own axes, that curse, that criticise. That such
46 worthless, heartless, selfish, rubbish criticise, is the greatest
47 blessing that can come to me. I want nothing so much in life as to
48 be miles off from these extremely selfish axe-grinders.

49 Talking of luxuries! Take these critics up one after the other--

1 It is all flesh, all flesh and no spirit anywhere. Thank God, they
2 come out sooner or later in their true colours. And you advise me to
3 regulate my conduct, my work, according to the desires of such
4 heartless, selfish persons, and are at your wit's end because I do
5 not!

6 As to my Gurubhais (brother-disciples), they do nothing but
7 what I insist on their doing. If they have shown any selfishness
8 anywhere, that is because of my ordering them, not what they
9 would do themselves.

10 Would you like your children put into that dark hole you got
11 for me in London, made to work to death, and almost starved all the
12 time? Would Mrs. Sturdy like that? They are Sannyasins, and that
13 means, no Sannyasin should unnecessarily throw away his life or
14 *undertake unnecessary hardship*.

15 In undergoing all this hardship in the West we have been
16 only breaking the rules of Sannyasa. They are my brothers, my
17 children. I do not want them to die in holes for my sake. I don't, by
18 all that is good and true I don't, want them starved and worked and
19 cursed for all their pains.

20 A word more. I shall be very glad if you can point out to me
21 where I have preached torturing the flesh. As for the Shastras
22 (scriptures), I shall be only too glad if a Shastri (Pundit) dares
23 oppose us with the rules of life laid down for Sannyasins and
24 Paramahamsas.

25 Well, Sturdy, my heart aches. I understand it all. I know what
26 you are in--you are in the clutches of people who want to use you. I
27 don't mean your wife. She is too simple to be dangerous. But, my
28 poor boy, you have got the flesh-smell--a little money--and vultures
29 are around. Such is life.

30 You said a lot about ancient India. That India still lives,
31 Sturdy, is not dead, and that living India dares even today to deliver
32 her message without fear or favour of the rich, without fear of
33 anybody's opinion, either in the land where her feet are in chains or
34 in the very face of those who hold the end of the chain, her rulers.
35 That India still lives, Sturdy, India of undying love, of everlasting
36 faithfulness, the unchangeable, not only in manners and customs,
37 but also in love, in faith, in friendship. And I, the least of that India's
38 children, love you, Sturdy, with *Indian* love, and would any day give
39 up a thousand bodies to help you out of this delusion.

40 Ever yours,

41 Vivekananda

42
43
44 XLV

45 Chicago

46 26th Nov., 1899

47 My dear Mrs. Leggett,

1 Many, many thanks for all your kindness and especially the
2 kind note. I am going to start from Chicago on Thursday next, and
3 got the ticket and berth ready for that day.

4 Miss Noble is doing very well here, and working her way out.
5 I saw Alberta the other day. She is enjoying every minute of her
6 stay here and is very happy. Miss Adams (Jane Adams), as ever is an
7 angel.

8 I shall wire to Joe Joe before I start and read all night.

9 With all love to Mr. Leggett and yourself,

10 Ever yours affectionately,

11 Vivekananda

12
13 XLVI

14 Chicago,

15 30th Nov., 1899

16 My dear Mother {Mrs. Leggett},

17 Nothing new--except Madame Calve's visit. She is a great
18 woman. I wish I saw more of her. It is a grand sight to see a giant
19 pine struggling against a cyclone. Is it not?

20 I leave here tonight. These lines in haste as A__ is waiting.
21 Mrs. Adams is kind as usual. Margot doing splendidly. Will write
22 more from California.

23 With all love to Frankincense,

24 Ever your son,

25 Vivekananda

26
27
28 XLVII

29 Los Angeles

30 6th Dec., 1899

31 Dear Margot {Nivedita},

32 Your sixth has arrived, but with it yet no change in my
33 fortune. Would change be any good, do you think? Some people are
34 made that way, to love being miserable. If I did not break my heart
35 over people I was born amongst, I would do it for somebody else. I
36 am sure of that. This is the way of some, I am coming to see it. We
37 are all after happiness, true, but that some are only happy in being
38 unhappy--queer, is it not? There is no harm in it either, except that
39 happiness and unhappiness are both infectious. Ingersoll said once
40 that if he were God, he would make health catching, instead of
41 disease, little dreaming that health is quite as catching as disease,
42 if not more! That is the only danger. No harm in the world in my
43 being happy, in being miserable, but others must not catch it. This
44 is the great fact. No sooner a prophet feels miserable for the state

1 of man than he sours his face, beats his breast, and calls upon
2 everyone to drink tartaric acid, munch charcoal, sit upon a dung-
3 heap covered with ashes, and speak only in groans and tears!--I find
4 they all have been wanting. Yes, they have. If you are really ready to
5 take the world's burden, take it by all means. But do not let us hear
6 your groans and curses. Do not frighten us with your sufferings, so
7 that we came to feel we were better off with our own burdens. The
8 man who really takes the burden blesses the world and goes his
9 own way. He has not a word of condemnation, a word of criticism,
10 not because there was no evil but that he has taken it on his own
11 shoulders willingly, voluntarily. It is the Saviour who should "go his
12 way rejoicing, and not the saved".

13 This is the only light I have caught this morning. This is
14 enough if it has come to live with me and permeate my life.

15 Come ye that are heavy laden and lay all your burden on me,
16 and then do whatever you like and be happy and forget that I ever
17 existed.

18 Ever with love,

19 Your father,

20 Vivekananda

21
22
23 XLVIII

24 1719 Turk Street

25 San Francisco

26 17th March, 1900

27 My dear Mother {Mrs. Leggett},

28 So glad to get your nice letter. Well, you may be sure I am
29 keeping in touch with my friends. Yet a delay may sometimes cause
30 nervousness.

31 Dr. and Mrs. Hiller returned to the city, much benefited, as
32 they declare, by Mrs. Melton's rubbings. As for me, I have got
33 several huge red patches on my chest.

34 What materialises later on as to complete recovery, I will let
35 you know. Of course, my case is such that it will take time to come
36 round by itself.

37 So thankful to you and to Mrs. Adams for the kindness. I will
38 surely go and call on them in Chicago.

39 How are things going on with you? I have been following the
40 "Put up or shut up" plan here, and so far it has not proved bad. Mrs.
41 Hansborough, the second of the three sisters, is here, and she is
42 working, working, working--to help me. Lord bless their hearts. The
43 three sisters are three angels, are they not? Seeing such souls here
44 and there repays for all the nonsense of this life.

45 Well, all blessings to you for ever is my prayer. You are one of
46 the angels also, say I.

1 With love to Miss Kate,

2 Ever your son,

3 Vivekananda

4 PS. How is the "Mother's child"?

5 How is Miss Spencer? All love to her. You know already I am
6 a very bad correspondent, but the heart never fails. Tell this to Miss
7 Spencer.

8 V.

9

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11 XLIX

12 1719 Turk Street

13 San Francisco

14 17th March, 1900

15 Dear Mother {Mrs. Leggett},

16 I had a letter from Joe asking me to send my signature on
17 four slips of paper, so that Mr. Leggett may put my money in the
18 bank for me. As I cannot possibly reach her in time, I send the slips
19 to you.

20 I am getting better in health and doing financially something.
21 I am quite satisfied. I am not at all sorry that more people did not
22 respond to your call. I knew they would not. But I am eternally
23 thankful to you for all your kindness. May all blessings follow you
24 and yours for ever.

25 It is better that my mail be sent to 1231 Pine Street, C/o the
26 Home of Truth. For though I be moving about, that place is a
27 permanent establishment, and the people there are very kind to me.

28 I am so glad to learn that you are very well now. Mrs. Melton
29 has left Los Angeles--I am informed by Mrs. Blodgett. Has she gone
30 to New York? Dr. and Mrs. Hiller came back to San Francisco day
31 before yesterday. They declare themselves very much helped by
32 Mrs. Melton. Mrs. Hiller expects to get completely cured in a short
33 time.

34 I had a number of lectures here already and in Oakland. The
35 Oakland lectures paid well. The first week in San Francisco was not
36 paying, this week is. Hope the next week will pay also. I am so glad
37 to hear the nice arrangement made by Mr. Leggett for the Vedanta
38 Society. He is so good.

39 With all love,

40 Yours,

41 Vivekananda

42 PS. Do you know anything about Turiyananda? Has he got
43 completely cured?

44 V.

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1719 Turk Street
San Francisco
7th April, 1900

Dear Mother {Mrs. Leggett},

Accept my congratulations for the news of the cause of the wound being completely removed. I have no doubt of your being perfectly cured this time.

Your very kind note cheered me a good deal. I do not mind at all whether people come round to help me or not; I am becoming calm and less worried.

Kindly convey my best love to Mrs. Melton. I am sure to recover in the long run. My health has been improving in the main, though there are occasional relapses. Each relapse becoming less, both in tone and in time.

It is just like you to have Turiyananda and Siri treated. The Lord has blessed you for your great heart. May all blessings ever follow you and yours.

It is perfectly true that I should go to France and work on French. I hope to reach France in July or earlier. Mother knows. May all good ever follow you, is the constant prayer of

Your son,
Vivekananda

LI

17th April, 1900

My Dear Mr. Leggett,

Herewith I send the executed Will to you. It has been executed as desired by her, and of course, as usual, I am requesting you for the trouble of taking charge of it.

You and yours have been so uniformly kind to me. But you know, dear friend, it is human nature to ask for more favours (now that they have come) where it gets from.

I am only a man, your child.

I am so sorry A_ has made disturbances. He does that now and then, at least used to. I do not venture to meddle, for fear of creating more trouble. You know how to manage him best. By the time you receive this letter, I will be off from San Francisco. Will you kindly send my Indian mail C/o Mrs. Hale, 10 Aster Street, Chicago, and to Margot in the same place? Margot writes very thankfully of your gift of a thousand dollars for her school.

1 May all blessings ever follow you and yours for your uniform
2 kindness to me and mine, is the constant prayer of

3 Yours affectionately,

4 Vivekananda

5 PS. I am so glad to learn that Mrs. Leggett has already
6 recovered.

7 V.

10 LII

11 2nd May, 1900

12 Dear Aunt Roxy {Mrs. Blodgett},

13 Your very, very kind letter came. I am down again with
14 nerves and fever, after six months of hard work. However, I found
15 out that my kidneys and heart are as good as ever. I am going to
16 take a few days' rest in the country and then start for Chicago.

17 I have just written to Mrs. Milward Adams and also have
18 given an introduction to my daughter, Miss Noble, to go and call
19 upon Mrs. Adams and give her all information she wants about the
20 work.

21 Well, dear good mother, may all blessings attend you and
22 peace. I just want a bit of peace badly--pray for me. With love to
23 Kate,

24 Ever your son,

25 Vivekananda

26 PS. Love to Miss Spencer--the Basaquisitz(?), Mrs. S__, and
27 the other friends.

28 A heap of loving pats on the head to Tricks.

29 V.

31 LIII

32 Perros Guirec

33 Bretagne

34 22nd September, 1900

35 To Miss Alberta Sturges on her 23rd birthday

36
37 The mother's heart, the hero's will,
38 The softest flower's sweetest feel;
39 The charm and force that ever sway
40 The altar fire's flaming play;
41 The strength that leads, in love obeys;
42 Far-reaching dreams, and patient ways,
43 Eternal faith in Self, in all

1 The sight Divine in great in small;
2 All these, and more than I could see
3 Today may "Mother" grant to thee.

4 Ever yours with love and blessings,
5 Vivekananda

6 Dear Alberta,

7 This little poem is for your birthday. It is not good, but it has
8 all my love. I am sure, therefore, you will like it.

9 Will you kindly send a copy each of the pamphlets there to
10 madame Besnard, Clairoix, Bres Compiegne, Oise, and oblige?

11 Your well-wisher,
12 Vivekananda

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DISCOURSES ON JNANA-YOGA²³⁶

3

I

4 Om Tat Sat! To know the Om is to know the secret of the
 5 universe. The object of Jnana-Yoga is the same as that of Bhakti and
 6 Raja Yogas, but the method is different. This is the Yoga for the
 7 strong, for those who are neither mystical nor devotional, but
 8 rational. As the Bhakti-Yogi works his way to complete oneness with
 9 the Supreme through love and devotion, so the Jnana-Yogi forces his
 10 way to the realisation of God by the power of pure reason. He must
 11 be prepared to throw away all old idols, all old beliefs and
 12 superstitions, all desire for this world or another, and be
 13 determined only to find freedom. Without Jnana (knowledge)
 14 liberation cannot be ours. It consists in knowing what we really are,
 15 that we are beyond fear, beyond birth, beyond death. The highest
 16 good is the realisation of the Self. It is beyond sense, beyond
 17 thought. The *real* "I" cannot be grasped. It is the eternal subject
 18 and can never become the object of knowledge, because knowledge
 19 is only of the related, not of the Absolute. All sense-knowledge is
 20 limitation, it is an endless chain of cause and effect. This world is a
 21 relative world, a shadow of the real; still, being the plane of
 22 equipoise where happiness and misery are about evenly balanced,
 23 it is the only plane where man can realise his true Self and know
 24 that he is Brahman.

25 This world is "the evolution of nature and the manifestation of
 26 God". It is our interpretation of Brahman or the Absolute, seen
 27 through the veil of Maya or appearance. The world is not zero, it
 28 has a certain reality; it only *appears* because Brahman *is* .

29 How shall we know the knower? The Vedanta says, "We are
 30 It, but can never know It, because It can never become the object of
 31 knowledge." Modern science also says that It cannot be known. We
 32 can, however, have glimpses of It from time to time. When the
 33 delusion of this world is once broken, it will come back to us, but no
 34 longer will it hold any reality for us. We shall know it as a mirage.
 35 To reach behind the mirage is the aim of all religions. That man and
 36 God are one is the constant teaching of the Vedas, but only few are
 37 able to penetrate behind the veil and reach the realisation of this
 38 truth.

39 The first thing to be got rid of by him who would be a Jnani is
 40 fear. Fear is one of our worst enemies. Next, believe in nothing until
 41 you *know* it. Constantly tell yourself, "I am not the body, I am not
 42 the mind, I am not thought, I am not even consciousness; I am the
 43 Atman." When you can throw away *all*, only the true Self will
 44 remain. The Jnani's meditation is of two sorts: (1) to deny and think
 45 away everything we are *not*; (2) to insist upon what we really are--
 46 the Atman, the One Self-Existence, Knowledge, and Bliss. The true

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²³⁶ ?These were originally recorded by a prominent American disciple of the Swami, Miss S.E. Waldo. Swami Saradananda, while he was in America (1896), copied them out from her notebook--Ed.

1 rationalist must go on and fearlessly follow his reason to its farthest
2 limits. It will not answer to stop anywhere on the road. When we
3 begin to deny, *all* must go until we reach what cannot be thrown
4 away or denied, which is the real "I". That "I" is the witness of the
5 universe, it is unchangeable, eternal, infinite. Now, layer after layer
6 of ignorance covers it from our eyes, but it remains ever the same.

7 Two birds sat on one tree. The bird at the top was calm,
8 majestic, beautiful, perfect. The lower bird was always hopping
9 from twig to twig, now eating sweet fruits and being happy, now
10 eating bitter fruits and being miserable. One day, when he had
11 eaten a fruit more bitter than usual, he glanced up at the calm
12 majestic upper bird and thought, "How I would like to be like him!"
13 and he hopped up a little way towards him. Soon he forgot all about
14 his desire to be like the upper bird, and went on as before, eating
15 sweet and bitter fruits and being happy and miserable. Again he
16 looked up, again he went up a little nearer to the calm and majestic
17 upper bird. Many times was this repeated until at last he drew very
18 near the upper bird; the brilliancy of his plumage dazzled him,
19 seemed to absorb him, and finally, to his wonder and surprise, he
20 found there was only one bird--he was the upper bird all the time
21 and had but just found it out. Man is like that lower bird, but if he
22 perseveres in his efforts to rise to the highest ideal he can conceive
23 of, he too will find that he was the Self all the time and the other
24 was but a dream. To separate ourselves utterly from matter and all
25 belief in its reality is true Jnana. The Jnani must keep ever in his
26 mind the "Om Tat Sat", that is, Om the only real existence. Abstract
27 unity is the foundation of Jnana-Yoga. This is called Advaitism
28 ("without dualism or dvaitism"). This is the corner-stone of the
29 Vedanta philosophy, the Alpha and the Omega. "Brahman alone is
30 true, all else is false and I am Brahman." Only by telling ourselves
31 this until we make it a part of our very being, can we rise beyond all
32 duality, beyond both good and evil, pleasure and pain, joy and
33 sorrow, and know ourselves as the One, eternal, unchanging,
34 infinite--the "One without a second".

35 The Jnana-Yogi must be as intense as the narrowest sectarian,
36 yet as broad as the heavens. He must absolutely control his mind,
37 be able to be a Buddhist or a Christian, to have the power to
38 consciously divide himself into all these different ideas and yet hold
39 fast to the eternal harmony. Constant drill alone can enable us to
40 get this control. All variations are in the One, but we must learn not
41 to identify ourselves with what we do, and to hear nothing, see
42 nothing, talk of nothing but the thing in hand. We must put in our
43 whole soul and be intense. Day and night tell yourself, "I am He, I
44 am He."

45 II

46 The greatest teacher of the Vedanta philosophy was
47 Shankaracharya. By solid reasoning he extracted from the Vedas
48 the truths of Vedanta, and on them built up the wonderful system of
49 Jnana that is taught in his commentaries. He unified all the
50 conflicting descriptions of Brahman and showed that there is only
51

1 one Infinite Reality. He showed too that as man can only travel
2 slowly on the upward road, all the varied presentations are needed
3 to suit his varying capacity. We find something akin to this in the
4 teachings of Jesus, which he evidently adapted to the different
5 abilities of his hearers. First he taught them of a Father in heaven
6 and to pray to Him. Next he rose a step higher and told them, "I am
7 the vine, you are the branches", and lastly he gave them the highest
8 truth: "I and my Father are one", and "The Kingdom of Heaven is
9 within you." Shankara taught that three things were the great gifts
10 of God: (1) human body, (2) thirst after God, and (3) a teacher who
11 can show us the light. When these three great gifts are ours, we
12 may know that our redemption is at hand. Only knowledge can free
13 and save us, but with knowledge must go virtue.

14 The essence of Vedanta is that there is but one Being and that
15 every soul is that Being in full, not a part of that Being. *All* the sun
16 is reflected in each dew-drop. Appearing in time, space and
17 causality, this Being is man, as we know him, but behind all
18 appearance is the one Reality. Unselfishness is the denial of the
19 lower or apparent self. We have to free ourselves from this
20 miserable dream that we are these bodies. We must *know* the
21 truth, "I am He". We are not drops to fall into the ocean and be lost;
22 each one is the *whole*, infinite ocean, and will know it when
23 released from the fetters of illusion. Infinity cannot be divided, the
24 "One without a second" can have no second, all *is* that One. This
25 knowledge will come to all, but we should struggle to attain it now,
26 because until we have it, we cannot really give mankind the best
27 help. The Jivanmukta ('the living free' or one who knows) alone is
28 able to give real love, real charity, real truth, and it is truth alone
29 that makes us free. Desire makes slaves of us, it is an insatiable
30 tyrant and gives its victims no rest; but the Jivanmukta has
31 conquered all desire by rising to the knowledge that he is the One
32 and there is nothing left to wish for.

33 The mind brings before us all our delusions--body, sex, creed,
34 caste, bondage; so we have to tell the truth to the mind incessantly,
35 until it is made to realise it. Our real nature is all bliss, and all the
36 pleasure we know is but a reflection, an atom, of that bliss we get
37 from touching our real nature. *That* is beyond both pleasure and
38 pain. It is the "witness" of the universe, the unchanging reader
39 before whom turn the leaves of the book of life.

40 Through practice comes Yoga, through Yoga comes
41 knowledge, through knowledge love, and through love bliss.

42 "Me and mine" is a superstition; we have lived in it so long
43 that it is well-nigh impossible to shake it off. Still we must get rid of
44 it if we would rise to the highest. We must be bright and cheerful,
45 long faces do not make religion. Religion should be the most joyful
46 thing in the world, because it is the best. Asceticism cannot make
47 us holy. Why should a man who loves God and who is pure be
48 sorrowful? He should be like a happy child, be truly a child of God.
49 The essential thing in religion is making the heart pure; the
50 Kingdom of Heaven is within us, but only the pure in heart can see
51 the King. While we think of the world, it is only the world for us; but
52 let us come to it with the feeling that the world is God, and we shall

1 have God. This should be our thought towards everyone and
2 everything--parents, children, husbands, wives, friends, and
3 enemies. Think how it would change the whole universe for us if we
4 could consciously fill it with God! See nothing but God! All sorrow,
5 all struggle, all pain would be for ever lost to us!

6 Jnana is "creedlessness", but that does not mean that it
7 despises creeds. It only means that a stage above and beyond
8 creeds has been gained. The Jnani seeks not to destroy, but to help
9 all. As all rivers roll their waters into the sea and become one, so all
10 creeds should lead to Jnana and become one.

11 The reality of everything depends upon Brahman, and only as
12 we really grasp this truth, have we any reality. When we cease to
13 see any differences, then we know that "I and the Father are One".

14 Jnana is taught very clearly by Krishna in the Bhagavad-Gita.
15 This great poem is held to be the Crown jewel of all Indian
16 literature. It is a kind of commentary on the Vedas. It shows us that
17 our battle for spirituality must be fought out in this life; so we must
18 not flee from it, but rather compel it to give us all that it holds. As
19 the Gita typifies this struggle for higher things, it is highly poetical
20 to lay the scene in a battlefield. Krishna in the guise of a charioteer
21 to Arjuna, leader of one of the opposing armies, urges him not to be
22 sorrowful, not to fear death, since he knows he is immortal, that
23 nothing which changes can be in the *real* nature of man. Through
24 chapter after chapter, Krishna teaches the higher truths of
25 philosophy and religion to Arjuna. It is these teachings which make
26 this poem so wonderful; practically the whole of the Vedanta
27 philosophy is included in them. The Vedas teach that the soul is
28 infinite and in no way affected by the death of the body. The soul is
29 a circle whose circumference is nowhere, but whose centre is in
30 some body. Death (so-called) is but a change of centre. God is a
31 circle whose circumference is nowhere and whose centre is
32 everywhere, and when we can get out of the narrow centre of body,
33 we shall realise God--our true Self.

34 The present is only a line of demarcation between the past
35 and the future; so we cannot rationally say that we care only for the
36 present, as it has no existence apart from the past and the future. It
37 is all one complete whole, the idea of time being merely a condition
38 imposed upon us by the form of our understanding.

40 III

41 Jnana teaches that the world should be given up, but not on
42 that account to be abandoned. To be *in* the world, but not *of* it, is
43 the true test of the Sannyasin. This idea of renunciation has been in
44 some form common to nearly all religions. Jnana demands that we
45 look upon all alike, that we see only "sameness". Praise and blame,
46 good and bad, even heat and cold, must be equally acceptable to us.
47 In India there are many holy men of whom this is literally true. They
48 wander on the snow-clad heights of the Himalayas or over the
49 burning desert sands, entirely unclothed and apparently entirely
50 unconscious of any difference in temperature.

1 We have first of all to give up this superstition of body; we are
2 not the body. Next must go the further superstition that we are
3 mind. We are not mind; it is but the "silken body", not any part of
4 the soul. The mere word "body", applied to nearly all things,
5 includes something common among all bodies. This is *existence* .

6 Our bodies are symbols of thought behind, and the thoughts
7 themselves are in their turn symbols of something behind them,
8 that is, the one Real Existence, the Soul of our soul, the Self of the
9 universe, the Life of our life, our true Self. As long as we believe
10 ourselves to be even the least different from God, fear remains with
11 us; but when we know ourselves to be the One, fear goes: of what
12 can we be afraid? By sheer force of will the Jnani rises beyond body,
13 beyond mind, making this universe zero. Thus he destroys Avidya
14 and knows his true Self, the Atman. Happiness and misery are only
15 in the senses, they cannot touch our real Self. The soul is beyond
16 time, space, and causality--therefore unlimited, omnipresent.

17 The Jnani has to come out of all forms, to get beyond all rules
18 and books, and be his own book. Bound by forms, we crystallise and
19 die. Still the Jnani must never condemn those who cannot yet rise
20 above forms. He must never even think of another, "I am holier than
21 thou".

22 These are the marks of the true Jnana-Yogi: (1) He desires
23 nothing, save to know. (2) All his senses are under perfect restraint;
24 he suffers everything without murmuring, equally content if his bed
25 be the bare ground under the open sky, or if he is lodged in a king's
26 palace. He shuns no suffering, he stands and bears it--he has given
27 up all but the Self. (3) He knows that all but the One is unreal. (4)
28 He has an intense desire for freedom. With a strong will, he fixes
29 his mind on higher things and so attains to peace. If we know not
30 peace, what are we more than the brutes? He does everything for
31 others--for the Lord--giving up all fruits of work and looking for no
32 result, either here or hereafter. What can the universe give us more
33 than our own soul? Possessing that, we possess *all*. The Vedas
34 teach that the Atman, or Self, is the One Undivided Existence. It is
35 beyond mind, memory, thought, or even consciousness as we know
36 it. From it are all things. It is that through which (or because of
37 which) we see, hear, feel, and think. The goal of the universe is to
38 realise oneness with the "Om" or One Existence. The Jnani has to
39 be free from all forms; he is neither a Hindu, a Buddhist, nor a
40 Christian, but he is all three. All action is renounced, given up to
41 the Lord; then no action has power to bind. The Jnani is a
42 tremendous rationalist; he denies everything. He tells himself day
43 and night, "There are no beliefs, no sacred words, no heaven, no
44 hell, no creed, no church--there is only Atman." When everything
45 has been thrown away until what cannot be thrown away is
46 reached, that is the Self. The Jnani takes nothing for granted; he
47 analyses by pure reason and force of will, until he reaches Nirvana
48 which is the extinction of all relativity. No description or even
49 conception of this state is possible. Jnana is never to be judged by
50 any earthly result. Be not like the vulture which soars almost
51 beyond sight, but which is ever ready to swoop downwards at the
52 sight of a bit of carrion. Ask not for healing, or longevity, or

1 prosperity, ask only to be free.

2 We are "Existence, Knowledge, Bliss" (Sachchidananda).
3 Existence is the last generalisation in the universe; so we exist, we
4 know it; and bliss is the natural result of existence without alloy.
5 Now and then we know a moment of supreme bliss, when we ask
6 nothing, give nothing, and know nothing but bliss. Then it passes
7 and we again see the panorama of the universe going on before us
8 and we know it is but a "mosaic work set upon God, who is the
9 background of all things". When we return to earth and see the
10 Absolute as relative, we see Sachchidananda as Trinity--Father,
11 Son, Holy Ghost. Sat = the creating principle; Chit = the guiding
12 principle; Ananda = the realising principle, which joins us again to
13 the One. No one can know "existence" (Sat) except through
14 "knowledge" (Chit), and hence the force of the saying of Jesus, No
15 man can see the Father save through the Son. The Vedanta teaches
16 that Nirvana can be attained here and now, that we do not have to
17 wait for death to reach it. Nirvana is the realisation of the Self, and
18 after having once, if only for an instant, known this, never again can
19 one be deluded by the mirage of personality. Having eyes, we must
20 see the apparent; but all the time we know it for what it is, we have
21 found out its true nature. It is the "screen" that hides the Self which
22 is unchanging. The screen opens and we find the Self behind it--all
23 change is in the screen. In the saint the screen is thin and the
24 Reality can almost shine through; but in the sinner it is thick, and
25 we are apt to lose sight of the truth that the Atman is there, as well
26 as behind the saint.

27 All reasoning ends only in finding Unity; so we first use
28 analysis, then synthesis. In the world of science, the forces are
29 gradually narrowed down in the search for one underlying force.
30 When physical science can perfectly grasp the final unity, it will
31 have reached an end, for reaching unity we find rest. Knowledge is
32 final.

33 Religion, the most precious of all sciences, long ago
34 discovered that final unity, to reach which is the object of Jnana-
35 Yoga. There is but one Self in the universe, of which all lower selves
36 are but manifestations. The Self, however, is infinitely more than all
37 of its manifestations. All is the Self or Brahman. The saint, the
38 sinner, the lamb, the tiger, even the murderer, as far as they have
39 any reality, can be nothing else, because there is nothing else. "That
40 which exists is One, sages call It variously." Nothing can be higher
41 than this knowledge, and in those purified by Yoga it comes in
42 flashes to the soul. The more one has been purified and prepared by
43 Yoga and meditation, the clearer are these flashes of realisation.
44 This was discovered 4,000 years ago, but has not yet become the
45 property of the race; it is still the property of some individuals only.

46 47 IV

48 All men, so-called, are not yet really human beings. Every one
49 has to judge of this world through his own mind. The higher
50 understanding is extremely difficult. The concrete is more to most
51 people than the abstract. As an illustration of this, a story is told of

1 two men in Bombay--one a Hindu and the other a Jain--who were
2 playing chess in the house of a rich merchant of Bombay. The house
3 was near the sea, the game long; the ebb and flow of the tide under
4 the balcony where they sat attracted the attention of the players.
5 One explained it by a legend that the gods in their play threw the
6 water into a great pit and then threw it out again. The other said:
7 No, the gods draw it up to the top of a high mountain to use it, and
8 then when they have done with it, they throw it down again. A
9 young student present began to laugh at them and said, "Do you not
10 know that the attraction of the moon causes the tides?" At this, both
11 men turned on him in a fury and inquired if he thought they were
12 fools. Did he suppose that they believed the moon had any ropes to
13 pull up the tides, or that it could reach so far? They utterly refused
14 to accept any such foolish explanation. At this juncture the host
15 entered the room and was appealed to by both parties. He was an
16 educated man and of course knew the truth, but seeing plainly the
17 impossibility of making the chess-players understand it, he made a
18 sign to the student and then proceeded to give an explanation of
19 the tides that proved eminently satisfactory to his ignorant hearers.
20 "You must know", he told them, "that afar off in the middle of the
21 ocean, there is a huge mountain of sponge--you have both seen
22 sponge, and know what I mean. This mountain of sponge absorbs a
23 great deal of the water and then the sea falls; by and by the gods
24 come down and dance on the mountain and their weight squeezes
25 all the water out and the sea rises again. This, gentlemen, is the
26 cause of the tides, and you can easily see for yourselves how
27 reasonable and simple is this explanation." The two men who
28 ridiculed the power of the moon to cause the tides, found nothing
29 incredible in a mountain of sponge, danced upon by the gods! The
30 gods were real to them, and they had actually seen sponge; what
31 was more likely than their joint effect upon the sea!

32 "Comfort" is no test of truth; on the contrary, truth is often far
33 from being "comfortable". If one intends to really find truth, one
34 must not cling to comfort. It is hard to let all go, but the Jnani *must*
35 do it. He must become pure, kill out all desires and cease to identify
36 himself with the body. Then and then only, the higher truth can
37 shine in his soul. Sacrifice is necessary, and this immolation of the
38 lower self is the underlying truth that has made sacrifice a part of
39 all religions. All the propitiatory offerings to the gods were but
40 dimly understood types of the only sacrifice that is of any real value,
41 the surrender of the apparent self, through which alone we can
42 realise the higher Self, the Atman. The Jnani must not try to
43 preserve the body, nor even wish to do so. He must be strong and
44 follow truth, though the universe fall. Those who follow "fads" can
45 never do this. It is a life-work, nay, the work of a hundred lives!
46 Only the few dare to realise the God within, to renounce heaven
47 and Personal God and all hope of reward. A firm will is needed to do
48 this; to be even vacillating is a sign of tremendous weakness. Man
49 always *is* perfect, or he never could become so; but he had to
50 realise it. If man were bound by external causes, he could only be
51 mortal. Immortality can only be true of the unconditioned. Nothing
52 can act on the Atman--the idea is pure delusion; but man must
53 identify himself with that, not with body or mind. Let him know that

1 he is the witness of the universe, then he can enjoy the beauty of
2 the wonderful panorama passing before him. Let him even tell
3 himself, "I am the universe, I am Brahman." When man *really*
4 identifies himself with the One, the Atman, everything is possible to
5 him and all matter becomes his servant. As Shri Ramakrishna has
6 said: After the butter is churned, it can be put in water or milk and
7 will never mix with either; so when man has once realised the Self,
8 he can no more be contaminated by the world.

9 "From a balloon, no minor distinctions are visible, so when
10 man rises high enough, he will not see good and evil people." "Once
11 the pot is burned, no more can it be shaped; so with the mind that
12 has once touched the Lord and has had a baptism of fire, no more
13 can it be changed." Philosophy in Sanskrit means "clear vision", and
14 religion is practical philosophy. Mere theoretic, speculative
15 philosophy is not much regarded in India. There is no church, no
16 creed, no dogma. The two great divisions are the "Dvaitists" and the
17 "Advaitists". The former say, "The way to salvation is through the
18 mercy of God; the law of causation, once set in motion, can never
19 be broken; only God, who is not bound by this law, by His mercy
20 helps us to break it". The latter say, "Behind all this nature is
21 something that is free; and finding that which is beyond all law gets
22 us freedom; and freedom is salvation." Dualism is only one phase,
23 Advaitism goes to the ultimate. To become pure is the shortest path
24 to freedom. Only that is ours which we earn. No authority can save
25 us, no beliefs. If there is a God, *all* can find Him. No one needs to
26 be told it is warm; each one can discover it for himself. So it should
27 be with God. He should be a fact in the consciousness of all men.
28 The Hindus do not recognise "sin", as it is understood by the
29 Western mind. Evil deeds are not "sins", we are not offending some
30 Ruler in committing these; we are simply injuring ourselves, and we
31 must suffer the penalty. It is not a sin to put one's finger in the fire,
32 but he who does so will surely suffer just as much as if it were. All
33 deeds produce certain results, and "every deed returns to the
34 doer". "Trinitarianism" is an advance on "Unitarianism" (which is
35 dualism, God and man for ever separate). The first step upwards is
36 when we recognise ourselves as the children of God; the last step is
37 when we realise ourselves as the One, the Atman.

38 39 V

40 The question why there cannot be eternal bodies is in itself
41 illogical, as "body" is a term applied to a certain combination of
42 elements, changeable and in its very nature impermanent. When we
43 are not passing through changes, we will not have bodies (so-
44 called). "Matter" beyond the limit of time, space, and causality will
45 not be matter at all. Time and space exist only in us, we are the one
46 Permanent Being. All forms are transitory, that is why all religions
47 say, "God has no form". Menander was a Greco-Bactrian king. He
48 was converted to Buddhism about 150 B.C. by one of the Buddhist
49 missionary monks and was called by them "Milinda". He asked a
50 young monk, his teacher, "Can a perfect man (such as Buddha) be
51 in error or make mistakes?" The young monk's answer was : The
52 perfect man can remain in ignorance of minor matters not in his

1 experience, but he can *never* be in error as to what his insight has
2 actually realised. He is perfect here and now. He knows the whole
3 mystery, the Essence of the universe, but he may not know the
4 mere external variation through which that Essence is manifested
5 in time and space. He knows the *clay* itself, but has not had
6 experience of every shape it may be wrought into. The perfect man
7 knows the Soul itself, but not every form and combination of its
8 manifestation. He would have to attain more relative knowledge
9 just as we do, though on account of his immense power, he would
10 learn it far more quickly.

11 The tremendous "search-light" of a perfectly controlled mind,
12 when thrown on any subject, would rapidly reduce it to possession.
13 It is very important to understand this, because it saves so much
14 foolish explanation as to how a Buddha or a Jesus could be
15 mistaken in ordinary relative Knowledge, as we well know they
16 were. The disciples should not be blamed as having put down the
17 sayings erroneously. It is humbug to say that one thing is true and
18 another untrue in their statements. Accept the whole account, or
19 reject it. How can we pick out the true from the false?

20 If a thing happens once, it can happen again. If any human
21 being has ever realised perfection, we too can do so. If we cannot
22 become perfect here and now, we never can in any state or heaven
23 or condition we may imagine. If Jesus Christ was not perfect, then
24 the religion bearing his name falls to the ground. If he was perfect,
25 then we too can become perfect. The perfect man does not reason
26 or "know", as we count "knowing", for all our knowledge is mere
27 comparison, and there is no comparison, no classification, possible
28 in the Absolute. Instinct is less liable to error than reason, but
29 reason is higher and leads to intuition, which is higher still.
30 Knowledge is the parent of intuition, which like instinct, is also
31 unerring, but on a higher plane. There are three grades of
32 manifestation in living beings: (1) sub-conscious--mechanical,
33 unerring; (2) conscious--knowing, erring; (3) superconscious--
34 intuitional, unerring; and these are illustrated in an animal, man,
35 and God. For the man who has become perfect, nothing remains but
36 to apply his understanding. He lives only to help the world, desiring
37 nothing for himself. What distinguishes is negative--the positive is
38 ever wider and wider. What we have in common is the widest of all,
39 and that is "Being".

40 "Law is a mental shorthand to explain a series of
41 phenomena"; but law as an entity, so to speak, does not exist. We
42 use the word to express the regular succession of certain
43 occurrences in the phenomenal world. We must not let law become
44 a superstition, a something inevitable, to which we must submit.
45 Error must accompany reason, but the very struggle to conquer
46 error makes us gods. Disease is the struggle of nature to cast out
47 something wrong; so sin is the struggle of the divine in us to throw
48 off the animal. We must "sin" (that is, make mistakes) in order to
49 rise to Godhood.

50 Do not pity anyone. Look upon all as your equal, cleanse
51 yourself of the primal sin of inequality. We are all equal and must
52 not think, "I am good and you are bad, and I am trying to reclaim

1 you". Equality is the sign of the free. Jesus came to publicans and
2 sinners and lived with them. He never set himself on a pedestal.
3 Only sinners see sin. See not man, see only the Lord. We
4 manufacture our own heaven and can make a heaven even in hell.
5 Sinners are only to be found in hell, and as long as we see them
6 around us, we are there ourselves. Spirit is not in time, nor in
7 space. Realise "I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss
8 Absolute--I am He, I am He". Be glad at birth, be glad at death,
9 rejoice always in the love of God. Get rid of the bondage of body;
10 we have become slaves to it and learnt to hug our chains and love
11 our slavery; so much so that we long to perpetuate it, and go on
12 with "body" "body" for ever. Do not cling to the idea of "body", do
13 not look for a future existence in any way like this one; do not love
14 or want the body, even of those dear to us. This life is our teacher,
15 and dying only makes room to begin over again. Body is our
16 schoolmaster, but to commit suicide is folly, it is only killing the
17 "schoolmaster". Another will take his place. So until we have learnt
18 to transcend the body, we must have it, and losing one, will get
19 another. Still we must not identify ourselves with the body, but look
20 upon it only as an instrument to be used in reaching perfection.
21 Hanuman, the devotee of Rama, summed up his philosophy in these
22 words: When I identify myself with the body, O Lord, I am Thy
23 creature, eternally separate from Thee. When I identify myself with
24 the soul, I am a spark of that Divine Fire which Thou art. But when
25 I identify myself with the Atman, I and Thou art one.

26 Therefore the Jnani strives to realise the Self and nothing
27 else.

28 VI

30 Thought is all important, for "what we think we become".
31 There was once a Sannyasin, a holy man, who sat under a tree and
32 taught the people. He drank milk, and ate only fruit, and made
33 endless "Pranayamas", and felt himself to be very holy. In the same
34 village lived an evil woman. Every day the Sannyasin went and
35 warned her that her wickedness would lead her to hell. The poor
36 woman, unable to change her method of life which was her only
37 means of livelihood, was still much moved by the terrible future
38 depicted by the Sannyasin. She wept and prayed to the Lord,
39 begging Him to forgive her because she could not help herself. By
40 and by both the holy man and the evil woman died. The angels
41 came and bore her to heaven, while the demons claimed the soul of
42 the Sannyasin. "Why is this!" he exclaimed, "have I not lived a most
43 holy life, and preached holiness to everybody? Why should I be
44 taken to hell while this wicked woman is taken to heaven?"
45 "Because," answered the demons, "while she was forced to commit
46 unholy acts, her mind was always fixed on the Lord and she sought
47 deliverance, which has now come to her. But you, on the contrary,
48 while you performed only holy acts, had your mind always fixed on
49 the wickedness of others. You saw only sin, and thought only of sin,
50 so now you have to go to that place where only sin is." The moral of
51 the story is obvious: The outer life avails little. The heart must be
52 pure and the pure heart sees only good, never evil. We should never

1 try to be guardians of mankind, or to stand on a pedestal as saints
2 reforming sinners. Let us rather purify ourselves, and the result
3 must be that in so doing we shall help others.

4 Physics is bounded on both sides by metaphysics. So it is with
5 reason--it starts from non-reason and ends with non-reason. If we
6 push inquiry far enough in the world of perception, we must reach a
7 plane beyond perception. Reason is really stored up and classified
8 perception, preserved by memory. We can never imagine or reason
9 beyond our sense-perceptions. Nothing beyond reason can be an
10 object of sense-knowledge. We feel the limited character of reason,
11 yet it does bring us to a plane where we get a glimpse of something
12 beyond. The question then arises: Has man an instrument that
13 transcends reason? It is very probable that in man there is a power
14 to reach beyond reason; in fact the saints in all ages assert the
15 existence of this power in themselves. But it is impossible in the
16 very nature of things to translate spiritual ideas and perceptions
17 into the language of reason; and these saints, each and all, have
18 declared their inability to make known their spiritual experiences.
19 Language can, of course, supply no words for them, so that it can
20 only be asserted that these are actual experiences and can be had
21 by all. Only in that way can they become known, but they can never
22 be described. Religion is the science which learns the
23 transcendental in nature through the transcendental in man. We
24 know as yet but little of man, consequently but little of the universe.
25 When we know more of man, we shall probably know more of the
26 universe. Man is the epitome of all things and all knowledge is in
27 him. Only for the infinitesimal portion of the universe, which comes
28 into sense-perception, are we able to find a reason; never can we
29 give the reason for any fundamental principle. Giving a reason for a
30 thing is simply to classify it and put it in a pigeon-hole of the mind.
31 When we meet a new fact, we at once strive to put it in some
32 existing category and the attempt to do this is to reason. When we
33 succeed in placing the fact, it gives a certain amount of satisfaction,
34 but we can never go beyond the physical plane in this classification.
35 That man can transcend the limits of the senses is the emphatic
36 testimony of all past ages. The Upanishads told 5,000 years ago
37 that the realisation of God could never be had through the senses.
38 So far, modern agnosticism agrees, but the Vedas go further than
39 the negative side and assert in the plainest terms that man can and
40 does transcend this sense-bound, frozen universe. He can, as it
41 were, find a hole in the ice, through which he can pass and reach
42 the whole ocean of life. Only by so transcending the world of sense,
43 can he reach his true Self and realise what he really is.

44 Jnana is never sense-knowledge. We cannot *know* Brahman,
45 but we *are* Brahman, the whole of It, not a piece. The unextended
46 can never be divided. The apparent variety is but the reflection
47 seen in time and space, as we see the sun reflected in a million
48 dewdrops, though we know that the sun itself is one and not many.
49 In Jnana we have to lose sight of the variety and see only the Unity.
50 Here there is no subject, no object, no knowing, no thou or he or I,
51 only the one, absolute Unity. We *are* this all the time; once free,
52 ever free. Man is *not* bound by the law of causation. Pain and

1 misery are not in man, they are but as the passing cloud throwing
2 its shadow over the sun, but the cloud passes, the sun is
3 unchanged; and so it is with man. He is not born, he does not die,
4 he is not in time and space. These ideas are mere reflections of the
5 mind, but we mistake them for the reality and so lose sight of the
6 glorious truth they obscure. Time is but the method of our thinking,
7 but we are the eternally present tense. Good and evil have
8 existence only in relation to us. One cannot be had without the
9 other, because neither has meaning or existence apart from the
10 other. As long as we recognise duality, or separate God and man, so
11 long we must see good and evil. Only by going to the centre, by
12 unifying ourselves with God can we escape the delusions of the
13 senses. When we let go the eternal fever of desire, the endless
14 thirst that gives us no rest, when we have for ever quenched desire,
15 we shall escape both good and evil, because we shall have
16 transcended both. The satisfaction of desire only increases it, as oil
17 poured on fire but makes it burn more fiercely. The further from the
18 centre, the faster goes the wheel, the less the rest. Draw near the
19 centre, check desire, stamp it out, let the false self go, then our
20 vision will clear and we shall see God. Only through renunciation of
21 this life and of all life to come (heaven etc.), can we reach the point
22 where we stand firmly on the true Self. While we hope for anything,
23 desire still rules us. Be for one moment really "hopeless", and the
24 mist will clear. For what to hope when one is the all of existence?
25 The secret of Jnana is to give up all and be sufficient unto ourselves.
26 Say "not", and you become "not"; say "is", and you become "is".
27 Worship the Self within, naught else exists. All that binds us is
28 Maya--delusion.

30 VII

31 The Self is the condition of all in the universe, but It can
32 never be conditioned. As soon as we know that we are It, we are
33 free. As mortals we are not and never can be free. Free mortality is
34 a contradiction in terms, for mortality implies change, and only the
35 changeless can be free. The Atman alone is free, and that is our
36 real essence. We feel this inner freedom; in spite of all theories, all
37 beliefs, we know it, and every action proves that we know it. The
38 will is not free, its apparent freedom is but a reflection from the
39 Real. If the world were only an endless chain of cause and effect,
40 where could one stand to help it? There must needs be a piece of
41 dry land for the rescuer to stand on, else how can he drag anyone
42 out of the rushing stream and save him from drowning? Even the
43 fanatic who cries "I am a worm", thinks that he is on the way to
44 become a saint. He sees the saint even in the worm.

45 There are two ends or aims of human life, real knowing
46 (Vijnana) and bliss. Without freedom, these two are impossible.
47 They are the touchstone of all life. We should feel the Eternal Unity
48 so much, that we should weep for all sinners, knowing that it is we
49 who are sinning. The eternal law is self-sacrifice, not self-assertion.
50 What self to assert when all is one? There are no "rights", all is
51 love. The great truths that Jesus taught have never been lived. Let
52 us try his method and see if the world will not be saved. The

1 contrary method has nearly destroyed it. Selflessness only, not
2 selfishness, can solve the question. The idea of "right" is a
3 limitation; there is really no "mine" and "thine", for I am thou and
4 thou art I. We have "responsibility", not "rights". We should say, "I
5 am the universe", not "I am John" or "I am Mary". These limitations
6 are all delusions and are what holds us in bondage, for as soon as I
7 think, "I am John", I want exclusive possession of certain things and
8 begin to say "me and mine", and continually make new distinctions
9 in so doing. So our bondage goes on increasing with every fresh
10 distinction, and we get further and further away from the central
11 Unity, the undivided Infinite. There is only one Individual, and each
12 of us is That. Oneness alone is love and fearlessness; separation
13 leads us to hatred and fear. Oneness fulfils the law. Here, on earth,
14 we strive to enclose little spaces and exclude outsiders, but we
15 cannot do that in the sky, though that is what sectarian religion
16 tries to do when it says, "Only *this* way leads to salvation, all others
17 are wrong". Our aim should be to wipe out these little enclosures to
18 widen the boundaries until they are lost sight of, and to realise that
19 all religions lead to God. This little puny self must be sacrificed.
20 This is the truth symbolised by baptism into a new life, the death of
21 the old man, the birth of the new--the perishing of the false self, the
22 realisation of the Atman, the one Self of the universe.

23 The two great divisions of the Vedas are Karma Kanda--the
24 portion pertaining to doing or work, and Jnana Kanda--the portion
25 treating of knowing, true knowledge. In the Vedas we can find the
26 whole process of the growth of religious ideas. This is because
27 when a higher truth was reached, the lower perception that led to
28 it, was still preserved. This was done, because the sages realised
29 that the world of creation being eternal, there would always be
30 those who needed the first steps to knowledge, that the highest
31 philosophy, while open to all, could never be grasped by all. In
32 nearly every other religion, only the last or highest realisation of
33 truth has been preserved, with the natural consequence that the
34 older ideas were lost, while the newer ones were only understood
35 by the few and gradually came to have no meaning for the many.
36 We see this result illustrated in the growing revolt against old
37 traditions and authorities.

38 Instead of accepting them, the man of today boldly challenges
39 them to give reasons for their claims, to make clear the grounds
40 upon which they demand acceptance. Much in Christianity is the
41 mere application of new names and meanings to old pagan beliefs
42 and customs. If the old sources had been preserved and the reasons
43 for the transitions fully explained, many things would have been
44 clearer. The Vedas preserved the old ideas and this fact
45 necessitated huge commentaries to explain them and why they
46 were kept. It also led to many superstitions, through clinging to old
47 forms after all sense of their meaning had been lost. In many
48 ceremonies, words are repeated which have survived from a now
49 forgotten language and to which no real meaning can now be
50 attached. The idea of evolution was to be found in the Vedas long
51 before the Christian era; but until Darwin said it was true, it was
52 regarded as a mere Hindu superstition.

1 All external forms of prayer and worship are included in the
2 Karma Kanda. These are good when performed in a spirit of
3 unselfishness and not allowed to degenerate into mere formality.
4 They purify the heart. The Karma-Yogi wants everyone to be saved
5 before himself. His only salvation is to help others to salvation. "To
6 serve Krishna's servants is the highest worship." One great saint
7 prayed, "Let me go to hell with the sins of the whole world, but let
8 the world be saved." This true worship leads to intense self-
9 sacrifice. It is told of one sage that he was willing to give all his
10 virtues to his dog, that it might go to heaven, because it had long
11 been faithful to him, while he himself was content to go to hell.

12 The Jnana Kanda teaches that knowledge alone can save, in
13 other words, that he must become "wise unto salvation". Knowledge
14 is first objective, the Knower knowing Himself. The Self, the only
15 subject, is in manifestation seeking only to know Itself. The better
16 the mirror, the better reflection it can give; so man is the best
17 mirror, and the purer the man, the more clearly he can reflect God.
18 Man makes the mistake of separating himself from God and
19 identifying himself with the body. This mistake arises through
20 Maya, which is not exactly delusion but might be said to be seeing
21 the real as something else and not as it is. This identifying of
22 ourselves with the body leads to inequality, which inevitably leads
23 to struggle and jealousy, and so long as we see inequality, we can
24 never know happiness. "Ignorance and inequality are the two
25 sources of all misery", says Jnana.

26 When man has been sufficiently buffeted by the world, he
27 awakes to a desire for freedom; and searching for means of escape
28 from the dreary round of earthly existence, he seeks knowledge,
29 learns what he really is, and is free. After that he looks at the world
30 as a huge machine, but takes good care to keep his fingers out of
31 the wheels. Duty ceases for him who is free; what power can
32 constrain the free being? He does good, because it is his nature, not
33 because any fancied duty commands it. This does not apply to those
34 who are still in the bondage of the senses. Only for him, who has
35 transcended the lower self, is this freedom. He stands on his own
36 soul, obeys no law; he is free and perfect. He has undone the old
37 superstitions and got out of the wheel. Nature is but the mirror of
38 our own selves. There is a limit to the working power of human
39 beings, but no limit to desire; so we strive to get hold of the
40 working powers of others and enjoy the fruits of their labours,
41 escaping work ourselves. Inventing machinery to work for us can
42 never increase well-being, for in gratifying desire, we only find it,
43 and then we want more and more without end. Dying, still filled
44 with ungratified desires, we have to be born again and again in the
45 vain search for satisfaction.

46 "Eight Millions of bodies have we had, before we reached the
47 human", say the Hindus. Jnana says, "Kill desire and so get rid of
48 it". That is the only way. Cast out all causation and realise the
49 Atman. Only freedom can produce true morality. If there were only
50 an endless chain of cause and effect, Nirvana could not be. It is
51 extinction of the seeming self, bound by this chain. That is what
52 constitutes freedom, to get beyond causality.

1 Our true nature is good, it is free, the pure being that can
2 never be or do wrong. When we read God with our eyes and minds,
3 we call Him this or that; but in reality there is but One, all
4 variations are our interpretations of that One. We *become* nothing;
5 we *regain* our true Self. Buddha's summary of misery as the
6 outcome of "ignorance and caste" (inequality) has been adopted by
7 the Vedantists, because it is the best ever made. It manifests the
8 wonderful insight of this greatest among men. Let us then be brave
9 and sincere: whatever path we follow with devotion, must take us to
10 freedom. Once lay hold of one link of the chain and the whole must
11 come after it by degrees. Water the root of the tree and the whole
12 tree is watered. It is of little advantage to waste time to water each
13 leaf. In other words, seek the Lord and getting Him we get all.
14 Churches, doctrines, forms--these are merely the hedges to protect
15 the tender plant of religion; but later on they must all be broken
16 down, that the little plant may become a tree. So the various
17 religious sects, Bibles, Vedas, and scriptures are just "tubs" for the
18 little plant; but it has to get out of the tub and fill the world.

19 We must learn to feel ourselves as much in the sun, in the
20 stars, as here. Spirit is beyond all time and space; every eye seeing
21 is my eye; every mouth praising the Lord is my mouth; every sinner
22 is I. We are confined nowhere, we are not body. The universe is our
23 body. We are just the pure crystal reflecting all, but itself ever the
24 same. We are magicians waving magic wands and creating scenes
25 before us at will, but we have to go behind appearances and know
26 the Self. This world is like water in a kettle, beginning to boil; first a
27 bubble comes, then another, then many until all is in ebullition and
28 passes away in steam. The great teachers are like the bubbles as
29 they begin--here one, there one; but in the end every creature has
30 to be a bubble and escape. Creation, ever new, will bring new water
31 and go through the process all over again. Buddha and Christ are
32 the two greatest "bubbles" the world has known. They were great
33 souls who having realised freedom helped others to escape. Neither
34 was perfect, but they are to be judged by their virtues, never by
35 their defects. Jesus fell short, because he did not always live up to
36 his own highest ideal; and above all, because he did not give
37 woman an equal place with man. Woman did everything for him, yet
38 not one was made an apostle. This was doubtless owing to his
39 Semitic origin. The great Aryans, Buddha among the rest, have
40 always put woman in an equal position with man. For them sex in
41 religion did not exist. In the Vedas and Upanishads, women taught
42 the highest truths and received the same veneration as men.

43 44 VIII

45 Both happiness and misery are chains, the one golden, the
46 other iron; but both are equally strong to bind us and hold us back
47 from realising our true nature. The Atman knows neither happiness
48 nor misery. These are mere "states", and states must ever change.
49 The nature of the soul is bliss and peace unchanging. We have not
50 to *get* it; we *have* it; let us wash away the dross from our eyes and
51 see it. We must stand ever on the Self and look with perfect
52 calmness upon all the panorama of the world. It is but baby's play

1 and ought never to disturb us. If the mind is pleased by praise, it
2 will be pained by blame. All pleasures of the senses or even of the
3 mind are evanescent, but within ourselves is the one true unrelated
4 pleasure, dependent on nothing outside. "The pleasure of the Self is
5 what the world calls religion." The more our bliss is within, the
6 more spiritual we are. Let us not depend upon the world for
7 pleasure.

8 Some poor fishwives, overtaken by a violent storm, found
9 refuge in the garden of a rich man. He received them kindly, fed
10 them, and left them to rest in a summer-house, surrounded by
11 exquisite flowers which filled all the air with their rich perfume. The
12 women lay down in this sweet-smelling paradise, but could not
13 sleep. They missed something out of their lives and could not be
14 happy without it. At last one of the women arose and went to the
15 place where they had left their fish baskets, brought them to the
16 summer-house, and then once more happy in the familiar smell,
17 they were all soon sound asleep.

18 Let not the world be our "fish basket" which we have to
19 depend upon for enjoyment. This is Tamasika, or being bound by
20 the lowest of the three qualities (or Gunas). Next higher come the
21 egotistical who talk always about "I", "I". Sometimes they do good
22 work and may become spiritual. These are Rajasika or active.
23 Highest come the introspective nature (Sattvika), those who live
24 only in the Self. These three qualities are in every human being in
25 varying proportions, and different ones predominate at different
26 times. We must strive to overcome Tamas with Rajas and then to
27 submerge both in Sattva.

28 Creation is not a "making" of something, it is the struggle to
29 regain equilibrium, as when atoms of cork are thrown to the bottom
30 of a pail of water: they rush to the top singly and in clusters, and
31 when all have reached the top and equilibrium has been regained,
32 all motion or "life" ceases. So with creation; if equilibrium were
33 reached, all change would cease and life, so-called, would end. Life
34 must be accompanied with evil, for when the balance is regained,
35 the world must end, as sameness and destruction are one. There is
36 no possibility of ever having pleasure without pain, or good without
37 evil, for living itself is just the lost equilibrium. What we want is
38 freedom, not life, nor pleasure, nor good. Creation is eternal,
39 without beginning, without end, the ever moving ripple in an
40 infinite lake. There are yet unreached depths and others where
41 stillness has been regained, but the ripple is ever progressing, the
42 struggle to regain the balance is eternal. Life and death are but
43 different names for the same fact, they are the two sides of one
44 coin. Both are Maya, the inexplicable state of striving at one point
45 to live and a moment later to die. Beyond all this is the true nature,
46 the Atman. We enter into creation, and then, for us, it becomes
47 living. Things are dead in themselves, only we give them life, and
48 then, like fools, we turn round and are afraid of them or enjoy
49 them! The world is neither true nor untrue, it is the shadow of
50 truth.

51 "Imagination is the gilded shadow of truth", says the poet.
52 The internal universe, the Real, is infinitely greater than the

1 external one, which is but the shadowy projection of the true one.
2 When we see the "rope", we do not see the "serpent", and when the
3 "serpent" is, the "rope" is not. Both cannot exist at the same time;
4 so while we see the world we do not realise the Self, it is only an
5 intellectual concept. In the realisation of Brahman, the personal "I"
6 and all sense of the world is lost. The Light does not know the
7 darkness, because it has no existence in the light; so Brahman is all.
8 While we recognise a God, it is really only the Self that we have
9 separated from ourselves and worship as outside of us; but all the
10 time it is our own true Self, the one and only God. The nature of the
11 brute is to remain where he is, of man to seek good and avoid evil,
12 of God to neither seek nor avoid, but just to be blissful eternally. Let
13 us be Gods, let us make our hearts like an ocean, to go beyond all
14 the trifles of the world and see it only as a picture. We can then
15 enjoy it without being in any way affected by it. Why look for good
16 in the world, what can we find there? The best it has to offer is only
17 as if children playing in a mud puddle found a few glass beads.
18 They lose them again and have to begin the search anew. Infinite
19 strength is religion and God. We are only souls if we are free, there
20 is immortality only if we are free, there is God only if He is free.

21 Until we give up the world manufactured by the ego, never
22 can we enter the Kingdom of Heaven. None ever did, none ever
23 will. To give up the world is to utterly forget the ego, to know it not
24 at all, living in the body but not being ruled by it. This rascal ego
25 must be obliterated. Power to help mankind is with the silent ones
26 who only live and love and withdraw their own personality entirely.
27 They never say "me" or "mine", they are only blessed in being the
28 instruments to help others. They are wholly identified with God,
29 asking nothing and not *consciously* doing anything. They are the
30 true Jivanmuktas-the absolutely selfless, their little personality
31 thoroughly blown away, ambition non-existent. They are all
32 principle, with no personality. The more we sink the "little self", the
33 more God comes. Let us get rid of the little "I" and let only the
34 great "I" live in us. Our best work and our greatest influence is
35 when we are without a thought of self. It is the "desireless" who
36 bring great results to pass. Bless men when they revile you. Think
37 how much good they are doing by helping to stamp out the false
38 ego. Hold fast to the real Self, think only pure thoughts, and you
39 will accomplish more than a regiment of mere preachers. Out of
40 purity and silence comes the word of power.

41 42 IX

43 Expression is necessarily degeneration, because spirit can
44 only be expressed by the "letter", and as St. Paul said, "the letter
45 killeth". Life cannot be in the "letter" which is only a reflection. Yet,
46 principle must be clothed in matter to be "known". We lose sight of
47 the Real in the covering and come to consider that as the Real,
48 instead of as the symbol. This is an almost universal mistake. Every
49 great Teacher knows this and tries to guard against it; but
50 humanity, in general, is prone to worship the *seen* rather than the
51 unseen. This is why a succession of prophets have come to the
52 world to point again and again to the principle behind the

1 personality and to give it a new covering suited to the times. Truth
2 remains ever unchanged, but it can only be presented in a "form";
3 so from time to time a new "form" or expression is given to Truth,
4 as the progress of mankind makes them ready to receive it. When
5 we free ourselves from name and form, especially when we no
6 longer need a body of any kind, good or bad, coarse or fine, then
7 only do we escape from bondage. "Eternal progression" would be
8 eternal bondage. We must get beyond all differentiation and reach
9 eternal "sameness" or homogeneity or Brahman. The Atman is the
10 unity of all personalities and is unchangeable, the "One without a
11 second". It is not life, but it is coined into life. It is beyond life and
12 death and good and bad. It is the Absolute Unity. Dare to seek
13 Truth even through hell. Freedom can never be true of name and
14 form, of the related. No form can say, "I am free as a form." Not
15 until all idea of form is lost, does freedom come. If our freedom
16 hurts others, we are not free there. We must not hurt others. While
17 real perception is only one, relative perceptions must be many. The
18 fountain of all knowledge is in every one of us--in the ant as in the
19 highest angel. Real religion is one; all quarrel is with the forms, the
20 symbols, the "illustrations". The millennium exists already for those
21 who find it. The truth is, we have lost ourselves and think the world
22 to be lost. "Fool! Hearest not thou? In thine own heart, day and
23 night, is singing that Eternal Music--Sachchidananda, Soham,
24 Soham, (Existence, Knowledge, and Bliss, I am He, I am He)!"

25 To try to think without a phantasm is to try to make the
26 impossible possible. Each thought has two parts--the thinking and
27 the word, and we must have both. Neither idealists nor materialists
28 are able to explain the world; to do that, we must take both idea
29 and expression. All knowledge is of the reflected as we can only see
30 our own faces reflected in a mirror. So no one can know his Self or
31 Brahman; but each is that Self and must see it reflected in order to
32 make it an object of knowledge. This seeing the illustrations of the
33 unseen Principle is what leads to idolatry--so-called. The range of
34 idols is wider than is usually supposed. They range from wood and
35 stone to great personalities as Jesus or Buddha. The introduction of
36 idols into India was the result of Buddha's constantly inveighing
37 against a Personal God. The Vedas knew them not, but the reaction
38 against the loss of God as Creator and Friend led to making idols of
39 the great teachers, and Buddha himself became an idol and is
40 worshipped as such by millions of people. Violent attempts at
41 reform always end in retarding true reform. To worship is inherent
42 in every man's nature; only the highest philosophy can rise to pure
43 abstraction. So man will ever personify his God in order to worship
44 Him. This is very good, as long as the symbol, be it what it may, is
45 worshipped as a symbol of the Divinity behind and not in and for
46 itself. Above all, we need to free ourselves from the superstition of
47 believing because "it is in the books". To try to make everything--
48 science, religion, philosophy, and all--conform to what any book
49 says, is a most horrible tyranny. Book-worship is the worst form of
50 idolatry. There was once a stag, proud and free, and he talked in a
51 lordly fashion to his child, "Look at me, see my powerful horns!
52 With one thrust I can kill a man; it is a fine thing to be a stag!" Just
53 then the sound of the huntsman's bugle was heard in the distance,

1 and the stag precipitately fled, followed by his wondering child.
2 When they had reached a place of safety, he inquired, "Why do you
3 fly before man, O my father, when you are so strong and brave?"
4 The stag answered, "My child, I know I am strong and powerful, but
5 when I hear that sound, something seizes me and makes me fly
6 whether I will or no." So with us. We hear the "bugle sound" of the
7 laws laid down in the books, habits and old superstitions lay hold of
8 us; and before we know it, we are fast bound and forget our real
9 nature which is freedom.

10 Knowledge exists eternally. The man who discovers a spiritual
11 truth is what we call "inspired", and what he brings to the world is
12 revelation. But revelation too is eternal and is not to be crystallised
13 as final and then blindly followed. Revelation may come to any man
14 who has fitted himself to receive it. Perfect purity is the most
15 essential thing, for only "the pure in heart shall see God". Man is
16 the highest being that exists and this is the greatest world, for here
17 can man realise freedom. The highest concept we can have of God
18 is man. Every attribute we give Him belongs also to man, only in a
19 lesser degree. When we rise higher and want to get out of this
20 concept of God, we have to get out of the body, out of mind and
21 imagination, and leave this world out of sight. When we rise to be
22 the absolute, we are no longer in the world--all is Subject, without
23 object.

24 Man is the apex of the only "world" we can ever know. Those
25 who have attained "sameness" or perfection, are said to be "living
26 in God". All hatred is "killing the self by the self"; therefore, love is
27 the law of life. To rise to this is to be perfect; but the more "perfect"
28 we are, the less work can we do. The Sattvika see and know that all
29 this world is mere child's play and do not trouble themselves about
30 that. We are not much disturbed when we see two puppies fighting
31 and biting each other. We know it is not a serious matter. The
32 perfect one knows that this world is Maya. Life is called Samsara--it
33 is the result of the conflicting forces acting upon us. Materialism
34 says, "The voice of freedom is a delusion." Idealism says, "The voice
35 that tells of bondage is but a dream." Vedanta says, "We are free
36 and not free at the same time." That means that we are never free
37 on the earthly plane, but ever free on the spiritual side. The Self is
38 beyond both freedom and bondage. We *are* Brahman, we *are*
39 immortal knowledge beyond the senses, we *are* Bliss Absolute.

SIX LESSONS ON RAJA-YOGA²³⁷

Raja-Yoga is as much a science as any in the world. It is an analysis of the mind, a gathering of the facts of the supersensuous world and so building up the spiritual world. All the great spiritual teachers the world has known said, "I see and I know." Jesus, Paul, and Peter all claimed actual perception of the spiritual truths they taught.

This perception is obtained by Yoga.

Neither memory nor consciousness can be the limitation of existence. There is a superconscious state. Both it and the unconscious state are sensationless, but with a vast difference between them--the difference between ignorance and knowledge. Present Yoga as an appeal to reason, as a science.

Concentration of the mind is the source of all knowledge.

Yoga teaches us to make matter our slave, as it ought to be. Yoga means "yoke", "to join", that is, to join the soul of man with the supreme Soul or God.

The mind acts in and under consciousness. What we call consciousness is only one link in the infinite chain that is our nature.

This "I" of ours covers just a little consciousness and a vast amount of unconsciousness, while over it, and mostly unknown to it, is the superconscious plane.

Through faithful practice, layer after layer of the mind opens before us, and each reveals new facts to us. We see as it were new worlds created before us, new powers are put into our hands, but we must not stop by the way or allow ourselves to be dazzled by these "beads of glass" when the mine of diamonds lies before us.

God alone is our goal. Failing to reach God, we die.

Three things are necessary to the student who wishes to succeed.

First. Give up all ideas of enjoyment in this world and the next, care only for God and Truth. We are here to know truth, not for enjoyment. Leave that to brutes who enjoy as we never can. Man is a thinking being and must struggle on until he conquers death, until he sees the light. He must not spend himself in vain talking that bears no fruit. Worship of society and popular opinion is idolatry. The soul has no sex, no country, no place, no time.

Second. Intense desire to know Truth and God. Be eager for

²³⁷ These lessons are composed of notes of class talks given by Swami Vivekananda to an intimate audience in the house of Mrs. Sara C. Bull, a devoted American disciple, and were preserved by her and finally printed in 1913 for private circulation--Ed.

1 them, long for them, as a drowning man longs for breath. Want only
2 God, take nothing else, let not "seeming" cheat you any longer. Turn
3 from all and seek only God.

4 Third. The six trainings: First--Restraining the mind from
5 going outward. Second--Restraining the senses. Third--Turning the
6 mind inward. Fourth--Suffering everything without murmuring.
7 Fifth--Fastening the mind to one idea. Take the subject before you
8 and think it out; never leave it. Do not count time. Sixth--Think
9 constantly of your real nature. Get rid of superstition. Do not
10 hypnotise yourself into a belief in your own inferiority. Day and
11 night tell yourself what you really are, until you realise (actually
12 realise) your oneness with God.

13 Without these disciplines, no results can be gained.

14 We can be conscious of the Absolute, but we can never
15 express It. The moment we try to express It, we limit It and It
16 ceases to be Absolute.

17 We have to go beyond sense limit and transcend even reason,
18 and we have the power to do this.

19 *[After practising the first lesson in breathing a week, the*
20 *pupil reports to the teacher.]*

22 FIRST LESSON

23 This is a lesson seeking to bring out the individuality. Each
24 individuality must be cultivated. All will meet at the centre.
25 "Imagination is the door to inspiration and the basis of all thought."
26 All prophets, poets, and discoverers have had great imaginative
27 power. The explanation of nature is in us; the stone falls outside,
28 but gravitation is in us, not outside. Those who stuff themselves,
29 those who starve themselves, those who sleep too much, those who
30 sleep too little, cannot become Yogis. Ignorance, fickleness,
31 jealousy, laziness, and excessive attachment are the great enemies
32 to success in Yoga practice. The three great requisites are:

33 First. Purity, physical and mental; all uncleanness, all that
34 would draw the mind down, must be abandoned.

35 Second. Patience: At first there will be wonderful
36 manifestations, but they will all cease. This is the hardest period,
37 but hold fast; in the end the gain is sure if you have patience.

38 Third. Perseverance: Persevere through thick and thin,
39 through health and sickness, never miss a day in practice.

40 The best time for practice is the junction of day and night, the
41 calmest time in the tides of our bodies, the zero point between two
42 states. If this cannot be done, practise upon rising and going to bed.
43 Great personal cleanliness is necessary--a daily bath.

44 After bathing, sit down and hold the seat firm, that is, imagine
45 that you sit as firm as a rock, that nothing can move you. Hold the
46 head and shoulders and the hips in a straight line, keeping the
47 spinal column free; all action is along it, and it must not be
48 impaired.

1 Begin with your toes and think of each part of your body as
2 perfect; picture it so in your mind, touching each part if you prefer
3 to do so. Pass upward bit by bit until you reach the head, thinking of
4 each as perfect, lacking nothing. Then think of the whole as perfect,
5 an instrument given to you by God to enable you to attain Truth, the
6 vessel in which you are to cross the ocean and reach the shores of
7 eternal truth. When this has been done, take a long breath through
8 both nostrils, throw it out again, and then hold it out as long as you
9 comfortably can. Take four such breaths, then breathe naturally and
10 pray for illumination.

11 "I meditate on the glory of that being who created this
12 universe; may he illuminate my mind." Sit and meditate on this ten
13 or fifteen minutes.

14 Tell your experiences to no one but your Guru.

15 Talk as little as possible.

16 Keep your thoughts on virtue; what we think we tend to
17 become.

18 Holy meditation helps to burn out all mental impurities. All
19 who are not Yogis are slaves; bond after bond must be broken to
20 make us free.

21 All can find the reality beyond. If God is true, we must feel
22 him as a fact, and if there is a soul, we ought to be able to see it and
23 feel it.

24 The only way to find if there be a soul is to be something
25 which is not the body.

26 The Yogis class our organs under two chief heads: organs of
27 sense and organs of motion, or knowledge and action.

28 The internal organ or mind has four aspects. First--Manas,
29 the cogitating or thinking faculty, which is usually almost entirely
30 wasted, because uncontrolled; properly governed, it is a wonderful
31 power. Second--Buddhi, the will (sometimes called the intellect).
32 Third--Ahamkara, the self-conscious egotism (from Aham). Fourth--
33 Chitta, the substance in and through which all the faculties act, the
34 floor of the mind as it were; or the sea in which the various faculties
35 are waves.

36 Yoga is the science by which we stop Chitta from assuming,
37 or becoming transformed into, several faculties. As the reflection of
38 the moon on the sea is broken or blurred by the waves, so is the
39 reflection of the Atman, the true Self, broken by the mental waves.
40 Only when the sea is stilled to mirror-like calmness, can the
41 reflection of the moon be seen, and only when the "mind-stuff", the
42 Chitta is controlled to absolute calmness, is the Self to be
43 recognised.

44 The mind is not the body, though it is matter in a finer form. It
45 is not eternally bound by the body. This is proved as we get
46 occasionally loosened from it. We can learn to do this at will by
47 controlling the senses.

48 When we can do that fully, we shall control the universe,

1 because our world is only what the senses bring us. Freedom is the
2 test of the higher being. Spiritual life begins when you have
3 loosened yourself from the control of the senses. He whose senses
4 rule him is worldly--is a slave.

5 If we could entirely stop our mind-stuff from breaking into
6 waves, it would put an end to our bodies. For millions of years we
7 have worked so hard to manufacture these bodies that in the
8 struggle we have forgotten our real purpose in getting them, which
9 was to become perfect. We have grown to think that body-making is
10 the end of our efforts. This is Maya. We must break this delusion
11 and return to our original aim and realise we are not the body, it is
12 our servant.

13 Learn to take the mind out and to see that it is separate from
14 the body. We endow the body with sensation and life and then think
15 it is alive and real. We have worn it so long that we forget that it is
16 not identical with us. Yoga is to help us put off our body when we
17 please and see it as our servant, our instrument, *not* our ruler.
18 Controlling the mental powers is the first great aim in Yoga
19 practices. The second is concentrating them in full force upon any
20 subject.

21 You cannot be a Yogi if you talk much.

23 **SECOND LESSON**

24 This Yoga is known as the eightfold Yoga, because it is divided
25 into eight principal parts. These are:

26 First--Yama. This is most important and has to govern the
27 whole life; it has five divisions:

28 1st. Not injuring any being by thought, word, or deed.

29 2nd. Non-covetousness in thought, word, or deed.

30 3rd. Perfect chastity in thought, word, or deed.

31 4th. Perfect truthfulness in thought, word, or deed.

32 5th. Non-receiving of gifts.

33 Second--Niyama. The bodily care, bathing daily, dietary, etc.

34 Third--Asana, posture. Hips, shoulders, and head must be
35 held straight, leaving the spine free.

36 Fourth--Pranayama, restraining the breath (in order to get
37 control of the Prana or vital force).

38 Fifth--Pratyahara, turning the mind inward and restraining it
39 from going outward, revolving the matter in the mind in order to
40 understand it.

41 Sixth--Dharana, concentration on one subject.

42 Seventh--Dhyana, meditation.

43 Eighth--Samadhi, illumination, the aim of all our efforts.

44 Yama and Niyama are for lifelong practice. As for the others,

1 we do as the leech does, not leave one blade of grass before firmly
2 grasping another. In other words, we have thoroughly to
3 understand and practise one step before taking another.

4 The subject of this lesson is Pranayama, or controlling the
5 Prana. In Raja-Yoga breathing enters the psychic plane and brings
6 us to the spiritual. It is the fly-wheel of the whole bodily system. It
7 acts first upon the lungs, the lungs act on the heart, the heart acts
8 upon the circulation, this in turn upon the brain, and the brain upon
9 the mind. The will can produce an outside sensation, and the
10 outside sensation can arouse the will. Our wills are weak; we do not
11 realise their power, we are so much bound up in matter. Most of our
12 action is from outside in. Outside nature throws us off our balance,
13 and we cannot (as we ought) throw nature off her balance. This is
14 all wrong; the stronger power is really within.

15 The great saints and teachers were those who had conquered
16 this world of thought within themselves and so spake with power.
17 The story²³⁸ of the minister confined in a high tower, who was
18 released through the efforts of his wife who brought him a beetle,
19 honey, a silken thread, a cord, and a rope, illustrates the way we
20 gain control of our mind by using first the physical regulation of the
21 breath as the silken thread. That enables us to lay hold on one
22 power after another until the rope of concentration delivers us from
23 the prison of the body and we are free. Reaching freedom, we can
24 discard the means used to bring us there.

25 Pranayama has three parts:

26 1st. Puraka--inhaling.

27 2nd. Kumbhaka--restraining.

28 3rd. Rechaka--exhaling.

29 There are two currents passing through the brain and
30 circulating down the sides of the spine, crossing at the base and
31 returning to the brain. One of these currents, called the "sun"
32 (Pingala), starts from the left hemisphere of the brain, crosses at
33 the base of the brain to the right side of the spine, and recrosses at
34 the base of the spine, like one-half of the figure eight.

35 The other current, the "moon" (Ida), reverses this action and
36 completes this figure eight. Of course, the lower part is much
37 longer than the upper. These currents flow day and night and make
38 deposits of the great life forces at different points, commonly
39 known as "plexuses"; but we are rarely conscious of them. By
40 concentration we can learn to feel them and trace them over all
41 parts of the body. These "sun" and "moon" currents are intimately
42 connected with breathing, and by regulating this we get control of
43 the body.

44 In the Katha Upanishad the body is described as the chariot,
45 the mind is the reins, the intellect is the charioteer, the senses are
46 the horses, and the objects of the senses their road. The self is the
47 rider, seated in the chariot. Unless the rider has understanding and

²³⁸ ?For the story see *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. I, p. 143.

1 can make the charioteer control his horses, he can never attain the
2 goal; but the senses, like vicious steeds, will drag him where they
3 please and may even destroy him. These two currents are the great
4 "check rein" in the hands of the charioteer, and he must get control
5 of this to control the horses. We have to get the power to become
6 moral; until we do that, we cannot control our actions. Yoga alone
7 enables us to carry into practice the teachings of morality. To
8 become moral is the object of Yoga. All great teachers were Yogis
9 and controlled every current. The Yogis arrest these currents at the
10 base of the spine and force them through the centre of the spinal
11 column. They then become the current of knowledge, which only
12 exists in the Yogi.

13 Second Lesson in Breathing: One method is not for all. This
14 breathing must be done with rhythmic regularity, and the easiest
15 way is by counting; as that is purely mechanical, we repeat the
16 sacred word "Om" a certain number of times instead.

17 The process of Pranayama is as follows: Close the right
18 nostril with the thumb and then slowly inhale through the left
19 nostril, repeating the word "Om" four times.

20 Then firmly close both nostrils by placing the forefinger on
21 the left one and hold the breath in, mentally repeating "Om" eight
22 times.

23 Then, removing the thumb from the right nostril, exhale
24 slowly through that, repeating "Om" four times.

25 As you close the exhalation, draw in the abdomen forcibly to
26 expel all the air from the lungs. Then slowly inhale through the
27 right nostril, keeping the left one closed, repeating "Om" four times.
28 Next close the right nostril with the thumb and hold the breath
29 while repeating "Om" eight times. Then uncloze the left nostril and
30 slowly exhale, repeating "Om" four times, drawing in the abdomen
31 as before. Repeat this whole operation twice at each sitting, that is,
32 making four Pranayamas, two for each nostril. Before taking your
33 seat it is well to begin with prayer.

34 This needs to be practised a week; then gradually increase
35 the duration of breathing, keeping the same ratio, that is, if you
36 repeat "Om" six times at inhalation, then do the same at exhalation
37 and twelve times during Kumbhaka. These exercises will make us
38 more spiritual, more pure, more holy. Do not be led aside into any
39 byways or seek after power. Love is the only power that stays by us
40 and increases. He who seeks to come to God through Raja-Yoga
41 must be strong mentally, physically, morally, and spiritually. Take
42 every step in that light.

43 Of hundreds of thousands only one soul will say, "I will go
44 beyond, and I will penetrate to God." Few can face the truth; but to
45 accomplish anything, we must be willing to die for Truth.

46 47 THIRD LESSON

48 Kundalini: Realise the soul not as matter, but as it is. We are
49 thinking of the soul as body, but we must separate it from sense and

1 thought. Then alone can we know we are immortal. Change implies
2 the duality of cause and effect, and all that changes must be mortal.
3 This proves that the body cannot be immortal, nor can the mind,
4 because both are constantly changing. Only the unchangeable can
5 be immortal, because there is nothing to act upon it.

6 We do not become it, we are it; but we have to clear away the
7 veil of ignorance that hides the truth from us. The body is
8 objectified thought. The "sun" and "moon" currents bring energy to
9 all parts of the body. The surplus energy is stored at certain points
10 (plexuses) along the spinal column commonly known as nerve
11 centres.

12 These currents are not to be found in dead bodies and can
13 only be traced in a healthy organism.

14 The Yogi has an advantage; for he is able not only to feel
15 them, but actually to see them. They are luminous in his life, and so
16 are the great nerve centres.

17 There is conscious as well as unconscious action. The Yogis
18 possess a third kind, the superconscious, which in all countries and
19 in all ages has been the source of all religious knowledge. The
20 superconscious state makes no mistakes, but whereas the action of
21 the instinct would be purely mechanical, the former is beyond
22 consciousness.

23 It has been called inspiration, but the Yogi says, "This faculty
24 is in every human being, and eventually all will enjoy it."

25 We must give a new direction to the "sun" and "moon"
26 currents and open for them a new passage through the centre of
27 the spinal cord. When we succeed in bringing the currents through
28 this passage called "Sushumna", up to the brain, we are for the
29 time being separated entirely from the body.

30 The nerve centre at the base of the spine near the sacrum is
31 most important. It is the seat of the generative substance of the
32 sexual energy and is symbolised by the Yogi as a triangle containing
33 a tiny serpent coiled up in it. This sleeping serpent is called
34 Kundalini, and to raise this Kundalini is the whole object of Raja-
35 Yoga.

36 The great sexual force, raised from animal action and sent
37 upward to the great dynamo of the human system, the brain, and
38 there stored up, becomes Ojas or spiritual force. All good thought,
39 all prayer, resolves a part of that animal energy into Ojas and helps
40 to give us spiritual power. This Ojas is the real man and in human
41 beings alone is it possible for this storage of Ojas to be
42 accomplished. One in whom the whole animal sex force has been
43 transformed into Ojas is a god. He speaks with power, and his
44 words regenerate the world.

45 The Yogi pictures this serpent as being slowly lifted from
46 stage to stage until the highest, the pineal gland, is reached. No
47 man or woman can be really spiritual until the sexual energy, the
48 highest power possessed by man, has been converted into Ojas.

49 No force can be created; it can only be directed. Therefore

1 we must learn to control the grand powers that are already in our
2 hands and by will power make them spiritual instead of merely
3 animal. Thus it is clearly seen that chastity is the corner-stone of all
4 morality and of all religion. In Raja-Yoga especially, absolute
5 chastity in thought, word, and deed is a *sine qua non*. The same
6 laws apply to the married and the single. If one wastes the most
7 potent forces of one's being, one cannot become spiritual.

8 All history teaches us that the great seers of all ages were
9 either monks and ascetics or those who had given up married life;
10 only the pure in life can see God.

11 Just before making the Pranayama, endeavour to visualise the
12 triangle. Close your eyes and picture it vividly in your imagination.
13 See it surrounded by flames and with the serpent coiled in the
14 middle. When you can clearly see the Kundalini, place it in
15 imagination at the base of the spine, and when restraining the
16 breath in Kumbhaka, throw it forcibly down on the head of the
17 serpent to awaken it. The more powerful the imagination, the more
18 quickly will the real result be attained and the Kundalini be
19 awakened. Until it does, imagine it does: try to feel the currents
20 and try to force them through the Sushumna. This hastens their
21 action.

23 FOURTH LESSON

24 Before we can control the mind we must study it.

25 We have to seize this unstable mind and drag it from its
26 wanderings and fix it on one idea. Over and over again this must be
27 done. By power of will we must get hold of the mind and make it
28 stop and reflect upon the glory of God.

29 The easiest way to get hold of the mind is to sit quiet and let
30 it drift where it will for a while. Hold fast to the idea, "I am the
31 witness watching my mind drifting. The mind is not I." Then see it
32 think as if it were a thing entirely apart from yourself. Identify
33 yourself with God, never with matter or with the mind.

34 Picture the mind as a calm lake stretched before you and the
35 thoughts that come and go as bubbles rising and breaking on its
36 surface. Make no effort to control the thoughts, but watch them and
37 follow them in imagination as they float away. This will gradually
38 lessen the circles. For the mind ranges over wide circles of thought
39 and those circles widen out into ever-increasing circles, as in a
40 pond when we throw a stone into it. We want to reverse the process
41 and starting with a huge circle make it narrower until at last we can
42 fix the mind on one point and make it stay there. Hold to the idea, "I
43 am not the mind, I see that I am thinking, I am watching my mind
44 act", and each day the identification of yourself with thought and
45 feeling will grow less, until at last you can entirely separate
46 yourself from the mind and actually know it to be apart from
47 yourself.

1 When this is done, the mind is your servant to control as you
2 will. The first stage of being a Yogi is to go beyond the senses.
3 When the mind is conquered, he has reached the highest stage.

4 Live alone as much as possible. The seat should be of
5 comfortable height; put first a grass mat, then a skin (fur), next a
6 silken cover. It is better that the seat has no back and it must stand
7 firm.

8 Thoughts being pictures, we should not create them. We have
9 to exclude all thought from the mind and make it a blank; as fast as
10 a thought comes we have to banish it. To be able to accomplish this,
11 we must transcend matter and go beyond our body. The whole life
12 of man is really an effort to do this.

13 Each soul has its own meaning: In our nature these two
14 things are connected.

15 The highest ideal we have is God. Meditate on Him. We
16 cannot know the Knower, but we are He.

17 Seeing evil, we are creating it. What we are, we see outside,
18 for the world is our mirror. This little body is a little mirror we have
19 created, but the whole universe is our body. We must think this all
20 the time; then we shall know that we cannot die or hurt another,
21 because he is our own. We are birthless and deathless and we
22 ought only to love.

23 "This whole universe is my body; all health, all happiness is
24 mine, because all is in the universe." Say, "I am the universe." We
25 finally learn that all action is from us to the mirror.

26 Although we appear as little waves, the whole sea is at our
27 back, and we are one with it. No wave can exist of itself.

28 Imagination properly employed is our greatest friend; it goes
29 beyond reason and is the only light that takes us everywhere.

30 Inspiration is from within and we have to inspire ourselves by
31 our own higher faculties.

32 33 FIFTH LESSON

34 Pratyahara and Dharana: Krishna says, "All who seek me by
35 whatever means will reach me", "All must reach me." Pratyahara is
36 a gathering toward, an attempt to get hold of the mind and focus it
37 on the desired object. The first step is to let the mind drift; watch it;
38 see what it thinks; be only the witness. Mind is not soul or spirit. It
39 is only matter in a finer form, and we own it and can learn to
40 manipulate it through the nerve energies.

41 The body is the objective view of what we call mind
42 (subjective). We, the Self, are beyond both body and mind; we are
43 "Atman", the eternal, unchangeable witness. The body is
44 crystallised thought.

45 When the breath is flowing through the left nostril, it is the
46 time for rest; when through the right, for work; and when through
47 both, the time to meditate. When we are calm and breathing equally

1 through both nostrils, we are in the right condition for quiet
2 meditation. It is no use trying to concentrate at first. Control of
3 thought will come of itself.

4 After sufficient practice of closing the nostrils with the thumb
5 and forefinger, we shall be able to do it by the power of will,
6 through thought alone.

7 Pranayama is now to be slightly changed. If the student has
8 the name of his "Ishta" (Chosen Ideal), he should use that instead of
9 "Om" during inhalation and exhalation, and use the word "Hum"
10 (pronounced Hoom) during Kumbhaka.

11 Throw the restrained breath forcibly down on the head of the
12 Kundalini at each repetition of the word Hum and imagine that this
13 awakens her. Identify yourself only with God. After a while thoughts
14 will announce their coming, and we shall learn the way they begin
15 and be aware of what we are going to think, just as on this plane we
16 can look out and see a person coming. This stage is reached when
17 we have learnt to separate ourselves from our minds and see
18 ourselves as one and thought as something apart. Do not let the
19 thoughts grasp you; stand aside, and they will die away.

20 Follow these holy thoughts; go with them; and when they melt
21 away, you will find the feet of the Omnipotent God. This is the
22 superconscious state; when the idea melts, follow it and melt with
23 it.

24 Haloes are symbols of inner light and can be seen by the Yogi.
25 Sometimes we may see a face as if surrounded by flames and in
26 them read the character and judge without erring. We may have
27 our Ishta come to us as a vision, and this symbol will be the one
28 upon which we can rest easily and fully concentrate our minds.

29 We can imagine through all the senses, but we do so mostly
30 through the eyes. Even imagination is half material. In other words,
31 we cannot think without a phantasm. But since animals appear to
32 think, yet have no words, it is probable that there is no inseparable
33 connection between thought and images.

34 Try to keep up the imagination in Yoga, being careful to keep
35 it pure and holy. We all have our peculiarities in the way of
36 imaginative power; follow the way most natural to you; it will be the
37 easiest.

38 We are the results of all reincarnations through Karma: "One
39 lamp lighted from another", says the Buddhist--different lamps, but
40 the same light.

41 Be cheerful, be brave, bathe daily, have patience, purity, and
42 perseverance, then you will become a Yogi in truth. Never try to
43 hurry, and if the higher powers come, remember that they are but
44 side-paths. Do not let them tempt you from the main road; put them
45 aside and hold fast to your only true aim--God. Seek only the
46 Eternal, finding which we are at rest for ever; having the all,
47 nothing is left to strive for, and we are for ever in free and perfect
48 existence--Existence absolute, Knowledge absolute, Bliss absolute.

1 SIXTH LESSON

2 Sushumna: It is very useful to meditate on the Sushumna. You
3 may have a vision of it come to you, and this is the best way. Then
4 meditate for a long time on that. It is a very fine, very brilliant
5 thread, this living passage through the spinal cord, this way of
6 salvation through which we have to make the Kundalini rise.

7 In the language of the Yogi, the Sushumna has its ends in two
8 lotuses, the lower lotus surrounding the triangle of the Kundalini
9 and the top one in the brain surrounding the pineal gland; between
10 these two are four other lotuses, stages on the way:

11 6th. Pineal Gland.

12 5th. Between the Eyes.

13 4th. Bottom of the Throat.

14 3rd. Level with the Heart.

15 2nd. Opposite the Navel.

16 1st. Base of Spine.

17 We must awaken the Kundalini, then slowly raise it from one
18 lotus to another till the brain is reached. Each stage corresponds to
19 a new layer of the mind.

WOMEN OF INDIA

(Delivered at the Shakespeare Club House, in Pasadena, California, on January 18, 1900)

Swami Vivekananda: "Some persons desire to ask questions about Hindu Philosophy before the lecture and to question in general about India after the lecture; but the chief difficulty is I do not know what I am to lecture on. I would be very glad to lecture on any subject, either on Hindu Philosophy or on anything concerning the race, its history, or its literature. If you, ladies and gentlemen, will suggest anything, I would be very glad."

Questioner: "I would like to ask, Swami, what special principle in Hindu Philosophy you would have us Americans, who are a very practical people, adopt, and what that would do for us beyond what Christianity can do."

Swami Vivekananda: "That is very difficult for me to decide; it rests upon you. If you find anything which you think you ought to adopt, and which will be helpful, you should take that. You see I am not a missionary, and I am not going about converting people to my idea. My principle is that all such ideas are good and great, so that some of your ideas may suit some people in India, and some of our ideas may suit some people here; so ideas must be cast abroad, all over the world."

Questioner: "We would like to know the result of your philosophy; has your philosophy and religion lifted your women above our women?"

Swami Vivekananda: "You see, that is a very invidious question: I like our women and your women too."

Questioner: "Well, will you tell us about your women, their customs and education, and the position they hold in the family?"

Swami Vivekananda: "Oh, yes, those things I would be very glad to tell you. So you want to know about Indian women tonight, and not philosophy and other things?"

The Lecture

I must begin by saying that you may have to bear with me a good deal, because I belong to an Order of people who never marry; so my knowledge of women in all their relations, as mother, as wife, as daughter and sister, must necessarily not be so complete as it may be with other men. And then, India, I must remember, is a vast continent, not merely a country, and is inhabited by many different races. The nations of Europe are nearer to each other, more similar to each other, than the races in India. You may get just a rough idea of it if I tell you that there are eight different languages in all India. Different languages--not dialects--each having a literature of its own. The Hindi language, alone, is spoken by 100,000,000 people; the Bengali by about 60,000,000, and so on. Then, again, the four northern Indian languages differ more from the southern Indian

1 languages than any two European languages from each other. They
2 are entirely different, as much different as your language differs
3 from the Japanese, so that you will be astonished to know, when I
4 go to southern India, unless I meet some people who can talk
5 Sanskrit, I have to speak to them in English. Furthermore, these
6 various races differ from each other in manners, customs, food,
7 dress, and in their methods of thought.

8 Then, again, there is caste. Each caste has become, as it
9 were, a separate racial element. If a man lives long enough in India,
10 he will be able to tell from the features what caste a man belongs
11 to. Then, between castes, the manners and customs are different.
12 And all these castes are exclusive; that is to say, they would meet
13 socially, but they would not eat or drink together, nor intermarry. In
14 those things they remain separate. They would meet and be friends
15 to each other, but there it would end.

16 Although I have more opportunity than many other men to
17 know women in general, from my position and my occupation as a
18 preacher, continuously travelling from one place to another and
19 coming in contact with all grades of society--(and women, even in
20 northern India, where they do not appear before men, in many
21 places would break this law for religion and would come to hear us
22 preach and talk to us)--still it would be hazardous on my part to
23 assert that I know everything about the women of India.

24 So I will try to place before you the ideal. In each nation, man
25 or woman represents an ideal consciously or unconsciously being
26 worked out. The individual is the external expression of an ideal to
27 be embodied. The collection of such individuals is the nation, which
28 also represents a great ideal; towards that it is moving. And,
29 therefore, it is rightly assumed that to understand a nation you
30 must first understand its ideal, for each nation refuses to be judged
31 by any other standard than its own.

32 All growth, progress, well-being, or degradation is but
33 relative. It refers to a certain standard, and each man to be
34 understood has to be referred to that standard of his perfection.
35 You see this more markedly in nations: what one nation thinks good
36 might not be so regarded by another nation. Cousin-marriage is
37 quite permissible in this country. Now, in India, it is illegal; not only
38 so, it would be classed with the most horrible incest. Widow-
39 marriage is perfectly legitimate in this country. Among the higher
40 castes in India it would be the greatest degradation for a woman to
41 marry twice. So, you see, we work through such different ideas that
42 to judge one people by the other's standard would be neither just
43 nor practicable. Therefore we must know what the ideal is that a
44 nation has raised before itself. When speaking of different nations,
45 we start with a general idea that there is one code of ethics and the
46 same kind of ideals for all races; practically, however, when we
47 come to judge of others, we think what is good for us must be good
48 for everybody; what we do is the right thing, what we do not do, of
49 course in others would be outrageous. I do not mean to say this as a
50 criticism, but just to bring the truth home. When I hear Western
51 women denounce the confining of the feet of Chinese ladies, they
52 never seem to think of the corsets which are doing far more injury

1 to the race. This is just one example; for you must know that
2 cramping the feet does not do one-millionth part of the injury to the
3 human form that the corset has done and is doing--when every
4 organ is displaced and the spine is curved like a serpent. When
5 measurements are taken, you can note the curvatures. I do not
6 mean that as a criticism but just to point out to you the situation,
7 that as you stand aghast at women of other races, thinking that you
8 are supreme, the very reason that they do not adopt your manners
9 and customs shows that they also stand aghast at you.

10 Therefore there is some misunderstanding on both sides.
11 There is a common platform, a common ground of understanding, a
12 common humanity, which must be the basis of our work. We ought
13 to find out that complete and perfect human nature which is
14 working only in parts, here and there. It has not been given to one
15 man to have everything in perfection. You have a part to play; I, in
16 my humble way, another; here is one who plays a little part; there,
17 another. The perfection is the combination of all these parts. Just as
18 with individuals, so with races. Each race has a part to play; each
19 race has one side of human nature to develop. And we have to take
20 all these together; and, possibly in the distant future, some race will
21 arise in which all these marvellous individual race perfections,
22 attained by the different races, will come together and form a new
23 race, the like of which the world has not yet dreamed. Beyond
24 saying that, I have no criticism to offer about anybody. I have
25 travelled not a little in my life; I have kept my eyes open; and the
26 more I go about the more my mouth is closed. I have no criticism to
27 offer.

28 Now, the ideal woman in India is the mother, the mother first,
29 and the mother last. The word woman calls up to the mind of the
30 Hindu, motherhood; and God is called Mother. As children, every
31 day, when we are boys, we have to go early in the morning with a
32 little cup of water and place it before the mother, and mother dips
33 her toe into it and we drink it.

34 In the West, the woman is wife. The idea of womanhood is
35 concentrated there--as the wife. To the ordinary man in India, the
36 whole force of womanhood is concentrated in motherhood. In the
37 Western home, the wife rules. In an Indian home, the mother rules.
38 If a mother comes into a Western home, she has to be subordinate
39 to the wife; to the wife belongs the home. A mother always lives in
40 our homes: the wife must be subordinate to her. See all the
41 difference of ideas.

42 Now, I only suggest comparisons; I would state facts so that
43 we may compare the two sides. Make this comparison. If you ask,
44 "What is an Indian woman as wife?", the Indian asks, "Where is the
45 American woman as mother? What is she, the all-glorious, who gave
46 me this body? What is she who kept me in her body for nine
47 months? Where is she who would give me twenty times her life, if I
48 had need? Where is she whose love never dies, however wicked,
49 however vile I am? Where is she, in comparison with her, who goes
50 to the divorce court the moment I treat her a little badly? O
51 American woman! where is she?" I will not find her in your country.
52 I have not found the son who thinks mother is first. When we die,

1 even then, we do not want our wives and our children to take her
2 place. Our mother!--we want to die with our head on her lap once
3 more, if we die before her. Where is she? Is woman a name to be
4 coupled with the physical body only? Ay! the Hindu mind fears all
5 those ideals which say that the flesh must cling unto the flesh. No,
6 no! Woman! thou shalt not be coupled with anything connected with
7 the flesh. The name has been called holy once and for ever, for what
8 name is there which no lust can ever approach, no carnality ever
9 come near, than the one word mother? That is the ideal in India.

10 I belong to an Order very much like what you have in the
11 Mendicant Friars of the Catholic Church; that is to say, we have to
12 go about without very much in the way of dress and beg from door
13 to door, live thereby, preach to people when they want it, sleep
14 where we can get a place--that way we have to follow. And the rule
15 is that the members of this Order have to call every woman
16 "mother"; to every woman and little girl we have to say "mother";
17 that is the custom. Coming to the West, that old habit remained and
18 I would say to ladies, "Yes, mother", and they are horrified. I could
19 not understand why they should be horrified. Later on, I discovered
20 the reason: because that would mean that they are old. The ideal of
21 womanhood in India is motherhood--that marvellous, unselfish, all-
22 suffering, ever-forgiving mother. The wife walks behind--the
23 shadow. She must imitate the life of the mother; that is her duty.
24 But the mother is the ideal of love; she rules the family, she
25 possesses the family. It is the father in India who thrashes the child
26 and spansks when there is something done by the child, and always
27 the mother puts herself between the father and the child. You see it
28 is just the opposite here. It has become the mother's business to
29 spank the children in this country, and poor father comes in
30 between. You see, ideals are different. I do not mean this as any
31 criticism. It is all good--this what you do; but our way is what we
32 have been taught for ages. You never hear of a mother cursing the
33 child; she is forgiving, always forgiving. Instead of "Our Father in
34 Heaven", we say "Mother" all the time; that idea and that word are
35 ever associated in the Hindu mind with Infinite Love, the mother's
36 love being the nearest approach to God's love in this mortal world
37 of ours. "Mother, O Mother, be merciful; I am wicked! Many
38 children have been wicked, but there never was a wicked mother"--
39 so says the great saint Ramprasad.

40 There she is--the Hindu mother. The son's wife comes in as
41 her daughter; just as the mother's own daughter married and went
42 out, so her son married and brought in another daughter, and she
43 has to fall in line under the government of the queen of queens, of
44 his mother. Even I, who never married, belonging to an Order that
45 never marries, would be disgusted if my wife, supposing I had
46 married, dared to displease my mother. I would be disgusted. Why?
47 Do I not worship my mother? Why should not her daughter-in-law?
48 Whom I worship, why not she? Who is she, then, that would try to
49 ride over my head and govern my mother? She has to wait till her
50 womanhood is fulfilled; and the one thing that fulfils womanhood,
51 that is womanliness in woman, is motherhood. Wait till she becomes
52 a mother; then she will have the same right. That, according to the

1 Hindu mind, is the great mission of woman--to become a mother.
2 But oh, how different! Oh, how different! My father and mother
3 fasted and prayed, for years and years, so that I would be born.
4 They pray for every child before it is born. Says our great law-giver,
5 Manu, giving the definition of an Aryan, "He is the Aryan, who is
6 born through prayer". Every child not born through prayer is
7 illegitimate, according to the great law-giver. The child must be
8 prayed for. Those children that come with curses, that slip into the
9 world, just in a moment of inadvertence, because that could not be
10 prevented--what can we expect of such progeny? Mothers of
11 America, think of that! Think in the heart of your hearts, are you
12 ready to be women? Not any question of race or country, or that
13 false sentiment of national pride. Who dares to be proud in this
14 mortal life of ours, in this world of woes and miseries? What are we
15 before this infinite force of God? But I ask you the question tonight:
16 Do you all pray for the children to come? Are you thankful to be
17 mothers, or not? Do you think that you are sanctified by
18 motherhood, or not? Ask that of your minds. If you do not, your
19 marriage is a lie, your womanhood is false, your education is
20 superstition, and your children, if they come without prayer, will
21 prove a curse to humanity.

22 See the different ideals now coming before us. From
23 motherhood comes tremendous responsibility. There is the basis,
24 start from that. Well, why is mother to be worshipped so much?
25 Because our books teach that it is the pre-natal influence that gives
26 the impetus to the child for good or evil. Go to a hundred thousand
27 colleges, read a million books, associate with all the learned men of
28 the world--better off you are when born with the right stamp. You
29 are born for good or evil. The child is a born god or a born demon;
30 that is what the books say. Education and all these things come
31 afterwards--are a mere bagatelle. You are what you are born. Born
32 unhealthful, how many drug stores, swallowed wholesale, will keep
33 you well all through your life? How many people of good, healthy
34 lives were born of weak parents, were born of sickly, blood-
35 poisoned parents? How many? None--none. We come with a
36 tremendous impetus for good or evil: born demons or born gods.
37 Education or other things are a bagatelle.

38 Thus say our books: direct the pre-natal influence. Why
39 should mother be worshipped? Because she made herself pure. She
40 underwent harsh penances sometimes to keep herself as pure as
41 purity can be. For, mind you, no woman in India thinks of giving up
42 her body to any man; it is her own. The English, as a reform, have
43 introduced at present what they call "Restitution of conjugal
44 rights", but no Indian would take advantage of it. When a man
45 comes in physical contact with his wife, the circumstances she
46 controls through what prayers and through what vows! For that
47 which brings forth the child is the holiest symbol of God himself. It
48 is the greatest prayer between man and wife, the prayer that is
49 going to bring into the world another soul fraught with a
50 tremendous power for good or for evil. Is it a joke? Is it a simple
51 nervous satisfaction? Is it a brute enjoyment of the body? Says the
52 Hindu: no, a thousand times, no!

1 But then, following that, there comes in another idea. The
2 idea we started with was that the ideal is the love for the mother--
3 herself all-suffering, all-forbearing. The worship that is accorded to
4 the mother has its fountain-head there. She was a saint to bring me
5 into the world; she kept her body pure, her mind pure, her food
6 pure, her clothes pure, her imagination pure, for years, because I
7 would be born. Because she did that, she deserves worship. And
8 what follows? Linked with motherhood is wifehood.

9 You Western people are individualistic. I want to do this thing
10 because I like it; I will elbow every one. Why? Because I like to. I
11 want my own satisfaction, so I marry this woman. Why? Because I
12 like her. This woman marries me. Why? Because she likes me.
13 There it ends. She and I are the only two persons in the whole,
14 infinite world; and I marry her and she marries me--nobody else is
15 injured, nobody else responsible.

16 Your Johns and your Janes may go into the forest and there
17 they may live their lives; but when they have to live in society, their
18 marriage means a tremendous amount of good or evil to us. Their
19 children may be veritable demons--burning, murdering, robbing,
20 stealing, drinking, hideous, vile.

21 So what is the basis of the Indian's social order? It is the
22 caste law. I am born for the caste, I live for the caste. I do not mean
23 myself, because, having joined an Order, we are outside. I mean
24 those that live in civil society. Born in the caste, the whole life must
25 be lived according to caste regulation. In other words, in the
26 present-day language of your country, the Western man is born
27 individualistic, while the Hindu is socialistic--entirely socialistic.
28 Now, then, the books say: if I allow you freedom to go about and
29 marry any woman you like, and the woman to marry any man she
30 likes, what happens? You fall in love; the father of the woman was,
31 perchance, a lunatic or a consumptive. The girl falls in love with the
32 face of a man whose father was a roaring drunkard. What says the
33 law then? The law lays down that all these marriages would be
34 illegal. The children of drunkards, consumptives, lunatics, etc., shall
35 not be married. The deformed, humpbacked, crazy, idiotic--no
36 marriage for them, absolutely none, says the law.

37 But the Mohammedan comes from Arabia, and he has his own
38 Arabian law; so the Arabian desert law has been forced upon us.
39 The Englishman comes with his law; he forces it upon us, so far as
40 he can. We are conquered. He says, "Tomorrow I will marry your
41 sister". What can we do? Our law says, those that are born of the
42 same family, though a hundred degrees distant, must not marry,
43 that is illegitimate, it would deteriorate or make the race sterile.
44 That must not be, and there it stops. So I have no voice in my
45 marriage, nor my sister. It is the caste that determines all that.

46 We are married sometimes when children. Why? Because the
47 caste says: if they have to be married anyway without their consent,
48 it is better that they are married very early, before they have
49 developed this love: if they are allowed to grow up apart, the boy
50 may like some other girl, and the girl some other boy, and then
51 something evil will happen; and so, says the caste, stop it there. I

1 do not care whether my sister is deformed, or good-looking, or bad-
2 looking: she is my sister, and that is enough; he is my brother, and
3 that is all I need to know. So they will love each other. You may say,
4 "Oh! they lose a great deal of enjoyment--those exquisite emotions
5 of a man falling in love with a woman and a woman falling in love
6 with a man. This is a sort of tame thing, loving each other like
7 brothers and sisters, as though they have to." So be it; but the
8 Hindu says, "We are *socialistic*. For the sake of one man's or
9 woman's exquisite pleasure we do not want to load misery on
10 hundreds of others."

11 There they are--married. The wife comes home with her
12 husband; that is called the second marriage. Marriage at an early
13 age is considered the first marriage, and they grow up separately
14 with women and with their parents. When they are grown, there is
15 a second ceremony performed, called a second marriage. And then
16 they live together, but under the same roof with his mother and
17 father. When she becomes a mother, she takes her place in turn as
18 queen of the family group.

19 Now comes another peculiar Indian institution. I have just
20 told you that in the first two or three castes the widows are not
21 allowed to marry. They cannot, even if they would. Of course, it is a
22 hardship on many. There is no denying that not all the widows like it
23 very much, because non-marrying entails upon them the life of a
24 student. That is to say, a student must not eat meat or fish, nor
25 drink wine, nor dress except in white clothes, and so on; there are
26 many regulations. We are a nation of monks--always making
27 penance, and we like it. Now, you see, a woman never drinks wine
28 or eats meat. It was a hardship on us when we were students, but
29 not on the girls. Our women would feel degraded at the idea of
30 eating meat. Men eat meat sometimes in some castes; women
31 never. Still, not being allowed to marry must be a hardship to many;
32 I am sure of that.

33 But we must go back to the idea; they are intensely
34 *socialistic*. In the higher castes of every country you will find the
35 statistics show that the number of women is always much larger
36 than the number of men. Why? Because in the higher castes, for
37 generation after generation, the women lead an easy life. They
38 "neither toil nor spin, yet Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed
39 like one of them". And the poor boys, they die like flies. The girl has
40 a cat's nine lives, they say in India. You will read in the statistics
41 that they outnumber the boys in a very short time, except now when
42 they are taking to work quite as hard as the boys. The number of
43 girls in the higher castes is much larger than in the lower.
44 Conditions are quite opposite in the lower castes. There they all
45 work hard; women a little harder, sometimes, because they have to
46 do the domestic work. But, mind you, I never would have thought of
47 that, but one of your American travellers, Mark Twain, writes this
48 about India: "In spite of all that Western critics have said of Hindu
49 customs, I never saw a woman harnessed to a plough with a cow or
50 to a cart with a dog, as is done in some European countries. I saw
51 no woman or girl at work in the fields in India. On both sides and
52 ahead (of the railway train) brown-bodied naked men and boys are

1 ploughing in the fields. But not a woman. In these two hours I have
2 not seen a woman or a girl working in the fields. In India, even the
3 lowest caste never does any hard work. They generally have an
4 easy lot compared to the same class in other nations; and as to
5 ploughing, they never do it."

6 Now, there you are. Among the lower classes the number of
7 men is larger than the number of women; and what would you
8 naturally expect? A woman gets more chances of marriage, the
9 number of men being larger.

10 Relative to such questions as to widows not marrying: among
11 the first two castes, the number of women is disproportionately
12 large, and here is a dilemma. Either you have a non-marriageable
13 widow problem and misery, or the non-husband-getting young lady
14 problem. To face the widow problem, or the old maid problem?
15 There you are; either of the two. Now, go back again to the idea
16 that the Indian mind is socialistic. It says, "Now look here! we take
17 the widow problem as the lesser one." Why? "Because they have
18 had their chance; they have been married. If they have lost their
19 chance, at any rate they have had one. Sit down, be quiet, and
20 consider these poor girls--they have not had one chance of
21 marriage." Lord bless you! I remember once in Oxford Street, it
22 was after ten o'clock, and all those ladies coming there, hundreds
23 and thousands of them shopping; and some man, an American,
24 looks around, and he says, "My Lord! how many of them will ever
25 get husbands, I wonder!" So the Indian mind said to the widows,
26 "Well, you have had your chance, and now we are very, very sorry
27 that such mishaps have come to you, but we cannot help it; others
28 are waiting."

29 Then religion comes into the question; the Hindu religion
30 comes in as a comfort. For, mind you, our religion teaches that
31 marriage is something bad, it is only for the weak. The very
32 spiritual man or woman would not marry at all. So the religious
33 woman says, "Well, the Lord has given me a better chance. What is
34 the use of marrying? Thank God, worship God, what is the use of
35 my loving man?" Of course, all of them cannot put their mind on
36 God. Some find it simply impossible. They have to suffer; but the
37 other poor people, they should not suffer for them. Now I leave this
38 to your judgment; but that is their idea in India.

39 Next we come to woman as daughter. The great difficulty in
40 the Indian household is the daughter. The daughter and caste
41 combined ruin the poor Hindu, because, you see, she must marry in
42 the same caste, and even inside the caste exactly in the same order;
43 and so the poor man sometimes has to make himself a beggar to get
44 his daughter married. The father of the boy demands a very high
45 price for his son, and this poor man sometimes has to sell
46 everything just to get a husband for his daughter. The great
47 difficulty of the Hindu's life is the daughter. And, curiously enough,
48 the word daughter in Sanskrit is "duhita". The real derivation is
49 that, in ancient times, the daughter of the family was accustomed to
50 milk the cows, and so the word "duhita" comes from "duh", to milk;
51 and the word "daughter" really means a milkmaid. Later on, they
52 found a new meaning to that word "duhita", the milkmaid--she who

1 milks away all the milk of the family. That is the second meaning.

2 These are the different relations held by our Indian women.
3 As I have told you, the mother is the greatest in position, the wife is
4 next, and the daughter comes after them. It is a most intricate and
5 complicated series of gradation. No foreigner can understand it,
6 even if he lives there for years. For instance, we have three forms
7 of the personal pronoun; they are a sort of verbs in our language.
8 One is very respectful, one is middling, and the lowest is just like
9 *thou* and *thee*. To children and servants the last is addressed. The
10 middling one is used with equals. You see, these are to be applied in
11 all the intricate relations of life. For example, to my elder sister I
12 always throughout my life use the pronoun *apani*, but she never
13 does in speaking to me; she says *tumi* to me. She should not, even
14 by mistake, say *apani* to me, because that would mean a curse.
15 Love, the love toward those that are superior, should always be
16 expressed in that form of language. That is the custom. Similarly I
17 would never dare address my elder sister or elder brother, much
18 less my mother or father, as *tu* or *tum* or *tumi*. As to calling our
19 mother and father by name, why, we would never do that. Before I
20 knew the customs of this country, I received such a shock when the
21 son, in a very refined family, got up and called the mother by name!
22 However, I got used to that. That is the custom of the country. But
23 with us, we never pronounce the name of our parents when they
24 are present. It is always in the third person plural, even before
25 them.

26 Thus we see the most complicated mesh-work in the social
27 life of our men and our women and in our degree of relationship.
28 We do not speak to our wives before our elders; it is only when we
29 are alone or when inferiors are present. If I were married, I would
30 speak to my wife before my younger sister, my nephews or nieces;
31 but not before my elder sister or parents. I cannot talk to my sisters
32 about their husbands at all. The idea is, we are a monastic race.
33 The whole social organisation has that one idea before it. Marriage
34 is thought of as something impure, something lower. Therefore the
35 subject of love would never be talked of. I cannot read a novel
36 before my sister, or my brothers, or my mother, or even before
37 others. I close the book.

38 Then again, eating and drinking is all in the same category.
39 We do not eat before superiors. Our women never eat before men,
40 except they be the children or inferiors. The wife would die rather
41 than, as she says, "munch" before her husband. Sometimes, for
42 instance, brothers and sisters may eat together; and if I and my
43 sister are eating, and the husband comes to the door, my sister
44 stops, and the poor husband flies out.

45 These are the customs peculiar to the country. A few of these
46 I note in different countries also. As I never married myself, I am
47 not perfect in all my knowledge about the wife. Mother, sisters--I
48 know what they are; and other people's wives I saw; from that I
49 gather what I have told you.

50 As to education and culture, it all depends upon the man.
51 That is to say, where the men are highly cultured, there the women

1 are; where the men are not, women are not. Now, from the oldest
2 times, you know, the primary education, according to the old Hindu
3 customs, belongs to the village system. All the land from time
4 immemorial was nationalised, as you say--belonged to the
5 Government. There never is any private right in land. The revenue
6 in India comes from the land, because every man holds so much
7 land from the Government. This land is held in common by a
8 community, it may be five, ten, twenty, or a hundred families. They
9 govern the whole of the land, pay a certain amount of revenue to
10 the Government, maintain a physician, a village schoolmaster, and
11 so on.

12 Those of you who have read Herbert Spencer remember what
13 he calls the "monastery system" of education that was tried in
14 Europe and which in some parts proved a success; that is, there is
15 one schoolmaster, whom the village keeps. These primary schools
16 are very rudimentary, because our methods are so simple. Each boy
17 brings a little mat; and his paper, to begin with, is palm leaves. Palm
18 leaves first, paper is too costly. Each boy spreads his little mat and
19 sits upon it, brings out his inkstand and his books and begins to
20 write. A little arithmetic, some Sanskrit grammar, a little of
21 language and accounts--these are taught in the primary school.

22 A little book on ethics, taught by an old man, we learnt by
23 heart, and I remember one of the lessons:

24 "For the good of a village, a man ought to give up his family;

25 For the good of a country, he ought to give up his village;

26 For the good of humanity, he may give up his country;

27 For the good of the world, everything."

28 Such verses are there in the books. We get them by heart,
29 and they are explained by teacher and pupil. These things we learn,
30 both boys and girls together. Later on, the education differs. The old
31 Sanskrit universities are mainly composed of boys. The girls very
32 rarely go up to those universities; but there are a few exceptions.

33 In these modern days there is a greater impetus towards
34 higher education on the European lines, and the trend of opinion is
35 strong towards women getting this higher education. Of course,
36 there are some people in India who do not want it, but those who do
37 want it carried the day. It is a strange fact that Oxford and
38 Cambridge are closed to women today, so are Harvard and Yale; but
39 Calcutta University opened its doors to women more than twenty
40 years ago. I remember that the year I graduated, several girls came
41 out and graduated--the same standard, the same course, the same
42 in everything as the boys; and they did very well indeed. And our
43 religion does not prevent a woman being educated at all. In this
44 way the girl should be educated; even thus she should be trained;
45 and in the old books we find that the universities were equally
46 resorted to by both girls and boys, but later the education of the
47 whole nation was neglected. What can you expect under foreign
48 rule? The foreign conqueror is not there to do good to us; he wants
49 his money. I studied hard for twelve years and became a graduate
50 of Calcutta University; now I can scarcely make \$5.00 a month in

1 my country. Would you believe it? It is actually a fact. So these
2 educational institutions of foreigners are simply to get a lot of
3 useful, practical slaves for a little money--to turn out a host of
4 clerks, postmasters, telegraph operators, and so on. There it is.

5 As a result, education for both boys and girls is neglected,
6 entirely neglected. There are a great many things that should be
7 done in that land; but you must always remember, if you will kindly
8 excuse me and permit me to use one of your own proverbs, "What is
9 sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander." Your foreign born
10 ladies are always crying over the hardships of the Hindu woman,
11 and never care for the hardships of the Hindu man. They are all
12 weeping salt tears. But who are the little girls married to? Some
13 one, when told that they are all married to old men, asked, "And
14 what do the young men do? What! are all the girls married to old
15 men, only to old men?" We are born old--perhaps all the men there.

16 The ideal of the Indian race is freedom of the soul. This world
17 is nothing. It is a vision, a dream. This life is one of many millions
18 like it. The whole of this nature is Maya, is phantasm, a pest house
19 of phantasms. That is the philosophy. Babies smile at life and think
20 it so beautiful and good, but in a few years they will have to revert
21 to where they began. They began life crying, and they will leave it
22 crying. Nations in the vigour of their youth think that they can do
23 anything and everything: "We are the gods of the earth. We are the
24 chosen people." They think that God Almighty has given them a
25 charter to rule over all the world, to advance His plans, to do
26 anything they like, to turn the world upside down. They have a
27 charter to rob, murder, kill; God has given them this, and they do
28 that because they are only babes. So empire after empire has
29 arisen--glorious, resplendent--now vanished away--gone, nobody
30 knows where; it may have been stupendous in its ruin.

31 As a drop of water upon a lotus leaf tumbles about and falls in
32 a moment, even so is this mortal life. Everywhere we turn are ruins.
33 Where the forest stands today was once the mighty empire with
34 huge cities. That is the dominant idea, the tone, the colour of the
35 Indian mind. We know, you Western people have the youthful blood
36 coursing through your veins. We know that nations, like men, have
37 their day. Where is Greece? Where is Rome? Where that mighty
38 Spaniard of the other day? Who knows through it all what becomes
39 of India? Thus they are born, and thus they die; they rise and fall.
40 The Hindu as a child knows of the Mogul invader whose cohorts no
41 power on earth could stop, who has left in your language the
42 terrible word "Tartar". The Hindu has learnt his lesson. He does not
43 want to prattle, like the babes of today. Western people, say what
44 you have to say. This is your day. Onward, go on, babes; have your
45 prattle out. This is the day of the babies, to prattle. We have learnt
46 our lesson and are quiet. You have a little wealth today, and you
47 look down upon us. Well, this is your day. Prattle, babes, prattle--
48 this is the Hindu's attitude.

49 The Lord of Lords is not to be attained by much frothy
50 speech. The Lord of Lords is not to be attained even by the powers
51 of the intellect. He is not gained by much power of conquest. That
52 man who knows the secret source of things and that everything else

1 is evanescent, unto him He, the Lord, comes; unto none else. India
2 has learnt her lesson through ages and ages of experience. She has
3 turned her face towards Him. She has made many mistakes; loads
4 and loads of rubbish are heaped upon the race. Never mind; what
5 of that? What is the clearing of rubbish, the cleaning of cities, and
6 all that? Does that give life? Those that have fine institutions, they
7 die. And what of institutions, those tinplate Western institutions,
8 made in five days and broken on the sixth? One of these little
9 handful nations cannot keep alive for two centuries together. And
10 our institutions have stood the test of ages. Says the Hindu, "Yes,
11 we have buried all the old nations of the earth and stand here to
12 bury all the new races also, because our ideal is not this world, but
13 the other. Just as your ideal is, so shall you be. If your ideal is
14 mortal, if your ideal is of this earth, so shalt thou be. If your ideal is
15 matter, matter shalt thou be. Behold! Our ideal is the Spirit. That
16 alone exists, nothing else exists; and like Him, we live for ever."

MY LIFE AND MISSION

*(Delivered at the Shakespeare Club of Pasadena, California,
on January 27, 1900)*

Now, ladies and gentlemen, the subject for this morning was to have been the Vedanta Philosophy. That subject itself is interesting, but rather dry and very vast.

Meanwhile, I have been asked by your president and some of the ladies and gentlemen here to tell them something about my work and what I have been doing. It may be interesting to some here, but not so much so to me. In fact, I do not quite know how to tell it to you, for this will have been the first time in my life that I have spoken on that subject.

Now, to understand what I have been trying to do, in my small way, I will take you, in imagination, to India. We have not time to go into all the details and all the ramifications of the subject; nor is it possible for you to understand all the complexities in a foreign race in this short time. Suffice it to say, I will at least try to give you a little picture of what India is like.

It is like a gigantic building all tumbled down in ruins. At first sight, then, there is little hope. It is a nation gone and ruined. But you wait and study, then you see something beyond that. The truth is that so long as the principle, the ideal, of which the outer man is the expression, is not hurt or destroyed, the man lives, and there is hope for that man. If your coat is stolen twenty times, that is no reason why you should be destroyed. You can get a new coat. The coat is unessential. The fact that a rich man is robbed does not hurt the vitality of the man, does not mean death. The man will survive.

Standing on this principle, we look in and we see--what? India is no longer a political power; it is an enslaved race. Indians have no say, no voice in their own government; they are three hundred millions of slaves--nothing more! The average income of a man in India is two shillings a month. The common state of the vast mass of the people is starvation, so that, with the least decrease in income, millions die. A little famine means death. So there, too, when I look on that side of India, I see ruin--hopeless ruin.

But we find that the Indian race never stood for wealth. Although they acquired immense wealth, perhaps more than any other nation ever acquired, yet the nation did not stand for wealth. It was a powerful race for ages, yet we find that that nation never stood for power, never went out of the country to conquer. Quite content within their own boundaries, they never fought anybody. The Indian nation never stood for imperial glory. Wealth and power, then, were not the ideals of the race.

What then? Whether they were wrong or right--that is not the question we discuss--that nation, among all the children of men, has believed, and believed intensely, that this life is not real. The real is God; and they must cling unto that God through thick and thin. In the midst of their degradation, religion came first. The Hindu man

1 drinks religiously, sleeps religiously, walks religiously, marries
2 religiously, robs religiously.

3 Did you ever see such a country? If you want to get up a gang
4 of robbers, the leader will have to preach some sort of religion,
5 then formulate some bogus metaphysics, and say that this method
6 is the clearest and quickest way to get God. Then he finds a
7 following, otherwise not. That shows that the vitality of the race,
8 the mission of the race is religion; and because that has not been
9 touched, therefore that race lives.

10 See Rome. Rome's mission was imperial power, expansion.
11 And so soon as that was touched, Rome fell to pieces, passed out.
12 The mission of Greece was intellect, as soon as that was touched,
13 why, Greece passed out. So in modern times, Spain and all these
14 modern countries. Each nation has a mission for the world. So long
15 as that mission is not hurt, that nation lives, despite every difficulty.
16 But as soon as its mission is destroyed, the nation collapses.

17 Now, that vitality of India has not been touched yet. They
18 have not given up that, and it is still strong--in spite of all their
19 superstitions. Hideous superstitions are there, most revolting some
20 of them. Never mind. The national life-current is still there--the
21 mission of the race.

22 The Indian nation never will be a powerful conquering
23 people--never. They will never be a great political power; that is not
24 their business, that is not the note India has to play in the great
25 harmony of nations. But what has she to play? God, and God alone.
26 She clings unto that like grim death. Still there is hope there.

27 So, then, after your analysis, you come to the conclusion that
28 all these things, all this poverty and misery, are of no consequence--
29 the man is living still, and therefore there is hope.

30 Well! You see religious activities going on all through the
31 country. I do not recall a year that has not given birth to several
32 new sects in India. The stronger the current, the more the
33 whirlpools and eddies. Sects are not signs of decay, they are a sign
34 of life. Let sects multiply, till the time comes when every one of us is
35 a sect, each individual. We need not quarrel about that.

36 Now, take your country. (I do not mean any criticism). Here
37 the social laws, the political formation--everything is made to
38 facilitate man's journey in this life. He may live very happily so long
39 as he is on this earth. Look at your streets--how clean! Your
40 beautiful cities! And in how many ways a man can make money!
41 How many channels to get enjoyment in this life! But, if a man here
42 should say, "Now look here, I shall sit down under this tree and
43 meditate; I do not want to work", why, he would have to go to jail.
44 See! There would be no chance for him at all. None. A man can live
45 in this society only if he falls in line. He has to join in this rush for
46 the enjoyment of good in this life, or he dies.

47 Now let us go back to India. There, if a man says, "I shall go
48 and sit on the top of that mountain and look at the tip of my nose all
49 the rest of my days", everybody says, "Go, and Godspeed to you!"
50 He need not speak a word. Somebody brings him a little cloth, and

1 he is all right. But if a man says, "Behold, I am going to enjoy a little
2 of this life", every door is closed to him.

3 I say that the ideas of both countries are unjust. I see no
4 reason why a man here should not sit down and look at the tip of his
5 nose if he likes. Why should everybody here do just what the
6 majority does? I see no reason.

7 Nor why, in India, a man should not have the goods of this life
8 and make money. But you see how those vast millions are forced to
9 accept the opposite point of view by tyranny. This is the tyranny of
10 the sages. This is the tyranny of the great, tyranny of the spiritual,
11 tyranny of the intellectual, tyranny of the wise. And the tyranny of
12 the wise, mind you, is much more powerful than the tyranny of the
13 ignorant. The wise, the intellectual, when they take to forcing their
14 opinions upon others, know a hundred thousand ways to make
15 bonds and barriers which it is not in the power of the ignorant to
16 break.

17 Now, I say that this thing has got to stop. There is no use in
18 sacrificing millions and millions of people to produce one spiritual
19 giant. If it is possible to make a society where the spiritual giant
20 will be produced and all the rest of the people will be happy as well,
21 that is good; but if the millions have to be ground down, that is
22 unjust. Better that the one great man should suffer for the salvation
23 of the world.

24 In every nation you will have to work through their methods.
25 To every man you will have to speak in his own language. Now, in
26 England or in America, if you want to preach religion to them, you
27 will have to work through political methods--make organisations,
28 societies, with voting, balloting, a president, and so on, because
29 that is the language, the method of the Western race. On the other
30 hand, if you want to speak of politics in India, you must speak
31 through the language of religion. You will have to tell them
32 something like this: "The man who cleans his house every morning
33 will acquire such and such an amount of merit, he will go to heaven,
34 or he comes to God." Unless you put it that way, they will not listen
35 to you. It is a question of language. The thing done is the same. But
36 with every race, you will have to speak their language in order to
37 reach their hearts. And that is quite just. We need not fret about
38 that.

39 In the Order to which I belong we are called Sannyasins. The
40 word means "a man who has renounced". This is a very, very, very
41 ancient Order. Even Buddha, who was 560 years before Christ,
42 belonged to that Order. He was one of the reformers of his Order.
43 That was all. So ancient! You find it mentioned away back in the
44 Vedas, the oldest book in the world. In old India there was the
45 regulation that every man and woman, towards the end of their
46 lives, must get out of social life altogether and think of nothing
47 except God and their own salvation. This was to get ready for the
48 great event--death. So old people used to become Sannyasins in
49 those early days. Later on, young people began to give up the
50 world. And young people are active. They could not sit down under
51 a tree and think all the time of their own death, so they went about

1 preaching and starting sects, and so on. Thus, Buddha, being
2 young, started that great reform. Had he been an old man, he
3 would have looked at the tip of his nose and died quietly.

4 The Order is not a church, and the people who join the Order
5 are not priests. There is an absolute difference between the priests
6 and the Sannyasins. In India, priesthood, like every other business
7 in a social life, is a hereditary profession. A priest's son will become
8 a priest, just as a carpenter's son will be a carpenter, or a
9 blacksmith's son a blacksmith. The priest must always be married.
10 The Hindu does not think a man is complete unless he has a wife.
11 An unmarried man has no right to perform religious ceremonies.

12 The Sannyasins do not possess property, and they do not
13 marry. Beyond that there is no organisation. The only bond that is
14 there is the bond between the teacher and the taught--and that is
15 peculiar to India. The teacher is not a man who comes just to teach
16 me, and I pay him so much, and there it ends. In India it is really
17 like an adoption. The teacher is more than my own father, and I am
18 truly his child, his son in every respect. I owe him obedience and
19 reverence first, before my own father even; because, they say, the
20 father gave me this body, but *he* showed me the way to salvation,
21 he is greater than father. And we carry this love, this respect for
22 our teacher all our lives. And that is the only organisation that
23 exists. I adopt my disciples. Sometimes the teacher will be a young
24 man and the disciple a very old man. But never mind, he is the son,
25 and he calls me "Father", and I have to address him as my son, my
26 daughter, and so on.

27 Now, I happened to get an old man to teach me, and he was
28 very peculiar. He did not go much for intellectual scholarship,
29 scarcely studied books; but when he was a boy he was seized with
30 the tremendous idea of getting truth direct. First he tried by
31 studying his own religion. Then he got the idea that he must get the
32 truth of other religions; and with that idea he joined all the sects,
33 one after another. For the time being he did exactly what they told
34 him to do--lived with the devotees of these different sects in turn,
35 until interpenetrated with the particular ideal of that sect. After a
36 few years he would go to another sect. When he had gone through
37 with all that, he came to the conclusion that they were all good. He
38 had no criticism to offer to any one; they are all so many paths
39 leading to the same goal. And then he said, "That is a glorious
40 thing, that there should be so many paths, because if there were
41 only one path, perhaps it would suit only an individual man. The
42 more the number of paths, the more the chance for every one of us
43 to know the truth. If I cannot be taught in one language, I will try
44 another, and so on". Thus his benediction was for every religion.

45 Now, all the ideas that I preach are only an attempt to echo
46 his ideas. Nothing is mine originally except the wicked ones,
47 everything I say which is false and wicked. But every word that I
48 have ever uttered which is true and good is simply an attempt to
49 echo his voice. Read his life by Prof. Max Muller.²³⁹

1 ²³⁹ ?*Ramakrishna: His Life and Sayings*, first published in London in 1896.
2 Reprinted in 1951 by Advaita Ashrama.
3

1 Well, there at his feet I conceived these ideas--there with
2 some other young men. I was just a boy. I went there when I was
3 about sixteen. Some of the other boys were still younger, some a
4 little older--about a dozen or more. And together we conceived that
5 this ideal had to be spread. And not only spread, but made
6 practical. That is to say, we must show the spirituality of the
7 Hindus, the mercifulness of the Buddhists, the activity of the
8 Christians, the brotherhood of the Mohammedans, by our practical
9 lives. "We shall start a universal religion now and here," we said,
10 "we will not wait".

11 Our teacher was an old man who would never touch a coin
12 with his hands. He took just the little food offered, just so many
13 yards of cotton cloth, no more. He could never be induced to take
14 any other gift. With all these marvellous ideas, he was strict,
15 because that made him free. The monk in India is the friend of the
16 prince today, dines with him; and tomorrow he is with the beggar,
17 sleeps under a tree. He must come into contact with everyone, must
18 always move about. As the saying is, "The rolling stone gathers no
19 moss". The last fourteen years of my life, I have never been for
20 three months at a time in any one place--continually rolling. So do
21 we all.

22 Now, this handful of boys got hold of these ideas, and all the
23 practical results that sprang out of these ideas. Universal religion,
24 great sympathy for the poor, and all that are very good in theory,
25 but one must practise.

26 Then came the sad day when our old teacher died. We nursed
27 him the best we could. We had no friends. Who would listen to a
28 few boys, with their crank notions? Nobody. At least, in India, boys
29 are nobodies. Just think of it--a dozen boys, telling people vast, big
30 ideas, saying they are determined to work these ideas out in life.
31 Why, everybody laughed. From laughter it became serious; it
32 became persecution. Why, the parents of the boys came to feel like
33 spanking every one of us. And the more we were derided, the more
34 determined we became.

35 Then came a terrible time--for me personally and for all the
36 other boys as well. But to me came such misfortune! On the one
37 side was my mother, my brothers. My father died at that time, and
38 we were left poor. Oh, very poor, almost starving all the time! I was
39 the only hope of the family, the only one who could do anything to
40 help them. I had to stand between my two worlds. On the one hand,
41 I would have to see my mother and brothers starve unto death; on
42 the other, I had believed that this man's ideas were for the good of
43 India and the world, and had to be preached and worked out. And
44 so the fight went on in my mind for days and months. Sometimes I
45 would pray for five or six days and nights together without
46 stopping. Oh, the agony of those days! I was living in hell! The
47 natural affections of my boy's heart drawing me to my family--I
48 could not bear to see those who were the nearest and dearest to me
49 suffering. On the other hand, nobody to sympathise with me. Who
50 would sympathise with the imaginations of a boy--imaginations that
51 caused so much suffering to others? Who would sympathise with
52 me? None--except one.

1 That one's sympathy brought blessing and hope. She was a
2 woman. Our teacher, this great monk, was married when he was a
3 boy and she a mere child. When he became a young man, and all
4 this religious zeal was upon him, she came to see him. Although
5 they had been married for long, they had not seen very much of
6 each other until they were grown up. Then he said to his wife,
7 "Behold, I am your husband; you have a right to this body. But I
8 cannot live the sex life, although I have married you. I leave it to
9 your judgment". And she wept and said, "God speed you! The Lord
10 bless you! Am I the woman to degrade you? If I can, I will help you.
11 Go on in your work".

12 That was the woman. The husband went on and became a
13 monk in his own way; and from a distance the wife went on helping
14 as much as she could. And later, when the man had become a great
15 spiritual giant, she came--really, she was the first disciple--and she
16 spent the rest of her life taking care of the body of this man. He
17 never knew whether he was living or dying, or anything.
18 Sometimes, when talking, he would get so excited that if he sat on
19 live charcoals, he did not know it. Live charcoals! Forgetting all
20 about his body, all the time.

21 Well, that lady, his wife, was the only one who sympathised
22 with the idea of those boys. But she was powerless. She was poorer
23 than we were. Never mind! We plunged into the breach. I believed,
24 as I was living, that these ideas were going to rationalise India and
25 bring better days to many lands and foreign races. With that belief,
26 came the realisation that it is better that a few persons suffer than
27 that such ideas should die out of the world. What if a mother or two
28 brothers die? It is a sacrifice. Let it be done. No great thing can be
29 done without sacrifice. The heart must be plucked out and the
30 bleeding heart placed upon the altar. Then great things are done. Is
31 there any other way? None have found it. I appeal to each one of
32 you, to those who have accomplished any great thing. Oh, how
33 much it has cost! What agony! What torture! What terrible suffering
34 is behind every deed of success in every life! You know that, all of
35 you.

36 And thus we went on, that band of boys. The only thing we
37 got from those around us was a kick and a curse--that was all. Of
38 course, we had to beg from door to door for our food: got hips and
39 haws--the refuse of everything--a piece of bread here and there. We
40 got hold of a broken-down old house, with hissing cobras living
41 underneath; and because that was the cheapest, we went into that
42 house and lived there.

43 Thus we went on for some years, in the meanwhile making
44 excursions all over India, trying to bring about the idea gradually.
45 Ten years were spent without a ray of light! Ten more years! A
46 thousand times despondency came; but there was one thing always
47 to keep us hopeful--the tremendous faithfulness to each other, the
48 tremendous love between us. I have got a hundred men and women
49 around me; if I become the devil himself tomorrow, they will say,
50 "Here we are still! We will never give you up!" That is a great
51 blessing. In happiness, in misery, in famine, in pain, in the grave, in
52 heaven, or in hell who never gives me up is my friend. Is such

1 friendship a joke? A man may have salvation through such
2 friendship. That brings salvation if we can love like that. If we have
3 that faithfulness, why, there is the essence of all concentration. You
4 need not worship any gods in the world if you have that faith, that
5 strength, that love. And that was there with us all throughout that
6 hard time. That was there. That made us go from the Himalayas to
7 Cape Comorin, from the Indus to the Brahmaputra.

8 This band of boys began to travel about. Gradually we began
9 to draw attention: ninety per cent was antagonism, very little of it
10 was helpful. For we had one fault: we were boys--in poverty and
11 with all the roughness of boys. He who has to make his own way in
12 life is a bit rough, he has not much time to be smooth and suave and
13 polite--"my lady and my gentleman", and all that. You have seen that
14 in life, always. He is a rough diamond, he has not much polish, he is
15 a jewel in an indifferent casket.

16 And there we were. "No compromise!" was the watchword.
17 "This is the ideal, and this has got to be carried out. If we meet the
18 king, though we die, we must give him a bit of our minds; if the
19 peasant, the same". Naturally, we met with antagonism.

20 But, mind you, this is life's experience; if you really want the
21 good of others, the whole universe may stand against you and
22 cannot hurt you. It must crumble before your power of the Lord
23 Himself in you if you are sincere and really unselfish. And those
24 boys were that.

25 They came as children, pure and fresh from the hands of
26 nature. Said our Master: I want to offer at the altar of the Lord only
27 those flowers that have not even been smelled, fruits that have not
28 been touched with the fingers. The words of the great man
29 sustained us all. For he saw through the future life of those boys
30 that he collected from the streets of Calcutta, so to say. People used
31 to laugh at him when he said, "You will see--this boy, that boy, what
32 he becomes". His faith was unalterable: "Mother showed it to me. I
33 may be weak, but when She says this is so--She can never make
34 mistakes--it must be so."

35 So things went on and on for ten years without any light, but
36 with my health breaking all the time. It tells on the body in the long
37 run: sometimes one meal at nine in the evening, another time a
38 meal at eight in the morning, another after two days, another after
39 three days--and always the poorest and roughest thing. Who is
40 going to give to the beggar the good things he has? And then, they
41 have not much in India. And most of the time walking, climbing
42 snow peaks, sometimes ten miles of hard mountain climbing, just to
43 get a meal. They eat unleavened bread in India, and sometimes they
44 have it stored away for twenty or thirty days, until it is harder than
45 bricks; and then they will give a square of that. I would have to go
46 from house to house to collect sufficient for one meal. And then the
47 bread was so hard, it made my mouth bleed to eat it. Literally, you
48 can break your teeth on that bread. Then I would put it in a pot and
49 pour over it water from the river. For months and months I existed
50 that way--of course it was telling on the health.

51 Then I thought, I have tried India: it is time for me to try

1 another country. At that time your Parliament of Religions was to be
2 held, and someone was to be sent from India. I was just a
3 vagabond, but I said, "If you send me, I am going. I have not much
4 to lose, and I do not care if I lose that." It was very difficult to find
5 the money, but after a long struggle they got together just enough
6 to pay for my passage--and I came. Came one or two months earlier,
7 so that I found myself drifting about in the streets here, without
8 knowing anybody.

9 But finally the Parliament of Religions opened, and I met kind
10 friends, who helped me right along. I worked a little, collected
11 funds, started two papers, and so on. After that I went over to
12 England and worked there. At the same time I carried on the work
13 for India in America too.

14 My plan for India, as it has been developed and centralised, is
15 this: I have told you of our lives as monks there, how we go from
16 door to door, so that religion is brought to everybody without
17 charge, except, perhaps, a broken piece of bread. That is why you
18 see the lowest of the low in India holding the most exalted religious
19 ideas. It is all through the work of these monks. But ask a man,
20 "Who are the English?"--he does not know. He says perhaps, "They
21 are the children of those giants they speak of in those books, are
22 they not?" "Who governs you?" "We do not know." "What is the
23 government?" They do not know. But they know philosophy. It is a
24 practical want of intellectual education about life on this earth they
25 suffer from. These millions and millions of people are ready for life
26 beyond this world--is not that enough for them? Certainly not. They
27 must have a better piece of bread and a better piece of rag on their
28 bodies. The great question is: How to get that better bread and
29 better rag for these sunken millions.

30 First, I must tell you, there is great hope for them, because,
31 you see, they are the gentlest people on earth. Not that they are
32 timid. When they want to fight, they fight like demons. The best
33 soldiers the English have are recruited from the peasantry of India.
34 Death is a thing of no importance to them. Their attitude is "Twenty
35 times I have died before, and I shall die many times after this. What
36 of that?" They never turn back. They are not given to much emotion,
37 but they make very good fighters.

38 Their instinct, however, is to plough. If you rob them, murder
39 them, tax them, do anything to them, they will be quiet and gentle,
40 so long as you leave them free to practise their religion. They never
41 interfere with the religion of others. "Leave us liberty to worship
42 our gods, and take everything else!" That is their attitude. When the
43 English touch them there, trouble starts. That was the real cause of
44 the 1857 Mutiny--they would not bear religious repression. The
45 great Mohammedan governments were simply blown up because
46 they touched the Indians' religion.

47 But aside from that, they are very peaceful, very quiet, very
48 gentle, and, above all, not given to vice. The absence of any strong
49 drink, oh, it makes them infinitely superior to the mobs of any other
50 country. You cannot compare the decency of life among the poor in
51 India with life in the slums here. A slum means poverty, but poverty

1 does not mean sin, indecency, and vice in India. In other countries,
2 the opportunities are such that only the indecent and the lazy need
3 be poor. There is no reason for poverty unless one is a fool or a
4 blackguard--the sort who want city life and all its luxuries. They will
5 not go into the country. They say, "We are here with all the fun, and
6 you must give us bread". But that is not the case in India, where the
7 poor fellows work hard from morning to sunset, and somebody else
8 takes the bread out of their hands, and their children go hungry.
9 Notwithstanding the millions of tons of wheat raised in India,
10 scarcely a grain passes the mouth of a peasant. He lives upon the
11 poorest corn, which you would not feed to your canary-birds.

12 Now there is no reason why they should suffer such distress--
13 these people; oh, so pure and good! We hear so much talk about the
14 sunken millions and the degraded women of India--but none come
15 to our help. What do they say? They say, "You can only be helped,
16 you can only be good by ceasing to be what you are. It is useless to
17 help Hindus." These people do not know the history of races. There
18 will be no more India if they change their religion and their
19 institutions, because that is the vitality of that race. It will
20 disappear; so, really, you will have nobody to help.

21 Then there is the other great point to learn: that you can
22 never help really. What can we do for each other? You are growing
23 in your own life, I am growing in my own. It is possible that I can
24 give you a push in your life, knowing that, in the long run, all roads
25 lead to Rome. It is a steady growth. No national civilisation is
26 perfect yet. Give that civilisation a push, and it will arrive at its own
27 goal: do not strive to change it. Take away a nation's institutions,
28 customs, and manners, and what will be left? They hold the nation
29 together.

30 But here comes the very learned foreign man, and he says,
31 "Look here; you give up all those institutions and customs of
32 thousands of years, and take my tomfool tinpot and be happy". This
33 is all nonsense.

34 We will have to help each other, but we have to go one step
35 farther: the first thing is to become unselfish in help. "If you do just
36 what I tell you to do, I will help you; otherwise not." Is that help?

37 And so, if the Hindus want to help you spiritually, there will
38 be no question of limitations: perfect unselfishness. I give, and
39 there it ends. It is gone from me. My mind, my powers, my
40 everything that I have to give, is given: given with the idea to give,
41 and no more. I have seen many times people who have robbed half
42 the world, and they gave \$20,000 "to convert the heathen".

1 What for? For the benefit of the heathen, or for their own
2 souls? Just think of that.

3 And the Nemesis of crime is working. We men try to
4 hoodwink our own eyes. But inside the heart, He has remained, the
5 real Self. He never forgets. We can never delude Him. His eyes will
6 never be hoodwinked. Whenever there is any impulse of real
7 charity, it tells, though it be at the end of a thousand years.
8 Obstructed, it yet wakens once more to burst like a thunderbolt.
9 And every impulse where the motive is selfish, self-seeking--though
10 it may be launched forth with all the newspapers blazoning, all the
11 mobs standing and cheering--it fails to reach the mark.

12 I am not taking pride in this. But, mark you, I have told the
13 story of that group of boys. Today there is not a village, not a man,
14 not a woman in India that does not know their work and bless them.
15 There is not a famine in the land where these boys do not plunge in
16 and try to work and rescue as many as they can. And that strikes to
17 the heart. The people come to know it. So help whenever you can,
18 but mind what your motive is. If it is selfish, it will neither benefit
19 those you help, nor yourself. If it is unselfish, it will bring blessings
20 upon them to whom it is given, and infinite blessings upon you, sure
21 as you are living. The Lord can never be hoodwinked. The law of
22 Karma can never be hoodwinked.

23 Well then, my plans are, therefore, to reach these masses of
24 India. Suppose you start schools all over India for the poor, still you
25 cannot educate them. How can you? The boy of four years would
26 better go to the plough or to work, than to your school. He cannot
27 go to your school. It is impossible. Self-preservation is the first
28 instinct. But if the mountain does not go to Mohammed, then
29 Mohammed can come to the mountain. Why should not education
30 go from door to door, say I. If a ploughman's boy cannot come to
31 education, why not meet him at the plough, at the factory, just
32 wherever he is? Go along with him, like his shadow. But there are
33 these hundreds and thousands of monks, educating the people on
34 the spiritual plane; why not let these men do the same work on the
35 intellectual plane? Why should they not talk to the masses a little
36 about history--about many things? The ears are the best educators.
37 The best principles in our lives were those which we heard from our
38 mothers through our ears. Books came much later. Book-learning is
39 nothing. Through the ears we get the best formative principles.
40 Then, as they get more and more interested, they may come to your
41 books too. First, let it roll on and on--that is my idea.

42 Well, I must tell you that I am not a very great believer in
43 monastic systems. They have great merits, and also great defects.
44 There should be a perfect balance between the monastics and the
45 householders. But monasticism has absorbed all the power in India.
46 We represent the greatest power. The monk is greater than the
47 prince. There is no reigning sovereign in India who dares to sit
48 down when the "yellow cloth" is there. He gives up his seat and
49 stands. Now, that is bad, so much power, even in the hands of good
50 men--although these monastics have been the bulwark of the
51 people. They stand between the priestcraft and knowledge. They
52 are the centres of knowledge and reform. They are just what the

1 prophets were among the Jews. The prophets were always
2 preaching against the priests, trying to throw out superstitions. So
3 are they in India. But all the same so much power is not good there;
4 better methods should be worked out. But you can only work in the
5 line of least resistance. The whole national soul there is upon
6 monasticism. You go to India and preach any religion as a
7 householder: the Hindu people will turn back and go out. If you
8 have given up the world, however, they say, "He is good, he has
9 given up the world. He is a sincere man, he wants to do what he
10 preaches." What I mean to say is this, that it represents a
11 tremendous power. What we can do is just to transform it, give it
12 another form. This tremendous power in the hands of the roving
13 Sannyasins of India has got to be transformed, and it will raise the
14 masses up.

15 Now, you see, we have brought the plan down nicely on
16 paper; but I have taken it, at the same time, from the regions of
17 idealism. So far the plan was loose and idealistic. As years went on,
18 it became more and more condensed and accurate; I began to see
19 by actual working its defects, and all that.

20 What did I discover in its working on the material plane?
21 First, there must be centres to educate these monks in the method
22 of education. For instance, I send one of my men, and he goes about
23 with a camera: he has to be taught in those things himself. In India,
24 you will find every man is quite illiterate, and that teaching requires
25 tremendous centres. And what does all that mean? Money. From
26 the idealistic plane you come to everyday work. Well, I have worked
27 hard, four years in your country, and two in England. And I am very
28 thankful that some friends came to the rescue. One who is here
29 today with you is amongst them. There are American friends and
30 English friends who went over with me to India, and there has been
31 a very rude beginning. Some English people came and joined the
32 orders. One poor man worked hard and died in India. There are an
33 Englishman and an Englishwoman who have retired; they have
34 some means of their own, and they have started a centre in the
35 Himalayas, educating the children. I have given them one of the
36 papers I have started--a copy you will find there on the table--*The*
37 *Awakened India*. And there they are instructing and working
38 among the people. I have another centre in Calcutta. Of course, all
39 great movements must proceed from the capital. For what is a
40 capital? It is the heart of a nation. All the blood comes into the
41 heart and thence it is distributed; so all the wealth, all the ideas, all
42 the education, all spirituality will converge towards the capital and
43 spread from it.

44 I am glad to tell you I have made a rude beginning. But the
45 same work I want to do, on parallel lines, for women. And my
46 principle is: each one helps himself. My help is from a distance.
47 There are Indian women, English women, and I hope American
48 women will come to take up the task. As soon as they have begun, I
49 wash my hands of it. No man shall dictate to a woman; nor a woman
50 to a man. Each one is independent. What bondage there may be is
51 only that of love. Women will work out their own destinies--much
52 better, too, than men can ever do for them. All the mischief to

1 women has come because men undertook to shape the destiny of
2 women. And I do not want to start with any initial mistake. One
3 little mistake made then will go on multiplying; and if you succeed,
4 in the long run that mistake will have assumed gigantic proportions
5 and become hard to correct. So, if I made this mistake of employing
6 men to work out this women's part of the work, why, women will
7 never get rid of that--it will have become a custom. But I have got
8 an opportunity. I told you of the lady who was my Master's wife. We
9 have all great respect for her. She never dictates to us. So it is quite
10 safe.

11 That part has to be accomplished.

BUDDHA'S MESSAGE TO THE WORLD

(Delivered in San Francisco, on March 18, 1900)

Buddhism is historically the most important religion--historically, not philosophically--because it was the most tremendous religious movement that the world ever saw, the most gigantic spiritual wave ever to burst upon human society. There is no civilisation on which its effect has not been felt in some way or other.

The followers of Buddha were most enthusiastic and very missionary in spirit. They were the first among the adherents of various religions not to remain content with the limited sphere of their Mother Church. They spread far and wide. They travelled east and west, north and south. They reached into darkest Tibet; they went into Persia, Asia Minor; they went into Russia, Poland, and many other countries of the Western world. They went into China, Korea, Japan; they went into Burma, Siam, the East Indies, and beyond. When Alexander the Great, through his military conquests, brought the Mediterranean world in contact with India, the wisdom of India at once found a channel through which to spread over vast portions of Asia and Europe. Buddhist priests went out teaching among the different nations; and as they taught, superstition and priestcraft began to vanish like mist before the sun.

To understand this movement properly you should know what conditions prevailed in India at the time Buddha came, just as to understand Christianity you have to grasp the state of Jewish society at the time of Christ. It is necessary that you have an idea of Indian society six hundred years before the birth of Christ, by which time Indian civilisation had already completed its growth.

When you study the civilisation of India, you find that it has died and revived several times; this is its peculiarity. Most races rise once and then decline for ever. There are two kinds of people; those who grow continually and those whose growth comes to an end. The peaceful nations, India and China, fall down, yet rise again; but the others, once they go down, do not come up--they die. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall enjoy the earth.

At the time Buddha was born, India was in need of a great spiritual leader, a prophet. There was already a most powerful body of priests. You will understand the situation better if you remember the history of the Jews--how they had two types of religious leaders, priests and prophets, the priests keeping the people in ignorance and grinding superstitions into their minds. The methods of worship the priests prescribed were only a means by which they could dominate the people. All through the Old Testament, you find the prophets challenging the superstitions of the priests. The outcome of this fight was the triumph of the prophets and the defeat of the priests.

Priests believe that there is a God, but that this God can be

1 approached and known only through them. People can enter the
2 Holy of Holies only with the permission of the priests. You must pay
3 them, worship them, place everything in their hands. Throughout
4 the history of the world, this priestly tendency has cropped up
5 again and again--this tremendous thirst for power, this tiger-like
6 thirst, seems a part of human nature. The priests dominate you, lay
7 down a thousand rules for you. They describe simple truths in
8 roundabout ways. They tell you stories to support their own
9 superior position. If you want to thrive in this life or go to heaven
10 after death, you have to pass through their hands. You have to
11 perform all kinds of ceremonies and rituals. All this has made life so
12 complicated and has so confused the brain that if I give you plain
13 words, you will go home unsatisfied.

14 You have become thoroughly befuddled. The less you
15 understand, the better you feel! The prophets have been giving
16 warnings against the priests and their superstitions and
17 machinations; but the vast mass of people have not yet learnt to
18 heed these warnings--education is yet to come to them.

19 Men must have education. They speak of democracy, of the
20 equality of all men, these days. But how will a man know he is equal
21 with all? He must have a strong brain, a clear mind free of
22 nonsensical ideas; he must pierce through the mass of superstitions
23 encrusting his mind to the pure truth that is in his inmost Self. Then
24 he will know that all perfections, all powers are already within
25 himself, that these have not to be given him by others. When he
26 realises this, he becomes free that moment, he achieves equality.
27 He also realises that every one else is equally as perfect as he, and
28 he does not have to exercise any power, physical, mental or moral,
29 over his brother men. He abandons the idea that there was ever
30 any man who was lower than himself. Then he can talk of equality;
31 not until then.

32 Now, as I was telling you, among the Jews there was a
33 continuous struggle between the priests and the prophets; and the
34 priests sought to monopolise power and knowledge, till they
35 themselves began to lose them and the chains they had put on the
36 feet of the people were on their own feet. The masters always
37 become slaves before long. The culmination of the struggle was the
38 victory of Jesus of Nazareth. This triumph is the history of
39 Christianity. Christ at last succeeded in overthrowing the mass of
40 witchcraft. This great prophet killed the dragon of priestly
41 selfishness, rescued from its clutches the jewel of truth, and gave it
42 to all the world, so that whosoever desired to possess it would have
43 absolute freedom to do so, and would not have to wait on the
44 pleasure of any priest or priests.

45 The Jews were never a very philosophical race: they had not
46 the subtlety of the Indian brain nor did they have the Indian's
47 psychic power. The priests in India, the Brahmins, possessed great
48 intellectual and psychic powers. It was they who began the spiritual
49 development of India, and they accomplished wonderful things. But
50 the time came when the free spirit of development that had at first
51 actuated the Brahmins disappeared. They began to arrogate
52 powers and privileges to themselves. If a Brahmin killed a man, he

1 would not be punished. The Brahmin, by his very birth, is the lord of
2 the universe! Even the most wicked Brahmin must be worshipped!

3 But while the priests were flourishing, there existed also the
4 poet-prophets called Sannyasins. All Hindus, whatever their castes
5 may be, must, for the sake of attaining spirituality, give up their
6 work and prepare for death. No more is the world to be of any
7 interest to them. They must go out and become Sannyasins. The
8 Sannyasins have nothing to do with the two thousand ceremonies
9 that the priests have invented: Pronounce certain words--ten
10 syllables, twenty syllables, and so on--all these things are nonsense.

11 So these poet-prophets of ancient India repudiated the ways
12 of the priest and declared the pure truth. They tried to break the
13 power of the priests, and they succeeded a little. But in two
14 generations their disciples went back to the superstitious,
15 roundabout ways of the priests--became priests themselves: "You
16 can get truth only through us!" Truth became crystallised again,
17 and again prophets came to break the encrustations and free the
18 truth, and so it went on. Yes, there must be all the time the man, the
19 prophet, or else humanity will die.

20 You wonder why there have to be all these roundabout
21 methods of the priests. Why can you not come directly to the truth?
22 Are you ashamed of God's truth

1 that you have to hide it behind all kinds of intricate
2 ceremonies and formulas? Are you ashamed of God that you cannot
3 confess His truth before the world? Do you call that being religious
4 and spiritual? The priests are the only people fit for the truth! The
5 masses are not fit for it! It must be diluted! Water it down a little!

6 Take the Sermon on the Mount and the Gita--they are
7 simplicity itself. Even the streetwalker can understand them. How
8 grand! In them you find the truth clearly and simply revealed. But
9 no, the priests would not accept that truth can be found so directly.
10 They speak of two thousand heavens and two thousand hells. If
11 people follow their prescriptions, they will go to heaven! If they do
12 not obey the rules, they will go to hell!

13 But the people shall learn the truth. Some are afraid that if
14 the full truth is given to all, it will hurt them. They should not be
15 given the unqualified truth--so they say. But the world is not much
16 better off by compromising truth. What worse can it be than it is
17 already? Bring truth out! If it is real, it will do good. When people
18 protest and propose other methods, they only make apologies for
19 witchcraft.

20 India was full of it in Buddha's day. There were the masses of
21 people, and they were debarred from all knowledge. If just a word
22 of the Vedas entered the ears of a man, terrible punishment was
23 visited upon him. The priests had made a secret of the Vedas--the
24 Vedas that contained the spiritual truths discovered by the ancient
25 Hindus!

26 At last one man could bear it no more. He had the brain, the
27 power, and the heart--a heart as infinite as the broad sky. He felt
28 how the masses were being led by the priests and how the priests
29 were glorying in their power, and he wanted to do something about
30 it. He did not want any power over any one, and he wanted to break
31 the mental and spiritual bonds of men. His heart was large. The
32 heart, many around us may have, and we also want to help others.
33 But we do not have the brain; we do not know the ways and means
34 by which help can be given. But this man had the brain to discover
35 the means of breaking the bondages of souls. He learnt why men
36 suffer, and he found the way out of suffering. He was a man of
37 accomplishment, he worked everything out; he taught one and all
38 without distinction and made them realise the peace of
39 enlightenment. This was the man Buddha.

40 You know from Arnold's poem, *The Light of Asia*, how Buddha
41 was born a prince and how the misery of the world struck him
42 deeply; how, although brought up and living in the lap of luxury, he
43 could not find comfort in his personal happiness and security; how
44 he renounced the world, leaving his princess and new-born son
45 behind; how he wandered searching for truth from teacher to
46 teacher; and how he at last attained to enlightenment. You know
47 about his long mission, his disciples, his organisations. You all know
48 these things.

49 Buddha was the triumph in the struggle that had been going
50 on between the priests and the prophets in India. One thing can be
51 said for these Indian priests--they were not and never are intolerant

1 of religion; they never have persecuted religion. Any man was
2 allowed to preach against them. Theirs is such a religion; they
3 never molested any one for his religious views. But they suffered
4 from the peculiar weaknesses of all the priests: they also sought
5 power; they also promulgated rules and regulations and made
6 religion unnecessarily complicated, and thereby undermined the
7 strength of those who followed their religion.

8 Buddha cut through all these excrescences. He preached the
9 most tremendous truths. He taught the very gist of the philosophy
10 of the Vedas to one and all without distinction, he taught it to the
11 world at large, because one of his great messages was the equality
12 of man. Men are all equal. No concession there to anybody! Buddha
13 was the great preacher of equality. Every man and woman has the
14 same right to attain spirituality--that was his teaching. The
15 difference between the priests and the other castes he abolished.
16 Even the lowest were entitled to the highest attainments; he
17 opened the door of Nirvana to one and all. His teaching was bold
18 even for India. No amount of preaching can ever shock the Indian
19 soul, but it was hard for India to swallow Buddha's doctrine. How
20 much harder it must be for you!

21 His doctrine was this: Why is there misery in our life?
22 Because we are selfish. We desire things for ourselves--that is why
23 there is misery. What is the way out? The giving up of the self. The
24 self does not exist; the phenomenal world, all this that we perceive,
25 is all that exists. There is nothing called soul underlying the cycle of
26 life and death. There is the stream of thought, one thought
27 following another in succession, each thought coming into existence
28 and becoming non-existent at the same moment, that is all; there is
29 no thinker of the thought, no soul. The body is changing all the
30 time; so is mind, consciousness. The self therefore is a delusion. All
31 selfishness comes of holding on to the self, to this illusory self. If we
32 know the truth that there is no self, then we will be happy and make
33 others happy.

34 This was what Buddha taught. And he did not merely talk; he
35 was ready to give up his own life for the world. He said, "If
36 sacrificing an animal is good, sacrificing a man is better", and he
37 offered himself as a sacrifice. He said, "This animal sacrifice is
38 another superstition. God and soul are the two big superstitions.
39 God is only a superstition invented by the priests. If there is a God,
40 as these Brahmins preach, why is there so much misery in the
41 world? He is just like me, a slave to the law of causation. If he is not
42 bound by the law of causation, then why does he create? Such a
43 God is not at all satisfactory. There is the ruler in heaven that rules
44 the universe according to his sweet will and leaves us all here to die
45 in misery--he never has the goodness to look at us for a moment.
46 Our whole life is continuous suffering; but this is not sufficient
47 punishment--after death we must go to places where we have other
48 punishments. Yet we continually perform all kinds of rites and
49 ceremonies to please this creator of the world!"

50 Buddha said, "These ceremonials are all wrong. There is but
51 one ideal in the world. Destroy all delusions; what is true will
52 remain. As soon as the clouds are gone, the sun will shine". How to

1 kill the self? Become perfectly unselfish, ready to give up your life
2 even for an ant. Work not for any superstition, not to please any
3 God, not to get any reward, but because you are seeking your own
4 release by killing your self. Worship and prayer and all that, these
5 are all nonsense. You all say, "I thank God"--but where does He live?
6 You do not know, and yet you are all going crazy about God.

7 Hindus can give up everything except their God. To deny God
8 is to cut off the very ground from under the feet of devotion.
9 Devotion and God the Hindus must cling to. They can never
10 relinquish these. And here, in the teaching of Buddha, are no God
11 and no soul--simply work. What for? Not for the self, for the self is a
12 delusion. We shall be ourselves when this delusion has vanished.
13 Very few are there in the world that can rise to that height and
14 work for work's sake.

15 Yet the religion of Buddha spread fast. It was because of the
16 marvellous love which, for the first time in the history of humanity,
17 overflowed a large heart and devoted itself to the service not only
18 of all men but of all living things--a love which did not care for
19 anything except to find a way of release from suffering for all
20 beings.

21 Man was loving God and had forgotten all about his brother
22 man. The man who in the name of God can give up his very life, can
23 also turn around and kill his brother man in the name of God. That
24 was the state of the world. They would sacrifice the son for the
25 glory of God, would rob nations for the glory of God, would kill
26 thousands of beings for the glory of God, would drench the earth
27 with blood for the glory of God. This was the first time they turned
28 to the other God--man. It is man that is to be loved. It was the first
29 wave of intense love for all men--the first wave of true
30 unadulterated wisdom--that, starting from India, gradually
31 inundated country after country, north, south, east, west.

32 This teacher wanted to make truth shine as truth. No
33 softening, no compromise, no pandering to the priests, the
34 powerful, the kings. No bowing before superstitious traditions,
35 however hoary; no respect for forms and books just because they
36 came down from the distant past. He rejected all scriptures, all
37 forms of religious practice. Even the very language, Sanskrit, in
38 which religion had been traditionally taught in India, he rejected, so
39 that his followers would not have any chance to imbibe the
40 superstitions which were associated with it.

1 There is another way of looking at the truth we have been
2 discussing: the Hindu way. We claim that Buddha's great doctrine
3 of selflessness can be better understood if it is looked at in our way.
4 In the Upanishads there is already the great doctrine of the Atman
5 and the Brahman. The Atman, Self, is the same as Brahman, the
6 Lord. This Self is all that is; It is the only reality. Maya, delusion,
7 makes us see It as different. There is one Self, not many. That one
8 Self shines in various forms. Man is man's brother because all men
9 are one. A man is not only my brother, say the Vedas, he is myself.
10 Hurting any part of the universe, I only hurt myself. I am the
11 universe. It is a delusion that I think I am Mr. So-and-so--that is the
12 delusion.

13 The more you approach your real Self, the more this delusion
14 vanishes. The more all differences and divisions disappear, the
15 more you realise all as the one Divinity. God exists; but He is not
16 the man sitting upon a cloud. He is pure Spirit. Where does He
17 reside? Nearer to you than your very self. He is the Soul. How can
18 you perceive God as separate and different from yourself? When
19 you think of Him as some one separate from yourself, you do not
20 know Him. He is you yourself. That was the doctrine of the prophets
21 of India.

22 It is selfishness that you think that you see Mr. So-and-so and
23 that all the world is different from you. You believe you are different
24 from me. You do not take any thought of me. You go home and have
25 your dinner and sleep. If I die, you still eat, drink, and are merry.
26 But you cannot really be happy when the rest of the world is
27 suffering. We are all one. It is the delusion of separateness that is
28 the root of misery. Nothing exists but the Self; there is nothing else.

29 Buddha's idea is that there is no God, only man himself. He
30 repudiated the mentality which underlies the prevalent ideas of
31 God. He found it made men weak and superstitious. If you pray to
32 God to give you everything, who is it, then, that goes out and
33 works? God comes to those who work hard. God helps them that
34 help themselves. An opposite idea of God weakens our nerves,
35 softens our muscles, makes us dependent. Everything independent
36 is happy; everything dependent is miserable. Man has infinite
37 power within himself, and he can realise it--he can realise himself
38 as the one infinite Self. It can be done; but you do not believe it. You
39 pray to God and keep your powder dry all the time.

40 Buddha taught the opposite. Do not let men weep. Let them
41 have none of this praying and all that. God is not keeping shop.
42 With every breath you are praying in God. I am talking; that is a
43 prayer. You are listening; that is a prayer. Is there ever any
44 movement of yours, mental or physical, in which you do not
45 participate in the infinite Divine Energy? It is all a constant prayer.
46 If you call only a set of words prayer, you make prayer superficial.
47 Such prayers are not much good; they can scarcely bear any real
48 fruit.

49 Is prayer a magic formula, by repeating which, even if you do
50 not work hard, you gain miraculous results? No. All have to work
51 hard; all have to reach the depths of that infinite Energy. Behind

1 the poor, behind the rich, there is the same infinite Energy. It is not
2 that one man works hard, and another by repeating a few words
3 achieves results. This universe is a constant prayer. If you take
4 prayer in this sense, I am with you. Words are not necessary. Better
5 is silent prayer.

6 The vast majority of people do not understand the meaning of
7 this doctrine. In India any compromise regarding the Self means
8 that we have given power into the hands of the priests and have
9 forgotten the great teachings of the prophets. Buddha knew this; so
10 he brushed aside all the priestly doctrines and practices and made
11 man stand on his own feet. It was necessary for him to go against
12 the accustomed ways of the people; he had to bring about
13 revolutionary changes. As a result this sacrificial religion passed
14 away from India for ever, and was never revived.

15 Buddhism apparently has passed away from India; but really
16 it has not. There was an element of danger in the teaching of
17 Buddha--it was a reforming religion. In order to bring about the
18 tremendous spiritual change he did, he had to give many negative
19 teachings. But if a religion emphasises the negative side too much,
20 it is in danger of eventual destruction. Never can a reforming sect
21 survive if it is only reforming; the formative elements alone--the
22 real impulse, that is, the principles--live on and on. After a reform
23 has been brought about, it is the positive side that should be
24 emphasised; after the building is finished the scaffolding must be
25 taken away.

26 It so happened in India that as time went on, the followers of
27 Buddha emphasised the negative aspect of his teachings too much
28 and thereby caused the eventual downfall of their religion. The
29 positive aspects of truth were suffocated by the forces of negation;
30 and thus India repudiated the destructive tendencies that flourished
31 in the name of Buddhism. That was the decree of the Indian
32 national thought.

33 The negative elements of Buddhism--there is no God and no
34 soul--died out. I can say that God is the only being that exists; it is a
35 very positive statement. He is the one reality. When Buddha says
36 there is no soul, I say, "Man, thou art one with the universe; thou
37 art all things." How positive! The reformative element died out; but
38 the formative element has lived through all time. Buddha taught
39 kindness towards lower beings; and since then there has not been a
40 sect in India that has not taught charity to all beings, even to
41 animals. This kindness, this mercy, this charity--greater than any
42 doctrine--are what Buddhism left to us.

43 The life of Buddha has an especial appeal. All my life I have
44 been very fond of Buddha, but not of his doctrine. I have more
45 veneration for that character than for any other--that boldness, that
46 fearlessness, and that tremendous love! He was born for the good
47 of men. Others may seek God, others may seek truth for
48 themselves; he did not even care to know truth for himself. He
49 sought truth because people were in misery.

50 How to help them, that was his only concern. Throughout his
51 life he never had a thought for himself. How can we ignorant,

1 selfish, narrow-minded human beings ever understand the
2 greatness of this man?

3 And consider his marvellous brain! No emotionalism. That
4 giant brain never was superstitious. Believe not because an old
5 manuscript has been produced, because it has been handed down
6 to you from your forefathers, because your friends want you to--but
7 think for yourself; search truth for yourself; realise it yourself. Then
8 if you find it beneficial to one and many, give it to people. Soft-
9 brained men, weak-minded, chicken-hearted, cannot find the truth.
10 One has to be free, and as broad as the sky. One has to have a mind
11 that is crystal clear; only then can truth shine in it. We are so full of
12 superstitions! Even in your country where you think you are highly
13 educated, how full of narrownesses and superstitions you are! Just
14 think, with all your claims to civilisation in this country, on one
15 occasion I was refused a chair to sit on, because I was a Hindu.

16 Six hundred years before the birth of Christ, at the time when
17 Buddha lived, the people of India must have had wonderful
18 education. Extremely free-minded they must have been. Great
19 masses followed him. Kings gave up their thrones; queens gave up
20 their thrones. People were able to appreciate and embrace his
21 teaching, so revolutionary, so different from what they had been
22 taught by the priests through the ages! But their minds have been
23 unusually free and broad.

24 And consider his death. If he was great in life, he was also
25 great in death. He ate food offered to him by a member of a race
26 similar to your American Indians. Hindus do not touch them,
27 because they eat everything indiscriminately. He told his disciples,
28 "Do not eat this food, but I cannot refuse it. Go to the man and tell
29 him he has done me one of the greatest services of my life--he has
30 released me from the body." An old man came and sat near him--he
31 had walked miles and miles to see the Master--and Buddha taught
32 him. When he found a disciple weeping, he reproved him, saying,
33 "What is this? Is this the result of all my teaching? Let there be no
34 false bondage, no dependence on me, no false glorification of this
35 passing personality. The Buddha is not a person; he is a realisation.
36 Work out your own salvation."

37 Even when dying, he would not claim any distinction for
38 himself. I worship him for that. What you call Buddhas and Christs
39 are only the names of certain states of realisation. Of all the
40 teachers of the world, he was the one who taught us most to be self-
41 reliant, who freed us not only from the bondages of our false selves
42 but from dependence on the invisible being or beings called God or
43 gods. He invited every one to enter into that state of freedom which
44 he called Nirvana. All must attain to it one day; and that attainment
45 is the complete fulfilment of man.

DISCIPLESHIP

(Delivered in San Francisco, on March 29, 1900)

My subject is "Discipleship". I do not know how you will take what I have to say. It will be rather difficult for you to accept it--the ideals of teachers and disciples in this country vary so much from those in ours. An old proverb of India comes to my mind: "There are hundreds of thousands of teachers, but it is hard to find one disciple." It seems to be true. The one important thing in the attainment of spirituality is the attitude of the pupil. When the right attitude is there, illumination comes easily.

What does the disciple need in order to receive the truth? The great sages say that to attain truth takes but the twinkling of an eye--it is just a question of knowing--the dream breaks. How long does it take? In a second the dream is gone. When the illusion vanishes, how long does it take? Just the twinkling of an eye. When I know the truth, nothing happens except that the falsehood vanishes away: I took the rope for the snake, and now I see it is the rope. It is only a question of half a second and the whole thing is done. Thou art That. Thou art the Reality. How long does it take to know this? If we are God and always have been so, not to know this is most astonishing. To know this is the only natural thing. It should not take ages to find out what we have always been and what we now are.

Yet it seems difficult to realise this self-evident truth. Ages and ages pass before we begin to catch a faint glimpse of it. God is life; God is truth. We write about this; we feel in our inmost heart that this is so, that everything else than God is nothing--here today, gone tomorrow. And yet most of us remain the same all through life. We cling to untruth, and we turn our back upon truth. We do not want to attain truth. We do not want anyone to break our dream. You see, the teachers are not wanted. Who wants to learn? But if anyone wants to realise the truth and overcome illusion, if he wants to receive the truth from a teacher, he must be a true disciple.

It is not easy to be a disciple; great preparations are necessary; many conditions have to be fulfilled. Four principal conditions are laid down by the Vedantists.

The first condition is that the student who wants to know the truth must give up all desires for gain in this world or in the life to come.

1 The truth is not what we see. What we see is not truth as long
2 as any desire creeps into the mind. God is true, and the world is not
3 true. So long as there is in the heart the least desire for the world,
4 truth will not come. Let the world fall to ruin around my ears: I do
5 not care. So with the next life; I do not care to go to heaven. What is
6 heaven? Only the continuation of this earth. We would be better and
7 the little foolish dreams we are dreaming would break sooner if
8 there were no heaven, no continuation of this silly life on earth. By
9 going to heaven we only prolong the miserable illusions.

10 What do you gain in heaven? You become gods, drink nectar,
11 and get rheumatism. There is less misery there than on earth, but
12 also less truth. The very rich can understand truth much less than
13 the poorer people. "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of
14 a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." The
15 rich man has no time to think of anything beyond his wealth and
16 power, his comforts and indulgences. The rich rarely become
17 religious. Why? Because they think, if they become religious, they
18 will have no more fun in life. In the same way, there is very little
19 chance to become spiritual in heaven; there is too much comfort
20 and enjoyment there--the dwellers in heaven are disinclined to give
21 up their fun.

22 They say there will be no more weeping in heaven. I do not
23 trust the man who never weeps; he has a big block of granite where
24 the heart should be. It is evident that the heavenly people have not
25 much sympathy. There are vast masses of them over there, and we
26 are miserable creatures suffering in this horrible place. They could
27 pull us all out of it; but they do not. They do not weep. There is no
28 sorrow or misery there; therefore they do not care for anyone's
29 misery. They drink their nectar, dances go on; beautiful wives and
30 all that.

31 Going beyond these things, the disciple should say, "I do not
32 care for anything in this life nor for all the heavens that have ever
33 existed--I do not care to go to any of them. I do not want the sense-
34 life in any form--this identification of myself with the body--as I feel
35 now, 'I am this body--this huge mass of flesh.' This is what I feel I
36 am. I refuse to believe that."

37 The world and the heavens, all these are bound up with the
38 senses. You do not care for the earth if you do not have any senses.
39 Heaven also is the world. Earth, heaven, and all that is between
40 have but one name--earth.

41 Therefore the disciple, knowing the past and the present and
42 thinking of the future, knowing what prosperity means, what
43 happiness means, gives up all these and seeks to know the truth
44 and truth alone. This is the first condition.

45 The second condition is that the disciple must be able to
46 control the internal and the external senses and must be
47 established in several other spiritual virtues.

48 The external senses are the visible organs situated in
49 different parts of the body; the internal senses are intangible. We
50 have the external eyes, ears, nose, and so on; and we have the

1 corresponding internal senses. We are continually at the beck and
2 call of both these groups of senses. Corresponding to the senses are
3 sense-objects. If any sense-objects are near by, the senses compel
4 us to perceive them; we have no choice or independence. There is
5 the big nose. A little fragrance is there; I have to smell it. If there
6 were a bad odour, I would say to myself, "Do not smell it"; but
7 nature says, "Smell", and I smell it. Just think what we have
8 become! We have bound ourselves. I have eyes. Anything going on,
9 good or bad, I must see. It is the same with hearing. If anyone
10 speaks unpleasantly to me, I must hear it. My sense of hearing
11 compels me to do so, and how miserable I feel! Curse or praise--
12 man has got to hear. I have seen many deaf people who do not
13 usually hear, but anything about themselves they always hear!

14 All these senses, external and internal, must be under the
15 disciple's control. By hard practice he has to arrive at the stage
16 where he can assert his mind against the senses, against the
17 commands of nature. He should be able to say to his mind, "You are
18 mine; I order you, do not see or hear anything", and the mind will
19 not see or hear anything--no form or sound will react on the mind.
20 In that state the mind has become free of the domination of the
21 senses, has become separated from them. No longer is it attached
22 to the senses and the body. The external things cannot order the
23 mind now; the mind refuses to attach itself to them. Beautiful
24 fragrance is there. The disciple says to the mind, "Do not smell",
25 and the mind does not perceive the fragrance. When you have
26 arrived at that point, you are just beginning to be a disciple. That is
27 why when everybody says, "I know the truth", I say, "If you know
28 the truth, you must have self-control; and if you have control of
29 yourself, show it by controlling these organs."

30 Next, the mind must be made to quiet down. It is rushing
31 about. Just as I sit down to meditate, all the vilest subjects in the
32 world come up. The whole thing is nauseating. Why should the mind
33 think thoughts I do not want it to think? I am as it were a slave to
34 the mind. No spiritual knowledge is possible so long as the mind is
35 restless and out of control. The disciple has to learn to control the
36 mind. Yes, it is the function of the mind to think. But it must not
37 think if the disciple does not want it to; it must stop thinking when
38 he commands it to. To qualify as a disciple, this state of the mind is
39 very necessary.

40 Also, the disciple must have great power of endurance. Life
41 seems comfortable; and you find the mind behaves well when
42 everything is going well with you. But if something goes wrong,
43 your mind loses its balance. That is not good. Bear all evil and
44 misery without one murmur of hurt, without one thought of
45 unhappiness, resistance, remedy, or retaliation. That is true
46 endurance; and that you must acquire.

47 Good and evil there always are in the world. Many forget
48 there is any evil--at least they try to forget; and when evil comes
49 upon them, they are overwhelmed by it and feel bitter. There are
50 others who deny that there is any evil at all and consider everything
51 good. That also is a weakness; that also proceeds from a fear of
52 evil. If something is evil-smelling, why sprinkle it with rose water

1 and call it fragrant? Yes, there are good and evil in the world--God
2 has put evil in the world. But you do not have to whitewash Him.
3 Why there is evil is none of your business. Please have faith and
4 keep quiet.

5 When my Master, Shri Ramakrishna fell ill, a Brahmin
6 suggested to him that he apply his tremendous mental power to
7 cure himself. He said that if my Master would only concentrate his
8 mind on the diseased part of the body, it would heal. Shri
9 Ramakrishna answered,

1 "What! Bring down the mind that I've given to God to this
2 little body!" He refused to think of body and illness. His mind was
3 continually conscious of God; it was dedicated to Him utterly. He
4 would not use it for any other purpose.

5 This craving for health, wealth, long life, and the like--the so-
6 called good--is nothing but an illusion. To devote the mind to them
7 in order to secure them only strengthens the delusion. We have
8 these dreams and illusions in life, and we want to have more of
9 them in the life to come, in heaven. More and more illusion. Resist
10 not evil. Face it! You are higher than evil.

11 There is this misery in the world--it has to be suffered by
12 someone. You cannot act without making evil for somebody. And
13 when you seek worldly good, you only avoid an evil which must be
14 suffered by somebody else. Everyone is trying to put it on someone
15 else's shoulders. The disciple says, "Let the miseries of the world
16 come to me; I shall endure them all. Let others go free."

17 Remember the man on the cross. He could have brought
18 legions of angels to victory; but he did not resist. He pitied those
19 who crucified him. He endured every humiliation and suffering. He
20 took the burden of all upon himself: "Come unto me, all ye that
21 labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Such is true
22 endurance. How very high he was above this life, so high that we
23 cannot understand it, we slaves! No sooner does a man slap me in
24 the face than my hand hits back: bang, it goes! How can I
25 understand the greatness and blessedness of the Glorified One?
26 How can I see the glory of it?

27 But I will not drag the ideal down. I feel I am the body,
28 resisting evil. If I get a headache, I go all over the world to have it
29 cured; I drink two thousand bottles of medicine. How can I
30 understand these marvellous minds? I can see the ideal, but how
31 much of that ideal? None of this consciousness of the body, of the
32 little self, of its pleasures and pains, its hurts and comforts, none of
33 these can reach that atmosphere. By thinking only of the spirit and
34 keeping the mind out of matter all the time, I can catch a glimpse of
35 that ideal. Material thought and forms of the sense-world have no
36 place in that ideal. Take them off and put the mind upon the spirit.
37 Forget your life and death, your pains and pleasures, your name
38 and fame, and realise that you are neither body nor mind but the
39 pure spirit.

40 When I say "I", I mean this spirit. Close your eyes and see
41 what picture appears when you think of your "I". Is it the picture of
42 your body that comes, or of your mental nature? If so, you have not
43 realised your true "I" yet. The time will come, however, when as
44 soon as you say "I" you will see the universe, the Infinite Being.
45 Then you will have realised your true Self and found that you are
46 infinite. That is the truth: you are the spirit, you are not matter.
47 There is such a thing as illusion--in it one thing is taken for another:
48 matter is taken for spirit, this body for soul. That is the tremendous
49 illusion. It has to go.

50 The next qualification is that the disciple must have faith in
51 the Guru (teacher). In the West the teacher simply gives intellectual

1 knowledge; that is all. The relationship with the teacher is the
2 greatest in life. My dearest and nearest relative in life is my Guru;
3 next, my mother; then my father. My first reverence is to the Guru.
4 If my father says, "Do this", and my Guru says, "Do not do this", I do
5 not do it. The Guru frees my soul. The father and mother give me
6 this body; but the Guru gives me rebirth in the soul.

7 We have certain peculiar beliefs. One of these is that there
8 are some souls, a few exceptional ones, who are already free and
9 who will be born here for the good of the world, to help the world.
10 They are free already; they do not care for their own salvation--they
11 want to help others. They do not require to be taught anything.
12 From their childhood they know everything; they may speak the
13 highest truth even when they are babies six months old.

14 Upon these free souls depends the spiritual growth of
15 mankind. They are like the first lamps from which other lamps are
16 lighted. True, the light is in everyone, but in most men it is hidden.
17 The great souls are shining lights from the beginning. Those who
18 come in contact with them have as it were their own lamps lighted.
19 By this the first lamp does not lose anything; yet it communicates
20 its light to other lamps. A million lamps are lighted; but the first
21 lamp goes on shining with undiminished light. The first lamp is the
22 Guru, and the lamp that is lighted from it is the disciple. The second
23 in turn becomes the Guru, and so on. These great ones whom you
24 call Incarnations of God are mighty spiritual giants. They come and
25 set in motion a tremendous spiritual current by transmitting their
26 power to their immediate disciples and through them to generation
27 after generation of disciples.

28 A bishop in the Christian Church, by the laying on of hands,
29 claims to transmit the power which he is supposed to have received
30 from the preceding bishops. The bishop says that Jesus Christ
31 transmitted his power to his immediate disciples and they to others,
32 and that that is how the Christ's power has come to him. We hold
33 that every one of us, not bishops only, ought to have such power.
34 There is no reason why each of you cannot be a vehicle of the
35 mighty current of spirituality.

36 But first you must find a teacher, a true teacher, and you must
37 remember that he is not just a man. You may get a teacher in the
38 body; but the real teacher is not in the body; he is not the physical
39 man--he is not as he appears to your eyes. It may be the teacher
40 will come to you as a human being, and you will receive the power
41 from him. Sometimes he will come in a dream and transmit things
42 to the world. The power of the teacher may come to us in many
43 ways. But for us ordinary mortals the teacher must come, and our
44 preparation must go on till he comes.

45 We attend lectures and read books, argue and reason about
46 God and soul, religion and salvation. These are not spirituality,
47 because spirituality does not exist in books or theories or in
48 philosophies. It is not in learning or reasoning, but in actual inner
49 growth. Even parrots can learn things by heart and repeat them. If
50 you become learned, what of it? Asses can carry whole libraries. So
51 when real light will come, there will be no more of this learning

1 from books--no book-learning. The man who cannot write even his
2 own name can be perfectly religious, and the man with all the
3 libraries of the world in his head may fail to be. Learning is not a
4 condition of spiritual growth; scholarship is not a condition. The
5 touch of the Guru, the transmittal of spiritual energy, will quicken
6 your heart. Then will begin the growth. That is the real baptism by
7 fire. No more stopping. You go on and go on.

8 Some years ago one of your Christian teachers, a friend of
9 mine, said, "You believe in Christ?" "Yes," I answered, "but perhaps
10 with a little more reverence." "Then why don't you be baptised?"
11 How could I be baptised? By whom? Where is the man who can give
12 true baptism? What is baptism? Is it sprinkling some water over
13 you, or dipping you in water, while muttering formulas?

14 Baptism is the direct introduction into the life of the spirit. If
15 you receive the real baptism, you know you are not the body but the
16 spirit. Give me that baptism if you can. If not, you are not
17 Christians. Even after the so-called baptism which you received,
18 you have remained the same. What is the sense of merely saying
19 you have been baptised in the name of the Christ? Mere talk, talk--
20 ever disturbing the world with your foolishness! "Ever steeped in
21 the darkness of ignorance, yet considering themselves wise and
22 learned, the fools go round and round, staggering to and fro like the
23 blind led by the blind."²⁴⁰ Therefore do not say you are Christians,
24 do not brag about baptism and things of that sort.

25 Of course there is true baptism--there was baptism in the
26 beginning when the Christ came to the earth and taught. The
27 illumined souls, the great ones that come to the earth from time to
28 time, have the power to reveal the Supernal Vision to us. This is
29 true baptism. You see, before the formulas and ceremonies of every
30 religion, there exists the germ of universal truth. In course of time
31 this truth becomes forgotten; it becomes as it were strangled by
32 forms and ceremonies. The forms remain--we find there the casket
33 with the spirit all gone. You have the form of baptism, but few can
34 evoke the living spirit of baptism. The form will not suffice. If we
35 want to gain the living knowledge of the living truth, we have to be
36 truly initiated into it. That is the ideal.

37 The Guru must teach me and lead me into light, make me a
38 link in that chain of which he himself is a link. The man in the street
39 cannot claim to be a Guru. The Guru must be a man who has
40 known, has actually realised the Divine truth, has perceived himself
41 as the spirit. A mere talker cannot be the Guru. A talkative fool like
42 me can talk much, but cannot be the Guru. A true Guru will tell the
43 disciple, "Go and sin no more"; and no more can he sin, no more has
44 the person the power to sin.

45 I have seen such men in this life. I have read the Bible and all
46 such books; they are wonderful. But the living power you cannot
47 find in the books. The power that can transform life in a moment
48 can be found only in the living illumined souls, those shining lights
49 who appear among us from time to time. They alone are fit to be

²⁴⁰ ?Katha Upanishad, I.ii.5.

1 Gurus. You and I are only hollow talk-talk, not teachers. We are
2 disturbing the world more by talking, making bad vibrations. We
3 hope and pray and struggle on, and the day will come when we
4 shall arrive at the truth, and we shall not have to speak.

5 "The teacher was a boy of sixteen; he taught a man of eighty.
6 Silence was the method of the teacher; and the doubts of the
7 disciple vanished for ever."²⁴¹ That is the Guru. Just think, if you find
8 such a man, what faith and love you ought to have for that person!
9 Why, he is God Himself, nothing less than that! That is why Christ's
10 disciples worshipped him as God. The disciple must worship the
11 Guru as God Himself. All a man can know is the living God, God as
12 embodied in man, until he himself has realised God. How else
13 would he know God?

14 Here is a man in America, born nineteen hundred years after
15 Christ, who does not even belong to the same race as Christ, the
16 Jewish race. He has not seen Jesus or his family. He says, "Jesus
17 was God. If you do not believe it, you will go to hell". We can
18 understand how the disciples believed it--that Christ was God; he
19 was their Guru, and they must have believed he was God. But what
20 has this American got to do with the man born nineteen hundred
21 years ago? This young man tells me that I do not believe in Jesus
22 and therefore I shall have to go to hell. What does he know of
23 Jesus? He is fit for a lunatic asylum. This kind of belief will not do.
24 He will have to find his Guru.

25 Jesus may be born again, may come to you. Then, if you
26 worship him as God, you are all right. We must all wait till the Guru
27 comes, and the Guru must be worshipped as God. He is God, he is
28 nothing less than that. As you look at him, the Guru gradually melts
29 away and what is left? The Guru picture gives place to God Himself.
30 The Guru is the bright mask which God wears in order to come to
31 us. As we look steadily on, gradually the mask falls off and God is
32 revealed.

33 "I bow to the Guru who is the embodiment of the Bliss Divine,
34 the personification of the highest knowledge and the giver of the
35 greatest beatitude, who is pure, perfect, one without a second,
36 eternal, beyond pleasure and pain, beyond all thought and all
37 qualification, transcendental". Such is in reality the Guru. No
38 wonder the disciple looks upon him as God Himself and trusts him,
39 reveres him, obeys him, follows him unquestioningly. This is the
40 relation between the Guru and the disciple.

41 The next condition the disciple must fulfil is to conceive an
42 extreme desire to be free.

43 We are like moths plunging into the flaming fire, knowing that
44 it will burn us, knowing that the senses only burn us, that they only
45 enhance desire. "Desire is never satiated by enjoyment; enjoyment
46 only increases desire as butter fed into fire increases the fire."²⁴²
47 Desire is increased by desire. Knowing all this, people still plunge

1 ²⁴¹ ?*Dakshinamurti-stotram*, 12 (adapted).
2

3 ²⁴² ?*Bhagavata*, IX.xix.14.
4

1 into it all the time. Life after life they have been going after the
2 objects of desire, suffering extremely in consequence, yet they
3 cannot give up desire. Even religion, which should rescue them
4 from this terrible bondage of desire, they have made a means of
5 satisfying desire. Rarely do they ask God to free them from
6 bondage to the body and senses, from slavery to desires. Instead,
7 they pray to Him for health and prosperity, for long life: "O God,
8 cure my headache, give me some money or something!"

9 The circle of vision has become so narrow, so degraded, so
10 beastly, so animal! None is desiring anything beyond this body. Oh,
11 the terrible degradation, the terrible misery of it! What little flesh,
12 the five senses, the stomach! What is the world but a combination
13 of stomach and sex? Look at millions of men and women--that is
14 what they are living for. Take these away from them and they will
15 find their life empty, meaningless, and intolerable. Such are we.
16 And such is our mind; it is continually hankering for ways and
17 means to satisfy the hunger of the stomach and sex. All the time
18 this is going on. There is also endless suffering; these desires of the
19 body bring only momentary satisfaction and endless suffering. It is
20 like drinking a cup of which the surface layer is nectar, while
21 underneath all is poison. But we still hanker for all these things.

22 What can be done? Renunciation of the senses and desires is
23 the only way out of this misery. If you want to be spiritual, you must
24 renounce. This is the real test. Give up the world--this nonsense of
25 the senses. There is only one real desire: to know what is true, to be
26 spiritual. No more materialism, no more this egoism, I must become
27 spiritual. Strong, intense must be the desire. If a man's hands and
28 feet were so tied that he could not move and then if a burning piece
29 of charcoal were placed on his body, he would struggle with all his
30 power to throw it off. When I shall have that sort of extreme desire,
31 that restless struggle, to throw off this burning world, then the time
32 will have come for me to glimpse the Divine Truth.

33 Look at me. If I lose my little pocketbook with two or three
34 dollars in it, I go twenty times into the house to find that
35 pocketbook. The anxiety, the worry, and the struggle! If one of you
36 crosses me, I remember it twenty years, I cannot forgive and forget
37 it. For the little things of the senses I can struggle like that. Who is
38 there that struggles for God that way? "Children forget everything
39 in their play. The young are mad after the enjoyment of the senses;
40 they do not care for anything else. The old are brooding over their
41 past misdeeds" (Shankara). They are thinking of their past
42 enjoyments--old men that cannot have any enjoyment. Chewing the
43 cud--that is the best they can do. None crave for the Lord in the
44 same intense spirit with which they crave for the things of the
45 senses.

46 They all say that God is the Truth, the only thing that really
47 exists; that spirit alone is, not matter. Yet the things they seek of
48 God are rarely spirit. They ask always for material things. In their
49 prayers spirit is not separated from matter. Degradation--that is
50 what religion has turned out to be. The whole thing is becoming
51 sham. And the years are rolling on and nothing spiritual is being
52 attained. But man should hunger for one thing alone, the spirit,

1 because spirit alone exists. That is the ideal. If you cannot attain it
2 now, say, "I cannot do it; that is the ideal, I know, but I cannot follow
3 it yet." But that is not what you do. You degrade religion to your low
4 level and seek matter in the name of spirit. You are all atheists. You
5 do not believe in anything except the senses. "So-and-so said such-
6 and-such--there may be something in it. Let us try and have the fun.
7 Possibly some benefit will come; possibly my broken leg will get
8 straight."

9 Miserable are the diseased people; they are great
10 worshippers of the Lord, for they hope that if they pray to Him He
11 will heal them. Not that that is altogether bad--if such prayers are
12 honest and if they remember that that is not religion. Shri Krishna
13 says in the Gita (VII.16), "Four classes of people worship Me: the
14 distressed, the seeker of material things, the inquirer, and the
15 knower of truth." People who are in distress approach God for
16 relief. If they are ill, they worship Him to be healed; if they lose
17 their wealth, they pray to Him to get it back. There are other people
18 who ask Him for all kinds of things, because they are full of
19 desires--name, fame, wealth, position and so on. They will say, "O
20 Virgin Mary, I will make an offering to you if I get what I want. If
21 you are successful in granting my prayer, I will worship God and
22 give you a part of everything." Men not so material as that, but still
23 with no faith in God, feel inclined to know about Him. They study
24 philosophies, read scriptures, listen to lectures, and so on. They are
25 the inquirers. The last class are those who worship God and know
26 Him. All these four classes of people are good, not bad. All of them
27 worship Him.

28 But we are trying to be disciples. Our sole concern is to know
29 the highest truth. Our goal is the loftiest. We have said big words to
30 ourselves--absolute realisation and all that. Let us measure up to
31 the words. Let us worship the spirit in spirit, standing on spirit. Let
32 the foundation be spirit, the middle spirit, the culmination spirit.
33 There will be no world anywhere. Let it go and whirl into space--
34 who cares? Stand thou in the spirit! That is the goal. We know we
35 cannot reach it yet. Never mind. Do not despair, and do not drag
36 the ideal down. The important thing is: how much less you think of
37 the body, of yourself as matter--as dead, dull, insentient matter;
38 how much more you think of yourself as shining immortal being.
39 The more you think of yourself as shining immortal spirit, the more
40 eager you will be to be absolutely free of matter, body, and senses.
41 This is the intense desire to be free.

42 The fourth and last condition of discipleship is the
43 discrimination of the real from the unreal. There is only one thing
44 that is real--God. All the time the mind must be drawn to Him,
45 dedicated to Him. God exists, nothing else exists, everything else
46 comes and goes. Any desire for the world is illusion, because the
47 world is unreal. More and more the mind must become conscious of
48 God alone, until everything else appears as it really is--unreal.

49 These are the four conditions which one who wants to be a
50 disciple must fulfil; without fulfilling them he will not be able to
51 come in contact with the true Guru. And even if he is fortunate
52 enough to find him, he will not be quickened by the power that the

1 Guru may transmit. There cannot be any compromising of these
2 conditions. With the fulfilment of these conditions--with all these
3 preparations--the lotus of the disciple's heart will open, and the bee
4 shall come. Then the disciple knows that the Guru was within the
5 body, within himself. He opens out. He realises. He crosses the
6 ocean of life, goes beyond. He crosses this terrible ocean: and in
7 mercy, without a thought of gain or praise, he in his turn helps
8 others to cross.

IS VEDANTA THE FUTURE RELIGION?

(Delivered in San Francisco on April 8, 1900)

Those of you who have been attending my lectures for the last month or so must, by this time, be familiar with the ideas contained in the Vedanta philosophy. Vedanta is the most ancient religion of the world; but it can never be said to have become popular. Therefore the question "Is it going to be the religion of the future?" is very difficult to answer.

At the start, I may tell you that I do not know whether it will ever be the religion of the vast majority of men. Will it ever be able to take hold of one whole nation such as the United States of America? Possibly it may. However, that is the question we want to discuss this afternoon.

I shall begin by telling you what Vedanta is not, and then I shall tell you what it is. But you must remember that, with all its emphasis on impersonal principles, Vedanta is not antagonistic to anything, though it does not compromise or give up the truths which it considers fundamental.

You all know that certain things are necessary to make a religion. First of all, there is the book. The power of the book is simply marvellous! Whatever it be, the book is the centre round which human allegiance gathers. Not one religion is living today but has a book. With all its rationalism and tall talk, humanity still clings to the books. In your country every attempt to start a religion without a book has failed. In India sects rise with great success, but within a few years they die down, because there is no book behind them. So in every other country.

Study the rise and fall of the Unitarian movement. It represents the best thought of your nation. Why should it not have spread like the Methodist, Baptist, and other Christian denominations? Because there was no book. On the other hand, think of the Jews. A handful of men, driven from one country to another, still hold together, because they have a book. Think of the Parsees--only a hundred thousand in the world. About a million are all that remain of the Jains in India. And do you know that these handfuls of Parsees and Jains still keep on just because of their books? The religions that are living at the present day--every one of them has a book.

The second requisite, to make a religion, is veneration for some person. He is worshipped either as the Lord of the world or as the great Teacher. Men must worship some embodied man! They must have the Incarnation or the prophet or the great leader. You find it in every religion today. Hindus and Christians--they have Incarnations: Buddhists, Mohammedans, and Jews have prophets. But it is all about the same--all their veneration twines round some person or persons.

The third requisite seems to be that a religion, to be strong

1 and sure of itself, must believe that it alone is the truth; otherwise it
2 cannot influence people.

3 Liberalism dies because it is dry, because it cannot rouse
4 fanaticism in the human mind, because it cannot bring out hatred
5 for everything except itself. That is why liberalism is bound to go
6 down again and again. It can influence only small numbers of
7 people. The reason is not hard to see. Liberalism tries to make us
8 unselfish. But we do not want to be unselfish--we see no immediate
9 gain in unselfishness; we gain more by being selfish. We accept
10 liberalism as long as we are poor, have nothing. The moment we
11 acquire money and power, we turn very conservative. The poor man
12 is a democrat. When he becomes rich, he becomes an aristocrat. In
13 religion, too, human nature acts in the same way.

14 A prophet arises, promises all kinds of rewards to those who
15 will follow him and eternal doom to those who will not. Thus he
16 makes his ideas spread. All existent religions that are spreading are
17 tremendously fanatic. The more a sect hates other sects, the
18 greater is its success and the more people it draws into its fold. My
19 conclusion, after travelling over a good part of the world and living
20 with many races, and in view of the conditions prevailing in the
21 world, is that the present state of things is going to continue, in
22 spite of much talk of universal brotherhood.

23 Vedanta does not believe in any of these teachings. First, it
24 does not believe in a book--that is the difficulty to start with. It
25 denies the authority of any book over any other book. It denies
26 emphatically that any one book can contain all the truths about
27 God, soul, the ultimate reality. Those of you who have read the
28 Upanishads remember that they say again and again, "Not by the
29 reading of books can we realise the Self."

30 Second, it finds veneration for some particular person still
31 more difficult to uphold. Those of you who are students of Vedanta--
32 by Vedanta is always meant the Upanishads--know that this is the
33 only religion that does not cling to any person. Not one man or
34 woman has ever become the object of worship among the
35 Vedantins. It cannot be. A man is no more worthy of worship than
36 any bird, any worm. We are all brothers. The difference is only in
37 degree. I am exactly the same as the lowest worm. You see how
38 very little room there is in Vedanta for any man to stand ahead of us
39 and for us to go and worship him--he dragging us on and we being
40 saved by him. Vedanta does not give you that. No book, no man to
41 worship, nothing.

42 A still greater difficulty is about God. You want to be
43 democratic in this country. It is the democratic God that Vedanta
44 teaches.

45 You have a government, but the government is impersonal.
46 Yours is not an autocratic government, and yet it is more powerful
47 than any monarchy in the world. Nobody seems to understand that
48 the real power, the real life, the real strength is in the unseen, the
49 impersonal, the nobody. As a mere person separated from others,
50 you are nothing, but as an impersonal unit of the nation that rules
51 itself, you are tremendous. You are all one in the government--you

1 are a tremendous power. But where exactly is the power? Each man
2 is the power. There is no king. I see everybody equally the same. I
3 have not to take off my hat and bow low to anyone. Yet there is a
4 tremendous power in each man.

5 Vedanta is just that. Its God is not the monarch sitting on a
6 throne, entirely apart. There are those who like their God that way--
7 a God to be feared and propitiated. They burn candles and crawl in
8 the dust before Him. They want a king to rule them--they believe in
9 a king in heaven to rule them all. The king is gone from this country
10 at least. Where is the king of heaven now? Just where the earthly
11 king is. In this country the king has entered every one of you. You
12 are all kings in this country. So with the religion of Vedanta. You are
13 all Gods. One God is not sufficient. You are all Gods, says the
14 Vedanta.

15 This makes Vedanta very difficult. It does not teach the old
16 idea of God at all. In place of that God who sat above the clouds and
17 managed the affairs of the world without asking our permission,
18 who created us out of nothing just because He liked it and made us
19 undergo all this misery just because He liked it, Vedanta teaches
20 the God that is in everyone, has become everyone and everything.
21 His majesty the king has gone from this country; the Kingdom of
22 Heaven went from Vedanta hundreds of years ago.

23 India cannot give up his majesty the king of the earth--that is
24 why Vedanta cannot become the religion of India. There is a chance
25 of Vedanta becoming the religion of your country because of
26 democracy. But it can become so only if you can and do clearly
27 understand it, if you become real men and women, not people with
28 vague ideas and superstitions in your brains, and if you want to be
29 truly spiritual, since Vedanta is concerned only with spirituality.

30 What is the idea of God in heaven? Materialism. The Vedantic
31 idea is the infinite principle of God embodied in every one of us.
32 God sitting up on a cloud! Think of the utter blasphemy of it! It is
33 materialism--downright materialism. When babies think this way, it
34 may be all right, but when grown-up men try to teach such things, it
35 is downright disgusting--that is what it is. It is all matter, all body
36 idea, the gross idea, the sense idea. Every bit of it is clay and
37 nothing but clay. Is that religion? It is no more religion than is the
38 Mumbo Jumbo "religion" of Africa. God is spirit and He should be
39 worshipped in spirit and in truth. Does spirit live only in heaven?
40 What is spirit? We are all spirit. Why is it we do not realise it? What
41 makes you different from me? Body and nothing else. Forget the
42 body, and all is spirit.

43 These are what Vedanta has not to give. No book. No man to
44 be singled out from the rest of mankind--"You are worms, and we
45 are the Lord God!"--none of that. If you are the Lord God, I also am
46 the Lord God. So Vedanta knows no sin. There are mistakes but no
47 sin; and in the long run everything is going to be all right. No
48 Satan--none of this nonsense. Vedanta believes in only one sin, only
49 one in the world, and it is this: the moment you think you are a
50 sinner or anybody is a sinner, that is sin. From that follows every
51 other mistake or what is usually called sin. There have been many

1 mistakes in our lives. But we are going on. Glory be unto us that we
2 have made mistakes! Take a long look at your past life. If your
3 present condition is good, it has been caused by all the past
4 mistakes as well as successes. Glory be unto success! Glory be unto
5 mistakes! Do not look back upon what has been done. Go ahead!

6 You see, Vedanta proposes no sin nor sinner. No God to be
7 afraid of. He is the one being of whom we shall never be afraid,
8 because He is our own Self. There is only one being of whom you
9 cannot possibly be afraid; He is that. Then is not he really the most
10 superstitious person who has fear of God? There may be someone
11 who is afraid of his shadow; but even he is not afraid of himself.
12 God is man's very Self. He is that one being whom you can never
13 possibly fear. What is all this nonsense, the fear of the Lord
14 entering into a man, making him tremble and so on? Lord bless us
15 that we are not all in the lunatic asylum! But if most of us are not
16 lunatics, why should we invent such ideas as fear of God? Lord
17 Buddha said that the whole human race is lunatic, more or less. It is
18 perfectly true, it seems.

19 No book, no person, no Personal God. All these must go.
20 Again, the senses must go. We cannot be bound to the senses. At
21 present we are tied down--like persons dying of cold in the glaciers.
22 They feel such a strong desire to sleep, and when their friends try
23 to wake them, warning them of death, they say, "Let me die, I want
24 to sleep." We all cling to the little things of the senses, even if we
25 are ruined thereby: we forget there are much greater things.

26 There is a Hindu legend that the Lord was once incarnated on
27 earth as a pig. He had a pig mate and in course of time several little
28 pigs were born to Him. He was very happy with His family, living in
29 the mire, squealing with joy, forgetting His divine glory and
30 lordship. The gods became exceedingly concerned and came to the
31 earth to beg Him to give up the pig body and return to heaven. But
32 the Lord would have none of that; He drove them away. He said He
33 was very happy and did not want to be disturbed. Seeing no other
34 course, the gods destroyed the pig body of the Lord. At once He
35 regained His divine majesty and was astonished that He could have
36 found any joy in being a pig.

37 People behave in the same way. Whenever they hear of the
38 Impersonal God, they say, "What will become of my individuality?--
39 my individuality will go!" Next time that thought comes, remember
40 the pig, and then think what an infinite mine of happiness you have,
41 each one of you. How pleased you are with your present condition!
42 But when you realise what you truly are, you will be astonished that
43 you were unwilling to give up your sense-life. What is there in your
44 personality? It is any better than that pig life? And this you do not
45 want to give up! Lord bless us all!

46 What does Vedanta teach us? In the first place, it teaches that
47 you need not even go out of yourself to know the truth. All the past
48 and all the future are here in the present. No man ever saw the
49 past. Did any one of you see the past? When you think you are
50 knowing the past, you only imagine the past in the present moment.
51 To see the future, you would have to bring it down to the present,

1 which is the only reality--the rest is imagination. This present is all
2 that is. There is only the One. All is here right now. One moment in
3 infinite time is quite as complete and all-inclusive as every other
4 moment. All that is and was and will be is here in the present. Let
5 anybody try to imagine anything outside of it--he will not succeed.

6 What religion can paint a heaven which is not like this earth?
7 And it is all art, only this art is being made known to us gradually.
8 We, with five senses, look upon this world and find it gross, having
9 colour, form, sound, and the like. Suppose I develop an electric
10 sense--all will change. Suppose my senses grow finer--you will all
11 appear changed. If I change, you change. If I go beyond the power
12 of the senses, you will appear as spirit and God. Things are not
13 what they seem.

14 We shall understand this by and by, and then see it: all the
15 heavens--everything--are here, now, and they really are nothing but
16 appearances on the Divine Presence. This Presence is much greater
17 than all the earths and heavens. People think that this world is bad
18 and imagine that heaven is somewhere else. This world is not bad.
19 It is God Himself if you know it. It is a hard thing even to
20 understand, harder than to believe. The murderer who is going to
21 be hanged tomorrow is all God, perfect God. It is very hard to
22 understand, surely; but it can be understood.

23 Therefore Vedanta formulates, not universal brotherhood, but
24 universal oneness. I am the same as any other man, as any animal--
25 good, bad, anything. It is one body, one mind, one soul throughout.
26 Spirit never dies. There is no death anywhere, not even for the
27 body. Not even the mind dies. How can even the body die? One leaf
28 may fall--does the tree die? The universe is my body. See how it
29 continues. All minds are mine. With all feet I walk. Through all
30 mouths I speak. In everybody I reside.

31 Why can I not feel it? Because of that individuality, that
32 piggishness. You have become bound up with this mind and can
33 only be here, not there. What is immortality? How few reply, "It is
34 this very existence of ours!" Most people think this is all mortal and
35 dead--that God is not here, that they will become immortal by going
36 to heaven. They imagine that they will see God after death. But if
37 they do not see Him here and now, they will not see Him after
38 death. Though they all believe in immortality, they do not know that
39 immortality is not gained by dying and going to heaven, but by
40 giving up this piggish individuality, by not tying ourselves down to
41 one little body. Immortality is knowing ourselves as one with all,
42 living in all bodies, perceiving through all minds. We are bound to
43 feel in other bodies than this one. We are bound to feel in other
44 bodies. What is sympathy? Is there any limit to this sympathy, this
45 feeling in our bodies? It is quite possible that the time will come
46 when I shall feel through the whole universe.

1 What is the gain? The pig body is hard to give up; we are
2 sorry to lose the enjoyment of our one little pig body! Vedanta does
3 not say, "Give it up": it says, "Transcend it". No need of asceticism--
4 better would be the enjoyment of two bodies, better three, living in
5 more bodies than one! When I can enjoy through the whole
6 universe, the whole universe is my body.

7 There are many who feel horrified when they hear these
8 teachings. They do not like to be told that they are not just little pig
9 bodies, created by a tyrant God. I tell them, "Come up!" They say
10 they are born in sin--they cannot come up except through
11 someone's grace. I say, "You are Divine! They answer, "You
12 blasphemer, how dare you speak so? How can a miserable creature
13 be God? We are sinners!" I get very much discouraged at times, you
14 know. Hundreds of men and women tell me, "If there is no hell, how
15 can there be any religion?" If these people go to hell of their own
16 will, who can prevent them?

17 Whatever you dream and think of, you create. If it is hell, you
18 die and see hell. If it is evil and Satan, you get a Satan. If ghosts,
19 you get ghosts. Whatever you think, that you become. If you have to
20 think, think good thoughts, great thoughts. This taking for granted
21 that you are weak little worms! By declaring we are weak, we
22 become weak, we do not become better. Suppose we put out the
23 light, close the windows, and call the room dark. Think of the
24 nonsense! What good does it do me to say I am a sinner? If I am in
25 the dark, let me light a lamp. The whole thing is gone. Yet how
26 curious is the nature of men! Though always conscious that the
27 universal mind is behind their life, they think more of Satan, of
28 darkness and lies. You tell them the truth--they do not see it; they
29 like darkness better.

30 This forms the one great question asked by Vedanta: Why are
31 people so afraid? The answer is that they have made themselves
32 helpless and dependent on others. We are so lazy, we do not want to
33 do anything for ourselves. We want a Personal God, a saviour or a
34 prophet to do everything for us. The very rich man never walks,
35 always goes in the carriage; but in the course of years, he wakes up
36 one day paralysed all over. Then he begins to feel that the way he
37 had lived was not good after all. No man can walk for me. Every
38 time one did, it was to my injury. If everything is done for a man by
39 another, he will lose the use of his own limbs. Anything we do
40 ourselves, that is the only thing we do. Anything that is done for us
41 by another never can be ours. You cannot learn spiritual truths from
42 my lectures. If you have learnt anything, I was only the spark that
43 brought it out, made it flash. That is all the prophets and teachers
44 can do. All this running after help is foolishness.

45 You know, there are bullock carts in India. Usually two bulls
46 are harnessed to a cart, and sometimes a sheaf of straw is dangled
47 at the tip of the pole, a little in front of the animals but beyond their
48 reach. The bulls try continually to feed upon the straw, but never
49 succeed. This is exactly how we are helped! We think we are going
50 to get security, strength, wisdom, happiness from the outside. We
51 always hope but never realise our hope. Never does any help come
52 from the outside.

1 There is no help for man. None ever was, none is, and none
2 will be. Why should there be? Are you not men and women? Are the
3 lords of the earth to be helped by others? Are you not ashamed?
4 You will be helped when you are reduced to dust. But you are spirit.
5 Pull yourself out of difficulties by yourself! Save yourself by
6 yourself! There is none to help you--never was. To think that there
7 is, is sweet delusion. It comes to no good.

8 There came a Christian to me once and said, "You are a
9 terrible sinner." I answered, "Yes, I am. Go on." He was a Christian
10 missionary. That man would not give me any rest. When I see him, I
11 fly. He said, "I have very good things for you. You are a sinner and
12 you are going to hell." I replied, "Very good, what else?" I asked
13 him, "Where are you going?" "I am going to heaven", he answered. I
14 said, "I will go to hell." That day he gave me up.

15 Here comes a Christian man and he says, "You are all
16 doomed; but if you believe in this doctrine, Christ will help you out."
17 If this were true--but of course it is nothing but superstition--there
18 would be no wickedness in the Christian countries. Let us believe in
19 it--believing costs nothing--but why is there no result? If I ask, "Why
20 is it that there are so many wicked people?" they say, "We have to
21 work more." Trust in God, but keep your powder dry! Pray to God,
22 and let God come and help you out! But it is I who struggle, pray,
23 and worship; it is I who work out my problems--and God takes the
24 credit. This is not good. I never do it.

25 Once I was invited to a dinner. The hostess asked me to say
26 grace. I said, "I will say grace to you, madam. My grace and thanks
27 are to you." When I work, I say grace to myself. Praise be unto me
28 that I worked hard and acquired what I have!

29 All the time you work hard and bless somebody else, because
30 you are superstitious, you are afraid. No more of these
31 superstitions bred through thousands of years! It takes a little hard
32 work to become spiritual. Superstitions are all materialism, because
33 they are all based on the consciousness of body, body, body. No
34 spirit there. Spirit has no superstitions--it is beyond the vain desires
35 of the body.

1 But here and there these vain desires are being projected
2 even into the realm of the spirit. I have attended several
3 spiritualistic meetings. In one, the leader was a woman. She said to
4 me, "Your mother and grandfather came to me" She said that they
5 greeted her and talked to her. But my mother is living yet! People
6 like to think that even after death their relatives continue to exist in
7 the same bodies, and the spiritualists play on their superstitions. I
8 would be very sorry to know that my dead father is still wearing his
9 filthy body. People get consolation from this, that their fathers are
10 all encased in matter. In another place they brought me Jesus
11 Christ. I said, "Lord, how do you do?" It makes me feel hopeless. If
12 that great saintly man is still wearing the body, what is to become of
13 us poor creatures? The spiritualists did not allow me to touch any of
14 those gentlemen. Even if these were real, I would not want them. I
15 think, "Mother, Mother! atheists--that is what people really are! Just
16 the desire for these five senses! Not satisfied with what they have
17 here, they want more of the same when they die!"

18 What is the God of Vedanta? He is principle, not person. You
19 and I are all Personal Gods. The absolute God of the universe, the
20 creator, preserver, and destroyer of the universe, is impersonal
21 principle. You and I, the cat, rat, devil, and ghost, all these are Its
22 persons--all are Personal Gods. You want to worship Personal Gods.
23 It is the worship of your own self. If you take my advice, you will
24 never enter any church. Come out and go and wash off. Wash
25 yourself again and again until you are cleansed of all the
26 superstitions that have clung to you through the ages. Or, perhaps,
27 you do not like to do so, since you do not wash yourself so often in
28 this country--frequent washing is an Indian custom, not a custom of
29 your society.

30 I have been asked many times, "Why do you laugh so much
31 and make so many jokes?" I become serious sometimes--when I
32 have stomach-ache! The Lord is all blissfulness. He is the reality
33 behind all that exists, He is the goodness, the truth in everything.
34 You are His incarnations. That is what is glorious. The nearer you
35 are to Him, the less you will have occasions to cry or weep. The
36 further we are from Him, the more will long faces come. The more
37 we know of Him, the more misery vanishes. If one who lives in the
38 Lord becomes miserable, what is the use of living in Him? What is
39 the use of such a God? Throw Him overboard into the Pacific
40 Ocean! We do not want Him!

41 But God is the infinite, impersonal being--ever existent,
42 unchanging, immortal, fearless; and you are all His incarnations,
43 His embodiments. This is the God of Vedanta, and His heaven is
44 everywhere. In this heaven dwell all the Personal Gods there are--
45 you yourselves. Exit praying and laying flowers in the temples!

46 What do you pray for? To go to heaven, to get something, and
47 let somebody else not have it. "Lord, I want more food! Let
48 somebody else starve!" What an idea of God who is the reality, the
49 infinite, ever blessed existence in which there is neither part nor
50 flaw, who is ever free, ever pure, ever perfect! We attribute to Him
51 all our human characteristics, functions, and limitations. He must
52 bring us food and give us clothes. As a matter of fact we have to do

1 all these things ourselves and nobody else ever did them for us.
2 That is the plain truth.

3 But you rarely think of this. You imagine there is God of whom
4 you are special favourites, who does things for you when you ask
5 Him; and you do not ask of Him favours for all men, all beings, but
6 only for yourself, your own family, your own people. When the
7 Hindu is starving, you do not care; at that time you do not think that
8 the God of the Christians is also the God of the Hindus. Our whole
9 idea of God, our praying, our worshipping, all are vitiated by our
10 ignorance, our foolish idea of ourselves as body. You may not like
11 what I am saying. You may curse me today, but tomorrow you will
12 bless me.

13 We must become thinkers. Every birth is painful. We must get
14 out of materialism. My Mother would not let us get out of Her
15 clutches; nevertheless we must try. This struggle is all the worship
16 there is; all the rest is mere shadow. You are the Personal God. Just
17 now I am worshipping you. This is the greatest prayer. Worship the
18 whole world in that sense--by serving it. This standing on a high
19 platform, I know, does not appear like worship. But if it is service, it
20 is worship.

21 The infinite truth is never to be acquired. It is here all the
22 time, undying and unborn. He, the Lord of the universe, is in every
23 one. There is but one temple--the body. It is the only temple that
24 ever existed. In this body, He resides, the Lord of souls and the King
25 of kings. We do not see that, so we make stone images of Him and
26 build temples over them. Vedanta has been in India always, but
27 India is full of these temples--and not only temples, but also caves
28 containing carved images. "The fool, dwelling on the bank of the
29 Ganga, digs a well for water!" Such are we! Living in the midst of
30 God--we must go and make images. We project Him in the form of
31 the image, while all the time He exists in the temple of our body. We
32 are lunatics, and this is the great delusion.

33 Worship everything as God--every form is His temple. All else
34 is delusion. Always look within, never without. Such is the God that
35 Vedanta preaches, and such is His worship. Naturally there is no
36 sect, no creed, no caste in Vedanta. How can this religion be the
37 national religion of India?

38 Hundreds of castes! If one man touches another man's food,
39 he cries out, "Lord help me, I am polluted!" When I returned to
40 India after my visit to the West, several orthodox Hindus raised a
41 howl against my association with the Western people and my
42 breaking the rules of orthodoxy. They did not like me to teach the
43 truths of the Vedas to the people of the West.

44 But how can there be these distinctions and differences? How
45 can the rich man turn up his nose at the poor man, and the learned
46 at the ignorant, if we are all spirit and all the same? Unless society
47 changes, how can such a religion as Vedanta prevail? It will take
48 thousands of years to have large numbers of truly rational human
49 beings. It is very hard to show men new things, to give them great
50 ideas. It is harder still to knock off old superstitions, very hard; they
51 do not die easily. With all his education, even the learned man

1 becomes frightened in the dark--the nursery tales come into his
2 mind, and he see ghosts.

3 The meaning of the word "Veda", from which the word
4 "Vedanta" comes, is knowledge. All knowledge is Veda, infinite as
5 God is infinite. Nobody ever creates knowledge. Did you ever see
6 knowledge created? It is only discovered--what was covered is
7 uncovered. It is always here, because it is God Himself. Past,
8 present, and future knowledge, all exist in all of us. We discover it,
9 that is all. All this knowledge is God Himself. The Vedas are a great
10 Sanskrit book. In our country we go down on our knees before the
11 man who reads the Vedas, and we do not care for the man who is
12 studying physics. That is superstition; it is not Vedanta at all. It is
13 utter materialism. With God every knowledge is sacred. Knowledge
14 is God. Infinite knowledge abides within every one in the fullest
15 measure. You are not really ignorant, though you may appear to be
16 so. You are incarnations of God, all of you. You are incarnations of
17 the Almighty, Omnipresent, Divine Principle. You may laugh at me
18 now, but the time will come when you will understand. You must.
19 Nobody will be left behind.

20 What is the goal? This that I have spoken of--Vedanta--is not a
21 new religion. So old--as old as God Himself. It is not confined to any
22 time and place, it is everywhere. Everybody knows this truth. We
23 are all working it out. The goal of the whole universe is that. This
24 applies even to external nature--every atom is rushing towards that
25 goal. And do you think that any of the infinite pure souls are left
26 without knowledge of the supreme truth? All have it, all are going
27 to the same goal--the discovery of the innate Divinity. The maniac,
28 the murderer, the superstitious man, the man who is lynched in this
29 country--all are travelling to the same goal. Only that which we do
30 ignorantly we ought to do knowingly, and better.

31 The unity of all existence--you all have it already within
32 yourselves. None was ever born without it. However you may deny
33 it, it continually asserts itself. What is human love? It is more or less
34 an affirmation of that unity: "I am one with thee, my wife, my child,
35 my friend!" Only you are affirming the unity ignorantly. "None ever
36 loved the husband for the husband's sake, but for the sake of the
37 Self that is in the husband." The wife finds unity there. The husband
38 sees himself in the wife--instinctively he does it, but he cannot do it
39 knowingly, consciously.

40 The whole universe is one existence. There cannot be
41 anything else. Out of diversities we are all going towards this
42 universal existence. Families into tribes, tribes into races, races into
43 nations, nations into humanity--how many wills going to the One! It
44 is all knowledge, all science--the realisation of this unity.

45 Unity is knowledge, diversity is ignorance. This knowledge is
46 your birthright. I have not to teach it to you. There never were
47 different religions in the world. We are all destined to have
48 salvation, whether we will it or not. You have to attain it in the long
49 run and become free, because it is your nature to be free. We are
50 already free, only we do not know it, and we do not know what we
51 have been doing. Throughout all religious systems and ideals is the

1 same morality; one thing only is preached: "Be unselfish, love
2 others." One says, "Because Jehovah commanded." "Allah," shouted
3 Mohammed. Another cries, "Jesus". If it was only the command of
4 Jehovah, how could it come to those who never knew Jehovah? If it
5 was Jesus alone who gave this command, how could any one who
6 never knew Jesus get it? If only Vishnu, how could the Jews get it,
7 who never were acquainted with that gentleman? There is another
8 source, greater than all of them. Where is it? In the eternal temple
9 of God, in the souls of all beings from the lowest to the highest. It is
10 there--that infinite unselfishness, infinite sacrifice, infinite
11 compulsion to go back to unity.

12 We have seemingly been divided, limited, because of our
13 ignorance; and we have become as it were the little Mrs. so-and-so
14 and Mr. so-and-so. But all nature is giving this delusion the lie every
15 moment. I am not that little man or little woman cut off from all
16 else; I am the one universal existence. The soul in its own majesty is
17 rising up every moment and declaring its own intrinsic Divinity.

18 This Vedanta is everywhere, only you must become conscious
19 of it. These masses of foolish beliefs and superstitions hinder us in
20 our progress. If we can, let us throw them off and understand that
21 God is spirit to be worshipped in spirit and in truth. Try to be
22 materialists no more! Throw away all matter! The conception of
23 God must be truly spiritual. All the different ideas of God, which are
24 more or less materialistic, must go. As man becomes more and
25 more spiritual, he has to throw off all these ideas and leave them
26 behind. As a matter of fact, in every country there have always been
27 a few who have been strong enough to throw away all matter and
28 stand out in the shining light, worshipping the spirit by the spirit.

29 If Vedanta--this conscious knowledge that all is one spirit--
30 spreads, the whole of humanity will become spiritual. But is it
31 possible? I do not know. Not within thousands of years. The old
32 superstitions must run out. You are all interested in how to
33 perpetuate all your superstitions. Then there are the ideas of the
34 family brother, the caste brother, the national brother. All these are
35 barriers to the realisation of Vedanta. Religion has been religion to
36 very few.

37 Most of those who have worked in the field of religion all over
38 the world have really been political workers. That has been the
39 history of human beings. They have rarely tried to live up
40 uncompromisingly to the truth. They have always worshipped the
41 god called society; they have been mostly concerned with upholding
42 what the masses believe--their superstitions, their weakness. They
43 do not try to conquer nature but to fit into nature, nothing else. God
44 to India and preach a new creed--they will not listen to it. But if you
45 tell them it is from the Vedas--"That is good!" they will say. Here I
46 can preach this doctrine, and you--how many of you take me
47 seriously? But the truth is all here, and I must tell you the truth.

1 There is another side to the question. Everyone says that the
2 highest, the pure, truth cannot be realised all at once by all, that
3 men have to be led to it gradually through worship, prayer, and
4 other kinds of prevalent religious practices. I am not sure whether
5 that is the right method or not. In India I work both ways.

6 In Calcutta, I have all these images and temples--in the name
7 of God and the Vedas, of the Bible and Christ and Buddha. Let it be
8 tried. But on the heights of the Himalayas I have a place where I
9 am determined nothing shall enter except pure truth. There I want
10 to work out this idea about which I have spoken to you today. There
11 are an Englishman and an Englishwoman in charge of the place.
12 The purpose is to train seekers of truth and to bring up children
13 without fear and without superstition. They shall not hear about
14 Christs and Buddhas and Shivas and Vishnus--none of these. They
15 shall learn, from the start, to stand upon their own feet. They shall
16 learn from their childhood that God is the spirit and should be
17 worshipped in spirit and in truth. Everyone must be looked upon as
18 spirit. That is the ideal. I do not know what success will come of it.
19 Today I am preaching the thing I like. I wish I had been brought up
20 entirely on that, without all the dualistic superstitions.

21 Sometimes I agree that there is some good in the dualistic
22 method: it helps many who are weak. If a man wants you to show
23 him the polar star, you first point out to him a bright star near it,
24 then a less bright star, then a dim star, and then the polar star. This
25 process makes it easy for him to see it. All the various practices and
26 trainings, Bibles and Gods, are but the rudiments of religion, the
27 kindergartens of religion.

28 But then I think of the other side. How long will the world
29 have to wait to reach the truth if it follows this slow, gradual
30 process? How long? And where is the surety that it will ever
31 succeed to any appreciable degree? It has not so far. After all,
32 gradual or not gradual, easy or not easy to the weak, is not the
33 dualistic method based on falsehood? Are not all the prevalent
34 religious practices often weakening and therefore wrong? They are
35 based on a wrong idea, a wrong view of man. Would two wrong
36 make one right? Would the lie become truth? Would darkness
37 become light?

38 I am the servant of a man who has passed away. I am only the
39 messenger. I want to make the experiment. The teachings of
40 Vedanta I have told you about were never really experimented with
41 before. Although Vedanta is the oldest philosophy in the world, it
42 has always become mixed up with superstitions and everything
43 else.

44 Christ said, "I and my father are one", and you repeat it. Yet it
45 has not helped mankind. For nineteen hundred years men have not
46 understood that saying. They make Christ the saviour of men. He is
47 God and we are worms! Similarly in India. In every country, this
48 sort of belief is the backbone of every sect. For thousands of years
49 millions and millions all over the world have been taught to worship
50 the Lord of the world, the Incarnations, the saviours, the prophets.
51 They have been taught to consider themselves helpless, miserable

1 creatures and to depend upon the mercy of some person or persons
2 for salvation. There are no doubt many marvellous things in such
3 beliefs. But even at their best, they are but kindergartens of
4 religion, and they have helped but little. Men are still hypnotised
5 into abject degradation. However, there are some strong souls who
6 get over that illusion. The hour comes when great men shall arise
7 and cast off these kindergartens of religion and shall make vivid
8 and powerful the true religion, the worship of the spirit by the
9 spirit.

THE STRUGGLE FOR EXPANSION²⁴³

The old dilemma, whether the tree precedes the seed or the seed the tree, runs through all our forms of knowledge. Whether intelligence is first in the order of being or matter; whether the ideal is first or the external manifestation; whether freedom is our true nature or bondage of law; whether thought creates matter or matter thought; whether the incessant change in nature precedes the idea of rest or the idea of rest precedes the idea of change--all these are questions of the same insoluble nature. Like the rise and fall of a series of waves, they follow one another in an invariable succession and men take this side or that according to their tastes or education or peculiarity of temperaments.

For instance, if it be said on the one hand that, seeing the adjustment in nature of different parts, it is clear that it is the effect of intelligent work; on the other hand it may be argued that intelligence itself being created by matter and force in the course of evolution could not have been before this world. If it be said that the production of every form must be preceded by an ideal in the mind, it can be argued, with equal force, that the ideal was itself created by various external experiences. On the one hand, the appeal is to our ever-present idea of freedom; on the other, to the fact that nothing in the universe being causeless, everything, both mental and physical, is rigidly bound by the law of causation. If it be affirmed that, seeing the changes of the body induced by volition, it is evident that thought is the creator of this body, it is equally clear that as change in the body induces a change in the thought, the body must have produced the mind. If it be argued that the universal change must be the outcome of a preceding rest, equally logical argument can be adduced to show that the idea of unchangeability is only an illusory relative notion, brought about by the comparative differences in motion.

Thus in the ultimate analysis all knowledge resolves itself into this vicious circle: the indeterminate interdependence of cause and effect. Judging by the laws of reasoning, such knowledge is incorrect; and the most curious fact is that this knowledge is proved to be incorrect, not by comparison with knowledge which is true, but by the very laws which depend for their basis upon the selfsame vicious circle. It is clear, therefore, that the peculiarity of all our knowledge is that it proves its own insufficiency. Again, we cannot say that it is unreal, for all the reality we know and can think of is within this knowledge. Nor can we deny that it is sufficient for all practical purposes. This state of human knowledge which embraces within its scope both the external and the internal worlds is called Maya. It is unreal because it proves its own incorrectness. It is real in the sense of being sufficient for all the needs of the animal man.

²⁴³ Written by the Swami during his first visit to America in answer to questions put by a Western disciple.

1 Acting in the external world Maya manifests itself as the two
2 powers of attraction and repulsion. In the internal its
3 manifestations are desire and non-desire (Pravritti and Nivritti).
4 The whole universe is trying to rush outwards. Each atom is trying
5 to fly off from its centre. In the internal world, each thought is
6 trying to go beyond control. Again each particle in the external
7 world is checked by another force, the centripetal, and drawn
8 towards the centre. Similarly in the thought-world the controlling
9 power is checking all these outgoing desires.

10 Desires of materialisation, that is, being dragged down more
11 and more to the plane of mechanical action, belong to the animal
12 man. It is only when the desire to prevent all such bondage to the
13 senses arises that religion dawns in the heart of man. Thus we see
14 that the whole scope of religion is to prevent man from falling into
15 the bondage of the senses and to help him to assert his freedom.
16 The first effort of this power of Nivritti towards that end is called
17 morality. The scope of all morality is to prevent this degradation
18 and break this bondage. All morality can be divided into the positive
19 and the negative elements; it says either, "Do this" or "Do not do
20 this". When it says, "Do not", it is evident that it is a check to a
21 certain desire which would make a man a slave. When it says, "Do",
22 its scope is to show the way to freedom and to the breaking down of
23 a certain degradation which has already seized the human heart.

24 Now this morality is only possible if there be a liberty to be
25 attained by man. Apart from the question of the chances of
26 attaining perfect liberty, it is clear that the whole universe is a case
27 of struggle to expand, or in other words, to attain liberty. This
28 infinite space is not sufficient for even one atom. The struggle for
29 expansion must go on eternally until perfect liberty is attained. It
30 cannot be said that this struggle to gain freedom is to avoid pain or
31 to attain pleasure. The lowest grade of beings, who can have no
32 such feeling, are also struggling for expansion; and according to
33 many, man himself is the expansion of these very beings.

THE BIRTH OF RELIGION²⁴⁴

The beautiful flowers of the forest with their many-coloured petals, nodding their heads, jumping, leaping, playing with every breeze; the beautiful birds with their gorgeous plumage, their sweet songs echoing through every forest glade--they were there yesterday, my solace, my companions, and today they are gone--where? My playmates, the companions of my joys and sorrows, my pleasures and pastime--they also are gone--where? Those that nursed me when I was a child, who all through their lives had but one thought for me--that of doing everything for me--they also are gone. Everyone, everything is gone, is going, and will go. Where do they go? This was the question that pressed for an answer in the mind of the primitive man. "Why so?" you may ask, "Did he not see everything decomposed, reduced to dust before him? Why should he have troubled his head at all about where they went?"

To the primitive man everything is living in the first place, and to him death in the sense of annihilation has no meaning at all. People come to him, go away, and come again. Sometimes they go away and do not come. Therefore in the most ancient language of the world death is always expressed by some sort of going. This is the beginning of religion. Thus the primitive man was searching everywhere for a solution of his difficulty--where do they all go?

There is the morning sun radiant in his glory, bringing light and warmth and joy to a sleeping world. Slowly he travels and, alas, he also disappears, down, down below!

But the next day he appears again--glorious, beautiful! And there is the lotus--that wonderful flower in the Nile, the Indus, and the Tigris, the birth-places of civilisation--opening in the morning as the solar rays strike its closed petals and with the waning sun shutting up again. Some were there then who came and went and got up from their graves revived. This was the first solution. The sun and the lotus are, therefore, the chief symbols in the most ancient religions. Why these symbols? because abstract thought, whatever that be, when expressed, is bound to come clad in visible, tangible, gross garments. This is the law. The idea of the passing out as not out of existence but in it, had to be expressed only as a change, a momentary transformation; and reflexively, that object which strikes the senses and goes vibrating to the mind and calls up a new idea is bound to be taken up as the support, the nucleus round which the new idea spreads itself for an expression. And so the sun and the lotus were the first symbols.

There are deep holes everywhere--so dark and so dismal; down is all dark and frightful; under water we cannot see, open our eyes though we may; up is light, all light, even at night the beautiful starry hosts shedding their light. Where do they go then, those I

²⁴⁴ ?Written by the Swami during his first visit to America in answer to questions put by a Western disciple.

1 love? Not certainly down in the dark, dark place, but up, above in
2 the realm of Everlasting Light. That required a new symbol. Here is
3 fire with its glowing wonderful tongues of flame--eating up a forest
4 in a short time, cooking the food, giving warmth, and driving wild
5 animals away--this life-giving, life-saving fire; and then the flames--
6 they all go upwards, never downwards. Here then was another--this
7 fire that carries them upwards to the places of light--the connecting
8 link between us and those that have passed over to the regions of
9 light. "Thou Ignis", begins the oldest human record, "our messenger
10 to the bright ones." So they put food and drink and whatever they
11 thought would be pleasing to these "bright ones" into the fire. This
12 was the beginning of sacrifice.

13 So far the first question was solved, at least as far as to
14 satisfy the needs of these primitive men. Then came the other
15 question: Whence has all this come? Why did it not come first?
16 Because we remember a sudden change more. Happiness, joy,
17 addition, enjoyment make not such a deep impression on our mind
18 as unhappiness, sorrow, and subtraction. Our nature is joy,
19 enjoyment, pleasure, and happiness. Anything that violently breaks
20 it makes a deeper impression than the natural course. So the
21 problem of death was the first to be solved as the great disturber.
22 Then with more advancement came the other question: Whence
23 they came? Everything that lives moves: we move; our will moves
24 our limbs; our limbs manufacture forms under the control of our
25 will. Everything then that moved had a will in it as the motor, to the
26 man-child of ancient times as it is to the child-man of the present
27 day. The wind has a will; the cloud, the whole of nature, is full of
28 separate wills, minds, and souls. They are creating all this just as
29 we manufacture many things; they--the "Devas", the "Elohim" are
30 the creators of all this.

31 Now in the meanwhile society was growing up. In society
32 there was the king--why not among the bright ones, the Elohim?
33 Therefore there was a supreme "Deva", an Elohim-Jahveh, God of
34 gods--the one God who by His single will has created all this--even
35 the "bright ones". But as He has appointed different stars and
36 planets, so He has appointed different "Devas" or angels to preside
37 over different functions of nature--some over death, some over
38 birth, etc. One supreme being, supreme by being infinitely more
39 powerful than the rest, is the common conception in the two great
40 sources of all religions, the Aryan and Semitic races. But here the
41 Aryans take a new start, a grand deviation.

42 Their God was not only a supreme being, but He was the
43 Dyaus Pitar, the Father in heaven. This is the beginning of Love.
44 The Semitic God is only a thunderer, only the terrible one, the
45 mighty Lord of hosts. To all these the Aryan added a new idea, that
46 of a *Father*. And the divergence becomes more and more obvious
47 all through further progress, which in fact stopped at this place in
48 the Semitic branch of the human race. The God of the Semitic is not
49 to be seen--nay, it is death to see Him; the God of the Aryan cannot
50 only be seen, but He is the goal of being; the one aim of life is to
51 see Him. The Semitic obeys his King of kings for fear of punishment
52 and keeps His commandments. The Aryan loves his father; and

1 further on he adds mother, his friend. And "Love me, love my dog",
2 they say. So each one of His creatures should be loved, because
3 they are His. To the Semitic, this life is an outpost where we are
4 posted to test our fidelity; to the Aryan this life is on the way to our
5 goal. To the Semitic, if we do our duty well, we shall have an ever-
6 joyful home in heaven. To the Aryan, that home is God Himself. To
7 the Semitic, serving God is a means to an end, namely, the pay,
8 which is joy and enjoyment. To the Aryan, enjoyment, misery--
9 everything--is a means, and the end is God. The Semitic worships
10 God to go to heaven. The Aryan rejects heaven to go to God. In
11 short, this is the main difference. The aim and end of the Aryan life
12 is to see God, to see the face of the Beloved, because without Him
13 he cannot live. "Without Thy presence, the sun, the moon, and the
14 stars lose their light."

FOUR PATHS OF YOGA²⁴⁵

Our main problem is to be free. It is evident then that until we realise ourselves as the Absolute, we cannot attain to deliverance. Yet there are various ways of attaining to this realisation. These methods have the generic name of Yoga (to join, to join ourselves to our reality). These Yogas, though divided into various groups, can principally be classed into four; and as each is only a method leading indirectly to the realisation of the Absolute, they are suited to different temperaments. Now it must be remembered that it is not that the assumed man becomes the real man or Absolute. There is no becoming with the Absolute. It is ever free, ever perfect; but the ignorance that has covered Its nature for a time is to be removed. Therefore the whole scope of all systems of Yoga (and each religion represents one) is to clear up this ignorance and allow the Atman to restore its own nature. The chief helps in this liberation are Abhyasa and Vairagya. Vairagya is non-attachment to life, because it is the will to enjoy that brings all this bondage in its train; and Abhyasa is constant practice of any one of the Yogas.

Karma-Yoga . Karma-Yoga is purifying the mind by means of work. Now if any work is done, good or bad, it must produce as a result a good or bad effect; no power can stay it, once the cause is present. Therefore good action producing good Karma, and bad action, bad Karma, the soul will go on in eternal bondage without ever hoping for deliverance. Now Karma belongs only to the body or the mind, never to the Atman (Self); only it can cast a veil before the Atman.

The veil cast by bad Karma is ignorance. Good Karma has the power to strengthen the moral powers. And thus it creates non-attachment; it destroys the tendency towards bad Karma and thereby purifies the mind. But if the work is done with the intention of enjoyment, it then produces only that very enjoyment and does not purify the mind or Chitta. Therefore all work should be done without any desire to enjoy the fruits thereof. All fear and all desire to enjoy here or hereafter must be banished for ever by the Karma-Yogi. Moreover, this Karma without desire of return will destroy the selfishness, which is the root of all bondage. The watchword of the Karma-Yogi is "not I, but Thou", and no amount of self-sacrifice is too much for him. But he does this without any desire to go to heaven, or gain name or fame or any other benefit in this world. Although the explanation and rationale of this unselfish work is only in Jnana-Yoga, yet the natural divinity of man makes him love all sacrifice simply for the good of others, without any ulterior motive, whatever his creed or opinion. Again, with many the bondage of wealth is very great; and Karma-Yoga is absolutely necessary for them as breaking the crystallisation that has gathered round their love of money.

²⁴⁵ ?Written by the Swami during his first visit to America in answer to questions put by a Western disciple.

1 Next is *Bhakti-Yoga* . Bhakti or worship or love in some form
2 or other is the easiest, pleasantest, and most natural way of man.
3 The natural state of this universe is attraction; and that is surely
4 followed by an ultimate disunion. Even so, love is the natural
5 impetus of union in the human heart; and though itself a great
6 cause of misery, properly directed towards the proper object, it
7 brings deliverance. The object of Bhakti is God. Love cannot be
8 without a subject and an object. The object of love again must be at
9 first a being who can reciprocate our love. Therefore the God of
10 love must be in some sense a human God. He must be a God of love.
11 Aside from the question whether such a God exists or not, it is a
12 fact that to those who have love in their heart this Absolute appears
13 as a God of love, as personal.

14 The lower forms of worship, which embody the idea of God as
15 a judge or punisher or someone to be obeyed through fear, do not
16 deserve to be called love, although they are forms of worship
17 gradually expanding into higher forms. We pass on to the
18 consideration of love itself. We will illustrate love by a triangle, of
19 which the first angle at the base is fearlessness. So long as there is
20 fear, it is not love. Love banishes all fear. A mother with her baby
21 will face a tiger to save her child. The second angle is that love
22 never asks, never begs. The third or the apex is that love loves for
23 the sake of love itself. Even the idea of object vanishes. Love is the
24 only form in which love is loved. This is the highest abstraction and
25 the same as the Absolute.

26 Next is *Raja-Yoga* . This Yoga fits in with every one of these
27 Yogas. It fits inquirers of all classes with or without any belief, and
28 it is the real instrument of religious inquiry. As each science has its
29 particular method of investigation, so is this Raja-Yoga the method
30 of religion. This science also is variously applied according to
31 various constitutions. The chief parts are the Pranayama,
32 concentration, and meditation. For those who believe in God, a
33 symbolical name, such as Om or other sacred words received from
34 a Guru, will be very helpful. Om is the greatest, meaning the
35 Absolute. Meditating on the meaning of these holy names while
36 repeating them is the chief practice.

37 Next is *Jnana-Yoga*. This is divided into three parts. First:
38 hearing the truth--that the Atman is the only reality and that
39 everything else is Maya (relativity). Second: reasoning upon this
40 philosophy from all points of view. Third: giving up all further
41 argumentation and realising the truth. This realisation comes from
42 (1) being certain that Brahman is real and everything else is unreal;
43 (2) giving up all desire for enjoyment; (3) controlling the senses and
44 the mind; (4) intense desire to be free. Meditating on this reality
45 always and reminding the soul of its real nature are the only ways
46 in this Yoga. It is the highest, but most difficult. Many persons get
47 an intellectual grasp of it, but very few attain realisation.

CYCLIC REST AND CHANGE²⁴⁶

This whole universe is a case of lost balance. All motion is the struggle of the disturbed universe to regain its equilibrium, which, as such, cannot be motion. Thus in regard to the internal world it would be a state which is beyond thought, for thought itself is a motion. Now when all indication is towards perfect equilibrium by expansion and the whole universe is rushing towards it, we have no right to say that that state can never be attained. Again it is impossible that there should be any variety whatsoever in that state of equilibrium. It must be homogeneous; for as long as there are even two atoms, they will attract and repel each other and disturb the balance. Therefore this state of equilibrium is one of unity, of rest, and of homogeneity. In the language of the internal, this state of equilibrium is not thought, nor body, nor anything which we call an attribute. The only thing which we can say it will retain is what is its own nature as existence, self-consciousness, and blissfulness.

This state in the same way cannot be two. It must only be a unit, and all fictitious distinctions of I, thou, etc., all the different variations must vanish, as they belong to the state of change or Maya. It may be said that this state of change has come now upon the Self, showing that, before this, it had the state of rest and liberty; that at present the state of differentiation is the only real state, and the state of homogeneity is the primitive crudeness out of which this changeful state is manufactured; and that it will be only degeneration to go back to the state of undifferentiation. This argument would have had some weight if it could be proved that these two states, viz homogeneity and heterogeneity, are the only two states happening but once through all time. What happens once must happen again and again. Rest is followed by change--the universe. But that rest must have been preceded by other changes, and this change will be succeeded by other rests. It would be ridiculous to think that there was a period of rest and then came this change which will go on for ever. Every particle in nature shows that it is coming again and again to periodic rest and change.

This interval between one period of rest and another is called a Kalpa. But this Kalpic rest cannot be one of perfect homogeneity, for in that case there would be an end to any future manifestation. Now to say that the present state of change is one of great advance in comparison to the preceding state of rest is simply absurd, because in that case the coming period of rest being much more advanced in time must be much more perfect! There is no progression or digression in nature. It is showing again and again the same forms. In fact, the word law means this. But there is a progression with regard to souls. That is to say, the souls get nearer to their own natures, and in each Kalpa large numbers of them get deliverance from being thus whirled around. It may be said, the individual soul being a part of the universe and nature, returning

²⁴⁶ ?Written by the Swami during his first visit to America in answer to questions put by a Western disciple.

1 again and again, there cannot be any liberty for the soul, for in that
2 case the universe has to be destroyed. The answer is that the
3 individual soul is an assumption through Maya, and it is no more a
4 reality than nature itself. In reality, this individual soul is the
5 unconditioned absolute Brahman (the Supreme).

6 All that is real in nature is Brahman, only it appears to be this
7 variety, or nature, through the superimposition of Maya. Maya
8 being illusion cannot be said to be real, yet it is producing the
9 phenomena. If it be asked, how can Maya, herself being illusion,
10 produce all this, our answer is that what is produced being also
11 ignorance, the producer must also be that. How can ignorance be
12 produced by knowledge? So this Maya is acting in two ways as
13 nescience and science (relative knowledge); and this science after
14 destroying nescience or ignorance is itself also destroyed. This
15 Maya destroys herself and what remains is the Absolute, the
16 Essence of existence, knowledge, and bliss. Now whatever is reality
17 in nature is this Absolute, and nature comes to us in three forms,
18 God, conscious, and unconscious, i.e. God, personal souls, and
19 unconscious beings. The reality of all these is the Absolute; through
20 Maya it is seen to be diverse. But the vision of God is the nearest to
21 the reality and the highest. The idea of a Personal God is the
22 highest idea which man can have. All the attributes attributed to
23 God are true in the same sense as are the attributes of nature. Yet
24 we must never forget that the Personal God is the very Absolute
25 seen through Maya.

26 27 28 **A PREFACE TO THE IMITATION OF** 29 **CHRIST²⁴⁷**

30
31 *The Imitation of Christ* is a cherished treasure of the
32 Christian world. This great book was written by a Roman Catholic
33 monk. "Written", perhaps, is not the proper word. It would be more
34 appropriate to say that each letter of the book is marked deep with
35 the heart's blood of the great soul who had renounced all for his
36 love of Christ. That great soul whose words, living and burning,
37 have cast such a spell for the last four hundred years over the
38 hearts of myriads of men and women; whose influence today
39 remains as strong as ever and is destined to endure for all time to
40 come; before whose genius and Sadhana (spiritual effort) hundred
41 of crowned heads have bent down in reverence; and before whose
42 matchless purity the jarring sects of Christendom, whose name is
43 legion, have sunk their differences of centuries in common
44 veneration to a common principle--that great soul, strange to say,
45 has not thought fit to put his name to a book such as this. Yet there

1 ²⁴⁷ ?Translated from an original Bengali writing of the Swami in 1889. The
2 passage is the preface to his Bengali translation of *The Imitation of Christ* which
3 he contributed to a Bengali monthly. He translated only six chapters with
4 quotations of parallel passages from the Hindu scriptures.
5

1 is nothing strange here after all, for why should he? Is it possible
2 for one who totally renounced all earthly joys and despised the
3 desire for the bauble fame as so much dirt and filth--is it possible
4 for such a soul to care for that paltry thing, a mere author's name?
5 Posterity, however, has guessed that the author was Thomas a
6 Kempis, a Roman Catholic monk. How far the guess is true is
7 known only to God. But be he who he may, that he deserves the
8 world's adoration is a truth that can be gainsaid by none.

9 We happen to be the subjects of a Christian government now.
10 Through its favour it has been our lot to meet Christians of so many
11 sects, native as well as foreign. How startling the divergence
12 between their profession and practice! Here stands the Christian
13 missionary preaching: "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.
14 Take no thought for the morrow"--and then busy soon after, making
15 his pile and framing his budget for ten years in advance! There he
16 says that he follows him who "hath not where to lay his head", glibly
17 talking of the glorious sacrifice and burning renunciation of the
18 Master, but in practice going about like a gay bridegroom fully
19 enjoying all the comforts the world can bestow! Look where we
20 may, a true Christian nowhere do we see. The ugly impression left
21 on our mind by the ultra-luxurious, insolent, despotic, barouche-
22 and-brougham-driving Christians of the Protestant sects will be
23 completely removed if we but once read this great book with the
24 attention it deserves.

25 All wise men think alike. The reader, while reading this book,
26 will hear the echo of the Bhagavad-Gita over and over again. Like
27 the Bhagavad-Gita it says, "Give up all Dharmas and follow Me".
28 The spirit of humility, the panting of the distressed soul, the best
29 expression of Dasya Bhakti (devotion as a servant) will be found
30 imprinted on every line of this great book and the reader's heart
31 will be profoundly stirred by the author's thoughts of burning
32 renunciation, marvelous surrender, and deep sense of dependence
33 on the will of God. To those of my countrymen, who under the
34 influence of blind bigotry may seek to belittle this book because it is
35 the work of a Christian, I shall quote only one aphorism of
36 *Vaisheshika Darshana* and say nothing more. The aphorism is this:
37 {Sanskrit}--which means that the teachings of Siddha Purushas
38 (perfected souls) have a probative force and this is technically
39 known as Shabda Pramana (verbal evidence). Rishi Jaimini, the
40 commentator, says that such Apta Purushas (authorities) may be
41 born both among the Aryans and the Mlechchhas.

42 If in ancient times Greek astronomers like Yavanacharya
43 could have been so highly esteemed by our Aryan ancestors, then it
44 is incredible that this work of the lion of devotees will fail to be
45 appreciated by my countrymen.

46 Be that as it may, we shall place the Bengali translation of
47 this book before our readers *seriatim*. We trust that the readers of
48 Bengal will spend over it at least one hundredth part of the time
49 they waste over cart-loads of trashy novels and dramas.

1 I have tried to make the translation as literal as possible, but
2 I cannot say how far I have succeeded. The allusions to the Bible in
3 several passages are given in the footnotes.

4 5 6 **AN INTERESTING CORRESPONDENCE**²⁴⁸ 7

8 Now Sister Mary,
9 You need not be sorry
10 For the hard raps I gave you,
11 You know full well,
12 Though you like me tell,
13 With my whole heart I love you.

14
15 The babies I bet,
16 The best friends I met,
17 Will stand by me in weal and woe.
18 And so will I do,
19 You know it too.

20
21 Life, name, or fame, even heaven forgo
22 For the sweet sisters four
23 *Sans reproche et sans peur*,
24 The truest, noblest, steadfast, best.

25
26 The wounded snake its hood unfurls,
27 The flame stirred up doth blaze,
28 The desert air resounds the calls
29 Of heart-struck lion's rage.

30
31 The cloud puts forth its deluge strength
32 When lightning cleaves its breast,
33 When the soul is stirred to its inmost depth
34 Great ones unfold their best.
35

1 ²⁴⁸ ?In order to truly appreciate this correspondence, the reader has to be
2 informed of the occasion which gave rise to it and also to remember the relation
3 that existed between the correspondents. At the outset of the first letter the
4 Swami speaks of "the hard raps" that he gave to his correspondent. These were
5 nothing but a very strong letter which he wrote to her in vindication of his
6 position, on the 1st of February, 1895, which will be found reproduced in the fifth
7 volume of the *Complete Works* of the Swami. It was a very beautiful letter full of
8 the fire of a Sannyasin's spirit, and we request our readers to go through it
9 before they peruse the following text. Mary Hale, to whom the Swami wrote,
10 was one of the two daughters of Mr. and Mrs. Hale whom the Swami used to
11 address as Father Pope and Mother Church. The Misses Hales and their two
12 cousins were like sisters to him, and they also in their turn held the Swami in
13 great love and reverence. Some of the finest letters of the Swami were written to
14 them.

15 In the present correspondence the Swami is seen in a new light, playful and
16 intensely human, yet keyed to the central theme of his life, Brahmajñana. The
17 first letter was written from New York, 15th February 1895--Ed.
18

1 Let eyes grow dim and heart grow faint,
2 And friendship fail and love betray,
3 Let Fate its hundred horrors send,
4 And clotted darkness block the way.
5
6 All nature wear one angry frown,
7 To crush you out--still know, my soul,
8 You are Divine. March on and on,
9 Nor right nor left but to the goal.
10
11 Nor angel I, nor man, nor brute,
12 Nor body, mind, nor he or she,
13 The books do stop in wonder mute
14 To tell my nature; I am He.
15
16 Before the sun, the moon, the earth,
17 Before the stars or comets free,
18 Before e'en time has had its birth,
19 I was, I am, and I will be.
20
21 The beauteous earth, the glorious sun,
22 The calm sweet moon, the spangled sky,
23 Causation's laws do make them run;
24 They live in bonds, in bonds they die.
25
26 And mind its mantle dreamy net
27 Cast o'er them all and holds them fast.
28 In warp and woof of thought are set,
29 Earth, hells, and heavens, or worst or best.
30
31 Know these are but the outer crust--
32 All space and time, all effect, cause.
33 I am beyond all sense, all thoughts,
34 The witness of the universe.
35
36 Not two or many, 'tis but one,
37 And thus in me all me's I have;
38 I cannot hate, I cannot shun
39 Myself from me, I can but love.
40
41 From dreams awake, from bonds be free,
42 Be not afraid. This mystery,
43 My shadow, cannot frighten me,
44 Know once for all that I am He.
45

46 Well, so far my poetry. Hope you are all right. Give my love to
47 mother and Father Pope. I am busy to death and have almost no
48 time to write even a line. So excuse me if later on I am rather late
49 in writing.

50 Yours eternally,
51 Vivekananda.

52

1 *Miss M.B.H. sent Swami the following doggerel in reply:*

2

3 The monk he would a poet be
4 And wooed the muse right earnestly;
5 In thought and word he could well beat her,
6 What bothered him though was the metre.

7

8 His feet were all too short too long,
9 The form not suited to his song;
10 He tried the sonnet, lyric, epic,
11 And worked so hard, he waxed dyspeptic.

12

13 While the poetic mania lasted
14 He e'en from vegetables fasted,
15 Which Leon²⁴⁹ had with tender care
16 Prepared for Swami's dainty fare.

17

18 One day he sat and mused alone--
19 Sudden a light around him shone,
20 The "still small voice" his thoughts inspire
21 And his words glow like coals of fire.

22

23 And coals of fire they proved to be
24 Heaped on the head of contrite me--
25 My scolding letter I deplore
26 And beg forgiveness o'er and o'er.

27

28 The lines you sent to your sisters four
29 Be sure they'll cherish evermore
30 For you have made them clearly see
31 The one main truth that "all is He".

32

33 *Then Swami:*

34

35 In days of yore,
36 On Ganga's shore preaching,
37 A hoary priest was teaching
38 How Gods they come
39 As Sita Ram,
40 And gentle Sita pining, weeping.
41 The sermons end,
42 They homeward wend their way--
43 The hearers musing, thinking.

44

45 When from the crowd
46 A voice aloud
47 This question asked beseeching, seeking--
48 "Sir, tell me, pray,
49 Who were but they

1 ²⁴⁹ ?Leon Landsberg, a disciple of the Swami who lived with him for some
2 time.
3

These Sita Ram you were teaching, speaking!"

So Mary Hale,
Allow me tell,
You mar my doctrines wronging, baulking.
I never taught
Such queer thought
That all was God--unmeaning talking!

But this I say,
Remember pray,
That God is *true*, all else is *nothing*,
This world's a dream
Though true it seem,
And only truth is *He* the living!
The real *me* is none but *He*,
And never, never *matter* changing!
With undying love and gratitude to you all. . . .
Vivekananda.

And then Miss M.B.H.:

The difference I clearly see
'Twixt tweedledum and tweedledee--
That is a proposition sane,
But truly 'tis beyond my vein
To make your Eastern logic plain.

If "God is truth, all else is naught,"
This "world a dream", delusion up wrought,
What can exist which God is not?
All those who "many" see have much to fear,
He only lives to whom the "One" is clear.
So again I say
In my poor way,
I cannot see but that all's He,
If I'm in Him and He in me.

Then the Swami replied:

Of temper quick, a girl unique,
A freak of nature she,
A lady fair, no question there,
Rare soul is Miss Mary.
Her feelings deep she cannot keep,
But creep they out at last,
A spirit free, I can foresee,
Must be of fiery cast.

Tho' many a lay her muse can bray,
And play piano too,
Her heart so cool, chills as a rule
The fool who comes to woo.

1 Though, Sister Mary, I hear they say
2 The sway your beauty gains,
3 Be cautious now and do not bow,
4 However sweet, to chains.
5
6 For 'twill be soon, another tune
7 The moon-struck mate will hear
8 If his will but clash, your words will hash
9 And smash his life I fear.
10 These lines to thee, Sister Mary,
11 Free will I offer, take
12 "Tit for tat"--a monkey chat,
13 For monk alone can make.

14

15

16 **THOU BLESSED DREAM**²⁵⁰

17

18 If things go ill or well--
19 If joy rebounding spreads the face,
20 Or sea of sorrow swells--
21 A play--we each have part,
22 Each one to weep or laugh as may;
23 Each one his dress to don--
24 Its scenes, alternative shine and rain.

25

26 Thou dream, O blessed dream!
27 Spread far and near thy veil of haze,
28 Tone down the lines so sharp,
29 Make smooth what roughness seems.

30

31 No magic but in thee!
32 Thy touch makes desert bloom to life.
33 Harsh thunder, sweetest song,
34 Fell death, the sweet release.

35

36 **LIGHT**²⁵¹

37

38 I look behind and after
39 And find that all is right,
40 In my deepest sorrows
41 There is a soul of light.

42

43

44 **THE LIVING GOD**²⁵²

1 ²⁵⁰ ?Written to Miss Christine Greenstidel from Paris, 14th August 1900.

2
3 ²⁵¹ ?From a letter to Miss MacLeod, 26th December 1900 (Vide Vol. VI.)

4
5 ²⁵² ?Written to an American friend from Almora, 9th July 1897.

6

1
2 He who is in you and outside you,
3 Who works through all hands,
4 Who walks on all feet,
5 Whose body are all ye,
6 Him worship, and break all other idols!

7
8 He who is at once the high and low,
9 The sinner and the saint,
10 Both God and worm,
11 Him worship--visible, knowable, real, omnipresent,
12 Break all other idols!

13
14 In whom is neither past life
15 Nor future birth nor death,
16 In whom we always have been
17 And always shall be one,
18 Him worship. Break all other idols!

19
20 Ye fools! who neglect the living God,
21 And His infinite reflections with which the world is full.

22
23 While ye run after imaginary shadows,
24 That lead alone to fights and quarrels,
25 Him worship, the only visible!
26 Break all other idols!

27
28
29 **TO AN EARLY VIOLET**²⁵³

30
31 What though thy bed be frozen earth,
32 Thy cloak the chilling blast;
33 What though no mate to cheer thy path,
34 Thy sky with gloom o'ercast;

35
36 What though if love itself doth fail,
37 Thy fragrance strewed in vain;
38 What though if bad o'er good prevail,
39 And vice o'er virtue reign:

40
41 Change not thy nature, gentle bloom,
42 Thou violet, sweet and pure,
43 But ever pour thy sweet perfume
44 Unasked, unstinted, sure!

45
46
47 **TO MY OWN SOUL**²⁵⁴

48
49 Hold yet a while, Strong Heart,

1 ²⁵³ ?Written to a Western lady-disciple from New York, 6th January 1896.

2
3 ²⁵⁴ ?Composed at Ridgely Manor, New York, in 1899.

1 Not part a lifelong yoke
2 Though blighted looks the present, future gloom.

3
4 And age it seems since you and I began our
5 March up hill or down. Sailing smooth o'er
6 Seas that are so rare--
7 Thou nearer unto me, than oft-times I myself--
8 Proclaiming mental moves before they were!

9
10 Reflector true--Thy pulse so timed to mine,
11 Thou perfect note of thoughts, however fine--
12 Shall we now part, Recorder, say?

13
14 In thee is friendship, faith,
15 For thou didst warn when evil thoughts were brewing--
16 And though, alas, thy warning thrown away,
17 Went on the same as ever--good and true.

18 19 20 **THE DANCE OF SHIVA**²⁵⁵

21
22 Lo, the God is dancing
23 --Shiva the all-destroyer and Lord of creation,
24 The Master of Yoga and the wielder of Pinaka.²⁵⁶
25 His flaming locks have filled the sky,
26 Seven worlds play the rhythm
27 As the trembling earth sways almost to dissolution,
28 Lo, the Great God Shiva is dancing.

29 30 31 32 **SHIVA IN ECSTASY**

33
34 Shiva is dancing, lost in the ecstasy of Self, sounding his
35 own cheeks.
36 His tabor is playing and the garland of skulls is swinging
37 in rhythm.
38 The waters of the Ganga are roaring among his matted
39 locks.
40 The great trident is vomiting fire, and the moon on his
41 forehead is fiercely flaming.

42 43 44 **TO SHRI KRISHNA**

45 *(A Song in Hindi)*

46
47 O Krishna, my friend, let me go to the water,
48 O let me go today.
49 Why play tricks with one who is already thy slave?

1
2 ²⁵⁵ ?This and the next one are translated from Bengali songs.

3
4 ²⁵⁶ ?Trident.

1 O friend, let me go today, let me go.
2 I have to fill my pitcher in the waters of the Jumna.
3 I pray with folded hands, friend, let me go.
4
5

6 **A HYMN TO SHRI RAMAKRISHNA**

7 *(In Sanskrit)*

8 {Sanskrit}

9 1. Om! Hrim! Thou art the True, the Imperturbable One,
10 transcending the three Gunas and yet adored for Thy virtues!
11 Inasmuch as I do not worship day and night, with yearning, Thy
12 compassionate lotus feet which destroy all ignorance, therefore, O
13 Thou friend of the lowly, Thou art my only refuge.

14 {Sanskrit}

15 2. Spiritual powers, reverence, and worship which put an end
16 to this cycle of birth and death are enough indeed to lead to the
17 greatest Truth. But this while finding utterance through the mouth
18 is not at all being brought home to my heart. Therefore, O Thou
19 friend of the lowly, Thou art my only refuge.

20
21 {Sanskrit}

22 3. If devotion is directed to Thee, O Ramakrishna, the way of
23 Divine Truth, then with desires all fulfilled in Thee, they forthwith
24 cross over this sea of Rajas: for Thy feet are like nectar to the
25 mortals, quelling the waves of death. Therefore, O Thou friend of
26 the lowly, Thou art my only refuge.

27
28 {Sanskrit}

29 4. O Thou dispeller of illusion, Thy name ending in "shna",
30 pure and auspicious, converts sinfulness to purity. Because, O Thou
31 the only goal of all beings, shelter have I none, therefore Thou art,
32 O friend of the lowly, my only refuge.

33 34 **A HYMN TO SHRI RAMAKRISHNA**

35 *(In Sanskrit)*

36 {Sanskrit}

37 1. He who was Shri Rama, whose stream of love flowed with
38 resistless might even to the Chandala (the outcaste); Oh, who ever
39 was engaged in doing good to the world though superhuman by
40 nature, whose renown there is none to equal in the three worlds,
41 Sita's beloved, whose body of Knowledge Supreme was covered by
42 devotion sweet in the form of Sita.

43 {Sanskrit}

44 2. He who quelled the noise, terrible like that at the time of

destruction, arising from the battle (of Kurukshetra), who destroyed the terrible yet natural night of ignorance (of Arjuna) and who roared out the Gita sweet and appeasing; That renowned soul is born now as Shri Ramakrishna.

{Sanskrit}

3. Hail, O Lord of Men! Victory unto You! I surrender myself to my Guru, the physician for the malady of Samsara (relative existence) who is, as it were, a wave rising in the ocean of Shakti (Power), who has shown various sports of Love Divine, and who is the weapon to destroy the demon of doubt.

Hail, O Lord of Men! Victory unto You!

{Sanskrit}

4. Hail, O Lord of Men! Victory unto you! I surrender myself to my Guru the Man-God, the physician for the malady of this Samsara (relative existence), whose mind ever dwelt on the non-dualistic Truth, whose personality was covered by the cloth of Supreme Devotion, who was ever active (for the good of humanity) and whose actions were all superhuman.

Hail, O Lord of Men! Victory unto You!

NO ONE TO BLAME²⁵⁷

The sun goes down, its crimson rays
Light up the dying day;
A startled glance I throw behind
And count my triumph shame;
No one but me to blame.

Each day my life I make or mar,
Each deed begets its kind,
Good good, bad bad, the tide once set
No one can stop or stem;
No one but me to blame.

I am my own embodied past;
Therein the plan was made;
The will, the thought, to that conform,
To that the outer frame;
No one but me to blame.

Love comes reflected back as love,
Hate breeds more fierce hate,
They mete their measures, lay on me
Through life and death their claim;
No one but me to blame.

I cast off fear and vain remorse,
I feel my Karma's sway

²⁵⁷ ?Written from New York, 16th May, 1895.

1 I face the ghosts my deeds have raised--
2 Joy, sorrow, censure, fame;
3 No one but me to blame.
4
5 Good, bad, love, hate, and pleasure, pain
6 Forever linked go,
7 I dream of pleasure without pain,
8 It never, never came;
9 No one but me to blame.
10
11 I give up hate, I give up love,
12 My thirst for life is gone;
13 Eternal death is what I want,
14 Nirvanam goes life's flame;
15 No one is left to blame.
16
17 One only man, one only God, one ever perfect soul,
18 One only sage who ever scorned the dark and dubious ways,
19 One only man who dared think and dared show the goal--
20 That *death* is curse, and so is *life*, and best when stops to be.
21
22 Om Nama Bhagavate Sambuddhaya
23 Om, I salute the Lord, the awakened.

NOTES OF CLASS TALKS

When Will Christ Come Again?

I never take much notice of these things. I have come to deal with principles. I have only to preach that God comes again and again, and that He came in India as Krishna, Rama, and Buddha, and that He will come again. It can almost be demonstrated that after each 500 years the world sinks, and a tremendous spiritual wave comes, and on the top of the wave is a Christ.

There is a great change now coming all over the world, and this is a cycle. Men are finding that they are losing hold of life; which way will they turn, down or up? Up, certainly. How can it be down? Plunge into the breach; fill up the breach with your body, your life. How should you allow the world to go down when you are living?

The Difference Between Man and Christ

There is much difference in manifested beings. As a manifested being you will never be Christ. Out of clay, manufacture a clay elephant, out of the same clay, manufacture a clay mouse. Soak them in water, they become one. As clay, they are eternally one; as fashioned things, they are eternally different. The Absolute is the material of both God and man. As Absolute, Omnipresent Being, we are all one; and as personal beings, God is the eternal master, and we are the eternal servants.

You have three things in you: (1) the body, (2) the mind, (3) the spirit. The spirit is intangible, the mind comes to birth and death, and so does the body. You are that spirit, but often you think you are the body.

When a man says, "I am here", he thinks of the body. Then comes another moment when you are on the highest plane; you do not say, "I am here". But if a man abuses you or curses you and you do not resent it, you are the spirit. "When I think I am the mind, I am one spark of that eternal fire which Thou art; and when I feel that I am the spirit, Thou and I are one"--so says a devotee to the Lord. Is the mind in advance of the spirit?

God does not reason; why should you reason if you knew? It is a sign of weakness that we have to go on crawling like worms to get a few facts and build generalisations, and then the whole thing tumbles down again. The spirit is reflected in the mind and everything. It is the light of the spirit that makes the mind sensate. Everything is an expression of the spirit; the minds are so many mirrors. What you call love and fear, hatred, virtue, and vice are all reflections of the spirit; only when the reflector is base the

1 reflection is bad.

3 Are Christ and Buddha Identical?

5 It is my particular fancy that the same Buddha became
6 Christ. Buddha prophesied, "I will come again in five hundred
7 years", and Christ came here in five hundred years. These are the
8 two Lights of the whole human nature. Two men have been
9 produced, Buddha and Christ; these are the two giants, huge
10 gigantic personalities, two Gods. Between them they divide the
11 whole world. Wherever there is the least knowledge in the world,
12 people bow down either to Buddha or Christ. It would be very hard
13 to produce more like them, but I hope there will be. Mohammed
14 came five hundred years after, five hundred years after came
15 Luther with his Protestant wave, and this is five hundred years after
16 that again. It is a great thing in a few thousand years to produce
17 two such men as Jesus and Buddha. Are not two such enough?
18 Christ and Buddha were Gods, the others were prophets. Study the
19 life of these two and see the manifestation of power in them--calm
20 and non-resisting, poor beggars owning nothing, without a cent in
21 their pockets, despised all their lives, called heretic and fool--and
22 think of the immense spiritual power they have wielded over
23 humanity.

25 Salvation From Sin

27 We are to be saved from sin by being saved from ignorance.
28 Ignorance is the cause of which sin is the result.

30 Coming Back to the Divine Mother

32 When a nurse takes a baby out into the garden and plays with
33 the baby, the Mother may send a word to the baby to come indoors.
34 The baby is absorbed in play, and says, "I won't come; I don't want
35 to eat." After a while the baby becomes tired with his play and says,
36 "I will go to Mother." The nurse says, "Here is a new doll", but the
37 baby says, "I don't care for dolls any more. I will go to Mother", and
38 he weeps until he goes. We are all babies. The Mother is God. We
39 are absorbed in seeking for money, wealth, and all these things; but
40 the time will come when we will awaken; and then this nature will
41 try to give us more dolls, and we will say, "No, I have had enough; I
42 will go to God."

44 No Individuality Apart From God

46 If we are inseparable from God, and always one, have we no

1 individuality? Oh yes; that is God. Our individuality is God. This is
2 not real individuality which you have now. You are coming towards
3 that true one. Individuality means what cannot be divided. How can
4 you call this state--we are now--individuality? One hour you are
5 thinking one way, and the next hour another way, and two hours
6 after another way. Individuality is that which changes not. It would
7 be tremendously dangerous for the present state to remain in
8 eternity, then the thief would always remain a thief, and the
9 blackguard, a blackguard. If a baby died, it would have to remain a
10 baby. The real individuality is that which never changes, and will
11 never change; and that is God within us.

12 13 MAN THE MAKER OF HIS DESTINY

14
15 There was a very powerful dynasty in Southern India. They
16 made it a rule to take the horoscope of all the prominent men living
17 from time to time, calculated from the time of their birth. In this
18 way they got a record of leading facts predicted, and compared
19 them afterwards with events as they happened. This was done for a
20 thousand years, until they found certain agreements; these were
21 generalised and recorded and made into a huge book. The dynasty
22 died out, but the family of astrologers lived and had the book in
23 their possession. It seems possible that this is how astrology came
24 into existence. Excessive attention to the minutiae of astrology is
25 one of the superstitions which has hurt the Hindus very much.

26 I think the Greeks first took astrology to India and took from
27 the Hindus the science of astronomy and carried it back with them
28 from Europe. Because in India you will find old altars made
29 according to a certain geometrical plan, and certain things had to
30 be done when the stars were in certain positions, therefore I think
31 the Greeks gave the Hindus astrology, and the Hindus gave them
32 astronomy.

33 I have seen some astrologers who predicted wonderful
34 things; but I have no reason to believe they predicted them only
35 from the stars, or anything of the sort. In many cases it is simply
36 mind-reading. Sometimes wonderful predictions are made, but in
37 many cases it is arrant trash.

38 In London, a young man used to come to me and ask me,
39 "What will become of me next year?" I asked him why he asked me
40 so. "I have lost all my money and have become very, very poor."
41 Money is the only God of many beings. Weak men, when they lose
42 everything and feel themselves weak, try all sorts of uncanny
43 methods of making money, and come to astrology and all these
44 things. "It is the coward and the fool who says, "This is fate"--so
45 says the Sanskrit proverb. But it is the strong man who stands up
46 and says, "I will make my fate." It is people who are getting old who
47 talk of fate. Young men generally do not come to astrology. We *may*
48 be under planetary influence, but it should not matter much to us.
49 Buddha says, "Those that get a living by calculation of the stars by
50 such art and other lying tricks are to be avoided"; and he ought to

1 know, because he was the greatest Hindu ever born. Let stars
2 come, what harm is there? If a star disturbs my life, it would not be
3 worth a cent. You will find that astrology and all these mystical
4 things are generally signs of a weak mind; therefore as soon as they
5 are becoming prominent in our minds, we should see a physician,
6 take good food and rest.

7 If you can get an explanation of a phenomenon from within its
8 nature, it is nonsense to look for an explanation from outside. If the
9 world explains itself, it is nonsense to go outside for an explanation.
10 Have you found any phenomena in the life of a man that you have
11 ever seen which cannot be explained by the power of the man
12 himself? So what is the use of going to the stars or anything else in
13 the world? My own Karma is sufficient explanation of my present
14 state. So in the case of Jesus himself. We know that his father was
15 only a carpenter. We need not go to anybody else to find an
16 explanation of his power. He was the outcome of his own past, all of
17 which was a preparation for that Jesus. Buddha goes back and back
18 to animal bodies and tells us how he ultimately became Buddha. So
19 what is the use of going to stars for explanation? They may have a
20 little influence; but it is our duty to ignore them rather than
21 hearken to them and make ourselves nervous. This I lay down as
22 the first essential in all I teach: anything that brings spiritual,
23 mental, or physical weakness, touch it not with the toes of your
24 feet. Religion is the manifestation of the natural strength that is in
25 man. A spring of infinite power is coiled up and is inside this little
26 body, and that spring is spreading itself. And as it goes on
27 spreading, body after body is found insufficient; it throws them off
28 and takes higher bodies. This is the history of man, of religion,
29 civilisation, or progress. That giant Prometheus, who is bound, is
30 getting himself unbound. It is always a manifestation of strength,
31 and all these ideas such as astrology, although there may be a grain
32 of truth in them, should be avoided.

33 There is an old story of an astrologer who came to a king and
34 said, "You are going to die in six months." The king was frightened
35 out of his wits and was almost about to die then and there from
36 fear. But his minister was a clever man, and this man told the king
37 that these astrologers were fools. The king would not believe him.
38 So the minister saw no other way to make the king see that they
39 were fools but to invite the astrologer to the palace again. There he
40 asked him if his calculations were correct. The astrologer said that
41 there could not be a mistake, but to satisfy him he went through the
42 whole of the calculations again and then said that they were
43 perfectly correct. The king's face became livid. The minister said to
44 the astrologer, "And when do you think that you will die?" "In twelve
45 years", was the reply. The minister quickly drew his sword and
46 separated the astrologer's head from the body and said to the king,
47 "Do you see this liar? He is dead this moment."

48 If you want your nation to live, keep away from all these
49 things. The only test of good things is that they make us strong.
50 Good is life, evil is death. These superstitious ideas are springing
51 like mushrooms in your country, and women wanting in logical
52 analysis of things are ready to believe them. It is because women

1 are striving for liberation, and women have not yet established
2 themselves intellectually. One gets by heart a few lines of poetry
3 from the top of a novel and says she knows the whole of Browning.
4 Another attends a course of three lectures and then thinks she
5 knows everything in the world. The difficulty is that they are unable
6 to throw off the natural superstition of women. They have a lot of
7 money and some intellectual learning, but when they have passed
8 through this transition stage and get on firm ground, they will be all
9 right. But they are played upon by charlatans. Do not be sorry; I do
10 not mean to hurt anyone, but I have to tell the truth. Do you not see
11 how open you are to these things? Do you not see how sincere these
12 women are, how that divinity latent in all never dies? It is only to
13 know how to appeal to the Divine.

14 The more I live, the more I become convinced every day that
15 every human being is divine. In no man or woman, however vile,
16 does that divinity die. Only he or she does not know how to reach it
17 and is waiting for the Truth. And wicked people are trying to
18 deceive him or her with all sorts of fooleries. If one man cheats
19 another for money, you say he is a fool and a blackguard. How much
20 greater is the iniquity of one who wants to fool others spiritually!
21 This is too bad. It is the one test, that truth must make you strong
22 and put you above superstition. The duty of the philosopher is to
23 raise you above superstition. Even this world, this body and mind
24 are superstitions; what infinite souls you are! And to be tricked by
25 twinkling stars! It is a shameful condition. You are divinities; the
26 twinkling stars owe their existence to you.

27 I was once travelling in the Himalayas, and the long road
28 stretched before us. We poor monks cannot get any one to carry us,
29 so we had to make all the way on foot. There was an old man with
30 us. The way goes up and down for hundreds of miles, and when that
31 old monk saw what was before him, he said, "Oh sir, how to cross it;
32 I cannot walk any more; my chest will break." I said to him, "Look
33 down at your feet." He did so, and I said, "The road that is under
34 your feet is the road that you have passed over and is the same
35 road that you see before you; it will soon be under your feet." The
36 highest things are under your feet, because you are Divine Stars; all
37 these things are under your feet. You can swallow the stars by the
38 handful if you want; such is your real nature. Be strong, get beyond
39 all superstitions, and be free.

40 41 42 **GOD: PERSONAL AND IMPERSONAL** 43

44 My idea is that what you call a Personal God is the same as
45 the Impersonal Being, a Personal and Impersonal God at the same
46 time. We are personalised impersonal beings. If you use the word in
47 the absolute sense, we are impersonal; but if you use it in a relative
48 meaning, we are personal. Each one of you is a universal being,
49 each one is omnipresent. It may seem staggering at first, but I am
50 as sure of this as that I stand before you. How can the spirit help

1 being omnipresent? It has neither length, nor breadth, nor
2 thickness, nor any material attribute whatsoever; and if we are all
3 spirits we cannot be limited by space. Space only limits space,
4 matter matter. If we were limited to this body we would be a
5 material something. Body and soul and everything would be
6 material, and such words as "living in the body", "embodying the
7 soul" would be only words used for convenience; beyond that they
8 would have no meaning. Many of you remember the definition I
9 gave of the soul; that each soul is a circle whose centre is in one
10 point and circumference nowhere. The centre is where the body is,
11 and the activity is manifested there. You are omnipresent; only you
12 have the consciousness of being concentrated in one point. That
13 point has taken up particles of matter, and formed them into a
14 machine to express itself. That through which it expresses itself is
15 called the body. So you are everywhere; when one body or machine
16 fails, you, the centre, move on and take up other particles of matter,
17 finer or grosser, and work through that. This is man. And what is
18 God? God is a circle with its circumference nowhere and centre
19 everywhere. Every point in that circle is living, conscious, active,
20 and equally working; with us limited souls, only one point is
21 conscious, and that point moves forward and backward. As the body
22 has a very infinitesimal existence in comparison with that of the
23 universe, so the whole universe, in comparison with God, is nothing.
24 When we talk of God speaking, we say He speaks through His
25 universe; and when we speak of Him beyond all limitations of time
26 and space, we say He is an Impersonal Being. Yet He is the same
27 Being.

28 To give an illustration: We stand here and see the sun.
29 Suppose you want to go towards the sun. After you get a few
30 thousand miles nearer, you will see another sun, much bigger.
31 Supposing you proceed much closer, you will see a much bigger
32 sun. At last you will see the real sun, millions and millions of miles
33 big. Suppose you divide this journey into so many stages, and take
34 photographs from each stage, and after you have taken the real
35 sun, come back and compare them; they will all appear to be
36 different, because the first view was a little red ball, and the real
37 sun was millions of miles bigger; yet it was the same sun. It is the
38 same with God: the Infinite Being we see from different
39 standpoints, from different planes of mind. The lowest man sees
40 Him as an ancestor; as his vision gets higher, as the Governor of the
41 planet; still higher as the Governor of the universe, and the highest
42 man sees Him as himself. It was the same God, and the different
43 realisations were only degrees and differences of vision.

44 45 46 **THE DIVINE INCARNATION OR AVATARA** 47

48 Jesus Christ was God--the Personal God become man. He has
49 manifested Himself many times in different forms and these alone
50 are what you can worship. God in His absolute nature is not to be
51 worshipped. Worshipping such God would be nonsense. We have to

1 worship Jesus Christ, the human manifestation, as God. You cannot
2 worship anything higher than the manifestation of God. The sooner
3 you give up the worship of God separate from Christ, the better for
4 you. Think of the Jehovah you manufacture and of the beautiful
5 Christ. Any time you attempt to make a God beyond Christ, you
6 murder the whole thing. God alone can worship God. It is not given
7 to man, and any attempt to worship Him beyond His ordinary
8 manifestations will be dangerous to mankind. Keep close to Christ if
9 you want salvation; He is higher than any God you can imagine. If
10 you think that Christ was a man, do not worship Him; but as soon as
11 you can realise that He is God, worship Him. Those who say He was
12 a man and then worship Him commit blasphemy; there is no half-
13 way house for you; you must take the whole strength of it. "He that
14 hath seen the Son hath seen the Father", and without seeing the
15 Son, you *cannot* see the Father. It would be only tall talk and frothy
16 philosophy and dreams and speculations. But if you want to have a
17 hold on spiritual life, cling close to God as manifest in Christ.

18 Philosophically speaking, there was no such human being
19 living as Christ or Buddha; we saw God through them. In the Koran,
20 Mohammed again and again repeats that Christ was never
21 crucified, it was a semblance; no one could crucify Christ.

22 The lowest state of philosophical religion is dualism; the
23 highest form is the Triune state. Nature and the human soul are
24 interpenetrated by God, and this we see as the Trinity of God,
25 nature, and soul. At the same time you catch a glimpse that all
26 these three are products of the One. Just as this body is the
27 covering of the soul, so this is, as it were, the body of God. As I am
28 the soul of nature, so is God the soul of my soul. You are the centre
29 through which you see all nature in which you are. This nature,
30 soul, and God make one individual being, the universe. Therefore
31 they are a unity; yet at the same time they are separate. Then there
32 is another sort of Trinity which is much like the Christian Trinity.
33 God is absolute. We cannot see God in His absolute nature, we can
34 only speak of that as "not this, not this". Yet we can get certain
35 qualities as the nearest approach to God. First is existence, second
36 is knowledge, third is bliss--very much corresponding to your
37 Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Father is the existence out of which
38 everything comes; Son is that knowledge. It is in Christ that God
39 will be manifest. God was everywhere, in all beings, before Christ;
40 but in Christ we became conscious of Him. This is God. The third is
41 bliss, the Holy Spirit. As soon as you get this knowledge, you get
42 bliss. As soon as you begin to have Christ within you, you have bliss;
43 and that unifies the three.

44 45 46 **PRANAYAMA** 47

1 First of all we will try to understand a little of the meaning of
2 Pranayama. Prana stands in metaphysics for the sum total of the
3 energy that is in the universe. This universe, according to the
4 theory of the philosophers, proceeds in the form of waves; it rises,
5 and again it subsides, melts away, as it were; then again it proceeds
6 out in all this variety; then again it slowly returns. So it goes on like
7 a pulsation. The whole of this universe is composed of matter and
8 force; and according to Sanskrit philosophers, everything that we
9 call matter, solid and liquid, is the outcome of one primal matter
10 which they call Akasha or ether; and the primordial force, of which
11 all the forces that we see in nature are manifestations, they call
12 Prana. It is this Prana acting upon Akasha, which creates this
13 universe, and after the end of a period, called a cycle, there is a
14 period of rest. One period of activity is followed by a period of rest;
15 this is the nature of everything. When this period of rest comes, all
16 these forms that we see in the earth, the sun, the moon, and the
17 stars, all these manifestations melt down until they become ether
18 again. They become dissipated as ether. All these forces, either in
19 the body or in the mind, as gravitation, attraction, motion, thought,
20 become dissipated, and go off into the primal Prana. We can
21 understand from this the importance of this Pranayama. Just as this
22 ether encompasses us everywhere and we are interpenetrated by it,
23 so everything we see is composed of this ether, and we are floating
24 in the ether like pieces of ice floating in a lake. They are formed of
25 the water of the lake and float in it at the same time. So everything
26 that exists is composed of this Akasha and is floating in this ocean.
27 In the same way we are surrounded by this vast ocean of Prana-
28 force and energy. It is this Prana by which we breathe and by which
29 the circulation of the blood goes on; it is the energy in the nerves
30 and in the muscles, and the thought in the brain. All forces are
31 different manifestations of this same Prana, as all matter is a
32 different manifestation of the same Akasha. We always find the
33 causes of the gross in the subtle. The chemist takes a solid lump of
34 ore and analyses it; he wants to find the subtler things out of which
35 that gross is composed. So with our thought and our knowledge;
36 the explanation of the grosser is in the finer. The effect is the gross
37 and the cause the subtle. This gross universe of ours, which we see,
38 feel, and touch, has its cause and explanation behind in the
39 thought. The cause and explanation of that is also further behind.
40 So in this human body of ours, we first find the gross movements,
41 the movements of the hands and lips; but where are the causes of
42 these? The finer nerves, the movements of which we cannot
43 perceive at all, so fine that we cannot see or touch or trace them in
44 any way with our senses, and yet we know they are the cause of
45 these grosser movements. These nerve movements, again, are
46 caused by still finer movements, which we call thought; and that is
47 caused by something finer still behind, which is the soul of man, the
48 Self, the Atman. In order to understand ourselves we have first to
49 make our perception fine. No microscope or instrument that was
50 ever invented will make it possible for us to see the fine movements
51 that are going on inside; we can never see them by any such means.
52 So the Yogi has a science that manufactures an instrument for the
53 study of his own mind, and that instrument is in the mind. The mind

1 attains to powers of finer perception which no instrument will ever
2 be able to attain.

3 To attain to this power of superfine perception we have to
4 begin from the gross. And as the power becomes finer and finer, we
5 go deeper and deeper inside our own nature; and all the gross
6 movements will first be tangible to us, and then the finer
7 movements of the thought; we will be able to trace the thought
8 before its beginning, trace it where it goes and where it ends. For
9 instance, in the ordinary mind a thought arises. The mind does not
10 know how it began or whence it comes. The mind is like the ocean
11 in which a wave rises, but although the man sees the wave, he does
12 not know how the wave came there, whence its birth, or whither it
13 melts down again; he cannot trace it any further. But when the
14 perception becomes finer, we can trace this wave long, long before
15 it comes to the surface; and we will be able to trace it for a long
16 distance after it has disappeared, and then we can understand
17 psychology as it truly is. Nowadays men think this or that and write
18 many volumes, which are entirely misleading, because they have
19 not the power to analyse their own minds and are talking of things
20 they have never *known*, but only theorised about. All science must
21 be based on facts, and these facts must be observed and
22 generalised. Until you have some facts to generalise upon, what are
23 you going to do? So all these attempts at generalising are based
24 upon knowing the things we generalise. A man proposes a theory,
25 and adds theory to theory, until the whole book is patchwork of
26 theories, not one of them with the least meaning. The science of
27 Raja-Yoga says, first you must gather facts about your own mind,
28 and that can be done by analysing your mind, developing its finer
29 powers of perception and seeing for yourselves what is happening
30 inside; and when you have got these facts, then generalise; and
31 then alone you will have the real science of psychology.

32 As I have said, to come to any finer perception we must take
33 the help of the grosser end of it. The current of action which is
34 manifested on the outside is the grosser.

35 If we can get hold of this and go on further and further, it
36 becomes finer and finer, and at last the finest. So this body and
37 everything we have in this body are not different existences, but, as
38 it were, various links in the same chain proceeding from fine to
39 gross. You are a complete whole; this body is the outside
40 manifestation, the crust, of the inside; the external is grosser and
41 the inside finer; and so finer and finer until you come to the Self.
42 And at last, when we come to the Self, we come to know that it was
43 only the Self that was manifesting all this; that it was the Self which
44 became the mind and became the body; that nothing else exists but
45 the Self, and all these others are manifestations of that Self in
46 various degrees, becoming grosser and grosser. So we will find by
47 analogy that in this whole universe there is the gross manifestation,
48 and behind that is the finer movement, which we can call the will of
49 God. Behind that even, we will find that Universal Self. And then we
50 will come to know that the Universal Self becomes God and
51 becomes this universe; and that it is not that this universe is one
52 and God another and the Supreme Self another, but that they are

1 different states of the manifestation of the same Unity behind.

2 All this comes of our Pranayama. These finer movements that
3 are going on inside the body are connected with the breathing; and
4 if we can get hold of this breathing and manipulate it and control it,
5 we will slowly get to finer and finer motions, and thus enter, as it
6 were, by getting hold of that breathing, into the realms of the mind.

7 The first breathing that I taught you in our last lesson was
8 simply an exercise for the time being. Some of these breathing
9 exercises, again, are very difficult, and I will try to avoid all the
10 difficult ones, because the more difficult ones require a great deal
11 of dieting and other restrictions which it is impossible for most of
12 you to keep to. So we will take the slower paths and the simpler
13 ones. This breathing consists of three parts. The first is breathing
14 in, which is called in Sanskrit Puraka, filling; and the second part is
15 called Kumbhaka, retaining, filling the lungs and stopping the air
16 from coming out; the third is called Rechaka, breathing out. The
17 first exercise which I will give you today is simply breathing in and
18 stopping the breath and throwing it out slowly. Then there is one
19 step more in the breathing which I will not give you today, because
20 you cannot remember them all; it would be too intricate. These
21 three parts of breathing make one Pranayama. This breathing
22 should be regulated, because if it is not, there is danger in the way
23 to yourselves. So it is regulated by numbers, and I will give you first
24 the lowest numbers. Breathe in four seconds, then hold the breath
25 for eight seconds, then again throw it out slowly in four seconds.²⁵⁸
26 Then begin again, and do this four times in the morning and four
27 times in the evening. There is one thing more. Instead of counting
28 by one, two, three, and all such meaningless things, it is better to
29 repeat any word that is holy to you. In our country we have
30 symbolical words, "Om" for instance, which means God. If that be
31 pronounced instead of one, two, three, four, it will serve your
32 purpose very well. One thing more. This breathing should begin
33 through the left nostril and should turn out through the right
34 nostril, and the next time it should be drawn in through the right
35 and thrown out through the left. Then reverse again, and so on. In
36 the first place you should be able to drive your breathing through
37 either nostril at will, just by the power of the will. After a time you
38 will find it easy; but now I am afraid you have not that power. So we
39 must stop the one nostril while breathing through the other with
40 the finger and during the retention, of course, both nostrils.

41 The first two lessons should not be forgotten. The first thing is
42 to hold yourselves straight; second to think of the body as sound
43 and perfect, as healthy and strong. Then throw a current of love all
44 around, think of the whole universe being happy. Then if you believe
45 in God, pray. Then breathe.

46 In many of you certain physical changes will come,
47 twitchings all over the body, nervousness; some of you will feel like
48 weeping, sometimes a violent motion will come. Do not be afraid;

1 ²⁵⁸ This process is more difficult when the ratio is two, eight, and four; for
2 further remarks see later.
3

1 these things have to come as you go on practicing. The whole body
2 will have to be rearranged as it were. New channels for thought
3 will be made in the brain, nerves which have not acted in your
4 whole life will begin to work, and a whole new series of changes
5 will come in the body itself.

6 7 8 **WOMEN OF THE EAST**²⁵⁹

9 (*Report of a lecture in the Chicago Daily Inter-Ocean,*
10 *September 23, 1893*)
11

1 ²⁵⁹ ?As many women as could crowd into Hall 7 yesterday afternoon flocked
2 thither to hear something as to the lives of their sisters of the Orient. Mrs. Potter
3 Palmer and Mrs. Charles Henrotin sat upon the platform, surrounded by
4 turbanned representatives of the women of the East.

5 It may interest the reader to know that the published addresses of Swami
6 Vivekananda at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago are not exhaustive and
7 many addresses, specially those delivered at the Scientific Section of the
8 Parliament were not all reported. The Scientific Sessions were conducted
9 simultaneously with the open session at the Hall of Columbus. Swami
10 Vivekananda spoke on the following subjects at the Scientific Section:

11 1. Orthodox Hinduism and the Vedanta Philosophy.

12 --*Friday, September 22, 1893, at 10:30 a.m.*

13 2. The Modern Religions of India.

14 --*Friday, September 22, 1893 afternoon session.*

15 3. On the subject of the foregoing addresses.

16 --*Saturday, September 23, 1893.*

17 4. The Essence of the Hindu Religion.

18 --*Monday, September 25, 1893.*

19 *The Chicago Daily Inter-Ocean* of September 23, 1893 published the following
20 note on the first lecture.

21 "In the Scientific Section yesterday morning Swami Vivekananda spoke on
22 'Orthodox Hinduism'. Hall III was crowded to overflowing and hundreds of
23 questions were asked by auditors and answered by the great Sannyasin with
24 wonderful skill and lucidity. At the close of the session he was thronged with
25 eager questioners who begged him to give a semi-public lecture somewhere on
26 the subject of his religion. He said that he already had the project under
27 consideration."
28

1 Swami Vivekananda, at a special meeting, discussed the
2 present and future of the women of the East. He said, "The best
3 thermometer to the progress of a nation is its treatment of its
4 women. In ancient Greece there was absolutely no difference in the
5 state of man and woman. The idea of perfect equality existed. No
6 Hindu can be a priest until he is married, the idea being that a
7 single man is only half a man, and imperfect. The idea of perfect
8 womanhood is perfect independence. The central idea of the life of
9 a modern Hindu lady is her chastity. The wife is the centre of a
10 circle, the fixity of which depends upon her chastity. It was the
11 extreme of this idea which caused Hindu widows to be burnt. The
12 Hindu women are very spiritual and very religious, perhaps more so
13 than any other women in the world. If we can preserve these
14 beautiful characteristics and at the same time develop the intellects
15 of our women, the Hindu woman of the future will be the ideal
16 woman of the world."

19 CONGRESS OF RELIGIOUS UNITY

20 *(Report of a lecture in the Chicago Sunday Herald,*
21 *September 24, 1893)*

23 Swami Vivekananda said, "All the words spoken at this
24 parliament come to the common conclusion that the brotherhood of
25 man is the much-to-be-desired end. Much has been said for this
26 brotherhood as being a natural condition, since we are all children
27 of one God. Now, there are sects that do not admit of the existence
28 of God--that is, a Personal God. Unless we wish to leave those sects
29 out in the cold--and in that case our brotherhood will not be
30 universal--we must have our platform broad enough to embrace all
31 mankind. It has been said here that we should do good to our fellow
32 men, because every bad or mean deed reacts on the doer. This
33 appears to me to savour of the shopkeeper--ourselves first, our
34 brothers afterwards. I think we should love our brother whether we
35 believe in the universal fatherhood of God or not, because every
36 religion and every creed recognises man as divine, and you should
37 do him no harm that you might not injure that which is divine in
38 him."

41 THE LOVE OF GOD--I

42 *(Report of a lecture in the Chicago Herald, September 25,*
43 *1893)*

45 An audience that filled the auditorium of the Third Unitarian
46 Church at Laflin and Monroe streets heard Swami Vivekananda
47 preach yesterday morning. The subject of his sermon was the love
48 of God, and his treatment of the theme was eloquent and unique.

1 He said that God was worshipped in all parts of the world, but by
2 different names and in different ways. It is natural for men, he said,
3 to worship the grand and the beautiful, and that religion was a
4 portion of their nature. The need of God was felt by all, and His love
5 prompted them to deeds of charity, mercy, and justice. All men
6 loved God because He was love itself. The speaker had heard since
7 coming to Chicago a great deal about the brotherhood of man. He
8 believed that a still stronger tie connected them, in that all are the
9 offsprings of the love of God. The brotherhood of man was the
10 logical sequence of God as the Father of all. The speaker said he
11 had travelled in the forests of India and slept in caves, and from his
12 observation of nature he had drawn the belief that there was
13 something above the natural law that kept men from wrong, and
14 that, he concluded, was the love of God. If God had spoken to
15 Christ, Mohammed, and the Rishis of the Vedas, why did He not
16 speak also to him, one of his children?

17 "Indeed, he does speak to me", the Swami continued, "and to
18 all His children. We see Him all around us and are impressed
19 continually by the boundlessness of His love, and from that love we
20 draw the inspiration for our well-being and well-doing."

23 **THE LOVE OF GOD--II**

24 *(A lecture delivered in the Unitarian Church of Detroit on*
25 *February 20, 1894 and reported in the Detroit Free Press)*

26
27 Vivekananda delivered a lecture on "The Love of God" at the
28 Unitarian Church last night before the largest audience that he has
29 yet had. The trend of the lecturer's remarks was to show that we do
30 not accept God because we really want Him, but because we have
31 need of Him for selfish purposes. Love, said the speaker, is
32 something absolutely unselfish, that which has no thought beyond
33 the glorification and adoration of the object upon which our
34 affections are bestowed. It is a quality which bows down and
35 worships and asks nothing in return. Merely to love is the sole
36 request that true love has to ask.

37 It is said of a Hindu saint that when she was married, she
38 said to her husband, the king, that she was already married. "To
39 whom?" asked the king. "To God", was the reply. She went among
40 the poor and the needy and taught the doctrine of extreme love for
41 God. One of her prayers is significant, showing the manner in which
42 her heart was moved: "I ask not for wealth; I ask not for position; I
43 ask not for salvation; place me in a hundred hells if it be Thy wish,
44 but let me continue to regard Thee as my love." The early language
45 abounds in beautiful prayers of this woman. When her end came,
46 she entered into Samadhi on the banks of a river. She composed a
47 beautiful song, in which she stated that she was going to meet her
48 Beloved.

49 Men are capable of philosophical analysis of religion. A

1 woman is devotional by nature and loves God from the heart and
2 soul and not from the mind. The songs of Solomon are one of the
3 most beautiful parts of the Bible. The language in them is much of
4 that affectionate kind which is found in the prayers of the Hindu
5 woman saint. And yet I have heard that Christians are going to have
6 these incomparable songs removed. I have heard an explanation of
7 the songs in which it is said that Solomon loved a young girl and
8 desired her to return his royal affection. The girl, however, loved a
9 young man and did not want to have anything to do with Solomon.
10 This explanation is excellent to some people, because they cannot
11 understand such wondrous love for God as is embodied in the
12 songs. Love for God in India is different from love for God
13 elsewhere, because when you get into a country where the
14 thermometer reads 40 degrees below zero, the temperament of the
15 people changes. The aspirations of the people in the climate where
16 the books of the Bible are said to have been written were different
17 from the aspirations of the cold-blooded Western nations, who are
18 more apt to worship the almighty dollar with the warmth expressed
19 in the songs than to worship God. Love for God seems to be based
20 upon a basis of "what can I get out of it?" In their prayers they ask
21 for all kinds of selfish things.

22 Christians are always wanting God to give them something.
23 They appear as beggars before the throne of the Almighty. A story
24 is told of a beggar who applied to an emperor for alms. While he
25 was waiting, it was time for the emperor to offer up prayers. The
26 emperor prayed, "O God, give me more wealth; give me more
27 power; give me a greater empire." The beggar started to leave. The
28 emperor turned and asked him, "Why are you going?" "I do not beg
29 of beggars", was the reply.

30 Some people find it really difficult to understand the frenzy of
31 religious fervour which moved the heart of Mohammed.

32 He would grovel in the dust and writhe in agony. Holy men
33 who have experienced these extreme emotions have been called
34 epileptic. The absence of the thought of self is the essential
35 characteristic of the love for God. Religion nowadays has become a
36 mere hobby and fashion. People go to church like a flock of sheep.
37 They do not embrace God because they need Him. Most persons
38 are unconscious atheists who self-complacently think that they are
39 devout believers.

42 INDIA

43 *(Report of a lecture delivered at Detroit on Thursday,*
44 *February 15, 1894, with the editorial comments of the Detroit Free*
45 *Press)*

46
47 An audience that filled the Unitarian Church heard the
48 renowned monk, Swami Vivekananda, deliver a lecture last night on
49 the manners and customs of his country. His eloquent and graceful

1 manner pleased his listeners, who followed him from beginning to
2 end with the closest attention, showing approval from time to time
3 by outbursts of applause. While his lecture was more popular in
4 character than the celebrated Address before the religious
5 congress in Chicago, it was highly entertaining, especially where
6 the speaker diverted from the instructive portions and was led to an
7 eloquent narration of certain spiritual conditions of his own people.
8 It is upon matters religious and philosophic (and necessarily
9 spiritual) that the Eastern brother is most impressive, and, while
10 outlining the duties that follow the conscientious consideration of
11 the great moral law of nature, his softly modulated tones, a
12 peculiarity of his people, and his thrilling manner are almost
13 prophetic. He speaks with marked deliberation, except when
14 placing before his listeners some moral truth, and then his
15 eloquence is of the highest kind.

16 It seemed somewhat singular that the Eastern monk, who is
17 so outspoken in his disapproval of missionary labour on the part of
18 the Christian church in India (where, he affirms, the morality is the
19 highest in the world), should have been introduced by Bishop Ninde
20 who in June will depart for China in the interest of foreign Christian
21 missions. The Bishop expects to remain away until December; but if
22 he should stay longer he will go to India. The Bishop referred to the
23 wonders of India and the intelligence of the educated classes there,
24 introducing Vivekananda in a happy manner. When that dusky
25 gentleman arose, dressed in his turban and bright gown, with
26 handsome face and bright, intelligent eyes, he presented an
27 impressive figure. He returned thanks to the Bishop for his words
28 and proceeded to explain race divisions in his own country, the
29 manners of the people, and the different languages. Principally
30 there are four northern tongues and four southern, but there is one
31 common religion. Four-fifths of the population of 300 million people
32 are Hindus and the Hindu is a peculiar person. He does everything
33 in a religious manner. He eats religiously; he sleeps religiously; he
34 rises in the morning religiously; he does good things religiously;
35 and he also does bad things religiously. At this point the lecturer
36 struck the great moral keynote of his discourse, stating that with
37 his people it was the belief that all non-self is good and all self is
38 bad. This point was emphasised throughout the evening and might
39 be termed the text of the address. To build a home is selfish, argues
40 the Hindu; so he builds it for the worship of God and for the
41 entertainment of guests. To cook food is selfish, so he cooks for the
42 poor; he will serve himself last if any hungry stranger applies, and
43 this feeling extends throughout the length and breadth of the land.
44 Any man can ask for food and shelter, and any house will be opened
45 to him.

46 The caste system has nothing to do with religion. A man's
47 occupation is hereditary: a carpenter is born a carpenter; a
48 goldsmith, a goldsmith; a workman, a workman; and a priest, a
49 priest. But this is a comparatively modern social evil, since it has
50 existed only about 1,000 years. This period of time does not seem
51 so great in India as in this and other countries. Two gifts are
52 especially appreciated--the gift of learning and the gift of life. But

1 the gift of learning takes precedence. One may save a man's life,
2 and that is excellent; one may impart to another knowledge, and
3 that is better. To instruct for money is an evil, and to do this would
4 bring opprobrium on the head of the man who barter learning for
5 gold, as though it were an article of trade. The government makes
6 gifts from time to time to the instructors, and the moral effect is
7 better than it would be if the conditions were the same as exist in
8 certain alleged civilised countries. The speaker had asked through
9 the length and breadth of the land what was the definition of
10 civilisation, and he had asked the question in many countries.
11 Sometimes the reply had been given: What we are, that is
12 civilisation. He begged to differ in the definition of the word. A
13 nation may control the elements, develop utilitarian problems of life
14 seemingly to the limit, and yet not realise that in the individual the
15 highest type of civilisation is found in him who has learnt to
16 conquer self. This condition is found in India more than in any
17 country on earth, for there the material conditions are subservient
18 to the spiritual, and the individual looks for the soul manifestations
19 in everything that has life, studying nature to this end. Hence that
20 gentle disposition to endure with indomitable patience the flings of
21 what appears unkind fortune, the while there is a full consciousness
22 of a spiritual strength and knowledge greater than those possessed
23 by any other people; hence the existence of a country and a people
24 from which flows an unending stream that attracts the attention of
25 thinkers far and near to approach and throw from their shoulders
26 an oppressive earthly burden. The early king, who in 260 B.C.
27 commanded that there should be no more bloodshed, no more wars,
28 and who sent forth instead of soldiers an army of instructors, acted
29 wisely, although in material things the land has suffered. But
30 though in bondage to brutal nations who conquer by force, the
31 Indian's spirituality endures for ever, and nothing can take it away
32 from him. There is something Christlike in the humility of the
33 people to endure the stings and arrows of outraged fortune, the
34 while the soul is advancing towards the brighter goal. Such a
35 country has no need of Christian missionaries to "preach ideas", for
36 theirs is a religion that makes men gentle, sweet, considerate, and
37 affectionate towards all God's creatures, whether man or beast.
38 Morally, said the speaker, India is head and shoulders above the
39 United States or any other country on the globe. Missionaries
40 would do well to come there and drink of the pure waters, and see
41 what a beautiful influence upon a great community have the lives of
42 the multitude of holy men.

43 Then marriage condition was described; and the privileges
44 extended to women in ancient times when the system of co-
45 education flourished. In the records of the saints in India there is
46 the unique figure of the prophetess. In the Christian creed they are
47 all prophets, while in India the holy women occupy a conspicuous
48 place in the holy books. The householder has five objects for
49 worship. One of them is learning and teaching. Another is worship
50 of dumb creatures. It is hard for Americans to understand the last
51 worship, and it is difficult for Europeans to appreciate the
52 sentiment. Other nations kill animals by wholesale and kill one
53 another; they exist in a sea of blood. A European said that the

1 reason why in India animals were not killed was because it was
2 supposed that they contained the spirits of ancestors. This reason
3 was worthy of a savage nation who are not many steps from the
4 brute. The fact was that the statement was made by a set of
5 atheists in India who thus carped at the Vedic idea of non-killing
6 and transmigration of souls. It was never a religious doctrine, it was
7 an idea of a materialistic creed. The worship of dumb animals was
8 pictured in a vivid manner. The hospitable spirit--the Indian golden
9 rule, was illustrated by a story. A Brahmin, his wife, his son, and his
10 son's wife had not tasted food for some time on account of a famine.
11 The head of the house went out and after a search found a small
12 quantity of barley. He brought this home and divided it into four
13 portions, and the small family was about to eat, when a knock was
14 heard at the door. It was a guest. The different portions were set
15 before him, and he departed with his hunger satisfied, while the
16 quartette who had entertained him perished. This story is told in
17 India to illustrate what is expected in the sacred name of
18 hospitality.

19 The speaker concluded in an eloquent manner. Throughout,
20 his speech was simple; but whenever he indulged in imagery, it was
21 delightfully poetic, showing that the Eastern brother has been a
22 close and attentive observer of the beauties of nature. His excessive
23 spirituality is a quality which makes itself felt with his auditors, for
24 it manifests itself in the love for animate and inanimate things and
25 in the keen insight into the mysterious workings of the divine law of
26 harmony and kindly intentions.

27 28 29 **HINDUS AND CHRISTIANS**

30 *(A lecture delivered at Detroit on February 21, 1894, and*
31 *reported in the Detroit Free Press)*
32

33 Of the different philosophies, the tendency of the Hindu is not
34 to destroy, but to harmonise everything. If any new idea comes into
35 India, we do not antagonise it, but simply try to take it in, to
36 harmonise it, because this method was taught first by our prophet,
37 God incarnate on earth, Shri Krishna. This Incarnation of God
38 preached himself first: "I am the God Incarnate, I am the inspirer of
39 all books, I am the inspirer of all religions." Thus we do not reject
40 any.

41 There is one thing which is very dissimilar between us and
42 Christians, something which we never taught. That is the idea of
43 salvation through Jesus' blood, or cleansing by any man's blood. We
44 had our sacrifice as the Jews had. Our sacrifices mean simply this:
45 Here is some food I am going to eat, and until some portion is
46 offered to God, it is bad; so I offer the food. This is the pure and
47 simple idea. But with the Jew the idea is that his sin be upon the
48 lamb, and let the lamb be sacrificed and him go scot-free. We never
49 developed this beautiful idea in India, and I am glad we did not. I,

1 for one, would not come to be saved by such a doctrine. If anybody
2 would come and say, "Be saved by my blood", I would say to him,
3 "My brother, go away; I will go to hell; I am not a coward to take
4 innocent blood to go to heaven; I am ready for hell." So that
5 doctrine never cropped up amongst us, and our prophet says that
6 whenever evil and immortality prevail on earth, He will come down
7 and support His children; and this He is doing from time to time
8 and from place to place. And whenever on earth you see an
9 extraordinary holy man trying to uplift humanity, know that He is in
10 him.

11 So you see that is the reason why we never fight any religion.
12 We do not say that ours is the only way to salvation. Perfection can
13 be had by everybody, and what is the proof? Because we see the
14 holiest of men in all countries, good men and women everywhere,
15 whether born in our faith or not. Therefore it cannot be held that
16 ours is the only way to salvation. "Like so many rivers flowing from
17 different mountains, all coming and mingling their waters in the
18 sea, all the different religions, taking their births from different
19 standpoints of fact, come unto Thee." This is a part of the child's
20 everyday prayer in India. With such everyday prayers, of course,
21 such ideas as fighting because of differences of religion are simply
22 impossible. So much for the philosophers of India. We have great
23 regard for all these men, especially this prophet, Shri Krishna, on
24 account of his wonderful catholicity in harmonising all the
25 preceding revelations.

26 Then the man who is bowing down before the idol. It is not in
27 the same sense as you have heard of the Babylonian and the Roman
28 idolatry. It is peculiar to the Hindus. The man is before the idol, and
29 he shuts his eyes and tries to think, "I am He; I have neither life nor
30 death; I have neither father nor mother; I am not bound by time or
31 space; I am Existence infinite, Bliss infinite, and Knowledge infinite;
32 I am He, I am He. I am not bound by books, or holy places, or
33 pilgrimages, or anything whatsoever; I am the Existence Absolute,
34 Bliss Absolute; I am He, I am He." This he repeats and then says, "O
35 Lord, I cannot conceive Thee in myself; I am a poor man." Religion
36 does not depend upon knowledge. It is the soul itself, it is God, not
37 to be attained by simple book-knowledge or powers of speech. You
38 may take the most learned man you have and ask him to think of
39 spirit as spirit; he cannot. You may imagine spirit, he may imagine
40 spirit. It is impossible to think of spirit without training. So no
41 matter how much theology you may learn--you may be a great
42 philosopher and greater theologian--but the Hindu boy would say,
43 "Well, that has nothing to do with religion." Can you think of spirit
44 as spirit? Then alone all doubt ceases, and all crookedness of the
45 heart is made straight. Then only all fears vanish, and all doubtings
46 are for ever silent when man's soul and God come face to face.

47 A man may be wonderfully learned in the Western sense, yet
48 he may not know the A B C of religion. I would tell him that. I would
49 ask him, "Can you think of spirit as such? Are you advanced in the
50 science of the soul? Have you manifested your own soul above
51 matter?" If he has not, then I say to him, "Religion has not come to
52 you; it is all talk and book and vanity." But this poor Hindu sits

1 before that idol and tries to think that he is That, and then says, "O
2 Lord, I cannot conceive Thee as spirit, so let me conceive of Thee in
3 this form"; and then he opens his eyes and see this form, and
4 prostrating himself he repeats his prayers. And when his prayer is
5 ended, he says, "O Lord, forgive me for this imperfect worship of
6 Thee."

7 You are always being told that the Hindu worships blocks of
8 stone. Now what do you think of this fervent nature of the souls of
9 these people? I am the first monk to come over to these Western
10 countries--it is the first time in the history of the world that a Hindu
11 monk has crossed the ocean. But we hear such criticism and hear of
12 these talks, and what is the general attitude of my nation towards
13 you? They smile and say, "They are children; they may be great in
14 physical science; they may build huge things; but in religion they
15 are simply children." That is the attitude of my people.

16 One thing I would tell you, and I do not mean any unkind
17 criticism. You train and educate and clothe and pay men to do
18 what? To come over to my country to curse and abuse all my
19 forefathers, my religion, and everything. They walk near a temple
20 and say, "You idolaters, you will go to hell." But they dare not do
21 that to the Mohammedans of India; the sword would be out. But the
22 Hindu is too mild; he smiles and passes on, and says, "Let the fools
23 talk." That is the attitude. And then you who train men to abuse and
24 criticise, if I just touch you with the least bit of criticism, with the
25 kindest of purpose, you shrink and cry, "Don't touch us; we are
26 Americans. We criticise all the people in the world, curse them and
27 abuse them, say anything; but do not touch us; we are sensitive
28 plants." You may do whatever you please; but at the same time I am
29 going to tell you that we are content to live as we are; and in one
30 thing we are better off--we never teach our children to swallow
31 such horrible stuff: "Where every prospect pleases and man alone is
32 vile." And whenever your ministers criticise us, let them remember
33 this: If all India stands up and takes all the mud that is at the
34 bottom of the Indian Ocean and throws it up against the Western
35 countries, it will not be doing an infinitesimal part of that which you
36 are doing to us. And what for? Did we ever send one missionary to
37 convert anybody in the world? We say to you, "Welcome to your
38 religion, but allow me to have mine." You call yours an aggressive
39 religion. You are aggressive, but how many have you taken? Every
40 sixth man in the world is a Chinese subject, a Buddhist; then there
41 are Japan, Tibet, and Russia, and Siberia, and Burma, and Siam;
42 and it may not be palatable, but this Christian morality, the Catholic
43 Church, is all derived from them. Well, and how was this done?
44 Without the shedding of one drop of blood! With all your brags and
45 boastings, where has your Christianity succeeded without the
46 sword? Show me one place in the whole world. One, I say,
47 throughout the history of the Christian religion--one; I do not want
48 two. I know how your forefathers were converted. They had to be
49 converted or killed; that was all. What can you do better than
50 Mohammedanism, with all your bragging? "We are the only one!"
51 And why? "Because we can kill others." The Arabs said that; they
52 bragged. And where is the Arab now? He is the bedouin. The

1 Romans used to say that, and where are they now? Blessed are the
2 peace-makers; they shall enjoy the earth. Such things tumble down;
3 it is built upon sands; it cannot remain long.

4 Everything that has selfishness for its basis, competition as its
5 right hand, and enjoyment as its goal, must die sooner or later.
6 Such things must die. Let me tell you, brethren, if you want to live,
7 if you really want your nation to live, go back to Christ. You are not
8 Christians. No, as a nation you are not. Go back to Christ. Go back
9 to him who had nowhere to lay his head. "The birds have their nests
10 and the beasts their lairs, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay
11 his head." Yours is religion preached in the name of luxury. What an
12 irony of fate! Reverse this if you want to live, reverse this. It is all
13 hypocrisy that I have heard in this country. If this nation is going to
14 live, let it go back to him. You cannot serve God and Mammon at the
15 same time. All this prosperity, all this from Christ! Christ would
16 have denied all such heresies. All prosperity which comes with
17 Mammon is transient, is only for a moment. Real permanence is in
18 Him. If you can join these two, this wonderful prosperity with the
19 ideal of Christ, it is well. But if you cannot, better go back to him
20 and give this up. Better be ready to live in rags with Christ than to
21 live in palaces without him.

22 23 24 **CHRISTIANITY IN INDIA**

25 *(A lecture delivered at Detroit on March 11, 1894 and reported in the Detroit*
26 *Free Press)*

27
28 "Vive Kananda spoke to a crowded audience at the Detroit
29 Opera House last night. He was given an extremely cordial
30 reception and delivered his most eloquent address here. He spoke
31 for two hours and a half.

32 Hon. T. W. Palmer, in introducing the distinguished visitor,
33 referred to the old tale of the shield that was copper on one side
34 and silver on the other and the contest which ensued. If we look on
35 both sides of a question there would be less dispute. It is possible
36 for all men to agree. The matter of foreign missions has been dear
37 to the religious heart. Vive Kananda, from the Christian standpoint,
38 said Mr. Palmer, was a pagan. It would be pleasant to hear from a
39 gentleman who spoke about the copper side of the shield.

40 Vive Kananda was received with great applause." . . .

41 I do not know much about missionaries in Japan and China,
42 but I am well posted about India. The people of this country look
43 upon India as a vast waste, with many jungles and a few civilised
44 Englishmen. India is half as large as the United States, and there
45 are three hundred million people. Many stories are related, and I
46 have become tired of denying these. The first invaders of India, the
47 Aryans, did not try to exterminate the population of India as the
48 Christians did when they went into a new land, but the endeavour
49 was made to elevate persons of brutish habits. The Spaniards came

1 to Ceylon with Christianity. The Spaniards thought that their God
2 commanded them to kill and murder and to tear down heathen
3 temples. The Buddhists had a tooth a foot long, which belonged to
4 their Prophet, and the Spaniards threw it into the sea, killed a few
5 thousand persons, and converted a few scores. The Portuguese
6 came to Western India. The Hindus have a belief in the Trinity and
7 had a temple dedicated to their sacred belief. The invaders looked
8 at the temple and said it was a creation of the devil; and so they
9 brought their cannon to bear upon the wonderful structure and
10 destroyed a portion of it. But the invaders were driven out of the
11 country by the enraged population. The early missionaries tried to
12 get hold of the land, and in their effort to secure a foothold by force,
13 they killed many people and converted a number. Some of them
14 became Christians to save their lives. Ninety-nine percent of the
15 Christians converted by the Portuguese sword were compelled to
16 be so, and they said, "We do not believe in Christianity, but we are
17 forced to call ourselves Christians." But Catholic Christianity soon
18 relapsed.

19 The East India Company got possession of a part of India with
20 the idea of making hay while the sun shone. They kept the
21 missionaries away. The Hindus were the first to welcome the
22 missionaries, not the Englishmen, who were engaged in trade. I
23 have great admiration for some of the first missionaries of the later
24 period, who were true servants of Jesus and did not vilify the people
25 or spread vile falsehoods about them. They were gentle, kindly
26 men. When Englishmen became masters of India, the missionary
27 enterprise began to become stagnant, a condition which
28 characterises the missionary efforts in India today. Dr. Long, an
29 early missionary, stood by the people. He translated a Hindu drama
30 describing the evils perpetuated in India by indigo-planters, and
31 what was the result? He was placed in jail by the English. Such
32 missionaries were of benefit to the country, but they have passed
33 away. The Suez Canal opened up a number of evils.

34 Now goes the missionary, a married man, who is hampered
35 because he is married. The missionary knows nothing about the
36 people, he cannot speak the language, so he invariably settles in
37 the little white colony. He is forced to do this because he is married.
38 Were he not married, he could go among the people and sleep on
39 the ground if necessary. So he goes to India to seek company for his
40 wife and children. He stays among the English-speaking people.
41 The great heart of India is today absolutely untouched by
42 missionary effort. Most of the missionaries are incompetent. I have
43 not met a single missionary who understands Sanskrit. How can a
44 man absolutely ignorant of the people and their traditions, get into
45 sympathy with them? I do not mean any offense, but Christians
46 send men as missionaries, who are not persons of ability. It is sad to
47 see money spent to make converts when no real results of a
48 satisfactory nature are reached.

49 Those who are converted, are the few who make a sort of
50 living by hanging round the missionaries. The converts who are not
51 kept in service in India, cease to be converts. That is about the
52 entire matter in a nutshell. As to the way of converting, it is

1 absolutely absurd. The money the missionaries bring is accepted.
2 The colleges founded by missionaries are all right, so far as the
3 education is concerned. But with religion it is different. The Hindu
4 is acute; he takes the bait but avoids the hook! It is wonderful how
5 tolerant the people are. A missionary once said, "That is the worst
6 of the whole business. People who are self-complacent can never be
7 converted."

8 As regards the lady missionaries, they go into certain houses,
9 get four shillings a month, teach them something of the Bible, and
10 show them how to knit. The girls of India will never be converted.
11 Atheism and skepticism at home is what is pushing the missionary
12 into other lands.

13 When I came into this country I was surprised to meet so
14 many liberal men and women. But after the Parliament of Religions
15 a great Presbyterian paper came out and gave me the benefit of a
16 seething article. This the editor called enthusiasm. The missionaries
17 do not and cannot throw off nationality--they are not broad enough--
18 and so they accomplish nothing in the way of converting, although
19 they may have a nice sociable time among themselves. India
20 requires help from Christ, but not from the antichrist; these men
21 are not Christlike. They do not act like Christ; they are married and
22 come over and settle down comfortably and make a fair livelihood.
23 Christ and his disciples would accomplish much good in India, just
24 as many of the Hindu saints do; but these men are not of that
25 sacred character. The Hindus would welcome the Christ of the
26 Christians gladly, because his life was holy and beautiful; but they
27 cannot and will not receive the narrow utterances of the ignorant,
28 hypocritical or self-deceiving men.

29 Men are different. If they were not, the mentality of the world
30 would be degraded. If there were not different religions, no religion
31 would survive. The Christian requires his religion; the Hindu needs
32 his own creed. All religions have struggled against one another for
33 years. Those which were founded on a book, still stand. Why could
34 not the Christians convert the Jews? Why could they not make the
35 Persians Christians? Why could they not convert Mohammedans?
36 Why cannot any impression be made upon China or Japan?
37 Buddhism, the first missionary religion, numbers double the
38 number of converts of any other religion, and they did not use the
39 sword. The Mohammedans used the greatest violence. They
40 number the least of the three great missionary religions. The
41 Mohammedans have had their day. Every day you read of Christian
42 nations acquiring land by bloodshed. What missionaries preach
43 against this? Why should the most blood-thirsty nation exalt an
44 alleged religion which is not the religion of Christ? The Jews and
45 the Arabs were the fathers of Christianity, and how they have been
46 persecuted by the Christians! The Christians have been weighed in
47 the balance in India and have been found wanting. I do not mean to
48 be unkind, but I want to show the Christians how they look in
49 others' eyes. The missionaries who preach the burning pit are
50 regarded with horror. The Mohammedans rolled wave after wave
51 over India waving the sword, and today where are they?

52 The furthest that all religions can see is the existence of a

1 spiritual entity. So no religion can teach beyond that point. In every
2 religion there is the essential truth and the non-essential casket in
3 which this jewel lies. Believing in the Jewish book or in the Hindu
4 book is non-essential. Circumstances change; the receptacle is
5 different; but the central truth remains. The essentials being the
6 same, the educated people of every community retain the
7 essentials. If you ask a Christian what his essentials are, he should
8 reply, "The teachings of Lord Jesus." Much of the rest is nonsense.
9 But the nonsensical part is right; it forms the receptacle. The shell
10 of the oyster is not attractive, but the pearl is within it. The Hindu
11 will never attack the life of Jesus; he reverences the Sermon on the
12 Mount. But how many Christians know or have heard of the
13 teachings of the Hindu holy men? They remain in a fool's paradise.
14 Before a small fraction of the world was converted, Christianity was
15 divided into many creeds. That is the law of nature. Why take a
16 single instrument from the great religious orchestra of the earth?
17 Let the grand symphony go on. Be pure. Give up superstition and
18 see the wonderful harmony of nature. Superstition gets the better
19 of religion. All the religions are good, since the essentials are the
20 same. Each man should have the perfect exercise of his
21 individuality, but these individualities form a perfect whole. This
22 marvelous condition is already in existence. Each creed has
23 something to add to the wonderful structure.

24 I pity the Hindu who does not see the beauty in Jesus Christ's
25 character. I pity the Christian who does not reverence the Hindu
26 Christ. The more a man sees of himself, the less he sees of his
27 neighbors. Those that go about converting, who are very busy
28 saving the souls of others, in many instances forget their own souls.
29 I was asked by a lady why the women of India were not more
30 elevated. It is in a great degree owing to the barbarous invaders
31 through different ages; it is partly due to the people in India
32 themselves. But our women are any day better than the ladies of
33 this country who devotees of novels and balls. Where is the
34 spirituality one would expect in a country which is so boastful of its
35 civilisation? I have not found it. "Here" and "here-after" are words
36 to frighten children. It is all "here". To live and move in God--even
37 here, even in this body! All self should go out; all superstition
38 should be banished. Such men live in India. Where are such in this
39 country? Your preachers speak against "dreamers". The people of
40 this country would be better off if there were more "dreamers". If a
41 man here followed literally the instruction of his Lord, he would be
42 called a fanatic. There is a good deal of difference between
43 dreaming and the brag of the nineteenth century. The bees look for
44 the flowers. Open the lotus! The whole world is full of God and not
45 of sin. Let us help each other. Let us love each other. A beautiful
46 prayer of the Buddhist is: I bow down to all the saints; I bow down
47 to all the prophets; I bow down to all the holy men and women all
48 over the world!

51 THE RELIGION OF LOVE

(Notes of a lecture delivered in London on November 16, 1895)

Just as it is necessary for a man to go through symbols and ceremonies first in order to arrive at the depth of realisation, so we say in India, "It is good to be born in a church, but bad to die in one". A sapling must be hedged about for protection, but when it becomes a tree, a hedge would be a hindrance. So there is no need to criticise and condemn the old forms. We forget that in religion there must be *growth*.

At first we think of a Personal God, and call Him Creator, Omnipotent, Omniscient, and so forth. But when love comes, God is only love. The loving worshipper does not care *what* God is, because he wants nothing from Him. Says an Indian saint, "I am no beggar!" Neither does he fear. God is loved as a human being.

Here are some of the systems founded on love. (1) Shanta, a common, peaceful love, with such thoughts as those of fatherhood and help; (2) Dasya, the ideal of service; God as master or general or sovereign, giving punishments and rewards; (3) Vatsalya, God as mother or child. In India the mother never punishes. In each of these stages, the worshipper forms an ideal of God and follows it. Then (4) Sakhya, God as friend. There is here no fear. There is also the feeling of equality and familiarity. There are some Hindus who worship God as friend and playmate. Next comes (5) Madhura, sweetest love, the love of husband and wife. Of this St. Teresa and the ecstatic saints have been examples. Amongst the Persians, God has been looked upon as the wife, amongst the Hindus as the husband. We may recall the great queen Mira Bai, who preached that the Divine Spouse was all. Some carry this to such an extreme that to call God "mighty" or "father" seems to them blasphemy. The language of this worship is erotic. Some even use that of illicit passion. To this cycle belongs the story of Krishna and the Gopi-girls. All this probably seems to you to entail great degeneration on the worshipper. And so it does. Yet many great saints have been developed by it. And no human institution is beyond abuse. Would you cook nothing because there are beggars? Would you possess nothing because there are thieves? "O Beloved, one kiss of Thy lips, once tasted, hath made me mad!"

The fruit of this idea is that one can no longer belong to any sect, or endure ceremonial. Religion in India culminates in freedom. But even this comes to be given up, and all is love for love's sake.

Last of all comes *love without distinction*, the Self. There is a Persian poem that tells how a lover came to the door of his beloved, and knocked. She asked, "Who art thou?" and he replied, "I am so and so, thy beloved!" and she answered only, "Go! I know none such!" But when she had asked for the fourth time, he said, "I am thyself, O my Beloved, therefore open thou to me!" And the door was opened.

A great saint said, using the language of a girl, describing love: "Four eyes met. There were changes in two souls. And now I

1 cannot tell whether he is a man and I am a woman, or he is a
2 woman and I a man. This only I remember, two souls were. Love
3 came, and there was one."

4 In the highest love, union is only of the spirit. All love of any
5 other kind is quickly evanescent. Only the spiritual lasts, and this
6 grows.

7 Love sees the Ideal. This is the third angle of the triangle.
8 God has been Cause, Creator, Father. Love is the culmination. The
9 mother regrets that her child is humpbacked, but when she has
10 nursed him for a few days, she loves him and thinks him most
11 beautiful. The lover sees the beauty of Helen in the brow of
12 Ethiopia. We do not commonly realise what happens. The brow of
13 Ethiopia is merely a suggestion: the man *sees* Helen. His ideal is
14 thrown upon the suggestion and covers it, as the oyster makes sand
15 into a pearl. God is this ideal, through which man may see all.

16 Hence we come to love love itself. This love cannot be
17 expressed. No words can utter it. We are dumb about it.

18 The senses become very much heightened in love. Human
19 love, we must remember, is mixed up with attributes. It is
20 dependent, too, on the other's attitude. Indian languages have
21 words to describe this interdependence of love. The lowest love is
22 selfish; it consists in pleasure of being loved. We say in India, "One
23 gives the cheek, the other kisses." Above this is mutual love. But
24 this also ceases mutually. True love is all giving. We do not even
25 want to see the other, or to do anything to express our feeling. It is
26 enough to give. It is almost impossible to love a human being like
27 this, but it is possible to love God.

28 In India there is no idea of blasphemy if boys fighting in the
29 street use the name of God. We say, "Put your hand into the fire,
30 and whether you feel it or not, you will be burnt. So to utter the
31 name of God can bring nothing but good."

32 The notion of blasphemy comes from the Jews, who were
33 impressed by the spectacle of Persian loyalty. The ideas that God is
34 judge and punisher are not in themselves bad, but they are low and
35 vulgar. The three angles of the triangle are: Love begs not; Love
36 knows no fear; Love is always the ideal.

37 "Who would be able to live one second,
38 Who would be able to breathe one moment,
39 If the Loving one had not filled the universe?"

40 Most of us will find that we were born for service. We must
41 leave the results to God. The work was done only for love of God. If
42 failure comes, there need be no sorrow. The work was done only for
43 love of God.

44 In women, the mother-nature is much developed. They
45 worship God as the child. They ask nothing, and will do anything.

46 The Catholic Church teaches many of these deep things, and
47 though it is narrow, it is religious in the highest sense. In modern
48 society, Protestantism is broad but shallow. To judge truth by what
49 good it does is as bad as to question the value of a scientific

1 discovery to a baby.

2 Society must be outgrown. We must crush law and become
3 outlaws. We allow nature, only in order to conquer her.
4 Renunciation means that none can serve both God and Mammon.

5 Deepen your own power of thought and love. Bring your own
6 lotus to blossom: the bees will come of themselves. Believe first in
7 yourself, then in God. A handful of strong men will move the world.
8 We need a heart to feel, a brain to conceive, and a strong arm to do
9 the work. Buddha gave himself for the animals. Make yourself a fit
10 agent to work. But it is God who works, not you. One man contains
11 the whole universe. One particle of matter has all the energy of the
12 universe at its back. In a conflict between the heart and the brain
13 follow your heart.

14 Yesterday, competition was the law. Today, cooperation is the
15 law. Tomorrow there is no law. Let sages praise thee, or let the
16 world blame. Let fortune itself come, or let poverty and rags stare
17 thee in the face.

18 Eat the herbs of the forest, one day, for food; and the next,
19 share a banquet of fifty courses. Looking neither to right hand nor
20 to the left, follow thou on!

21 The Swami began by telling, in answer to questions, the story
22 of how Pavhari Baba snatched up his own vessels and ran after the
23 thief, only to fall at his feet and say:

24 "O Lord, I knew not that Thou wert there! Take them! They
25 are Thine! Pardon me, Thy child!"

26 Again he told how the same saint was bitten by a cobra, and
27 when, towards nightfall he recovered, he said, "A messenger came
28 to me from the Beloved."

31 JNANA AND KARMA

32 (*Notes of a lecture delivered in London, on November 23,*
33 *1895*)

34 The greatest force is derived from the power of thought. *The*
35 *finer the element, the more powerful it is* . The silent power of
36 thought influences people even at a distance, because mind is one
37 as well as many. The universe is a cobweb; minds are spiders.

38 The universe equals the phenomena of one Universal Being.
39 He, seen through our senses, is the universe. This is Maya. So the
40 world is illusion, that is, the imperfect vision of the Real, a semi-
41 revelation, even as the sun in the morning is a red ball. Thus all
42 evils and wickedness are but weakness, the *imperfect vision of*
43 *goodness*.

44 A straight line projected infinitely becomes a circle. The
45 search for good comes back to Self. I am the whole mystery, God. I
46 am a body, the lower self; and I am the Lord of the universe.

47 Why should a man be moral and pure? Because this

1 strengthens his will. Everything that strengthens the will by
2 revealing the real nature is moral. Everything that does the reverse
3 is immoral. The standard varies from country to country, from
4 individual to individual. Man must recover from his state of slavery
5 to laws, to words, and so on. We have no freedom of the will now,
6 but we shall have when we are free. Renunciation is this giving up
7 of the world. Through the senses, anger comes, and sorrow comes.
8 As long as renunciation is not *there*, self and the passion animating
9 it are different. At last they become identified, and the man is an
10 animal at once. Become possessed with the feeling of renunciation.

11 I once had a body, was born, struggled and died: What awful
12 hallucinations! To think that one was cramped in a body, weeping
13 for salvation!

14 But does renunciation demand that we all become ascetics?
15 Who then is to help others? Renunciation is not asceticism. Are all
16 beggars Christ? Poverty is not a synonym for holiness; often the
17 reverse. Renunciation is of the mind. How does it come? In a
18 desert, when I was thirsty, I saw a lake. It was in the midst of a
19 beautiful landscape. There were trees surrounding it, and their
20 reflections could be seen in the water, upside down. But the whole
21 thing proved to be a mirage. Then I knew that every day for a
22 month I had seen this; and only that day, being thirsty, I had learnt
23 it to be unreal. Every day for a month I should see it again. But I
24 should never take it to be real. So, when we reach God, the idea of
25 the universe, the body and so on, will vanish. It will return
26 afterwards. But next time we shall know it to be unreal.

27 The history of the world is the history of persons like Buddha
28 and Jesus. The passionless and unattached do most for the world.
29 Picture Jesus in the slums. He sees beyond the misery, "You, my
30 brethren, are all divine." His work is calm. He removes causes. You
31 will be able to work for the good of the world when you know for a
32 fact that this work is all illusion. The more unconscious this work,
33 the better, because it is then the more superconscious. Our search
34 is not for good or evil; but happiness and good are nearer to truth
35 than their opposites. A man ran a thorn into his finger, and with
36 another thorn took it out. The first thorn is Evil. The second thorn is
37 Good. The Self is that Peace which passeth beyond both evil and
38 good. The universe is melting down: man draws nearer to God. For
39 one moment he is real--God. He is re-differentiated--a prophet.
40 Before him, now, the world trembles. A fool sleeps and wakes a
41 fool--a man unconscious; and superconscious, he returns with
42 infinite power, purity, and love--the God-Man. This is the use of the
43 superconscious state.

44 Wisdom can be practised even on a battlefield. The Gita was
45 preached so. There are three states of mind: the active, the passive,
46 and the serene. The passive state is characterised by slow
47 vibrations; the active by quick vibrations, and the serene by the
48 most intense vibrations of all. Know that the soul is sitting in the
49 chariot. The body is the chariot; the outer senses are the horses;
50 and the mind the reins; and the intellect the charioteer. So man
51 crosses the ocean of Maya. He goes beyond. He reaches God. When
52 a man is under the control of his senses, he is of this world. When

1 he has controlled the senses, he has renounced.

2 Even forgiveness, if weak and passive, is not true: fight is
3 better. *Forgive* when you could bring legions of angels to the
4 victory. Krishna, the charioteer of Arjuna, hears him say, "Let us
5 forgive our enemies", and answers, "You speak the words of wise
6 men, but you are not a wise man, but a coward". As a lotus-leaf,
7 living in the water yet untouched by it, so should the soul be in the
8 world. This is a battlefield, fight your way out. Life in this world is
9 an attempt to see God. Make your life a manifestation of will
10 strengthened by renunciation.

11 We must learn to control all our brain-centres consciously.
12 The first step is the joy of living. Asceticism is fiendish. To laugh is
13 better than to pray. Sing. Get rid of misery. Do not for heaven's sake
14 infect others with it. Never think God sells a little happiness and a
15 little unhappiness. Surround yourself with flowers and pictures and
16 incense. The saints went to the mountain tops to enjoy nature.

17 The second step is purity.

18 The third is full training of the mind. Reason out what is true
19 from what is untrue. See that God alone is true. If for a moment you
20 think you are not God, great terror will seize you. As soon as you
21 think "*I am He*", great peace and joy will come to you. Control the
22 senses. If a man curses me, I should still see in him God, whom
23 through my weakness I see as a curser. The poor man to whom you
24 do good is extending a privilege to you. He allows you, through His
25 mercy, to worship Him thus.

26 The history of the world is the history of a few men who had
27 faith in themselves. That faith calls out the divinity within. You can
28 do anything. You fail only when you do not strive sufficiently to
29 manifest infinite power. As soon as a man or a nation loses faith,
30 death comes.

31 There is a divine within that cannot be overcome either by
32 church dogmas or by blackguardism. A handful of Greeks speak
33 wherever there is civilisation. Some mistakes there must always be.
34 Do not grieve. Have great insight. Do *not* think, "What is done is
35 done. Oh, that 'twere done better!" If man had not been God,
36 humanity would by this time have become insane, with its litanies
37 and its penitence.

38 None will be left, none destroyed. All will in the end be made
39 perfect. Say, day and night, "Come up, my brothers! You are the
40 infinite ocean of purity! Be God! Manifest as God!"

41 What is civilisation? It is the feeling of the divine within.
42 When you find time, repeat these ideas to yourself and desire
43 freedom. That is all. Deny everything that is not God. Assert
44 everything that is God. Mentally assert this, day and night. So the
45 veil grows thinner:

1 "I am neither man nor angel. I have no sex nor limit. I am
2 knowledge itself. I am He. I have neither anger nor hatred. I have
3 neither pain nor pleasure. Death or birth I never had. For I am
4 Knowledge Absolute, and Bliss Absolute. I am He, my soul, I am
5 He!"

6 Find yourself bodiless. You never had a body. It was all
7 superstition. Give back the divine consciousness to all the poor, the
8 downtrodden, the oppressed, and the sick.

9 Apparently, every five hundred years or so, a wave of this
10 thought comes over the world. Little waves arise in many
11 directions: but one swallows up all the others and sweeps over
12 society. That wave does this which has most character at its back.

13 Confucius, Moses, and Pythagoras; Buddha, Christ,
14 Mohammed; Luther, Calvin, and the Sikhs; Theosophy, Spiritualism,
15 and the like; all these mean only the preaching of the Divine-in-
16 Man.

17 Never say man is weak. Wisdom-Yoga is no better than the
18 others. Love is the ideal and requires no object. Love is God. So
19 even through devotion we reach the subjective God. I am He! How
20 can one work, unless one loves city, country, animals, the universe?
21 Reason leads to the finding of unity in variety. Let the atheist and
22 the agnostic work for the social good. So God comes.

23 But this you must guard against: Do not disturb the faith of
24 any. For you must know that religion is not in doctrines. Religion
25 lies in being and becoming, in realisation. All men are born
26 idolaters. The lowest man is an animal. The highest man is perfect.
27 And between these two, all have to think in sound and colour, in
28 doctrine and ritual.

29 The test of having ceased to be an idolater is: "When you say
30 'I', does the body come into your thought or not? If it does, then you
31 are still a worshipper of idols." Religion is not intellectual jargon at
32 all, but realisation. If you *think* about God, you are only a fool. The
33 ignorant man, by prayer and devotion, can reach beyond the
34 philosopher. To know God, no philosophy is necessary. Our duty is
35 not to disturb the faith of others. Religion is experience. Above all
36 and in all, be sincere; identification brings misery, because it brings
37 desire. Thus the poor man sees gold, and identifies himself with the
38 need of gold. Be the witness. *Learn never to react.*

41 **THE CLAIMS OF VEDANTA ON THE MODERN** 42 **WORLD**

43 (*Report of a lecture delivered in Oakland on Sunday, February 25, 1900,*
44 *with editorial comments of the Oakland Enquirer*)

45 The announcement that Swami Vivekananda, a distinguished
46 savant of the East, would expound the philosophy of Vedanta in the
47 Parliament of Religions at the Unitarian Church last evening,
48 attracted an immense throng. The main auditorium and ante-rooms
49 were packed, the annexed auditorium of Wendte Hall was thrown

1 open, and this was also filled to overflowing, and it is estimated that
2 fully 500 persons, who could not obtain seats or standing room
3 where they could hear conveniently, were turned away.

4 The Swami created a marked impression. Frequently he
5 received applause during the lecture, and upon concluding, held a
6 levee of enthusiastic admirers. He said in part, under the subject of
7 "The Claims of Vedanta on the Modern World":

8 Vedanta demands the consideration of the modern world. The
9 largest number of the human race is under its influence. Again and
10 again, millions upon millions have swept down on its adherents in
11 India, crushing them with their great force, and yet the religion
12 lives.

13 In all the nations of the world, can such a system be found?
14 Others have risen to come under its shadow. Born like mushrooms,
15 today they are alive and flourishing, and tomorrow they are gone. Is
16 this not the survival of the fittest?

17 It is a system not yet complete. It has been growing for
18 thousands of years and is still growing. So I can give you but an
19 idea of all I would say in one brief hour.

20 First, to tell you of the history of the rise of Vedanta. When it
21 arose, India had already perfected a religion. Its crystallisation had
22 been going on many years. Already there were elaborate
23 ceremonies; already there had been perfected a system of morals
24 for the different stages of life. But there came a rebellion against
25 the mummeries and mockeries that enter into many religions in
26 time, and great men came forth to proclaim through the Vedas the
27 true religion. Hindus received their religion from the revelation of
28 these Vedas. They were told that the Vedas were without beginning
29 and without end. It may sound ludicrous to this audience--how a
30 book can be without beginning or end; but by the Vedas no books
31 are meant. They mean the accumulated treasury of spiritual laws
32 discovered by different persons in different times.

33 Before these men came, the popular ideas of a God ruling the
34 universe, and that man was immortal, were in existence. But there
35 they stopped. It was thought that nothing more could be known.
36 Here came the daring of the expounders of Vedanta. They knew
37 that religion meant for children is not good for thinking men; that
38 there is something more to man and God.

39 The moral agnostic knows only the external dead nature.
40 From that he would form the law of the universe. He might as well
41 cut off my nose and claim to form an idea of my whole body, as
42 argue thus. He must look within. The stars that sweep through the
43 heavens, even the universe is but a drop in the bucket. Your
44 agnostic sees not the greatest, and he is frightened at the universe.

45 The world of spirit is greater than all--the God of the universe
46 who rules--our Father, our Mother. What is this heathen mummery
47 we call the world? There is misery everywhere. The child is born
48 with a cry upon its lips; it is its first utterance. This child becomes a
49 man, and so well used to misery that the pang of the heart is hidden
50 by a smile on the lips.

1 Where is the solution of this world? Those who look outside
2 will never find it; they must turn their eyes inward and find truth.
3 Religion lives inside.

4 One man preaches, if you chop your head off, you get
5 salvation. But does he get any one to follow him? Your own Jesus
6 says, "Give all to the poor and follow me." How many of you have
7 done this? You have not followed out this command, and yet Jesus
8 was the great teacher of your religion. Every one of you is practical
9 in his own life, and you find this would be impracticable.

10 But Vedanta offers you nothing that is impracticable. Every
11 science must have its own matter to work upon. Everyone needs
12 certain conditions and much of training and learning; but any Jack
13 in the street can tell you all about religion. You may want to follow
14 religion and follow an expert, but you may only care to converse
15 with Jack, for he can talk it.

16 You must do with religion as with science, come in direct
17 contact with facts, and on that foundation build a marvellous
18 structure.

19 To have a true religion you must have instruments. Belief is
20 not in question; of faith you can make nothing, for you can believe
21 anything.

22 We know that in science as we increase the velocity, the mass
23 decreases; and as we increase the mass, the velocity decreases.
24 Thus we have matter and force. The matter, we do not know how,
25 disappears into force, and force into matter. Therefore there is
26 something which is neither force nor matter, as these two may not
27 disappear into each other. This is what we call mind--the universal
28 mind.

29 Your body and my body are separate, you say. I am but a little
30 whirlpool in the universal ocean of mankind. A whirlpool, it is true,
31 but a part of the great ocean.

32 You stand by moving water where every particle is changing,
33 and yet you call it a stream. The water is changing, it is true, but
34 the banks remain the same. The mind is not changing, but the
35 body--how quick its growth! I was a baby, a boy, a man, and soon I
36 will be an old man, stooped and aged. The body is changing, and
37 you say, is the mind not changing also? When I was a child, I was
38 thinking, I have become larger, because my mind is a sea of
39 impressions.

40 There is behind nature a universal mind. The spirit is simply a
41 unit and it is not matter. For man is a spirit. The question, "Where
42 does the soul go after death?" should be answered like the boy
43 when he asked, "Why does not the earth fall down?" The questions
44 are alike, and their solutions alike; for where could the soul go to?

45 To you who talk of immortality I would ask when you go home
46 to endeavour to imagine you are dead. Stand by and touch your
47 dead body. You cannot, for you cannot get out of yourself. The
48 question is not concerning immortality, but as to whether Jack will
49 meet his Jenny after death.

1 The one great secret of religion is to know for yourself that
2 you are a spirit. Do not cry out, "I am a worm, I am nobody!" As the
3 poet says, "I am Existence, Knowledge, and Truth." No man can do
4 any good in the world by crying out, "I am one of its evils." The
5 more perfect, the less imperfections you see.

6 7 **THE LAWS OF LIFE AND DEATH**

8 *(Report of a lecture delivered in Oakland on March 7, 1900, with editorial*
9 *comments of the Oakland Tribune)*

10
11 Swami Vivekananda delivered a lecture last evening on the
12 subject, "The Laws of Life and Death". The Swami said: "How to get
13 rid of this birth and death--not how to go to heaven, but how one
14 can stop going to heaven--this is the object of the search of the
15 Hindu."

16 The Swami went on to say that nothing stands isolated--
17 everything is a part of the never-ending procession of cause and
18 effect. If there are higher beings than man, they also must obey the
19 laws. Life can only spring from life, thought from thought, matter
20 from matter. A universe cannot be created out of matter. It has
21 existed for ever. If human beings came into the world fresh from the
22 hands of nature, they would come without impressions; but we do
23 not come in that way, which shows that we are not created afresh.
24 If human souls are created out of nothing, what is to prevent them
25 from going back into nothing? If we are to live all the time in the
26 future, we must have lived all the time in the past.

27 It is the belief of the Hindu that the soul is neither mind nor
28 body. What is it which remains stable--which can say, "I am I"? Not
29 the body, for it is always changing; and not the mind, which
30 changes more rapidly than the body, which never has the same
31 thoughts for even a few minutes. There must be an identity which
32 does not change--something which is to man what the banks are to
33 the river--the banks which do not change and without whose
34 immobility we would not be conscious of the constantly moving
35 stream. Behind the body, behind the mind, there must be
36 something, viz the soul, which unifies the man. Mind is merely the
37 fine instrument through which the soul--the master--acts on the
38 body. In India we say a man has given up his body, while you say, a
39 man gives up his ghost. The Hindus believe that a man is a soul and
40 has a body, while Western people believe he is a body and
41 possesses a soul.

42 Death overtakes everything which is complex. The soul is a
43 single element, not composed of anything else, and therefore it
44 cannot die. By its very nature the soul must be immortal. Body,
45 mind, and soul turn upon the wheel of law--none can escape. No
46 more can we transcend the law than can the stars, than can the
47 sun--it is all a universe of law. The law of Karma is that every action
48 must be followed sooner or later by an effect. The Egyptian seed
49 which was taken from the hand of a mummy after 5000 years and
50 sprang into life when planted is the type of the never-ending

1 influence of human acts. Action can never die without producing
2 action. Now, if our acts can only produce their appropriate effects
3 on this plane of existence, it follows that we must all come back to
4 round out the circle of causes and effects. This is the doctrine of
5 reincarnation. We are the slaves of law, the slaves of conduct, the
6 slaves of thirst, the slaves of desire, the slaves of a thousand things.
7 Only by escaping from life can we escape from slavery to freedom.
8 God is the only one who is free. God and freedom are one and the
9 same.

12 **THE REALITY AND THE SHADOW**

13 *(Report of a lecture delivered in Oakland on March 8, 1900, with editorial*
14 *comments of the Oakland Tribune)*

16 Swami Vivekananda, the Hindu philosopher, delivered
17 another lecture in Wendte Hall last evening. His subject was: "The
18 Reality and The Shadow". He said:

19 "The soul of man is ever striving after certainty, to find
20 something that does not change. It is never satisfied. Wealth, the
21 gratification of ambition or of appetite are all changeable. Once
22 these are attained, man is not content. Religion is the science which
23 teaches us whence to satisfy this longing after the unchangeable.
24 Behind all the local colours and derivations they teach the same
25 thing--that there is reality only in the soul of man.

26 "The philosophy of Vedanta teaches that there are two
27 worlds, the external or sensory, and the internal or subjective--the
28 thought world.

29 "It posits three fundamental concepts--time, space, and
30 causation. From these is constituted Maya, the essential
31 groundwork of human thought, not the product of thought. This
32 same conclusion was arrived at a later date by the great German
33 philosopher Kant.

34 "My reality, that of nature and of God, is the same, the
35 difference is in form of manifestation. The differentiation is caused
36 by Maya. The contour of the shore may shape the ocean into bay,
37 strait, or inlet; but when this shaping force or Maya is removed, the
38 separate form disappears, the differentiation ceases, all is ocean
39 again."

40 The Swami then spoke of the roots of the theory of evolution
41 to be found in the Vedanta philosophy.

42 "All modern religions start with the idea," continued the
43 speaker, "that man was once pure, he fell, and will become pure
44 again. I do not see where they get this idea. The seat of knowledge
45 is the soul; external circumstance simply stimulates the soul;
46 knowledge is the power of the soul. Century after century it has
47 been manufacturing bodies. The various forms of incarnation are
48 merely successive chapters of the story of the life of the soul. We

1 are constantly building our bodies. The whole universe is in a state
2 of flux, of expansion and contraction, of change. Vedanta holds that
3 the soul never changes in essence, but it is modified by Maya.
4 Nature is God limited by mind. The evolution of nature is the
5 modification of the soul. The soul in essence is the same in all forms
6 of being. Its expression is modified by the body. This unity of soul,
7 this common substance of humanity, is the basis of ethics and
8 morality. In this sense all are one, and to hurt one's brother is to
9 hurt one's Self.

10 "Love is simply an expression of this infinite unity. Upon what
11 dualistic system can you explain love? One of the European
12 philosophers says that kissing is a survival of cannibalism, a kind of
13 expression of 'how good you taste'. I do not believe it.

14 "What is it we all seek? Freedom. All the effort and struggle
15 of life is for freedom. It is the march universal of races, of worlds,
16 and of systems.

17 "If we are bound, who bound us? No power can bind the
18 Infinite but Itself."

19 After the discourse an opportunity was afforded for asking
20 questions of the speaker, who devoted half an hour to answering
21 them.

23 **WAY TO SALVATION**

24 *(Report of a lecture delivered in Oakland on Monday, March*
25 *12, 1900, with editorial comments of the Oakland Enquirer)*

26
27 Wendte Hall of the First Unitarian Church was crowded last
28 evening with a large audience to hear the "Way to Salvation" from
29 the standpoint of the Hindu priest, Swami Vivekananda. This was
30 the last lecture of a series of three which the Swami has delivered.
31 He said in part:

32 One man says God is in heaven, another that God is in nature
33 and everywhere present. But when the great crisis comes, we find
34 the goal is the same. We all work on different plans, but the end is
35 not different.

36 The two great watchwords of every great religion are
37 renunciation and self-sacrifice. We all want the truth, and we know
38 that it must come, whether we want it or not. In a way we are all
39 striving for that good. And what prevents our reaching it? It is
40 ourselves. Your ancestors used to call it the devil; but it is our own
41 false self.

42 We live in slavery, and we would die if we were out of it. We
43 are like the man who lived in total darkness for ninety years and
44 when taken out into the warm sunshine of nature, prayed to be
45 taken back to his dungeon. You would not leave this old life to go
46 into a newer and greater freedom which opens out.

47 The great difficulty is to go to the heart of things. These little
48 degraded delusions of Jack So-and-So's, who thinks he has an

1 infinite soul, however small he is with his different religions. In one
2 country, all as a matter of religion, a man has many wives; in
3 another one woman has many husbands. So some men have two
4 gods, some one God, and some no God at all.

5 But salvation is in work and love. You learn something
6 thoroughly; in time you may not be able to call that thing to
7 memory. Yet it has sunk into your inner consciousness and is a part
8 of you. So as you work, whether it be good or bad, you shape your
9 future course of life. If you do good work with the idea of work--
10 work for work's sake--you will go to heaven of your idea and dream
11 of heaven.

12 The history of the world is not of its great men, of its demi-
13 gods, but it is the little islands of the sea, which build themselves to
14 great continents from fragments of the sea drift. Then the history of
15 the world is in the little acts of sacrifice performed in every
16 household. Man accepts religion because he does not wish to stand
17 on his own judgment. He takes it as the best way of getting out of a
18 bad place.

19 The salvation of man lies in the great love with which he loves
20 his God. Your wife says, "O John, I could not live without you." Some
21 men when they lose their money have to be sent to the asylum. Do
22 you feel that way about your God? When you can give up money,
23 friends, fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, all that is in the
24 world and only pray to God that He grant you something of His
25 love, then you have found salvation.

28 **THE PEOPLE OF INDIA**

29 *(Report of a lecture delivered in Oakland on Monday, March*
30 *19, 1900, with editorial comments of the Oakland Enquirer)*

32 The lecture which the Swami Vivekananda gave Monday
33 night in his new course on "The People of India", was interesting,
34 not only for what he had to relate of the people of that country, but
35 for the insight into their mental attitude and prejudices which the
36 speaker gave without really meaning it. It is apparent that the
37 Swami, educated and intellectual man that he is, is no admirer of
38 Western civilisation. He has evidently been a good deal embittered
39 by the talk about child widows, the oppression of women, and other
40 barbarisms alleged against the people of India, and is somewhat
41 inclined to resort to the *tu quoque* in reply.

42 In commencing his talk, he gave his hearers an idea of the
43 racial characteristics of the people. He said that the bond of unity in
44 India, as in other countries of Asia, is not language or race, but
45 religion. In Europe the race makes the nation, but in Asia people of
46 diverse origin and different tongues become one nation if they have
47 the same religion. The people of Northern India are divided into
48 four great classes, while in Southern India the languages are so
49 entirely different from those of Northern India that there is no

1 kinship whatever. The people of Northern India belong to the great
2 Aryan race, to which all of the people of Europe, except the
3 Basques in the Pyrennees, and the Finns, are supposed to belong.
4 The Southern India people belong to the same race as the ancient
5 Egyptians and the Semites. To illustrate the difficulties of learning
6 one another's languages in India, the Swami said that when he had
7 occasion to go into Southern India, he always talked with the native
8 people in English, unless they belonged to the select few who could
9 speak Sanskrit.

10 A good deal of the lecture was taken up in a discussion of the
11 caste system which the Swami characterised by saying that it had
12 its bad side, but that its benefits outweighed its disadvantages. In
13 brief, this caste system had grown by the practice of the son always
14 following the business of the father. In course of time the
15 community came thus to be divided into a series of classes, each
16 held rigidly within its own boundaries. But while this divided the
17 people, it also united them, because all the members of a caste
18 were bound to help their fellows in case of need. And as no man
19 could rise out of his caste, the Hindus have no such struggles for
20 social or personal supremacy as embitter the people of other
21 countries.

22 The worst feature of the caste is that it suppresses
23 competition, and the checking of competition has really been the
24 cause of the political downfall of India and its conquest by foreign
25 races.

26 Respecting the much-discussed subject of marriage, the
27 Hindus are socialistic and see nothing good in matches being made
28 by a couple of young people who might be attached to one another,
29 without regard to the welfare of the community, which is more
30 important than that of any two persons. "Because I love Jennie and
31 Jennie loves me", said the Swami, "is no reason why we should be
32 married."

33 He denied that the condition of the child widows is as bad as
34 has been represented, saying that in India the position of widows in
35 general is one of a great deal of influence, because a large part of
36 the property in the country is held by widows. In fact, so enviable is
37 the position of widows that a woman or a man either might almost
38 pray to be made a widow.

39 The child widows, or women who have been betrothed to
40 children who died before marriage, might be pitied if a marriage
41 were the only real object in life, but, according to the Hindu way of
42 thinking, marriage is rather a duty than a privilege, and the denial
43 of the right of child widows to marry is no particular hardship.

46 **I AM THAT I AM**

47 *(Notes of a lecture give in San Francisco on March 20, 1900)*

48 The subject tonight is man, man in contrast with nature. For a
49 long time the word "nature" was used almost exclusively to denote

1 external phenomena. These phenomena were found to behave
2 methodically; and they often repeated themselves: that which had
3 happened in the past happened again--nothing happened only once.
4 Thus it was concluded that nature was uniform. Uniformity is
5 closely associated with the idea of nature; without it natural
6 phenomena cannot be understood. This uniformity is the basis of
7 what we call law.

8 Gradually the word "nature" and the idea of uniformity came
9 to be applied also to internal phenomena, the phenomena of life and
10 mind. All that is differentiated is nature. Nature is the quality of the
11 plant, the quality of the animal, and the quality of man. Man's life
12 behaves according to definite methods; so does his mind. Thoughts
13 do not just happen, there is a certain method in their rise, existence
14 and fall. In other words, just as external phenomena are bound by
15 law, internal phenomena, that is to say, the life and mind of man,
16 are also bound by law.

17 When we consider law in relation to man's mind and
18 existence, it is at once obvious that there can be no such thing as
19 free will and free existence. We know how animal nature is wholly
20 regulated by law. The animal does not appear to exercise any free
21 will. The same is true of man; human nature also is bound by law.
22 The law governing functions of the human mind is called the law of
23 Karma.

24 Nobody has ever seen anything produced out of nothing; if
25 anything arises in the mind, that also must have been produced
26 from something. When we speak of free will, we mean the will is
27 not caused by anything. But that cannot be true, the will is caused;
28 and since it is caused, it cannot be free--it is bound by law. That I
29 am willing to talk to you and you come to listen to me, that is law.
30 Everything that I do or think or feel, every part of my conduct or
31 behaviour, my every movement--all is caused and therefore not free.
32 This regulation of our life and mind--that is the law of Karma.

33 If such a doctrine had been introduced in olden times into a
34 Western community, it would have produced a tremendous
35 commotion. The Western man does not want to think his mind is
36 governed by law. In India it was accepted as soon as it was
37 propounded by the most ancient Indian system of philosophy. There
38 is no such thing as freedom of the mind; it cannot be. Why did not
39 this teaching create any disturbance in the Indian mind? India
40 received it calmly; that is the speciality of Indian thought, wherein
41 it differs from every other thought in the world.

42 The external and internal natures are not two different
43 things; they are really one. Nature is the sum total of all
44 phenomena. "Nature" means all that is, all that moves. We make a
45 tremendous distinction between matter and mind; we think that the
46 mind is entirely different from matter. Actually, they are but one
47 nature, half of which is continually acting on the other half. Matter
48 is pressing upon the mind in the form of various sensations. These
49 sensations are nothing but force. The force from the outside evokes
50 the force within. From the will to respond to or get away from the
51 outer force, the inner force becomes what we call thought.

1 Both matter and mind are really nothing but forces; and if you
2 analyse them far enough, you will find that at root they are one. The
3 very fact that the external force can somehow evoke the internal
4 force shows that somewhere they join each other--they must be
5 continuous and, therefore, basically the same force. When you get
6 to the root of things, they become simple and general. Since the
7 same force appears in one form as matter and in another form as
8 mind, there is no reason to think matter and mind are different.
9 Mind is changed into matter, matter is changed into mind. Thought
10 force becomes nerve force, muscular force; muscular and nerve
11 force become thought force. Nature is all this force, whether
12 expressed as matter or mind.

13 The difference between the subtlest mind and the grossest
14 matter is only one of degree. Therefore the whole universe may be
15 called either mind or matter, it does not matter which. You may call
16 the mind refined matter, or the body concretised mind; it makes
17 little difference by which name you call which. All the troubles
18 arising from the conflict between materialism and spirituality are
19 due to wrong thinking. Actually, there is no difference between the
20 two. I and the lowest pig differ only in degree. It is less manifested,
21 I am more. Sometimes I am worse, the pig is better.

22 Nor is it any use discussing which comes first--mind or
23 matter. Is the mind first, out of which matter has come? Or is
24 matter first, out of which the mind has come? Many of the
25 philosophical arguments proceed from these futile questions. It is
26 like asking whether the egg or the hen is first. Both are first, and
27 both last--mind and matter, matter and mind. If I say matter exists
28 first and matter, growing finer and finer, becomes mind, then I must
29 admit that before matter there must have been mind. Otherwise,
30 where did matter come from? Matter precedes mind, mind
31 precedes matter. It is the hen and the egg question all through.

32 The whole of nature is bound by the law of causation and is in
33 time and space. We cannot see anything outside of space, yet we do
34 not know space. We cannot perceive anything outside of time, yet
35 we do not know time. We cannot understand anything except in
36 terms of causality, yet we do not know what causation is. These
37 three things--time, space, and causality--are in and through every
38 phenomena, but they are not phenomena. They are as it were the
39 forms or moulds in which everything must be cast before it can be
40 apprehended. Matter is substance plus time, space, and causation.
41 Mind is substance plus time, space and causation.

42 This fact can be expressed in another way. Everything is
43 substance plus name and form. Name and form come and go, but
44 substance remains ever the same. Substance, form, and name make
45 this pitcher. When it is broken, you do not call it pitcher any more,
46 nor do you see its pitcher form. Its name and form vanish, but its
47 substance remains. All the differentiation in substance is made by
48 name and form. There are not real, because they vanish. What we
49 call nature is not the substance, unchanging and indestructible.
50 Nature is time, space and causation. Nature is name and form.
51 Nature is Maya. Maya means name and form, into which everything
52 is cast. Maya is not real. We could not destroy it or change it if it

1 were real. The substance is the noumenon, Maya is phenomena.
2 There is the real "me" which nothing can destroy, and there is the
3 phenomenal "me" which is continually changing and disappearing.

4 The fact is, everything existing has two aspects. One is
5 noumenal, unchanging and indestructible; the other is phenomenal,
6 changing and destructible. Man in his true nature is substance,
7 soul, spirit. This soul, this spirit, never changes, is never destroyed;
8 but it appears to be clothed with a form and to have a name
9 associated with it. This form and name are not immutable or
10 indestructible; they continually change and are destroyed.

11 Yet men foolishly seek immortality in this changeable aspect,
12 in the body and mind--they want to have an eternal body. I do not
13 want that kind of immortality.

14 What is the relation between me and nature? In so far as
15 nature stands for name and form or for time, space, and causality, I
16 am not part of nature, because I am free, I am immortal, I am
17 unchanging and infinite. The question does not arise whether I have
18 free will or not; I am beyond any will at all. Wherever there is will,
19 it is never free. There is no freedom of will whatever. There is
20 freedom of that which becomes will when name and form get hold
21 of it, making it their slave. That substance--the soul--as it were
22 moulds itself, as it were throws itself into the cast of name and
23 form, and immediately becomes bound, whereas it was free before.
24 And yet its original nature is still there. That is why it says, "I am
25 free; in spite of all this bondage, I am free." And it never forgets
26 this.

27 But when the soul has become the will, it is no more really
28 free. Nature pulls the strings, and it has to dance as nature wants it
29 to. Thus have you and I danced throughout the years. All the things
30 that we see, do, feel, know, all our thoughts and actions, are
31 nothing but dancing to the dictates of nature. There has been, and
32 there is, no freedom in any of this. From the lowest to the highest,
33 all thoughts and actions are bound by law, and none of these
34 pertain to our real Self.

35 My true Self is beyond all law. Be in tune with slavery, with
36 nature, and you live under law, you are happy under law. But the
37 more you obey nature and its dictates, the more bound you become;
38 the more in harmony with ignorance you are, the more you are at
39 the beck and call of everything in the universe. Is this harmony with
40 nature, this obedience to law, in accord with the true nature and
41 destiny of man? What mineral ever quarrelled with and disputed
42 any law? What tree or plant ever defied any law? This table is in
43 harmony with nature, with law; but a table it remains always, it
44 does not become any better. Man begins to struggle and fight
45 against nature. He makes many mistakes, he suffers. But eventually
46 he conquers nature and realises his freedom. When he is free,
47 nature becomes his slave.

48 The awakening of the soul to its bondage and its effort to
49 stand up and assert itself--this is called life. Success in this struggle
50 is called evolution. The eventual triumph, when all the slavery is
51 blown away, is called salvation, Nirvana, freedom. Everything in the

1 universe is struggling for liberty. When I am bound by nature, by
2 name and form, by time, space and causality, I do not know what I
3 truly am. But even in this bondage my real Self is not completely
4 lost. I strain against the bonds; one by one they break, and I
5 become conscious of my innate grandeur. Then comes complete
6 liberation. I attain to the clearest and fullest consciousness of
7 myself-I know that I am the infinite spirit, the master of nature, not
8 its slave. Beyond all differentiation and combination, beyond space,
9 time and causation, I am that I am.

11 **UNITY**

12 *(Notes of a lecture delivered at the Vedanta Society, New*
13 *York, in June, 1900)*

14 The different sectarian systems of India all radiate from one
15 central idea of unity or dualism.

16 They are all under Vedanta, all interpreted by it. Their final
17 essence is the teaching of unity. This, which we see as many, is God.
18 We perceive matter, the world, manifold sensation. Yet there is but
19 one existence.

20 These various names mark only differences of degree in the
21 expression of that One. The worm of today is the God of tomorrow.
22 These distinctions which we do love are all parts of one infinite fact,
23 and only differ in the degree of expression. That one infinite fact is
24 the attainment of freedom.

25 However mistaken we may be as to the method, all our
26 struggle is really for freedom. We seek neither misery nor
27 happiness, but freedom. This one aim is the secret of the insatiable
28 thirst of man. Man's thirst, says the Hindu, man's thirst, says the
29 Buddhist, is a burning, unquenchable thirst for more and more. You
30 Americans are always looking for more pleasure, more enjoyment.
31 You cannot be satisfied, true; but at bottom what you seek is
32 freedom.

33 This vastness of his desire is really the sign of man's own
34 infinitude. It is because he is infinite, that he can only be satisfied
35 when his desire is infinite and its fulfilment infinite.

36 What then can satisfy man? Not gold. Not enjoyment. Not
37 beauty. One Infinite alone can satisfy him, and that Infinite is
38 Himself. When he realises this, then alone comes freedom.

39 "This flute, with the sense-organs as its keyholes,
40 With all its sensations, perceptions, and song,
41 Is singing only one thing. It longs to go back to the
42 wood whence it was cut!"

43 "Deliver thou thyself by thyself!

44 Ah, do not let thyself sink!

45 For thou art thyself thy greatest friend.

46 And thou thyself thy greatest enemy."

1 Who can help the Infinite? Even the hand that comes to you
2 through the darkness will have to be your own.

3 Fear and desire are the two causes of all this, and who
4 creates them? We ourselves. Our lives are but a passing from
5 dream to dream. Man the infinite dreamer, dreaming finite dreams!

6 Oh, the blessedness of it, that nothing external can be
7 eternal! They little know what they mean, whose hearts quake
8 when they hear that nothing in this relative world can be eternal.

9 I am the infinite blue sky. Over me pass these clouds of
10 various colours, remain a moment, and vanish. I am the same
11 eternal blue. I am the witness, the same eternal witness of all. I see,
12 therefore nature exists. I do not see, therefore she does not. Not
13 one of us could see or speak if this infinite unity were broken for a
14 moment.

16 **THE WORSHIP OF THE DIVINE MOTHER**

17 *(Fragmentary notes taken on a Sunday afternoon in New York*
18 *in June, 1900)*

20 From the tribal or clan-God, man arrives, in every religion, at
21 the sum, the God of gods.

22 Confucius alone has expressed the one eternal idea of ethics.
23 "Manu Deva" was transformed into Ahriman. In India, the
24 mythological expression was suppressed; but the idea remained. In
25 an old Veda is found the Mantra, "I am the empress of all that lives,
26 the power in everything."

27 Mother-worship is a distinct philosophy in itself. Power is the
28 first of our ideas. It impinges upon man at every step; power felt
29 within is the soul; without, nature. And the battle between the two
30 makes human life. All that we know or feel is but the resultant of
31 these two forces. Man saw that the sun shines on the good and evil
32 alike. Here was a new idea of God, as the Universal Power behind
33 all--the Mother-idea was born.

34 Activity, according to Sankhya, belongs to Prakriti, to nature,
35 not to Purusha or soul. Of all feminine types in India, the mother is
36 pre-eminent. The mother stands by her child through everything.
37 Wife and children may desert a man, but his mother never! Mother,
38 again, is the impartial energy of the universe, because of the
39 colourless love that asks not, desires not, cares not for the evil in
40 her child, but loves him the more. And today Mother-worship is the
41 worship of all the highest classes amongst the Hindus.

42 The goal can only be described as something not yet attained.
43 Here, there is no goal. This world is all alike the play of Mother. But
44 we forget this. Even misery can be enjoyed when there is no
45 selfishness, when we have become the witness of our own lives. The
46 thinker of this philosophy has been struck by the idea that one
47 *power* is behind all phenomena. In our thought of God, there is
48 human limitation, personality: with Shakti comes the idea of One

1 Universal Power. "I stretch the bow of Rudra when He desires to
2 kill", says Shakti. The Upanisads did not develop this thought; for
3 Vedanta does not care for the God-idea. But in the Gita comes the
4 significant saying to Arjuna, "I am the real, and I am the unreal. I
5 bring good, and I bring evil."

6 Again the idea slept. Later came the new philosophy. This
7 universe is a composite fact of good and evil; and one Power must
8 be manifesting through both. "A lame one-legged universe makes
9 only a lame one-legged God." And this, in the end, lands us in want
10 of sympathy and makes us brutal. The ethics built upon such a
11 concept is an ethics of brutality. The saint hates the sinner, and the
12 sinner struggles against the saint. Yet even this leads onward. For
13 finally the wicked self-sufficient mind will die, crushed under
14 repeated blows; and then we shall awake and know the Mother.

15 Eternal, unquestioning self-surrender to Mother alone can
16 give us peace. Love Her for Herself, without fear or favour. Love
17 Her because you are Her child. See Her in all, good and bad alike.
18 Then alone will come "Sameness" and Bliss Eternal that is Mother
19 Herself when we realise Her thus. Until then, misery will pursue us.
20 Only resting in Mother are we safe.

23 **THE ESSENCE OF RELIGION**

24 *(Report of a lecture delivered in America)*

26 In France the "rights of man" was long a watchword of the
27 race; in America the rights of women still beseech the public ear; in
28 India we have concerned ourselves always with the rights of Gods.

29 The Vedanta includes all sects. We have a peculiar idea in
30 India. Suppose I had a child; I should not teach him any religion,
31 but the practice of concentrating his mind; and just one line of
32 prayer--not prayer in your sense, but this: "I meditate on Him who
33 is the Creator of the universe; may He enlighten my mind." Then,
34 when old enough, he goes about hearing the different philosophies
35 and teachings, till he finds that which seems the truth to him. He
36 then becomes the Shishya or disciple of the Guru (teacher) who is
37 teaching this truth. He may choose to worship Christ or Buddha or
38 Mohammed: we recognise the rights of each of these, and the right
39 of all souls to their own Ishta or chosen way. It is, therefore, quite
40 possible for my son to be a Buddhist, my wife to be a Christian, and
41 myself a Mohammedan at one and the same time with absolute
42 freedom from friction.

43 We are all glad to remember that all roads lead to God; and
44 that the reformation of the world does not depend upon all seeing
45 God through our eyes. Our fundamental idea is that your doctrine
46 cannot be mine, nor mine yours. I am my own sect. It is true that
47 we have created a system of religion in India which we believe to
48 be the only rational religious system extant; but our belief in its

1 rationality rests upon its all-inclusion of the searchers after God; its
2 absolute charity towards all forms of worship, and its eternal
3 receptivity of those ideas trending towards the evolution of God in
4 the universe. We admit the imperfection of our system, because the
5 reality must be beyond all system; and in this admission lies the
6 portent and promise of an eternal growth. Sects, ceremonies, and
7 books, so far as they are the means of a man's realising his own
8 nature, are all right; when he has realised that, he gives up
9 everything. "I reject the Vedas!" is the last word of the Vedanta
10 philosophy. Ritual, hymns, and scriptures, through which he has
11 travelled to freedom, vanish for him. "So'ham, So'ham"--I am He, I
12 am He--bursts from his lips, and to say "Thou" to God is blasphemy,
13 for he is "one with the Father".

14 Personally, I take as much of the Vedas as agree with reason.
15 Parts of the Vedas are apparently contradictory. They are not
16 considered as inspired in the Western sense of the word, but as the
17 sum total of the knowledge of God, omniscience, which we possess.
18 But to say that only those books which we call the Vedas contain
19 this knowledge is mere sophistry. We know it is shared in varying
20 degrees by the scriptures of all sects. Manus says, that part only of
21 the Vedas which agrees with reason is Vedas; and many of our
22 philosophers have taken this view. Of all the scriptures of the world,
23 it is the Vedas alone which declare that the study of the Vedas is
24 secondary.

25 The real study is that "by which we realise the
26 Unchangeable", and that is neither by reading, nor believing, nor
27 reasoning, but by superconscious perception and Samadhi. When a
28 man has reached that perfect state, he is of the same nature as the
29 Personal God: "I and my Father are one." He knows himself one
30 with Brahman, the Absolute, and projects himself as does the
31 Personal God. The Personal God is the Absolute looked at through
32 the haze of Maya--ignorance.

33 When we approach Him with the five senses, we can only see
34 Him as the Personal God. The idea is that the Self cannot be
35 objectified. How can the knower know himself? But he can cast a
36 shadow, as it were, and the highest form of that shadow, that
37 attempt of objectifying one's Self is the Personal God. The Self is
38 the eternal subject, and we are eternally struggling to objectify that
39 Self, and out of that struggle has come this phenomenon of the
40 universe: that which we call matter. But these are weak attempts,
41 and the highest objectification of the Self, possible to us, is the
42 Personal God.

43 "An honest God's the noblest work of man", said one of your
44 Western thinkers. God is as man is. No man can see God but
45 through these human manifestations. Talk as you may, try as you
46 may, you cannot think of God but as a man; and as you are, He is.
47 An ignorant man was asked to make an image of the God Shiva; and
48 after many days of hard struggle he succeeded only in
49 manufacturing the image of a monkey! So, when we try to think of
50 God as He is in His absolute perfection, we meet with miserable
51 failure, because we are limited and bound by our present
52 constitution to see God as man. If the buffaloes desire to worship

1 God, they, in keeping with their own nature, will see Him as a huge
2 buffalo; if a fish wishes to worship God, its concept of Him would
3 inevitably be a big fish; and man must think of Him as man.
4 Suppose man, the buffalo, and the fish represent so many different
5 vessels; that these vessels all go to the sea of God to be filled, each
6 according to its shape and capacity. In man the water takes the
7 shape of man; in the buffalo the shape of the buffalo; and in the fish
8 the shape of the fish; but in each of these vessels is the same water
9 of the sea of God.

10 Two kinds of mind do not worship God as man--the human
11 brute who has no religion, and the Paramahansa who has
12 transcended the limits of his own human nature.

13 To him all nature has become his own Self; he alone can
14 worship God as He is. The human brute does not worship because
15 of his ignorance, and the Jivanmuktas (free souls) do not worship
16 because they have realised God in themselves. "So'ham, So'ham"--I
17 am He, I am He--they say; and how shall they worship themselves?

18 I will tell you a little story. There was once a baby lion left by
19 its dying mother among some sheep. The sheep fed it and gave it
20 shelter. The lion grew apace and said "Ba-a-a" when the sheep said
21 "Ba-a-a". One day another lion came by. "What do you do here?"
22 said the second lion in astonishment: for he heard the sheep-lion
23 bleating with the rest. "Ba-a-a," said the other. "I am a little sheep, I
24 am a little sheep, I am frightened." "Nonsense!" roared the first
25 lion, "come with me; I will show you." And he took him to the side of
26 a smooth stream and showed him that which was reflected therein.
27 "You are a lion; look at me, look at the sheep, look at yourself." And
28 the sheep-lion looked, and then he said, "Ba-a-a, I do not look like
29 the sheep--it is true, I am a lion!" and with that he roared a roar
30 that shook the hills to their depths.

31 That is it. We are lions in sheep's clothing of habit, we are
32 hypnotised into weakness by our surroundings. And the province of
33 Vedanta is the self-dehypnotisation. The goal to be reached is
34 freedom. I disagree with the idea that freedom is obedience to the
35 laws of nature. I do not understand what that means. According to
36 the history of human progress, it is disobedience to nature that has
37 constituted that progress. It may be said that the conquest of lower
38 laws was through the higher, but even there the conquering mind
39 was still seeking freedom; as soon as it found the struggle was
40 through law, it wished to conquer that also. So the ideal is always
41 freedom. The trees never disobey law. I never saw a cow steal. An
42 oyster never told a lie. Yet these are not greater than man.

43 Obedience to law, in the last issue, would make of us simply
44 matter--either in society, or in politics, or religion. This life is a
45 tremendous assertion of freedom; excess of laws means death. No
46 nation possesses so many laws as the Hindus, and the result is the
47 national death. But the Hindus had one peculiar idea--they never
48 made any doctrines or dogmas in religion; and the latter has had
49 the greatest growth. Therein are we practical--wherein you are
50 impractical--in our religion.

51 A few men come together in America and say, "We will have a

1 stock company"; in five minutes it is done. In India twenty men may
2 discuss a stock company for as many weeks, and it may not be
3 formed; but if one believes that by holding up his hands in air for
4 forty years he will attain wisdom, it will be done! So we are
5 practical in ours, you in your way.

6 But the way of all ways to realisation is love. When one loves
7 the Lord, the whole universe becomes dear to one, because it is all
8 His. "Everything is His, and He is my Lover; I love Him", says the
9 Bhakta. In this way everything becomes sacred to the Bhakta,
10 because all things are His. How, then, may we hurt any one? How,
11 then, may we not love another? With the love of God will come, as
12 its effect, the love of every one in the long run. The nearer we
13 approach God, the more do we begin to see that all things abide in
14 Him, our heart will become a perennial fountain of love. Man is
15 transformed in the presence of this Light of Love and realises at
16 last the beautiful and inspiring truth that Love, Lover, and the
17 Beloved are really one.

SAYINGS AND UTTERANCES

1. "Did Buddha teach that the many was real and the ego unreal, while orthodox Hinduism regards the One as the real, and the many as unreal?" the Swami was asked. "Yes", answered the Swami. "And what Ramakrishna Paramahansa and I have added to this is, that the Many and the One are the same Reality, perceived by the same mind at different times and in different attitudes."

2. "Remember!" he said once to a disciple, "Remember! the message of India is always *"Not the soul for nature, but nature for the soul!"*

3. "What the world wants today is twenty men and women who can dare to stand in the street yonder, and say that they possess nothing but God. Who will go? Why should one fear? If this is true, what else could matter? *If it is not true, what do our lives matter!"*

4. "Oh, how calm would be the work of one who really understood the divinity of man! For such, there is nothing to do, save to open men's eyes. All the rest does itself."

5. "He (Shri Ramakrishna) was contented simply to live that great life and to leave it to others to find the explanation!"

6. "Plans! Plans!" Swami Vivekananda explained in indignation, when one of his disciples had offered him some piece of worldly wisdom. "That is why . . . Western people can never create a religion! If any of you ever did, it was only a few Catholic saints who had no plans. Religion was never preached by planners!"

7. "Social life in the West is like a peal of laughter; but underneath, it is a wail. It ends in a sob. The fun and frivolity are all on the surface: really it is full of tragic intensity. Now here, it is sad and gloomy on the outside, but underneath are carelessness and merriment.

"We have a theory that the universe is God's manifestation of Himself just for fun, that the Incarnations came and lived here 'just for fun'. Play, it was all play. Why was Christ crucified? It was mere play. And so of life. Just play with the Lord. Say, "It is all play, it is all play". Do *you* do anything?"

8. "I am persuaded that a leader is not made in one life. He has to be born for it. For the difficulty is not in organisation and making plans; the test, the real test, of the leader, lies in holding widely different people together along the line of their common sympathies. And this can only be done unconsciously, never by trying."

9. In explanation of Plato's doctrine of Ideas, Swamiji said, "And so you see, all this is but a feeble manifestation of the great ideas, which alone, are real and perfect. Somewhere is an ideal for you, and here is an attempt to manifest it! The attempt falls short still in many ways. Still, go on! You will interpret the ideal some

1 day."

2 10. Answering the remark of a disciple who felt that it would
3 be better for her to come back to this life again and again and help
4 the causes that were of interest to her instead of striving for
5 personal salvation with a deep longing to get out of life, the Swami
6 retorted quickly: "That's because you cannot overcome the idea of
7 progress. But things do not grow better. They remain as they are;
8 and we grow better by the changes we make in them."

9 11. It was in Almora that a certain elderly man, with a face
10 full of amiable weakness, came and put him a question about
11 Karma. What were they to do, he asked, whose Karma it was to see
12 the strong oppress the weak? The Swami turned on him in
13 surprised indignation. "Why, thrash the strong, of course!" he said,
14 "You forget your own part in this Karma: Yours is always the right to
15 rebel!"

16 12. "Ought one to seek an opportunity of death in defense of
17 right, or ought one to take the lesson of the Gita and learn never to
18 react?" the Swami was asked. "I am for no reaction", said the
19 Swami, speaking slowly and with a long pause. Then he added "--for
20 Sannyasins. Self-defense for the householder!"

21 13. "It is a mistake to hold that with all men pleasure is the
22 motive. Quite as many are born to seek after pain. Let us worship
23 the Terror for Its own sake."

24 14. "Ramakrishna Paramahansa was the only man who ever
25 had the courage to say that we must speak to all men in their own
26 language!"

27 15. "How I used to hate Kali!" he said, referring to his own
28 days of doubts in accepting the Kali ideal, "And all Her ways! That
29 was the ground of my six years' fight--that I would not accept Her.
30 But I had to accept Her at last! Ramakrishna Paramahansa
31 dedicated me to Her, and now I believe that She guides me in
32 everything I do, and does with me what She will. . . . Yet I fought so
33 long! I loved him, you see, and that was what held me. I saw his
34 marvellous purity. . . . I felt his wonderful love. . . . His greatness
35 had not dawned on me then. All that came afterwards when I had
36 given in. At that time I thought him a brain-sick baby, always seeing
37 visions and the rest. I hated it. And then I, too, had to accept Her!

38 "No, the thing that made me do it is a secret that will die with
39 me. I had great misfortunes at the time. . . . It was an
40 opportunity. . . . She made a slave of me. Those were the very
41 words: 'a slave of you'. And Ramakrishna Paramahansa made me
42 over to Her. . . . Strange! He lived only two years after doing that,
43 and most of the time he was suffering. Not more than six months
44 did he keep his own health and brightness.

45 "Guru Nanak was like that, you know, looking for the one
46 disciple to whom he would give his power. And he passed over all
47 his own family--his children were as nothing to him--till he came
48 upon the boy to whom he gave it; and then he could die.

49 "The future, you say, will call Ramakrishna Paramahansa an

1 Incarnation of Kali? Yes, I think there's no doubt that She worked
2 up the body of Ramakrishna for Her own ends.

3 "You see, I cannot but believe that there is somewhere a
4 great Power that thinks of Herself as feminine, and called Kali and
5 Mother. . . . And I believe in Brahman too. . . . But is it not always
6 like that? Is it not the multitude of cells in the body that make up
7 the personality, the many brain-centres, not the one, that produce
8 consciousness? . . . Unity in complexity! Just so! And why should it
9 be different with Brahman? It *is* Brahman. It *is* the One. And yet--
10 and yet--it is the gods too!"

11 16. "The older I grow, the more everything seems to me to lie
12 in manliness. This is my new gospel."

13 17. Referring to some European reference to cannibalism, as
14 if it were a normal part of life in some societies, the Swami
15 remarked, "That is not true! No nation ever ate human flesh, save
16 as a religious sacrifice, or in war, out of revenge. Don't you see?
17 That's not the way of gregarious animals! It would cut at the root of
18 social life!"

19 18. "Sex-love and creation! These are at the root of most
20 religions. And these in India are called Vaishnavism, and in the
21 West Christianity. How few have dared to worship Death or Kali!
22 Let us worship Death! Let us embrace the Terrible, because it is
23 terrible, not asking that it be toned down. Let us take misery for
24 misery's own sake!"

25 19. "The three cycles of Buddhism were five hundred years of
26 the Law, five hundred years of images, and five hundred years of
27 Tantras. You must not imagine that there was ever a religion in
28 India called Buddhism with temples and priests of its own order!
29 Nothing of the sort. It was always within Hinduism. Only at one
30 time the influence of Buddha was paramount, and this made the
31 nation monastic."

32 20. "The conservative's whole ideal is *submission* . Your ideal
33 is struggle. Consequently it is *we* who enjoy the life, and never
34 you! You are always striving to change yours to something better;
35 and before a millionth part of the change is carried out, you die.
36 The Western ideal is to be doing; the Eastern to be suffering. The
37 perfect life would be a wonderful harmony doing and suffering. But
38 that can never be.

39 "In our system it is accepted that a man cannot have all he
40 desires. Life is subjected to many restraints. This is ugly, yet it
41 brings out points of light and strength. Our liberals see only the
42 ugliness and try to throw it off. But they substitute something quite
43 as bad; and the new custom takes as long as the old for us to work
44 to its centres of strength.

45 "Will is not strengthened by change. It is weakened and
46 enslaved by it. But we must be always absorbing. Will grows
47 stronger by absorption. And consciously or unconsciously, will is the
48 one thing in the world that we admire. Suttee is great in the eyes of
49 the whole world, because of the will that it manifests.

1 "It is selfishness that we must seek to eliminate. I find that
2 whenever I have made a mistake in my life, it has always been
3 because *self* entered into the calculation. Where self has not been
4 involved, my judgment has gone straight to the mark.

5 "Without self, there would have been no religious system. If
6 man had not wanted anything for himself, do you think he would
7 have had all this praying and worship? Why! he would never have
8 thought of God at all, except perhaps for a little praise now and
9 then, at the sight of a beautiful landscape or something. And that is
10 the only attitude there ought to be. All praise and thanks. If only we
11 were rid of self!

12 "You are quite wrong when you think that fighting is a sign of
13 growth. It is not so at all. Absorption is the sign. Hinduism is a very
14 genius of absorption. We have never cared for fighting. Of course
15 we could strike a blow now and then, in defense of our homes! That
16 was right. But we never cared for fighting for its own sake. Every
17 one had to learn that. So let these races of newcomers whirl on!
18 They'll all be taken into Hinduism in the end!"

19 21. "The totality of all souls, not the human alone, is the
20 Personal God. The will of the Totality nothing can resist. It is what
21 we know as law. And this is what we mean by Shiva and Kali and so
22 on."

23 22. "Worship the Terrible! Worship Death! All else is vain. All
24 struggle is vain. That is the last lesson. Yet this is not the coward's
25 love of death, not the love of the weak or the suicide. It is the
26 welcome of the strong man who has sounded everything to its
27 depths and *knows* that there is no alternative."

28 23. "I disagree with all those who are giving their
29 superstitions back to my people. Like the Egyptologist's interest in
30 Egypt, it is easy to feel an interest in India that is purely selfish.
31 One may desire to see again the India of one's books, one's studies,
32 one's dreams. *My* hope is to see again the strong points of that
33 India, reinforced by the strong points of this age, only in a natural
34 way. The new stage of things must be a *growth* from within.

35 "So I preach only the Upanishads. If you look, you will find
36 that I have never quoted anything but the Upanishads. And of the
37 Upanishads, it is only that One idea, strength. The quintessence of
38 the Vedas and Vedanta and all lies in that one word. Buddha's
39 teaching was non-resistance, or non-injury. But I think this is a
40 better way of teaching the same thing. For behind that non-injury
41 lay a dreadful weakness. It is weakness that conceives the idea of
42 resistance. I do not think of punishing or escaping from a drop of
43 sea-spray. It is nothing to me. Yet to the mosquito it would be
44 serious. Now I would make all injury like that. Strength and
45 fearlessness. My own ideal is that saint whom they killed in the
46 Mutiny and who broke his silence, when stabbed to the heart, to
47 say, "And thou also art He!"

48 "But you may ask, 'What is the place of Ramakrishna in this
49 scheme?'

50 "He is the method, that wonderful unconscious method! He

1 did not understand himself. He knew nothing of England or the
2 English, save that they were queer folk from over the sea. But he
3 lived that great life: and I read the meaning. Never a word of
4 condemnation for any! Once I had been attacking one of our sects
5 of diabolists. I had been raving on for three hours, and he had
6 listened quietly. 'Well, well!' said the old man as I finished, 'perhaps
7 every house may have a backdoor. Who knows?'

8 "Hitherto the great fault of our Indian religion has lain in its
9 knowing only two words: renunciation and Mukti. Only Mukti here!
10 Nothing for the householder!

11 "But these are the very people whom I want to help. For are
12 not all souls of the same quality? Is not the goal of all the same?

13 "And so strength must come to the nation through education."

14 24. The Puranas, the Swami considered, to be the effort of
15 Hinduism to bring lofty ideas to the door of the masses. There had
16 been only one mind in India that had foreseen this need, that of
17 Krishna, probably the greatest man who ever lived.

18 The Swami said, "Thus is created a religion that ends in the
19 worship of Vishnu, as the preservation and enjoyment of life,
20 leading to the realisation of God. Our last movement, Chaitanyaism,
21 you remember, was for enjoyment. At the same time Jainism
22 represents the other extreme, the slow destruction of the body by
23 self-torture. Hence Buddhism, you see, is reformed Jainism; and
24 this is the real meaning of Buddha's leaving the company of the five
25 ascetics. In India, in every age, there is a cycle of sects which
26 represents every gradation of physical practice, from the extreme
27 of self-torture to the extreme of excess. And during the same period
28 will always be developed a metaphysical cycle, which represents
29 the realisation of God as taking place by every gradation of means,
30 from that of using the senses as an instrument to that of the
31 annihilation of the senses. Thus Hinduism always consists, as it
32 were, of two counter-spirals, completing each other, round a single
33 axis.

34 "Yes!" Vaishnavism says, 'it is all right--this tremendous love
35 for father, for mother, for brother, husband, or child! It is all right, if
36 only you will think that Krishna is the child, and when you give him
37 food, that you are feeding Krishna!' This was the cry of Chaitanya,
38 'Worship God *through* the senses', as against the Vedantic cry,
39 'Control the senses! suppress the senses!'

40 "I see that India is a young and living organism. Europe is
41 young and living. Neither has arrived at such a stage of
42 development that we can safely criticise its institutions. They are
43 two great experiments, neither of which is yet complete. In India
44 we have social communism, with the light of Advaita--that is,
45 spiritual individualism--playing on and around it; in Europe you are
46 socially individualists, but your thought is dualistic, which is
47 spiritual communism. Thus the one consists of socialist institutions
48 hedged in by individualist thought, while the other is made up of
49 individualist institutions within the hedge of communistic thought.

50 "Now we must help the Indian experiment as it is. Movements

1 which do not attempt to help things as they are, are, from that point
2 of view, no good. In Europe, for instance, I respect marriage as
3 highly as non-marriage. Never forget that a man is made great and
4 perfect as much by his faults as by his virtues. So we must not seek
5 to rob a nation of its character, even if it could be proved that the
6 character was all faults."

7 25. "You may always say that the image is God. The error you
8 have to avoid is to think God is the image."

9 26. The Swami was appealed to on one occasion to condemn
10 the fetishism of the Hottentot. "I do not know", he answered, "what
11 fetishism is!" Then a lurid picture was hastily put before him of the
12 object alternately worshipped, beaten, and thanked. "I do that!" he
13 exclaimed. "Don't you see," he went on, a moment later, in hot
14 resentment of injustice done to the lowly and absent, "don't you see
15 that there is no fetishism? Oh, your hearts are steeled, that you
16 cannot see that the child is right! The child sees person
17 everywhere. Knowledge robs us of the child's vision. But at last,
18 through higher knowledge, we win back to it. He connects a living
19 power with rocks, sticks, trees and the rest. And is there not a
20 living Power behind them? It is *symbolism*, not fetishism! Can you
21 not see?"

22 27. One day he told the story of Satyabhama's sacrifice and
23 how the word "Krishna", written on a piece of paper and thrown
24 into the balance, made Krishna himself, on the other side, kick the
25 beam. "Orthodox Hinduism", he began, "makes Shruti, the sound,
26 everything. The *thing* is but a feeble manifestation of the pre-
27 existing and eternal idea. So the *name* of God is everything: God
28 Himself is merely the objectification of that idea in the eternal
29 mind. Your own name is infinitely more perfect than the person you!
30 The name of God is greater than God. Guard your speech!"

31 28. "I would not worship even the Greek Gods, for they were
32 separate from humanity! Only those should be worshipped who are
33 like ourselves but greater. The difference between the gods and me
34 must be a difference only of degree."

35 29. "A stone falls and crushes a worm. Hence we infer that all
36 stones, falling, crush worms. Why do we thus immediately reapply a
37 perception? Experience, says one. But it happens, let us suppose,
38 for the first time. Throw a baby into the air, and it cries. Experience
39 from past lives? But why applied to the future? Because there is a
40 real connection between certain things, a *pervasiveness*, only it lies
41 with us to see that the quality neither overlaps, nor falls short of,
42 the instance. On this discrimination depends all human knowledge.

43 "With regard to fallacies, it must be remembered that direct
44 perception itself can only be a proof, provided the instrument, the
45 method, and the persistence of the perception are all maintained
46 pure. Disease or emotion will have the effect of disturbing the
47 observation. *Therefore direct perception itself is but a mode of*
48 *inference*. Therefore all human knowledge is uncertain and may be
49 erroneous. Who is a true witness? He is a true witness to whom the
50 thing said is a direct perception. Therefore the Vedas are true,
51 because they consist of the evidence of competent persons. But is

1 this power of perception peculiar to any? No! The Rishi, the Aryan,
2 and the Mlechchha all alike have it.

3 "Modern Bengal holds that evidence is only a special case of
4 direct perception, and that analogy and parity of reasoning are only
5 bad inferences. Therefore, of actual proofs there are only two,
6 direct perception and inference.

7 "One set of persons, you see, gives priority to the external
8 manifestation, the other to the internal idea. Which is prior, the bird
9 to the egg, or the egg to the bird? Does the oil hold the cup or the
10 cup the oil? This is a problem of which there is no solution. Give it
11 up! Escape from Maya!"

12 30. "Why should I care if the world itself were to disappear?
13 According to my philosophy, that, you know, would be a very good
14 thing! But, in fact, all that is against me must be with me in the end.
15 Am I not Her soldier?"

16 31. "Yes, my own life is guided by the enthusiasm of a certain
17 great personality, but what of that? Inspiration was never filtered
18 out to the world through one man!

19 "It is true I believe Ramakrishna Paramahansa to have been
20 inspired. But then I am myself inspired also. And you are inspired.
21 And your disciples will be; and theirs after them; and so on, to the
22 end of time!

23 "Don't you see that the age for esoteric interpretation is over?
24 For good or for ill, that day is vanished, never to return. Truth, in
25 the future, is to be open to the world!"

26 32. "Buddha made the fatal mistake of thinking that the whole
27 world could be lifted to the height of the Upanishads. And self-
28 interest spoilt all. Krishna was wiser, because He was more politic.
29 But Buddha would have no compromise. The world before now has
30 seen even the Avatara ruined by compromise, tortured to death for
31 want of recognition, and lost. But Buddha would have been
32 worshipped as God in his own lifetime, all over Asia, for a moment's
33 compromise. And his reply was only: 'Buddhahood is an
34 achievement, not a person!' Verily was He the only man in the world
35 who was ever quite sane, the only sane man ever born!"

36 33. People had told the Swami in the West that the greatness
37 of Buddha would have been more appealing, had he been crucified!
38 This he stigmatised as "Roman brutality", and pointed out, "The
39 lowest and most animal liking is for action. Therefore the world will
40 always love the epic. Fortunately for India, however, she has never
41 produced a Milton, with his 'hurled headlong down the steep
42 abyss!' The whole of that were well exchanged for a couple of lines
43 of Browning!" It had been this epic vigour of the story, in his
44 opinion, that had appealed to the Roman. The crucifixion it was that
45 carried Christianity over the Roman world. "Yes, Yes!" he
46 reiterated. "You Western folk want *action* ! You cannot yet perceive
47 the poetry of every common little incident in life! What beauty could
48 be greater than that of the story of the young mother coming to
49 Buddha with her dead boy? Or the incident of the goats? You see
50 the Great Renunciation was not new in India! . . . But *after Nirvana*,

1 look at the poetry!

2 "It is a wet night, and he comes to the cowherd's hut and
3 gathers in to the wall under the dripping eaves. The rain is pouring
4 down and the wind rising.

5 "Within, the cowherd catches a glimpse of a face through the
6 window and thinks, 'Ha, ha! Yellow garb! stay there! It's good
7 enough for you!' And then he begins to sing.

8 "My cattle are housed, and the fire burns bright. My wife is
9 safe, and my babes sleep sweet! Therefore ye may rain, if ye will, O
10 clouds, tonight!"

11 "And the Buddha answers from without, "My mind is
12 controlled: my senses are all gathered in; my heart firm. Therefore
13 ye may rain, if ye will, O clouds, tonight!"

14 "Again the cowherd: 'The fields are reaped, and the hay is
15 fast in the barn. The stream is full, and the roads are firm.
16 Therefore ye may rain, if ye will, O clouds, tonight.'

17 "And so it goes on, till at last the cowherd rises, in contrition
18 and wonder, and becomes a disciple.

19 "Or what would be more beautiful than the barber's story?

20 "The Blessed One passed by my house,
21 *my house--the Barber's!*

22 "I ran, but He turned and awaited me,
23 *Awaited me--the Barber!*

24 "I said, 'May I speak, O Lord, with Thee?'

25 "And He said 'Yes!'

26 'Yes!' to *me--the Barber!*

27 "And I said, 'Is Nirvana for such as I?'

28 "And He said 'Yes!'

29 *Even for me--the Barber!*

30 "And I said, 'May I follow after Thee?'

31 "And He said, 'Oh yes!'

32 *Even I --the Barber!*

33 "And I said, 'May I stay, O Lord, near Thee?'

34 "And He said, 'Thou mayest!'

35 *Even to me--the poor Barber!"*

36 34. "The great point of contrast between Buddhism and
37 Hinduism lies in the fact that Buddhism said, 'Realise all this as
38 illusion', while Hinduism said, 'Realise that within the illusion is the
39 Real.' Of *how* this was to be done, Hinduism never presumed to
40 enunciate any rigid law. The Buddhist command could only be
41 carried out through monasticism; the Hindu might be fulfilled
42 through any state of life. All alike were roads to the One Real. One
43 of the highest and greatest expressions of the Faith is put into the

1 mouth of a butcher, preaching by the orders of a married woman to
2 a Sannyasin. Thus Buddhism became the religion of a monastic
3 order, but Hinduism, in spite of its exaltation of monasticism,
4 remains ever the religion of faithfulness to duty, whatever it be, as
5 the path by which man may attain God."

6 35. "Lay down the rules for your group and formulate your
7 ideas," the Swami said, dealing with the monastic ideal for women,
8 "and put in a little universalism, if there is room for it. But
9 remember that not more than half a dozen people in the whole
10 world are ever at any time ready for this! There must be room for
11 sects, as well as for rising above sects. You will have to
12 manufacture your own tools. Frame laws, but frame them in such a
13 fashion that when people are ready to do without them, they can
14 burst them asunder. Our originality lies in combining perfect
15 freedom with perfect authority. This can be done even in
16 monasticism."

17 36. "Two different races mix and fuse, and out of them rises
18 one strong distinct type. This tries to save itself from admixture,
19 and here you see the beginning of caste. Look at the apple. The
20 best specimens have been produced by crossing; but once crossed,
21 we try to preserve the variety intact."

22 37. Referring to education of girls in India he said, "In
23 worship of the gods, you must of course use images. But you can
24 change these. Kali need not always be in one position. Encourage
25 your girls to think of new ways of picturing Her. Have a hundred
26 different conceptions of Saraswati. Let them draw and model and
27 paint their own ideas.

28 "In the chapel, the pitcher on the lowest step of the altar
29 must be always full of water, and lights in great Tamil butter-lamps
30 must be always burning. If, in addition, the maintenance of
31 perpetual adoration could be organised, nothing could be more in
32 accord with Hindu feeling.

33 "But the ceremonies employed must themselves be Vedic.
34 There must be a Vedic altar, on which at the hour of worship to light
35 the Vedic fire. And the children must be present to share in the
36 service of oblation. This is a rite which would claim the respect of
37 the whole of India.

38 "Gather all sorts of animals about you. The cow makes a fine
39 beginning. But you will also have dogs and cats and birds and
40 others. Let the children have a time for going to feed and look after
41 these.

42 "Then there is the sacrifice of learning. That is the most
43 beautiful of all. Do you know that every book is holy in India, not the
44 Vedas alone, but the English and Mohammedan also? All are
45 sacred.

46 "Revive the old arts. Teach your girls fruit-modelling with
47 hardened milk. Give them artistic cooking and sewing. Let them
48 learn painting, photography, the cutting of designs in paper, and
49 gold and silver filigree and embroidery. See that everyone knows
50 something by which she can earn a living in case of need.

1 "And never forget Humanity! The idea of a humanitarian man-
2 worship exists in nucleus in India, but it has never been sufficiently
3 specialised. Let your students develop it. Make poetry, make art, of
4 it. Yes, a daily worship at the feet of beggars, after bathing and
5 before the meal, would be a wonderful practical training of heart
6 and hand together. On some days, again, the worship might be of
7 children, of your own pupils. Or you might borrow babies and nurse
8 and feed them. What was it that Mataji²⁶⁰ said to me? 'Swamiji! I
9 have no help. But these blessed ones I worship, and they will take
10 me to salvation!' She feels, you see, that she is serving Uma in the
11 Kumari, and that is a wonderful thought, with which to begin a
12 school."

13 38. "Love is always a manifestation of bliss. The least shadow
14 of pain falling upon it is always a sign of physicality and
15 selfishness."

16 39. "The West regards marriage as consisting in all that lies
17 beyond the legal tie, while in India it is thought of as a bond thrown
18 by society round two people to unite them together for all eternity.
19 Those two must wed each other, whether they will or not, in life
20 after life. Each acquires half of the merit of the other. And if one
21 seems in this life to have fallen hopelessly behind, it is for the other
22 only to wait and beat time, till he or she catches up again!"

23 40. "Consciousness is a mere film between two oceans, the
24 subconscious and the superconscious."

25 41. "I could not believe my own ears when I heard Western
26 people talking so much of consciousness! Consciousness? What
27 does consciousness matter! Why, it is nothing compared with the
28 unfathomable depths of the subconscious and the heights of the
29 superconscious! In this I could never be misled, for had I not seen
30 Ramakrishna Paramahansa gather in ten minutes, from a man's
31 subconscious mind, the whole of his past, and determine from that
32 his future and his powers?"

33 42. "All these (visions etc.) are side issues. They are not true
34 Yoga. They may have a certain usefulness in establishing indirectly
35 the truth of our statements. Even a little glimpse gives faith that
36 there is something behind gross matter. Yet those who spend time
37 on such things run into grave dangers.

38 "These (psychic developments) are *frontier questions* ! There
39 can never be any certainty or stability of knowledge reached by
40 their means. Did I not say they were 'frontier questions'? The
41 boundary line is always shifting!"

42 43. "Now on the Advaitic side it is held that the soul neither
43 comes nor goes, and that all these spheres or layers of the universe
44 are only so many varying products of Akasha and Prana. That is to
45 say, the lowest or most condensed is the Solar Sphere, consisting of
46 the visible universe, in which Prana appears as physical force, and
47 Akasha as sensible matter. The next is called the Lunar Sphere,
48 which surrounds the Solar Sphere. This is not the moon at all, but

1 ²⁶⁰ ?Tapaswini Mataji, foundress of the Mahakali Pathashala, Calcutta.
2

1 the habitation of the gods; that is to say, Prana appears in it as
2 psychic forces, and Akasha as Tanmatras or fine particles. Beyond
3 this is the Electric Sphere; that is to say, a condition inseparable
4 from Akasha, and you can hardly tell whether electricity is force or
5 matter. Next is the Brahmaloaka, where there is neither Prana nor
6 Akasha, but both are merged into the mind-stuff, the primal energy.
7 And here--there being neither Prana nor Akasha--the Jiva
8 contemplates the whole universe as Samashti or the sum total of
9 Mahat or mind. This appears as Purusha, an abstract Universal
10 Soul, yet not the Absolute, for still there is multiplicity. From this
11 the Jiva finds at last that Unity which is the end. Advaitism says that
12 these are the visions which arise in succession before the Jiva, who
13 himself neither goes nor comes, and that in the same way this
14 present vision has been projected. The projection (Srishti) and
15 dissolution must take place in the same order, only one means going
16 backward and the other coming out.

17 "Now, as each individual can only see his own universe, that
18 universe is created with his bondage and goes away with his
19 liberation, although it remains for others who are in bondage. Now,
20 name and form constitute the universe. A wave in the ocean is a
21 wave only in so far as it is bound by name and form. If the wave
22 subsides, it is the ocean, but that name-and-form has immediately
23 vanished forever, so that the name and form of a wave could never
24 be without the water that was fashioned into the wave by them. Yet
25 the name and form themselves were not the wave; they die as soon
26 as ever it returns to water, but other names and forms live on in
27 relation to other waves. This name-and-form is called Maya and the
28 water is Brahman. The wave was nothing but water all the time, yet
29 as a wave it had the name and form. Again this name-and-form
30 cannot remain for one moment separated from the wave, although
31 the wave, as water, can remain eternally separate from name and
32 form. But because the name and form can never be separated, they
33 can never be said to exist. Yet they are not zero. This is called
34 Maya."

35 44. "I am the servant of the servants of the servants of
36 Buddha. Who was there ever like him?--the Lord--who never
37 performed one action for himself--with a heart that embraced the
38 whole world! So full of pity that he--prince and monk--would give
39 his life to save a little goat! So loving that he sacrificed himself to
40 the hunger of a tigress!--to the hospitality of a pariah and blessed
41 him! And he came into my room when I was a boy, and I fell at his
42 feet! For I knew it was the Lord Himself!"

43 45. "He (Shuka) is the ideal Paramahansa. To him alone
44 amongst men was it given to drink a handful of the waters of that
45 one undivided Ocean of Sat-Chit-Ananda--Existence, Knowledge,
46 and Bliss Absolute! Most saints die, having heard only the thunder
47 of its waves upon the shore. A few gain the vision, and still fewer,
48 taste of It. But he drank of the Sea of Bliss!"

49 46. "What is this idea of Bhakti without renunciation? It is
50 most pernicious."

1 47. "We worship neither pain nor pleasure. We seek through
2 either to come at that which transcends them both."

3 48. "Shankaracharya had caught the rhythm of the Vedas, the
4 national cadence. Indeed I always imagine that he had some vision
5 such as mine when he was young, and recovered the ancient music
6 that way. Anyway, his whole life's work is nothing but that, the
7 throbbing of the beauty of the Vedas and the Upanishads."

8 49. "Though the love of a mother is in some ways greater, yet
9 the whole world takes the love of man and woman as the type (of
10 the soul's relation to God). *No other has such tremendous idealising*
11 *power.* The beloved actually becomes what he is imagined to be.
12 This love transforms its object."

13 50. "Is it so easy to be Janaka--to sit on a throne absolutely
14 unattached, caring nothing for wealth or fame, for wife or child?
15 One after another in the West has told me that he has reached this.
16 But I could only say, 'Such great men are not born in India!'"

17 51. "Never forget to say to yourself and to teach to your
18 children, as the difference between a firefly and the blazing sun,
19 between the infinite ocean and a little pond, between a mustard
20 seed and the mountain Meru, such is the difference between the
21 householder and the Sannyasin!

22 "Everything is fraught with fear: Renunciation alone is
23 fearless.

24 "Blessed be even the fraudulent Sadhus and those who have
25 failed to carry out their vows, inasmuch as they also have witnessed
26 to their ideal and so are in some degree the cause of the success of
27 others!

28 "Let us never, never, forget our ideal!"

29 52. "The river is pure that flows, the monk is pure that goes!"

30 53. "The Sannyasin who thinks of gold, to desire it, commits
31 suicide."

32 54. "What do I care if Mohammed *was* a good man, or
33 Buddha? Does that altar my goodness or evil? Let us be good for
34 our own sake on our own responsibility."

35 55. "You people in this country are so afraid of losing your in-
36 di-vid-u-al-i-ty! Why, you are not individuals yet. When you realise
37 your whole nature, you will attain your true individuality, not
38 before. There is another thing I am constantly hearing in this
39 country, and that is that we should live in harmony with nature.
40 Don't you know that all the progress ever made in the world was
41 made by conquering nature? We are to resist nature at every point
42 if we are to make any progress."

43 56. "In India they tell me I ought not to teach Advaita Vedanta
44 to the people at large; but I say, I can make even a child understand
45 it. You cannot begin too early to teach the highest spiritual truths."

46 57. "The less you read, the better. Read the Gita and other
47 good works on Vedanta. That is all you need. The present system of
48 education is all wrong. The mind is crammed with facts before it

1 knows how to think. Control of the mind should be taught first. If I
2 had my education to get over again and had any voice in the matter,
3 I would learn to master my mind first, and then gather facts if I
4 wanted them. It takes people a long time to learn things because
5 they can't concentrate their minds at will."

6 58. "If a bad time comes, what of that? The pendulum must
7 swing back to the other side. But that is no better. The thing to do is
8 to stop it."

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I

Baghbazar,
Calcutta,
28th

November, 1888

{original in Bengali}

Dear Sir {Shri Pramadadas Mitra},

I have received the book of Panini which you so kindly sent me. Please accept my gratitude for the same.

I had an attack of fever again--hence I could not reply to you immediately. Please excuse. I am ailing much. I am praying to the Divine Mother to keep you happy physically and mentally.

Your servant,
Vivekananda

II

Baranagore
22nd

February, 1899

{original in Bengali}

Dear Sir {Shri Pramadadas Mitra},

I had intended to go to Varanasi, and I planned to reach there after visiting the birthplace of my Master. But unluckily on the way to that village I had an attack of high fever followed by vomiting and purging as in cholera. There was again fever after three or four days--and as the body is now so weak that I can barely walk even two steps, I have been compelled now to give up my previous intention. I do not know what is God's will, but my body is quite unfit for treading on this path. Anyway, the body is not everything. Recovering my health after a few days here, I entertain the hope of visiting you there. The will of Vishweshwara, the Lord of the universe, will prevail--whatever that may be. You also kindly bless me. My respects to you and brother Jnanananda.

Your servant,
Vivekananda

III

Baghbazar
Calcutta,

1 21st March,
2 1889
3 {original in Bengali}
4 Respected Sir {Shri Pramadadas Mitra},
5 It is several days since I received your last letter. Please
6 excuse the delay in replying, which was due to some special
7 reasons. I am very ill at present; there is fever now and then, but
8 there is no disorder in the spleen or other organs. I am under
9 homeopathic treatment. Now I have had to give up completely the
10 intention of going to Varanasi. Whatever God dispenses will happen
11 later on, according to the state of the body. If you meet brother
12 Jnanananda, please tell him not to be held up there in expectation
13 of my coming. My going there is very uncertain. My regards to you
14 and Jnanananda.

15 Yours
16 sincerely,
17 Vivekananda
18
19

20 IV
21 Simla
22 (Calcutta)

23 14th July,
24 1889

25 {original in Bengali}
26 Respected Sir {Shri Pramadadas Mitra},

27 I was very glad to get your letter. In such circumstances many
28 give the advice to incline towards the worldly life. But you are
29 truthful and have an adamant heart. I have been highly
30 comforted by your encouraging and cheering words. My difficulties
31 here have almost come to a close--only I have engaged the services
32 of a broker for the sale of a piece of land, and I hope the sale will be
33 over soon. In that case, I shall be free from all worry and shall at
34 once go straight off to you to Varanasi.

35 Your servant,
36 Vivekananda
37
38

39 V
40 Baghbazar,
41 Calcutta
42 4th June,
43 1890
44 {original in Bengali}

1 Dear Sir {Shri Pramadadas Mitra},

2 I got your letter. There is no doubt that your advice is very
3 wise. It is quite true that the Lord's Will will prevail. We also are
4 spreading out here and there in small groups of two or three. I also
5 got two letters from brother Gangadhar. He is at present in the
6 house of Gagan Babu suffering from an attack of influenza. Gagan
7 Babu is taking special care of him. He will come here as soon as he
8 recovers. Our respectful salutations to you.

9 Your servant,
10 Vivekananda

11 PS. Abhedananda and others are all doing well.

12 V.

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14 VI

15 Baroda

16 26th April,

17 1892

18 {original in Bengali}

19 Dear Diwanji Saheb {Shri Haridas Viharidas Desai},

20 Very happy to receive your kind letter even here. I had not
21 the least difficulty in reaching your house from the station of
22 Nadiad. And your brothers, they are what they should be, *your*
23 *brothers* . May the Lord shower his choicest blessings on your
24 family. I have never found such a glorious one in all my travels. Your
25 friend Mr. Manibhai has provided every comfort for me; but, as to
26 his company, I have only seen him twice; once for a minute, the
27 other for ten minutes at the most when he talked about the system
28 of education here. Of course, I have seen the Library and the
29 pictures of Ravi Varma, and that is about all worth seeing here. So I
30 am going off this evening to Bombay. My thanks to the Diwanji here
31 (or to you) for his kind behaviour. More from Bombay.

32 Yours in
33 affection,

34 Vivekananda

35 PS. At Nadiad I met Mr. Manilal Nabhubhai. He is a very
36 learned and pious gentleman, and I enjoyed his company much.

37

38 VII

39 Ellapa

40 Balaram's House

41 c/o Thakore

42 of Limdi

43 Neutral Line,

44 Poona

1 15th June,
2 1892

3 Dear Diwanji Saheb {Shri Haridas Viharidas Desai},

4 It is a long time since I heard from you. I hope I have not
5 offended you anyway. I came down with the Thakore Saheb of
6 Mahabaleshwar, and I am living here with him. I would remain here
7 a week or more and then proceed to Rameshwaram via Hyderabad.

8 Perhaps by this time every hitch has been removed from your
9 way in Junagad; at least I hope so. I am very anxious to learn about
10 your health, especially that sprain, you know.

11 I saw your friend the Surti tutor to the Prince of Bhavnagar.
12 He is a perfect gentleman. It was quite a privilege to make his
13 acquaintance; he is so good and noble-natured a man.

14 My sincerest greetings to your noble-minded brothers and to
15 our friends there. Kindly send to Mr. Nabhubhai my earnest good
16 wishes in your letter home. I hope you would gratify me by a speedy
17 reply.

18 With my sincerest respects and gratitude and prayers for you
19 and yours, I remain,

20 Yours
21 faithfully,

22 Vivekananda

23

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25 VIII

26 Bombay

27 1892

28 Dear Diwanji Saheb {Shri Haridas Viharidas Desai},

29 The bearer of this letter, Babu Akshaya Kumar Ghose, is a
30 particular friend of mine. He comes of a respectable family of
31 Calcutta. I found him at Khandwa where I made his acquaintance,
32 although I knew his family long before in Calcutta.

33 He is a very honest and intelligent boy and is an
34 undergraduate of the Calcutta University. You know how hard the
35 struggle is in Bengal nowadays, and the poor boy has been out in
36 search of some job. Knowing your native kindness of heart, I think I
37 am not disturbing you by asking and entreating you to do something
38 for this young man. I need not write more. You will find him an
39 honest and hard-working lad. If a single act of kindness done to a
40 fellow creature renders his whole life happy, I need not remind you
41 that this boy is a Patra (a person quite deserving of help), noble and
42 kind as you are.

43 I hope you are not disturbed and troubled by this request of
44 mine. This is the first and the last of its kind and made only under
45 very peculiar circumstances. Hoping and relying on your kind
46 nature, I remain,

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faithfully,

Yours

Vivekananda

IX

Bombay

22nd August,

1892

Dear Diwanji Saheb {Shri Haridas Viharidas Desai},

I am very much gratified on receiving your letter, especially as that is the proof that you have the same kindness towards me.

About the kindness and gentlemanliness of your friend Mr. Bederkar of Indore and of the Dakshinis in general, the less said the better; but of course there are Dakshinis and Dakshinis, and I would only quote to you what Shankar Pandurang wrote me at Mahabaleshwar on my informing him that I had found shelter with the Limdi Thakore:

"I am so glad to learn that you have found Limdi Thakore there, else you would have been in serious troubles, our Maratha people not being so kind as the Gujaratis." So kind? heaven and hell!

I am very glad that your joint has now been nearly perfectly cured. Kindly tell your noble brother to excuse my promise-breaking as I have got here some Sanskrit books and help, too, to read, which I do not hope to get elsewhere, and am anxious to finish them. Yesterday I saw your friend Mr. Manahsukharam who has lodged a Sannyasin friend with him. He is very kind to me and so is his son.

After remaining here for 15 to 20 days I would proceed toward Rameshwaram, and on my return would surely come to you.

The world really is enriched by men, high-souled, noble-minded, and kind, like you; the rest are "only as axes which cut at the tree of youth of their mothers", as the Sanskrit poet puts it.

It is impossible that I should ever forget your fatherly kindness and care of me, and what else can a poor fakir like me do in return to a mighty minister but pray that the Giver of all gifts may give you all that is desirable on earth and in the end--which may He postpone to a day long, long ahead--may take you in His shelter of bliss and happiness and purity infinite.

Yours,

Vivekananda

PS. One thing that I am very sorry to notice in these parts is the thorough want of Sanskrit and other learning. The people of this part of the country have for their religion a certain bundle of local superstitions about eating, drinking, and bathing, and that is

1 about the whole of their religion.

2 Poor fellows! Whatever the rascally and wily priests teach
3 them--all sorts of mummary and tomfoolery as the very gist of the
4 Vedas and Hinduism (mind you, neither these rascals of priests nor
5 their forefathers have so much as *seen* a volume of the Vedas for
6 the last 400 generations)--they follow and degrade themselves.
7 Lord help them from the Rakshasas in the shape of the Brahmins of
8 the Kaliyuga.

9 I have sent a Bengali boy to you. Hope he would be treated
10 kindly.

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13 X

14 Margoan,

15 1893

16 {original in Bengali}

17 Dear Haripada {Shri Haripada Mitra},

18 I just now received a letter from you. I reached here safe. I
19 went to visit Panjim and a few other villages and temples near by. I
20 returned just today. I have not given up the intention of visiting
21 Gokarna, Mahabaleshwar, and other places. I start for Dharwar by
22 the morning train tomorrow. I have taken the walking-stick with me.
23 Doctor Yagdekar's friend was very hospitable to me. Please give my
24 compliments to Mr. Bhate and all others there. May the Lord
25 shower His blessings on you and your wife. The town of Panjim is
26 very neat and clean. Most of the Christians here are literate. The
27 Hindus are mostly uneducated.

28 Yours

29 affectionately,

30 Sachchidananda²⁶¹

32

33

34 XI

35 c/o Babu Madhusudan

36 Chattopadhyaya

37 Superintending Engineer

38 Khartabad, Hyderabad

39 11th February, 1893

40 Dear Alasinga {Shri Alasinga Perumal},

41 Your friend, the young graduate, came to receive me at the
42 station, so also a Bengali gentleman. At present I am living with the

1 ²⁶¹ ?Swamiji used to call himself such in those days.

1 Bengali gentleman; tomorrow I go to live with your young friend for
2 a few days, and then I see the different sights here, and in a few
3 days you may expect me at Madras. For I am very sorry to tell you
4 that I cannot go back at present to Rajputana. It is so very
5 dreadfully hot here already. I do not know how hot it would be at
6 Rajputana, and I cannot bear heat at all. So the next thing, I would
7 do, would be to go back to Bangalore and then to Ootacamund to
8 pass the summer there. My brain boils in heat.

9 So all my plans have been dashed to the ground. That is why I
10 wanted to hurry off from Madras early. In that case I would have
11 months left in my hands to seek out for somebody amongst our
12 northern princes to send me over to America. But alas, it is now too
13 late. First, I cannot wander about in this heat--I would die.
14 Secondly, my fast friends in Rajputana would keep me bound down
15 to their sides if they get hold of me and would not let me go over to
16 Europe. So my plan was to get hold of some new person without my
17 friends' knowledge. But this delay at Madras has dashed all my
18 hopes to the ground, and with a deep sigh I give it up, and the
19 Lord's will be done! However, you may be almost sure that I shall
20 see you in a few days for a day or two in Madras and then go to
21 Bangalore and thence to Ootacamund to see "if" the M__ Maharaja
22 sends me up. "If"--because you see I cannot be sure of any promise
23 of a Dakshini (southern) Raja. They are not Rajputs. A Rajput would
24 rather die than break his promise. However, man learns as he lives,
25 and experience is the greatest teacher in the world.

26 "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven, for Thine is the
27 glory and the kingdom for ever and ever." My compliments to you
28 all.

29 Yours etc.,

30 Sachchidananda

34 XII

35 Khetri

36 28th April,

37 1893

38 Dear Diwanji Saheb {Shri Haridas Viharidas Desai},

39 On my way here, I wanted to go to your place at Nadiad and
40 redeem my pledge, but certain circumstances prevented me, and
41 the greatest of them was that you were not there; and to play
42 Hamlet leaving Hamlet's part out is a ridiculous affair; and as I
43 know for certain that you are to return in a few days to Nadiad, and
44 as I am shortly going back to Bombay, say in 20 days, I thought it
45 better to postpone my visit for that time.

1 Here the Khetri Rajaji was very, very anxious to see me and
2 had sent his Private Secretary to Madras; and so I was bound to
3 leave for Khetri. But the heat is quite intolerable, and so I am flying
4 off very soon.

5 By and by, I have made the acquaintances of nearly all the
6 Dakshini Rajas and have seen most queer sights in many places of
7 which I would tell you *in extenso* when we meet next. I know your
8 love for me and am sure that you would excuse my not going down
9 to your place. However, I am coming to you in a few days.

10 One thing more. Have you got lion's cubs now in Junagad?
11 Can you lend me one for my Raja? He can give you some Rajputana
12 animals in exchange, if you like.

13 I saw Ratilalbhai in the train. He is the same nice and kind
14 gentleman; and what more shall I wish for you, my dear Diwanji
15 Saheb, but that the Lord would be your all in all in your well-
16 merited, well-applauded and universally respected latter end of a
17 life which was ever holy, good, and devoted to the service of so
18 many of the sons and daughters of the great Father of Mercies.
19 Amen!

20
21 affectionately,

Yours

Vivekananda

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23
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25 XIII

26 Khetri

27 May, 1893

28 Dear Diwanji Saheb {Shri Haridas Viharidas Desai},

29 Surely my letter had not reached you before you wrote to me.
30 The perusal of your letter gave me both pleasure and pain
31 simultaneously: pleasure, to see that I have the good fortune to be
32 loved by a man of your heart, power, and position; and pain, to see
33 that my motive has been misinterpreted throughout. Believe me,
34 that I love you and respect you like a father and that my gratitude
35 towards you and your family is surely unbounded. The fact is this.
36 You may remember that I had from before a desire to go to
37 Chicago. When at Madras, the people there, of their own accord, in
38 conjunction with H.H. of Mysore and Ramnad made every
39 arrangement to send me up. And you may also remember that
40 between H.H. of Khetri and myself there are the closest ties of love.
41 Well, I, as a matter of course, wrote to him that I was going to
42 America. Now the Raja of Khetri thought in his love that I was
43 bound to see him once before I departed, especially as the Lord has
44 given him an heir to the throne and great rejoicings were going on
45 here; and to make sure of my coming he sent his Private Secretary
46 all the way to Madras to fetch me, and of course I was bound to
47 come. In the meanwhile I telegraphed to your brother at Nadiad to
48 know whether you were there, and, unfortunately, the answer I

1 could not get; therefore, the Secretary who, poor fellow, had
2 suffered terribly for his master in going to and from Madras and
3 with his eye wholly on the fact that his master would be unhappy if
4 we could not reach Khetri within the Jalsa (festival), bought tickets
5 at once for Jaipur. On our way we met Mr. Ratilal who informed me
6 that my wire was received and duly answered and that Mr.
7 Viharidas was expecting me. Now it is for you to judge, whose duty
8 it has been so long to deal even justice. What would or could I do in
9 this connection? If I would have got down, I could not have reached
10 in time for the Khetri rejoicings; on the other hand, my motives
11 might be misinterpreted. But I know you and your brother's love for
12 me, and I knew also that I would have to go back to Bombay in a
13 few days on my way to Chicago. I thought that the best solution was
14 to postpone my visit till my return. As for my feeling affronted at not
15 being attended by your brothers, it is a new discovery of yours
16 which I never even dreamt of; or, God knows, perhaps, you have
17 become a thought-reader. Jokes apart, my dear Diwanji Saheb, I am
18 the same frolicsome, mischievous but, I assure you, innocent boy
19 you found me at Junagad, and my love for your noble self is the
20 same or increased a hundredfold, because I have had a mental
21 comparison between yourself and the Diwans of nearly all the
22 states in Dakshin, and the Lord be my witness how my tongue was
23 fluent in your praise (although I know that my powers are quite
24 inadequate to estimate your noble qualities) in every Southern
25 court. If this be not a sufficient explanation, I implore you to pardon
26 me as a father pardons a son, and let me not be haunted with the
27 impression that I was ever ungrateful to one who was so good to
28 me.

29 Yours,

30 Vivekananda

31 PS. I depend on you to remove any misconception in the mind
32 of your brother about my not getting down and that, even had I
33 been the very devil, I could not forget their kindness and good
34 offices for me.

35 As to the other two Swamis, they were my Gurubhais, who
36 went to you last at Junagad; of them one is our leader. I met them
37 after three years, and we came together as far as Abu and then I
38 left them. If you wish, I can take them back to Nadiad on my way to
39 Bombay. May the Lord shower His blessings on you and yours.

40 Yours,

41 V.

42
43 XIV

44 Bombay

45 22nd May,

46 1893

47 Dear Diwanji Saheb {Shri Haridas Viharidas Desai},

48 Reached Bombay a few days ago and would start off in a few

1 days. Your friend, the Banya gentleman to whom you wrote for the
2 house accommodation, writes to say that his house is already full of
3 guests and some of them are ill and that he is very sorry he cannot
4 accommodate me. After all we have got a nice, airy place.

5 . . . The Private Secretary of H. H. of Khetri and I are now
6 residing together. I cannot express my gratitude to him for his love
7 and kindness to me. He is what they call a Tazimi Sardar in
8 Rajputana, i.e. one of those whom the Rajas receive by rising from
9 their seats. Still he is so simple, and sometimes his service for me
10 makes me almost ashamed.

11 . . . Often and often, we see that the very best of men even
12 are troubled and visited with tribulations in this world; it may be
13 inexplicable; but it is also the experience of my life that the heart
14 and core of everything here is good, that whatever may be the
15 surface waves, deep down and underlying everything, there is an
16 infinite basis of goodness and love; and so long as we do not reach
17 that basis, we are troubled; but having once reached that zone of
18 calmness, let winds howl and tempests rage. The house which is
19 built on a rock of ages cannot shake. I thoroughly believe that a
20 good, unselfish and holy man like you, whose whole life has been
21 devoted to doing good to others, has already reached this basis of
22 firmness which the Lord Himself has styled as "rest upon Brahman"
23 in the Gita.

24 May the blows you have received draw you closer to that
25 Being who is the only one to be loved here and hereafter, so that
26 you may realise Him in everything past, present, and future, and
27 find everything present or lost in Him and Him alone. Amen!

28 Yours
29 affectionately,

Vivekananda

33 XV

34 Chicago

35 29th January,

36 1894

37 Dear Diwanji Saheb {Shri Haridas Viharidas Desai},

38 Your last letter reached me a few days ago. You had been to
39 see my poor mother and brothers. I am glad you did. But you have
40 touched the only soft place in my heart. You ought to know, Diwanji,
41 that I am no hard-hearted brute. If there is any being I love in the
42 whole world, it is my mother. Yet I believed and still believe that
43 without my giving up the world, the great mission which
44 Ramakrishna Paramahansa, my great Master came to preach
45 would not see the light, and where would those young men be who
46 have stood as bulwarks against the surging waves of materialism
47 and luxury of the day? These have done a great amount of good to
48 India, especially to Bengal, and this is only the beginning. With the

1 Lord's help they will do things for which the whole world will bless
2 them for ages. So on the one hand, my vision of the future of Indian
3 religion and that of the whole world, my love for the millions of
4 beings sinking down and down for ages with nobody to help them,
5 nay, nobody with even a thought for them; on the other hand,
6 making those who are nearest and dearest to me miserable; I
7 choose the former. "Lord will do the rest." He is with me, I am sure
8 of that if of anything. So long as I am sincere, nothing can resist
9 me, because He will be my help. Many and many in India could not
10 understand me; and how could they, poor men? Their thoughts
11 never strayed beyond the everyday routine business of eating and
12 drinking. I know only a few noble souls like yourself appreciate me.
13 Lord bless your noble self. But appreciation or no appreciation, I am
14 born to organise these young men; nay, hundreds more in every city
15 are ready to join me; and I want to send them rolling like
16 irresistible waves over India, bringing comfort, morality, religion,
17 education to the doors of the meanest and the most downtrodden.
18 And this I will do or die.

19 Our people have no idea, no appreciation. On the other hand,
20 that horrible jealousy and suspicious nature which is the natural
21 outcome of a thousand years of slavery make them stand as
22 enemies to every new idea. Still the Lord is great.

23 About the Arati as well as other things you speak of, it is the
24 form in every one of the monasteries in all parts of India, and the
25 worshipping of Guru is the first duty inculcated in the Vedas. It has
26 its bad and good sides. But you must remember we are a unique
27 company, nobody amongst us has a right to force his faith upon the
28 others. Many of us do not believe in any form of idolatry; but they
29 have no right to object when others do it, because that would break
30 the first principle of our religion. Again, God can only be known in
31 and through man. Vibrations of light are everywhere, even in the
32 darkest corners; but it is only in the lamp that it becomes visible to
33 man. Similarly God, though everywhere, we can only conceive Him
34 as a big man. All ideas of God such as merciful preserver, helper,
35 protector--all these are human ideas, anthropomorphic; and again
36 these must cling to a man, call him a Guru or a Prophet or an
37 Incarnation. Man cannot go beyond his nature, no more than you
38 can jump out of your body. What harm is there in some people
39 worshipping their Guru when that Guru was a hundred times more
40 holy than even your historical prophets all taken together? If there
41 is no harm in worshipping Christ, Krishna, or Buddha, why should
42 there be any in worshipping this man who never did or thought
43 anything unholy, whose intellect only through intuition stands head
44 and shoulders above all the other prophets, because they were all
45 one-sided? It was he that brought first to the world this idea of
46 truth, not *in* but *of* every religion, which is gaining ground all over
47 the world, and that without the help of science or philosophy or any
48 other acquirement.

49 But even this is not compulsory, none of the brethren has told
50 you that all must worship his Guru. No, no, no. But again none of us
51 has a right to object when another worships. Why? Because that
52 would overthrow this most unique society the world has ever seen,

1 ten men of ten different notions and ideas living in perfect harmony.
2 Wait, Diwanji, the Lord is great and merciful, you will see more.

3 We do not only tolerate but accept every religion, and with
4 the Lord's help I am trying to preach it to the whole world.

5 Three things are necessary to make every man great, every
6 nation great:

7 1. Conviction of the powers of goodness.

8 2. Absence of jealousy and suspicion.

9 3. Helping all who are trying to be and do good.

10 Why should the Hindu nation with all its wonderful
11 intelligence and other things have gone to pieces? I would answer
12 you, *jealousy*. Never were there people more wretchedly jealous of
13 one another, more envious of one another's fame and name than
14 this wretched Hindu race. And if you ever come out in the West, the
15 absence of this is the first feeling which you will see in the Western
16 nations.

17 Three men cannot act in concert together in India for five
18 minutes. Each one struggles for power, and in the long run the
19 whole organisation comes to grief. Lord! Lord! When will we learn
20 not to be jealous! In such a nation, and especially in Bengal, to
21 create a band of men who are tied and bound together with a most
22 undying love in spite of difference--is it not wonderful? This band
23 will increase. This idea of wonderful liberality joined with eternal
24 energy and progress must spread over India. It must electrify the
25 whole nation and must enter the very pores of society in spite of the
26 horrible ignorance, spite, caste-feeling, old boobyism, and jealousy
27 which are the heritage of this nation of slaves.

28 You are one of the few noble natures who stand as rocks out
29 of water in this sea of universal stagnation. Lord bless you for ever
30 and ever!

31 Yours ever
32 faithfully,

Vivekananda

36 XVI

37 Detroit

38 12th March,

39 1894

40 Dear Sisters {the Hale sisters},

41 I am now living with Mr. Palmer. He is a very nice gentleman.
42 He gave a dinner the night before last to a group of his old friends,
43 each more than 60 years of age, which he calls his "old boys' club".
44 I spoke at an opera house for two hours and a half. People were
45 very much pleased. I am going to Boston and New York. I will get
46 here sufficient to cover my expenses there. I have forgotten the

addresses of both Flagg and Prof. Wright. I am not going to lecture in Michigan, Mr. Holden tried to persuade me this morning to lecture in Michigan but I am quite bent upon seeing a little of Boston and New York. To tell you the truth, the more I am getting popularity and facility in speaking, the more I am getting fed up. My last address was the best I ever delivered. Mr. Palmer was in ecstasies and the audience remained almost spellbound, so much so that it was after the lecture that I found I had spoken so long. A speaker always feels the uneasiness or inattention of the audience. Lord save me from such nonsense, I am fed up. I would take rest in Boston or New York if the Lord permits. My love to you all. May you ever be happy!

Your affectionate
brother,

Vivekananda

XVII

Detroit
15th March,
1894

Dear Babies {the Hale sisters},

I am pulling on well with old Palmer. He is a very jolly, good old man. I got only 127 dollars by my last lecture. I am going to speak again in Detroit on Monday. Your mother asked me to write to a lady in Lynn. I have never seen her. Is it etiquette to write without any introduction? Please post me a little letter about this lady. Where is Lynn? The funniest thing said about me here was in one of the papers which said, "The cyclonic Hindu has come and is a guest with Mr. Palmer. Mr. Palmer has become a Hindu and is going to India; only he insists that two reforms should be carried out: firstly that the Car of Jagannath should be drawn by Percherons raised in Mr. Palmer's Loghouse Farm, and secondly that the Jersey cow be admitted into the pantheon of Hindu sacred cows." Mr. Palmer is passionately fond of both Percheron horse and Jersey cow and has a great stock of both in his Loghouse Farm.

The first lecture was not properly managed, the cost of the hall being 150 dollars. I have given up Holden. Here is another fellow cropped up; let me see if he does better. Mr. Palmer makes me laugh the whole day. Tomorrow there is going to be another dinner party. So far all is well; but I do not know--I have become very sad in my heart since I am here--do not know why.

I am wearied of lecturing and all that nonsense. This mixing with hundreds of varieties of the human animal has disturbed me. I will tell you what is to my taste; I cannot write, and I cannot speak, but I can think deeply, and when I am heated, can speak fire. It should be, however, to a select, a very select--few. Let them, if they will, carry and scatter my ideas broadcast--not I. This is only a just division of labour. The same man never succeeded both in thinking

1 and in scattering his thoughts. A man should be free to think,
2 especially spiritual thoughts.

3 Just because this assertion of independence, this proving that
4 man is *not a machine*, is the essence of all religious thought, it is
5 impossible to think it in the routine mechanical way. It is this
6 tendency to bring everything down to the level of a machine that
7 has given the West its wonderful prosperity. And it is this which has
8 driven away all religion from its doors. Even the little that is left,
9 the West has reduced to a systematic drill.

10 I am really not "cyclonic" at all. Far from it. What I want is not
11 here, nor can I longer bear this "cyclonic" atmosphere. This is the
12 way to perfection, to strive to be perfect, and to strive to make
13 perfect a few men and women. My idea of doing good is this: to
14 evolve out a few giants, and not to strew pearls before swine, and
15 so lose time, health, and energy.

16 Just now I got a letter from Flagg. He cannot help me in
17 lecturing. He says, "First go to Boston." Well, I do not care for
18 lecturing any more. It is too disgusting, this attempt to bring me to
19 suit anybody's or any audience's fads. However, I shall come back
20 to Chicago for a day or two at least before I go out of this country.
21 Lord bless you all.

22
23 brother,

Ever gratefully your

Vivekananda

24
25
26
27 XVIII

28 Detroit

29 18th March,

30 1894

31 Dear Sister Mary {Hale},

32 My heartfelt thanks for your kindly sending me the letter
33 from Calcutta. It was from my brethren at Calcutta, and it is written
34 on the occasion of a private invitation to celebrate the birthday of
35 my Master about whom you have heard so much from me--so I send
36 it over to you. The letter says that Mazoomdar has gone back to
37 Calcutta and is preaching that Vivekananda is committing every sin
38 under the sun in America. . . . This is your America's *wonderful*
39 *spiritual man* ! It is not their fault; until one is really spiritual, that
40 is, until one has got a real insight into the nature of one's own soul
41 and has got a glimpse of the world of the soul, one cannot
42 distinguish chaff from seed, tall talk from depth, and so on. I am
43 sorry for poor Mazoomdar that he should stoop so low! Lord bless
44 the old boy!

45 The address inside the letter is in English and is my old, old
46 name as written by a companion of my childhood who has also
47 taken orders. It is a very poetic name. That written in the letter is
48 an abbreviation, the full name being Narendra meaning the "Chief

1 of men" ("nara" means "man", and "indra" stands for "ruler",
2 "chief")--very ludicrous, isn't it? But such are the names in our
3 country; we cannot help, but I am glad I have given that up.

4 I am all right. Hoping it is same with you.

5 I remain your
6 brother,

7 Vivekananda

10 XIX

11 Detroit

12 30th March,

13 1894

14 Dear Sister {Mary Hale},

15 Your and Mother Church's letters came together just now,
16 acknowledging the receipt of the money. I am very glad to receive
17 the Khetri letter, which I send back for your perusal. You would find
18 from it that he wants some newspaper clippings. I do not think I
19 have any except the Detroit one, which I will send to him. If you can
20 get hold of some others, kindly send some over to him if it be
21 possible and convenient. You know his address--H. H. the
22 Maharajah of Khetri, Rajputana, India. Of course, this letter is for
23 the perusal of the holy family alone. Mrs. Breed wrote to me a stiff
24 burning letter first, and then today I got a telegram from her
25 inviting me to be her guest for a week. Before this I got a letter
26 from Mrs. Smith of New York writing on her behalf and another
27 lady Miss Helen Gould and another Dr. __ to come over to New York.
28 As the Lynn Club wants me on the 17th of next month, I am going to
29 New York first and come in time for their meeting at Lynn.

30 Next summer, if I do not go away, which Mrs. Bagley insists I
31 should not, I may go to Annisquam where Mrs. Bagley has engaged
32 a nice house. Mrs. Bagley is a very spiritual lady, and Mr. Palmer a
33 spirituous gentleman but very good. What shall I write more? I am
34 all right in nice health of body and mind. May you all be blessed,
35 ever blessed, my dear, dear sisters. By the by, Mrs. Sherman has
36 presented me with a lot of things amongst which is a nail set and
37 letter holder and a little satchel etc., etc. Although I objected,
38 especially to the nail set, as very dudish with mother-of-pearl
39 handles, she insisted and I had to take them, although I do not
40 know what to do with that brushing instrument. Lord bless them all.
41 She gave me one advice--never to wear this Afrikee dress in society.
42 Now I am a society man! Lord! What comes next? Long life brings
43 queer experiences! My inexpressible love for you all, my holy
44 family.

45 Your brother,

46 Vivekananda

47

Chicago

20th June,

1894

Dear Diwanji Saheb {Shri Haridas Viharidas Desai},

Your very kind note came today. I am so sorry that I could have caused pain to such a noble heart as yours with my rash and strong words. I bow down to your mild corrections. "Thy son am I, teach me thus bowing"--Gita. But you well know, Diwanji Saheb, it was my love that prompted me to say so. The backbiters, I must tell you, have not indirectly benefited me; on the other hand, they have injured me immensely in view of the fact that our Hindu people did not move a finger to tell the Americans that I represented them. Had our people sent some words thanking the American people for their kindness to me and stating that I was representing them! . . . have been telling the American people that I have donned the Sannyasin's garb only in America and that I was a cheat, bare and simple. So far as reception goes, it has no effect on the American nation; but so far as helping me with funds goes, it has a terrible effect in making them take off their helping hands from me. And it is one year since I have been here, and not one man of note from India has thought it fit to make the Americans know that I am no *cheat*. There again the missionaries are always seeking for something against me, and they are busy picking up anything said against me by the Christian papers of India and publishing it here. Now you must know that the people here know very little of the distinction in India between the Christian and the Hindu.

Primarily my coming has been to raise funds for an enterprise of my own. Let me tell it all to you again.

The whole difference between the West and the East is in this: They are nations, we are not, i.e., civilisation, education here is general, it penetrates into the masses. The higher classes in India and America are the same, but the distance is infinite between the lower classes of the two countries. Why was it so easy for the English to conquer India? It was because they are a nation, we are not. When one of our great men dies, we must sit for centuries to have another; they can produce them as fast as they die. When our Diwanji Saheb will pass away (which the Lord may delay long for the good of my country), the nation will see the difficulty at once of filling his place, which is seen even now in the fact that they cannot dispense with your services. It is the dearth of great ones. Why so? Because they have such a bigger field of recruiting their great ones, we have so small. A nation of 300 millions has the smallest field of recruiting its great ones compared with nations of thirty, forty, or sixty millions, because the number of educated men and women in those nations is so great. Now do not mistake me, my kind friend, this is the great defect in our nation and must be removed.

Educate and raise the masses, and thus alone a nation is possible. Our reformers do not see where the wound is, they want

1 to save the nation by marrying the widows; do you think that a
2 nation is saved by the number of husbands its widows get? Nor is
3 our religion to blame, for an idol more or less makes no difference.
4 The whole defect is here: The real nation who live in cottage have
5 forgotten their manhood, their individuality. Trodden under the foot
6 of the Hindu, Mussulman, or Christian, they have come to think that
7 they are born to be trodden under the foot of everybody who has
8 money enough in his pocket. They are to be given back their lost
9 individuality. They are to be educated. Whether idols will remain or
10 not, whether widows will have husbands enough or not, whether
11 caste is good or bad, I do not bother myself with such questions.
12 Everyone must work out his own salvation. Our duty is to put the
13 chemicals together, the crystallisation will come through God's
14 laws. Let us put ideas into their heads, and they will do the rest.
15 Now this means educating the masses. Here are these difficulties. A
16 pauper government cannot, will not, do anything; so no help from
17 that quarter.

18 Even supposing we are in a position to open schools in each
19 village free, still the poor boys would rather go to the plough to
20 earn their living than come to your school. Neither have we the
21 money, nor can we make them come to education. The problem
22 seems hopeless.

23 I have found a way out. It is this. If the mountain does not
24 come to Mohammed, Mohammed must go to the mountain. If the
25 poor cannot come to education, education must reach them at the
26 plough, in the factory, everywhere. How? You have seen my
27 brethren. Now I can get hundreds of such, all over India, unselfish,
28 good, and educated. Let these men go from village to village
29 bringing not only religion to the door of everyone but also
30 education. So I have a nucleus of organising the widows also as
31 instructors to our women.

1 Now suppose the villagers after their day's work have come
2 to their village and sitting under a tree or somewhere are smoking
3 and talking the time away. Suppose two of these educated
4 Sannyasins get hold of them there and with a camera throw
5 astronomical or other pictures, scenes from different nations,
6 histories, etc. Thus with globes, maps, etc.--and all this orally--how
7 much can be done that way, Diwanji? It is not that the eye is the
8 only door of knowledge, the ear can do all the same. So they would
9 have ideas and morality, and hope for better. Here our work ends.
10 Let them do the rest. What would make the Sannyasins do this
11 sacrifice, undertake such a task?--religious enthusiasm. Every new
12 religious wave requires a new centre. The old religion can only be
13 revived by a new centre. Hang your dogmas or doctrines, they
14 never pay. It is a character, a life, a centre, a God-man that must
15 lead the way, that must be the centre round which all other
16 elements will gather themselves and then fall like a tidal wave upon
17 the society, carrying all before it, washing away all impurities.
18 Again, a piece of wood can only easily be cut along the grain. So the
19 old Hinduism can only be reformed through Hinduism, and not
20 through the new-fangled reform movements. At the same time the
21 reformers must be able to unite in themselves the culture of both
22 the East and the West. Now do you not think that you have already
23 seen the nucleus of such a great movement, that you have heard
24 the low rumblings of the coming tidal wave? That centre, that God-
25 man to lead was born in India. He was the great Ramakrishna
26 Paramahansa, and round him this band is slowly gathering. They
27 will do the work. Now, Diwanji Maharaj, this requires an
28 organisation, money--a little at least to set the wheel in motion. Who
29 would have given us money in India?--So, Diwanji Maharaj, I
30 crossed over to America. You may remember I begged all the
31 money from the poor, and the offers of the rich I would not accept
32 because they could not understand my ideas. Now lecturing for a
33 year in this country, I could not succeed at all (of course, I have no
34 wants for myself) in my plan for raising some funds for setting up
35 my work. First, this year is a very bad year in America; thousands of
36 their poor are without work. Secondly, the missionaries and the
37 Brahmo Samajists try to thwart all my views. Thirdly, a year has
38 rolled by, and our countrymen could not even do so much for me as
39 to say to the American people that I was a real Sannyasin and no
40 cheat, and that I represented the Hindu religion. Even this much,
41 the expenditure of a few words, they could not do! Bravo, my
42 countrymen! I love them, Diwanji Saheb. Human help I spurn with
43 my foot. He who has been with me through hills and dales, through
44 deserts or forests, will be with me, I hope; if not, some heroic soul
45 would arise some time or other in India, far abler than myself, and
46 carry it out. So I have told you all about it. Diwanji, excuse my long
47 letter, my noble friend, one of the few who really feel for me, have
48 real kindness for me. You are at liberty, my friend, to think that I am
49 a dreamer, a visionary; but believe at least that I am sincere to the
50 backbone, and my greatest fault is that I love my country only too,
51 too well. May you and yours be blessed ever and ever, my noble,
52 noble friend. May the shadow of the Almighty ever rest on all those
53 you love. I offer my eternal gratitude to you. My debt to you is

1 immense, not only because you are my friend, but also because you
2 have all your life served the Lord and your motherland so well.

3 Ever yours in
4 gratitude,

5 Vivekananda

8 XXI

9 541 Dearborn
10 Ave.

11 Chicago

12 28 June, 1894

13 Dear__ {a Madras disciple},

14 The other day I received a letter from G. G., Mysore. G. G.
15 unfortunately thinks that I am all-knowing, else he would have
16 written his Canarese address on the top of the letter more legibly.
17 Then again it is a great mistake to address me letters to any other
18 place but Chicago. It was my mistake of course at first, because I
19 ought to have thought of the fine Buddhi (intellect) of our friends
20 who are throwing letters at me anywhere they find an address at
21 the top. But tell our Madras Brihaspatis (i.e. wise fellows) that they
22 already knew full well that before their letters reach, I may be 1000
23 miles away from that particular place, for I am continuously
24 travelling. In Chicago there is a friend whose house is my
25 headquarters.

26 Now as to my prospects here--it is well-nigh zero. Why,
27 because although I had the best purpose, it has been made null and
28 void by these causes. All that I get about India is from Madras
29 letters. Your letters say again and again how I am being praised in
30 India. But that is between you and me, for I never saw a single
31 Indian paper writing about me, except the three square inches sent
32 to me by Alasinga. On the other hand, everything that is said by
33 Christians in India is sedulously gathered by the missionaries and
34 regularly published, and they go from door to door to make my
35 friends give me up. They have succeeded only too well, for there is
36 not one word for me from India. Indian Hindu papers may laud me
37 to the skies, but not a word of that ever came to America, so that
38 many people in this country think me a fraud. In the face of the
39 missionaries and with the jealousy of the Hindus here to back them,
40 I have not a word to say.

41 I now think it was foolish of me to go to the Parliament on the
42 strength of the urging of the Madras boys. They are boys after all.
43 Of course, I am eternally obliged to them, but they are after all
44 enthusiastic young men without any executive abilities. I came here
45 without credentials. How else to show that I am not a fraud in the
46 face of the missionaries and the Brahmo Samaj? Now I thought
47 nothing so easy as to spend a few words; I thought nothing would
48 be so easy as to hold a meeting of some respectable persons in

1 Madras and Calcutta and pass a resolution thanking me and the
2 American people for being kind to me and sending it over officially,
3 i.e. through the Secretary of the function, to America, for instance,
4 sending one to Dr. Barrows and asking him to publish it in the
5 papers and so on, to different papers of Boston, New York, and
6 Chicago. Now after all, I found that it is too terrible a task for India
7 to undertake. There has not been one voice for me in one year and
8 every one against me, for whatever you may say of me in your
9 homes, who knows anything of it here? More than two months ago I
10 wrote to Alasinga about this. He did not even answer my letter. I am
11 afraid his heart has grown lukewarm. So you must first think of that
12 and then show this letter to the Madras people. On the other hand,
13 my brethren foolishly talk nonsense about Keshab Sen; and the
14 Madrasis, telling the Theosophists anything I write about them, are
15 creating only enemies. . . . Oh! If only I had one man of some true
16 abilities and brains to back me in India! But His will be done. I
17 stand a fraud in this country. It was my foolishness to go to the
18 Parliament without any credentials, hoping that there would be
19 many for me. I have got to work it out slowly.

20 On the whole, the Americans are a million times nobler than
21 the Hindus, and I can work more good here than in the country of
22 the ingrate and the heartless. After all, I must work my Karma out.
23 So far as pecuniary circumstances go I am all right and will be all
24 right. The number of Theosophists in all America is only 625 by the
25 last census. Mixing up with them will smash me in a minute rather
26 than help me in any way. What nonsense does Alasinga mean by my
27 going to London to see Mr. Old etc. Fool! the boys there don't know
28 what they are talking. And this pack of Madras babies cannot even
29 keep a counsel in their blessed noodles! Talk nonsense all day, and
30 when it comes to the least business, they are nowhere! Boobies,
31 who cannot get up a few meetings of 50 men each and send up a
32 few empty *words* only to help me, talk big about influencing the
33 world. I have written to you about the phonograph. Now there is
34 here an electric fan costing \$20 and working beautifully. The
35 battery works 100 hours and then can be replenished at any
36 electric plant. Good-bye, I have had enough of the Hindus. Now His
37 will be done, I obey and bow down to my Karma. However, do not
38 think me ungrateful. . . . The Madras people have done for me more
39 than I deserved and more than was in their power. It was my
40 foolishness--the forgetting for a moment that we Hindus have not
41 yet become human beings and giving up for a moment my self-
42 reliance and relying upon the Hindus--that I came to grief. Every
43 moment I expected something from India. No, it never came. Last
44 two months especially I was in torture at every moment. No, not
45 even a newspaper from India! My friends waited--waited month
46 after month; nothing came, not a voice. Many consequently grew
47 cold and at last gave me up. But it is the punishment for relying
48 upon man and upon brutes, for our countrymen are not men as yet.
49 They are ready to be praised, but when their turn comes even to
50 say a word, they are nowhere.

51 My thanks eternal to the Madras young men. May the Lord
52 bless them for ever. America is the best field in the world to carry

1 on my idea; so I do not think of leaving America soon. And why?
2 Here I have food and drink and clothes, and everybody so kind, and
3 all this for a few good words! Why should I give up such a noble
4 nation to go to the land of brutes and ingrates and the brainless
5 boobies held in eternal thralldom of superstitious, merciless, pitiless
6 wretches? So good-bye again. You may show this letter to the
7 people with discretion, even Alasinga upon whom I built so much.
8 By the by, will you kindly send up a few copies of the sketch of
9 Ramakrishna Paramahansa's life written by Mazumdar to Chicago?
10 They have lots in Calcutta. Don't forget the address 541 Dearborn
11 Avenue (not Street), Chicago, or c/o Thomas Cook, Chicago. Any
12 other address would cause much delay and confusion, as I am
13 continually travelling, and Chicago is my headquarters, although
14 even this much did not come to the brains of our Madras friends.
15 Kindly give G. G., Alasinga, Secretary, and all others my eternal
16 blessings. I am always praying for their welfare, and I am not in the
17 least displeased with them, but I am not pleased with myself. I
18 committed a terrible error--of calculating upon others' help--once in
19 my life--and I have paid for it. It was my fault and not theirs. Lord
20 bless all the Madras people. They are at least far superior to the
21 Bengalis, who are simply fools and have no souls, no stamina at all.
22 Good-bye, good-bye. I have launched my boat in the waves, come
23 what may. Regarding my brutal criticisms, I have really no right to
24 make them. You have done for me infinitely more than I deserve. I
25 must bear my own Karma, and that without a murmur. Lord bless
26 you all.

27 Yours truly,

28 Vivekananda

29 PS. I am afraid Alasinga's college has closed, but I have no
30 intimation of it, and he never gave me his home address. Kidi has
31 dropped out, I am afraid.

32 V.

33
34
35 XXII

36 C/o Dr. E.

37 Guernsey

38 Fishkill

39 landing, N.Y.

40 July, 1894

41 Dear Mother {Mrs. George W. Hale},

42 I came yesterday to this place, and shall remain here a few
43 days. I received in New York a letter from you but did not receive
44 any *Interior*, for which I am glad, because I am not perfect yet, and
45 knowing the "unselfish love" the Presbyterian priests, especially the
46 *Interior* has for "me", I want to keep aloof from rousing bad
47 feelings towards these "sweet Christian gentlemen" in my heart.

48 Our religion teaches that anger is a great sin, even if it is

1 "righteous". Each must follow his own religion. I could not for my
2 soul distinguish ever the distinction between "religious anger" and
3 "commonplace anger", "religious killing" and "commonplace
4 killing", "religious slandering and irreligious", and so forth. Now
5 may that "fine" ethical distinction ever enter into the ethics of our
6 nation! Jestng apart, Mother Church, I do not care the least for the
7 gambols these men play, seeing as I do through and through the
8 insincerity, the hyposcrisy, and love of self and name that is the *only*
9 *motive power* in these men.

10 As to the photographs, the first time the Babies got a few
11 copies, and the second time you brought a few copies; you know
12 they are to give 50 copies in all. Sister Isabelle knows better than I.

13 With my sincerest love and respects for you and Father Pope.

14 I remain,

15 Yours,

16 Vivekananda

17 PS. How are you enjoying the heat? I am bearing the heat
18 very well here. I had an invitation to Swampscott on the sea from a
19 very rich lady whose acquaintance I made last winter in New York,
20 but I declined with thanks. I am very careful not to take the
21 hospitality of anybody here, especially the rich. I had a few other
22 invitations from some very rich people here. I refused; I have by
23 this time seen the whole business through. Lord bless you and
24 yours, Mother Church, for your sincerity. Oh! it is so rare in this
25 world.

26 Yours

27 affectionately,

28 V.

29
30 XXIII

31 *To the Hale Sisters (about the*
32 *Calcutta meeting of 5th Sept., 1894)*

33 New York

34 9th July

35 (Sept?), 1894

36 O My Sisters,

37 Glory unto Jagadamba (Mother of the Universe)! I have
38 gained beyond expectations. The prophet has been honoured and
39 with a *vengeance*. I am weeping like a child at His mercy--He
40 never leaves His servant, sisters. The letter I send you will explain
41 all, and the printed things are coming to the American people. The
42 names there are the very flower of our country. The President was
43 the chief *nobleman* of Calcutta, and the other man Mahesh
44 Chandra Nyayaratna is the principal of the Sanskrit College and the
45 chief Brahmin in all India and recognised by the Government as
46 such. The letter will tell you all. O sisters! What a rogue am I that in
47 the face of such mercies sometimes the faith totters--seeing every

1 moment that I am in His hands. Still the mind sometimes gets
2 despondent. Sister, there is a God--a Father--a *Mother* who never
3 leaves His Children, never, never, never. Put uncanny theories aside
4 and becoming children take refuge in Him. I cannot write more--I
5 am weeping like a woman.

6 Blessed, blessed art Thou, Lord God of my soul!

7 Yours

8 affectionately,

9 Vivekananda

10
11
12 XXIV

13 Swampscott

14 26th July,

15 1894

16 Dear Babies {the Hale sisters},

17 Now don't let my letters stray beyond the circle, please. I had
18 a beautiful letter from sister Mary. See how I am getting the dash,
19 sister Jeany teaches me all that. She can jump and run and play and
20 swear like a devil and talk slang at the rate of 500 a minute; only
21 she does not much care for religion, only a little. She is gone today
22 home, and I am going to Greenacre. I had been to see Mrs. Breed.
23 Mrs. Stone was there, with whom is residing Mrs. Pullman and all
24 the golden bugs, my old friends hereabouts. They are kind as usual.
25 On my way back from Greenacre I am going to Annisquam to see
26 Mrs. Bagley for a few days.

27 Darn it, forget everything. I had duckings in the sea like a
28 fish. I am enjoying every bit of it. What nonsense was the song
29 Harriet taught me "dans la plaine" the deuce take it. I told it to a
30 French scholar and he laughed and laughed till the fellow was well-
31 nigh burst at my wonderful translation. That is the way you would
32 have taught me French! You are a pack of fools and heathens, I tell
33 you. Now are you gasping for breath like a huge fish stranded? I am
34 glad that you are sizzling. Oh! how nice and cool it is here, and it is
35 increased a hundred-fold when I think about the gasping, sizzling,
36 boiling, frying four old maids, and how cool and nice I am here.
37 Whooooo!

38 Miss Phillips has a beautiful place somewhere in N.Y. State--
39 mountain, lake, river, forest altogether--what more? I am going to
40 make a Himalayas there and start a monastery as sure as I am
41 living--I am not going to leave this country without throwing one
42 more apple of discord into this already roaring, fighting, kicking,
43 mad whirlpool of American religion. Well, dear old maids, you
44 sometimes have a glimpse of the lake and on every hot noon, think
45 of going down to the bottom of the lake, down, down, down, until it
46 is cool and nice, and then to lie down on the bottom, with that
47 coolness above and around, and lie there still, silent, and just doze--
48 not sleep, but dreamy dozing half unconscious sort of bliss-- very

1 much like that which opium brings; that is delicious; and drinking
2 lots of iced water. Lord bless my soul--I had such cramps several
3 times as would have killed an elephant. So I hope to keep myself
4 away from the cold water.

5 May you be all happy, dear *fin de siecle* young ladies, is the
6 constant prayer of Vivekananda.

9 XXV

10 Greenacre

11 11th August,

12 1894

13 Dear Sisters {the Hale sisters},

14 I have been all this time in Greenacre. I enjoyed this place
15 very much. They have been all very kind to me. One Chicago lady,
16 Mrs. Pratt of Kenilworth, wanted to give me \$500; she became so
17 much interested in me; but I refused. She has made me promise
18 that I would send word to her whenever I need money, which I hope
19 the Lord will never put me in. His help alone is sufficient for me. I
20 have not heard anything from you nor from Mother. Neither have I
21 any news from India as to the arrival of the phonograph.

22 If there was anything in my letter to you which was offensive,
23 I hope you all know that I meant everything in love. It is useless to
24 express my gratitude to you for your kindness. Lord bless you and
25 shower His choicest blessings on you and those you love. To your
26 family I am ever, ever beholden. You know it. You feel it. I cannot
27 express it. On Sunday I am going to lecture at Plymouth at the
28 "Sympathy of Religions" meetings of Col. Higginson. Herewith I
29 send a photograph Cora Stockham took of the group under the tree.
30 It is only a proof and will fade away under exposure, but I cannot
31 get anything better at present. Kindly tender my heartfelt love and
32 gratitude to Miss Howe. She has been so, so kind to me. I do not
33 need anything at present. I shall be very glad to let you know if I
34 need anything. I think I am going to Fishkill from Plymouth, where I
35 will be only a couple of days. I will write you again from Fishkill.
36 Hope you are all happy, or rather I know you are. Pure and good
37 souls can never be unhappy. I shall have a very nice time the few
38 weeks I am here. I will be in New York next fall. New York is a
39 grand and good place. The New York people have a tenacity of
40 purpose unknown in any other city. I had a letter from Mrs. Potter
41 Palmer asking me to see her in August. She is a very gracious and
42 kind lady, etc. I have not much to say. There is my friend Dr. Janes
43 of New York, President of the Ethical Culture Society, who has
44 begun his lectures. I must go to hear him. He and I agree so much.
45 May you be always happy!

46 Ever your well-wishing

47 brother,

48 Vivekananda

XXVI

Bagley C/o Mrs.
Annisquam
31st August,
1894

Dear Sister {Mary Hale},

The letter from the Madras people was published in yesterday's *Boston Transcript*. I hope to send you a copy. You may have seen it in some Chicago paper. I am sure there is some mail for me at Cook & Sons--I shall be here till Tuesday next at least, on which day I am going to lecture here in Annisquam.

Kindly inquire at Cook's for my mail and send it over at Annisquam.

I had no news of you for some time. I sent two pictures to Mother Church yesterday and hope you will like them. I am very anxious about the Indian mail. With love for all, I am your ever affectionate brother,

Vivekananda

PS. As I do not know where you are I could not send something else which I have to send over to you.

V.

XXVII

Hotel
Bellevue
Boston
13th
September, 1894

Dear Leon {Landsberg},

Forgive me, but I have the right, as your Guru, to advise you, and I insist that you buy some clothes for yourself, *as the want of them stands in the way of your doing anything in this country*. Once you have a start, you may dress in whatever way you like. People do not object.

You need not thank me, for this is only a duty. According to Hindu law, if a Guru dies, his disciple is his heir, and not even his son--supposing him to have had one before becoming a Sannyasin. This is, you see, an actual spiritual relationship, and none of your Yankee "tutor" business!

With all blessings and prayers for your success,

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Yours,
Vivekananda

XXVIII

Hotel
Bellevue
Beacon St.,
Boston
13th
September, 1894

Dear Sister {Mary Hale},

Your kind note reached me this morning. I have been in this hotel for about a week. I will remain in Boston some time yet. I have plenty of gowns already, in fact, more than I can carry with ease. When I had that drenching in Annisquam, I had on that beautiful black suit you appreciate so much, and I do not think it can be damaged any way; it also has been penetrated with my deep meditations on the Absolute. I am very glad that you enjoyed the summer so well. As for me, I am vagabondising. I was very much amused the other day at reading Abe Hue's description of the vagabond lamas of Tibet--a true picture of our fraternity. He says they are queer people. They come when they will, sit at everybody's table, invitation or no invitation, live where they will, and go where they will. There is not a mountain they have not climbed, not a river they have not crossed, not a nation they do not know, not a language they do not talk. He thinks that God must have put into them a part of that energy which makes the planets go round and round eternally. Today this vagabond lama was seized with a desire of going right along scribbling, and so I walked down and entering a store bought all sorts of writing material and a beautiful portfolio which shuts with a clasp and has even a little wooden inkstand. So far it promises well. Hope it will continue. Last month I had mail enough from India and am greatly delighted with my countrymen at their generous appreciation of my work. Good enough for them. I cannot find anything more to write. Prof. Wright, his wife, and children were as good as ever. Words cannot express my gratitude to them.

Everything so far is not going bad with me except that I had a bad cold. Now I think the fellow is gone. This time I tried Christian Science for insomnia and really found it worked very well. Wishing you all happiness, I remain, ever your affectionate brother,

Vivekananda

PS. Kindly tell Mother that I do not want any coat now.

XXIX

Chicago

1
2 September,
3 1894

4 Dear Diwanji Saheb {Shri Haridas Viharidas Desai},

5 Your kind letter reached long ago, but as I had not anything
6 to write I was late in answering.

7 Your kind note to G. W. Hale has been very gratifying, as I
8 owed them that much. I have been travelling all over this country
9 all this time and seeing everything. I have come to this conclusion
10 that there is only one country in the world which understands
11 religion--it is India; that with all their faults the Hindus are head
12 and shoulders above all other nations in morality and spirituality;
13 and that with proper care and attempt and struggle of all her
14 disinterested sons, by combining some of the active and heroic
15 elements of the West with the calm virtues of the Hindus, there will
16 come a type of men far superior to any that have ever been in this
world.

17 I do not know when I come back; but I have seen enough of
18 this country, I think, and so soon will go over to Europe and then to
19 India.

20 With my best love, gratitude to you and all your brothers,

21 I remain, yours
22 faithfully,

23 Vivekananda

24

25

26 XXX

27 Chicago(?)

28 September,

29 1894(3?)²⁶²

30 Dear Diwanji Saheb {Shri Haridas Viharidas Desai},

31 Very kind of you to send up a man inquiring about my health
32 and comfort. But that's quite of a piece with your fatherly character.
33 I am all right here. Your kindness has left nothing more to be
34 desired here. I hope soon to see you in a few days. I don't require
35 any conveyance while going down. Descent is very bad, and the
36 ascent is the worst part of the job, that's the same in everything in
37 the world. My heartfelt gratitude to you.

38 Yours
39 faithfully,

40 Vivekananda

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1 ²⁶² ?Diwanji never visited U.S.A. The time and place given by his relatives are
2 wrong obviously.
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XXXI

1125 St. Paul
St.
Baltimore
October,
1894

Dear Mother {Mrs. Hale},

You see where I am now. Did you see a telegram from India in the *Chicago Tribune* ? Did they print the address from Calcutta? From here I go to Washington, thence to Philadelphia and then to New York; send me the address of Miss Mary in Philadelphia so that I may look in on my way to New York. Hope your worry is over.

Yours
affectionately,
Vivekananda

XXXII

c/o Mrs. E.
Totten
1703, 1st
Street
Washington
[November
1(?), 1894]

Dear Sister {Mary Hale},

I have received two letters which you were very kind to take the trouble to write. I am going to talk here today, tomorrow at Baltimore, then again Monday at Baltimore, and Tuesday at Washington again. So I will be in Philadelphia a few days after that. I shall write to you the day I start from Washington. I shall be in Philadelphia a few days only to see Prof. Wright, and then I go to New York and run for a little while between New York and Boston, and then go to Chicago via Detroit; and then "whist" . . ., as Senator Palmer says, to England.

The word "Dharma" means religion. I am very sorry they treated Petro very badly in Calcutta. I have been very well treated here and am doing very well. Nothing extraordinary in the meantime except I got vexed at getting loads of newspapers from India; so after sending a cart-load to Mother Church and another to Mrs. Guernsey, I had to write them to stop sending their newspapers. I have had "boom" enough in India. Alasinga writes that every village all over the country now has heard of me. Well, the old peace is gone for ever and no rest anywhere from heretofore. These newspapers of India will be my death, I am sure. They will now talk what I ate on such and such a date and how I

sneezed. Lord bless them, it was all my foolery. I really came here to raise a little money secretly and go over but was caught in the trap and now no more of a reserved life.

Wishing you all enjoyments,
I remain, yours
affectionately,
Vivekananda

XXXIII

Chicago
15th November,
1894(?)

Dear Diwanji Saheb {Shri Haridas Viharidas Desai},

I here received your kind note. So very kind of you to remember me even here, I have not seen your Narayan Hemchandra. He is not in America, I believe. I have seen many strange sights and grand things. I am glad that there is a good chance of your coming over to Europe. Avail yourself of it by any means. The fact of our isolation from all the other nations of the world is the cause of our degeneration and its only remedy is getting back into the current of the rest of the world. Motion is the sign of life. America is a grand country. It is a paradise of the poor and women. There is almost no poor in the country, and nowhere else in the world women are so free, so educated, so cultured. They are everything in society.

This is a great lesson. The Sannyasin has not lost a bit of his Sannyasinship, even his mode of living. And in this most hospitable country, every home is open to me. The Lord who guides me in India, would He not guide me here? And He has.

You may not understand why a Sannyasin should be in America, but it was necessary. Because the only claim you have to be recognised by the world is your religion, and good specimens of our religious men are required to be sent abroad to give other nations an idea that India is not dead.

Some representative men must come out of India and go to all the nations of the earth to show at least that you are not savages. You may not feel the necessity of it from your Indian home, but, believe me, much depends upon that for your nation. And a Sannyasin who has no idea of doing good to his fellows is a brute, not a Sannyasin.

I am neither a sightseer nor an idle traveller; but you will see, if you live to see, and bless me all your life.

Mr. Dvivedi's papers were too big for the Parliament, and they had to be cut short.

I spoke at the Parliament of Religions, and with what effect I

1 may quote to you from a few newspapers and magazines ready at
2 hand. I need not be self-conceited, but to you in confidence I am
3 bound to say, because of your love, that no Hindu made such an
4 impression in America, and if my coming has done nothing, it has
5 done this that the Americans have come to know that India even
6 today produces men at whose feet even the most civilised nations
7 may learn lessons of religion and morality. Don't you think that is
8 enough to say for the Hindu nation sending over here their
9 Sannyasin? You would hear the details from Virchand Gandhi.

10 These I quote from the journals: "But eloquent as were many
11 of the brief speeches, no one expressed as well the spirit of the
12 Parliament (of religions) and its limitations as the Hindu monk. I
13 copy his address in full, but I can only suggest its effect upon the
14 audience; for he is an orator by Divine right, and his strong
15 intelligent face in its picturesque setting of yellow and orange was
16 hardly less interesting than these earnest words and the rich
17 rhythmical utterance he gave them." (Here the speech is quoted *in*
18 *extenso* .) *New York Critique* .

19 "He has preached in clubs and churches until his faith has
20 become familiar to us. . . . His culture, his eloquence, and his
21 fascinating personality have given us *a new idea of Hindu*
22 *civilisation* His fine, intelligent face and his deep musical voice,
23 prepossessing one at once in his favour. . . . He speaks without
24 notes, presenting his facts and his conclusions with the greatest art
25 and the most convincing sincerity, and rising often to rich inspiring
26 eloquence." (*ibid.*)

27 "Vivekananda is undoubtedly the greatest figure in the
28 Parliament of Religions. After hearing him we feel how foolish it is
29 to send missionaries to this learned nation." *Herald* (the greatest
30 paper here).

31 I cease from quoting more lest you think me conceited; but
32 this was necessary to you who have become nearly frogs in the well
33 and would not see how the world is going on elsewhere. I do not
34 mean you personally, my noble friend, but our nation in general.

35 I am the same here as in India, only here in this highly
36 cultural land there is an appreciation, a sympathy which our
37 ignorant fools never dream of. There our people grudge us monks a
38 crumb of bread, here they are ready to pay one thousand rupees a
39 lecture and remain grateful for the instructions for ever.

40 I am appreciated by these strangers more than I was ever in
41 India. I can, if I will, live here all my life in the greatest luxury; but I
42 am a Sannyasin, and "India, with all thy faults I love thee still". So I
43 am coming back after some months, and go on sowing the seeds of
44 religion and progress from city to city as I was doing so long,
45 although amongst a people who know not what appreciation and
46 gratefulness are.

1 I am ashamed of my own nation when I compare their
2 beggarly, selfish, unappreciative, ignorant ungratefulness with the
3 help, hospitality, sympathy, and respect which the Americans have
4 shown to me, a representative of a foreign religion. Therefore come
5 out of the country, see others, and compare.

6 Now after these quotations, do you think it was worth while
7 to send a Sannyasin to America?

8 Please do not publish it. I hate notoriety in the same manner
9 as I did in India.

10 I am doing the Lord's work, and wherever He leads I follow.
11 {Sanskrit} etc.--He who makes the dumb eloquent and the lame
12 cross a mountain, He will help me. I do not care for human help. He
13 is ready to help me in India, in America, on the North Pole, if He
14 thinks fit. If He does not, none else can help me. Glory unto the
15 Lord for ever and ever.

16 Yours with
17 blessings,

Vivekananda

21 XXXIV

22 541 Dearborn
23 Avenue
24 Chicago
25 November(?),
26 1894

27 Dear Diwanji {Shri Haridas Viharidas Desai},

28 Your letter pleased me extremely. I, of course, understand the
29 joke, but I am not the baby to be put off with a joke; now take more.

30 The secret of success of the Westerners is the power of
31 organisation and combination. That is only possible with mutual
32 trust and co-operation and help. Now here is Virchand Gandhi, the
33 Jain, whom you well knew in Bombay. This man never takes
34 anything but pure vegetables even in this terribly cold climate, and
35 tooth and nail tries to defend his countrymen and religion. The
36 people of this country like him very well, but what are they doing
37 who sent him over? They are trying to outcast him. Jealousy is a
38 vice necessarily generated in slaves. Again it is jealousy that holds
39 them down.

40 Here were . . . ; they were all trying to lecture and get money
41 thereby. They did something, but I succeeded better than they--why,
42 I did not put myself as a bar to their success. It was the will of the
43 Lord. But all these . . . except . . . have fabricated and circulated the
44 most horrible lies about me in this country, and behind my back.
45 Americans will never stoop to such meanness.

46 . . . If any man tries to move forward here, everybody is ready

1 to help him. In India you may try tomorrow by writing a single line
2 of praise for me in any of our papers (Hindu), and the next day they
3 would be all against me. Why? It is the nature of slaves. They
4 cannot suffer to see any one of their brethren putting his head the
5 least above their rank. . . . Do you mean to compare such stuff with
6 these children of liberty, self-help, and brotherly love? The nearest
7 approach to our people are the freed slaves of the U.S.A., the
8 Negroes. Why, in the South they are about twenty millions and are
9 now free. The whites are a handful, still the whites hold them down
10 all the same. Why, even when they have every right by law, a bloody
11 war between the brothers has been fought to free these slaves? The
12 same defect--jealousy. Not one of these Negroes would bear to see
13 his brother-Negro praised or pushing on. Immediately they would
14 join the whites to crush him down. You can have no idea about it
15 until you come out of India. It is all right for those who have plenty
16 of money and position to let the world roll on such, but I call him a
17 traitor who, having been educated, nursed in luxury by the heart's
18 blood of the downtrodden millions of toiling poor, never even takes
19 a thought for them. Where, in what period of history your rich men,
20 noblemen, your priests and potentates took any thought for the
21 poor--the grinding of whose faces is the very life-blood of their
22 power?

23 But the Lord is great, the vengeance came sooner or later,
24 and they who sucked the life-blood of the poor, whose very
25 education was at their expense, whose very power was built on
26 their poverty, were in their turn sold as slaves by hundreds and
27 thousands, their wives and daughters dishonoured, their property
28 robbed for the last 1,000 years, and do you think it was for no
29 cause? Why amongst the poor of India so many are Mohammedans?
30 It is nonsense to say, they were converted by the sword. It was to
31 gain their liberty from the . . . zemindars and from the . . . priest,
32 and as a consequence you find in Bengal there are more
33 Mohammedans than Hindus amongst the cultivators, because there
34 were so many zemindars there. Who thinks of raising these sunken
35 downtrodden millions? A few thousand graduates do not make a
36 nation, a few rich men do not make a nation. True, our
37 opportunities are less, but still there is enough to feed and clothe
38 and made 300 millions more comfortable, nay, luxurious. Ninety per
39 cent of our people are without education--who thinks of that?--these
40 Babus, the so-called patriots?

41 Now, let me tell you--still there is a God, no joke. He is
42 ordering our lives, and although I know a nation of slaves cannot
43 but try to bite at the hand that wants to give them medicine, yet,
44 pray with me, you--one of the few that have real sympathy for
45 everything good, for everything great, one at least whom I know to
46 be a man of true ring, nobility of nature, and a thorough sincerity of
47 head and heart--pray with me:

48 "Lead, kindly Light,
49 amid th' encircling gloom."

50 I do not care what they say. I love my God, my religion, my
51 country, and above all, myself, a poor beggar. I love the poor, the

1 ignorant, the downtrodden, I feel for them--the Lord knows how
2 much. He will show me the way. I do not care a fig for human
3 approbation or criticism. I think of most of them as ignorant, noisy
4 children--they have not penetrated into the inner nature of
5 sympathy, into the spirit which is all love.'

6 I have that insight through the blessing of Ramakrishna. I am
7 trying to work with my little band, all of these poor beggars like me,
8 you have seen them. But the Lord's works have been always done
9 by the lowly, by the poor. You bless me that I may have faith in my
10 Guru, in my God, and in myself.

11 The only way is love and sympathy. The only worship is love.

12 May He help you and yours ever and ever!

13 With prayers and
14 blessings,

15 Vivekananda

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18 XXXV

19 168, Brattle
20 Street

21 Cambridge

22 8th

23 December, 1894

24 Dear Sister {Mary Hale},

25 I have been here three days. We had a nice lecture from Lady
26 Henry Somerset. I have a class every morning here on Vedanta and
27 other topics. Perhaps you have got the copy of *Vedantism* by this
28 time which I left with Mother Temple to be sent over. I went to dine
29 with the Spaldings another day. That day they urged me, against my
30 repeated protests, to criticise the Americans. I am afraid they did
31 not relish it. It is of course always impossible to do it. What about
32 Mother Church and the family at Chicago? I had no letters from
33 them a long time. I would have run into town to see you before this,
34 had I time. I am kept pretty busy the whole day. Then there is the
35 fear of not meeting you.

36 If you have time, you may write, and I shall snatch the first
37 opportunity to see you. My time of course is always in the
38 afternoon, so long I shall be here, that is until the 27th or 28th of
39 this month; I will have to be very busy in the morning till 12 or 1.

40 With my love to you all,

41 Ever your affectionate

42 brother,

43 Vivekananda

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XXXVI

Cambridge,
December

1894

Dear Sister {Mary Hale},

I received your letter just now. If it is not against the rules of your society, why do you not come to see Mrs. Ole Bull, Miss Farmer, and Mrs. Adams the physical culturist from Chicago?

Any day you will find them there.

Yours ever

affectionately,

Vivekananda

XXXVII

Cambridge
21st

December, 1894

Dear Sister {Mary Hale},

I had not anything from you since your last. I am going away next Tuesday to New York. You must have received Mrs. Bull's letter in the meanwhile. If you cannot accept it, I shall be very glad to come over any day--I have time now as the lectures are at an end, except Sunday next.

Yours ever

affectionately,

Vivekananda

XXXVIII

528, 5th Ave.,
24th Jan., 1895

New York

Dear Miss Bell {Isabelle McKindley},

I hope you are well. . . .

My last lecture was not very much appreciated by the *men* but awfully so by *women*. You know this Brooklyn is the centre of anti-women's rights movements; and when I told them that women deserve and are fit for everything, they did not like it of course. Never mind, the women were in ecstasies.

I have got again a little cold. I am going to the Guernseys. I have got a room downtown also where I will go several hours to hold my classes etc. Mother Church must be all right by this time, and you are all enjoying this nice weather. Give Mrs. Adams

1 mountain high love and regard from me when you see her next.

2 Send my letters as usual to the Guernseys.

3 With love for all,

4 Ever your aff.

5 bro.,

6 Vivekananda

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9 XXXIX

10 New York

11 10th April,

12 1895

13 Dear Friend {Mr. Leggett},

14 It is impossible to express my gratitude for your kindly
15 inviting me to your country seat. I am involved in a mistake now
16 and find it impossible for me to come tomorrow. Tomorrow I have a
17 class at Miss Andrews' of 40 W. 9th Street. As I was given to
18 understand by Miss MacLeod that that class could be postponed, I
19 was only too glad at the prospect of joining the company tomorrow.
20 But I find that Miss MacLeod was mistaken and Miss Andrews came
21 to tell me that she could not by any means stop the class tomorrow
22 or even give notice to the members, who are about 50 or 60 in
23 number.

24 In view of this I sincerely regret my inability and hope that
25 Miss MacLeod and Mrs. Sturges will understand that it is an
26 unavoidable circumstance, and not the will, that stands in the way
27 of my taking advantage of your kind invitation.

28 I shall only be too glad to come day after tomorrow, or any
29 other day this week, as it suits you.

30 Ever

31 sincerely yours,

32 Vivekananda

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34 XL

35 54 W. 33rd

36 Street

37 New York

38 24th April,

39 1895

40 Dear Friend {Mr. E. T. Sturdy},

41 I am perfectly aware that although some truth underlies the
42 mass of mystical thought which has burst upon the Western world
43 of late, it is for the most part full of motives, unworthy, or insane.
44 For this reason, I have never had anything to do with these phases

1 of religion, either in India or elsewhere, and mystics as a class are
2 not very favourable to me. . . .

3 I quite agree with you that only the Advaita philosophy can
4 save mankind, whether in East or West, from "devil worship" and
5 kindred superstitions, giving tone and strength to the very nature of
6 man. India herself requires this, quite as much or even more than
7 the West. Yet it is hard uphill work, for we have first to create a
8 taste, then teach, and lastly proceed to build up the whole fabric.

9 Perfect sincerity, holiness, gigantic intellect, and an all-
10 conquering will. Let only a handful of men work with these, and the
11 whole world will be revolutionised. I did a good deal of platform
12 work in this country last year, and received plenty of applause, but
13 found that I was only working for myself. It is the patient upbuilding
14 of character, the intense struggle to *realise* the truth, which alone
15 will tell in the future of humanity. So this year I am hoping to work
16 along this line--training up to practical Advaita realisation a small
17 band of men and women. I do not know how far I shall succeed. The
18 West is the field for work if a man wants to benefit humanity, rather
19 than his own particular sect or country. I agree perfectly as to your
20 idea of a magazine. But I have no business capacity at all to do
21 these things. I can teach and preach, and sometimes write. But I
22 have intense faith in Truth. The Lord will send help and hands to
23 work with me. Only let me be perfectly pure, perfectly sincere, and
24 perfectly unselfish.

25 "Truth alone triumphs, not untruth; through truth alone
26 stretches the way to the Lord" (Atharva-Veda). He who gives up the
27 little self for the world will find the whole universe his. . . . I am
28 very uncertain about coming to England. I know no one there, and
29 here I am doing some work. The Lord will guide, in His own time.

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32 XLI

33 19 W. 38th St.
34 New York

35 Dear Friend {E. T. Sturdy},

36 I received your last duly, and as I had a previous arrangement
37 to come to Europe by the end of this August, I take your invitation
38 as a Divine Call.

39 "Truth alone triumphs, not untruth. Through truth alone lies
40 the way to Devayana (the way to the gods)." Those who think that a
41 little sugar-coating of untruth helps the spread of truth are
42 mistaken and will find in the long run that a single drop of poison
43 poisons the whole mass. . . . The man who is pure, and who dares,
44 does all things. May the Lord ever protect you from illusion and
45 delusion! I am ever ready to work with you, and the Lord will send
46 us friends by the hundred, if only we be our own friends first. "The
47 Atman alone is the friend of the Atman."

48 Europe has always been the source of social, and Asia of

1 spiritual power; and the whole history of the world is the tale of the
2 varying combinations of those two powers. Slowly a new leaf is
3 being turned in the story of humanity. The signs of this are
4 everywhere. Hundreds of new plans will be created and destroyed.
5 Only the fit will survive. And what but the true and the good is the
6 fit?

7 Yours etc.,

8 Vivekananda

10
11 XLII

12 New York

13 5th May,

14 1895

15 Dear Babies {the Hale Sisters},

16 What I expected has come. I always thought that although
17 Prof. Max Muller in all his writings on the Hindu religion adds in
18 the last a derogatory remark, he must see the whole truth in the
19 long run. As soon as you can, get a copy of his last book *Vedantism* ;
20 there you will find him swallowing the whole of it--*reincarnation*
21 and all.

22 Of course, you will not find it difficult at all to understand, as
23 it is only a part of what I have been telling you all this time.

24 Many points you will find smack of my paper in Chicago.

25 I am glad now the old man has seen the truth, because that is
26 the only way to have religion in the face of modern research and
27 science.

28 Hope you are enjoying Todd's *Rajasthan* .

29 With all love, your

30 brother,

31 Vivekananda

32 PS. When is Miss Mary coming to Boston?--V.

33
34 XLIII

35 c/o Miss

36 Philips

37 19 West 38th

38 Street

39 New York

40 28th May,

41 1895

42 Dear Alasinga,

43 Herewith I send a hundred dollars or £20-8-7 in English

1 money. Hope this will go just a little in starting your paper. Hoping
2 to do more by and by.

3 I remain, ever yours, with
4 blessings,

5 Vivekananda

6 PS. Reply immediately to it C/o the above address. New York
7 will be my headquarters henceforth.

8 I have succeeded in doing something in this country at last.

9 V.

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12 XLIV

13 21 W. 34th St.

14 New York

15 June, 1895

16 Dear Joe {Josephine MacLeod},

17 Experiences are gathering a bit thick round you. I am sure
18 they will lift many a veil more.

19 Mr. Leggett told me of your phonograph. I told him to get a
20 few cylinders--I talk in them through somebody's phonograph and
21 send them to Joe--to which he replied that he could buy one,
22 because "I always do what Joe asks me to do." I am glad there is so
23 much of hidden poetry in his nature.

24 I am going today to live with the Guernseys as the doctor
25 wants to watch me and cure me. . . . Doctor Guernsey, after
26 examining other things, was feeling my pulse, when suddenly
27 Landsberg (whom they had forbidden the house) got in and
28 retreated immediately after seeing me. Dr. Guernsey burst out
29 laughing and declared he would have paid that man for coming just
30 then, for he was then sure of his diagnosis of my case. The pulse
31 before was so regular, but just at the sight of Landsberg it almost
32 stopped from emotion. It is sure only a case of nervousness. He also
33 advises me strongly to go on with Doctor Helmer's treatment. He
34 thinks Helmer will do me a world of good, and that is what I need
35 now. Is not he broad?

36 I expect to see "the sacred cow" today in town. I will be in
37 New York a few days more. Helmer wants me to take three
38 treatments a week for four weeks, then two a week for four more,
39 and I will be all right. In case I go to Boston, he recommends me to
40 a very good *ostad* (expert) there whom he would advise on the
41 matter.

42 I said a few kind words to Landsberg and went upstairs to
43 Mother Guernsey to save poor Landsberg from embarrassment.

44 Ever yours in
45 the Lord,

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Vivekananda

XLV

Percy N. H.

17 June, 1895

(written on birch bark)

Dear Sister {Mary Hale},

Going tomorrow to the Thousand Islands care Miss Dutcher's, Thousand Island Park, N.Y. Where are you now? Where will you all be in summer? I have a chance of going to Europe in August, I will come to see you before I go. So write to me. Also I expect books and letters from India. Kindly send them care Miss Phillips, 19 W. 38th Street, N.Y. This is the bark in which all holy writings are written in India. So I write Sanskrit: May the husband of Uma (Shiva) protect you always.

May you all be blessed ever and ever.

Vivekananda

XLVI

54 W. 33rd
Street
New York
22nd June,
1895

Dear Sister {Mary Hale},

The letters from India and the parcel of books reached me safe. I am so happy to know of Mr. Sam's arrival. I am sure he is "bewareing of the vidders" nicely. I met a friend of Mr. Sam's one day on the street. He is an Englishman with a name ending in "ni". He was very nice. He said he was living in the same house with Sam somewhere in Ohio.

I am going on pretty nearly in the same old fashion. Talking when I can and silent when forced to be. I do not know whether I will go to Greenacre this summer. I saw Miss Farmer the other day. She was in a hurry to go away, so I had but very little talk with her. She is a noble, noble lady.

How are you going on with your Christian Science lessons? I hope you will go to Greenacre. There you will find quite a number of them and also the Spiritualists, table turnings, palmists, astrologers, etc., etc. You will get all the "cures" and all the "isms" presided over by Miss Farmer.

Landsberg has gone away to live in some other place, so I am

1 left alone. I am living mostly on nuts and fruits and milk, and find it
2 very nice and healthy too. I hope to lose about 30 to 40 lbs. this
3 summer. That will be all right for my size. I am afraid I have
4 forgotten all about Mrs. Adam's lessons in walking. I will have to
5 renew them when she comes again to N.Y. Gandhi has gone to
6 England *en route* to India from Boston, I suppose.

7 I would like to know about his "chaperon" Mrs. Howard and
8 her present bereaved state. I am very glad to hear that the rugs did
9 not go down to the bottom of the Atlantic and are at last coming.

10 This year I could hardly keep my head up, and I did not go
11 about lecturing. The three great commentaries on the Vedanta
12 philosophy belonging to the three great sects of dualists, qualified
13 dualists, and monists are being sent to me from India. Hope they
14 will arrive safe. Then I will have an intellectual feast indeed. I
15 intend to write a book this summer on the Vedanta philosophy. This
16 world will always be a mixture of good and evil, of happiness and
17 misery; this wheel will ever go up and come down; dissolution and
18 resolution is the inevitable law. Blessed are those who struggle to
19 go beyond. Well, I am glad all the babies are doing well but sorry
20 there was no "catch" even this winter, and every winter the chances
21 are dwindling. down. Here near my lodgings is the Waldorf-Hotel,
22 the rendezvous of lots of titled but penniless Europeans on show for
23 "Yankee" heiresses to buy. You may have any selection here, the
24 stock is so full and varied. There is the man who talks no English;
25 there are others who lisp a few words which no one can
26 understand; and others are there who talk nice English, but their
27 chance is not so great as that of the dumb ones--the girls do not
28 think them enough foreign who talk plain English fluently.

29 I read somewhere in a funny book that an American vessel
30 was being foundered in the sea; the men were desperate and as a
31 last solace wanted some religious service being done. There was
32 "Uncle Josh" on board who was an elder in the Presbyterian
33 Church. They all began to entreat, "Do something religious, Uncle
34 Josh! We are all going to die." Uncle Joseph took his hat in his hand
35 and took up a collection on the spot!

36 That is all of religion he knew. And that is more or less
37 characteristic of the majority of *such people*. Collections are about
38 all the religion they know or will ever know. Lord bless them. Good-
39 bye for present. I am going to eat something; I feel very hungry.

40
41 affectionately,

Yours

Vivekananda

XLVII

46
47 Dutcher

c/o Miss

48
49 Park, N.Y.

Thousand Island

26th June, 1895

Dear Sister {Mary Hale},

Many thanks for the Indian mail. It brought a good deal of good news. You are enjoying by this time, I hope, the articles by Prof. Max Muller on the "Immortality of the Soul" which I sent to Mother Church. The old man has taken in Vedanta, bones and all, and has boldly come out. I am so glad to know the arrival of the rugs. Was there any duty to pay? If so I will pay that, I insist on it. There will come another big packet from the Raja of Khetri containing some shawls and brocades and nick-nacks. I want to present them to different friends. But they are not going to arrive before some months, I am sure.

I am asked again and again, as you will find in the letters from India, to go over. They are getting desperate. Now if I go to Europe, I will go as the guest of Mr. Francis Leggett of N.Y. He will travel all over Germany, England, France, and Switzerland for six weeks. From there I shall go to India, or I may return to America. I have a seed planted here and wish it to grow. This winter's work in N.Y. was splendid, and it may die if I suddenly go over to India, so I am not sure about going to India soon.

Nothing noticeable has happened during this visit to the Thousand Islands. The scenery is very beautiful and I have some of my friends here with me to talk about God and soul *ad libitum*. I am eating fruits and drinking milk and so forth, and studying huge Sanskrit books on Vedanta which they have kindly sent me from India.

If I come to Chicago I cannot come at least within six weeks or more. Baby needn't alter any of her plans for me. I will see you all somehow or other before I go.

You fussed so much over my reply to Madras, but it has produced a tremendous effect there. A late speech by the President of the Madras Christian College, Mr. Miller, embodies a large amount of my ideas and declares that the West is in need of Hindu ideas of God and man and calls upon the young men to go and preach to the West. This has created quite a furore of course amongst the Missions. What you allude to as being published in the *Arena* I did not see a bit of it. The women did not make any fuss over me at all in New York. Your friend must have drawn on his imagination. They were not of the "bossing" type at all. I hope Father Pope will go to Europe and Mother Church too. Travelling is the best thing in life. I am afraid I shall die if made to stick to one place for a long time. Nothing like a nomadic life!

The more the shades around deepen, the more the ends approach and the more one understands the true meaning of life, that it is a dream; and we begin to understand the failure of everyone to grasp it, for they only attempted to get meaning out of the meaningless. To get reality out of a dream is boyish enthusiasm. "Everything is evanescent, everything is changeful"--knowing this, the sage gives up both pleasure and pain and becomes a witness of this panorama (the universe) without attaching himself to anything.

1 "They indeed have conquered Heaven even in this life whose
2 mind has become fixed in *sameness* . God is pure and same to all,
3 therefore they are said to be *in God* " (Gita, V.19). Desire,
4 ignorance, and inequality--this is the trinity of bondage.

5 Denial of the will to live, knowledge, and same-sightedness is
6 the trinity of liberation.

7 *Freedom* is the goal of the universe.

8 "Nor love nor hate nor pleasure nor pain nor death nor life
9 nor religion nor irreligion: not this, not this, not this."

10 Yours ever,

11 Vivekananda

12
13
14 XLVIII

15 c/o Miss

16 Dutcher

17 Thousand Island

18 Park, N.Y.

19 26th June, 1895

20 Dear Sister {Mary Hale},

21 Many thanks for the Indian mail. I cannot express in words
22 my gratitude to you. As you have already read in Max Muller's
23 article on Immortality I sent Mother Church, that he thinks that
24 those we love in this life we must have loved in the past, so it seems
25 I must have belonged to the Holy Family in some past life. I am
26 expecting some books from India. I hope they have arrived. If so,
27 will you kindly send them over here? If any postage is due I shall
28 send it as soon as I get intimation. You did not write about the duty
29 on the rugs; there will be another big packet from Khetri containing
30 carpets and shawls and some brocades and other nick-nacks. I have
31 written them to get the duty paid there if it is possible through the
32 American Consul in Bombay. If not I shall have to pay it here. I do
33 not think they will arrive for some months yet. I am anxious about
34 the books. Kindly send them as soon as they arrive.

My love to Mother and Father Pope and all the sisters. I am enjoying this place immensely. Very little eating and good deal of thinking and talking and study. A wonderful calmness is coming over my soul. Every day I feel I have no duty to do; I am always in eternal rest and peace. It is He that works. We are only the instruments. Blessed be His name! The threefold bondage of lust and gold and fame is, as it were, fallen from me for the time being, and once more, even here, I feel what sometimes I felt in India, "From me all difference has fallen, all right or wrong, all delusion and ignorance has vanished, I am walking in the path beyond the qualities." What law I obey, what disobey? From that height the universe looks like a mud-puddle. Hari Om Tat Sat. He exists; nothing else does. I in Thee and Thou in me. Be Thou Lord my eternal refuge! Peace, Peace, Peace! Ever with love and blessings,

Your brother,

Vivekananda

IL

19 West 38th St.,

New York,

2nd August, 1895

Dear Friend {E. T. Sturdy},

Your kind note received today. I am going to Paris first with a friend and start for Europe on the 17th of August. I will however remain in Paris only a week to see my friend married, and then I go over to London.

Your advice about an organisation was very good indeed. And I am trying to act on that line.

I have many strong friends here, but unfortunately they are most of them poor. So the work here must be slow. Moreover it requires a few months more of work in New York to carry it to some visible shape: as such I will have to return to New York early this winter, and in summer I will return to London again. So far as I see now I can stay only a few weeks in London. But if the Lord wills, that small time may prove to be the beginning of great things. From Paris I will inform you by wire when I arrive in England.

Some Theosophists came to my classes in New York, but as soon as human beings *perceive* the glory of the Vedanta, all abracadabras fall off of themselves. This has been my uniform experience. Whenever mankind attains a higher vision, the lower vision disappears of itself. Multitude counts for nothing. A few heart-whole, sincere, and energetic men can do more in a year than a mob in a century. If there is heat in one body, then those others that come near it must catch it. This is the law. So success is ours, so long as we keep up the heat, the spirit of truth, sincerity, and love. My own life has been a very chequered one, but I have always found the eternal words verified: "Truth alone triumphs, not untruth. Through truth alone lies the way to God."

May the *Sat* in you be always your infallible guide! May He speedily attain to freedom and help others to attain it!

the *Sat*, Ever yours in

Vivekananda

L

Street, 19, West 38th

New York,

9th August,

1895

Dear Friend {E. T. Sturdy},

. . . It is only just that I should try to give you a little of my views. I fully believe that there are periodic ferments of religion in human society, and that such a period is now sweeping over the educated world. While each ferment, moreover, appears broken into various little bubbles, these are all eventually similar, showing the cause or causes behind them to be the same. That religious ferment which at present is every day gaining a greater hold over thinking men, has this characteristic that all the little thought-whirlpools into which it has broken itself declare one single aim--a vision and a search after the Unity of Being. On planes physical, ethical, and spiritual, an ever-broadening generalisation--leading up to a concept of Unity Eternal--is in the air; and this being so, all the movements of the time may be taken to represent, knowingly or unknowingly, the noblest philosophy of the unity man ever had--the Advaita Vedanta.

Again, it has always been observed that as a result of the struggles of the various fragments of thought in a given epoch, one bubble survives. The rest only arise to melt into it and form a single great wave, which sweeps over society with irresistible force.

In India, America, and England (the countries I happen to know about) hundreds of these are struggling at the present moment. In India, dualistic formulae are already on the wane, the Advaita alone holds the field in force. In America, many movements are struggling for the mastery. All these represent Advaita thought more or less, and that series, which is spreading most rapidly, approaches nearer to it than any of the others. Now if anything was ever clear to me, it is that one of these must survive, swallowing up all the rest, to be the power of the future. Which is it to be?

Referring to history, we see that only that fragment which is fit will survive, and what makes fit to survive but *character*? Advaita will be the future religion of thinking humanity. No doubt of that. And of all the sects, they alone shall gain the day who are able to show most character in their lives, no matter how far they may be.

1 Let me tell you a little personal experience. When my Master
2 left the body, we were a dozen penniless and unknown young men.
3 Against us were a hundred powerful organisations, struggling hard
4 to nip us in the bud. But Ramakrishna had given us one great gift,
5 the desire, and the lifelong struggle not to talk alone, but to *live the*
6 *life* . And today all India knows and reverences the Master, and the
7 truths he taught are spreading like wild fire. Ten years ago I could
8 not get a hundred persons together to celebrate his birthday
9 anniversary. Last year there were fifty thousand.

10 Neither numbers nor powers nor wealth nor learning nor
11 eloquence nor anything else will prevail, but *purity, living the life*, in
12 one word, *anubhuti* , realisation. Let there be a dozen such lion-
13 souls in each country, lions who have broken their own bonds, who
14 have touched the Infinite, whose whole soul is gone to Brahman,
15 who care neither for wealth nor power nor fame, and these will be
16 *enough* to shake the world.

17 Here lies the secret. Says Patanjali, the father of Yoga, "When
18 a man rejects all the superhuman powers, then he attains to the
19 cloud of virtue." He sees God. He becomes God and helps others to
20 become the same. This is all I have to preach. Doctrines have been
21 expounded enough. There are books by the million. Oh, for an
22 ounce of practice!

23 As to societies and organisations, these will come of
24 themselves. Can there be jealousy where there is nothing to be
25 jealous of? The names of those who will wish to injure us will be
26 legion. But is not that the surest sign of our having the truth? The
27 more I have been opposed, the more my energy has always found
28 expression. I have been driven and worshipped by princes. I have
29 been slandered by priests and laymen alike. But what of it? Bless
30 them all! They are my very Self, and have they not helped me by
31 acting as a spring-board from which my energy could take higher
32 and higher flights?

33 . . . I have discovered one great secret--I have nothing to fear
34 from *talkers* of religion. And the great ones who realise--they
35 become enemies to none! Let talkers talk! They know no better! Let
36 them have their fill of name and fame and money and woman. Hold
37 we on to realisation, to being Brahman, to becoming Brahman. Let
38 us hold on to truth unto death, and from life to life. Let us not pay
39 the least attention to what others say, and if, after a lifetime's effort,
40 one soul, only one, can break the fetters of the world and be free,
41 *we have done our work* . Hari Om!

42 . . . One word more. Doubtless I do love India. But every day
43 my sight grows clearer. What is India, or England, or America to us?
44 We are the servants of that God who by the ignorant is called MAN.
45 He who pours water at the root, does he not water the whole tree?

46 There is but one basis of well-being, social, political or
47 spiritual--to know that I and my brother are *one* . This is true for all
48 countries and all people. And Westerners, let me say, will realise it
49 more quickly than Orientals, who have almost exhausted
50 themselves in formulating the idea and producing a few cases of
51 individual realisation.

Let us work without desire for name or fame or rule over others. Let us be free from the triple bonds of lust, greed of gain, and anger. And this truth is with us!

the Lord, Ever yours in

Vivekananda

LI

C/o	Miss
-----	------

Hotel

Rue de La

Paris

5th

September, 1895

Dear and Blessed Friend {E. T. Sturdy},

It is useless to express my gratitude for your kindness; it is too great for expression. . . .

I have a cordial invitation from Miss Muller, and as her place is very near to yours, I think it will be nice to come to her place first for a day or two and then to come over to you.

My body was very ill for a few days, which caused this delay in writing you.

Hoping soon for the privilege of mingling hearts and heads together.

I remain, ever yours in love, and fellowship in the Lord,

Vivekananda

LII

C/o E. T.

Sturdy, Esq.,

High View,

Caversham,

Reading,

England

September,

1895

Dear Joe Joe {Josephine MacLeod},

A thousand pardons for not promptly writing to you. I arrived safe in London, found my friend, and am all right in his home. It is

1 beautiful. His wife is surely an angel, and his life is full of India. He
2 has been years there--mixing with the Sannyasins, eating their food,
3 etc., etc.; so you see I am very happy. I found already several
4 retired Generals from India; they were very civil and polite to me.
5 That wonderful knowledge of the Americans that identify every
6 black man with the negro is entirely absent here, and nobody even
7 stares at me in the street.

8 I am very much more at home here than anywhere out of
9 India. The English people know us, we know them. The standard of
10 education and civilisation is very high here--that makes a great
11 change, so does the education of many generations.

12 Have the Turtle-doves returned? The Lord bless them and
13 theirs for ever and ever. How are the babies--Alberta and Holister?
14 Give them my oceans of love and know it yourself.

15 My friend being a Sanskrit scholar, we are busy working on
16 the great commentaries of Shankara etc. Nothing but philosophy
17 and religion here, Joe Joe. I am going to try to get up classes in
18 October in London.

19 Ever affectionately with love and blessings,

20 Vivekananda

21
22 LIII

23 C/o E. T.
24 Sturdy, Esq.,
25 High View,
26 Caversham,
27 Reading,
28 England
29 October, 1895

30 {original in Bengali}

31 Dear Kali {Abhedananda},

32 You may have got my earlier letter. At present send all letters
33 to me at the above address. Mr. Sturdy is known to Tarakda. He has
34 brought me to his place, and we are both trying to create a stir in
35 England. I shall this year leave again in November for America. So I
36 require a man well-up in Sanskrit and English, particularly the
37 latter language--either Shashi or you or Sarada. Now, if you have
38 completely recovered, very well, you come; otherwise send Sharat.
39 The work is to teach the devotees I shall be leaving here, to make
40 them study the Vedanta, to do a little translation work into English,
41 and to deliver occasional lectures. "Work is apt to cloud spiritual
42 vision." X_ is very eager to come, but unless the foundation is
43 strongly laid, there is every likelihood of everything toppling down.
44 I am sending you a cheque along with this letter. Buy clothes and
45 other necessary things--whoever comes. I am sending the cheque in
46 the name of Master Mahashay Mahendra Babu. Gangadhar's
47 Tibetan *choga* is in the Math; get the tailor to make a similar *choga*

1 of gerua colour. See that the collar is a little high, that is, the throat
2 and neck should be covered. . . . Above all, you must have a woollen
3 overcoat, for it is very cold. If you do not put on an overcoat on the
4 ship, you will suffer much. . . . I am sending a second class ticket, as
5 there is not much difference between a first class and a second
6 class berth. . . . If it is decided to send Shashi then inform the
7 purser of the ship beforehand to provide him with vegetarian diet.

8 Go to Bombay and see Messrs. King, King & Co., Fort,
9 Bombay, and tell them that you are Mr. Sturdy's man. They will then
10 give you a ticket to England. A letter is being sent from here to the
11 Company with instructions. I am writing to the Maharaja of Khetri
12 to instruct his Bombay agent to look after the booking of your
13 passage. If this sum of Rs. 150/- is not sufficient for your outfit, get
14 the remainder from Rakhal. I shall send him the amount
15 afterwards. Keep another Rs. 50/- for pocket expenses--take it from
16 4/21/25Rakhal; I shall pay back later. I have not up to now got any
17 acknowledgement of the amount I sent to Chuni Babu. Start as
18 quickly as possible. Inform Mahendra Babu that he is my Calcutta
19 agent. Tell him to send a letter to Mr. Sturdy by next mail informing
20 him that he is ready to look after all business transactions in
21 Calcutta on your behalf. In effect, Mr. Sturdy is my secretary in
22 England, Mahendra Babu in Calcutta, and Alasinga in Madras. Send
23 this information to Madras also. Can any work be done unless all of
24 us gird up our loins? And be up and doing! "Fortune favours the
25 brave and energetic." Don't look back--forward, infinite energy,
26 infinite enthusiasm, infinite daring, and infinite patience--then alone
27 can great deeds be accomplished. We must set the whole world
28 afire.

29 Now on the day the steamer is due to start, write a letter to
30 Mr. Sturdy informing him by which steamer you are leaving for
31 England. Otherwise there is some likelihood of your having
32 difficulties when you reach London. Take the ship that comes
33 directly to London, for even if it takes a few days longer on the
34 voyage, the fares are less. At the moment our purse is lean. In time
35 we shall send preachers in large numbers to all the quarters of the
36 globe.

37
38 affectionately,

Yours

Vivekananda

41 PS. Write at once to the Maharaja of Khetri, that you are
42 going to Bombay and that you will be glad if his agent attends to
43 the booking of your passage and sees you off the board.

44 Keep my address with you written in a pocket-book, lest there
45 should be difficulties afterwards.

1 Caversham

2 Reading,

3 England

4 October,

5 1895

6 Dear Joe Joe {MacLeod},

7 I was so glad to hear from you. I was afraid you had forgotten
8 me.

9 I am going to have a few lectures in and about London. One
10 of them, a public one, will be at Princes' Hall on the 22nd at 8-30.

11 Come over and try to form a class. I have as yet done almost
12 nothing here. Of course, breaking the ice is slow always. It took me
13 two years in America to work up that little which we had in New
14 York.

15 With love for all,

16 Yours ever,

17 Vivekananda

18

19

20 LV

21 High View,

22 Caversham

23 Reading,

24 England

25 20th October,

26 1895

27 Dear Joe Joe {MacLeod},

28 This note is to welcome the Leggetts to London. This being in
29 a sense my native country, I send you my welcome first, I shall
30 receive your welcome next Tuesday the 22nd at Princes' Hall half
31 past eight p.m.

32 I am so busy till Tuesday, I am afraid, I shall not be able to
33 run in to see you. I, however, shall come to see you any day after
34 that. Possibly I may come on Tuesday.

35 With everlasting love and blessings,

36 Yours,

37 Vivekananda

38

39

40 LVI

41 80 Oakley

42 Street

1 Chelsea
2 31st October,
3 1895

4 Dear Joe Joe {MacLeod},

5 I shall be only too glad to come to lunch on Friday and see
6 Mr. Coit at the Albemarle.

7 Two American ladies, mother and daughter, living in London
8 came in to the class last night--Mrs. and Miss Netter. They were
9 very sympathetic of course. The class there at Mr. Chamier's is
10 finished. I shall begin at my lodgings from Saturday night next. I
11 expect to have a pretty good-sized room or two for my classes. I
12 have been also invited to Moncure Conways's Ethical Society where
13 I speak on the 10th. I shall have a lecture in the Balboa Society next
14 Tuesday. The Lord will help. I am not sure whether I can go up with
15 you on Saturday. You will have great fun in the country anyway, and
16 Mr. and Mrs. Sturdy are such nice people.

17 With love and
18 blessings,

19 Vivekananda

20

21 PS. Kindly order some vegetables for me. I don't care much
22 for rice--bread will do as well. I have become an awful vegetarian
23 now.

24 V.

25

26

27 LVII

28 80 Oakley St.,

29 Chelsea,

30 31st October, 1895

31 (5 p.m.)

32 Dear Friend {E. T. Sturdy},

33 Just now two young gentlemen, Mr. Silverlock and his friend,
34 left. Miss Muller also came this afternoon and left just when these
35 gentlemen came in.

36 One is an Engineer and the other is in the grain trade. They
37 have read a good deal of modern philosophy and science and have
38 been much struck by the similarity with the latest conclusions of
39 both with the ancient Hindu thought. They are very fine, intelligent,
40 and educated men. One has given up the Church, the other asked
41 me whether he should or not. Now, two things struck me after this
42 interview. First, we must hurry the book through. We will touch a
43 class thereby who are philosophically religious without the least
44 mystery-mongering. Second, both of them want to know the rituals
45 of my creed! This opened my eyes. The world in general must have
46 some form. In fact, in the ordinary sense religion is philosophy

1 concretised through rituals and symbols.

2 It is absolutely necessary to form some ritual and have a
3 Church. That is to say, we must fix on some ritual as fast as we can.
4 If you can come Saturday morning or sooner, we shall go to the
5 Asiatic Society library or you can procure for me a book which is
6 called *Hemadri Kosha*, from which we can get what we want, and
7 kindly bring the Upanishads. We will fix something grand, from
8 birth to death of a man. A mere loose system of philosophy gets no
9 hold on mankind.

10 If we can get it through, before we have finished the classes,
11 and publish it by publicly holding a service or two under it, it will go
12 on. They want to form a congregation, and they want ritual; that is
13 one of the causes why __ will never have a hold on Western people.

14 The Ethical Society has sent me another letter thanking me
15 for the acceptance of this offer. Also a copy of their forms. They
16 want me to bring with me a book from which to read for ten
17 minutes. Will you bring the Gita (translation) and the Buddhist
18 Jataka (translation) with you?

19 I would not do anything in this matter without seeing you
20 first.

21 Yours with love and
22 blessings,

23 Vivekananda

24

25

26 LVIII

27 80 Oakley

28 Street

29 Chelsea

30 1st

31 November, 1895

32 Dear Friend {E. T. Sturdy},

33 The tickets of the Balleren (?) Society are 35 in number. The
34 subject is "Indian Philosophy and Western Society". Chairman
35 blank.

36 As you did not ask me to send them over, I do not. I got your
37 letters properly.

38 Yours in the
39 *Sat*,

40 Vivekananda

41

42

43 LIX

1
 2 November, 1895
 3 Dear Friend {E. T. Sturdy},
 4 I think you are right; we shall work on our own lines and let
 5 things grow.
 6 I send you the note of the lecture.
 7 I shall come on Sunday if nothing extraordinary prevents me.
 8 Yours with
 9 love,
 10 Vivekananda
 11
 12
 13 LX
 14 R.M.S.
 15 "Britannic"
 16 Blessed and Beloved {E. T. Sturdy},
 17 So far the journey has been very beautiful. The purser has
 18 been very kind to me and gave me a cabin to myself. The only
 19 difficulty is the food--meat, meat, meat. Today they have promised
 20 to give me some vegetables.
 21 We are standing at anchor now. The fog is too thick to allow
 22 the ship to proceed. So I take this opportunity to write a few letters.
 23 It is a queer fog almost impenetrable though the sun is
 24 shining bright and cheerful. Kiss baby for me; and with love and
 25 blessings for you and Mrs. Sturdy,
 26 I remain,
 27 Yours,
 28 Vivekananda
 29 PS. Kindly convey my love to Miss Muller. I left the night shirt
 30 at Avenue Road. So I shall have to do without any until the trunk is
 31 brought out of the hold.
 32
 33
 34 LXI
 35 228 West
 36 39th Street,
 37 New York,
 38 8th
 39 December, 1895
 40 Dear Friend {E. T. Sturdy},
 41 After ten days of a most tedious and rough voyage I safely
 42 arrived in New York. My friends had already engaged some rooms
 43 at the above where I am living now and intend to hold classes ere

1 long. In the meanwhile the Theosophists have been alarmed very
2 much and are trying their best to hurt me; but they and their
3 followers are of no consequence whatever.

4 I went to see Mrs. Leggett and other friends, and they are as
5 kind and enthusiastic as ever.

6 Did you hear anything from India about the coming
7 Sannyasin?

8 I will write later fuller particulars of the work here.

9 Kindly convey my best love to Miss Muller and to Mrs. Sturdy
10 and all the other friends and kiss baby for me.

11 Yours ever in
12 the *Sat*,

Vivekananda

16 LXII

17 228 West
18 39th Street

19 New York,
20 8th

21 December, 1895

22 Dear Joe Joe {MacLeod},

23 After 10 days of the most disastrous voyage I ever had I
24 arrived in New York. I was so so sick for days together.

25 After the clean and beautiful cities of Europe, New York
26 appears very dirty and miserable. I am going to begin work next
27 Monday. Your bundles have been safely delivered to the heavenly
28 pair, as Alberta calls them. They are as usual very kind. Saw Mrs.
29 and Mr. Salomon and other friends. By chance met Mrs. Peak at
30 Mrs. Guernsey's but yet have no news of Mrs. Rothinburger. Going
31 with the birds of paradise to Ridgely this Christmas. Wish ever so
32 much you were there.

33 Had you a nice visit with Lady Isabelle? Kindly give my love to
34 all our friends and know oceans yourself.

35 Excuse this short letter. I shall write bigger ones by the next.

36 Ever yours in
37 the Lord,

Vivekananda

40 LXIII

41 New York
42 1895

43 {To E. T. Sturdy},

1 The work here is going on splendidly. I have been working
2 incessantly at two classes a day since my arrival. Tomorrow I go out
3 of town with Mr. Leggett for a week's holiday. Did you know
4 Madame Antoinette Sterling, one of your greatest singers? She is
5 very much interested in the work.

6 I have made over all the secular part of the work to a
7 committee and am free from all that botheration. I have no aptitude
8 for organising. It nearly breaks me to pieces.

9 . . . What about the *Narada-Sutra* ? There will be a good sale
10 of the book here, I am sure. I have now taken up the *Yoga-Sutras*
11 and take them up one by one and go through all the commentators
12 along with them. These talks are all taken down, and when
13 completed will form the fullest annotated translation of Patanjali in
14 English. Of course it will be rather a big work.

15 At Trubner's I think there is an edition of *Kurma Purana* . The
16 commentator, Vijnana Bhikshu, is continually quoting from that
17 book. I have never seen the book myself. Will you kindly find time to
18 go and see if in it there are some chapters on Yoga? If so, will you
19 kindly send me a copy? Also of the *Hatha-Yoga-Pradipika*, *Shiva-*
20 *Samhita* , and any other book on Yoga? The originals of course. I
21 shall send you the money for them as soon as they arrive. Also a
22 copy of *Sankhya-Karika* of Ishwara Krishna by John Davies. Just
23 now your letter reached along with Indian letters. The one man who
24 is ready is ill. The others say that they cannot come over on the
25 spur of the moment. So far it seems unlucky. I am sorry they could
26 not come. What can be done? Things go slow in India!

27 Ramanuja's theory is that the bound soul or Jiva has its
28 perfections involved, entered, into itself. When this perfection again
29 evolves, it becomes free. The Advaitin declares both these to take
30 place only in show; there was neither involution nor evolution. Both
31 processes were Maya, or *apparent* only.

32 In the first place, the soul is not *essentially a knowing* being.
33 *Sachchidananda* is only an approximate definition, and *Neti Neti* is
34 the essential definition. Schopenhauer caught this idea of willing
35 from the Buddhists. We have it also in *Vasana* or *Trishna*, Pali
36 *tanha* . We also admit that it is the *cause* of all manifestation which
37 are, in their turn, its effects. But, being a cause, it must be a
38 combination of the *Absolute* and *Maya* . Even knowledge, being a
39 compound, cannot be the Absolute itself, but it is the nearest
40 approach to it, and higher than *Vasana*, conscious or unconscious.
41 The Absolute first becomes the mixture of knowledge, then, in the
42 second degree, that of will. If it be said that plants have no
43 consciousness, that they are at best only unconscious wills, the
44 answer is that even the *unconscious plant-will* is a manifestation of
45 the consciousness, not of the plant, but of the cosmos, the Mahat of
46 the Sankhya Philosophy. The Buddhist analysis of everything into
47 will is imperfect, firstly, because will is itself a compound, and
48 secondly, because consciousness or knowledge which is a
49 compound of the first degree, precedes it. *Knowledge is action.*
50 *First action, then reaction.* When the mind perceives, then, as the
51 reaction, it *wills* . The will is in the mind. So it is absurd to say that

1 will is the last analysis. Deussen is playing into the hands of the
2 Darwinists.

3 But evolution must be brought in accordance with the more
4 exact science of Physics, which can demonstrate that every
5 evolution must be preceded by an involution. This being so, the
6 evolution of the *Vasana* or will must be preceded by the involution
7 of the *Mahat* or cosmic consciousness.

8

9 Consciousness or Mahat²⁶³

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Subconscious

Unconscious

Superconscious

Will

Conscious

Conscious

Will

Will Proper

Supercons

There is no willing without knowing. How can we desire
unless we know the object of desire?

The apparent difficulty vanishes as soon as you divide
knowledge also into subconscious and conscious. And why not? If
will can be so treated, why not its father?

Vivekananda

LXIV

228 West

39th Street

New York

16th

December, 1895

Blessed and Beloved {E. T. Sturdy},

All your letters reached by one mail today. Miss Muller also
writes me one. She has read in the *Indian Mirror* that Swami
Krishnananda is coming over to England. If that is so, he is the
strongest man that I can get.

The classes I had here were six in the week, besides a
question class. The general attendance varies between 70 to 120.
Besides every Sunday I have a public lecture. The last month my
lectures were in a small hall holding about 600. But 900 will come

²⁶³ ?See also Vol. VIII, pp. 277-78; Vol. V. pp. 101-03.

1 as a rule, 300 standing, and about 300 going off, not finding room.
2 This week therefore I have a bigger hall, with a capacity of
3 holding 1200 people.

4 There is no admission charged in these lectures, but a
5 collection covers the rent. The newspapers have taken me up this
6 week, and altogether I have stirred up New York considerably this
7 year. If I could have remained here this summer and organised a
8 summer place, the work would be going on sure foundations here.
9 But as I intended to come over in May to England, I shall have to
10 leave it unfinished. If, however, Krishnananda comes to England,
11 and you find him strong and able, and if you find the work in
12 London will not be hurt by my absence this summer, I would
13 rather be here this summer.

14 Again, I am afraid my health is breaking down under
15 constant work. I want some rest. We are so unused to these
16 Western methods, especially the keeping to time. I will leave you
17 to decide all these. The *Brahmavadin* is going on here very
18 satisfactorily. I have begun to write articles on Bhakti; also send
19 them a monthly account of the work. Miss Muller wants to come
20 to America. I do not know whether she will or not. Some friends
21 here are publishing my Sunday lectures. I have sent you a few
22 copies of the first one. I shall send you next mail a few of the next
23 two lectures, and if you like them I shall ask them to send you a
24 number. Can you manage to get a few hundred copies sold in
25 England? That will encourage them in publishing the subsequent
26 ones.

27 Next month I go to Detroit, then to Boston, and Harvard
28 University. Then I shall have a rest, and then I come to England,
29 unless you think that things go on without me and with
30 Krishnananda.

31 Ever yours with love and
32 blessings,

33 Vivekananda

34
35
36 LXV

37 228 West
38 39th Street

39 New York
40 23rd

41 December, 1895

42 Dear Sharat {Saradananda},

43 Your letter only made me sad. I see you have lost all
44 enthusiasm. I know all of you, your powers and your limitations. I
45 would not have called you to any task which you are incompetent
46 to do. The only task I would have given you was to teach
47 elementary Sanskrit, and with the help of dictionaries and other
48 things assist S. in his translations and teachings. I would have

1 moulded you to it. Anyone could have done as well--only a little
2 smattering of Sanskrit was absolutely necessary. Well, everything
3 is for the best. If it is the Lord's work the right man for the right
4 place will be forthcoming in the right time. None of you need feel
5 disturbed. As for Sanyal, I don't care who takes money or not, but
6 I have a strong hatred for child-marriage. I have suffered terribly
7 from it, and it is the great sin for which our nation has to suffer.
8 As such, I would hate myself if I help such a diabolical custom
9 directly or indirectly. I wrote to you pretty plain about it, and
10 Sanyal had no right to play a hoax upon me about his "law-suit"
11 and his attempts to become free. I am sorry for his playing tricks
12 on me who have never done him any harm. This is the world. What
13 good you do goes for nothing, but if you stop doing it, then, Lord
14 help you, you are counted as a rogue. Isn't it? Emotional natures
15 like mine are always preyed upon by relatives and friends. This
16 world is merciless. This world is our friend when we are its slaves
17 and no more. This world is broad enough for me. There will
18 always be a corner found for me somewhere. If the people of India
19 do not like me, there will be others who do. I must set my foot to
20 the best of my ability upon this devilish custom of child-marriage.
21 No blame will entail on you. You keep at a safe distance if you are
22 afraid. I am sorry, very sorry, I cannot have any partnership with
23 such doings as getting husbands for babies. Lord help me, I never
24 had and never will have. Think of the case of M__ Babu! Did you
25 ever meet a more cowardly or brutal one than that? I can kill the
26 man who gets a husband for a baby. The upshot of the whole thing
27 is--I want bold, daring, adventurous spirits to help me. Else I will
28 work alone. I have a mission to fulfil. I will work it out alone. I do
29 not care who comes or who goes. Sanyal is already done for by
30 Samsara. Beware, boy! That was all the advice I thought it my
31 duty to give you. Of course, you are great folks now--my words
32 will have no value with you. But I hope the time will come when
33 you will see clearer, know better, and think other thoughts than
34 you are now doing.

35 Good-bye! I would not bother you any more, and all
36 blessings go with you all. I am very glad I have been of some
37 service to you sometimes if you think so. At least I am pleased
38 with myself for having tried my best to discharge the duties laid
39 on me by my Guru, and well done or ill, I am glad that I tried. So
40 good-bye. Tell Sanyal that I am not at all angry with him, but I am
41 sorry, very sorry. It is not the money--that counts nothing-- but the
42 violation of a principle that pained me, and the trick he played on
43 me. Good-bye to him also, and to you all. One chapter of my life is
44 closed. Let others come in their due order. They will find me
45 ready. You need not disturb yourselves at all about me. I want no
46 help from any human being in any country. So good-bye! May the
47 Lord bless you all for ever and ever!

48 Vivekananda

1
2 Manor Ridgely
3 29th
4 December, 1895
5 Dear Friend {E. T. Sturdy},
6 By this time the copies of the lectures must have reached
7 you. Hope they may be of some use.
8 I think, in the first place, there are so many difficulties to
9 overcome; in the second place, they think that they are fit for
10 nothing--that is the national disease; thirdly, they are afraid to
11 face the winter at once; the Tibet man they don't think is a very
12 strong man to work in England. Some one will come sooner or
13 later.
14 Yours in the
15 Sat,
16 Vivekananda
17 PS. My Christmas greetings to all our friends--to Mrs. and
18 Mr. Johnson, to Lady Margesson, Mrs. Clark, Miss Hawes, Miss
19 Muller, Miss Steel, and all the rest.--V.
20 Kiss baby for me and bless him. My greetings to Mrs.
21 Sturdy. We will *work* . "Wah guru ki fateh."--V.
22
23 LXVII
24 New York,
25 6th January,
26 1896
27 Dear Sister {Mary Hale},
28 Many thanks for your kind New Year's greetings. I am glad
29 to learn you enjoyed your six weeks with the Esq. although they
30 be only golf playing. I have been in the midst of the genuine
31 article in England. The English people received me with open
32 arms, and I have very much toned down my ideas about the
33 English race. First of all, I found that those fellows as Lund etc.
34 who came over from England to attack me were nowhere. Their
35 existence is simply ignored by the English people. None but a
36 person belonging to the English Church is thought to be *genteel* .
37 Again, some of the best men of England belonging to the English
38 Church and some of the highest in position and fame became my
39 truest friends. This was quite another sort of experience from
40 what I met in America, was it not?
41 The English people laughed and laughed when I told them
42 about my experience with the Presbyterians and other fanatics
43 here and my reception in hotels etc. I also found at once the
44 difference in culture and breeding between the two countries and
45 came to understand why American girls go in shoals to be married
46 to Europeans. Everyone was kind to me there, and I have left
47 many noble friends of both sexes anxiously waiting my return in

1 the spring.

2 As to my work there, the Vedantic thought has already
3 permeated the higher classes of England. Many people of
4 education and rank, and amongst them not a few clergymen, told
5 me that the conquest of Rome by Greece was being re-enacted in
6 England.

7 There are two sorts of Englishmen who have lived in India.
8 One consisting of those who hate everything Indian, but they are
9 uneducated. The other, to whom India is the holy land, its very air
10 is holy. And they try to out-Herod Herod in their Hinduism. They
11 are awful vegetarians, and they want to form a caste in England.
12 Of course, the majority of the English people are firm believers in
13 caste. I had eight classes a week apart from public lectures, and
14 they were so crowded that a good many people, even ladies of
15 high rank, sat on the floor and did not think anything of it. In
16 England I find strong-minded men and women to take up the work
17 and carry it forward with the peculiar English grip and energy.
18 This year my work in New York is going on splendidly. Mr. Leggett
19 is a very rich man of New York and very much interested in me.
20 The New Yorker has more steadiness than any other people in this
21 country, so I have determined to make my centre here. In this
22 country my teachings are thought to be queer by the "Methodist"
23 and "Presbyterian" aristocracy. In England it is the highest
24 philosophy to the English Church aristocracy.

25 Moreover those talks and gossips, so characteristic of the
26 American woman, are almost unknown in England. The English
27 woman is slow; but when she works up to an idea, she will have a
28 hold on it sure; and they are regularly carrying on my work there
29 and sending every week a report--think of that! Here is I go away
30 for a week, everything falls to pieces. My love to all--to Sam and
31 to yourself. May the Lord bless you ever and ever!

32 Your affectionate
33 brother,

34 Vivekananda

35

36 LXVIII

37 228 West
38 39th Street

39 New York

40 16th January,

41 1896

42 Blessed and Beloved {E. T. Sturdy},

43 Many many thanks for the books. The *Sankhya Karika* is a
44 very good book, and the *Kurma Purana*, though I do not find in it
45 all expected, has a few verses on Yoga. The words dropped in my
46 last letter were *Yoga-Sutra*, which I am translating with notes
47 from various authorities. I want to incorporate the chapter in
48 *Kurma Purana* in my notes. I have very enthusiastic accounts of

1 your classes from Miss MacLeod. Mr. Galsworthy seems to be very
2 much interested now.

3 I have begun my Sunday lectures here and also the classes.
4 Both are very enthusiastically received. I make them all free and
5 take up a collection to pay the hall etc. Last Sunday's lecture was
6 very much appreciated and is in the press. I shall send you a few
7 copies next week. It was the outline of our work.

8 As my friends have engaged a stenographer (Goodwin), all
9 these class lessons and public lectures are taken down. I intend to
10 send you a copy of each. They may suggest you some ideas.

11 My great want here is a strong man like you, possessing
12 intellect, and ability, and love. In this nation of universal
13 education, all seem to melt down into a mediocrity, and the few
14 able are weighed down by the eternal money-making.

15 I have a chance of getting a piece of land in the country, and
16 some buildings on it, plenty of trees and a river, to serve as a
17 summer meditation resort. That, of course, requires a committee
18 to look after it in my absence, as also the handling of money and
19 printing and other matters.

20 I have separated myself entirely from money questions, yet
21 without it the movement cannot go on. So necessarily I have to
22 make over everything executive to a committee, which will look
23 after these things in my absence. Steady work is not in the line of
24 the Americans. The only way they work, is in a herd. So let them
25 have it. As to the teaching part, my friends will go over this
26 country from place to place, each one independent, and let them
27 form independent circles. That is the easiest way to spread. Then,
28 when there will be sufficient strength, we shall have yearly
29 gatherings to concentrate our energies.

30 The committee is entirely executive and it is confined to
31 New York alone. . . .

32 Ever yours with love and
33 blessings,

34 Vivekananda

35
36
37 LXIX

38 23rd January,

39 1896

40 Dear Alasinga,

41 By this time you must have got enough of matter on Bhakti
42 from me. The last copy, dated 21st December, of *Brahmavadin* is
43 in. I have been smelling something since the last few issues of the
44 *Brahmavadin* . Are you going to join the Theosophists? This time
45 you simply gave yourselves up. Why, you get in a notice of the
46 Theosophists' lectures in the body of your notes! Any suspicion of
47 my connection with the Theosophists will spoil my work both in

1 America and England, and well it may. They are thought by all
2 people of sound mind to be wrong, and true it is that they are held
3 so, and you know it full well. I am afraid you want to overreach
4 me. You think you can get more subscribers in England by
5 advertising Annie Besant? Fool that you are.

6 I do not want to quarrel with the Theosophists, but my
7 position is entirely ignoring them. Had they paid for the
8 advertisement? Why should you go forward to advertise them? I
9 shall get more than enough subscribers in England when I go
10 next.

11 Now, I would have no traitors, I tell you plainly, I would not
12 be played upon by any rogue. No hypocrisy with me. Hoist your
13 flag and give public notice in your paper that you have given up
14 all connections with me, and join the . . . camp of of the
15 Theosophists or cease to have anything whatsoever to do with
16 them. I give you very plain words indeed. I shall have one man
17 only to follow me, but he must be true and faithful unto death. I do
18 not care for success or no success. I am tired of this nonsense of
19 preaching all over the world. Did any of Annie Besant's people
20 come to my help when I was in England? Fudge! I must keep my
21 movement *pure* or I will have none.

22 Yours,

23 Vivekananda

24 PS. Reply sharp your decision. I am very decided on this
25 point. You ought to have told me so before, had your intentions
26 been such from the very beginning. *The Brahmavadin* is for
27 preaching Vedanta and not Theosophy. I almost lose my patience
28 when I see these underhand dealings. This is the world--those
29 whom you love best and help most try to cheat you. --V.

30
31
32 LXX

33 228 West
34 39th Street
35 New York
36 29th
37 February, 1896

38 Blessed and Beloved {E. T. Sturdy},

39 I am coming before May if possible. You need not worry
40 about that. The pamphlet was beautiful. The newspaper cuttings
41 from here will be forwarded if we can get them.

42 The books and pamphlets here have been got up this way. A
43 committee was formed in New York. They paid all the expenses of
44 stenographing and printing on condition the books will belong to
45 them. So these pamphlets and books are theirs. One book, the
46 *Karma-Yoga* has been already published; the *Raja-Yoga*, a much
47 bigger one, is in the course of publication; the *Jnana-Yoga* may be

1 published later on. These will be popular books, the language
2 being that of talk, as you have seen already. I have purged
3 everything that is objectionable, and they help me in getting up
4 the books.

5 The books are the property of this Committee, of which Mrs.
6 Ole Bull is the principal backer, also Mrs. Leggett.

7 It is only just that they should have the books as they paid
8 all the expenses. There is no fear of the publishers meddling with
9 them, as they are the publishers themselves.

10 If any books come from India please keep them.

11 The stenographer, who is an Englishman named Goodwin,
12 has become so interested in the work that I have now made him a
13 Brahmacharin, and he is going round with me, and we shall come
14 over together to England. He will be very helpful as he has been
15 always.

16 Yours with all
17 blessings,

18 Vivekananda

19
20 LXXI

21 New York

22 17th March,

23 1896

24 Blessed and Beloved {E. T. Sturdy},

25 I received your last just now and it frightened me
26 immensely.

27 The lectures were delivered under the auspices of certain
28 friends who paid for the stenography and all other expenses on
29 condition they alone will have the right to publish them. As such,
30 they have already published the Sunday lectures as well as three
31 books on "Karma-Yoga", "Raja-Yoga", and "Jnana-Yoga". The *Raja-*
32 *Yoga* especially has been much altered and re-arranged along
33 with the translation of "Yoga-Sutras of Patanjali". The *Raja-Yoga* is
34 in the hands of Longmans. The friends here are furious at the idea
35 of these books being published in England; and as they have been
36 made over to them by me legally, I am at a loss what to do. The
37 publication of the pamphlets was not so serious, but the books
38 have been so much re-arranged and changed that the American
39 edition will not recognise the English one. Now pray don't publish
40 these books, as they will place me in a very false position and
41 create endless quarrel and destroy my American work.

42 By last mail from India I learn that a Sannyasin has started
43 from India. I had a beautiful letter from Miss Muller, also one
44 from Miss MacLeod; the Leggett family has become very attached
45 to me.

46 I do not know anything about Mr. Chatterji. I hear from
47 other sources that his trouble is money, which the Theosophists

1 cannot supply him with. Moreover the help he will be able to give
2 me is very rudimentary and useless in the face of the fact of a
3 much stronger man coming from India. So far with him. We need
4 not be in a hurry.

5 I pray you again to think about this publishing business and
6 write some letters to Mrs. Ole Bull and through her ask the
7 opinion of the American friends of the Vedanta, remembering
8 "ours is the Gospel of oneness of all beings", and all national
9 feelings are but wicked superstitions. Moreover I am sure that the
10 person who is always ready to give way to other's opinions finds at
11 last that his opinion has triumphed. Yielding always conquers at
12 last. With love to all our friends,

13 Yours with love and
14 blessings,

15 Vivekananda

16 PS. I am coming sure in March as early as possible.

17 V.

18
19
20 LXXII

21 Dear Sister {Mary Hale},

22 I am afraid you are offended and did not answer any of my
23 letters. Now I beg a hundred thousand pardons. By very good
24 luck, I have found the orange cloth and am going to have a coat
25 made as soon as I can. I am glad to hear you met Mrs. Bull. She is
26 such a noble lady and kind friend. Now, sister, there are two very
27 thin Sanskrit pamphlets in the house. Kindly send them over if it
28 does not bother you. The books from India have arrived safe, and I
29 had not to pay any duty on them. I am surprised that the rugs do
30 not arrive yet. I have not been to see Mother Temple any more. I
31 could not find time. Every little bit of time I get I spend in the
32 library.

33 With everlasting love and gratitude to you all,
34 Ever your
35 loving brother,

36 Vivekananda

37 PS. Mr. Howe has been a very constant student except the
38 last few days. Kindly give my love to Miss Howe.

39 V.

40
41
42 LXXIII

43 6 West 43rd
44 Street
45 New York

1 14th April,
2 1896

3 Dear Sisters {the Hale sisters},

4 I arrived safe on Sunday and on account of illness could not
5 write earlier. I sail on board the White Star Line *Germanic*
6 tomorrow at 12 noon. With everlasting memory of love, gratitude
7 and blessings,

8 I am, your ever
9 loving brother,

10 Vivekananda

11

12

13 LXXIV

14 Waveney

15 Mansions

16 Fairhazel

17 Gardens

18 London N.W.

19 April, 1896

20 Thursday

21 Afternoon

22 Dear Sturdy,

23 I forgot to tell you in the morning that Prof. Max Muller also
24 offered in his letter to me to do everything he could if I went to
25 lecture at Oxford.

26 Yours

27 affectionately,

28 Vivekananda

29 PS. Have you written for the *Artharva-Veda Samhita* edited
30 by Shankara Pandurang?

31 V.

32

33 LXXV

34 High View,

35 Reading

36 20th April,

37 1896

38 Dear Sisters {the Hale sisters},

39 Greetings to you from the other shore. The voyage has been
40 pleasant and no sickness this time. I gave myself treatment to
41 avoid it. I made quite a little run through Ireland and some of the
42 Old English towns and now am once more in Reading amidst
43 Brahma and Maya and Jiva, the individual and the universal soul,

1 etc. The other monk is here; he is one of the nicest of men I see,
2 and is quite a learned monk too. We are busy editing books now.
3 Nothing of importance happened on the way. It was dull,
4 monotonous, and prosaic as my life. I love America more when I
5 am out of it. And, after all, those years there have been some of
6 the best I have yet seen.

7 Are you trying to get some subscribers for the *Brahmavadin*
8 ? Give my best love and kindest remembrance to Mrs. Adams and
9 Mrs. Conger. Write me as soon as is convenient all about
10 yourselves, and what you are doing, what breaks the monotony of
11 eating, drinking, and cycling. I am in a hurry just now, shall write
12 a bigger letter later; so good-bye and may you be always happy.

13 Your ever affectionate
14 brother,

15 Vivekananda

16 PS. I will write to Mother Church as soon as I get time. Give
17 my love to Sam and sister Locke.

18 V.

19
20 LXXVI

21 63 St.
22 George's Road

23 London, S.W.
24 30th May,
25 1896

26 Dear Mary {Hale},

Your letter reached just now. Of course, you were not jealous but all of a sudden were inspired with sympathy for poor India. Well, you need not be frightened. Wrote a letter to Mother Church weeks ago, but have not been able to get a line from her yet. I am afraid the whole party have taken orders and entered a Catholic convent--four old maids are enough to drive any mother to a convent. I had a beautiful visit with Prof. Max Muller. He is a saint--a Vedantist through and through. What think you? He has been a devoted admirer of my old Master for years. He has written an article on my Master in *The Nineteenth Century*, which will soon come out. We had long talk on Indian things. I wish I had half his love for India. We are going to start another little magazine here. What about *The Brahnavadin*? Are you pushing it? If four pushful old maids cannot push a journal, I am blowed. You will hear from me now and then. I am not a pin to be lost under a bushel. I am having classes here just now. I begin Sunday lectures from next week. The classes are very big and are in the house. We have rented it for the season. Last night I made a dish. It was such a delicious mixture of saffron, lavender, mace, nutmeg, cubebs, cinnamon, cloves, cardamom, cream, limejuice, onions, raisins, almonds, pepper, and rice, that I myself could not eat it. There was no asafoetida, though that would have made it smoother to swallow.

Yesterday I went to a marriage *a la mode* . Miss Muller, a rich lady, a friend who has adopted a Hindu boy and to help my work has taken rooms in this house, took us to see it. One of her nieces was married to somebody's nephew I suppose. What tiring nonsense! I am glad you do not marry. Good-bye, love to all. No more time as I am going to lunch with Miss MacLeod.

affectionately, Yours ever

Vivekananda

LXXVII

London,
7th July, 1896

Dear Babies {the Hale sisters},

The work here progressed wonderfully. I had one monk here from India. I have sent him to the U.S.A. and sent for another from India. The season is closed; the classes, therefore, and the Sunday lectures are to be closed on the 16th next. And on the 19th I go for a month or so for quiet and rest in the Swiss Mountains to return next autumn to London and begin again. The work here has been very satisfactory. By rousing interest here I really do more for India than in India. Mother wrote to me that if you could rent your flat, she would be glad to take you with her to see Egypt. I am going with three English friends to the Swiss Hills. Later on, towards the end of winter, I expect to go to India with some

1 English friends who are going to live in my monastery there,
2 which, by the by, is in the air yet. It is struggling to materialise
3 somewhere in the Himalayas.

4 Where are You? Now the summer is in full swing, even
5 London is getting very hot. Kindly give my best love to Mrs.
6 Adams, Mrs. Conger, and all the rest of my friends in Chicago.

7 Your affectionate
8 brother,

9 Vivekananda

10
11
12 LXXVIII

13 Grand Hotel

14 Valais

15 Switzerland

16 Blessed and Beloved {E. T. Sturdy},

17 . . . I am reading a little, starving a good deal, and practising
18 a good deal more. The strolls in the woods are simply delicious.
19 We are now situated under three huge glaciers, and the scenery is
20 very beautiful.

21 By the by, whatever scruples I may have had as to the Swiss-
22 lake origin of the Aryans have been taken clean off my mind. The
23 Swiss is a Tartar *minus* a pigtail. . . .

24 Yours ever
25 affectionately,

26 Vivekananda

27
28
29 LXXIX

30 Switzerland

31 5th August,

32 1896

33 Blessed and Beloved {E. T. Sturdy},

34 A letter came this morning from Prof. Max Muller telling me
35 that the article of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa has been
36 published in *The XIX Century* August number. Have you read it?
37 He asked my opinion about it. Not having seen it yet, I can't write
38 anything to him. If you have it, kindly send it to me. Also *The*
39 *Brahmavadin* , if any have arrived. Max Muller wants to know
40 about our plans . . . and again about the magazine. He promises a
41 good deal of help and is ready to write a book on Shri
42 Ramakrishna Paramahansa.

43 I think it is better that you should directly correspond with
44 him about the magazine etc. You will see from his letter which I

1 shall send you as soon as I have replied (after reading *The XIX*
2 *Century*) that he is very much pleased with our movement and is
3 ready to help it as much as he can. . . .

4 Yours with blessings
5 and love,

6 Vivekananda

7 PS. I hope you will consider well the plan for the big
8 magazine. Some money can be raised in America, and we can
9 keep the magazine all to ourselves at the same time. I intend to
10 write to America on hearing about the plan you and Prof. Max
11 Muller decide upon. "A great tree is to be taken refuge in, when it
12 has both fruits and shade. If, however, we do not get the fruit, who
13 prevents our enjoyment of the shade?" So ought great attempts to
14 be made, is the moral.

15
16
17 LXXX

18 Switzerland

19 August, 1896

20 Dear__ {Kripananda},

21 Be you holy and, above all, sincere; and do not for a moment
22 give up your trust in the Lord, and you will see the light. Whatever
23 is truth will remain for ever; whatever is not, none can preserve.
24 We are helped in being born in a time when everything is quickly
25 searched out. Whatever others think or do, lower not your
26 standard of purity, morality, and love of God; above all, beware of
27 all secret organisations. No one who loves God need fear any
28 jugglery. Holiness is the highest and divinest power in earth and
29 in heaven. "Truth alone triumphs, not untruth. Through truth
30 alone is opened the way to God" (Mundaka, III.i.6). Do not care
31 for a moment who joins hands with you or not, be sure that you
32 touch the hand of the Lord. That is enough. . . .

33 I went to the glacier of Monte Rosa yesterday and gathered
34 a few hardy flowers growing almost in the midst of eternal snow. I
35 send you one in this letter hoping that you will attain to a similar
36 spiritual hardihood amidst all the snow and ice of this earthly
37 life. . . .

38 Your dream was very, very beautiful. In dream our souls
39 read a layer of our mind which we do not read in our waking
40 hours, and however unsubstantial imagination may be, it is behind
41 the imagination that all unknown psychic truths lie. Take heart.
42 We will try to do what we can for the good of humanity--the rest
43 depends upon the Lord. . . .

44 Well, do not be anxious, do not be in a hurry. Slow,
45 persistent and silent work does everything. The Lord is great. We
46 will succeed, my boy. We must. Blessed be His name! . . .

47 Here in America are no Ashramas. Would there was one!

1 How would I like it and what an amount of good it would do to this
2 country!

3
4 LXXXI

5 Switzerland

6 8th August,

7 1896

8 Dear Goodwin,

9 I am now taking rest. I read from different letters a lot
10 about Kripananda. I am sorry for him. There must be something
11 wrong in his head. Let him alone. None of you need bother about
12 him.

13 As for hurting me, that is not in the power of gods or devils.
14 So be at rest. It is unswerving love and perfect unselfishness that
15 conquer everything. We Vedantists in every difficulty ought to ask
16 the subjective question, "Why do I see that?" "Why can I not
17 conquer this with love?"

18 I am very glad at the reception the Swami has met with, also
19 at the good work he is doing. Great work requires great and
20 persistent effort for a long time. Neither need we trouble
21 ourselves if a few fail. It is in the nature of things that many
22 should fall, that troubles should come, that tremendous difficulties
23 should arise, that selfishness and all the other devils in the human
24 heart should struggle hard when they are about to be driven out
25 by the fire of spirituality. The road to the Good is the roughest and
26 steepest in the universe. It is a wonder that so many succeed, no
27 wonder that so many fall. Character has to be established through
28 a thousand stumbles.

29 I am much refreshed now. I look out of the window and see
30 the huge glaciers just before me and feel that I am in the
31 Himalayas. I am quite calm. My nerves have regained their
32 accustomed strength; and little vexations, like those you write of,
33 do not touch me at all. How shall I be disturbed by this child's
34 play? The whole world is a mere child's play--preaching, teaching,
35 and all included. "Know him to be the Sannyasin who neither
36 hates nor desires" (Gita, V.3). And what is there to be desired in
37 this little mud-puddle of a world, with its ever-recurring misery,
38 disease, and death? "He who has given up all desires, he alone is
39 happy."

40 This rest, eternal, peaceful rest, I am catching a glimpse of
41 now in this beautiful spot. "Having once known that the Atman
42 alone, and nothing else, exists, desiring what, or for whose desire,
43 shall you suffer misery about the body?" (Brihadaranyaka,
44 IV.iv.12.)

45 I feel as if I had my share of experience in what they call
46 "work". I am finished, I am longing now to get out. "Out of
47 thousands, but one strives to attain the Goal. And even of those
48 who struggle hard, but few attain" (Gita, VII.3); for the senses are
49 powerful, they drag men down.

1 "A good world", "a happy world", and "social progress", are
2 all terms equally intelligible with "hot ice" or "dark light". If it
3 were good, it would not be the world. The soul foolishly thinks of
4 manifesting the Infinite in finite matter, Intelligence through gross
5 particles; but at last it finds out its error and tries to escape. This
6 going-back is the beginning of religion, and its method,
7 destruction of self, that is, love. Not love for wife or child or
8 anybody else, but love for everything else except this little self.
9 Never be deluded by the tall talk, of which you will hear so much
10 in America, about "human progress" and such stuff. There is *no*
11 *progress* without corresponding digression. In one society there
12 is one set of evils; in another, another. So with periods of history.
13 In the Middle Ages, there were more robbers, now more cheats.
14 At one period there is less idea of married life; at another, more
15 prostitution. In one, more physical agony; in another, a
16 thousandfold more mental. So with knowledge. Did not gravitation
17 already exist in nature before it was observed and named? Then
18 what difference does it make to know that it exists? Are you
19 happier than the Red Indians?

20 The only knowledge that is of any value is to know that all
21 this is humbug. But few, very few, will ever know this. "Know the
22 Atman alone, and give up all other vain words." This is the only
23 knowledge we gain from all this knocking about the universe. This
24 is the only work, to call upon mankind to "Awake, arise, and stop
25 not till the goal is reached". It is renunciation, Tyaga, that is
26 meant by religion, and nothing else.

27 Ishwara is the sum total of individuals; yet He Himself also
28 is an individual in the same way as the human body is a unit, of
29 which each cell is an individual. Samashti or the Collective is God.
30 Vyashti or the component is the soul of Jiva. The existence of
31 Ishwara, therefore, depends on that of Jiva, as the body on the
32 cell, and vice versa. Jiva, and Ishwara are co-existent beings. As
33 long as the one exists, the other also must. Again, since in all the
34 higher spheres, except on our earth, the amount of good is vastly
35 in excess of the amount of bad, the sum total or Ishwara may be
36 said to be All-good, Almighty, and Omniscient. These are obvious
37 qualities, and need no argument to prove, from the very fact of
38 totality.

39 Brahman is beyond both of these, and is not a state. It is the
40 only unit not composed of many units. It is the principle which
41 runs through all, from a cell to God, and without which nothing
42 can exist. Whatever is real is that principle or Brahman. When I
43 think "I am Brahman", then I alone exist. It is so also when *you* so
44 think, and so on. Each one is the whole of that principle. . . .

45 A few days ago, I felt a sudden irresistible desire to write to
46 Kripananda. Perhaps he was unhappy and thinking of me. So I
47 wrote him a warm letter. Today from the American news, I see
48 why it was so. I sent him flowers gathered near the glaciers. Ask
49 Miss Waldo to send him some money and plenty of love. Love
50 never dies. The love of the father never dies, whatever the
51 children may do or be. He is my child. He has the same or more
52 share in my love and help, now that he is in misery.

1
2 blessings, Yours with
3 Vivekananda
4
5

6 LXXXII

7 Grand Hotel,
8 Saas Fee,
9 Valais,
10 Switzerland
11 8th August,
12 1896

13 Blessed and Beloved {E. T. Sturdy},

14 A large packet of letters came along with yours. Herewith I
15 send you the letter written to me by Max Muller. It is very kind
16 and good of him.

17 Miss Muller thinks that she will go away very soon to
18 England. In that case I will not be able to go to Berne for that
19 Purity Congress I have promised. Only if the Seviars consent to
20 take me along, I will go to Kiel and write to you before. The
21 Seviars are good and kind, but I have no right to take advantage
22 of their generosity. Nor can I take the same of Miss Muller, as the
23 expenses there are frightful. As such, I think it best to give up the
24 Berne Congress, as it will come in the middle of September, a long
25 way off.

26 I am thinking, therefore, of going towards Germany, ending
27 in Kiel, and thence back to England.

28 Bala Gangadhara Tilak (Mr. Tilak) is the name and *Orion*
29 that of the book.

30 Yours,

31 Vivekananda

32 PS. There is also one by Jacobi--perhaps translated on the
33 same lines and with the same conclusions.

34 PS. I hope you will ask Miss Muller's opinion about the
35 lodgings and the Hall, as I am afraid she will be very displeased if
36 she and others are not consulted.

37 V.

38 Miss Muller telegraphed to Prof. Deussen last night; the
39 reply came this morning, 9th August, welcoming me; I am to be in
40 Kiel at Deussen's on the 10th September. So where will you meet
41 me? At Kiel? Miss Muller goes to England from Switzerland. I am
42 going with the Seviars to Kiel. I will be there on the 10th
43 September.

44 V.

45 PS. I have not fixed yet anything about the lecture. I have no

1 time to read. The Salem Society most probably is a Hindu
2 community and no faddists.

3 V.

6 LXXXIII

7 Switzerland

8 12th August,

9 1896

10 Blessed and Beloved {E. T. Sturdy},

11 Today I received a letter from America, which I send to you.
12 I have written them that my idea of course is concentration, at
13 least for the present beginning. I have also suggested them that
14 instead of having too many papers, they may start by putting in a
15 few sheets in *The Brahmavadin* --written in America--and raise the
16 subscription a little which will cover the American expenses. Do
17 not know what they will do.

18 We will start from here towards Germany next week. Miss
19 Muller goes to England as soon as we have crossed over to
20 Germany.

21 Capt. and Mrs. Sevier and myself will expect you at Kiel.

22 I haven't yet written anything nor read anything. I am
23 indeed taking a good rest. Do not be anxious, you will have the
24 article ready. I had a letter from the Math stating that the other
25 Swami is ready to start. He will, I am sure, be just the man you
26 want. He is one of the best Sanskrit scholars we have . . . and as I
27 hear, he has improved his English much. I had a number of
28 newspaper cuttings from America about Saradananda--I hear from
29 them that he has done very well there. America is a good training
30 ground to bring out all that is in a man. There is such a sympathy
31 in the air. I had letters from Goodwin and Saradananda. S. sends
32 his love to you and Mrs. Sturdy and the baby.

33 With everlasting love and
34 blessings,

35 Vivekananda

38 LXXXIV

39 Kiel

40 10th

41 September, 1896

42 Dear Friend {E. T. Sturdy},

43 I have at last seen Prof. Deussen. . . . The whole of
44 yesterday was spent very nicely with the Professor, sight-seeing
45 and discussing about the Vedanta.

He is what I should call "a warring Advaitist". No compromise with anything else. "Ishwara" is his bug-bear. He would have none of it if he could. He is very much delighted with the idea of your magazine and wants to confer with you on these subjects in London, where he is shortly going. . . .

LXXV

Ridgeway Gardens

Airlie Lodge,
Wimbledon, England
17th September,
1896

Dear Sister {Mary Hale},

Today I reached London, after my two months of climbing and walking and glacier seeing in Switzerland. One good it has done me--a few pounds of unnecessary adipose tissue have returned back to the gaseous state. Well, there is no safety even in that, for the solid body of this birth has taken a fancy to outstrip the mind towards infinite expansion. If it goes on this way, I would have soon to lose all personal identity even in the flesh--at least to all the rest of the world.

It is impossible to express my joy in words at the good news contained in Harriet's letter. I have written to her today. I am sorry I cannot come over to see her married, but I will be present in "fine body" with all good wishes and blessings. Well, I am expecting such news from you and other sisters to make my joy complete. Now, my dear Mary, I will tell you a great lesson I have learnt in this life. It is this: "The higher is your ideal, the more miserable you are"; for such a thing as an ideal *cannot* be attained *in the world* , or in this life even. He who wants perfection in the world is a madman, for it cannot be.

How can you find the Infinite in the finite? Therefore I tell you, Harriet will have a most blessed and happy life, because she is not so imaginative and sentimental as to make a fool of herself. She has enough of sentiment as to make life sweet, and enough of common sense and gentleness as to soften the hard points in life which must come to everyone. So has Harriet McKindley in a still higher degree. She is just the girl to make the best of wives, only this world is so full of idiots that very few can penetrate beyond the flesh! As for you and Isabelle, I will tell you the truth, and my "language is plain".

You, Mary, are like a mettlesome Arab--grand, splendid. You will make a splendid queen--physically, mentally. You will shine alongside of a dashing, bold, adventurous, heroic husband; but, my dear sister, you will make one of the worst of wives. You will take the life out of our easy-going, practical, plodding husbands of the everyday world. Mind, my sister, although it is true that there is more romance in actual life than in any novel, yet it is few and far between. Therefore my advice to you is that until you bring

1 down your ideals to a more practical level, you ought not to marry.
2 If you do, the result will be misery for both of you. In a few
3 months you will lose all regard for a commonplace, good, nice,
4 young man, and then life will become insipid. As to sister Isabelle,
5 she has the same temperament as you; only this kindergarten has
6 taught her a good lesson of patience and forbearance. Perhaps
7 she will make a good wife.

8 There are two sorts of persons in the world. The one--
9 strong-nerved, quiet, yielding to nature, not given to much
10 imagination, yet good, kind, sweet, etc. For such is this world;
11 they alone are born to be happy. There are others again with high-
12 strung nerves, tremendously imaginative, with intense feeling,
13 always going high one moment and coming down the next. For
14 them there is no happiness. The first class will have almost an
15 even tenor of happiness; the last will have to run between ecstasy
16 and misery. But of these alone what we call geniuses are made.
17 There is some truth in the recent theory that "genius is a sort
18 madness".

19 Now, persons of this class if they want to be great, they
20 must fight to finish--clear out the deck for battle. No
21 encumbrance--no marriage, no children, no undue attachment to
22 anything except the one *idea* , and live and die for that. I am a
23 person of this sort. I have taken up the one idea of "Vedanta" and I
24 have "cleared the deck for action". You and Isabelle are made of
25 this metal; but let me tell you, though it is hard, *you are spoiling*
26 *your lives in vain* . Either take up one *idea* , clear the deck, and to
27 it dedicate the life; or be contented and practical; lower the ideal,
28 marry, and have a *happy life* . Either "Bhoga" or "Yoga"; *none can*
29 *have both in one* . Now or never, select quick. "He who is very
30 particular gets nothing", says the proverb. Now sincerely and
31 really and for ever determine to "clear the deck for fight", take up
32 anything, philosophy or science or religion or literature, and let
33 that be your God for the rest of your life. Achieve happiness or
34 achieve greatness. I have no sympathy with you and Isabelle; you
35 are neither for this nor for that. I wish to see you happy, as
36 Harriet has well chosen, or *great* . Eating, drinking, dressing, and
37 society nonsense are not things to throw a life upon--especially
38 you, Mary. You are rusting away a splendid brain and abilities, for
39 which there is not the least excuse. You must have ambition to be
40 great. I know you will take these rather harsh remarks from me in
41 the right spirit knowing I like you really as much or more than
42 what I call you, my sisters. I had long had a mind to tell you this,
43 and as experience is gathering I feel like telling you. The joyful
44 news from Harriet urged me to tell you this. I will be overjoyed to
45 hear that you are married also and happy, so far as happiness can
46 be had here, or would like to hear of you as doing great deeds.

47 I had a pleasant visit with Prof. Deussen in Germany. I am
48 sure you have heard of him as the greatest living German
49 philosopher. He and I travelled together to England and today
50 came together to see my friend here with whom I am to stop for
51 the rest of my stay in England. He (Deussen) is very fond of
52 talking Sanskrit and is the only Sanskrit scholar in the West who

1 can talk in it. As he wants to get a practice, he never talks to me
2 in any other language but Sanskrit.

3 I have come over here amongst my friends, shall work for a
4 few weeks, and then go back to India in the winter.

5 Ever your
6 loving brother,

Vivekananda

LXXXVI

11 Grey Coat
12 Gardens
13 Westminster,
14 S.W.

15 London
16 3rd
17 December, 1896

18 Dear Joe {MacLeod},

19 Many, many thanks, dear Joe Joe, for your kind invitation;
20 but the Dear God has disposed it this way, viz I am to start for
21 India on the 16th with Captain and Mrs. Sevier and Mr. Goodwin.
22 The Seviere and myself take steamer at Naples. And as there will
23 be four days at Rome, I will look in to say good-bye to Alberta.

24 Things are in a "hum" here just now; the big hall for the
25 class, 39 Victoria, is full and yet more are coming.

26 Well, the good old country now calls me; I must go. So good-
27 bye to all projects of visiting Russia this April.

28 I just set things a-going a little in India and am off again for
29 the ever beautiful U.S. and England etc.

30 So very kind of you to send Mabel's letter--good news
31 indeed. Only I am a little sorry for poor Fox. However, Mabel
32 escaped him; that is better.

33 You did not write anything about how things are going on in
34 New York. I hope it is all well there. Poor Cola! is he able now to
35 make a living?

36 The coming of Goodwin was very opportune, as it captured
37 the lectures here which are being published in a periodical form.
38 Already there have been subscribers enough to cover the
39 expenses.

40 Three lectures next week, and my London work is finished
41 for this season. Of course, everybody here thinks it foolish to give
42 it up just now the "boom" is on, but the Dear Lord says, "Start for
43 Old India". I obey.

44 To Frankincense, to Mother, to Holister and everyone else
45 my eternal love and blessings, and with the same for you,

1
2 sincerely,
3 Yours ever
4
5
6 Vivekananda

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11 LXXXVII

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Florence
Hotel Minerva,
20th December,
1896

Dear Rakhal {Brahmananda},

As you see, by this time I am on my way. Before leaving London, I got your letter and the pamphlet. Take no heed of Mazoomdar's madness. He surely has gone crazy with jealousy. Such foul language as he has used would only make people laugh at him in a civilised country. He has defeated his purpose by the use of such vulgar words.

All the same, we ought not to allow Hara Mohan or any one else to go and fight Brahmos and others in our name. The public must know that we have no quarrel with any sect, and if anybody provokes a quarrel, he is doing it on his own responsibility. Quarrelling and abusing each other are our national traits. Lazy, useless, vulgar, jealous, cowardly, and quarrelsome, that is what we are, Bengalis. Anyone who wants to be my friend must give up these. Neither do you allow Hara Mohan to print any book, because such printing as he does is only cheating the public.

If there are oranges in Calcutta, send a hundred to Madras care of Alasinga, so that I may have them when I reach Madras.

Mazoomdar writes that the Sayings of Shri Ramakrishna published in *The Brahmavadin* are not genuine and are lies! In that case ask Suresh Dutt and Ram Babu to give him the lie in *The Indian Mirror*. As I did not do anything about the collection of the Uktis (Sayings), I cannot say anything.

Yours
affectionately,

Vivekananda

PS. Don't mind these fools; "No fool like an old fool" is the proverb. Let them bark a little. Their occupation is gone. Poor souls! Let them have a little satisfaction in barking.

LXXXVIII

Dampfer, "Prinz-Regent
Leopold"
3rd January, 1897

1 Dear Mary {Hale},

2 I received your letter forwarded from London in Rome. It
3 was very very kind of you to write such a beautiful letter, and I
4 enjoyed every bit of it. I do not know anything about the evolution
5 of the orchestra in Europe. We are nearing Port Said after four
6 days of frightfully bad sailing from Naples. The ship is rolling as
7 hard as she can, and you must pardon my scrawls under such
8 circumstances.

9 From Suez begins Asia. Once more Asia. What am I? Asiatic,
10 European, or American? I feel a curious medley of personalities in
11 me. You didn't write anything about Dharmapala, his goings and
12 doings. I am much more interested in him than in Gandhi.

13 I land in a few days at Colombo and mean to "do" Ceylon a
14 bit. There was a time when Ceylon had more than 20 million
15 inhabitants and a huge capital of which the ruins cover nearly a
16 hundred square miles!

17 The Ceylonese are not Dravidians but pure Aryans. It was
18 colonised from Bengal about 800 B.C., and they have kept a very
19 clear history of their country from that time. It was the greatest
20 trade centre of the ancient world, and Anuradhapuram was the
21 London of the ancients.

22 I enjoyed Rome more than anything in the West, and after
23 seeing Pompeii I have lost all regard for the so-called "Modern
24 Civilisation". With the exception of steam and electricity they had
25 everything else and infinitely more art conceptions and executions
26 than the Moderns.

27 Please tell Miss Locke that I was mistaken when I told her
28 that sculpturing of the human figure was not developed in India as
29 among the Greeks. I am reading in Fergusson and other
30 authorities that in Orissa or Jagannath, which I did not visit, there
31 are among the ruins human figures which for beauty and
32 anatomical skill would compare with any production of the
33 Greeks. There is a colossal figure of Death, a huge female
34 skeleton covered with a shrivelled skin--the awful fidelity to
35 anatomical details are frightening and disgusting. Says my author,
36 one of the female figures in the niche is exactly like the Venus de
37 Medici and so on. But you must remember that everything almost
38 has been destroyed by the iconoclastic Mohammedan, yet the
39 remnants are more than all European debris put together! I have
40 travelled eight years and not seen many of the masterpieces.

41 Tell sister Locke also that there is a ruined temple in a
42 forest in India which and the Parthenon of Greece Fergusson
43 considers as the climax of architectural art--each of its type--the
44 one of conception, the other of conception and detail. The later
45 Mogul buildings etc., the Indo-Saracenic architecture, does not
46 compare a bit with the best types of the ancients. . . .

47 With all my
48 love,

49 Vivekananda

1 PS. Just by chance saw Mother Church and Father Pope at
2 Florence. You know of it already.

3 V.
4
5

6 LXXXIX

7 Madras
8 12th
9

February, 1897

10 Dear Rakhal {Brahmananda},

11 I am to start by *S.S. Mombasa* next Sunday. I had to give up
12 invitations from Poona and other places on account of bad health.
13 I am very much pulled down by hard work and heat.

14 The Theosophists and others wanted to intimidate me.
15 Therefore I had to give them a bit of my mind. You know they
16 persecuted me all the time in America, because I did not join
17 them. They wanted to begin it here. So I had to clear my position.
18 If that displeases any of my Calcutta friends, "God help them". You
19 need not be afraid, I do not work alone, but He is always with me.
20 What could I do otherwise?

21 Yours,
22 Vivekananda

23 PS. Take the house if furnished--V.
24
25

26 XC

27 Darjeeling
28 20th April,
29

1897

30 {original in Bengali}

31 Dear Shashi {Ramakrishnananda},

32 All of you have doubtless reached Madras by this time. I
33 should think Biligiri is certainly taking great care of you, and that
34 Sadananda serves you as your attendant. In Madras the worship
35 should be done in a completely Sattvic manner, without a trace of
36 Rajas in it. I hope Alasinga has by now returned to Madras. Don't
37 enter into wrangles with anybody--always maintain a calm
38 attitude. For the present let the worship of Shri Ramakrishna be
39 established and continued in the house of Biligiri. But see that the
40 worship does not become very elaborate and long. Time thus
41 saved should be utilised in holding classes and doing some
42 preaching. It is good to initiate as many as you can. Supervise the
43 work of the two papers, and help in whatever way you can. Biligiri
44 has two widowed daughters. Kindly educate them and make
45 special efforts that through them more such widowed women get

1 a thorough grounding in their own religion and learn a little
2 English and Sanskrit. But all this work should be done from a
3 distance. One has to be exceedingly careful before young women.
4 Once you fall, there is no way out, and the sin is unpardonable.

5 I am very sorry to hear that Gupta was bitten by a dog; but I
6 hear that the dog was not a mad one, so there is no cause for
7 alarm. In any case, see that he takes the medicine sent by
8 Gangadhar.

9 Early morning, finish daily your worship and other duties
10 briefly, and calling together Biligiri with his family, read before
11 them the Gita and other sacred books. There is not the least
12 necessity for teaching the divine Love of Radha and Krishna.
13 Teach them pure devotion to Sita-Ram and Hara-Parvati. See that
14 no mistake is made in this respect. Remember that the episodes of
15 the divine relationship between Radha and Krishna are quite
16 unsuitable for young minds. Specially Biligiri and other followers
17 of Ramanujacharya are worshippers of Rama; so see to it that
18 their innate attitude of pure devotion is never disturbed.

19 In the evenings give some spiritual teaching like that to the
20 general public. Thus gradually "even the mountain is crossed".

21 See that an atmosphere of perfect purity is always
22 maintained, and that there enters not the slightest trace of
23 Vamachara. For the rest, the Lord Himself will guide you, there is
24 no fear. Give to Biligiri my respectful salutations and loving
25 greetings, and convey my salutations to similar devotees.

26 My illness is now much less--it may even be cured
27 completely, if the Lord wills. My love, blessings, and greetings to
28 you.

29 Yours
30 affectionately,

31 Vivekananda

32 PS. Please tender my specially affectionate greetings and
33 blessings to Dr. Nanjunda Rao and help him as much as you can.
34 Try your best to particularly encourage the study of Sanskrit
35 among the non-Brahmins.

36 V.

37
38 XCI

39 Alambazar

40 Math

41 Calcutta

42 5th May,

43 1897

44 My Dear Miss Noble {Sister Nivedita},

45 Your very very kind, loving, and encouraging letter gave me
46 more strength than you think of.

There are moments when one feels entirely despondent, no doubt--especially when one has worked towards an ideal during a whole life's time and just when there is a bit of hope of seeing it partially accomplished, there comes a tremendous thwarting blow. I do not care for the disease, but what depresses me is that my ideals have not had yet the least opportunity of being worked out. And you know, the difficulty is money.

The Hindus are making processions and all that, but they cannot give money. The only help I got in the world was in England, from Miss Muller, and Mr. Sevier. I thought there that a thousand pounds was sufficient to start at least the principal centre in Calcutta, but my calculation was from the experience of Calcutta ten or twelve years ago. Since then the prices have gone up three or four times.

The work has been started anyhow. A rickety old little house has been rented for six or seven shillings, where about twenty-four young men are being trained. I had to go to Darjeeling for a month to recover my health, and I am glad to tell you I am very much better, and would you believe it, without taking any medicine, only by the exercise of mental healing! I am going again to another hill station tomorrow, as it is very hot in the plains. Your society is still living, I am sure. I will send you a report, at least every month, of the work done here. The London work is not doing well at all, I hear, and that was the main reason why I would not come to England just now--although some of our Rajas going for the Jubilee tried their best to get me with them--as I would have to work hard again to revive the interest in Vedanta. And that would mean a good deal more trouble physically.

I may come over for a month or so very soon however. Only if I could see my work started here, how gladly and freely would I travel about!

So far about work. Now about you personally. Such love and faith and devotion and appreciation like yours, dear Miss Noble, repays a hundred times over any amount of labour one undergoes in this life. May all blessings be yours. My whole life is at your service, as we may say in our mother tongue.

It never was and never will be anything but very very welcome, any letters from you and other friends in England. Mr. and Mrs. Hammond wrote two very kind and nice letters and Mr. Hammond a beautiful poem in *The Brahmavadin*, although I did not deserve it a bit. I will write to you again from the Himalayas, where thought will be clear in sight of the snows and the nerves more settled than in this burning plains. Miss Muller is already in Almora. Mr. and Mrs. Sevier go to Simla. They have been in Darjeeling so long. So things come and go, dear friend. Only the Lord is unchangeable and He is Love. May He make our heart His eternal habitation is the constant prayer of,

Vivekananda

Almora

20th May,

1897

My Dear Rakhal {Brahmananda},

From your letter I got all the important news. I got a letter from Sudhir also and also one from Master Mahashay. I have also got two letters from Nityananda (Yogen Chatterjee) from the famine areas.

Even now money is floating on the waters, as it were, . . . but it will surely come. When it comes, buildings, land, and a permanent fund--everything will come all right. But one can never rest assured until the chickens are hatched; and I am not now going down to the hot plains within two or three months. After that I shall make a tour and shall certainly secure some money. This being so, if you think that the [land with a] frontage of eight Kathas cannot be acquired . . ., there is no harm in paying the earnest money to the middle-man vendor as though you were losing it for nothing. In all these matters use your own discretion; I cannot give any further advice. There is particularly a chance of making mistake through hurry. . . . Tell Master Mahashay that I quite approve of what he had said.

Write to Gangadhar that if he finds it difficult to get alms etc. there, he should feed himself by spending from his own pocket, and that he should publish a weekly letter in Upen's paper (*The Basumati*). In that case others also may help.

I understand from a letter of Shashi . . . he wants Nirbhayananda. If you think this course to be the best, then send Nirbhayananda and bring back Gupta. . . . Send Sashi a copy of the Bengali Rules and Regulations of the Math or an English version of it, and write to him to see that the work there is done in accordance with the Rules and Regulations.

I am glad to learn that the Association in Calcutta is going on nicely. It does not matter if one or two keep out. Gradually everyone will come. Be friendly and sympathetic with everybody. Sweet words are heard afar; it is particularly necessary to try and make new people come. We want more and more new members.

Yogen is doing well. On account of the great heat in Almora, I am now in an excellent garden twenty miles from there. This place is comparatively cool, but still warm. The heat does not seem to be particularly less than that of Calcutta. . . .

The feverishness is all gone. I am trying to go to a still cooler place. Heat or the fatigue of walking, I find, at once produces trouble of the liver. The air here is so dry that there is a burning sensation in the nose all the time, and the tongue becomes, as it were, a chip of wood. You have stopped criticising; otherwise I would have gone to a colder place by this time just for the fun of it. "He constantly neglects diet restrictions"--what rot do you talk? Do you really listen to the words of these fools? It is

1 just like your not allowing me to take Kalai-dal (black pulses),
2 because it contains starch! And what is more--there will be no
3 starch if rice and Roti (bread) are eaten after frying them! What
4 wonderful knowledge, my dear. The fact of the matter is my old
5 nature is coming back--this I am seeing clearly. In this part of the
6 country now, an illness takes on the colour and fashion of this
7 locality; and in that part of the country, it takes on the colour and
8 fashion of the illnesses in that locality. I am thinking of making my
9 meals at night very light; I shall eat to the full in the morning and
10 at noon; at night milk, fruits, etc. That is why I am staying in this
11 orchard, "in expectation of fruits"! Don't you see?

12 Now don't be alarmed. Does a companion of Shiva die so
13 quickly? Just now the evening lamp has been lighted, and singing
14 has to be done throughout the whole night. Nowadays my temper
15 also is not very irritable, and feverishness is all due to the liver--I
16 see this clearly. Well, I shall make that also come under control--
17 what fear? . . . Bravely brace yourself up and do work; let us
18 create a mighty commotion.

19 Tender my love to all at the Math. At the next meeting of the
20 Association give my greetings to everybody and tell them that
21 though I am not physically present there, yet my spirit is where
22 the name of our Lord is sung--"{Sanskrit}", that is, "O Rama, so
23 long as the story of your life goes the round on the earth"--
24 because, you see, the Atman is omnipresent.

25 Yours
26 affectionately,
27 Vivekananda

28
29
30 XCIII

31 Almora
32 20th May,
33 1897

34 Dear Sudhir,

35 Your letter gave me much pleasure. One thing, perhaps, I
36 forget to tell you--to keep a copy of the letter you sent me. Also all
37 important communications to the Math from different persons and
38 to different persons should be copied and preserved.

39 I am very glad to learn that things are going on well, that
40 the work there is steadily progressing as well as that of Calcutta.

41 I am all right now except for the fatigue of the travel which I
42 am sure will go off in a few days.

43 My love and blessings to you all.

44 Yours,
45 Vivekananda
46

Almora

2nd June,

1897

Dear Marie {Halboister},

I begin here my promised big chatty letter with the best intention as to its growth, and if it fails, it will be owing to your own Karma. I am sure you are enjoying splendid health. I have been very, very bad indeed; now recovering a bit--hope to recover very soon.

What about the work in London? I am afraid it is going to pieces. Do you now and then visit London? Hasn't Sturdy got a new baby?

The plains of India are blazing now. I cannot bear it. So I am here in this hill station--a bit cooler than the plains.

I am living in a beautiful garden belonging to a merchant of Almora--a garden abutting several miles of mountains and forests. Night before last a leopard came here and took away a goat from the flock kept in this garden. It was a frightful din the servants made and the barking of the big Tibet watchdogs. These dogs are kept chained at a distance all night since I am here, so that they may not disturb my sleep with their deep barks. The leopard thus found his opportunity and got a decent meal, perhaps, after weeks. May it do much good to him!

Do you remember Miss Muller? She has come here for a few days and was rather frightened when she heard of the leopard incident. The demand for tanned skins in London seems very great, and that is playing havoc with our leopards and tigers more than anything else.

As I am writing to you, before me, reflecting the afternoon's flow, stand long, long lines of huge snow peaks. They are about twenty miles as the crow flies from here, and forty through the circuitous mountain roads.

I hope your translations have been well received in the Countess's paper. I had a great mind and very good opportunity of coming over to England this Jubilee season with some of our Princes, but my physicians would not allow me to venture into work so soon. For going to Europe means work, isn't it? No work, no bread.

Here the yellow cloth is sufficient, and I would have food enough. Anyhow I am taking a much desired rest, hope it will do me good.

How are you going on with your work? With joy or sorrow? Don't you like to have a good rest, say for some years, and no work? Sleep, eat, and exercise; exercise, eat, and sleep--that is what I am going to do some months yet. Mr. Goodwin is with me. You ought to have seen him in his Indian clothes. I am very soon

1 going to shave his head and make a full-blown monk of him.

2 Are you still practising some of the Yogas? Do you find any
3 benefit from them? I learn that Mr. Martin is dead. How is Mrs.
4 Martin--do you see her now and then?

5 Do you know Miss Noble? Do you ever see her? Here my
6 letter comes to an end, as a huge dust storm is blowing over me,
7 and it is impossible to write. It is all your Karma, dear Marie, for I
8 intended to write so many wonderful things and tell you such fine
9 stories; but I will have to keep them for the future, and you will
10 have to wait.

11 Ever yours in
12 the Lord,

Vivekananda

16 XCV

17 Almora

18 20th June,

19 1897

20 My Dear Miss Noble {Nivedita},

21 . . . Let me tell you plainly. Every word you write I value, and
22 every letter is welcome a hundred times.

23 Write whenever you have a mind and opportunity, and
24 whatever you like, knowing that nothing will be misinterpreted,
25 nothing unappreciated. I have not had any news of the work for so
26 long. Can you tell me anything? I do not expect any help from
27 India, in spite of all the jubilating over me. They are so poor!

28 But I have started work in the fashion in which I myself was
29 trained--that is to say, under the trees, and keeping body and soul
30 together anyhow. The plan has also changed a little. I have sent
31 some of my boys to work in the famine districts. It has acted like a
32 miracle. I find, as I always thought, that it is through the *heart*,
33 and that alone, that the world can be reached. The present plan
34 is, therefore, to train up numbers of young men (from the highest
35 classes, not the lowest. For the latter I shall have to wait a little),
36 and the first attack will be made by sending a number of them
37 over a district. When these sappers and miners of religion have
38 cleared the way, there will then be time enough to put in theory
39 and philosophy.

40 A number of boys are already in training, but the recent
41 earthquake has destroyed the poor shelter we had to work in,
42 which was only rented, anyway. Never mind. The work must be
43 done without shelter and under difficulties. . . . As yet it is shaven
44 heads, rags, and casual meals. This must change, however, and
45 will, for are we not working for it, head and heart? . . .

46 It is true in one way that the people here have so little to
47 give up--yet renunciation is in our blood. One of my boys in

1 training has been an executive engineer, in charge of a district.
2 That means a very big position here. He gave it up like straw! . . .

3 With all love,

4 Yours in the
5 Truth,

6 Vivekananda

7
8 XCVI

9 Almora

10 4th July, 1897

11 My Dear Miss Noble {Nivedita},

12 I am being played upon curiously by both good and evil
13 influences from London these times here. . . . On the other hand,
14 your letters are full of life and sunshine, and bring strength and
15 hope to my spirits, and they sadly want these now. God knows.

16 Although I am still in the Himalayas, and shall be here for at
17 least a month more, I started the work in Calcutta before I came,
18 and they write progress every week.

19 Just now I am very busy with the famine, and except for
20 training a number of young men for future work, have not been
21 able to put more energy into the teaching work. The "feeding
22 work" is absorbing all my energy and means. Although we can
23 work only on a very small scale as yet, the effect is marvellous.
24 For the first time since the days of Buddha, Brahmin boys are
25 found nursing by the bed-side of cholera-stricken pariahs.

26 In India, lectures and teaching cannot do any good. What we
27 want is Dynamic Religion. And that, "God willing", as the
28 Mohammedans say, I am determined to show. . . . I entirely agree
29 with the prospectus of your Society, and you may take for granted
30 my agreement with everything you will do in the future. I have
31 entire faith in your ability and sympathy. I already owe you an
32 immense debt, and you are laying me every day under infinite
33 obligations. My only consolation is that it is for the good of others.
34 Else I do not deserve in the least the wonderful kindness shown to
35 me by the Wimbledon friends. You good, steady, genuine English
36 people, may the Lord always bless you. I appreciate you every day
37 more and more from a distance. Kindly convey my love everlasting
38 to__ and all the rest of our friends there.

39 With all love, yours ever in
40 the Truth,

41 Vivekananda

42
43
44 XCVII

45 Almora

1
2 1897 10th July,

3 My Dear Joe Joe {MacLeod},

4 I am glad to learn that you have at last found out that I have
5 time to read your letters.

6 I have taken to the Himalayas, tired of lecturing and
7 orating. I am so sorry the doctors would not allow my going over
8 with the Raja of Khetri to England, and that has made Sturdy
9 mad.

10 The Seviars are at Simla and Miss Muller here in Almora.

11 The plague has subsided, but the famine is still here, and as
12 it looks (on account of no rain as yet), it may wear yet a terrible
13 aspect.

14 I am very busy from here directing work by my boys in some
15 of the famine districts.

16 Do come by all means; only you must remember this. The
17 Europeans and the Hindus (called "Natives" by the Europeans)
18 live as oil and water. Mixing with Natives is damning to the
19 Europeans.

20 There are no good hotels to speak of even at the capitals.
21 You will have to travel with a number of servants about you (cost
22 cheaper than hotels). You will have to bear with people who wear
23 only a loin cloth; you will see me with only a loin cloth about me.
24 Dirt and filth everywhere, and brown people. But you will have
25 plenty of men to talk to you philosophy. If you mix with the English
26 much here, you will have more comforts but see nothing of the
27 Hindus as they are. Possibly I will not be able to eat with you, but
28 I promise that I will travel to good many places with you and do
29 everything in my power to make your journey pleasant. These are
30 what you expect; if anything good comes, so much the better.
31 Perhaps Mary Hale may come over with you. There is a young
32 lady, Miss Campbell, Orchard Lake, Orchard Island, Michigan,
33 who is a great worshipper of Krishna and lives alone in that
34 Island, fasting and praying. She will give anything to be able to
35 see India once, but she is awfully poor. If you bring her with you, I
36 will anyhow manage to pay her expenses. If Mrs. Bull brings old
37 Landsberg with her, that will be saving that fool's life as it were.

38 Most probably I may accompany you back to America. Kiss
39 Holister for me and the baby. My love to Alberta, to the Leggetts,
40 and to Mabel. What is Fox doing? Give him my love when you see
41 him. To Mrs. Bull and S. Saradananda my love. I am as strong as
42 ever, but it all depends upon leading a quiet life ever afterwards.
43 No hurly-burly any more.

44 I had a great mind to go to Tibet this year; but they would
45 not allow me, as the road is dreadfully fatiguing. However, I
46 content myself with galloping hard over precipices on mountain
47 ponies. (This is more exciting than your bicycle even, although I
48 had an experience of that at Wimbledon.) Miles and miles of uphill
49 and miles and miles of downhill, the road a few feet broad

1 hanging over sheer precipices several thousand feet deep below.

2 Ever yours in
3 the Lord,

4 Vivekananda

5
6 PS. The best time to come is to arrive in India by October or
7 beginning of November. December, January, and February you see
8 things all over and then start by the end of February. From March
9 it begins to get hot. Southern India is *always hot*.

10 V.

11 Goodwin has gone to work in Madras on a paper to be
12 started there soon.

13 V.

14
15
16 XCVIII

17 Deuldhara,

18 Almora

19 13th July,

20 1897

21 {original in Bengali}

22 My Dear Rakhal {Brahmananda},

23 Going to Almora from here I made special efforts for Yogen.
24 But he left for the plains as soon as he had recovered a little.
25 From Subhala valley he will write to me of his safe arrival there.
26 As it is impossible to procure a Dandi (a carrying chair) or any
27 other conveyance, Latu could not go. Achyut and myself have
28 again come back to this place. Today my health is a little bad
29 owing to this riding on horseback at breakneck speed in the sun. I
30 took Shashi Babu's medicine for two weeks--I find no special
31 benefit. . . . The pain in the liver is gone, and owing to plenty of
32 exercise my hands and legs have become muscular, but the
33 abdomen is distending very much. I feel suffocated while getting
34 up or sitting down. Perhaps this is due to the taking of milk. Ask
35 Shashi if I can give up milk. Previously I suffered from two attacks
36 of sunstroke. From that time, my eyes become red if I expose
37 myself to the sun, and the health continues to be bad for two or
38 three days at a stretch.

39 I was very pleased to get all the news from the Math, and I
40 also heard that the famine relief work is going on well. Please let
41 me know if any money has been received from the office of the
42 *Brahmavadin* for famine relief. Some money will be sent soon
43 from here also. There is famine in many other places as well, so it
44 is not necessary to stay so long in one place. Tell them to move to
45 other localities and write to each man to go to a separate place.
46 All such work is real work. If the field is made ready in this way,

1 the seeds of spiritual knowledge can be sown. Remember this
2 always--that the only answer to those conservative fanatics who
3 abuse us is such work. I have no objection to getting the thing
4 printed as Shashi and Sarada have suggested.

5 You yourselves come to a decision as to what the name of
6 the Math should be. . . . The money will come within seven weeks;
7 but I have no further news about the land. In this matter it seems
8 to me that it will be good if we can get the garden of Kristo Gopal
9 in Cossipore.²⁶⁴ What do you say? In future great works will be
10 accomplished. If you agree with me, don't let this matter out to
11 anybody either within the Math or outside, but quietly make
12 inquiries. The work is spoiled if plans are not kept secret. If it can
13 be bought with fifteen or sixteen thousand, then buy at once--of
14 course, only if you think it good. If something more is demanded,
15 make some advance payment and wait for those seven weeks. My
16 view is that for the present it is better to buy it. Everything else
17 will come by and by. All our associations centre round that
18 garden. In reality that is our first Math. Let the thing be done very
19 privately.

20 A work can be judged by its results only, just as one can
21 infer the nature of previous mental tendencies by their resultant
22 in present behaviour. . . .

23 Undoubtedly the price of the land of the garden at
24 Cossipore has increased; but our purse has, on the other hand,
25 dwindled. Do something or other, but do it quickly.

26 All work is spoilt by dilatoriness. This garden also has to be
27 acquired--if not today, tomorrow--however big the Math on the
28 banks of the Ganga may be. It will be still better if you can broach
29 the subject through a proxy. If they hear that we are willing to
30 buy, they will bid high. Do the work very confidentially. Be
31 fearless; Shri Ramakrishna is our helper, what fear? Give my love
32 to all.

33 Yours

34 affectionately,

35 Vivekananda

36 PS. (on the cover): . . . Make special efforts for Cossipore. . .
37 . Give up the land at Belur. Should the poor²⁶⁵ die of starvation
38 while you people at the top are indulging in controversy regarding
39 to whom the credit should go? If "Mahabodhi" takes all the credit,
40 let it. Let the poor be benefited. That the work is going on well is
41 good news. Work on with greater energy. I am beginning to send
42 articles. The saccharine and lime have reached.

43 V.
44

1 ²⁶⁴ ?Where Shri Ramakrishna passed his last days.
2

3 ²⁶⁵ ?The famine-stricken people for whom the Mahabodhi Society agreed to
4 pay, on condition that the work would be done in its name.
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IC

Almora

25th July,

1897

My Dear Marie {Halboister},

I have time, will, and opportunity now to clear my promise. So my letter begins. I have been very weak for some time, and with that and other things my visit to England this Jubilee season had to be postponed.

I was very sorry at first not to be able to meet my nice and very dear friends once more, but Karma cannot be avoided, and I had to rest contented with my Himalayas. It is a sorry exchange, after all; for the beauty of the living spirit shining through the human face is far more pleasurable than any amount of material beauty.

Is not the soul the Light of the world?

The work in London had to go slow--for various reasons, and last though not the least was *l'argent, mon amie* ! When I am there *l'argent* comes in somehow, to keep the mare going. Now everybody shrugs his shoulder. I must come again and try my best to revive the work.

I am having a good deal of riding and exercise, but I had to drink a lot of skimmed milk per prescription of the doctors, with the result that I am more to the front than back! I am always a forward man though--but do not want to be too prominent just now, and I have given up drinking milk.

I am glad to learn that you are eating your meals with good appetite.

Do you know Miss Margaret Noble of Wimbledon? She is working hard for me. Do correspond with her if you can, and you help me a good deal there. Her address is, Brantwood, Worple Road, Wimbledon.

So you saw my little friend Miss Orchard and you liked her too--good. I have great hopes for her. And how I should like to be retired from life's activities entirely when I am very old, and hear the world ringing with the names of my dear, dear young friends like yourself and Miss Orchard etc.!

By and by, I am glad to find that I am aging fast, my hair is turning grey. "Silver threads among the gold"--I mean black--are coming in fast.

It is bad for a preacher to be young, don't you think so? I do, as I did all my life. People have more confidence in an old man, and it looks more venerable. Yet the old rogues are the worst rogues in the world, isn't it?

The world has its code of judgment which, alas, is very different from that of truth's.

1 So your "Universal Religion" has been rejected by the *Revue*
2 *de deux Mondes* . Never mind, try again some other paper. Once
3 the ice is broken, you get in at a quick rate, I am sure. And I am so
4 glad that you love the work: it will make its way, I have no doubt
5 of it. Our ideas have a future, *ma chere* Marie--and it will be
6 realised soon.

7 I think this letter will meet you in Paris--your beautiful
8 Paris--and I hope you will write me lots about French journalism
9 and the coming "World's Fair" there.

10 I am so glad that you have been helped by Vedanta and
11 Yoga. I am unfortunately sometimes like the circus clown who
12 makes others laugh, himself miserable!

13 You are naturally of a buoyant temperament. Nothing seems
14 to touch you. And you are moreover a very prudent girl, inasmuch
15 as you have scrupulously kept yourself away from "love" and all its
16 nonsense. So you see you have made your good Karma and
17 planted the seed of your lifelong well-being. Our difficulty in life is
18 that we are guided by the present and not by the future. What
19 gives us a little pleasure now drags us on to follow it, with the
20 result that we always buy a mass of pain in the future for a little
21 pleasure in the present.

22 I wish I had nobody to love, and I were an orphan in my
23 childhood. The greatest misery in my life has been my own
24 people--my brothers and sisters and mother etc. Relatives are like
25 deadly clogs to one's progress, and is it not a wonder that people
26 will still go on to find new ones by *marriage* !!!

27 He who is alone is happy. Do good to all, like everyone, but
28 *do not love* anyone. It is a bondage, and bondage brings only
29 misery. Live alone in your mind--that is happiness. To have nobody
30 to care for and never minding who cares for one is the way to be
31 free.

32 I envy so much your frame of mind--quiet, gentle, light, yet
33 deep and *free* . You are already free, Marie, free already--you are
34 Jivanmukta. I am more of a woman than a man, you are more of a
35 man than woman. I am always dragging other's pain into me--for
36 nothing, without being able to do any good to anybody--just as
37 women, if they have no children, bestow all their love upon a
38 cat!!!

39 Do you think this has any spirituality in it? Nonsense, it is all
40 material *nervous bondage* --that is what it is. O! to get rid of the
41 thraldom of the flesh!

42 Your friend Mrs. Martin very kindly sends me copies of her
43 magazine every month--but Sturdy's thermometer is now below
44 zero, it seems. He seems to be greatly disappointed with my non-
45 arrival in England this summer. What could I do?

46 We have started two Maths (monasteries) here, one in
47 Calcutta, the other in Madras. The Calcutta Math (a wretched
48 rented house) was awfully shaken in the late earthquake.

49 We have got in a number of boys, and they are in training;

1 also we have opened famine relief in several places and the work
2 is going on apace. We will try to start similar centres in different
3 places in India.

4 In a few days I am going down to the plains and from thence
5 go to the Western parts of the mountains. When it is cooler in the
6 plains, I will make a lecture tour all over and see what work can
7 be done.

8 Here I cannot find any more time to write--so many people
9 are waiting--so here I stop, dear Marie, wishing you all joy and
10 happiness.

11 May you never be lured by flesh is the constant prayer of--
12 Ever yours in
13 the Lord,
14 Vivekananda

15
16 C
17 Almora
18 29th July,
19 1897

20 {original in Bengali}

21 Dear Shashi {Ramakrishnananda},

22 I got information that your work there is going on very well.
23 Get a thorough mastery of the three Bhashyas (commentaries),
24 and also study well European philosophy and allied subjects--see
25 to it without fail. To fight with others one requires sword and
26 shield--this fact should never be forgotten. I hope Sukul has now
27 reached there and is attending on you all right. If Sadananda does
28 not like to stay there, send him to Calcutta. Don't forget to send to
29 the Math every week a report of the work including income and
30 expenditure and other information.

31 Alasinga's sister's husband borrowed four hundred rupees
32 from Badridas here, promising to send it back as soon as he
33 reached Madras; inquire from Alasinga and tell him to send it
34 quickly. For I am leaving this place the day after tomorrow--
35 whether for Mussoorie Hills or somewhere else I shall decide
36 later.

37 Yesterday I delivered a lecture in the circle of the local
38 English people, and all were highly pleased with it. But I was very
39 much pleased with the lecture in Hindi that I delivered the
40 previous day--I did not know before that I could be oratorical in
41 Hindi.

42 Are there any new boys joining the Math? If so, then carry
43 on the work in the same manner as it is being done in Calcutta. At
44 present don't use up your wisdom too much, lest it should become
45 completely exhausted--you can do that later on.

46 Pay particular attention to your health, but too much

1 coddling of the body will, on the contrary, also spoil the health. If
2 there is not the strength of knowledge, nobody would care
3 twopence for your ringing of the bell--this is certain; and knowing
4 this for certain equip yourself accordingly. My heart's love and
5 blessings to you and to Goodwin and others.

6
7 affectionately, Yours
8 Vivekananda

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11 CI
12 Ambala
13 19th August,
14 1897

15 {original in Bengali}

16 Dear Shashi {Ramakrishnananda},

17 I am very much pained to hear that the work in Madras is
18 not prospering for want of funds. I am glad to learn that the
19 amount borrowed by Alasinga's brother-in-law (sister's husband)
20 has been received back in Almora. Goodwin has written to me to
21 inform the Reception Committee to take some money for expenses
22 from the amount that is left as a result of the lecture. It is a very
23 mean thing to spend the money received on the occasion of that
24 lecture for the purpose of the Reception--and I do not like to tell
25 anybody anything about this matter. I have understood quite well
26 what the people of our country are when it comes to money-
27 matters. . . . On my behalf, you personally talk with the friends
28 there and politely make them understand that it is all right if they
29 can find ways and means to bear the expenses; but if they cannot
30 do so, all of you come back to the Math at Calcutta or go to
31 Ramnad and establish the Math there.

32 I am now going to the hills at Dharamsala. Niranjana, Dinu,
33 Krishnalal, Latu, and Achyut will stay at Amritsar. Why did you
34 not, all these days, send Sadananda to the Math? If he is still
35 there, then send him to the Punjab on receipt of a letter from
36 Niranjana from Amritsar. I intend to start work in the Punjab after
37 a few days' more rest in the Punjab hills. The Punjab and
38 Rajputana are indeed fields for work. I shall write to you again
39 soon after starting work. . . .

40 My health was very bad recently. Now I am very slowly
41 recovering. It will be all right, if I stay in the hills for some more
42 days. My love to you and to Alasinga, G. G., R. A., Goodwin, Gupta,
43 Sukul, and all others.

44
45 affectionately, Yours
46 Vivekananda

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CII

Amritsar
2nd

September, 1897

{original in Bengali}

My Dear Rakhal {Brahmananda},

Yogen tells me in a letter to buy the house at Baghbazar for Rs. 20,000. Even if we buy that house, there are still a lot of difficulties; for example, we shall have to break it down in part and make the drawing room into a big hall, and similar alterations and repairs. Moreover the house is very old and ramshackle. However, consult Girish Babu and Atul and do what you decide to be best. Today I am leaving by the two o'clock train with all my party for Kashmir. The recent stay at Dharamsala Hills has improved my health much, and the tonsillitis, fever, etc. have completely disappeared.

From a letter of yours I got all the news. Niranjan, Latu, Krishnalal, Dinanath, Gupta, and Achyut are all going to Kashmir with me.

The gentleman from Madras who donated Rs. 1,500 for famine relief wants an account of how exactly the money was expended. Send him such an account. We are doing more or less well.

Yours
affectionately,

Vivekananda

PS. Give my love to all at the Math.

V.

CIII

C/o Rishibar
Chief Justice
Srinagar, Kashmir
13th September,

1897

{original in Bengali}

My Dear Rakhal {Brahmananda},

Now Kashmir. The excellent accounts you heard of this place are all true. There is no place so beautiful as this; and the people also are fair and good-looking, though their eyes are not beautiful. But I have also never seen elsewhere villages and towns

1 so horribly dirty. In Srinagar I am now putting up at the house of
2 Rishibar Babu. He is very hospitable and kind. Send all my letters
3 to his address. In a few days I shall go out somewhere else on
4 excursions; but while returning, I shall come by way of Srinagar,
5 and so shall get the letters also. I have read the letter that you
6 sent regarding Gangadhar. Write to him that there are many
7 orphans in Central India and in Gorakhpur. From there the
8 Punjabis are getting many children. You must persuade Mahendra
9 Babu and get up an agitation about this matter, so that the people
10 of Calcutta are induced to take up the charge of these orphans--
11 such a movement is very desirable. Especially a memorial should
12 be sent to the Government requesting it to see that orphans taken
13 over by the missionaries are returned to the Hindus. Tell
14 Gangadhar to come over; and on behalf of the Ramakrishna
15 Society a tearing campaign should be made. Gird up your loins,
16 and go to every house to carry on the campaign. Hold mass
17 meetings etc. Whether you succeed or not, start a furious
18 agitation. Get all the facts from the important Bengali friends at
19 Gorakhpur by writing to them, and let there be a countrywide
20 agitation over this. Let the Ramakrishna Society be fully
21 established. The secret of the whole thing is to agitate and agitate
22 without respite. I am much pleased to see the orderliness of
23 Sarada's work. Gangadhar and Sarada should not rest satisfied
24 until they have succeeded in creating a centre in every place they
25 visit.

26 Just now I received a letter from Gangadhar. It is good news
27 that he is determined to start a centre in that district. Write to
28 him saying that his friend, the Magistrate, has sent an excellent
29 reply to my letter. As soon as we come down to the plains from
30 Kashmir, I shall send back Latu, Niranjan, Dinu, and Khoka. For
31 there is no suitable work for them here any more; also within
32 three to four weeks send Shuddhananda, Sushil, and one other to
33 me. Send them to the house of Mr. Shyamacharan
34 Mukhopadhyaya, Medical Hall, Cantonment, Ambala. From there I
35 shall go to Lahore. They should have each two thick gerua-
36 coloured jerseys, and two blankets for bedding. I shall buy them
37 woollen *chaddars*, and other woollen necessities in Lahore. If the
38 translation of *Raja-Yoga* has been completed, get it published
39 bearing all the cost. . . . Where the language is obscure, make it
40 very simple and clear, and let Tulsi make a Hindi translation of it
41 if he can. If these books are published, they will help the Math
42 very greatly.

43 I hope your health is now quite all right. Since reaching
44 Dharamsala I have been all right. I like the cold places; there the
45 body keeps well. I have a desire either to visit a few places in
46 Kashmir and then choose an excellent site and live a quiet life
47 there, or to go on floating on the water. I shall do what the doctor
48 advises. The Raja is not here now. His brother, the one just next to
49 him in age, is the Commander-in-Chief. Efforts are being made to
50 arrange a lecture under his chairmanship. I shall write all about
51 this afterwards. If the meeting for the lecture is held in a day or
52 two, I shall stay back, otherwise I go out again on my travels.

1 Sevier is still at Murree. His health is very bad--going about in the
2 jolting *tongas* and *jutkas*. The Bengali gentlemen of Murree are
3 very good and courteous. Give my respects to G. C. Ghosh, Atul,
4 Master Mahashay, and others, and keep up the spirits of
5 everybody. What is the news about the house which Yogen
6 suggested we should buy? In October I shall go down from here
7 and shall deliver a few lectures in the Punjab. After that I may go
8 via Sind to Cutch, Bhuj, and Kathiawar--even down to Poona if
9 circumstances are favourable; otherwise I go to Rajputana via
10 Baroda. From Rajputana I go to the North-Western Province,²⁶⁶
11 then Nepal, and finally Calcutta--this is my present programme.
12 Everything, however, is in God's hands. My love and greetings to
13 all.

14 Yours

15 affectionately,

16 Vivekananda

17
18 CIV

19 C/o Rishibar

20 Mukhopadhyaya

21 Chief Justice

22 Srinagar, Kashmir

23 15th September,

24 1897

25 My Dear Shuddhananda,

26 We are in Kashmir at last. I need not tell you of all the
27 beauties of the place. It is the one land fit for Yogis, to my mind.
28 But the land is now inhabited by a race who though possessing
29 great physical beauty are extremely dirty. I am going to travel by
30 water for a month seeing the sights and getting strong. But the
31 city is very malarious just now, and Sadananda and Kristolal have
32 got fever. Sadananda is all right today, but Kristolal has fever yet.
33 The doctor came today and gave him a purgative. He will be all
34 right by tomorrow, we hope; and we start also tomorrow. The
35 State has lent me one of its barges, and it is fine and quite
36 comfortable. They have also sent orders to the Tahsildars of
37 different districts. The people here are crowding in banks to see
38 us and are doing everything they can to make us comfortable.

39 A clipping from *The Indian Mirror*, quoting passages from
40 an article written by Dr. Barrows in an American paper, has been
41 sent over to me by somebody without a name and asking me what
42 reply to give. I send back the cutting to Brahmananda with my
43 answer to the passages which are damned lies!

44 I am glad to learn you are doing well there and going on
45 with your usual work. I also had a letter from Shivananda giving
46 the details of work there.

1 ²⁶⁶ ?In those days this was made up of Uttar Pradesh and part of the Punjab.
2

After a month I go back to the Punjab, and I will expect three of you at Ambala. In case a centre is founded, one of you will be left in charge. Niranjana, Latu, and Kristolal will be sent back.

I intend to make a rapid march through the Punjab and Sind via Kathiawar and Baroda, back to Rajputana, and thence to Nepal and last Calcutta.

Write to me C/o Rishibar Babu at Srinagar. I will get the letter on my way back.

With love to all and blessings,

Yours,

Vivekananda

CV

Srinagar,

Kashmir

1897

{original in Bengali}

Dear Haripada {Mitra},

My health has been very bad for the last nine months, and the heat made it still worse. So I have been wandering over the hills from place to place. Now I am in Kashmir. I have travelled far and wide, but I have never seen such a country. I shall soon leave for the Punjab and again go to work. From Sadananda I have heard all the news about you and continue to get it. I am sure to go to Karachi after visiting the Punjab. So we shall meet in person there.

With

blessings,

Vivekananda

C VI

Srinagar,

Kashmir

30th

September, 1897

My Dear Miss MacLeod,

Come soon if you intend to come really. From November to the middle of February India is cool; after that it is hot. You will be able to see all you want within that time, but to see all takes years.

1 I am in a hurry; therefore excuse this hasty card. Kindly
2 tender my love to Mrs. Bull and my good wishes and earnest
3 thoughts for Goodwin's speedy recovery. My love to Mother, to
4 Alberta, to the baby, to Holister, and last, not the least, to Franky.

5 Yours in the
6 Lord,

7 Vivekananda

8
9
10 CVII

11 Srinagar,
12 Kashmir,
13 30th
14 September, 1897

15 Dear Rakhal {Brahmananda},

16 I received your affectionate letter and also the letter from
17 the Math. I am leaving for the Punjab in two or three days. I have
18 received the foreign mail. The following are my answers to Miss
19 Noble's questions in her letter:

20 1. Nearly all the branches have been started, but the
21 movement is only just beginning.

22 2. Most of the monks are educated. Those that are not are
23 also having secular education. But above all, to do good, perfect
24 unselfishness is absolutely necessary.

25 To ensure that, more attention is given to spiritual exercises
26 than to anything else.

27 3. Secular educators: We get mostly those who have already
28 educated themselves. What is needed is training them into our
29 method and building up of character. The training is to make them
30 obedient and fearless; and the method is to help the poor
31 physically first and then work up to higher regions of mentality.

32 Arts and Industries: This part of the programme alone
33 cannot be begun for want of funds. The simplest method to be
34 worked upon at present is to induce Indians to use their own
35 produce and get markets for Indian artware etc. in other
36 countries. This should be done by persons who are not only not
37 middlemen themselves, but will devote the entire proceeds of this
38 branch to the benefit of the workmen.

39 4. Wandering from place to place will be necessary till
40 "people come to education". The religious character of the
41 wandering monks will carry with it a much greater weight than
42 otherwise.

43 5. All castes are open to our influence. So long the highest
44 only have been worked upon. But since the work department is in
45 full operation in different famine-centres, we are influencing the
46 lower classes more and more.

6. Nearly all the Hindus approve our work, only they are not used to practical co-operation in such works.

7. Yes, from the very start we are making no distinction in our charities or other good works between the different religions of India.

Reply to Miss N. according to these hints.

See that there is no remissness whatever in the medical treatment of Yogen--if necessary spend money by drawing on the capital. Did you go and meet Bhavanath's wife?

If Brahmachari Hariprasanna can come, it will be very helpful. Mr. Sevier has become very impatient about acquiring a house somewhere; it will be good if something is done quickly about it! Hariprasanna is an engineer; so he will be able to do something quickly about it. Also he understands better about the suitability of places. They (the Seviers) like to have a place somewhere near about Dehra Dun or Mussoorie; that is to say, the place must not be too cold and must be habitable throughout the year. So send Hariprasanna at once straight to S^j. Shyamapada Mukherjee, Medical Hall, Ambala Cantonment. As soon as I go down to the Punjab, I shall send Mr. Sevier along with him. I am returning (to the Math) in a trice after a tour of the Punjab, Karachi, and then via Rajputana, not via Kathiawar and Gujarat--to Nepal. Tulsi has gone to Madhya Bharat--is it for the famine-relief work? . . .

My blessings and love to all. I have got the news that Kali has reached New York; but he has not written any letter. Sturdy writes that his work had increased so much that people were amazed--and a few persons have also written me praising him highly. However, there is not so much difficulty in America; the work will go on somehow or other. Send Shuddhananda and his brother along with Hariprasanna. Of the party only Gupta and Achyut will accompany me.

Yours

affectionately,

Vivekananda

CVIII

Srinagar,

Kashmir

30th

September, 1897

{original in Bengali}

My Dear Shashi {Ramakrishnananda},

Now I am returning from a visit to places in Kashmir. In a day or two I shall leave for the Punjab. As my health is now much better, I have decided to tour again in the same way as before.

1 Not too much lecturing--one or two lectures, perhaps, in the
2 Punjab, otherwise none. The people of our country have not yet
3 offered me even as much as a pice for my travelling expenses--and
4 to cap it all, to take with you a whole party, well, you can easily
5 understand how troublesome it all is. It is also a matter of shame
6 to have to draw upon only the English disciples. So, as before, I
7 start out "with only a blanket". In this place there is no need for
8 any person like Goodwin, as you can see.

9 A monk from Ceylon, P. C. Jinawar Vamar by name, has
10 written to me among other things that he wants to visit India.
11 Perhaps he is the same monk who comes of the Siamese royal
12 family. His address is Wellawatta, Ceylon. If convenient, invite him
13 to Madras. He believes in the Vedanta. It will not be so difficult to
14 send him to other places from Madras. It is also good to have such
15 a person in the Order. My love and blessings to you and all others.

16 Yours
17 affectionately,

18 Vivekananda

19 PS. The Maharaja of Khetri is reaching Bombay on the 10th
20 October. Don't forget to present him an address of welcome. V.

21
22
23 CIX

24 Srinagar,
25 Kashmir
26 30th
27 September, 1897

28 {original in Bengali}

29 My Dear Rakhal {Brahmananda},

30 I understand from a letter of Gopal Dada that you have seen
31 that piece of land at Konnagar. It seems that that site is rent-free
32 and measures 16 bighas (about 5 acres), and that the price is
33 below eight or ten thousand rupees. Do what you think best after
34 considering the healthiness and other factors. In a day or two I
35 shall leave for the Punjab. So don't write any more letters to me at
36 this address. I shall telegraph to you my next address. Don't
37 forget to send Hariprasanna. Tell Gopal Dada thus: "Your health
38 will soon be all right--winter is coming, what fear? Eat well and be
39 merry." Write a letter to Mrs. C. Sevier at Spring Dale, Murree, as
40 to Yogen's present state of health, marking on the cover "to await
41 arrival". Give my love and blessings to all.

42 Yours
43 affectionately,

44 Vivekananda

45 PS. The Maharaja of Khetri reaches Bombay on the 10th
46 October. Don't forget to give him an address of welcome.

CX

Srinagar,

Kashmir

1st October,

1897

Dear Margo {Nivedita},

Some people do the best work when *led*. Not every one is *born to lead*. The best leader, however, is one who "leads like the baby". The baby, though apparently depending on everyone, is the king of the household. At least, to my thinking, that is the secret. . . . Many feel, but only a few can express. It is the power of expressing one's love and appreciation and sympathy for others, that enables one person to succeed better in spreading the idea than others. . . .

I shall not try to describe Kashmir to you. Suffice it to say, I never felt sorry to leave any country except this Paradise on earth; and I am trying my best, if I can, to influence the Raja in starting a centre. So much to do here, and the material so hopeful! . . .

The great difficulty is this: I see persons giving me almost the whole of their love. But I must not give anyone the whole of mine in return, for that day the work would be ruined. Yet there are some who will look for such a return, not having the breadth of the impersonal view. It is absolutely necessary to the work that I should have the enthusiastic love of as many as possible, while I myself remain entirely impersonal. Otherwise jealousy and quarrels would break up everything. A leader must be impersonal. I am sure you understand this. I do not mean that one should be a brute, making use of the devotion of others for his own ends, and laughing in his sleeve meanwhile. What I mean is what I am, intensely personal in my love, but having the power to pluck out my own heart with my own hand, if it becomes necessary, "for the good of many, for the welfare of many", as Buddha said. Madness of love, and yet in it no bondage. Matter changed into spirit by the force of love. Nay, that is the gist of our Vedanta. There is but One, seen by the ignorant as matter, by the wise as God. And the history of civilisation is the progressive reading of spirit into matter. The ignorant see the person in the non-person. The sage sees the non-person in the person. Through pain and pleasure, joy and sorrow, this is the one lesson we are learning. . . .

Yours ever with love
and truth,

Vivekananda

CXI

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Murree
11th October,

1897

{original in Bengali}

My Dear Rakhal {Brahmananda},

I feel I have been working as if under an irresistible impulse for the last ten days, beginning from Kashmir. It may be either a physical or a mental disease. Now I have come to the conclusion that I am unfit for further work. . . . I now understand that I have been very harsh to all of you. But I knew, however, that you would bear with all my shortcomings; in the Math there is no one else who will do so. I have been increasingly harsh to you. Whatever has happened is now past--it is all the result of past Karma. What is the good of my repentance? I do not believe in it. It is all Karma. Whatever of Mother's work was to be accomplished through me, She made me do, and has now flung me aside breaking down my body and mind. Her will be done!

Now I retire from all this work. In a day or two I shall give up everything and wander out alone; I shall spend the rest of my life quietly in some place or other. Forgive me if you all will, or do what you like.

Mrs. Bull has given much of the money. She has implicit confidence in Sharat. Do the work of the Math with Sharat's advice; or do as you will.

But I have all along been like a hero--I want my work to be quick like lightning, and firm as adamant. Likewise shall I die also. Therefore kindly do my work for me--no question of success or defeat enters here at all. I have never retreated in a fight--shall I now . . . ? There is success and failure in every work. But I am inclined to believe that one who is a coward will be born after death as an insect or a worm, that there is no salvation for a coward even after millions of years of penance. Well, shall I after all be born as a worm? . . . In my eyes this world is mere play--and it will always remain as such. Should one spend six long months brooding over the questions of honour and disgrace, gain and loss pertaining to this? . . . I am a man of action. Simply advice upon advice is being given--this one says this, that one says that; again that man threatens, and this one frightens! This life is not, in my view, such a sweet thing that I would long to live through so much care and caution and fear. Money, life, friends, and relatives, and the love of men and myself--if one wants to enter into work fully assured beforehand of all these--if one has to be so much ridden with fear, then one will get just what Gurudeva used to say, "The crow thinks itself very clever but . . ." ²⁶⁷--well, he will get that. After all, what is the purpose behind all these--money and wealth, Maths and institutions, preaching and lecturing? There is only one purpose in the whole of life--education. Otherwise what is the use of men and women, land and wealth?

1 ²⁶⁷ ?The crow thinks itself very clever, but it cannot help eating filth.
2

1 So loss of money, or loss of anything else--I cannot bother
2 about, and I will not. When I fight, I fight with girded loins--that
3 much I fully understand; and I also understand that man, that
4 hero, that god, who says, "Don't care, be fearless. O brave one,
5 here I am by your side!" To such a man-god I offer a million
6 salutations. Their presence purifies the world, they are the
7 saviours of the world. And the others who always wail, "Oh, don't
8 go forward, there is *this* danger, there is *that* danger"--those
9 dyspeptics--they always tremble with fear. But through the grace
10 of the Divine Mother my mind is so strong that even the most
11 terrible dyspepsia shall not make me a coward. To cowards what
12 advice shall I offer?--nothing whatsoever have I to say. But this I
13 desire, that I should find shelter at the feet of those brave souls
14 who dared to do great deeds even though they failed to succeed,
15 of those heroes who never quailed nor shirked, of those fighters
16 who never disobeyed orders through fear or pride. I am the child
17 of the Divine Mother, the source of all power and strength. To me,
18 cringing, fawning, whining, degrading inertia and hell are one and
19 the same thing. O Mother of the Universe, O my Gurudeva, who
20 would constantly say, "This is a hero!"--I pray that I may not have
21 to die a coward. This is my prayer, O brother. "{Sanskrit}--
22 certainly there is, or there will be born one equal to me"; some
23 one or other will certainly arise from these thousands of devotees
24 of Shri Ramakrishna who will be like me, and who will be able to
25 understand me.

26 O hero, awake, and dream no more. Death has caught you
27 by the forelock . . . still fear not. What I have never done--fleeing
28 from the battle--well, will that happen today? For fear of defeat
29 shall I retreat from the fight? Defeat is the ornament the hero
30 adorns himself with. What, to acknowledge defeat without
31 fighting! O Mother, Mother! . . . Not one capable of even playing
32 second fiddle and yet the mind filled with petty self-importance,
33 "We understand everything". . . Now I retire; . . . everything I
34 leave in your control. If Mother sends me men again in whose
35 heart there is courage, in whose hands strength, in whose eyes
36 there is fire, real children of the Mother--if She gives me even one
37 such, then I shall work again, then I shall return. Otherwise, I
38 shall take it that, by Mother's will, this is the end. I am in a
39 tremendous hurry, I want to work at hurricane speed, and I want
40 fearless hearts.

41 I have rebuked poor Sarada severely. What to do? . . . I do
42 scold; but I also have much to complain.

43 . . . Almost suffocated by short breathing, standing and
44 standing, I have written an article for him. . . . It is all good,
45 otherwise how will renunciation come? . . . Will Mother in the end
46 kill me with attachment? I have offended all of you--do what you
47 want.

48 I bless you all with a full heart. May Mother enshrine
49 Herself in your hearts as strength: {Sanskrit}--the support that is
50 fearlessness--may She make you all fearless. This I have seen in
51 life--he who is over-cautious about himself falls into dangers at
52 every step; he who is afraid of losing honour and respect, gets

1 only disgrace; he who is always afraid of loss always loses. . . .
2 May all good attend you all.

3 Yours
4 affectionately,
5 Vivekananda

8 CXII

9 Murree
10 12th October,
11 1897

12 {original in Bengali}

13 My Dear Rakhal {Brahmananda},

14 I wrote at length in yesterday's letter. I think it desirable to
15 give you special directions about certain matters. . . . (1) To all
16 those who collect money and send it to the Math . . . the
17 acknowledgment of the amounts will be issued from the Math. (2)
18 The acknowledgment must be in duplicate, one for the sender, and
19 one for filing in the Math. (3) There must be a big register in
20 which all the names and addresses of the donors will be entered.
21 (4) Accounts, accurate to the last pie, must be kept of the amounts
22 that are donated to the Math Fund, and fully accurate accounts
23 should be obtained from Sarada and others to whom money is
24 given. For lack of accurate account-keeping . . . see that I am not
25 accused as a cheat. These accounts should afterwards be
26 published. (5) Immediately go and register a will under lawyer's
27 advice to the effect that in case you and I die then Hari and
28 Sharat will succeed to all that there is in our Math.

29 I have not yet got any news from Ambala, whether
30 Hariprasanna and others have reached there or not. Give the
31 other half-sheet of this letter to Master Mahashay.

32 Yours
33 affectionately,
34 Vivekananda

37 CXIII

38 Jammu
39 3rd
40 November, 1897

41 My Dear Miss Noble {Nivedita},²⁶⁸

1 ²⁶⁸ ?This was the last letter received in England by Sister Nivedita.
2

1 . . . Too much sentiment hurts work. "Hard as steel and soft
2 as a flower" is the motto.

3 I shall soon write to Sturdy. He is right to tell you that in
4 case of trouble I will stand by you. You will have the whole of it if I
5 find a piece of bread in India--you may rest assured of that. I am
6 going to write to Sturdy from Lahore, for which I start tomorrow. I
7 have been here for 15 days to get some land in Kashmir from the
8 Maharaja. I intend to go to Kashmir again next summer, if I am
9 here, and start some work there.

10 With everlasting love,

11 Yours,
12 Vivekananda

13
14 CXIV

15 Lahore
16 11th

17 November, 1897

18 {original in Bengali}

19 My Dear Rakhal {Brahmananda},

20 The lecture at Lahore is over somehow. I shall start for
21 Dehra Dun in a day or two. I have now postponed my tour to Sind,
22 as none of you are agreeable to it, and also because of various
23 other obstacles. Somebody has opened my two letters from
24 England on the way. So don't send me letters any further for the
25 present. Send them after I have written for them from Khetri. If
26 you go to Orissa, then make arrangements that some one will do
27 all the work as your representative--say Hari, especially now,
28 when I am daily expecting letters from America.

29 Perhaps the will that I asked you to make in favour of Hari
30 and Sharat has now been made.

31 Probably I shall leave Sadananda and Sudhir here after
32 establishing a Society. Now no more lecturing--I go in a hurry
33 straight to Rajputana.

34 The establishment of the Math must have precedence over
35 everything.

36 Without regular exercise the body does not keep fit; talking,
37 talking all the time brings illness--know this for certain. My love to
38 all.

39 Yours
40 affectionately,

Vivekananda

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43 CXV

44 Lahore,

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15th

November, 1897

{original in Bengali}

My Dear Rakhal {Brahmananda},

I hope you and Hari are now in good health. The work in Lahore went off with great eclat. Now I go to Dehra Dun. The Sind tour is postponed. I have yet no news whether Dinu, Latu, and Krishnalal have reached Jaipur. Babu Nagendranath Gupta will collect subscriptions and donations from here and send them to the Math to meet expenses. Send him regular receipts. Let me know if you have received anything from Murree, Rawalpindi, and Sialkot.

Reply to me C/o Post Master, Dehra Dun. Other letters you may send me after hearing from me from Dehra Dun. My health is good; only I have to get up at night once or twice. I am having sound sleep; sleep is not spoiled even after exhausting lectures; and I am doing exercise every day. . . . There is no trouble at all. Now, come on, work with redoubled energy. Keep an eye on that big piece of land--in all secrecy. We are making regular efforts so that big Utsava²⁶⁹ can be held there. My love to all.

Yours

affectionately,

Vivekananda

PS. It will be a very good thing if Master Mahashay will write now and then about us in *The Tribune*, so that Lahore will not become cold again--now it is quite warmed up. Spend money a little economically; pilgrimage expenses should be borne by you personally; preaching and propaganda expenses should be charged to the Math.

V.

CXVI

Dehra Dun

24th

November, 1897

{original in Bengali}

My Dear Baburam {Premananda},

I got all news about you from Hariprasanna. I am especially pleased to hear that Rakhal and Hari are now quite well.

Now Babu Raghunath Bhattacharya of Tehri is suffering very much from some pain in the neck; I also have been suffering for a long time from some pain at the back of my neck. If you can get hold of some very old ghee, then send some of it to him at Dehra Dun and some of it to me also at my Khetri address. You are

²⁶⁹ ?Celebration--of Shri Ramakrishna's birthday.

1 sure to get it from Habu or Sharat (lawyer). Address it to Babu
2 Raghunath Bhattacharya, Dehra Dun, N.W.P. . . . and it will reach
3 him.

4 The day after tomorrow I am leaving for Saharanpur; from
5 there to Rajputana.

6 Yours
7 affectionately,
8 Vivekananda

9
10 PS. My love to all. V.

11

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13 CXVII

14 Delhi

15 30th

16 November, 1897

17 {original in Bengali}

18 My Dear Rakhal {Brahmananda},

19 Part of the money that Miss Muller promised has reached
20 Calcutta. The balance will come afterwards in a short while. We
21 have also some amount. Miss Muller will deposit the money in
22 your name as well as mine with Messrs. Grindlay & Co. As you
23 have got the power of attorney, you alone can draw all the money.
24 As soon as the money is deposited, you yourself with Hari go to
25 Patna and meet that gentleman and by some means or other
26 influence him; and if the price of the land is reasonable, buy it. If
27 it cannot be had, try for some other plot of ground. I am trying to
28 get some money in these parts too. We must hold the big festival
29 on our own plot of ground--remember this must be your first and
30 foremost work, come what may.

31 You have shown great pluck; the work you have done these
32 last eight or nine months does you great credit. Now you must see
33 to it that a Math and a centre in Calcutta are steadily established
34 before everything else. Work hard to this end but quietly and in
35 secret. Get information about the Cossipore house also. Tomorrow
36 I am going to Khetri via Alwar. My health is good, even though I
37 have caught a cold. Send all letters to Khetri. My love to all.

38 Yours
39 affectionately,

40 Vivekananda

41 PS. What about the will I asked you to make in favour of
42 Sharat and Hari? Or will you buy the land and other things in my
43 name, and I shall make a will?

44 V.

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CXVIII

Delhi
8th

December, 1897

{original in Bengali}

My Dear Rakhal {Brahmananda},

We shall start for Khetri tomorrow. Gradually the luggage has greatly increased. After Khetri I intend to send everybody to the Math. I could get done through them none of the work which I had hoped. That is to say, it is quite certain that none of them can do anything if he always remains with me. Unless each goes about independently, he will not be able to do anything. The fact is, who will care for them if they are in my company? Only waste of time. So I am sending them to the Math.

Keep as a fund for some permanent work the balance of the money left after the famine relief. Do not spend that money for any other purpose, and after giving the full accounts of the famine work, note down thus, "So much balance is left for some other good work". . . .

Work I want--I don't want any humbug. To those who have no desire to work I say, "My dear fellow, now go and follow your own way." As soon as I reach Khetri, I will send you the power of attorney with my signature if the document has reached there meanwhile. Open only those letters from America which bear the Boston postmark, not the others. Send all my letters to Khetri. I shall get money in Rajputana itself; no cause for anxiety on that score. Try energetically for the piece of land; we must have the celebration on our own ground this time.

Is the money in the Bengal Bank, or have you kept it elsewhere? Be very careful about money matters; keep detailed accounts, and regarding money know for certain that one cannot rely even on one's own father.

Give my love to all. Write to me how Hari is doing. Recently I met at Dehra Dun the Udasi Sadhu, Kalyan Dev, and a few others. I hear the people at Hrishikesh are very eager to see me and are asking again and again about me.

Yours

affectionately,

Vivekananda

CXIX

Khetri
14th

December, 1897

{original in Bengali}

1 My Dear Rakhal {Brahmananda},

2 I have today sent your power of attorney with my
3 signature. . . . Draw the money as early as you can, and wire to
4 me as soon as you have done so. A Raja of a place in Bundelkhand
5 named Chatrapur has invited me. I shall visit the place on my way
6 to the Math. The Raja of Limbdi, too, is writing earnestly. I cannot
7 avoid going there also. I shall make a lightning tour of Kathiawar--
8 that is what it will come to. I shall feel great relief as soon as I
9 reach Calcutta. . . . There is no news from Boston as yet; perhaps
10 Sharat is coming; anyway, whenever any news comes from
11 anywhere, write to me immediately.

12
13 affectionately, Yours

14 Vivekananda

15 PS. How is Kanai? I hear that his health is not good. Pay
16 special attention to him and see that nobody is unduly bossed
17 over. Write to me about your health as well as Hari's. V.

18

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20 CXX

21 Jaipur

22 27th

23 December, 1897

24 {original in Bengali}

25 My Dear Shivananda,

26 Mr. Setlur of Girgaon, Bombay, whom you know very well
27 from Madras writes to me to send somebody to Africa to look after
28 the religious needs of the Indian emigrants in Africa. He will of
29 course send the man and bear all expenses.

30 The work will not be congenial at present, I am afraid, but it
31 is really the work for a perfect man. You know the emigrants are
32 not liked at all by the white people there. To look after the
33 Indians, and at the same time maintain cool-headedness so as not
34 to create more strife--is the work there. No immediate result can
35 be expected, but in the long run it will prove a more beneficial
36 work for India than any yet attempted. I wish you to try your luck
37 in this. If you agree, please write to Setlur, about your willingness
38 and ask for more information, mentioning this letter. And
39 godspeed to you! I am not very well, but am going to Calcutta in a
40 few days and will be all right.

41 Yours in the
42 Lord,

43 Vivekananda

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46 CXXI

1 The Math,
2 Belur
3 25th
4 February, 1898

5 My Dear Rajaji {Raja Pyari Mohan Mukherjee},

6 My gratitude for your very kind invitation to speak. I had a
7 talk with Mr. Bhattacharya on the subject a few days back, and I
8 am trying my best as a result to find time for your Society. I also
9 promised to let them know the result on Sunday.

10 A friend to whom I owe much is here, presumably, to take
11 me to his place in Darjeeling.

12 There are some American friends come, and every spare
13 moment is occupied in working for the new Math and several
14 organisations therein, and I expect to leave India next month for
15 America.

16 Believe me, I am trying my best to be able to take advantage
17 of this invitation of yours and shall communicate the result to you
18 on Sunday through Mr. Bhattacharya.

19 Yours with love and
20 blessings,

21 Vivekananda

22

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24 CXXII

25 Math, Belur

26 Howrah P.O.

27 25th

28 February, 1898

29 My Dear Shashi {Ramakrishnananda},

30 Our congratulations for the successful carrying out of the
31 Mahotsava²⁷⁰ in Madras. Hope you had a good gathering and
32 plenty of spiritual food. We are all so glad that you have girded
33 yourself to teach more of spirituality to the Madras people than
34 those finger twistings and *klung phat*²⁷¹ you are so fond of. Really
35 your lecture on *Shriji*²⁷² was splendid. I could only catch a report
36 in the *Madras Mail* in Kandwa, and the Math people have not had
37 any. Why don't you send us over a copy?

38 I learn that you complain about my silence, is it? I have
39 written you more letters, however, than you ever wrote me, from
40 Europe and America even. You ought to give me all the news you

1 ²⁷⁰ ?Big celebration--of Shri Ramakrishna's birthday.

2
3 ²⁷¹ ?Cryptic Mantras or sound formulae.

4
5 ²⁷² ?Shri Ramakrishna.

1 can from Madras every week. Simplest way is to put down a few
2 lines and a few items of news every day on a sheet.

3 My health has not been all right of late; at present it is much
4 better. Calcutta is unusually cool just now, and the American
5 friends who are here are enjoying it ever so much. Today we take
6 possession of the land we have bought, and though it is not
7 practicable to have the Mahotsava on it just now, I must have
8 something on it on Sunday. Anyhow, *Shriji's* relics must be taken
9 to our place for the day and worshipped. Gangadhar is here and
10 asks me to write to you that though he has succeeded in getting
11 some subscriptions for the *Brahmavadin*, the delivery being very
12 irregular, he is afraid of losing them also soon. I received your
13 letter of recommendation for the young man with the old story of
14 "having nothing to eat, Your Honour"; only added in the Madras
15 edition: "got a number of children too", for generating whom no
16 recommendation was needed! I would be very glad to help him,
17 but the fact is, I have no money; every cent I had I have made
18 over to Raja,²⁷³ as they all say I am a spendthrift and are afraid of
19 keeping money with me. I have, however, sent the letter to Rakhal
20 if he can find the way to help your friend, the young man, in
21 having some more children. He writes that the Christians will help
22 him out if he becomes a convert, but he won't. Perhaps he is
23 afraid that his conversion will make Hindu India lose one of her
24 brightest jewels and Hindu society the benefit of his propagating
25 power to eternal misery!

26 The boys here are rather seedy owing to the unusual
27 amount of pure and cool air they are made to breathe in and live
28 on the bank of the Ganga in the new Math. Sarada has his malaria
29 brought over from Dinajpur. I made him eat a dose of opium the
30 other day without much benefit to him except his brain which
31 progressed for some hours towards its natural direction, namely,
32 idiocy. Hari also has a touch; I hope it will take off a good bit of
33 their avoirdupois. By the by, we have once more started the
34 dancing business here, and it would make your heart glad to see
35 Hari and Sarada and my own good self in a waltz. How we keep
36 balance at all is a wonder to me.

37 Sharat has come and is hard at work as usual. We have got
38 some good furniture now, and a big jump from the old Chatai
39 (mat) in the old Math to nice tables and chairs and three Khats
40 (cots), mind you. We have curtailed the Puja (worship) work a
41 good deal, and the amount of pruning your *klings* and *phats* and
42 *svahas* have undergone would make you faint. The puja occupied
43 only the *day*, and they slept soundly all night. How are Tulsi and
44 Khoka? Are they more tractable with you than under Rakhal? You
45 may run in to Calcutta for a few days giving charge to Tulsi, but it
46 is so expensive, and then you must go back, as Madras has to be
47 *thoroughly worked up*. I am going to America again with Mrs.
48 Bull in a few months.

49 Give my love to Goodwin and tell him that we are going to

1 ²⁷³ ?Rakhal or Swami Brahmananda.
2

1 see him at any rate on our way to Japan. Shivananda is here, and I
2 have toned down a bit his *great desire* to go to the Himalayas *for*
3 *food* ! Is Tulsi contemplating the same? The *bandicoot-hole* will
4 be a sufficient cave for him, I suppose.

5 So the Math here is a *fait accompli*, and I am going over to
6 get more help. . . . Work on with energy. India is a rotten corpse
7 inside and outside. We shall revive it by the blessings of Shri
8 Maharaj. With all love,

9
10 the Lord, Ever yours in

11 Vivekananda

12
13 CXXIII

14 Math, Belur

15 Howrah

16 District

17 Bengal, India

18 2nd March,

19 1898

20 My Dear Mary {Hale},

21 You have news of me already, I hope, through the letter I
22 wrote to Mother Church. You are all so kind, the whole family, to
23 me, I must have belonged to you in the past, as we Hindus say. My
24 only regret is that the millionaires do not materialise: and I want
25 them so badly just now that I am growing decrepit and old and hot
26 in the midst of building and organising. Though Harriet has got
27 one of a million virtues, a few millions of cash virtue would have
28 made it more shining, I am sure; so you do not commit the same
29 mistake.

30 A certain young couple had everything favourable to make
31 them man and wife except that the bride's father was determined
32 not to give his daughter to anyone who had not a million. The
33 young people were in despair when a clever matchmaker came to
34 the rescue. He asked the bridegroom whether he was willing to
35 part with his nose on payment of a million--which he refused. The
36 matchmaker then swore before the bride's father that the
37 bridegroom had in store goods worth several millions, and the
38 match was completed. Don't you take like millions.

39 Well, well, you could not get the millionaire, so I could not
40 get the money; so I had to worry a good deal and work hard to no
41 purpose; so I got the disease. It requires brains like mine to find
42 out the true cause--I am charmed with myself!

43 Well, it was in Southern India, when I came from London
44 and when the people were feting and feasting and pumping all the
45 work out of me, that an old hereditary disease made its
46 appearance. The tendency was always there, and excess of mental
47 work made it "express" itself. Total collapse and extreme

1 prostration followed, and I had to leave Madras immediately for
2 the cooler North; a day's delay meant waiting for a week in that
3 awful heat for another steamer. By the by, I learnt afterwards that
4 Mr. Barrows arrived in Madras next day and was very much
5 chagrined at not finding me as he expected, though I helped
6 getting up an address for him and arranged for his reception.
7 Poor man, he little knew I was at death's door then.

8 I have been travelling in the Himalayas all through last
9 summer; and a cold climate, I found immediately, brought me
10 round; but as soon as I come into the heat of the plains I am down
11 again. From today the heat in Calcutta is becoming intense, and I
12 will soon have to fly. This time to cool America as Mrs. Bull and
13 Miss MacLeod are here. I have bought a piece of land for the
14 institution on the river Ganga near Calcutta, on which is a little
15 house where they are living now; within a stone's throw is the
16 house where the Math is situated at present in which we live.

17 So I see them every day and they are enjoying it immensely
18 *a L'Inde* . They intend making a trip to Kashmir in a month, and I
19 am going with them as a guide and friend and philosopher
20 perhaps, if they are willing. After that we all sail for the land of
21 freedom and scandal.

22 You need not be alarmed with me as the disease will take
23 two or three years at worst to carry me off. At best it may remain
24 a harmless companion. I am content. Only I am working hard to
25 set things all right and always so that the machine moves forward
26 when I am off the stage. Death I have conquered long ago when I
27 gave up life. My only anxiety is the *work* , and even that to the
28 Lord I dedicate, and He knows best.

29
30 the Lord,

Ever yours in

Vivekananda

34 CXXIV

35 Math, Belur

36 (Howrah),

37 March, 1898

38 My Dear Shashi {Ramakrishnananda},

39 I forgot to write you about two things. 1. That Tulsi ought to
40 learn shorthand from Goodwin, at least the beginning. 2. I had to
41 write a letter almost every mail to Madras while I was out of
42 India. I have in vain written for a copy of those letters. Send me
43 all those letters. I want to write out my travels. Do not fail, and I
44 shall send them back as soon as they have been used up. The
45 *Dawn* can manage with 200 subscribers to come out regularly on
46 Rs. 40/- an issue expenditure. This is a great fact to know. The P.B.
47 (*Prabuddha Bharata*) seems to be very disorganised; try best to
48 organise it. Poor Alasinga, I am sorry for him. Only thing I can do

1 is to make him entirely free for a year so that he may devote all
2 his energy to the *Brahmavadin* work. Tell him not to worry; I have
3 him always in mind, poor child; his devotion I can never repay.

4 I am thinking of going to Kashmir again with Mrs. Bull and
5 Miss MacLeod. (I) return to Calcutta and start for America from
6 here.

7 Miss Noble is really an acquisition. She will soon surpass
8 Mrs. Besant as a speaker, I am sure.

9 Do look after Alasinga. I have an idea that he is breaking
10 himself with work. Tell him, the best work is only done by
11 alternate repose and work. Give him all my love. We had two
12 public lectures in Calcutta, one from Miss Noble and the other
13 from our Sharat. Both of them did very well indeed; there was
14 great enthusiasm, which shows that the Calcutta public has not
15 forgotten us. Some of the members of the Math had a touch of
16 influenza. They are all right now. The thing is working nicely. Shri
17 (Holy) Mother is here, and the European and American ladies
18 went the other day to see her, and what do you think, *Mother ate*
19 *with them even there* ! Is not that grand? The Lord is watching
20 over us; there is no fear; do not lose your nerves, keep your health
21 and take things easy. It is always good to give a few strong
22 strokes and rest on your oars. Rakhal is living with the new land
23 and buildings. I was not satisfied with the Mahotsava this year.
24 What it should be is a grand mixture of all the different phases
25 here. We shall try it next year--I shall send instructions. With love
26 to all of you there and blessings.

27 Vivekananda

28
29
30 CXXV

31 Darjeeling

32 18th April,

33 1898

34 My Dear Joe Joe {MacLeod},

35 I was down with fever brought upon, perhaps, by excessive
36 mountain climbing and the bad health in the station.

37 I am better today and intend leaving this in a day or two. In
38 spite of the great heat there, I used to sleep well in Calcutta and
39 had some appetite. Here both have vanished--this is all the gain.

40 I could not see Miss Muller yet on the subject of
41 Marguerite; but I intend to write her today. She is making all
42 arrangements to receive her here. Mr. Gupta is also invited to
43 teach them Bengali. She may now do something about her. I shall,
44 however, write.

45 It will be easy for Marguerite to see Kashmir any time
46 during her stay; but if Miss M. is not willing, there will be a big
47 row again to injure both her and Marguerite.

1 I am not sure whether I go to Almora again. Much riding it
2 seems is sure to bring on a relapse. I will wait for you at Simla--
3 whilst you pay your visit to the Seviars. We will think on it when I
4 am in. I am so glad to learn that Miss Noble delivered an address
5 at the R.K. Mission. With all love to the Trinity,

6 Ever yours in
7 the Lord,

8 Vivekananda

9
10
11 CXXVI

12 Darjeeling,
13 23rd April,
14 1898

15 {original in Bengali}

16 My Dear Rakhal {Brahmananda},

17 My health was excellent on my return from Sandukphu
18 (11,924 ft.) and other places; but after returning to Darjeeling, I
19 had first an attack of fever, and after recovering from that, I am
20 now suffering from cough and cold. I try to escape from this place
21 every day; but they have been constantly putting it off for a long
22 time. However, tomorrow, Sunday, I am leaving; after halting at
23 Kharsana for a day I start again for Calcutta on Monday. I shall
24 send you a wire after starting. We should hold an annual meeting
25 of the Ramakrishna Mission, and also one for the Math. In both
26 the meetings the accounts of famine relief must be submitted, and
27 the report of the famine relief must be published. Keep all this
28 ready.

29 Nityagopal says, managing an English magazine will not
30 cost much. So let us first get this one out, and we shall see to the
31 Bengali magazine afterwards. All these points will have to be
32 discussed. Is Yogen willing to shoulder the responsibility of
33 running the paper? Shashi writes that if Sharat goes some time to
34 Madras, they may make a lecture tour jointly. Oh, how hot it is
35 now! Ask Sharat if G. G., Sarada, Shashi Babu, and others have
36 got their articles ready. Give my love and blessing to Mrs. Bull,
37 Miss MacLeod, and Nivedita.

38 Yours
39 affectionately,

40 Vivekananda

41
42
43 CXXVII

44 Darjeeling,
45 29th April,
46 1898

1 My Dear Joe Joe {MacLeod},

2 I have had several attacks of fever, the last being influenza.

3 It has left me now, only I am very weak yet. As soon as I
4 gather strength enough to undertake the journey, I come down to
5 Calcutta.

6 On Sunday I leave Darjeeling, probably stopping for a day or
7 two at Kurseong, then direct to Calcutta. Calcutta must be very
8 hot just now. Never mind, it is all the better for influenza. In case
9 the plague breaks out in Calcutta, I must not go anywhere; and
10 you start for Kashmir with Sadananda. How did you like the old
11 gentleman, Devendra Nath Tagore? Not as stylish as "Hans Baba"
12 with Moon God and Sun God of course. What enlightens your
13 insides on a dark night when the Fire God, Sun God, Moon God,
14 and Star Goddesses have gone to sleep? It is hunger that keeps
15 my consciousness up, I have discovered. Oh, the great doctrine of
16 correspondence of light! Think how dark the world has been all
17 these ages without it! And all this knowledge and love and work
18 and all the Buddhas and Krishnas and Christs--vain, vain have
19 been their lives and work, for they did not discover *that* "which
20 keeps the inner light when the Sun and Moon were gone to the
21 limbo" for the night! Delicious, isn't it?

22 If the plague comes to my native city, I am determined to
23 make myself a sacrifice; and that I am sure is a "Darn sight, better
24 way to Nirvana" than pouring oblations to all that ever twinkled.

25 I have had a good deal of correspondence with Madras with
26 the result that I need not send them any help just now. On the
27 other hand I am going to start a paper in Calcutta. I will be ever
28 so much obliged if you help me starting that. As always with
29 undying love,

30
31 the Lord.

Ever yours in

32 Vivekananda

33

34

35 CXXVIII

36 Almora

37 20th May.

38 1898

39 {original in Bengali}

40 My Dear Rakhal {Brahmananda},

I have got all the news from your letter and have replied to your wire already. Niranjana and Govindlal Shah will wait at Kathgodam for Yogen-Ma. After I reached Naini Tal, Baburam went from here to Naini Tal on horseback against everybody's advice, and while returning, he also accompanied us on horseback. I was far behind as I was in a Dandi. When I reached the dak bungalow at night, I heard that Baburam had again fallen

1 from the horse and had hurt one of his arms--though he had no
2 fractures. Lest I should rebuke him, he stayed in a private lodging
3 house. Because of his fall, Miss MacLeod gave him her Dandi and
4 herself came on the horse. He did not meet me that night. next
5 day I was making arrangements for a Dandi for him, when I heard
6 that he had already left on foot. Since then I have not heard of
7 him. I have wired to one or two places, but no news. Perhaps he is
8 putting up at some village. Very well! They are experts in
9 increasing one's worries.

10 There will be a Dandi for Yogen-Ma; but all the rest will
11 have to go on foot.

12 My health is much better, but the dyspepsia has not gone,
13 and again insomnia has set in. It will be very helpful if you can
14 soon send some good Ayurvedic medicine for dyspepsia.

15 Since only one or two sporadic cases of plague have
16 occurred there, there is plenty of accommodation in the
17 Government plague hospital, and there is a talk of having
18 hospitals in every Ward. Taking all this into consideration, do what
19 the situation demands. But remember that something said by
20 somebody in Baghbazar does not constitute public opinion. . . .
21 Take care that funds do not run short in times of need and that
22 there is no waste of money. For the present buy a plot of ground
23 for Ramlal in the name of Raghuvir²⁷⁴ after careful consideration. .
24 . . Holy Mother will be the Sebait (worshipper-in-charge); after
25 her will come Ramlal, and Shibu will succeed them as Sebait; or
26 make any other arrangement that seems best. You can, if you
27 think it right, begin the construction of the building even now. For
28 it is not good to live in a new house for the first one or two
29 months, as it will be damp. . . . The anti-erosion wall can be
30 completed afterwards. I am trying to raise money for the
31 magazine. See that the sum of Rs. 1,200 which I gave for the
32 magazine is kept only for that account.

33 All the others are well here. Sadananda sprained his foot
34 yesterday. He says he will be all right by the evening. The climate
35 at Almora is excellent at this time. Moreover the bungalow rented
36 by Sevier is the best in Almora. On the opposite side Annie Besant
37 is staying in a small bungalow with Chakravarty. Chakravarty is
38 now the son-in-law of Gagan (of Ghazipur). One day I went to see
39 him. Annie Besant told me entreatingly that there should be
40 friendship between her organisation and mine all over the world,
41 etc., etc. Today Besant will come here for tea. Our ladies are in a
42 small bungalow near by and are quite happy. Only Miss MacLeod
43 is a little unwell today. Harry Sevier is becoming more and more a
44 Sadhu as the days pass by. . . . Brother Hari sends you his
45 greetings and Sadananda, Ajoy, and Suren send you their
46 respectful salutations. My love to you and all the others.

47 Yours

48 affectionately

1 ²⁷⁴ ?The family deity at Shri Ramakrishna's birthplace, Kamarpukur, Ramlal
2 being his nephew.
3

1 Vivekananda
2 PS. Give my love to Sushil and Kanai and all the others.
3 V.

4
5
6 CXXIX
7 Kashmir
8 3rd July,
9 1898

10 Dear Sturdy,
11 Both the editions had my assent, as it was arranged
12 between us that we would not object to anybody's publishing my
13 books. Mrs. Bull knows about it all and is writing to you.
14 I had a beautiful letter from Miss Souter the other day. She
15 is as friendly as ever.
16 With love to the children, Mrs. Sturdy, and yourself
17 Ever yours in
18 the Lord,
19 Vivekananda

20
21
22 CXXX
23 Srinagar
24 17th July,
25 1898
26 {original in Bengali}

27 My Dear Rakhal {Brahmananda},
28 I got all the news from your letter. . . . My opinion regarding
29 what you have written about Sarada is only that it is difficult to
30 make a magazine in Bengali paying; but if all of you together
31 canvass subscribers from door to door, it may be possible. In this
32 matter do as you all decide. Poor Sarada has already been
33 disappointed once. What harm is there if we lose a thousand
34 rupees by supporting such an unselfish and very hardworking
35 person? What about the printing of *Raja-Yoga* ? As a last resort,
36 you may give it to Upen on certain terms of sharing the profit in
37 the sales. . . . About money matters, the advice given previously is
38 final. Henceforward do what you consider best regarding
39 expenditure and other things. I see very well that my policy is
40 wrong, and yours is correct, regarding helping others; that is to
41 say, if you help with money too much at a time, people instead of
42 feeling grateful remark on the contrary that they have got a
43 simpleton to bank upon. I always lost sight of the demoralising
44 influence of charity on the receiver. Secondly, we have no right to

1 deviate even slightly from the purposes for which we collect the
2 donations. Mrs. Bull will get her rosary all right if you send it care
3 of Chief Justice Rishibar Mukhopadhyaya, Kashmir. Mr. Mitra and
4 the Chief Justice are taking every care of them. We could not get a
5 plot of ground in Kashmir yet, but there is a chance that we shall
6 do so soon. If you can spend a winter here, you are sure to recoup
7 your health. If the house is a good one and if you have enough fuel
8 and warm clothing, then life in a land of snow is nothing but
9 enjoyable. Also for stomach troubles a cold climate is an unfailing
10 remedy. Bring Yogen with you; for the earth here is not stony, it is
11 clay like that of Bengal.

12 If the paper is brought out in Almora, the work will progress
13 much; for poor Sevier will have something to do, and the local
14 people also will get some work. Skilful management lies in giving
15 every man work after his own heart. By all the means in our
16 power the Nivedita Girls' School in Calcutta should be put on a
17 firm footing. To bring Master Mahashay to Kashmir is still a far
18 cry, for it will be long before a college is established here. But he
19 has written that it is possible to start a college in Calcutta, with
20 him as the principal, at an initial expense of a thousand rupees. I
21 hear that you all also favour this proposal. In this matter do what
22 you all consider best. My health is all right. I have to get up
23 seldom at night, even though I take twice a day rice and potatoes,
24 sugar, or whatever I get. Medicine is useless--it has no action on
25 the system of a Knower of Brahman! Everything will be digested--
26 don't be afraid.

27 The ladies are doing well, and they send you their greetings.
28 Two letters from Shivananda have come. I have also received a
29 letter from his Australian disciple. I hear that the outbreak of
30 plague in Calcutta has completely subsided.

31 affectionately, Yours
32
33 Vivekananda

34
35
36 CXXXI

37 Srinagar
38 1st August,
39 1898

40 My Dear Rakhal {Brahmananda},

41 You are always under a delusion, and it does not leave you
42 because of the strong influence, good or bad, of other brains. It is
43 this: whenever I write to you about accounts, you feel that I have
44 no confidence in you. . . . My great anxiety is this: the work has
45 somehow been started, but it should go on and progress even
46 when we are not here; such thoughts worry me day and night. Any
47 amount of theoretical knowledge one may have; but unless one
48 does the thing actually, nothing is learnt. I refer repeatedly to
49 election, accounts, and discussion so that everybody may be

1 prepared to shoulder the work. If one man dies, another--why
2 another only, ten if necessary--should be ready to take it up.
3 Secondly, if a man's interest in a thing is not roused, he will not
4 work whole-heartedly; all should be made to understand that
5 everyone has a share in the work and property, and a voice in the
6 management. This should be done while there is yet time. Give a
7 responsible position to everyone alternately, but keep a watchful
8 eye so that you can control when necessary; thus only can men be
9 trained for the work. Set up such a machine as will go on
10 automatically, no matter who dies or lives. We Indians suffer from
11 a great defect, viz we cannot make a permanent organisation--and
12 the reason is that we never like to share power with others and
13 never think of what will come after we are gone.

14 I have already written everything regarding the plague.
15 Mrs. Bull and Miss Muller and others are of opinion that it is not
16 desirable to spend money uselessly when hospitals have been
17 started in every Ward. We lend our services as nurses and the
18 like. Those that pay the piper must command the tune.

19 The Maharaja of Kashmir has agreed to give us a plot of
20 land. I have also visited the site. Now the matter will be finalised
21 in a few days, if the Lord wills. Right now, before leaving, I hope
22 to build a small house here. I shall leave it in the charge of Justice
23 Mukherjee when departing. Why not come here with somebody
24 else and spend the winter? Your health will improve, and a need,
25 too, will be fulfilled. The money I have set apart for the press will
26 be sufficient for the purpose, but all will be as you decide. This
27 time I shall surely get some money from N.W.P., Rajputana, and
28 other places. Well, give as directed . . . money to a few persons. I
29 am borrowing this amount from the Math and will pay it back to
30 you with interest.

31 My health is all right in a way. It is good news that the
32 building work has begun. My love to all.

33 Yours
34 affectionately,
35 Vivekananda

36
37
38 CXXXII
39 Srinagar,
40 Kashmir
41 28th August,
42 1898

43 My Dear Mary {Hale},

44 I could not make an earlier opportunity of writing you, and
45 knowing that you were in no hurry for a letter, I will not make
46 apologies. You are learning all about Kashmir and ourselves from
47 Miss MacLeod's letter to Mrs. Leggett, I hear--therefore needless
48 going into long rigmaroles about it.

The search for Heinsholdt's Mahatmas in Kashmir will be entirely fruitless; and as the whole thing has first to be established as coming from a creditable source, the attempt will also be a little too early. How are Mother Church and Father Pope and where? How are you ladies, young and old? Going on with the old game with more zest now that one has fallen off the ranks? How is the lady that looks like a certain statue in Florence? (I have forgotten the name) I always bless her arms when I think of the comparison.

I have been away a few days. Now I am going to join the ladies. The party then goes to a nice quiet spot behind a hill, in a forest, through which a murmuring stream flows, to have meditation deep and long under the deodars (trees of God) cross-legged *a la Buddha* .

This will be for a month or so, when by that time our good work will have spent its powers and we shall fall from this Paradise to earth again; then work out our Karma a few months and then will have to go to hell for bad Karma in China, and our evil deeds will make us sink in bad odours with the world in Canton and other cities. Thence Purgatory in Japan? And regain Paradise once more in the U.S. of America. This is what Pumpkin Swami, brother of the Coomra Swami, foretells (in Bengali Coomra means squash). He is very clever with his hands. In fact his cleverness with his hands has several times brought him into great dangers.

I wished to send you so many nice things, but alas! the thought of the tariff makes my desires vanish "like youth in women and beggars' dreams".

By the by, I am glad now that I am growing grey every day. My head will be a full-blown white lotus by the time you see me next.

Ah! Mary, if you could see Kashmir--only Kashmir; the marvellous lakes full of lotuses and swans (there are no swans but geese--poetic licence) and the big black bee trying to settle on the wind-shaken lotus (I mean the lotus nods him off refusing a kiss--poetry), then you could have a good conscience on your death-bed. As this is earthly paradise and as logic says one bird in the hand is equal to two in the bush, a glimpse of this is wiser, but economically the other better; no trouble, no labour, no expense, a little namby-pamby dolly life and later, that is all.

My letter is becoming a bore . . . so I stop. (It is sheer idleness). Good night.

the Lord, Ever yours in

Ever yours in

Vivekananda

My address always is:

Math, Belur,

Howrah Dist., Bengal, India

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CXXXIII

Srinagar,

Kashmir

17th

September, 1898

Dear Haripada {Mitra},

I got all news from your letter and wire. That you may easily pass your examination in Sindhi is my prayer to the Lord.

Recently my health was very bad, and so I have been delayed, otherwise I had intended to leave for the Punjab this week. The doctor had advised me not to go to the plains at the present time, as it is very hot there. Perhaps I may reach Karachi by about the last week of October. Now I am doing somewhat well. There is nobody else with me now excepting two American friends--ladies. Probably I shall part from them at Lahore. They will wait for me in Calcutta or in Rajputana. I shall probably visit Cutch, Bhuj, Junagad, Bhavnagar, Limbdi, and Baroda and then proceed to Calcutta. My present plan is to go to America via China and Japan in November or December, but it is all in the hands of the Lord. The above-mentioned American friends bear all my expenses, and I shall take from them all my expenses including railway fare up to Karachi. But if it is convenient to you, send me Rs. 50/- by wire C/o Rishibar Mukhopadhyaya, Chief Justice, Kashmir State, Srinagar. It will be a great help to me, for I have incurred much extra expense of late owing to illness, and I feel a little ashamed to have to depend always on my foreign devotees. With best wishes,

Yours

affectionately,

Vivekananda

CXXXIV

Lahore,

16th October,

1898

{original in Bengali}

My Dear Haripada {Mitra},

In Kashmir my health has completely broken down, and I have not witnessed the Durga-Puja for the last nine years; so I am starting for Calcutta. I have for the present given up the plan of going to America. I think I shall have plenty of time to go to Karachi during the winter.

My brother-disciple Saradananda will send Rs. 50/- from

1 Lahore to Karachi. Don't yield to sorrow--everything is in God's
2 hands. Certainly I won't go anywhere this year without meeting all
3 of you. My blessings to all.

4 Yours
5 affectionately,
6 Vivekananda
7
8

9 CXXXV

10 57 Ram Kanta
11 Bose Street
12 Calcutta
13 12th November,
14 1898

15 My Dear Joe {MacLeod},
16 I have invited a few friends to dinner tomorrow, Sunday. . . .
17 We expect you at tea. Everything will be ready then.
18 Shri Mother is going this morning to see the new Math. I am
19 also going there. Today at 6 p.m. Nivedita is going to preside. If
20 you feel like it, and Mrs. Bull strong, do come.

21 Ever yours in
22 the Lord,
23 Vivekananda
24

25
26 CXXXVI

27 Math, Belur
28 Howrah
29 District
30 16th March,
31 1899

32 My Dear Mary {Hale},
33 Thanks to Mrs. Adams; she roused you naughty girls to a
34 letter at last. "Out of sight out of mind"—as true in India as in
35 America. And the other young lady, who just left her love as she
36 flitted by, deserves a ducking I suppose.

37 Well, I have been in a sort of merry-go-round with my body
38 which has been trying to convince me for months that it too much
39 exists.

40 However, no fear, with four mental-healing sisters as I have,
41 no sinking just now. Give me a strong pull and a long pull, will
42 you, all together, and then I am up!

43 Why do you talk so much about me in your one-letter-a-year

1 and so little about the four witches mumbling Mantras over the
2 boiling pot in a corner of Chicago?

3 Did you come across Max Muller's new book, *Ramakrishna:*
4 *His Life and Sayings* ?

5 If you have not, do, and let Mother see it. How is Mother?
6 Growing grey? And Father Pope? Who have been our last visitors
7 from America do you suppose? "Brother, love is a drawing card"
8 and "Misses Meel"; they have been doing splendid in Australia
9 and elsewhere; the same old "fellies", little changed if any. I wish
10 you could come to visit India--that will be some day in the future.
11 By the by, Mary, I heard a few months ago, when I was rather
12 worrying over your long silence, that you were just hooking a
13 "Willy", and so busy with your dances and parties; that explained
14 of course your inability to write. But "Willy" or no "Willy", I must
15 have my money, don't forget. Harriet is discreetly silent since she
16 got her boy; but where is my money, please? Remind her and her
17 husband of it. If she is Woolley, I am greasy Bengali, as the
18 English call us here--Lord, where is my money?

19 I have got a monastery on the Ganga now, after all, thanks
20 to American and English friends. Tell Mother to look sharp. I am
21 going to deluge your Yankee land with idolatrous missionaries.

22 Tell Mr. Woolley he got the sister but has not paid the
23 brother yet. Moreover, it was the fat black queerly dressed
24 apparition smoking in the parlour that frightened many a
25 temptation away, and that was one of the causes which secured
26 Harriet to Mr. Woolley; therefore, I want to be paid for my great
27 share in the work etc., etc. Plead strong, will you?

28 I do so wish I could come over to America with Joe for this
29 summer; but man proposes and who disposes? Not God surely
30 always. Well, let things slide as they will. Here is Abhayananda,
31 Marie Louse you know, and she has been very well received in
32 Bombay and Madras. She will be in Calcutta tomorrow, and we
33 are going to give her a good reception too.

34 My love to Miss Howe, Mrs. Adams, to Mother Church, and
35 Father Pope and all the rest of my friends across the seven
36 oceans. We believe in seven oceans--one of milk, one of honey, one
37 of curd, one wine, one sugar-cane juice, one salt, one I forget
38 what. To you four sisters I waft my love across the ocean of honey.
39 ...

40 Ever sincerely,
41 your brother

42 Vivekananda

43 PS. Write when you find time between dances.

44 V.

1 Port Said
2 14th July,
3 1899

4 My Dear Sturdy,

5 I got your letter all right just now. I have one from M. Nobel
6 of Paris too. Miss Noble has several from America.

7 M. Nobel writes to me to defer my visit to him at Paris to
8 some other date, from London, as he will have to be away for a
9 long time. As you know sure, I shall not have many friends staying
10 now in London, and Miss MacLeod is so desirous I should come. A
11 stay in England under these circumstances is not advisable.
12 Moreover, I do not have much life left. At least I must go on with
13 that supposition. I mean, if anything has to be done in America, it
14 is high time we bring our scattered influence in America to a
15 head--if not organise regularly. Then I shall be free to return to
16 England in a few months and work with a will till I return to India.

17 I think you are absolutely wanted to gather up, as it were,
18 the American work. If you can, therefore, you ought to come over
19 with me. Turiyananda is with me. Saradananda's brother is going
20 to Boston. . . . In case you cannot come to America, I ought to go,
21 ought I not?

22 Yours,
23 Vivekananda

24

25

26 CXXXVIII

27 The Lymes
28 Woodsides,

29 Wimbledon

30 3rd August,
31 1899

32 My Dear Joe {MacLeod},

33 We are in at last. Turiyananda and I have beautiful lodgings
34 here. Saradananda's brother is with Miss Noble and starts
35 Monday next.

36 I have recovered quite a bit by the voyage. It was brought
37 about by the exercise on the dumb-bells and monsoon storms
38 tumbling the steamer about the waves. Queer, isn't it? Hope it will
39 remain. Where is our Mother, the Worshipful Brahmini cow of
40 India? She is with you in New York, I think.

41 Sturdy is away, Mrs. Johnson and everybody. Margo is
42 rather worried at that. She cannot come to U.S. till next month.
43 Already I have come to love the sea. The fish Avatara is on me, I
44 am afraid--good deal of him in me, I am sure, a Bengali.

45 How is Alberta, . . . the old folks and the rest of them? I had
46 a beautiful letter from dear Mrs. Brer Rabbit; she could not meet

1 us in London; she started before we arrived.

2 It is nice and warm here; rather too much they say. I have
3 become for the present a Shunyavadi, a believer in nothingness,
4 or void. No plans, no afterthought, no attempt, for anything,
5 *laissez faire* to the fullest. Well, Joe, Margo would always take
6 your side on board the steamer, whenever I criticised you or the
7 Divine cow. Poor child, she knows so little! The upshot of the
8 whole is, Joe, that there cannot be any work in London, because
9 you are not here. You seem to be my fate! Grind on, old lady; it is
10 Karma and none can avoid. Say, I look several years younger by
11 this voyage. Only when the heart gives a lurch, I feel my age.
12 What is this osteopathy, anyway? Will they cut off a rib or two to
13 cure me? Not I, no manufacturing of . . . from my ribs, sure.
14 Whatever it be, it will be hard work for him to find my bones. My
15 bones are destined to make corals in the Ganga. Now I am going
16 to study French if you give me a lesson every day; but no
17 grammar business--only I will read and you explain in English.
18 Kindly give my love to Abhedananda, and ask him to get ready for
19 Turiyananda. I will leave with him. Write soon.

20 With all love
21 etc.,

22 Vivekananda

23
24
25 CXXXIX

26 C/o Miss Noble
27 21A High Street,
28 Wimbledon

29 August, 1899

30 My Dear Marie {Halboister},

31 I am in London again. This time not busy, not hustling about
32 but quietly settled down in a corner--waiting to start for the U.S.
33 America on the first opportunity. My friends are nearly all out of
34 London in the country and elsewhere, and my health not
35 sufficiently strong.

36 So you are happy in the midst of your lakes and gardens and
37 seclusion in Canada. I am glad, so glad to know that you are up
38 again on top of the tide. May you remain there for ever!

39 You could not finish the *Raja-Yoga* translation yet--all right,
40 there is no hurry. Time and opportunity must come if it is to be
41 done you know, otherwise we vainly strive.

42 Canada must be beautiful now, with its short but vigorous
43 summer, and very healthy.

44 I expect to be in New York in a few weeks, and don't know
45 what next. I hope to come back to England next spring.

46 I fervently wish no misery ever came near anyone; yet it is

1 that alone that gives us an insight into the depths of our lives,
2 does it not?

3 In our moments of anguish, gates barred for ever seem to
4 open and let in many a flood of light.

5 We learn as we grow. Alas! we cannot use our knowledge
6 here. The moment we seem to learn, we are hurried off the stage.
7 And this is Maya!

8 This toy world would not be here, this play could not go on,
9 if we were knowing players. We must play blindfolded. Some of us
10 have taken the part of the rogue of the play, some heroic--never
11 mind, it is all play. This is the only consolation. There are demons
12 and lions and tigers and what not on the stage, but they are all
13 muzzled. They snap but cannot bite. The world cannot touch our
14 souls. If you want, even if the body be torn and bleeding, you may
15 enjoy the greatest peace in your mind.

16 And the way to that is to attain hopelessness. Do you know
17 that? Not the imbecile attitude of despair, but the contempt of the
18 conqueror for things he has attained, for things he struggled for
19 and then throws aside as beneath his worth.

20 This hopelessness, desirelessness, aimlessness, is just the
21 harmony with nature. In nature there is no harmony, no reason, no
22 sequence; it was chaos before, it is so still.

23 The lowest man is in consonance with nature in his earthy-
24 headness; the highest the same in the fullness of knowledge. All
25 three aimless, drifting, hopeless--all three happy.

26 You want a chatty letter, don't you? I have not much to chat
27 about. Mr. Sturdy came last two days. He goes home in Wales
28 tomorrow.

29 I have to book my passage for N.Y. in a day or two.

30 None of my old friends have I seen yet except Miss Souter
31 and Max Gysic, who are in London. They have been very kind, as
32 they always were.

33 I have no news to give you, as I know nothing of London yet.
34 I don't know where Gertrude Orchard is, else would have written
35 to her. Miss Kate Steel is also away. She is coming on Thursday or
36 Saturday.

37 I had an invitation to stay in Paris with a friend, a very well-
38 educated Frenchman, but I could not go this time. I hope another
39 time to live with him some days.

40 I expect to see some of our old friends and say good day to
41 them.

42 I hope to see you in America sure. Either I may
43 unexpectedly turn up in Ottawa in my peregrinations or you come
44 to N.Y.

45 Good-bye, all luck be yours.

46 Ever yours in
47 the Lord,

Vivekananda

CXL

London,

10th August,

1899

{original in Bengali}

My Dear Rakhal {Brahmananda},

I got a lot of news from your letter. My health was much better on the ship, but, after landing, owing to flatulence it is rather bad now. . . . There is a lot of difficulty here--all friends have gone out of town for the summer. In addition my health is not so good, and there is a lot of inconvenience regarding food etc. So in a few days I leave for America. Send an account to Mrs. Bull as to how much was spent on purchase of land, how much on buildings, how much on maintenance etc.

Sarada writes that the magazine is not going well. . . . Let him publish the account of my travels, and thoroughly advertise it beforehand--he will have subscribers rushing in. Do people like a magazine if three-fourths of it are filled with pious stuff? Anyway pay special attention to the magazine. Mentally take it as though I were not. Act independently on this basis. "We depend on the elder brother for money, learning, everything"--such an attitude is the road to ruin. If all the money even for the magazine is to be collected by me and all the articles too are from my pen--what will you all do? What are our Sahibs then doing? I have finished my part. You do what remains to be done. Nobody is there to collect a single penny, nobody to do any preaching, none has brains enough to take proper care of his own affairs, none has the capacity to write one line, and all are saints for nothing! . . . If this be your condition, then for six months give everything into the hands of the boys--magazine, money, preaching work, etc. If they are also not able to do anything, then sell off everything, and returning the proceeds to the donors go about as mendicants. I get no news at all from the Math. What is Sharat doing? I want to see work done. Before dying, I want to see that what I have established as a result of my lifelong struggle is put in a more or less running condition. Consult the Committee in every detail regarding money matters. Get the signatures of the Committee for every item of expenditure. Otherwise you also will be in for a bad name. This much is customary that people want some time or other an account of their donations. It is very wrong not to have it ready at every turn. . . . By such lethargy in the beginning, people finally become cheats. Make a committee of all those who are in the Math, and no expenditure will be made which is not countersigned by them--none at all! I want work, I want vigour--no matter who lives or dies. What are death and life to a Sannyasin?

If Sharat cannot rouse up Calcutta, . . . if you are not able to

1 construct the embankment this year, then you will see the fun! I
2 want work--no humbug about it. My respectful salutations to Holy
3 Mother.

4
5 affectionately, Yours
6 Vivekananda

7
8 CXLI
9 Ridgely
10 Manor
11 4th
12 September, 1899

13 My Dear Mother {Mrs. Bull},
14 It is an awful spell of the bad turn of fortune with me last six
15 months. Misfortune follows me ever wherever I go. In England,
16 Sturdy seems to have got disgusted with the work; he does not
17 see any asceticism in us from India. Here no sooner I reach than
18 Olea gets a bad attack.

19 Shall I run up to you? I know I cannot be of much help, but I
20 will try my best in being useful.

21 I hope everything will soon come right with you, and Olea
22 will be restored to perfect health even before this reaches you.
23 Mother knows best; that is all about me.

24 Ever yours
25 affectionately,
26 Vivekananda

27
28
29 CXLII
30 Ridgely
31 Manor
32 14th
33 September, 1899

34 My Dear Sturdy,
35 I have simply been taking rest at the Leggetts' and doing
36 nothing. Abhedananda is here. He has been working hard.

37 He goes in a day or two to resume his work in different
38 places for a month. After that he comes to New York to work.

39 I am trying to do something in the line you suggested, but
40 don't know how far an account of the Hindus will be appreciated
41 by the Western public when it comes from a Hindu. . . .

42 Mrs. Johnson is of opinion that no spiritual person ought to
43 be ill. It also seems to her now that my smoking is sinful etc., etc.
44 That was Miss Muller's reason for leaving me, my illness. They

1 may be perfectly right, for aught I know--and you too--but I am
2 what I am. In India, the same defects plus eating with Europeans
3 have been taken exception to by many. I was driven out of a
4 private temple by the owners for eating with Europeans. I wish I
5 were malleable enough to be moulded into whatever one desired,
6 but unfortunately I never saw a man who could satisfy everyone.
7 Nor can anyone who has to go to different places possibly satisfy
8 all.

9 When I first came to America, they ill-treated me if I had not
10 trousers on. Next I was forced to wear cuffs and collars, else they
11 would not touch me etc., etc. They thought me awfully funny if I
12 did not eat what they offered etc., etc. . . .

13 In India the moment I landed they made me shave my head
14 and wear "Kaupin" (loin cloth), with the result that I got diabetes
15 etc. Saradananda never gave up his underwear--this saved his life,
16 with just a touch of rheumatism and much comment from our
17 people.

18 Of course, it is my Karma, and I am glad that it is so. For,
19 though it smarts for the time, it is another great experience of
20 life, which will be useful, either in this or in the next. . . .

21 As for me, I am always in the midst of ebbs and flows. I
22 knew it always and preached always that every bit of pleasure will
23 bring its quota of pain, if not with compound interest. I have a
24 good deal of love given to me by the world; I deserve a good deal
25 of hatred therefore. I am glad it is so--as it proves my theory of
26 "every wave having its corresponding dip" on my own person.

27 As for me, I stick to my nature and principle--once a friend,
28 always a friend--also the true Indian principle of looking
29 subjectively for the cause of the objective.

30 I am sure that the fault is mine, and mine only, for every
31 wave of dislike and hatred that I get. It could not be otherwise.
32 Thanking you and Mrs. Johnson for thus calling me once more to
33 the internal,

34 I remain as ever with love and
35 blessings,

36 Vivekananda

37
38
39 CXLIII

40 Ridgely

41 Manor

42 September

43 1899

44 My Dear Mary {Hale},

45 Yes, I have arrived. I had a letter from Isabelle from
46 Greenacre. I hope to see her soon and Harriet. Harriet Woolley
47 has been uniformly silent. Never mind, I will bide my time, and as

1 soon as Mr. Woolley becomes a millionaire, demand my money.
2 You did not write any particulars about Mother Church and Father
3 Pope, only the news of something about me in some newspapers. I
4 have long ceased to take any interest in papers; only they keep me
5 before the public and get a sale of my books "anyway" as you say.
6 Do you know what I am trying to do now? Writing a book on India
7 and her people--a short chatty simple something. Again I am going
8 to learn French. If I fail to do it this year, I cannot "do" the Paris
9 Exposition next year properly. Well, I expect to learn much French
10 here where even the servants talk it.

11 You never saw Mrs. Leggett, did you? She is simply grand. I
12 am going to Paris next year as their guest, as I did the first time.

13 I have now got a monastery on the Ganga for the teaching of
14 philosophy and comparative religion and a centre of work.

15 What have you been doing all this time? Reading? Writing?
16 You did not do anything. You could have written lots by this time.
17 Even if you had taught me French, I would be quite a Froggy now,
18 *and you did not*, only made me talk nonsense. You never went to
19 Greenacre. I hope it is getting strength every year.

20 Say, you 24 feet and 600 lbs. of Christian Science, you could
21 not pull me up with your treatments. I am losing much faith in
22 your healing powers. Where is Sam? "Bewaring" all this time as
23 he could; bless his heart, such a noble boy!

24 I was growing grey fast, but somehow it got checked. I am
25 sorry, only a few grey hairs now; a research will unearth many
26 though. I like it and am going to cultivate a long white goaty.
27 Mother Church and Father Pope were having a fine time on the
28 continent. I saw a bit on my way home. And you have been
29 Cinderella-ing in Chicago--good for you. Persuade the old folks to
30 go to Paris next year and take you along. There must be wonderful
31 sights to see; the French are making a last great struggle, they
32 say, before closing business.

33 Well, you did not write me long, long. You do not deserve
34 this letter, but--I am so good you know, especially as death is
35 drawing near--I do not want to quarrel with anyone. I am dying to
36 see Isabelle and Harriet. I hope they have got a great supply of
37 healing power at Greenacre Inn and will help me out of my
38 present fall. In my days the Inn was well stored with spiritual
39 food, and less of material stuff. Do you know anything of
40 osteopathy? Here is one in New York working wonders really.

41 I am going to have my bones searched by him in a week.
42 Where is Miss Howe? She is such a noble soul, such a friend. By
43 the by, Mary, it is curious your family, Mother Church and her
44 clergy, both monastic and secular, have made more impression on
45 me than any family I know of. Lord bless you ever and ever.

46 I am taking rest now, and the Leggetts are so kind. I feel
47 perfectly at home. I intend to go to New York to see the Dewy
48 procession. I have not seen my friends there.

49 Write me all about yourselves. I so long to hear. You know

1 Joe Joe of course. I marred their visit to India with my constant
2 break-downs, and they were so good, so forgiving. For years Mrs.
3 Bull and she have been my guardian angels. Mrs. Bull is expected
4 here next week.

5 She would have been here before this, but her daughter
6 (Olea) had a spell of illness. She suffered much, but is now out of
7 danger. Mrs. Bull has taken one of Leggett's cottages here, and if
8 the cold weather does not set in faster than usual, we are going to
9 have a delightful month here even now. The place is so beautiful--
10 well wooded and perfect lawns.

11 I tried to play golf the other day; I do not think it difficult at
12 all--only it requires good practice. You never went to Philadelphia
13 to visit your golfing friends? What are your plans? What do you
14 intend to do the rest of your life? Have you thought out any work?
15 Write me a long letter, will you? I saw a lady in the streets of
16 Naples as I was passing, going along with three others, must be
17 Americans, so like you that I was almost going to speak to her;
18 when I came near I saw my mistake. Good-bye for the present.
19 Write sharp. . . .

20 Ever your
21 affectionate brother,

Vivekananda

CXLIV

25 Ridgely
26 Manor
27 3rd October,
28 1899

29 My Dear Mary {Hale},

30 Thanks for your very kind words. I am much better now and
31 growing so every day. Mrs. Bull and her daughter are expected
32 today or tomorrow. We hope thus to have another spell of good
33 time--you are having yours all the time, of course. I am glad you
34 are going to Philadelphia, but not so much now as then--when the
35 millionaire was on the horizon. With all love,

36 Ever your
37 affectionate brother,

Vivekananda

CXLV

42 Ridgely
43 Manor
44 30th October,
45 1899

46 My Dear Optimist {Mary Hale},

1 I received your letter and am thankful that something has
2 come to force optimistic *laissez faire* into action. Your questions
3 have tapped the very source of pessimism, however. British rule in
4 modern India has only one redeeming feature, though
5 unconscious; it has brought India out once more on the stage of
6 the world; it has forced upon it the contact of the outside world. If
7 it had been done with an eye to the good of the people concerned,
8 as circumstances favoured Japan with, the results could have
9 been more wonderful for India. No good can be done when the
10 main idea is blood-sucking. On the whole the old regime was
11 better for the people, as it *did not* take away everything they had,
12 and there was some justice, some liberty.

13 A few hundred, modernised, half-educated, and
14 denationalised men are all the show of modern English India--
15 *nothing else*. The Hindus were 600 million in number according to
16 Ferishta, the Mohammedan historian, in the 12th century--now
17 less than 200 million.

18 In spite of the centuries of anarchy that reigned during the
19 struggles of the English to conquer, the terrible massacre the
20 English perpetrated in 1857 and 1858, and the still more terrible
21 famines that have become the inevitable consequence of British
22 rule (there never is a famine in a native state) and that take off
23 millions, there has been a good increase of population, but not yet
24 what it was when the country was entirely independent--that is,
25 before the Mohammedan rule. Indian labour and produce can
26 support five times as many people as there are now in India with
27 comfort, if the whole thing is not taken off from them.

28 This is the state of things--even education will no more be
29 permitted to spread; freedom of the press stopped already, (of
30 course we have been disarmed long ago), the bit of self-
31 government granted to them for some years is being quickly taken
32 off. We are watching what next! For writing a few words of
33 innocent criticism, men are being hurried to *transportation for*
34 *life*, others imprisoned without *any trial*; and nobody knows when
35 his head will be off.

36 There has been a reign of terror in India for some years.
37 English soldiers are killing our men and outraging our women--
38 only to be sent home with passage and pension at our expense.
39 We are in a *terrible* gloom--where is the Lord? Mary, you can
40 afford to be optimistic, can I? Suppose you simply publish this
41 letter--the law just passed in India will allow the English
42 Government in India to drag me from here to India and kill me
43 without trial. And I know all your Christian governments will only
44 rejoice, because we are heathens. Shall I also go to sleep and
45 become optimistic? Nero was the greatest optimistic person! They
46 don't think it worth while to write these terrible things as news
47 items even! If necessary, the news agent of *Reuter* gives the
48 exactly opposite news fabricated to order! Heathen-murdering is
49 only a legitimate pastime for the Christians! Your missionaries go
50 to preach God and dare not speak a word of truth for fear of the
51 English, who will kick them out the next day.

1 All property and lands granted by the previous governments
2 for supporting education have been swallowed up, and the
3 present Government spends even less than Russia in education.
4 And what education?

5 The least show of originality is throttled. Mary, it is hopeless
6 with us, unless there really is a God who is the father of all, who is
7 not afraid of the strong to protect the weak, and who is not bribed
8 by wealth. Is there such a God? Time will show.

9 Well, I think I am coming to Chicago in a few weeks and talk
10 of things fully! Don't quote your authority.

11 With all love, ever your
12 brother,

13 Vivekananda

14 PS. As for religious sects--the Brahmo Samaj, the Arya
15 Samaj, and other sects have been useless mixtures; they were
16 only voices of apology to our English masters to allow us to live!
17 We have started a *new India--a growth* --waiting to see what
18 comes. We believe in new ideas only when the nation wants them,
19 and what will be true for us. The test of truth for this Brahmo
20 Samaj is "what our masters approve"; with us, what the Indian
21 reasoning and experience approves. The struggle has begun--not
22 between the Brahmo Samaj and us, for they are gone already, but
23 a harder, deeper, and more terrible one.

24 V.

25
26
27 CXLVI

28 C/o F.
29 Leggett Esq.,
30 Ridgely
31 Manor
32 Ulster
33 County, N.Y.

34 My Dear Sturdy,

35 Your last letter reached me after knocking about a little
36 through insufficient address.

37 It is quite probable that very much of your criticism is just
38 and correct. It is also possible that some day you may find that all
39 this springs from your dislike of certain persons, and I was the
40 scapegoat.

41 There need be no bitterness, however, on that account, as I
42 don't think I ever posed for anything but what I am. Nor is it ever
43 possible for me to do so, as an hour's contact is enough to make
44 everybody see through my smoking, bad temper, etc. "Every
45 meeting must have a separation"--this is the nature of things. I
46 carry no feeling of disappointment even. I hope you will have no

1 bitterness. It is Karma that brings us together, and Karma
2 separates.

3 I know how shy you are, and how loath to wound others'
4 feelings. I perfectly understand months of torture in your mind
5 when you have been struggling to work with people who were so
6 different from your ideal. I could not guess it before at all, else I
7 could have saved you a good deal of unnecessary mental trouble.
8 It is *Karma* again.

9 The accounts were not submitted before, as the work is not
10 yet finished; and I thought of submitting to my donor a complete
11 account when the whole thing was finished. The work was begun
12 only last year, as we had to wait for funds a long time, and my
13 method is never to ask but wait for voluntary help.

14 I follow the same idea in all my work, as I am so conscious
15 of my nature being positively displeasing to many, and wait till
16 somebody wants me. I hold myself ready also to depart at a
17 moment's notice. In the matter of departure thus, I never feel bad
18 about it or think much of it, as, in the constant roving life I lead, I
19 am constantly doing it. Only so sorry, I trouble others without
20 wishing it. Will you kindly send over if there is any mail for me at
21 your address?

22 May all blessings attend you and yours for ever and ever
23 will be the constant prayer of

24 Vivekananda

25
26
27 CXLVII

28 C/o E.
29 Guernsey, M.D.
30 The Madrid,
31 180 W. 59
32 15th
33 November, 1899

34 My Dear Mrs. Bull,

35 After all I decide to come to Cambridge just now. I must
36 finish the stories I began. The first one I don't think was given
37 back to me by Margo.

38 My clothes will be ready the day after tomorrow, and then I
39 shall be ready to start; only my fear is, it will be for the whole
40 winter a place for becoming nervous and not for quieting of
41 nerves, with constant parties and lectures. Well, perhaps you can
42 give me a room somewhere, where I can hide myself from all the
43 goings on in the place. Again I am so nervous of going to a place
44 where indirectly the Indian Math will be. The very name of these
45 Math people is enough to frighten me. And they are determined to
46 kill with these letters etc.

47 Anyhow, I come as soon as I have my clothes--this week. You

1 need not come to New York for my sake. If you have business of
2 your own, that is another matter. I had a very kind invitation from
3 Mrs. Wheeler of Montclair. Before I start for Boston, I will have a
4 turn-in in Montclair for a few hours at least.

5 I am much better and am all right; nothing the matter with
6 me except my worry, and now I am sure to throw that all
7 overboard.

8 Only one thing I want--and I am afraid I cannot get it of
9 you--there should be no communication about me in your letters to
10 India even indirect. I want to hide for a time or for all time. How I
11 curse the day that brought me celebrity!

12 With all love,

13 Vivekananda

14
15
16 CXLVIII

17 U.S.A.

18 20th

19 November, 1899

20 {original in Bengali}

21 My Dear Rakhal {Brahmananda},

22 Got some news from Sharat's letter. . . . Get experience
23 while still there is a chance; I am not concerned whether you win
24 or lose. . . . I have no disease now.

25 Again. . . . I am going to tour from place to place. There is
26 no reason for anxiety, be fearless. Everything will fly away before
27 you; only don't be disobedient, and all success will be yours. . . .
28 Victory to Kali! Victory to the Mother! Victory to Kali! Wah Guru,
29 Wah Guru ki Fateh (Victory unto the Guru)!

30 . . . Really, there is no greater sin than cowardice; cowards
31 are never saved--that is sure. I can stand everything else but not
32 that. Can I have any dealings with one who will not give that
33 up? . . . If one gets one blow, one must return ten with redoubled
34 fury. . . . Then only one is a *man*. . . . The coward is an object to be
35 pitied.

36 I bless you all; today, on this day sacred to the Divine
37 Mother, on this night, may the Mother dance in your hearts, and
38 bring infinite strength to your arms. Victory to Kali! Victory to
39 Kali! Mother will certainly come down--and with great strength
40 will bring all victory, world victory. Mother is coming, what dear?
41 Whom to fear? Victory to Kali! At the tread of each one of you the
42 earth will tremble. . . . Victory to Kali! Again onward, forward!
43 Wah Guru! Victory to the Mother! Kali! Kali! Kali! Disease, sorrow,
44 danger, weakness--all these have departed from you all. All
45 victory, all good fortune, all prosperity yours. Fear not! Fear not!
46 The threat of calamity is vanishing, fear not! Victory to Kali!
47 Victory to Kali!

1 Vivekananda

2 PS. I am the servant of the Mother, you are all servants of
3 the Mother--what destruction, what fear is there for us? Don't
4 allow egoism to enter your minds, and let love never depart from
5 your hearts. What destruction can touch you? Fear not. Victory to
6 Kali! Victory to Kali!

7 V.

8

9 CXLIX

10 1 East 39 St.,

11 New York

12 20th

13 November, 1899

14 My Dear Mary {Hale},

15 I start tomorrow most probably for California. On my way I
16 would stop for a day or two in Chicago. I send a wire to you when
17 I start. Send somebody to the station, as I never was so bad as
18 now in finding my way in and out.

19 Ever your
20 brother,

21 Vivekananda

22

23

24 CL

25 21 West 34

26 St.

27 New York,

28 21st

29 November, 1899

30 My Dear Brahmananda,

31 The accounts are all right. I have handed them over to Mrs.
32 Bull who has taken charge of reporting the different parts of the
33 accounts to different donors. Never mind what I have said in
34 previous harsh letters. They would do you good. Firstly, they will
35 make you business-like in the future to keep regular and clear
36 accounts and get the brethren into it. Secondly, if these scolding
37 don't make you brave, I shall have no more hopes of you. I want to
38 see you die even, but you must make a fight. Die in obeying
39 commands like a soldier, and go to Nirvana, but no cowardice.

40 It is necessary that I must disappear for some time. Let not
41 anyone write me or seek me during that time, it is absolutely
42 necessary for my health. I am only nervous, that is all, nothing
43 more.

44 All blessings follow you. Never mind my harshness. You
45 know the heart always, whatever the lips say. All blessings on you.

1 For the last year or so I have not been in my senses at all. I do not
2 know why. I had to pass through this hell--and I have. I am much
3 better--well, in fact. Lord help you all. I am going to the Himalayas
4 soon to retire for ever. My work is done.

5
6 the Lord, Ever yours in

7 Vivekananda

8 PS. Mrs. Bull sends her love.

9 V.

10
11
12 CLI

13 22nd

14 December, 1899

15 My Dear Dhira Mata {Mrs. Bull},

16 I have a letter from Calcutta today, from which I learn your
17 cheques have arrived; a great many thanks and grateful words
18 also came.

19 Miss Souter of London sends me a printed New Year's
20 greetings. I think she must have got the accounts you sent her by
21 this time.

22 Kindly send Saradananda's letters that have come to your
23 care.

24 As for me, I had a slight relapse of late, for which the healer
25 has rubbed several inches of my skin off.

26 Just now I am feeling it, the smart. I had a very hopeful note
27 from Margo. I am grinding on in Pasadena; hope some result will
28 come out of my work here. Some people here are very
29 enthusiastic; the Raja-Yoga book did indeed great services on this
30 coast. I am mentally very well; indeed I never really was so calm
31 as of late. The lectures for one thing do not disturb my sleep, that
32 is some gain. I am doing some writing too. The lectures here were
33 taken down by a stenographer, the people here want to print
34 them.

35 I learn they are well and doing good work at the Math--from
36 Swami Saradananda's letter to Joe. Slowly as usual plans are
37 working; but Mother knows, as I say. May She give me release
38 and find other workers for Her plans. By the by, I have made a
39 discovery as to the mental method of really practising what the
40 Gita teaches, of working without an eye to results. I have seen
41 much light on concentration and attention and control of
42 concentration, which if practised will take us out of all anxiety and
43 worry. It is really the science of bottling up our minds whenever
44 we like. Now what about yourself, poor Dhira Mata! This is the
45 result of motherhood and its penalties; we all think of ourselves,
46 and never of the Mother. How are you? How are things going on
47 with you? What about your daughter? about Mrs. Briggs?

1 I hope Turiyananda is completely recovered now and
2 working. Poor man, suffering is the lot! Never mind; there is a
3 pleasure in suffering even, when it is for others, is there not? Mrs.
4 Leggett is doing well; so is Joe; I--they say--I too am. May be they
5 are right. I work anyway and want to die in harness; if that be
6 what Mother wants, I am quite content.

7 Ever your
8 son,
9 Vivekananda

11 CLII

12 921 W. 21st
13 Street
14 Los Angeles
15 27th
16 December, 1899

17 Beloved Dhira Mata {Mrs. Bull},

18 An eventful and happy New Year to you and many such
19 returns!

20 I am much better in health--able enough to work once more.
21 I have started work already and have sent to Saradananda some
22 money--Rs. 1,300 already--as expenses for the law suit. I shall
23 send more, if they need it. I had a very bad dream this morning
24 and had not any news of Saradananda for three weeks. Poor boys!
25 How hard I am on them at times. Well, they know, in spite of all
26 that, I am their best friend.

27 Mr. Leggett has got a little over £500 I had with Sturdy on
28 account of *Raja-Yoga* and the Maharaja of Khetri. I have now
29 about a thousand dollars with Mr. Leggett. If I die, kindly send
30 that money to my mother. I wired to the boys three weeks ago that
31 I was perfectly cured. If I don't get any worse, this much health as
32 I have now will do well enough. Do not worry at all on my account;
33 I am up and working with a will.

34 I am sorry I could not write any more of the stories. I have
35 written some other things and mean to write something almost
36 every day.

37 I am very much more peaceful and find that the only way to
38 keep my peace is to teach others. Work is my only safety valve.

39 I only want some clear business head to take care of the
40 details as I push onwards and work on. I am afraid it will be a
41 long time to find such in India, and if there are any, they ought to
42 be educated by somebody from the West.

43 Again, I can only work when thrown completely on my own
44 feet. I am at my best when I am alone. Mother seems to arrange
45 so. Joe believes great things are brewing--in Mother's cup; hope it
46 is so.

1 Joe and Margot have developed into actual prophets, it
2 seems. I can only say, every blow I had in this life, every pang, will
3 only become joyful sacrifice if Mother becomes propitious to India
4 once more.

5 Miss Greenstidel writes a beautiful letter to me, about you
6 most of it. She thinks a lot about Turiyananda too. Give
7 Turiyananda my love. I am sure he will work well. He has the
8 pluck and stamina.

9 I am going soon to work in California; when I leave I shall
10 send for Turiyananda and make him work on the Pacific coast. I
11 am sure here is a great field. The Raja-Yoga book seems to be very
12 well known here. Miss Greenstidel had found great peace under
13 your roof and is very happy. I am so glad it is so. May things go a
14 little better with her every day. She has a good business head and
15 practical sense.

16 Joe has unearthed a magnetic healing woman. We are both
17 under her treatment. Joe thinks she is pulling me up splendidly.
18 On her has been worked a miracle, she claims. Whether it is
19 magnetic healing, California ozone, or the end of the present spell
20 of bad Karma, I am improving. It is a great thing to be able to
21 walk three miles, even after a heavy dinner.

22 All love and blessings to Olea. My love to Dr. Janes and
23 other Boston friends.

24 Ever your
25 son,

Vivekananda

CLIII

28
29 C/o Mrs.
30 Blodgett
31 921, West
32 21st St.

Los Angeles

27th

34
35 December, 1899

36 My Dear Mary {Hale},

37 Merry Christmas and Happy New Year and many, many
38 glorious returns of such for your birthday. All these wishes,
39 prayers, greetings in one breath. I am cured, you will be glad to
40 know. It was only indigestion and no heart or kidney affection,
41 quoth the healers; nothing more. And I am walking three miles a
42 day--after a heavy dinner.

43 Say--the person healing me insisted on my smoking! So I am
44 having my pipe nicely and am all the better for it. In plain English
45 the nervousness etc. was all due to dyspepsia and nothing more.

46 . . . I am at work too; working, working, not hard; but I don't

1 care, and I want to make money this time. Tell this to Margot,
2 especially the pipe business. You know who is healing me? No
3 physician, no Christian Science healer, but a magnetic healing
4 woman who skins me every time she treats me. Wonders--she
5 performs operations by rubbing--internal operations too, her
6 patients tell me.

7 It is getting late in the night. I have to give up writing
8 separate letters to Margot, Harriet, Isabelle, and Mother Church.
9 Wish is half the work. They all know how I love them dearly,
10 *passionately* ; so you become the medium for my spirit for the
11 time, and carry them my New Year's messages.

12 It is exactly like Northern Indian winter here, only some
13 days a little warmer; the roses are here and the beautiful palms.
14 Barley is in the fields, roses and many other flowers round about
15 the cottage where I live. Mrs. Blodgett, my host, is a Chicago
16 lady--fat, old, and extremely witty. She heard me in Chicago and is
17 very motherly.

18 I am so sorry, the English have caught a Tartar in South
19 Africa. A soldier on duty outside a camp bawled out that he had
20 caught a Tartar. "Bring him in", was the order from inside the
21 tent. "He will not come", replied the sentry. "Then you come
22 yourself", rang the order again. "He will not let me come either".
23 Hence the phrase "to catch a Tartar". Don't you catch any.

24 I am happy just now and hope to remain so for all the rest of
25 my life. Just now I am Christian Science--no evil, and "love is a
26 drawing card".

27 I shall be very happy if I can make a lot of money. I am
28 making some. Tell Margot, I am going to make a lot of money and
29 go home by way of Japan, Honolulu, China, and Java. This is a nice
30 place to make money quick in; and San Francisco is better, I hear.
31 Has she made any?

32 You could not get the millionaire. Why don't you start for
33 half or one-fourth million? Something is better than nothing. We
34 want money; he may go into Lake Michigan, we have not the least
35 objection. We had a bit of an earthquake here the other day. I
36 hope it has gone to Chicago and raised Isabelle's mud-puddle up.
37 It is getting late. I am yawning, so here I quit.

38 Good-bye; all blessings,
39 all love,

40 Vivekananda

41
42 CLIV

43 17th January,
44 1900

45 My Dear Dhira Mata {Mrs. Bull},

46 I received yours with the enclosures for Saradananda; and
47 there was some good news. I hope to get some more news this
48 week. You did not write anything about your plans. I had a letter

1 from Miss Greenstidel expressing her deep gratitude for your
2 kindness--and who does not? Turiyananda is getting well by this
3 time, I hope.

4 I have been able to remit Rs. 2,000 to Saradananda, with
5 the help of Miss MacLeod and Mrs. Leggett. Of course they
6 contributed the best part. The rest was got by lectures. I do not
7 expect anything much here or anywhere by lecturing. I can
8 scarcely make expenses. No, not even that; whenever it comes to
9 paying, the people are nowhere. The field of lecturing in this
10 country has been overworked; the people have outgrown that.

11 I am decidedly better in health. The healer thinks I am now
12 at liberty to go anywhere I choose, the process will go on, and I
13 shall completely recover in a few months. She insists on this, that
14 I am cured already; only nature will have to work out the rest.

15 Well, I came here principally for health. I have got it; in
16 addition I got Rs. 2,000, to defray the law expenses. Good.

17 Now it occurs to me that my mission from the platform is
18 finished, and I need not break my health again by that sort of
19 work.

20 It is becoming clearer to me that I lay down all the concerns
21 of the Math and for a time go back to my mother. She has suffered
22 much through me. I must try to smooth her last days. Do you
23 know, this was just exactly what the great Shankaracharya himself
24 had to do! He had to go back to his mother in the last few days of
25 her life! I accept it, I am resigned. I am calmer than ever. The only
26 difficulty is the financial part. Well, the Indian people owe
27 something. I will try Madras and a few other friends in India.
28 Anyhow, I must try, as I have forebodings that my mother has not
29 very many years to live. Then again, this is coming to me as the
30 greatest of all sacrifices to make, the sacrifice of ambition, of
31 leadership, of fame. I am resigned and must do the penance. The
32 one thousand dollars with Mr. Leggett and if a little more is
33 collected, will be enough to fall back upon in case of need. Will
34 you send me back to India? I am ready any time. Don't go to
35 France without seeing me. I have become practical at least
36 compared to the visionary dreams of Joe and Margot. Let them
37 work their dreams out for me--they are not more than dreams. I
38 want to make out a trust-deed of the Math in the names of
39 Saradananda, Brahmananda, and yourself. I will do it as soon as I
40 get the papers from Saradananda. Then I am quits. I want rest, a
41 meal, a few books, and I want to do some scholarly work. Mother
42 shows this light vividly now. Of course you were the one to whom
43 She showed it first. I would not believe it then. But then, it is now
44 shown that--leaving my mother was a great renunciation in 1884--
45 it is *a greater renunciation to go back to my mother now* .
46 Probably Mother wants me to undergo the same that She made
47 the great Acharya undergo in old days. Is it? I am surer of your
48 guidance than of my own. Joe and Margot are great souls, but to
49 you Mother is now sending the light for my guidance. Do you see
50 light? What do you advise? At least do not go out of this country
51 without sending me home.

1 I am but a child; what work have I to do? My powers I
2 passed over to you. I see it. I cannot any more *tell* from the
3 platform. Don't tell it to anyone--not even to Joe. I am glad. I want
4 rest; not that I am tired, but the next phase will be the *miraculous*
5 *touch and not the tongue* --like Ramakrishna's. The *word* has
6 gone to you and the voice to Margo. No more it is in me. I am
7 glad. I am resigned. Only get me out to India, won't you? Mother
8 will make you do it. I am sure.

9 Ever your
10 son,

Vivekananda

CLV

Los Angeles
15th

17 February, 1900

18 Dear Dhira Mata {Mrs. Bull},

19 Before this reaches you, I am off to San Francisco. You
20 already know all about the work. I have not done much work, but
21 my heart is growing stronger every day, physically and mentally.
22 Some days I feel I can bear everything and suffer everything.
23 There was nothing of note inside the bundle of papers sent by
24 Miss Muller. I did not write her, not knowing her address. Then
25 again, I am afraid.

26 I can always work better alone, and am physically and
27 mentally best when entirely alone! I scarcely had a day's illness
28 during my eight years of lone life away from my brethren. Now I
29 am again getting up, being alone. Strange, but that is what
30 Mother wants me to be. "Wandering alone like the rhinoceros", as
31 Joe likes it. I think the conferences are ended. Poor Turiyananda
32 suffered so much and never let me know; he is so strong and
33 good. Poor Niranjana, I learn from Mrs. Sevier, is so seriously ill in
34 Calcutta that I don't know whether he has passed away or not.
35 Well, good and evil both love company; queer, they come in
36 strings. I had a letter from my cousin telling me her daughter (the
37 adopted little child) was dead. Suffering seems to be the lot of
38 India! Good. I am getting rather callous, rather stilted, of late.
39 Good. Mother knows. I am so ashamed of myself--of this display of
40 weakness for the last two years! Glad it is ended.

41 Ever your
42 loving son,

Vivekananda

CLVI

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Pasadena
20th

February, 1900

My Dear Mary {Hale},

Your letter bearing the sad news of Mr. Hale's passing away reached me yesterday. I am sorry, because in spite of monastic training, the heart lives on; and then Mr. Hale was one of the best souls I met in life. Of course you are sorry, miserable, and so are Mother Church and Harriet and the rest, especially as this is the first grief of its kind you have met, is it not? I have lost many, suffered much, and the most curious cause of suffering when somebody goes off is the feeling that I was not good enough to that person. When my father died, it was a pang for months, and I had been so disobedient. You have been very dutiful; if you feel anything like that, it is only a form of sorrow.

Just now I am afraid life begins for you, Mary, in earnest. We may read books, hear lectures, and talk miles, but experience is the one teacher, the one eye-opener. It is best as it is. We learn, through smiles and tears we learn. We don't know why, but we see it is so; and that is enough. Of course Mother Church has the solace of her religion. I wish we could all dream undisturbed good dreams.

You have had shelter all your life. I was in the glare, burning and panting all the time. Now for a moment you have caught a glimpse of the other side. My life is made up of continuous blows like that, and hundred times worse, because of poverty, treachery, and my own foolishness! Pessimism! You will understand it, how it comes. Well, well, what shall I say to you, Mary? You know all the talks; only I say this and it is true--if it were possible to exchange grief, and had I a cheerful mind, I would exchange mine for your grief ever and always. Mother knows best.

Your ever faithful
brother,

Vivekananda

CLVII

1251 Pine
Street
San
Francisco
2nd March,
1900

Dear Mary {Hale},

Very kind of you to write to invite me to Chicago. I wish I could be there this minute. But I am busy making money; only I do not make much. Well, I have to make enough to pay my passage

home at any rate. Here is a new field, where I find ready listeners by hundreds, prepared beforehand by my books.

Of course money making is slow and tedious. If I could make a few hundreds, I would be only too glad.

By this time you must have received my previous note. I am coming eastward in a month or six weeks, I hope.

How are you all? Give Mother my heartfelt love. I wish I had her strength, she is a true Christian. My health is much better, but the old strength is not there yet. I hope it will come some day, but then, one had to work so hard to do the least little thing. I wish I had rest and peace for a few days at least, which I am sure I can get with the sisters at Chicago. Well, Mother knows best, as I say always. She knows best. The last two years have been specially bad. I have been living in mental hell. It is partially lifted now, and I hope for better days, better states. All blessings on you and the sisters and Mother. Mary, you have been always the sweetest notes in my jarring and clashing life. Then you had the great good Karma to start without oppressive surroundings. I never know a moment's peaceful life. It has always been high pressure, mentally. Lord bless you.

Ever your
loving brother,

Vivekananda

CLVIII

1502 Jones
Street
San
Francisco,
4th March,
1900

Dear Dhira Mata {Mrs. Bull},

I have not had a word from you for a month. I am in Frisco. The people here have been prepared by my writing beforehand, and they come in big crowds. But it remains to be seen how much of that enthusiasm endures when it comes to paying at the door. Rev. Benjamin Fay Mills invited me to Oakland and gave me big crowds to preach to. He and his wife have been reading my works and keeping track of my movements all the time. I sent the letter of introduction from Miss Thursby to Mrs. Hearst. She has invited me to one of her musicals Sunday next.

My health is about the same; don't find much difference; it is improving, perhaps, but very imperceptibly. I can use my voice, however, to make 3,000 people hear me, as I did twice in Oakland, and get good sleep too after two hours of speaking.

I learn Margot is with you. When are you sailing for France?

1 I will leave here in April and go to the East. I am very desirous of
2 getting to England in May if I can. Must not go home before trying
3 England once more.

4 I have nice letters from Brahmananda and Saradananda;
5 they are all doing well. They are trying to bring the municipality
6 to its senses; I am glad. In this world of Maya one need not injure,
7 but "spread the hood, without striking". That is enough.

8 Things must get round; if they don't, it is all right. I have a
9 very nice letter from Mrs. Sevier too. They are doing fine in the
10 mountains. How is Mrs. Vaughan? When is your conference to
11 close? How is Turiyananda?

12 With everlasting love and gratitude.

13 Your son,
14 Vivekananda

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17 CLIX

18 1502 Jones
19 Street
20 San
21 Francisco
22 7th March,
23 1900

24 Dear Dhira Mata {Mrs. Bull},

25 Your letter, enclosing one from Saradananda only and the
26 accounts, came. I am very much reassured by all the news I since
27 received from India. As for the accounts and the disposal of the
28 Rs. 30,000, do just what you please. I have given over the
29 management to you, the Master will show you what is best to do.
30 The money is Rs. 35,000; the Rs. 5,000, for building the cottage
31 on the Ganga, I wrote to Saradananda not to use just now. I have
32 already taken Rs. 5,000 of that money. I am not going to take
33 more. I had paid back Rs. 2,000 or more of that Rs. 5,000 in India.
34 But it seems, Brahmananda, wanting to show as much of the Rs.
35 35,000 intact as he could, drew upon my Rs. 2,000; so I owe them
36 Rs. 5,000 still on that score.

37 Anyway, I thought I could make money here in California
38 and pay them up quietly. Now I have entirely failed in California
39 financially. It is worse here than in Los Angeles. They come in
40 crowds when there is a free lecture and very few when there is
41 something to pay.

42 I have some hopes yet in England. It is necessary for me to
43 reach England in May. There is not the least use in breaking my
44 health in San Francisco for nothing. Moreover, with all Joe's
45 enthusiasm, I have not yet found any real benefit from the
46 magnetic healer, except a few red patches on my chest from
47 scratching! Platform work is nigh gone for me, and forcing it is

1 only hastening the end. I leave here very soon, as soon as I can
2 make money for a passage. I have 300 dollars in hand, made in
3 Los Angeles. I will lecture here next week and then I stop. As for
4 the Math and the money, the sooner I am released of that burden
5 the better.

6 I am ready to do whatever you advise me to do. You have
7 been a real mother to me. You have taken up one of my great
8 burdens on yourself--I mean my poor cousin. I feel quite satisfied.
9 As for my mother, I am going back to her--for my last days and
10 hers. The thousand dollars I have in New York will bring Rs. 9 a
11 month; then I bought for her a bit of land which will bring about
12 Rs. 6; and her old house--that will bring, say, Rs. 6. I leave the
13 house under litigation out of consideration, as I have not got it.
14 Myself, my mother, my grandmother, and my brother will live on
15 Rs. 20 a month easy. I would start just now, if I could make money
16 for a passage to India, without touching the 1,000 dollars in New
17 York.

18 Anyhow I will scrape three or four hundred dollars--400
19 dollars will be enough for a second class passage and for a few
20 weeks' stay in London. I do not ask you to do anything more for
21 me; I do not want it. What you have done is more, ever so much
22 more than I deserve. I have given my place solemnly to you in Shri
23 Ramakrishna's work. I am out of it. All my life I have been a
24 torture to my poor mother. Her whole life has been one of
25 continuous misery. If it be possible, my last attempt should be to
26 make her a little happy. I have planned it all out. I have served the
27 *Mother* all my life. It is done; I refuse now to grind Her axe. Let
28 Her find other workers--I strike.

29 You have been one friend with whom Shri Ramakrishna has
30 become the goal of life--that is the secret of my trust in you.
31 Others love me personally. But they little dream that what they
32 love me for is Ramakrishna; leaving Him, I am only a mass of
33 foolish selfish emotions. Anyway this stress is terrible, thinking of
34 what may come next, wishing what ought to come next. I am
35 unequal to the responsibility; I am found wanting. I must give up
36 this work. If the work has not life in it, let it die; if it has, it need
37 not wait for poor workers like myself.

38 Now the money, Rs. 30,000, is in my name, in Government
39 Securities. If they are sold now, we shall lose fearfully, on account
40 of the war; then, how can they be sent over here without being
41 sold there? To sell them there I must sign them. I do not know
42 how all this is going to be straightened out. Do what you think
43 best about it all. In the meanwhile, it is absolutely necessary that I
44 execute a will in your favour for everything, in case I suddenly
45 die. Send me a draft will as soon as possible and I shall register it
46 in San Francisco or Chicago; then my conscience will be safe. I
47 don't know any lawyer here, else I would have got it drawn up;
48 neither have I the money. The will must be done immediately; the
49 trust and things have time enough for them.

50 Ever your
51 son,

1 Vivekananda

2

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4 CLX

5 1502 Jones

6 Street

7 San

8 Francisco

9 7th March,

10 1900

11 Dear Joe {MacLeod},

12 I learn from Mrs. Bull's letter that you are in Cambridge.

13 I also learn from Miss Helen that you did not get the stories
14 sent on to you. I am sorry. Margot has copies she may give you. I
15 am so so in health. No money. Hard work. No result. Worse than
16 Los Angeles.

17 They come in crowds when the lecture is free--when there is
18 payment, they don't. That's all. I have a relapse--for some days--
19 and am feeling very bad. I think lecturing every night is the cause.
20 I hope to do something in Oakland at least to work out my passage
21 to New York, where I mean to work for my passage to India. I may
22 go to London if I make money here to pay a few months' lodging
23 there.

24 Will you send me our General's address? Even the name
25 slips from memory now!

26 Good-bye. May see you in Paris, may not. Lord bless you,
27 you have done for me more than I ever deserve.

28 With infinite love and gratitude,

29 Yours,

30 Vivekananda

31

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33 CLXI

34 San

35 Francisco

36 12th March,

37 1900

38 {original in Bengali}

39 My Dear Rakhal {Brahmananda},

40 I got a letter from you some time ago. A letter from Sharat
41 reached me yesterday. I saw a copy of the invitation letters for the
42 birthday anniversary of Gurudeva (Divine Master). I am
43 frightened hearing that Sharat is troubled by rheumatism. Alas,

sickness, sorrow, and pain have been my companions for the last two years. Tell Sharat that I am not going to work so hard any more. But he who does not work enough to earn his food will have to starve to death! . . . I hope Durgaprasanna has done by this time whatever was necessary for the compound wall. . . . The raising of a compound wall is not, after all, a difficult thing. If I can, I shall build a small house there and serve my old grandmother and mother. Evil actions leave none scot-free; Mother never spares anybody. I admit my actions have been wrong. Now, brother, all of you are Sadhus and great saints, kindly pray to the Mother that I do not have to shoulder all this trouble and burden any longer. Now I desire a little peace--it seems there is no more strength left to bear the burden of work and responsibility--rest and peace for the few days that I shall yet live! Victory to the Guru! Victory to the Guru! . . . No more lectures or anything of that sort. Peace!

As soon as Sharat sends the trust-deed of the Math, I shall put my signature to it. You all manage--truly I require rest. This disease is called neurasthenia, a disease of the nerves. Once it comes, it continues for some years. But after a complete rest for three or four years it is cured. This country is the home of the disease, and here it has caught me. However, it is not only no fatal disease, but it makes a man live long. Don't be anxious on my account. I shall go on rolling. But there is only this sorrow that the work of Gurudeva is not progressing; there is this regret that I have not been able to accomplish anything of his work. How much I abuse you all and speak harshly! I am the worst of men! Today, on the anniversary of his birthday, put the dust of your feet on my head--and my mind will become steady again. Victory to the Guru! Victory to the Guru! You are my only refuge--you are my only refuge! Now that my mind is steady, let me tell you that this resignation is the permanent attitude of my mind. All other moods that come are, you should know, only disease. Please don't allow me to work at all any longer. Now I shall quietly do Japa and meditation for some time--nothing more. Mother knows all else. Victory to the Mother of the Universe!

affectionately,
Yours
Vivekananda

CLXII

Street
Francisco,
1900
1719 Turk
San
12th March,

Dear Mary {Hale},

How are you? How is Mother, and the sisters? How are things going on in Chicago? I am in Frisco, and shall remain here for a month or so. I start for Chicago early in April. I shall write to you before that of course. How I wish I could be with you for a few days; one gets tired of work so much. My health is so so, but my mind is very peaceful and has been so for some time. I am trying to give up all anxiety unto the Lord. I am only a worker. My mission is to obey and work. He knows the rest.

"Giving up all vexations and paths, do thou take refuge unto Me. I will save you from all dangers" (Gita, XVIII.66).

I am trying hard to realise that. May I be able to do it soon.

affectionate brother, Ever your

Vivekananda

CLXIII

Street 1719 Turk

San Francisco,

12th March,
1900

My Dear Dhira Mata {Mrs. Bull},

Your letter from Cambridge came yesterday. Now I have got a fixed address, 1719 Turk Street, San Francisco. Hope you will have time to pen a few lines in reply to this. I had a manuscript account sent me by you. I sent it back as you desired; besides that, I had no other accounts. It is all right.

I had a nice letter from Miss Souter from London. She expects to have Mr. . . . to dine with her.

So glad to hear of Margot's success. I have given her over to you, and am sure you will take care of her. I will be here a few weeks more and then go East. I am only waiting for the warm season.

I have not been at all successful financially here, but am not in want. Anyway, things will go on as usual with me, I am sure; and if they don't, what then?

I am perfectly resigned. I had a letter from the Math; they had the Utsava yesterday. I do not intend to go by the Pacific. Don't care where I go, and when. Now perfectly resigned; Mother knows; a great change, peacefulness is coming on me. Mother, I know, will see to it. I die a Sannyasin. You have been more than mother to me and mine. All love, all blessings be yours for ever, is the constant prayer of

Vivekananda

1 PS. Kindly tell Mrs. Leggett that my address for some weeks
2 now will be, 1719 Turk Street, San Francisco.

3 V.
4
5

6 CLXIV

7 1719 Turk
8 Street
9 San
10 Francisco

11 22nd March,
12 1900

13 My Dear Mary {Hale},

14 Many thanks for your kind note. You are correct that I have
15 many other thoughts to think besides Indian people, but they have
16 all to go to the background before the all-absorbing mission--my
17 Master's work.

18 I would that this sacrifice were pleasant. It is not, and
19 naturally makes one bitter at times; for know, Mary, I am yet a
20 man and cannot wholly forget myself; hope I shall some time. Pray
21 for me.

22 Of course I am not to be held responsible for Miss
23 MacLeod's or Miss Noble's or anybody else's views regarding
24 myself or anything else, am I? You never found me smart under
25 criticism.

26 I am glad you are going over to Europe for a long period.
27 Make a long tour, you have been long a house-dove.

28 As for me, I am tired on the other hand of eternal tramping;
29 that is why I want to go back home and be quiet. I do not want to
30 work any more. My nature is the retirement of a scholar. I never
31 get it! I pray I will get it, now that I am all broken and worked out.
32 Whenever I get a letter from Mrs. Sevier from her Himalayan
33 home, I feel like flying off the the Himalayas. I am really sick of
34 this platform work and eternal trudging and seeing new faces and
35 lecturing.

36 You need not bother about getting up classes in Chicago. I
37 am getting money in Frisco and will soon make enough for my
38 passage home.

39 How are you and the sisters? I expect to come to Chicago
40 some time towards the first part of April.

41 Yours,

42 Vivekananda
43
44

45 CLXV

1 1719 Turk
2 Street
3 San
4 Francisco
5 28th March,
6 1900

7 Well Blessed Mary {Hale},

8 This is to let you know "I am very happy". Not that I am
9 getting into a shadowy optimism, but my power of suffering is
10 increasing. I am being lifted up above the pestilential miasma of
11 this world's joys and sorrows; they are losing their meaning. It is a
12 land of dreams; it does not matter whether one enjoys or weeps;
13 they are but dreams, and as such, must break sooner or later.
14 How are things going on with you folks there? Harriet is going to
15 have a good time at Paris. I am sure to meet her over there and
16 *parler fransaise* ! I am getting by heart a French *dictionnaire* ! I
17 am making some money too; hard work morning and evening; yet
18 better for all that. Good sleep, good digestion, perfect irregularity.

19 You are going to the East. I hope to come to Chicago before
20 the end of April. If I can't, I will surely meet you in the East before
21 you go.

22 What are the McKindley girls doing? Eating grapefruit
23 concoctions and getting plump? Go on, life is but a dream. Are you
24 not glad it is so? My! They want an eternal heaven! Thank God,
25 nothing is eternal except Himself. He alone can bear it, I am sure.
26 Eternity of nonsense!

27 Things are beginning to hum for me; they will presently
28 roar. I shall remain quiet though, all the same. Things are not
29 humming for you just now. I am so sorry, that is, I am trying to be,
30 for I cannot be sorry for anything and more. I am attaining peace
31 that passeth understanding, which is neither joy nor sorrow, but
32 something above them both. Tell Mother that. My passing through
33 the valley of death, physical, mental, last two years, has helped
34 me in this. Now I am nearing that *Peace* , the eternal silence. Now
35 I mean to see things as they are, everything in that peace, perfect
36 in its way. "He whose joy is only in himself, whose desires are only
37 in himself, he has *learned* his lessons." This is the great lesson
38 that we are here to learn through myriads of births and heavens
39 and hells--that there is nothing to be asked for, desired for, beyond
40 one's Self. "The greatest thing I can obtain is my Self." "I am
41 free", therefore I require none else for my happiness. "Alone
42 through eternity, because I was free, am free, and will remain free
43 for ever." This is Vedantism. I preached the theory so long, but oh,
44 joy! Mary, my dear sister, I am realising it now every day. Yes, I
45 am--"I am free." "Alone, alone, I am the one without a second."

46 Ever yours in the Sat-Chit-
47 Ananda,

48 Vivekananda

49 PS. Now I am going to be truly Vivekananda. Did you ever

1 enjoy evil! Ha! ha! you silly girl, all is good! Nonsense. Some
2 good, some evil. I enjoy the good and I enjoy the evil. I was Jesus
3 and I was Judas Iscariot; both my play, my fun. "So long as there
4 are two, fear shall not leave thee." Ostrich method? Hide your
5 heads in the sand and think there is nobody seeing you! All is
6 good! Be brave and face everything--come good, come evil, both
7 welcome, both of you my play. I have no good to attain, no ideal to
8 clench up to, no ambition to fulfil; I, the diamond mine, am playing
9 with pebbles, good and evil; good for you--evil, come; good for
10 you--good, you come too. If the universe tumbles round my ears,
11 what is that to me? I am Peace that passeth understanding;
12 understanding only gives us good or evil. I am beyond, I am
13 peace.

14 V.

15
16
17 CLXVI

18 San

19 Francisco

20 March, 1900

21 {original in Bengali}

22 Dear Haribhai {Turiyananda},

23 I have just received a bill of lading from Mrs. Banerji. She
24 has sent some Dal (pulses) and rice. I am sending the bill of lading
25 to you. Give it to Miss Waldo; she will bring all these things when
26 they come.

27 Next week I am leaving this place for Chicago; thence I go
28 over to New York. I am getting on somehow. . . . Where are you
29 putting up now? What are you doing?

30 Yours

31 affectionately,

32 Vivekananda

33
34
35 CLXVII

36 1719 Turk

37 Street

38 San

39 Francisco

40 30th March,

41 1900

42 My Dear Joe {MacLeod},

43 Many thanks for the prompt sending of the books. They will
44 sell quick, I believe. You have become worse than me in changing
45 your plans, I see. I wonder why I have not got any *Awakened India*

1 yet. My mail is getting so knocked about, I am afraid.

2 I am working hard--making some money--and am getting
3 better in health. Work morning and evening, go to bed at 12 p.m.
4 after a heavy supper!--and trudge all over the town! And get
5 better too!

6 So Mrs. Milton is there, give her my love, will you? Has not
7 Turiyananda's leg got all right?

8 I have sent Margot's letter to Mrs. Bull as she wanted. I am
9 so happy to learn of Mrs. Leggett's gift to her. Things have got to
10 come round; anyway, they are bound to, because nothing is
11 eternal.

12 I will be a week or two more here if I find it paying, then go
13 to a place near by called Stockton and then--I don't know. Things
14 are going anyhow.

15 I am very peaceful and quiet, and things are going anyway--
16 just they go. With all love,

17 Vivekananda

18 PS. Miss Waldo is just the person to undertake editing
19 *Karma-Yoga* with additions etc.

20 V.

21
22
23 CLXVIII

24 {original in Bengali}

25 Dear Haribhai {Turiyananda},

26 I am glad to hear that your leg is all right and that you are
27 doing splendid work. My body is going on all right. The thing is, I
28 fall ill when I take too much precaution. I am cooking, eating
29 whatever comes, working day and night, and I am all right and
30 sleeping soundly!

31 I am going over to New York within a month. Has Sarada's
32 magazine gone out of circulation? I am not getting it any longer.
33 *Awakened* also has gone to sleep, I think. They are not sending it
34 to me any more. Let that go. There is an outbreak of plague in our
35 country; who knows who is alive and who is dead! Well, a letter
36 from Achu has come today. He had hidden himself in the town of
37 Ramgarh in Sikar State. Someone told him that Vivekananda was
38 dead; so he has written to me! I am sending him a reply.

39 All well here. Hope this finds you and all others well.

40 Yours

41 affectionately,

42 Vivekananda

43
44 CLXIX

1 1719 Turk
2 Street
3 San
4 Francisco, Calif.

5 April, 1900

6 My Dear Joe {MacLeod},

7 Just a line before you start for France. Are you going via
8 England? I had a beautiful letter from Mrs. Sevier in which I find
9 that Miss Muller sent simply a paper without any other words to
10 Kali who was with her in Darjeeling.

11 Congreave is the name of her nephew, and he is in the
12 Transvaal war; that is the reason she underlined that, to show her
13 nephew fighting the Boers in Transvaal. That was all. I cannot
14 understand it any more now than then, of course.

15 I am physically worse than at Los Angeles, mentally much
16 better, stronger, and peaceful. Hope it will continue to be so.

17 I have not got a reply to my letter to you; I expect it soon.

18 One Indian letter of mine was directed by mistake to Mrs.
19 Wheeler; it came all right to me in the end. I had nice notes from
20 Saradananda; they are doing beautifully over there. The boys are
21 working up; well, scolding has both sides, you see; it makes them
22 up and doing. We Indians have been so dependent for so long that
23 it requires, I am sorry, a good lot of tongue to make them active.
24 One of the laziest fellows had taken charge of the anniversary this
25 year and pulled it through. They have planned and are
26 successfully working famine works by themselves without my
27 help. . . . All this comes from the terrific scolding I have been
28 giving, sure!

29 They are standing on their own feet. I am so glad. See Joe,
30 the Mother is working.

31 I sent Miss Thursby's letter to Mrs. Hearst. She sent me an
32 invitation to her musical. I could not go. I had a bad cold. So that
33 was all. Another lady for whom I had a letter from Miss Thursby,
34 an Oakland lady, did not reply. I don't know whether I shall make
35 enough in Frisco to pay my fare to Chicago! Oakland work has
36 been successful. I hope to get about \$100 from Oakland, that is
37 all. After all, I am content. It is better that I tried. . . . Even the
38 magnetic healer had not anything for me. Well, things will go on
39 anyhow for me; I do not care how. . . . I am very peaceful. I learn
40 from Los Angeles, Mrs. Leggett has been bad again. I wired to
41 New York to learn what truth was in it. I will get a reply soon, I
42 expect.

43 Say, how will you arrange about my mail when the Leggetts
44 are over on the other side? Will you so arrange that they reach me
45 right?

46 I have nothing more to say; all love and gratitude is yours;
47 already you know that. You have already done more than I ever
48 deserved. I don't know whether I go to Paris or not, but I must go

1 to England sure in May. I must not go home without trying
2 England a few weeks more. With all love,

3 Ever yours in
4 the Lord

5 Vivekananda

6 PS. Mrs. Hansborough and Mrs. Appenul have taken a flat
7 for a month at 1719 Turk Street. I am with them, and shall be a
8 few weeks.

9 V.

10
11 CLXX

12 1719 Turk
13 Street

14 San
15 Francisco

16 1st April,
17 1900

18 Dear Dhira Mata {Mrs. Bull},

19 Your kind note came this morning. I am so happy to learn
20 that all the New York friends are being cured by Mrs. Milton. She
21 has been very unsuccessful, it seems, in Los Angeles, as all the
22 people we introduced tell me. Some are in a worse state than
23 before the skin paring. Kindly give Mrs. Milton my love; her
24 rubbings used to do me good at the time at least. Poor Dr. Hiller!
25 We send him over post-haste to Los Angeles to get his wife cured.
26 You ought to have seen him the other morning and heard him too!
27 Mrs. Hiller, it appears, is many times worse for all the rubbings
28 given; and she is only a few bones; and, above all, the doctor had
29 to spend 500 dollars in Los Angeles. That makes him feel very
30 bad. I, of course, would not write this to Joe; she is happy in her
31 dreams of having done so much good to poor sufferers. But oh, if
32 she could hear the Los Angeles folks and this old Dr. Hiller, she
33 would change her mind at once and learn wisdom from an old
34 adage not to recommend medicine to any one. I am so glad I did
35 not write of old Dr. Hiller's alacrity in getting over to Los Angeles
36 when he heard of this cure from Joe. She ought to have seen the
37 old man dance about my room, with greater alacrity! 500 dollars
38 was too much for the old man; he is a German; he dances about,
39 slaps his pockets and says, "You can't have goth the five
40 hundred, but for this silly cure!"

41 Then there are poor people who paid her three dollars a
42 rubbing sometimes and now complimenting Joe and myself. Don't
43 tell this to Joe. You and she can afford to lose money on anyone.
44 So also the old German doctor, but the poor boy finds it a bit hard.
45 The old doctor is now persuaded that some *devils* are
46 misarranging his affairs of late. He had counted on so much to
47 have me as his guest, and his wife righted, but he had to run to
48 Los Angeles and that upset the whole plan; and now, though he

1 tries his best to get me in as his guest, I fight shy, not of him, but
2 of his wife and sister-in-law. He is sure, "Devils must be in it"; he
3 has been a Theosophical student. I told him to write to Miss
4 MacLeod to hunt up a devil-driver somewhere so that he might
5 run with his wife and spend another five hundred! Doing good is
6 not always smooth!

7 As for me, I get the fun out of it--as long as Joe pays--bone-
8 cracker, or skin-parer, or any system whatever. But this was not
9 fair of Joe--after having got in all these people to get rubbed
10 down, to run off and let me bear all the compliments! I am glad
11 she is not introducing any outsiders to be skinned. Otherwise Joe
12 would be gone to Paris, leaving poor Mr. Leggett to collect the
13 compliments. I sent in a Christian Science healer to Dr. Hiller as a
14 make-up of Joe's misdemeanour, but his wife slammed the door in
15 her face and would have nothing to do with queer healing.

16 Anyhow, I sincerely hope and pray Mrs. Leggett will be well
17 this time. Did they analyse the sting?

18 I hope the will will arrive soon; I am a bit anxious about it. I
19 expected to get a draft trust-deed also by this mail from India; no
20 letters came, not even *Awakened India*, though I find *Awakened*
21 *India* has reached San Francisco.

22 I read in the papers the other day of 500 deaths in one week
23 of plague in Calcutta! Mother knows what is good.

24 So Mr. Leggett has got the V. Society up. Good.

25 How is Olea? Where is Margot? I wrote her a letter the
26 other day to 21 W. 34, N.Y. I am so happy that she is making
27 headway. With all love,

28 Ever your
29 son,

Vivekananda

31 PS. I am getting all the work I can do and more. I will make
32 my passage, anyhow. Though they cannot pay me much, yet they
33 pay some, and by constant work I will make enough to pay my way
34 and have a few hundred in the pocket anyhow. So you needn't be
35 the least anxious about me.

V.

CLXXI

U.S.A.

6th April,

1900

Dear Margot {Nivedita},

44 Glad you have returned. Gladder you are going to Paris. I
45 shall go to Paris of course, only don't know when. Mrs. Leggett
46 thinks I ought to immediately, and take up studying French. Well,

1 take what comes. So you do too.

2 Finish your books, and in Paris we are going to conquer the
3 Froggies. How is Mary? Give her my love. My work here is done. I
4 will come in fifteen days to Chicago if Mary is there. She is going
5 away to the East soon. With blessings,

6 Vivekananda

7 PS. The mind is omnipresent and can be heard and felt
8 anywhere.

9 V.

10

11

12 CLXXII

13 San

14 Francisco

15 7th April,

16 1900

17 {To an American friend},

18 . . . I am more calm and quiet now than I ever was. I am on
19 my own feet, working hard and with pleasure. To work I have the
20 right. Mother knows the rest.

21 You see, I shall have to stay here, longer than I intended,
22 and work. But don't be disturbed. I shall work out all my
23 problems. I am on my own feet now, and I begin to see the light.
24 Success would have led me astray, and I would have lost sight of
25 the truth that I am a Sannyasin. That is why Mother is giving me
26 this experience.

27 My boat is nearing the calm harbour from which it is never
28 more to be driven out. Glory, glory unto Mother! I have no wish,
29 no ambition now. Blessed be Mother! I am the servant of
30 Ramakrishna. I am merely a machine. I know nothing else. Nor do
31 I want to know. Glory, glory unto Shri Guru!

32

33

34 CLXXIII

35 1719 Turk

36 Street

37 San

38 Francisco

39 8th April,

40 1900

41 My Dear Dhira Mata {Mrs. Bull},

42 Here is a long letter from A_. He seems to be entirely
43 upset. I am sure a little kindness will completely win him over. He
44 thinks that you want to drive him out of New York, etc. He awaits

1 my orders. I have told him to trust you in everything and remain
2 in New York till I come.

3 I think, as things stand in New York, they require my
4 presence. Do you? In that case I shall come over soon.

5 I have been making enough money to pay my passage. I will
6 stop on my way at Chicago and Detroit.

7 Of course by that time you will be off. A__ has done good
8 work so far; and, of course, you know I do not meddle with my
9 workers at all.

10 The man who can work has an individuality of his own and
11 resists any pressure there. That is my reason in leaving workers
12 entirely free. Of course you are on the spot and know best. Advise
13 me what to do.

14 The remittance to Calcutta has duly reached. I got news of it
15 by this mail. My cousin sends her respects and thanks, but she is
16 sorry she cannot write English.

17 I am getting better every day, and even walking uphill.
18 There are falls now and then, but the duration is decreasing
19 constantly. My thanks to Mrs. Milton.

20 I had a little note from Siri Gryanander. Poor girl, she is so
21 thankful to be trusted. That is just like Mrs. Leggett--good, good,
22 good. Money is not evil after all--in good hands. I hope fervently
23 Siri will completely recover, poor child.

24 I will leave here in about two weeks. I go to a place called
25 Star Klon and then start for the East. It may be I may go to
26 Denver also. With all love to Joe,

27 Ever your
28 son,

29 Vivekananda

30 PS. I do not any more doubt my ultimate cure; you ought to
31 see me working like a steam engine cooking, eating anything and
32 everything, and, all the same, sleeping well and keeping well!

33 I have not done any writing--no time. I am so glad Mrs.
34 Leggett is much better and walking about naturally. I expect her
35 complete recovery soon and pray for it.

36 V.

37 PS. I had a nice letter from Mrs. Sevier; they are going on
38 splendidly with the work. Plague has broken out severely at
39 Calcutta, but no hullabaloo over it this time.

40 V.

41 PS. Did you reveal to A__ that I have given over to you the
42 charge of the entire work? Well, you know best how to do things;
43 but he seems to be hurt at that.

44 V.

45

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CLXXIV

1719 Turk

Street

San

Francisco

10th April,

1900

Dear Joe {MacLeod},

There is a squabble in New York, I see. I got a letter from A__ stating that he was going to leave New York. He thought Mrs. Bull and you have written lots against him to me. I wrote him back to be patient and wait, and that Mrs. Bull and Miss MacLeod wrote only good things about him.

Well, Joe Joe, you know my method in all these rows; to leave all rows alone! "Mother" sees to all such things. I have finished my work. I am retired, Joe. "Mother" will work now Herself. That is all.

Now, as you say, I am going to send all the money I have made here. I could do it today, but I am waiting to make it a thousand. I expect to make a thousand in Frisco by the end of this week. I will buy a draft on New York and send it or ask the bank the best way to do it.

I have plenty of letters from the Math and the Himalayan centre. This morning came one from Swarupananda. Yesterday one from Mrs. Sevier.

I told Mrs. Hansborough about the photos.

You tell Mr. Leggett from me to do what is best about the Vedanta Society matter. The only thing I see is that in every country we have to follow its own method. As such, if I were you, I would convene a meeting of all the members and sympathisers and ask them what they want to do. Whether they want to organise or not, what sort of organisation they want if any, etc. But Lordy, do it on your own hook. I am quits. Only if you think my presence would be of any help I can come in fifteen days.

I have finished my work here; only, out of San Francisco, Stockton is a little city I want to work a few days in; then I go East. I think I should rest now, although I can have \$100 a week average in this city, all along. This time I want to let upon New York the charge of the Light Brigade.

With all love,

Ever yours

affectionately,

Vivekananda

PS. If the workers are all averse to organising, do you think there is any benefit in it? You know best. Do what you think best. I

1 have a letter from Margot from Chicago. She asks some
2 questions; I am going to reply.

3 V.

4
5 CLXXV

6 Alameda,
7 California
8 12th April,
9 1900

10 {To an American friend},

11 Mother is becoming propitious once more. Things are
12 looking up. They must.

13 Work always brings evil with it. I have paid for the
14 accumulated evil with bad health. I am glad. My mind is all the
15 better for it. There is a mellowness and a calmness in life now,
16 which was never there before. I am learning now how to be
17 detached as well as attached, and mentally becoming my own
18 master. . . .

19 Mother is doing Her own work; I do not worry much now.
20 Moths like me die by the thousand every instant. Her work goes
21 on all the same. Glory unto Mother! . . . Alone and drifting about
22 in the will-current of the Mother has been my whole life. The
23 moment I have tried to break this, that moment I have been hurt.
24 Her will be done! . . .

25 I am happy, at peace with myself, and more of the Sannyasin
26 than I ever was before. The love for my own kith and kin is
27 growing less every day, and that for Mother increasing. Memories
28 of long nights of vigil with Shri Ramakrishna under the
29 Dakshineswar Banyan are waking up once more. And work? What
30 is work? Whose work? Whom shall I work for?

31 I am free. I am Mother's child. She works, She plays. Why
32 should I plan? What should I plan? Things came and went, just as
33 She liked, without my planning. We are Her automata. She is the
34 wirepuller.

35
36 CLXXVI

37 Alameda,
38 California
39 20th April,
40 1900

41 My Dear Joe {MacLeod},

42 Received your note today. I wrote you one yesterday but
43 directed it to England thinking you will be there.

44 I have given your message to Mrs. Betts. I am so sorry this
45 little quarrel came with A_. I got also his letter you sent. He is
46 correct so far as he says, "Swami wrote me 'Mr. Leggett is not

1 interested in Vedanta and will not help any more. You stand on
2 your own feet.'" It was as you and Mrs. Leggett desired me to
3 write him from Los Angeles about New York--in reply to his asking
4 me what to do for funds.

5 Well, things will take their own shape, but it seems in Mrs.
6 Bull's and your mind there is some idea that I ought to do
7 something. But in the first place I do not know anything about the
8 difficulties. None of you write me anything about what that is for,
9 and I am no thought-reader. You simply wrote me a general idea
10 that A__ wanted to keep things in his hands. What can I
11 understand from it? What are the difficulties? Regarding what the
12 differences are about, I am as much in the dark as about the exact
13 date of the Day of Destruction! And yet Mrs. Bull's and your
14 letters show quite an amount of vexation! These things get
15 complicated sometimes, in spite of ourselves. Let them take their
16 shape.

17 I have executed and sent the will to Mr. Leggett as desired
18 by Mrs. Bull.

19 I am going on, sometimes well and at other times ill. I
20 cannot say, on my conscience, that I have been the least benefited
21 by Mrs. Milton. She has been good to me, I am very thankful. My
22 love to her. Hope she will benefit others.

23 For writing to Mrs. Bull this fact, I got a four page sermon,
24 as to how I ought to be grateful and thankful, etc., etc. All that is,
25 sure, the outcome of this A__ business! Sturdy and Mrs. Johnson
26 got disturbed by Margot, and they fell upon me. Now A__ disturbs
27 Mrs. Bull and, of course, I have to bear the brunt of it. Such is
28 life!

29 You and Mrs. Leggett wanted me to write him to be free and
30 independent and that Mr. Leggett was not going to help them. I
31 wrote it--now what can I do? If John or Jack does not obey you, am
32 I to be hanged for it? What do I know about this Vedanta Society?
33 Did I start it? Had I any hand in it? Then again, nobody
34 condescends to write me anything about what the affair is! Well,
35 this world is a great fun.

36 I am glad Mrs. Leggett is recovering fast. I pray every
37 moment for her complete recovery. I start for Chicago on Monday.
38 A kind lady has given me a pass up to New York to be used within
39 three months. The Mother will take care of me. She is not going to
40 strand me now after guarding me all my life.

41
42 gratefully, Ever yours

Vivekananda

CLXXVII

47 23rd April,
48 1900

1 My Dear Mary {Hale},

2 I ought to have started today but circumstances so
3 happened that I cannot forgo the temptation to be in a camp
4 under the huge red-wood trees of California before I leave.
5 Therefore I postpone it for three or four days. Again after the
6 incessant work I require a breath of God's free air before I start
7 on this bone-breaking journey of four days.

8 Margot insists in her letter that I must keep my promise to
9 come to see Aunt Mary in fifteen days. It will be kept--only in
10 twenty days instead of fifteen. By that I avoid the nasty snowstorm
11 Chicago had lately and get a little strength too.

12 Margot is a great partisan of Aunt Mary it seems, and other
13 people besides me have nieces and cousins and aunts.

14 I start tomorrow to the woods. Woof! get my lungs full of
15 ozone before getting into Chicago. In the meanwhile keep my mail
16 for me when it comes to Chicago and don't send it off here like a
17 good girl as you are.

18 I have finished work. Only a few days' rest, my friends
19 insist--three or four--before facing the railway.

20 I have got a free pass for three months from here to New
21 York; no expense except the sleeping car; so, you see, free, free!

22
23 affectionately, Yours

24 Vivekananda

25

26

27 CLXXVIII

28
29 1900

30 My Dear Mary {Hale},

31 Sudden indisposition and fever prevent my starting for
32 Chicago yet. I will start as soon as I am strong for the journey. I
33 had a letter from Margot the other day. Give her kindly my love,
34 and know yourself my eternal love.

35 Where is Harriet? Still in Chicago? And the McKindley
36 sisters? To all my love.

37 Vivekananda

38

39

40 CLXXIX

41 2nd May,
42 1900

43 My Dear Nivedita,

44 I have been very ill--one more relapse brought about by

1 months of hard work. Well, it has shown me that I have no kidney
2 or heart disease whatsoever, only overworked nerves. I am,
3 therefore, going today in the country for some days till I
4 completely recover, which I am sure will be in a few days.

5 In the meanwhile I do not want to read any India letters
6 with the plague news etc. My mail is coming to Mary; either she
7 or you keep them (you, if she goes away) till I return.

8 I am going to throw off all worry, and glory unto Mother.

9 Mrs. C. P. Huntington, a very, very wealthy lady, who has
10 helped me, came; wants to see and help you. She will be in New
11 York by the first of June. Do not go away without seeing her. If I
12 cannot come early enough, I will send you an introduction to her.

13 Give my love to Mary. I am leaving here in a few days.

14 Ever yours with
15 blessings,

16 Vivekananda

17 PS. The accompanying letter is to introduce you to Mrs. M.
18 C. Adams, wife of Judge Adams. Go to see her immediately. Much
19 good may come out of it. She is well known; find out her address.

20 V.

21
22 CLXXX

23 San

24 Francisco

25 26th May,

26 1900

27 Dear Nivedita,

28 All blessings on you. Don't despond in the least. *Shri wah*
29 *Guru! Shri wah Guru!* You come of the blood of a Kshatriya. Our
30 yellow garb is the robe of death on the field of battle. Death for
31 the cause is our goal, not success. *Shri wah Guru! . . .*

32 Black and thick are the folds of sinister fate. But I am the
33 master. I raise my hand, and lo, they vanish! All this is nonsense.
34 And fear? I am the Fear of fear, the Terror of terror, I am the
35 fearless secondless One, I am the Rule of destiny, the Wiper-out of
36 fact. *Shri wah Guru!* Steady, child, don't be bought by gold or
37 anything else, and we win!

38 Vivekananda

39
40
41 CLXXI

42 1921 W. 21

43 Street

44 Los Angeles

1
2 1900 17th June,

3 My Dear Mary {Hale},

4 It is true I am much better, but not yet completely
5 recovered; anyway, the complexion of the mind is one belonging to
6 everyone that suffers. It is neither gas nor anything else.

7 Kali worship is not a necessary step in any religion. The
8 Upanishads teach us all there is of religion. Kali worship is my
9 special *fad* ; you never heard me preach it, or read of my
10 preaching it in India. I only preach what is good for universal
11 humanity. If there is any curious method which applies entirely to
12 me, I keep it a secret and there it ends. I must not explain to you
13 what Kali worship is, as I never taught it to anybody.

14 You are entirely mistaken if you think the Boses are rejected
15 by the Hindu people. The English rulers want to push him into a
16 corner. They don't of course like that sort of development in the
17 Indian race. They make it hot for him, that is why he seeks to go
18 elsewhere.

19 By the "anglicised" are meant people who by their manners
20 and conduct show that they are ashamed of us poor, old type
21 Hindus. I am not ashamed of my race or my birth or nationality.
22 That such people are not liked by the Hindus, I cannot wonder.

23 Ceremonials and symbols etc. have no place in our religion
24 which is the doctrine of the Upanishads, pure and simple. Many
25 people think the ceremonial etc. help them in realising religion. I
26 have no objection.

27 Religion is that which does not depend upon books or
28 teachers or prophets or saviours, and that which does not make us
29 dependent in this or in any other lives upon others. In this sense
30 Advaitism of the Upanishads is the only religion. But saviours,
31 books, prophets, ceremonials, etc. have their places. They may
32 help many as Kali worship helps me in my *secular work* . They are
33 welcome.

34 The Guru, however, is a different idea. It is the relation
35 between the transmitter and the receiver of force--psychic power
36 and knowledge. Each nation is a type, physically and mentally.
37 Each is constantly receiving ideas from others only to work them
38 out *into* its type, that is, along the national line. The time has not
39 come for the destruction of types. All education from any source is
40 compatible with the ideals in every country; only they must be
41 nationalised, i.e. fall in line with the rest of the type
42 manifestation.

43 Renunciation is always the ideal of every race; only other
44 races do not know what they are made to do by nature
45 unconsciously. Through the ages one purpose runs sure. And that
46 will be finished with the destruction of this earth and the sun! And
47 worlds are always in progress indeed! And nobody as yet
48 developed enough in any one of the infinite worlds to
49 communicate with us! Bosh! They are born, show the same

phenomena, and die the same death! Increasing purpose! Babies!
Live in the land of dreams, you babies!

Well, now about me. You must persuade Harriet to give me a few dollars every month, and I will have some other friends do the same. If I succeed, I fly off to India. I am dead tired of the platform work for a living. It does not please me any more. I retire and do some writing if I can do some scholarly work.

I am coming soon to Chicago, hope to be there in a few days. Say, would not Mrs. Adams be able to get up a class for me to pay my passage back?

Of course I shall try different places. So much of optimism has come to me, Mary, that I should fly off to the Himalayas if I had wings.

I have worked for this world, Mary, all my life, and it does not give me a piece of bread without taking a pound of flesh.

If I can get a piece of bread a day, I retire entirely; but this is impossible--this is the increasing purpose that is unfolding all the devilish inwardness, as I am getting older!

Ever yours in
the Lord,

Vivekananda

PS. If ever a man found the vanity of things, I have it now. This is the world, hideous, beastly corpse. Who thinks of helping it is a fool! But we have to work out our slavery by doing good or evil; I have worked it out, I hope. May the Lord take me to the other shore! Amen! I have given up all thoughts about India or any land. I am now selfish, want to save myself!

"He who revealed unto Brahma (the first of the gods) the Vedas, who is manifest in every heart, unto Him I take refuge, hoping deliverance from bondage."

V.

CLXXXII

Society
Street
1900
Vedanta
146 E. 55th
New York,
23rd June,

My Dear Mary {Hale},

Many, many thanks for your beautiful letter. I am very well and happy and same as ever. Waves must come before a rise. So with me. I am very glad you are going to pray. Why don't you get

1 up a Methodist camp-meeting? That will have quicker effect, I am
2 sure.

3 I am determined to get rid of all sentimentalism, and
4 emotionalism, and hang me if you ever find me emotional. I am
5 the Advaitist; our goal is *knowledge* --no feelings, no love, as all
6 that belongs to matter and superstition and bondage. I am only
7 existence and knowledge.

8 Greenacre will give you good rest. I am sure. I wish you all
9 joy there. Don't for a moment worry on my account. "Mother"
10 looks after me. She is bringing me fast out of the hell of
11 emotionalism, and bringing me into the light of pure reason. With
12 everlasting wishes for your happiness,

13 Ever your
14 brother,

15 Vivekananda

16 PS. Margot starts on the 26th. I may follow in a week or
17 two. Nobody has any power over me, for I am the spirit. I have no
18 ambition; it is all Mother's work; I have no part.

19 V.

20 I could not digest your letter as the dyspepsia was rather
21 bad last few days.

22 V.

23 Non-attachment has always been there. It has come in a
24 minute. Very soon I stand where no sentiment, no feeling, can
25 touch me.

26 V.

27
28
29 CLXXXIII

30 102 E. 58th
31 Street
32 New York
33 11th July,
34 1900

35 My Dear Devoted Sister {Mary Hale},

36 I was glad to get your note as also to learn that you were
37 going to Greenacre. Hope you will have much profit. I have been
38 much censured by everyone for cutting off my long hair. I am
39 sorry. You forced me to do it.

40 I had been to Detroit and came back yesterday. Trying as
41 soon as possible to go to France, thence to India. Very little news
42 here; the work is closed. I am taking regularly my meals and
43 sleeping--that is all.

44 Ever faithful and loving
45 brother,

1 Vivekananda
2 PS. Write to the girls to send my mails, if any, at Chicago.
3 V.
4
5 CLXXXIV
6 102 E. 58th
7 Street
8 New York
9 18th July,
10 1900
11 My Dear Turiyananda,
12 Your letter reached me redirected. I stayed in Detroit for
13 three days only. It is frightfully hot here in New York. There was
14 no Indian mail for you last week. I have not heard from Sister
15 Nivedita yet.
16 Things are going on the same way with us. Nothing
17 particular. Miss Muller cannot come in August. I will not wait for
18 her. I take the next train. Wait till it comes. With love to Miss
19 Boocke,
20 Yours in the
21 Lord,
22 Vivekananda
23 PS. Kali went away about a week ago to the mountains. He
24 cannot come back till September. I am all alone, and washing; I
25 like it. Have you seen my friends? Give them my love.
26 V.
27
28
29 CLXXXV
30 102 E. 58th
31 Street
32 New York,
33 20th July,
34 1900
35 Dear Joe {MacLeod},
36 Possibly before this reaches you I shall be in Europe,
37 London or Paris as the chance of steamer comes.
38 I have straightened out my business here. The works are at
39 Mr. Whitmarsh's suggestion in the hands of Miss Waldo.
40 I have to get the passage and sail. Mother knows the rest.
41 My *intimate* friend did not materialise yet and writes she
42 will come some time in August, and she is dying to see a Hindu,
43 and her soul is burning for Mother India.

1 I wrote her I may see her in London. Mother knows again.
2 Mrs. Huntington sends love to Margot and expects to hear from
3 her if she is not too busy with her scientific exhibits.

4 With all love to "sacred cow" of India, to yourself, to the
5 Leggetts, to Miss (what's her name?), the American rubber plant.

6 Ever yours in
7 the Lord,

8 Vivekananda

9
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11 CLXXXVI

12 102 E. 58th
13 Street
14 New York
15 24th July,
16 1900

17 Dear Joe {MacLeod},

18 The sun=Knowledge. The stormy water=Work. The
19 lotus=Love. The serpent=Yoga. The swan=the Self. The
20 Motto=May the Swan (the Supreme Self) send us that. It is the
21 mind-lake.²⁷⁵ How do you like it? May the Swan fill you with all
22 these anyway.

23 I am to start on Thursday next, by the French steamer *La*
24 *Champagne*. The books are in the hands of Waldo and Whitmarsh.
25 They are nearly ready.

26 I am well, getting better--and all right till I see you next
27 week.

28 Ever yours in
29 the Lord,

30 Vivekananda

31
32 CLXXXVII

33 102 E. 58th
34 Street
35 New York
36 25th July,
37 1900

38 Dear Turiyananda,

39 I received a letter from Mrs. Hansborough telling me of
40 your visit to her. They like you immensely, and I am sure you have
41 found in them genuine, pure, and absolutely unselfish friends.

1 ²⁷⁵ ?This explains the design on the Ramakrishna Math and Mission seal,
2 printed on the title page of this volume--Ed.
3

1 I am starting for Paris tomorrow. Things all turn that way.
2 Kali is not here. He is rather worried at my going away, but it has
3 got to be.

4 Address your next letter to me care of Mr. Leggett, 6 Place
5 des Etats Unis, Paris, France.

6 Give my love to Mrs. Wyckoff, Hansborough, and to Helen.
7 Revive the clubs a bit and ask Mrs. Hansborough to collect the
8 dues as they fall and send them to India. Sarada writes they are
9 having rather hot times. My kind regards for Miss Boocke.

10 With all love,

11 Ever yours in
12 the Lord,

Vivekananda

16 CLXXXVIII

17 New York,

18 August, 1900

19 {original in Bengali}

20 Dear __ {Brahmachari Harendra Nath}²⁷⁶,

21 I had a letter from you several days ago, but I could not
22 reply earlier. Mr. Sevier speaks well of you in his letter. I am very
23 pleased at this.

24 Write to me in minute detail who all are there, and what
25 each one is doing. Why don't you write letters to your mother?
26 What is this? Devotion to the mother is the root of all welfare.
27 How is your brother getting on with his studies at Calcutta? The
28 Sannyasin-names of those there escape my memory--how to
29 address each? Give my love to all conjointly. I got the news that
30 Khagen has now fully recovered. This is happy news. Write to me
31 whether the Seviers are attending to your comforts and other
32 details. I am glad to know that Dinu's health is all right. The boy
33 Kali has a tendency to become fat; but this will all surely go away
34 by constantly climbing up and down the hills there. Tell Swarup
35 that I am very much pleased with his conducting of the paper. He
36 is doing splendid work. Give to all others also my love and
37 blessings. Tell everybody that my health is now all right. From
38 here I shall go to England and from there to India very shortly.

39 With all
40 blessings,

Vivekananda

1 ²⁷⁶ ?A Brahmacharin of the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati.
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CLXXXIX

6 Place Des
Paris
13th August,

Etats Unis,

1900

{original in Bengali}

Dear Brother Hari {Turiyananda},

I got your letter from California. So three persons are getting spiritual trances; well, it is not bad. Even out of that much good will come. Shri Ramakrishna knows! Let things happen as they will. His work He knows, you and I are but servants and nothing else.

I am sending this letter to San Francisco--care of Mrs. C. Panel. Just now I got some news from New York. They are well. Kali is on tour. Write in detail about your health and work in San Francisco. And don't be indifferent to the question of sending money to the Math. See that money goes certainly every month, from Los Angeles and San Francisco.

I am on the whole doing well. I am shortly starting for England. I get news of Sharat. Recently he had an attack of dysentery. The rest are all well. This time few got malaria; nor is it so prevalent on the banks of the Ganga. This year, owing to the scarcity of rain, there is fear of famine in Bengal also.

By the grace of Mother, go on doing work, brother. Mother knows, and you know--but I am off! Now I am going to take a rest.

Yours
affectionately,

Vivekananda

CXC

Hans Swan

Boulevard
Paris
14th August,

1900

John Fox, Esq.,

6 Dr. Wolf Street,

Dorchester, Mass, U.S., America.

Kindly write Mohin²⁷⁷ that he has my blessings in whatever he does. And what he is doing now is surely much better than

²⁷⁷ ?Mahendranath Datta, younger brother of Swamiji.

lawyering, etc. I like boldness and adventure and my race stands in need of that spirit very much. Only as my health is failing and I do not expect to live long, Mohin must see his way to take care of mother and family. I may pass away any moment. I am quite proud of him now.

Yours

affectionately,

Vivekananda

CXCI

6 Place Des

Etats Unis,

Paris

August, 1900

{original in Bengali}

Dear Brother Hari {Turiyananda},

Now I am staying on the sea-coast of France. The session of the Congress of History of Religions is over. It was not a big affair; some twenty scholars chattered a lot on the origin of the Shalagrama and the origin of Jehovah, and similar topics. I also said something on the occasion.

My body and mind are broken down; I need rest badly. In addition, there is not a single person on whom I can depend; on the other hand so long as I live, all will become very selfish depending upon me for everything. . . . Dealing with people entails constant mental uneasiness. . . . I have cut myself off by a will. Now I am writing to say that nobody will have sole power. All will be done in accordance with the view of the majority. . . . If a trust-deed on similar lines can be executed, then I am free. . . .

What you are doing is also Guru Maharaj's work. Continue to do it. Now I have done my part. Don't write to me any more about those things; do not even mention the subject. I have no opinions whatever to give on that subject. . . .

Yours

affectionately,

Vivekananda

PS. Convey my love to all.

CXCII

6 Place Des Etats

Unis,

1
2 Santa Clara Co.

Da Forest P.O.,
Paris, France,
1st September, 1900

3
4
5 {original in Bengali}

6 My Dear Hari {Turiyananda},

7 I learnt everything from your letter. Earlier I had an inkling
8 of some trouble between the full-fledged Vedantist and the Home
9 of Truth--someone wrote that. Such things do occur; wisdom
10 consists in carrying on the work by cleverly keeping all in good
11 humour.

12 For some time now I have been living *incognito* . I shall stay
13 with the French to pick up their language. I am somewhat freed
14 from worries; that is to say, I have signed the trust-deed and other
15 things and sent them to Calcutta. I have not reserved any right or
16 ownership for myself. You now possess everything and will
17 manage all work by the Master's grace.

18 I have no longer any desire to kill myself by touring. For the
19 present I feel like settling down somewhere and spending my time
20 among books. I have somewhat mastered the French language;
21 but if I stay among the French for a month or two, I shall be able
22 to carry on conversation well. If one can master this language and
23 German sufficiently, one can virtually become well acquainted
24 with European learning. The people of France are mere
25 intellectualists, they run after worldly things and firmly believe
26 God and souls to be superstitious; they are extremely loath to talk
27 on such subjects. This is a truly materialistic country! Let me see
28 what that Lord does. But this country is at the head of Western
29 culture, and Paris is the capital of that culture.

30 Brother, free me from all work connected with preaching. I
31 am now aloof from all that, you manage it yourselves. It is my firm
32 conviction that Mother will get work done through all of you a
33 hundredfold more than through me.

34 Many days ago I received a letter from Kali. He must have
35 reached New York by now. Miss Waldo sends news now and then.

36 I keep sometimes well and sometimes bad. Of late I am
37 again having that massage treatment by Mrs. Milton, who says,
38 "You have already recovered!" This much I see--whatever the
39 flatulence, I feel no difficulty in moving, walking, or even
40 climbing. In the morning I take vigorous exercise, and then have a
41 dip in cold water.

42 Yesterday I went to see the house of the gentleman with
43 whom I shall stay. He is a poor scholar, has his room filled with
44 books and lives in a flat on the fifth floor. And as there are no lifts
45 in this country as in America, one has to climb up and down. But it
46 is no longer trying to me.

47 There is a beautiful public park round the house. The
48 gentleman cannot speak English; that is a further reason for my

going. I shall have to speak French perforce. It is all Mother's will. She knows best what She wants to have done. She never speaks out, "only keeps mum". But this much I notice that for a month or so I have been having intense meditation and repetition of the Lord's name.

Please convey my love to Miss Boocke, Miss Bell, Mrs. Aspinel, Miss Beckham, Mr. George, Dr. Logan, and other friends and accept it yourself. My love to all in Los Angeles also.

Yours,

Vivekananda

CXCIII

6 Place Des

Etats Unis

September,

1900

{original in Bengali}

My Dear Turiyananda,

Just now I received your letter. Through Mother's will all work will go on; don't be afraid. I shall soon leave for some other place. Perhaps I shall be on a tour of Constantinople and other places for some time. Mother knows what will come next. I have received a letter from Mrs. Wilmot. From this, too, it appears that she is very enthusiastic. Sit firm and free from worries. Everything will be all right. If hearing the Nada etc. does anyone harm, he can get rid of it if he gives up meditation for a time and takes to fish and meat. If the body does not become progressively weak, there is no cause for alarm. Practice should be slow.

I shall leave this place before your reply comes. So do not send the reply to this letter here. I have received all the issues of Sarada's paper, and wrote to him lots a few weeks ago. I have a mind to send more later on.

There is no knowing where my next stop will be. This much I can say that I am trying to be free from care.

I received a letter from Kali, too, today. I shall send him a reply tomorrow. The body is somehow rolling on. Work makes it ill, and rest keeps it well--that is all. Mother knows. Nivedita has gone to England. She and Mrs. Bull are collecting funds. She has a mind to run a school at Kishengarh with the girls she had there. Let her do what she can. I do not intervene any more in any matter--that is all.

My love to you. But I have nothing more to advise as regards work.

Yours in

service,

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Vivekananda

CXCIV

6 Place Des Etats

Unis, Paris

October, 1900

{original in French}

My Dear Mademoiselle,

I have been very happy and content here. I am having the best of times after many years. I find life here with Mr. Bois very satisfactory--the books, the calm, and the absence of everything that usually troubles me.

But I don't know what kind of destiny is waiting for me now.

My letter is funny, isn't it? But it is my first attempt.

Yours

faithfully,

Vivekananda

CXCV

6 Place Des

Etats Unis,

Paris

14th October,

1900

{original in French}

{To Sister Christine},

God bless you at each step, my dear Christine, such is my constant prayer!

Your letter, so beautiful and so calm, has given me that fresh energy which I am often losing.

I am happy, yes, I am happy, but the cloud has not left me entirely. It sometimes comes back, unfortunately, but it no longer has the morbidity it used to have.

I am staying with a famous French writer, M. Jules Bois. I am his guest. As he is a man making his living with his pen, he is not rich; but we have many great ideas in common and feel happy together.

He discovered me a few years ago and has already translated some of my pamphlets into French. We shall in the end find what we are looking for, isn't it?

Thus, I shall travel with Madame Calve, Miss MacLeod, and M. Jules Bois. I shall be the guest of Madame Calve, the famous singer. We shall go to Constantinople, the Near East, Greece, and Egypt. On our way back, we shall visit Venice.

It may be that I shall give a few lectures in Paris after my return, but they will be in English with an interpreter. I have no time any more, nor the power to study a new language at my age. I am an old man, isn't it?

Mrs. Funke is ill. I think she works too hard. She already had some nervous trouble. I hope she will soon be well.

I am sending all the money I earned in America to India. Now I am free, the begging-monk as before. I have also resigned from the Presidentship of the Monastery. Thank God, I am free! It is no more for me to carry such a responsibility. I am so nervous and so weak.

"As the birds which have slept in the branches of a tree wake up, singing when the dawn comes, and soar up into the deep blue sky, so is the end of my life."

I have had many difficulties, and also some very great successes. But all my difficulties and suffering count for nothing, as I have succeeded. I have attained my aim. I have found the pearl for which I dived into the ocean of life. I have been rewarded. I am pleased.

Thus it seems to me that a new chapter of my life is opening. It seems to me that Mother will now lead me slowly and softly. No more effort on roads full of obstacles, now it is the bed prepared with birds' down. Do you understand that? Believe me, I feel quite sure.

The experience of all my life, up to now, has taught me, thank God, that I always find what I am looking for with eagerness. Sometimes it is after much suffering, but it does not matter! All is forgotten in the softness of the reward. You are also going through troubles, my friend, but you shall have your reward. Alas! What you now find is not a reward but an additional affliction.

As to myself, I see the cloud lifting, vanishing, the cloud of my bad Karma. And the sun of my good Karma rises--shining, beautiful, and powerful. This will also be the case for you, my friend. My knowledge of this language has not the power to express my emotion. But which language can really do so?

So I drop it, leaving it to your heart to clothe my thought with a soft, loving, and shining language. Good night, *gute Nacht* !

friend, Your devoted

Vivekananda

1 PS. We shall leave Paris for Vienna on October 29th. Mr.
2 Leggett is leaving for the United States by next week. We shall
3 notify the Post Office to forward our letters to our further
4 destinations.

5 V.

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8 CXCVI

9 Port Tewfick
10 26th

11 November, 1900

12 Dear Joe {MacCleod},

13 The steamer was late; so I am waiting. Thank goodness, it
14 entered the Canal this morning at Port Said. That means it will
15 arrive some time in the evening if everything goes right.

16 Of course it is like solitary imprisonment these two days,
17 and I am holding my soul in patience.

18 But they say the change is thrice dear. Mr. Gaze's agent
19 gave me all wrong directions. In the first place, there was nobody
20 here to tell me a thing, not to speak of receiving me. Secondly, I
21 was not told that I had to change my Gaze's ticket for a steamer
22 one at the agent's office, and that was at Suez, not here. It was
23 good one way, therefore, that the steamer was late; so I went to
24 see the agent of the steamer and he told me to exchange Gaze's
25 pass for a regular ticket.

26 I hope to board the steamer some time tonight. I am well
27 and happy and am enjoying the fun immensely.

28 How is Mademoiselle? Where is Bois? Give my everlasting
29 gratitude and good wishes to Mme. Calve. She is a good lady.

30 Hoping you will enjoy your trip.

31 Ever

32 affectionately yours,

33 Vivekananda

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36 CXCVII

37 The Math, Belur,
38 Howrah Dist.,

39 Bengal, India

40 15 December,

41 1900

42 My Dear Mother {Mrs. Bull},

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To Balaram Bose
Glory to Ramakrishna

[Ghazipur
February 6, 1890]

Respected Sir,

I have talked with Pavhari Baba. He is a wonderful saint—the embodiment of humility, devotion, and Yoga. Although he is an orthodox Vaishnava, he is not prejudiced against others of different beliefs. He has tremendous love for Mahâprabhu Chaitanya, and he [Pavhari Baba] speaks of Shri Ramakrishna as "an incarnation of God". He loves me very much, and I am going to stay here for some days at his request.

Pavhari Baba can live in Samâdhi for from two to six months at a stretch. He can read Bengali and has kept a photograph of Shri Ramakrishna in his room. I have not yet seen him face to face, since he speaks from behind a door, but I have never heard such a sweet voice. I have many things to say about him but not just at present.

Please try to get a copy of Chaitanya-*Bhâgavata* for him and send it immediately to the following address: Gagan Chandra Roy, Opium Department, Ghazipur. Please don't forget.

Pavhari Baba is an ideal Vaishnava and a great scholar; but he is reluctant to reveal his learning. His elder brother acts as his attendant, but even he is not allowed to enter his room.

Please send him a copy of Chaitanya-Mangala also, if it is still in print. And remember that if Pavhari Baba accepts your presents, that will be your great fortune. Ordinarily, he does not accept anything from anybody. Nobody knows what he eats or even what he does.

Please don't let it be known that I am here and don't send news of anyone to me. I am busy with an important work.

Your servant,
Narendra

II*

To Balaram Bose
Glory to Ramakrishna

Ghazipur
February 11,
1890

Respected Sir,

I have received your book. In Hrishikesh, Kali [Swami Abhedananda] has had a relapse and is again suffering from what seems to be malaria. Once it comes, the fever does not easily leave

1 those who have never had it before. I too suffered the same way
2 when I first had the attack of fever. Kali has never had the fever
3 before. I have not received any letter from Hrishikesh. Where
4 is . . . ?

5 I am suffering terribly from a backache which began in
6 Allahabad. I had recovered from it some time back, but it has
7 recurred. So I will have to stay here awhile longer because of my
8 back and also because Babaji [Pavhari Baba] has requested it.

9 What you have written about uncooked bread is true. But a
10 monk dies that way, not like the breaking of a cup and saucer. This
11 time I am not going to be overcome by weakness in any way. And if
12 I die, that will be good for me. It is better to depart from this world
13 very soon.

14 Your servant,

15 Narendra

16
17 III*

18 To Balaram Bose

19 Salutation to Bhagavan Shri Ramakrishna

20 [Ghazipur]

21 Calcutta

22 20 February 1890

23 Respected Sir,

24 I have received an anonymous letter which I have been
25 unable to trace back to the gigantic soul who wrote it. Indeed, one
26 should pay homage to such a man. He who considers a great soul
27 like Pavhari Baba to be no more than water in a hoof print, he who
28 has nothing to learn in this world and who feels it a disgrace to be
29 taught by any other man—truly, such a new incarnation must be
30 visited. I hope that if the government should discover the identity of
31 this person, he will be handled with special care and be placed in
32 the Alipore garden [zoo]. If you happen to know this man, please
33 ask him to bless me, so that even a dog or a jackal may be my
34 Guru—not to speak of a great soul like Pavhari Baba.

35 I have many things to learn. My master used to say: "As long
36 as I live, so long do I learn". Also please tell this fellow that
37 unfortunately I do not have the time to "cross the seven seas and
38 thirteen rivers" or to go to Sri Lanka in order to sleep after having
39 put oil in the nostrils.²⁷⁸

1 278 ?

2 Here the Swami is referring to Kumbhakarna, the brother of the villain
3 Râvana of the Râmâyana. He was of such a lethargic and evil nature that Brahmâ
4 granted the boon that he should sleep for six months at a stretch. Putting
5 mustard oil in the nostrils is considered to be an aid to sleeping soundly.

6 "Crossing seven seas and thirteen rivers" is a Bengali phrase meaning to
7 travel a great distance. Sri Lanka is the ancient name for the island of Ceylon and
8 was the capital of Ravana's kingdom.
9

1 Your servant,

2 Narendra

3 P.S. Please have the rose-water brought from Ishan Babu's
4 [Ishan Chandra Mukherjee's] residence if there is delay [in their
5 sending it to the Baranagore Math]. The roses are still not in bloom.
6 The rose-water has just been sent to the residence of Ishan Babu.

7

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9 IV

10 To Tulsiram Ghosh

11 [Ghazipur (Baghbazar)]

12 10 March [?] 1890]

13 Dear Tulsiram:²⁷⁹

14 A basket of roses will be sent to you in a few days at Chitpur.
15 Do you please send them up immediately to Shashi [Swami
16 Ramakrishnananda, at the Baranagore Math]. They

1 279 ?

2 The eldest of three brothers (Tulsiram, Baburam, and Shantiram) and a
3 sister (Krishnabhavini), married to Balaram Bose.

4

1 would not be sent to the care of Balaram Basu, for there
2 would be such nice delays and that would be death to the flowers.

3 I think if sent to Chitpur, to your depot, it would reach you
4 there at the very place; if not, write sharp. Baburam [Swami
5 Premananda] is here, going up in a day or two to Allahabad. I too
6 am going off from this place very soon. I go perhaps to Bareilly and
7 up. What is Balaram Babu [Balaram Bose] doing?

8 My Pranâms etc. to you all.

9 Yours affectionately,

10 Narendra

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14 V*

15 To Balaram Bose

16 Ghazipur

17 March 12, 1890

18 Balaram Babu,

19 As soon as you get the railway receipt, please send someone
20 to the railway warehouse at Fairlie Place (Calcutta) to pick up the
21 roses and send them on to Shashi. See that there is no delay in
22 bringing or sending them.

23 Baburam is going to Allahabad soon. I am going elsewhere.

24 Narendra

25 PS. Know it for certain that everything will be spoiled if
26 delayed.

27 Narendra

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30 VI

31 To Swami Saradananda

32 *Salutation to Bhagavan Ramakrishna*

33 Calcutta

34 32 Ashâdha [July 15, 1890]

35 My dear Sharat,

36 I am sorry to learn that [Vaikunthanath] Sanyal's habits are
37 as yet not Pucca [firm]; and what about Brahmacharya? I don't
38 understand you. If so, the best thing for you both is to come down
39 and live here. The widow of Mohindra Mukherjee is trying head and
40 heart to erect a Math for you, and Surendranath Mitra has left
41 another thousand so that you are very likely soon to get a beautiful
42 place on the river. As for all the hardships up there, I reserve my

own opinions.

It was not at all my intention to come down, only the death of Balaram Bose had made me have a peep here and go back. If the mountains be so bad, there is more than enough place for me; only I leave Bengal. If one does not suit, another will. So that is my determination. Everyone here will be so glad at your return here, and from your letter I see it would be downright injurious to you if you didn't come down. So come down at your earliest opportunity. I will leave this place before this letter reaches you; only I won't go to Almora. I have my own plans for the future and they shall be a secret.

As for Sanyal, I do not see how I can benefit him. Of course, you are at liberty to hold your own opinion about the Sanga [holy company] here. That I can find places Sudrishya [having scenic beauty] and Subhiksha [where alms are available] is enough. Sanga is not much, or, I think, not at all necessary for me.

Yours, etc.,

Narendra.

VII

To Mrs. G. W. Hale

Minneapolis

21 November 1893.

Dear Mother,

I reached Madison safely, went to a hotel, and sent a message to Mr. Updike. He came to see me. He is a Congregational and so, of course, was not very friendly at first; but in the course of an hour or so became very kind to me, and took me over the whole place and the University. I had a fine audience and \$100. Immediately after the lecture I took the night train to Minneapolis.

I tried to get the clergymen's ticket, but they could not give me any, not being the headquarters. The thing to be done is to get a permit from every head office of every line in Chicago. Perhaps it is possible for Mr. Hale to get the permits for me. If it is so, I hope he will take the trouble to send them over to me to Minneapolis if they can reach me by the 25th, or to Des Moines if by the 29th. Else I would do it the next time in Chicago. I have taken the money in a draft on the bank, which cost me 40¢.

May you be blessed for ever, my kind friend; you and your whole family have made such a heavenly impression on me as I would carry all my life.

Yours sincerely,

Vivekananda.

1 VIII
2 To Mrs. G. W. Hale
3 Minneapolis,
4 24 November 1893.

5 Dear Mother,

6 I am still in Minneapolis. I am to lecture this afternoon, and
7 the day after tomorrow go to Des Moines.

8 The day I came here they had their first snow, and it snowed
9 all through the day and night, and I had great use for the arctics.²⁸⁰
10 I went to see the frozen Minnehaha Falls. They are very beautiful.
11 The temperature today is 21° below zero, but I had been out
12 sleighing and enjoyed it immensely. I am not the least afraid of
13 losing the tips of my ears or nose.

14 The snow scenery here has pleased me more than any other
15 sight in this country.

16 I saw people skating on a frozen lake yesterday.

17 I am doing well. Hoping this will find you all the same, I
18 remain,

19 Yours obediently,
20 Vivekananda
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24 IX
25 To Mrs. G. W. Hale
26 Detroit,
27 14 February 1894.

28 Dear Mother,

29 Arrived safely night before last at 1 o'clock a.m. The train was
30 seven hours late, being blocked by snowdrifts on the way. However,
31 I enjoyed the novelty of the sight: several men cutting and clearing
32 the snow and two engines tugging and pulling was a new sight to
33 me.

34 Here I met Mr. Bagley, the youngest [Paul F. Bagley], waiting
35 for me at the station; and, it being very late in the night, Mrs.
36 Bagley²⁸¹ had retired, but the daughters sat up for me.

1 280 ?

2 A waterproof overshoe.
3

4 281 ?

5 Mrs. John Judson Bagley (1833-1898) was one of Detroit's most in-
6 fluential women, who had met Swami Vivekananda at the Parliament of Religions
7 in Chicago. She was a great admirer and supporter of the Swami and was his
8 hostess during this period. She honoured him with an enormous and gala
9 reception to which the élite of Detroit were invited.

1 They are very rich, kind and hospitable. Mrs. Bagley is
2 especially interested in India. The daughters are very good,
3 educated and good-looking. The eldest gave me a luncheon at a
4 club where I met some of the finest ladies and gentlemen of the
5 city. Last evening there was a reception given here in the house.
6 Today I am going to speak for the first time. Mrs. Bagley is a very
7 nice and kind lady. I hope the lectures will please her. With my love
8 and regards for you all, I remain,

9 Yours sincerely,

10 Vivekananda.

11
12 PS—I have received a letter from Slayton²⁸² in reply to that in
13 which I wrote to him that I cannot stay. He gives me hope. What is
14 your advice? I enclose the letter [from Narasimhacharya] in another
15 envelope.²⁸³

16 Yours,

17 V.

18
19
20 X

21 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

22 Detroit,

23 20 February 1894.

24 Dear Mother,

25 My lectures here are over. I have made some very good
26 friends here, amongst them Mr. Palmer,²⁸⁴ President of the late

1
2 ²⁸² ?

3 The Slayton Lyceum Lecture Bureau of Chicago, with whom the Swami
4 had signed a contract for three years. Later he broke the contract after noticing
5 that the Bureau had been cheating him.

6
7 ²⁸³ ? Narasimhacharya of Madras was a delegate to the Parliament of Reli-
8 gions, held at Chicago in 1893, where he became acquainted with Swami
9 Vivekananda. After the Parliament was over, he stayed for some months in the
10 United States. He had written a letter to Swami Vivekananda from the Nicholson
11 Hotel, Nashville, Tennessee, where he was stranded. The letter reads: "Dear
12 Swami, I have come here, and without being able to get out am stopping; and I
13 would be very much obliged if you would kindly send me \$50 so that I can fix the
14 whole thing and come over to Chicago, from which place I shall go back home.
15 Please do so at once as I am in trouble. Hoping to hear from you soon, I remain,
16 Yours sincerely, Narasimhacharya".

17 Swami Vivekananda mailed this letter to Mrs. G. W. Hale on February 14,
18 1894, from Detroit with a line: "What do you advise, Mother? Vivekananda".

19
20 ²⁸⁴ ?

21 Mr. Thomas W. Palmer of Detroit was a rich businessman and statesman. In
22 1883 he was elected to the United States Senate and later became Minister to
23 Spain. He was chosen President of the World's Fair Commission when the
24 World's Columbian Exposition was organized at Chicago, in the 1890s. In all

1 World's Fair. I am thoroughly disgusted with this Slayton²⁸⁵
2 business and am trying hard to break loose. I have lost at least
3 \$5,000 by joining this man. Hope you are all well. Mrs. Bagley and
4 her daughters are very kind to me. I hope to do some private
5 lecturing here and then go to Ada and then back to Chicago. It is
6 snowing here this morning. They are very nice people here, and the
7 different clubs took a good deal of interest in me. It is rather
8 wearisome, these constant receptions and dinners; and their
9 horrible dinners—a hundred dinners concentrated into one—and
10 when in a man's club, why, smoking on between the courses and
11 then beginning afresh. I thought the Chinese alone make a dinner
12 run through half a day with intervals of smoking!!

13 However, they are very gentlemanly men and, strange to say,
14 an Episcopal clergyman²⁸⁶ and a Jewish rabbi²⁸⁷ take great interest
15 in me and eulogize me. Now the man who got up the lectures here
16 got at least a thousand dollars. So in every place. And this is
17 Slayton's duty to do for me. Instead, he, the liar, had told me often
18 that he has agents everywhere and would advertise and do all that
19 for me. And this is what he is doing. His will be done. I am going
20 home. Seeing the liking the American people have for me, I could
21 have, by this time, got a pretty large sum. But Jimmy Mills²⁸⁸ and
22 Slayton were sent by the Lord to stand in the way. His ways are
23 inscrutable.

24 However, this is a secret. President Palmer has gone to
25 Chicago to try to get me loose from this liar of a Slayton. Pray that
26 he may succeed. Several judges here have seen my contract, and
27 they say it is a shameful fraud and can be broken any moment; but I
28 am a monk—no self-defence. Therefore, I had better throw up the
29 whole thing and go to India.

30 My love to Harriets, Mary, Isabelle, Mother Temple, Mr.
31 Matthews, Father Pope and you all.²⁸⁹

1 probability, it was at the Parliament of Religions that he first came to know and
2 admire Swami Vivekananda.

3
4 ²⁸⁵ ? The Slayton Lyceum Lecture Bureau of Chicago. On the cover of this
5 letter someone, perhaps Mrs. Hale, had written: "Feb. 22 President Palmer
6 breaks the Slayton contract".
7

8 ²⁸⁶ ?

9 Reverend Reed Stuart of the Unitarian Church, who was an admirer of
10 the Swami.
11

12 ²⁸⁷ ? Rabbi Grossman of the Temple Beth El. On Sunday, February 18, 1894,
13 Rabbi Grossman spoke in his temple on "What Swami Vivekananda Has Taught
14 Us". The Rabbi became Swami Vivekananda's devoted friend, and the Swami,
15 during his visit to Detroit in 1896, lectured at the Rabbi's temple.
16

17 ²⁸⁸ ? Jimmy, or Irving, Mills might have been either an individual lecture agent
18 or an agent of the Slayton Lyceum Lecture Bureau.
19

20 ²⁸⁹ ?

21 Here, "Harriets" refers to Harriet McKindley and Harriet Hale; Harriet
22 and Isabelle McKindley were the daughters of Mrs. Hale's sister. Harriet and
23 Mary Hale were her own daughters. Swami Vivekananda used to address Mr.

1 Yours obediently,
2 Vivekananda.
3
4

5 XI

6 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

7 Detroit

8 February 22, 1894

9 Dear Mother,

10 I have got the \$200 for the engagements, \$175 and \$117 by
11 private lectures²⁹⁰ and \$100 as a present from a lady.

12 This sum will be sent to you tomorrow in cheques by Mrs.
13 Bagley. Today, the banks being closed, we could not do it.

14 I am going tomorrow to lecture at Ada, Ohio. I do not know
15 whether I will go to Chicago from Ada or not. However, kindly let
16 not Slayton know anything about the rest of the money, as I am
17 going to separate myself from him.

18 Yours obediently,
19 Vivekananda.
20
21

22 XII

23 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

24 Detroit,

25 10 March 1894.

26 Dear Mother,

27 Reached Detroit safely yesterday evening.²⁹¹ The two younger
28 daughters were waiting for me with a carriage. So everything was
29 all right. I hope the lecture will be a success, as one of the girls said
30 the tickets are selling like hot cakes. Here I found a letter from Mr.
31 Palmer awaiting me with a request that I should come over to his

1 Hale's sister (Mrs. James Matthews) as "Mother Temple", Mr. G. W. Hale as
2 "Father Pope" and Mrs. G. W. Hale as "Mother Church".
3

4 ²⁹⁰ ?

5 When Swami Vivekananda realized that the Slayton Lyceum Lecture
6 Bureau was cheating him, he began to arrange lectures privately, not knowing
7 that Mr. T. W. Palmer, who had gone to Chicago on his behalf, had broken the
8 contract on the day this letter was written.
9

10 ²⁹¹ ?

11 On Friday, February 23, 1894, Swami Vivekananda had left Detroit for
12 Ada, Ohio, and from there he may have returned to Chicago. It appears that his
13 Detroit admirers called him back to fight the Christian onslaught which had been
14 launched against him.
15

1 house and be his guest. Could not go last night. He will come in the
2 course of the day to take me over. As I am going over to Mr.
3 Palmer's, I have not opened the awfully-packed bag. The very idea
4 of repacking seems to me to be hopeless. So I could not shave this
5 morning. However, I hope to shave during the course of the day. I
6 am thinking of going over to Boston and New York just now, as the
7 Michigan cities I can come and take over in summer; but the
8 fashionables of New York and Boston will fly off. Lord will show the
9 way.

10 Mrs. Bagley and all the family are heartily glad at my return
11 and people are again coming in to see me.

12 The photographer here has sent me some of the pictures he
13 made. They are positively villainous—Mrs. Bagley does not like them
14 at all. The real fact is that between the two photos my face has
15 become so fat and heavy—what can the poor photographers do?

16 Kindly send over four copies of photographs. Not yet made
17 any arrangement with Holden.²⁹² Everything promises to be very
18 nice. "Ssenator Ppalmer"²⁹³ is a very nice gentleman and very kind
19 to me. He has got a French chef—Lord bless his stomach! I am
20 trying to starve and the whole world is against me!! He used to give
21 the best dinners in all Washington! Hopeless! I am resigned!

22 I will write more from Mr. Palmer's house.

23 If the Himalayas become the inkpot, the ocean ink, if the
24 heavenly eternal Devadaroo²⁹⁴ becomes the pen, and if the sky itself
25 becomes paper, still I would not be able to write a drop of the debt
26 of gratitude I owe to you and yours. Kindly convey my love to the
27 four full notes and the four half notes of the Hale gamut.²⁹⁵ May the
28 blessings of the Lord be upon you and yours ever and ever.

29 Ever yours in grateful affection,

30 Vivekananda.

31
32
33 XIII

34 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

1 ²⁹² ?

2 A lecture agent at Detroit.

3
4 ²⁹³ ? Because Mr. T. W. Palmer was a stammerer, Swami Vivekananda spelled
5 his name this way.

6
7 ²⁹⁴ ?

8 Lit., "a tree of angels"; in Sanskrit *Deva* means "god" or "angel" and
9 *Daroo* means "tree" or "timber".

10
11 ²⁹⁵ ? The four full notes of the Hale family were Mr. and Mrs. G. W. Hale and
12 Mr. and Mrs. James Matthews; the half notes were Harriet and Mary Hale and
13 Harriet and Isabelle McKindley—respectively, the daughters and nieces of Mrs. G.
14 W. Hale.

1 Detroit
2 16 March 1894

3 Dear Mother,

4 Since my last, there has been nothing of interest here. Except
5 that Mr. Palmer is a very hearty, jolly, good old man and very rich.
6 He has been uniformly kind to me. Tomorrow I go back to Mrs.
7 Bagley's because I am afraid she is rather uneasy at my long stay
8 here. I am shrewd enough to know that in every country in general,
9 and America in particular, "she" is the real operator at the nose
10 string.

11 I am going to lecture here on Monday²⁹⁶ and in two places
12 near the town on Tuesday and Wednesday.²⁹⁷ I do not remember the
13 lady you refer me to,²⁹⁸ and she is in Lynn; what is Lynn, where on
14 the globe its position is—I do not know.²⁹⁹ I want to go to Boston.
15 What good would it do me by stopping at Lynn? Kindly give me a
16 more particular idea. Nor could I read the name of the lady at
17 whose house you say I met the lady. However, I am in no way very
18 anxious. I am taking life very easy in my natural way. I have no
19 particular wish to go anywhere, Boston or no Boston. I am just in a
20 nice come-what-may mood. Something should turn up, bad or good.
21 I have enough now to pay my passage back and a little sight-seeing
22 to boot. As to my plans of work, I am fully convinced that at the rate
23 it is progressing I will have to come back four or five times to put it
24 in any shape.

25 As to informing others and doing good that way, I have failed
26 to persuade myself that I have really anything to convey to the
27 world. So I am very happy just now and quite at my ease. With
28 almost nobody in this vast house and a cigar between my lips, I am
29 dreaming just now and philosophising upon that work fever which
30 was upon me. It is all nonsense. I am nothing, the world is nothing,
31 the Lord alone is the only worker. We are simply tools in His hands
32 etc., etc., etc. Have you got the Alaska information? If so, kindly
33 send it to me c/o Mrs. Bagley.

34 Are you coming to the East this summer? With eternal
35 gratitude and love,

36 Your son,
37 Vivekananda.

1 296 ?

2 On Monday, March 19, Swami Vivekananda spoke at the Detroit Audi-
3 torium on "Buddhism, the Religion of the Light of Asia".

4
5 297 ? On Tuesday, March 20, Swami Vivekananda delivered a lecture on Hin-
6 duism at Bay City, Michigan; and on Wednesday, March 21, he spoke on "The
7 Harmony of Religions" at Saginaw, Michigan.

8
9 298 ? Mrs. Francis W. Breed, a social leader of Lynn and the wife of an
10 extremely wealthy boot and shoe manufacturer.

11
12 299 ? Lynn, Massachusetts, a small industrial town on Massachusetts Bay, ten
13 miles north of Boston.
14

1 XIV

2 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

3 Detroit

4 Tuesday, 27 March 1894

5 Dear Mother,

6 Herewith I send two cheques of \$114 and \$75 to be put in the
7 banks for me. I have endorsed them to your care.

8 I am going to Boston in a day or two. I have got \$57 with me.
9 They will go a long way. Something will turn up, as it always does. I
10 do not know where I go from Boston. I have written to Mrs.
11 [Francis W.] Breed but as yet heard nothing from her.³⁰⁰ His will be
12 done. Not I but Thou—that is always the motto of my life.

13 With my eternal gratitude, love, and admiration for Mother
14 Church and all the dignitaries,

15 I remain your son,

16 Vivekananda.

17

18 XV

19 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

20 C/o Dr. Guernsey

21 528 Fifth Avenue

22 New York

23 2 April 1894

24 Dear Mother,

25 I am in New York. The gentleman [Dr. Guernsey] whose guest
26 I am is a very nice and learned and well-to-do man. He had an only
27 son whom he lost last July. Has only a daughter now. The old couple
28 have received a great shock, but they are pure and God-loving
29 people and bear it manfully. The lady of the house is very, very kind
30 and good. They are trying to help me as much as they can and they
31 will do a good deal, I have no doubt.

32 Awaiting further developments. This Thursday [April 5] they
33 will invite a number of the brainy people of the Union League Club
34 and other places of which the Doctor is a member, and see what
35 comes out of it. Parlour lectures are a great feature in this city, and
36 more can be made by each such lecture than even platform talks in
37 other cities.

38 It is a very clean city. None of that black smoke tarring
39 everyone in five minutes; and the street in which the Doctor lives is
40 a nice, quiet one.

1 300 ?

2 Soon afterward the Swami received a telegram from Mrs. Breed inviting him to
3 Lynn to be her guest for a week; he accepted and spent a week at her home in
4 mid-April.

1 Hope the sisters are doing well and enjoying their music,
2 both in the opera and the parlour. I am sure I would have
3 appreciated the music at the opera about which Miss Mary wrote to
4 me. I am sure the opera musicians do not show the interior anatomy
5 of their throats and lungs.

6 Kindly give brother Sam³⁰¹ my deep love. I am sure he is
7 bewaring of the vidders.³⁰² Some of the Baby Bagleys³⁰³ are going to
8 Chicago. They will go to see you, and I am sure you would like them
9 very much.

10 Nothing more to write. With all respect, love and obedience,

11 Your son,

12 Vivekananda.

13 PS—I have not to ask now for addresses. Mrs. Sherman³⁰⁴ has
14 given me a little book with A., B., C., etc., marks and has written
15 under them all the addresses I need; and I hope to write all the
16 future addresses in the same manner. What an example of self-help
17 I am!!³⁰⁵

18 V.

21 XVI

22 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

23 [C/o Dr. Egbert Guernsey

24 528 Fifth Avenue]

25 New York

26 10 April 1894

27 Dear Mother,

28 I just now received your letter. I have the greatest regard for
29 the Salvationists; in fact, they and the Oxford Mission gentlemen
30 are the only Christian missionaries for whom I have any regard at
31 all. They live with the people, as the people, and for the people of

1 ³⁰¹ ?

2 Sam Hale, younger brother of Mary and Harriet. He was then in Alaska.

4 ³⁰² ? A reference in Charles Dickens' novel *Pickwick Papers* to a Mr. Weller,
5 whose second marriage to a domineering widow prompted him to warn his son
6 Sam: "Be wery careful o' widders all your life . . . , Sammy".

8 ³⁰³ ? The daughters of Mrs. Bagley of Detroit.

10 ³⁰⁴ ?

11 Mrs. Bagley's married daughter.

13 ³⁰⁵ ? At the end of the letter, Mary Hale added the following note: "Dear Sam
14 [Hale], be sure not to lose any of these letters, and return them as soon as pos-
15 sible. We miss you, awfully. Hope you are well and happy and bewaring of the
16 vidders, as Swami says. Love to all. Affectionately your sister, Mary".

1 India. Lord bless them. But I would be very, very sorry of any trick
2 being played by them. I never have heard of any Lord in India,
3 much less in Ceylon.³⁰⁶ The people of Ceylon and northern India
4 differ more than Americans and Hindus. Nor is there any
5 connection between the Buddhist priest and the Hindu. Our dress,
6 manners, religion, food, language differ entirely from southern
7 India, much less to speak of Ceylon. You know already that I could
8 not speak a word of Narasimha's language!! Although that was only
9 Madras. Well, you have Hindu princesses; why not a Lord, which is
10 not a higher title.

11 There was a certain Mrs. Smith in Chicago.³⁰⁷ I met her at
12 Mrs. Stockham's. She has introduced me to the Guernseys. Dr.
13 Guernsey is one of the chief physicians of this city and is a very
14 good old gentleman. They are very fond of me and are very nice
15 people. Next Friday I am going to Boston. I have not been lecturing
16 in New York at all. I will come back and do some lecturing here.

17 For the last few days I was the guest of Miss Helen
18 Gould—daughter of the rich Gould³⁰⁸—at her palatial country
19 residence, an hour's ride from the city. She has one of the most
20 beautiful and large green-houses in the world, full of all sorts of
21 curious plants and flowers. They are Presbyterians, and she is a
22 very religious lady. I had a very nice time there.

23 I met my friend Mr. Flagg³⁰⁹ several times. He is flying
24 merrily. There is another Mrs. Smith here who is very rich and
25 pious. She has invited me to dine today.

26 As for lecturing, I have given up raising money. I cannot
27 degenerate myself any more. When a certain purpose was in view, I
28 could work; with that gone I cannot earn for myself. I have
29 sufficient for going back. I have not tried to earn a penny here, and
30 have refused some presents which friends here wanted to make to
31 me. Especially Flagg—I have refused his money. I had in Detroit
32 tried to refund the money back to the donors, and told them that,
33 there being almost no chance of my succeeding in my enterprise, I
34 had no right to keep their money; but they refused and told me to
35 throw that into the waters if I liked. But I cannot take any more
36 conscientiously. I am very well off, Mother. Everywhere the Lord
37 sends me kind persons and homes; so there is no use of my going
38 into beastly worldliness at all.

1 306 ?

2 Now Sri Lanka.

3 307 ?

4 Mrs. Arthur Smith. On April 24 Swami Vivekananda spoke before Mrs. Smith's
5 "Conversation Circle" at the Waldorf Hotel in New York, his first known talk in
6 that city.

7 308 ?

8 Mr. Jay Gould, one of the richest men in America. After his death in 1892,
9 a part of his immense fortune was inherited by his daughter Helen.

10 309 ?

11 William Joseph Flagg.

12

1 The New York people, though not so intellectual as the
2 Bostonians, are, I think, more sincere. The Bostonians know well
3 how to take advantage of everybody. And I am afraid even water
4 cannot slip through their closed fingers!!! Lord bless them!!! I have
5 promised to go and I must go; but, Lord, make me live with the
6 sincere, ignorant and the poor, and not cross the shadow of the
7 hypocrites and tall talkers who, as my Master used to say, are like
8 vultures who soar high and high in their talks, but the heart is
9 really on a piece of carrion on the ground.

10 I would be the guest of Mrs. Breed for a few days and, after
11 seeing a little of Boston, I would come back to New York.

12 Hope the sisters are all right and enjoying their concerts
13 immensely. There is not much of music in this city. That is a
14 blessing (?) Went to see Barnum's circus the other day. It is no
15 doubt a grand thing. I have not been as yet downtown. This street is
16 very nice and quiet.

17 I heard a beautiful piece of music the other day at Barnum's
18 –they call it a Spanish Serenada. Whatever it be, I liked it so
19 much. Unfortunately, Miss Guernsey is not given to much
20 thumping, although she has a good assortment of all the noisy stuffs
21 in the world–and so she could not play it, which I regret ever so
22 much.

23 Yours obediently,

24 Vivekananda.

25 PS–Most probably I will go to Annisquam as Mrs. Bagley's
26 guest. She has got a nice house there this summer. Before that, I
27 will go back to Chicago once more if I can.

28 V.

31 XVII

32 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

33 C/o Miss Florence Guernsey

34 528 Fifth Avenue

35 New York

36 4 May 1894

37 Dear Mother,

38 Herewith I send over \$125 in a cheque upon the 5th Avenue
39 Bank to be deposited at your leisure.

40 I am going to Boston on Sunday, day after tomorrow, and
41 write to you from Boston. With my love to all the family.

42 I remain yours truly,

43 Vivekananda.

44 XVIII

1 To Mrs. John J. Bagley
2 Hotel Bellevue
3 European Plan
4 Boston
5 May 8, 1894

6 Dear Mother,

7 I have arrived in Boston again. Last afternoon [I] spoke at
8 Mrs. Julia Ward Howe's club—of course for nothing, but it gives me
9 a prestige. I saw there Mrs. [Ednah Dean] Cheney. Would you not
10 write a letter to her for me? Although I told her I had a card from
11 you, I think a letter is better.

12 Yours truly,
13 Vivekananda

14
15

16 XIX

17 To Mrs. G. W. Hale
18 Hotel Bellevue, European Plan
19 Beacon Street, Boston
20 11 May 1894

21 Dear Mother,

22 I have been since the 7th, lecturing here every afternoon or
23 evening. At Mrs. Fairchild's I met the niece of Mrs. Howe. She was
24 here today to invite me to dinner with her today. I have not seen
25 Mr. Volkinen as yet. Of course, the pay for lecture is here the
26 poorest, and everybody has an axe to grind. I got a long let-ter full
27 of the prattles of the babies.³¹⁰ Your city, i.e. New York, pays far
28 better than Boston, so I am trying to go back there. But here one
29 can get work almost every day.

30 I think I want some rest. I feel as if I am very much tired, and
31 these constant journeyings to and fro have shaken my nerves a
32 little, but hope to recoup soon. Last few days I have been suffering
33 from cold and slight fever and lecturing for all that; hope to get rid
34 of it in a day or two.

35 I have got a very nice gown at \$30. The colour is not exactly
36 that of the old one, but cardinal, with more of yellow—

37 could not get the exact old colour even in New York.

38 I have not much to write, for it is the repetition of the old
39 story: talking, talking, talking. I long to fly to Chicago and shut up
40 my mouth and give a long rest to mouth and lungs and mind. If I am
41 not called for in New York, I am coming soon to Chicago.

1 310 ?

2 Mary and Harriet Hale and Isabelle and Harriet McKindley.
3

1 Yours obediently,
2 Vivekananda.

3
4
5 XX

6 To Mrs. G. W. Hale
7 Hotel Bellevue, European Plan
8 Beacon Street, Boston
9 14 May 1894

10 Dear Mother,

11 Your letter was so, so pleasing instead of being long; I
12 enjoyed every bit of it.

13 I have received a letter from Mrs. Potter Palmer³¹¹ asking me
14 to write to some of my countrywomen about their society etc. I will
15 see her personally when I come to Chicago; in the mean-while I will
16 write her all I know. Perhaps you have received \$125 sent over
17 from New York. Tomorrow I will send another \$100 from here. The
18 Bostonians want to grind their own axes!!

19 Oh, they are so, so dry—even girls talk dry metaphysics. Here
20 is like our Benares where all is dry, dry metaphysics!! Nobody here
21 understands "my Beloved". Religion to these people is reason, and
22 horribly stony at that. I do not care for anybody who cannot love my
23 "Beloved". Do not tell it to Miss Howe—she may be offended.

24 The pamphlet I did not send over because I do not like the
25 quotations from the Indian newspapers—especially, they give a haul
26 over coal to somebody. Our people so much dislike the Brâhmo
27 Samâj that they only want an opportunity to show it to them. I
28 dislike it. Any amount of enmity to certain persons cannot efface the
29 good works of a life. And then they were only children in Religion.
30 They never were much of religious men—

31 i.e. they only wanted to talk and reason, and did not struggle
32 to see the Beloved; and until one does that I do not say that he has
33 any religion. He may have books, forms, doctrines, words, reasons,
34 etc., etc., but not religion; for that begins when the soul feels the
35 necessity, the want, the yearning after the "Beloved", and never
36 before. And therefore our society has no right to expect from them
37 anything more than from an ordinary "house-holder".

38 I hope to come to Chicago before the end of this month. Oh, I
39 am so tired.

40 Yours affectionately,
41 Vivekananda.

1 311 ?

2 Social queen of Chicago who had made Swami Vivekananda's acquaintance at
3 the Parliament of Religions, in which she had been active. *Vide* Complete Works,
4 VI: 256.
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XXI

To Mrs. G. W. Hale
541 Dearborn Avenue
Chicago
9 June 1894

Dear Mother,

We are all doing very well here. Last night the sisters³¹² invited me and Mrs. Norton and Miss Howe and Mr. Frank Howe. We had a grand dinner and softshell crab and many other things, and a very nice time. Miss Howe left this morning.

The sisters and Mother Temple³¹³ are taking very good care of me. Just now I am going to see my "oh-my-dear" Gandhi.³¹⁴ Narasimha was here yesterday; he wanted to go to Cincinnati where he says he has more chances of success than anywhere else in the world. I gave him the passage, and so I hope I have got the white elephant out of my hands for the time being. How is Father Pope doing now? Hope he has been much benefited by the mudfish business.³¹⁵

I had a very beautiful letter from Miss Guernsey of New York, giving you her regards. I am going downtown to buy a new pair of shoes as well as to get some money, my purse having been made empty by Narasimha.

Nothing more to write. Yes, we went to see the "Charley's Aunt".³¹⁶ I nearly killed myself with laughing. Father Pope will enjoy it extremely. I had never seen anything so funny.

Yours affectionately,
Vivekananda.

XXII

³¹² ?
The daughters of Mrs. Hale: Mary and Harriet.

³¹³ ?
Mrs. James Matthews, Mr. Hale's sister.

³¹⁴ ? Probably Mr. Virchand Gandhi, who represented Jainism at the Chicago World's Parliament of Religions, in 1893.

³¹⁵ ? Mr. and Mrs. Hale were staying at the mineral-springs resort in Indiana. "Mud baths" were supposed cures for all ailments.

³¹⁶ ?
Charley's Aunt was a highly popular comedy of the era.

1 To Mrs. G. W. Hale
2 New York
3 28 June 1894

4 Dear Mother,

5 Arrived safely two hours ago. Landsberg³¹⁷ was waiting at the
6 station. Came to Dr. Guernsey's house. Nobody was there except a
7 servant. I took a bath and strolled with Landsberg to some
8 restaurant where I had a good meal. Then, I have just now returned
9 to Landsberg's rooms in the Theosophical Society and am writing
10 you this letter.

11 I haven't been to see my other friends yet. After a good and
12 long rest through the night I hope to see most of them tomorrow.
13 My Love to you all. By the by, somebody stepped on my umbrella on
14 board the train and broke its nose off.

15 Your affectionate son,
16 Vivekananda.

17 PS—I have not settled myself. So as to direct letters to me,
18 they can be directed c/o Leon Landsberg, 144 Madison Ave., New
19 York.

20

21

22 XXIII

23 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

24 C/o Leon Landsberg
25 144 Madison Avenue
26 New York
27 1 July 1894

28 Dear Mother,

29 Hope you are settled down in peace by this time. The babies
30 are doing well in Mudville³¹⁸—in their nunnery, I am sure. It is very
31 hot here, but now and then a breeze comes up which cools it down.
32 I am now with Miss [Mary A.] Phillips. Will move off from here on
33 Tuesday to another place.

34 Here I find a quotation from a speech by Sir Monier-Williams,
35 professor of Sanskrit in the Oxford University. It is very strange as
36 coming from one who every day expects to see the whole of India
37 converted to Christianity. "And yet it is a remarkable characteristic
38 of Hinduism that it neither requires nor attempts to make converts.

1 ³¹⁷ ?

2 Mr. Leon Landsberg, who was later initiated by Swami Vivekananda into
3 Sannyâsa at Thousand Island Park and became known as Swami Kripananda.

4 ³¹⁸ ?

1 Nor is it at present by any means decreasing in numbers, nor is it
2 being driven out of the field by two such proselytizing religions as
3 Mahomedanism [*sic*] and Christianity. On the contrary, it is at
4 present rapidly increasing. And far more remarkable than this is
5 that, it is all-receptive, all-embracing and all-comprehensive. It
6 claims to be the one religion of humanity, of human nature, of the
7 entire world. It cares not to oppose the progress of Christianity nor
8 of any other religion. For it has no difficulty in including all other
9 religions within its all-embracing arms and ever-widening fold. And
10 in real fact Hinduism has something to offer which is suited to all
11 minds. Its very strength lies in its infinite adaptability to the infinite
12 diversity of human characters and human tendencies. It has its
13 highly spiritual and abstract side suited to the philosoph-ical higher
14 classes. Its practical and concrete side suited to the man of affairs
15 and the man of the world. Its aesthetic and ceremonial side suited
16 to the man of poetic feeling and imagination. Its quiescent and
17 contemplative side suited to the man of peace and lover of
18 seclusion.

19 "Indeed, the Hindus were Spinozists 2,000 years before the
20 birth of Spinoza, Darwinians centuries before the birth of Darwin,
21 and evolutionists centuries before the doctrine of evolution had
22 been accepted by the Huxleys of our time, and before any word like
23 evolution existed in any language of the world."

24 This, as coming from one of the staunchest defenders of
25 Christianity, is wonderful indeed. But he seems to have got the idea
26 quite correct.

27 Now I am going to send up the orange coat today; as for the
28 books that came to me from Philadelphia, I do not think they are
29 worthy of being sent at all. I do not know what I am going to do
30 next. Patiently wait and resign myself unto His guidance—that is my
31 motto. My love to you all.

32 Your affectionate son,

33 Vivekananda

34
35
36 XXIV

37 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

38 C/o Dr. E. Guernsey

39 Cedar Lawn, Fishkill on the Hudson

40 19 July 1894

41 Dear Mother,

42 Your kind note reached me here yesterday evening. I am so
43 glad to hear the babies are enjoying. I got the Interior and am very
44 glad to see my friend Mazoomdar's³¹⁹ book spoken of so highly.
45 Mazoomdar is a great and a good man and has done much for his

1 ³¹⁹ ? Pratap Chandra Mazumdar.
2

1 fellow beings.

2 It is a lovely summer place, this Cedar Lawn of the
3 Guern-seys. Miss Guernsey has gone on a visit to Swampscott. I
4 had also an invitation there, but I thought [it] better to stay here in
5 the calm and silent place full of trees and with the beautiful Hudson
6 flowing by and mountain in the background.

7 I am very thankful for Miss Howe's suggestion, and I am also
8 thinking of it. Most probably I will go to England very soon. But
9 between you and me, I am a sort of mystic and cannot move without
10 orders, and that has not come yet. Mr. [Charles M.] Higgins, a rich
11 young lawyer and inventor of Brooklyn, is arranging some lectures
12 for me. I have not settled whether I will stop for them or not.

13 My eternal thanks to you for your kindness. My whole life
14 cannot repay my debt to you.³²⁰ You may see from the letter from
15 Madras that there is not a word about Narasimha. What can I do
16 more? I did not get the cheque cashed yet, for there was no ne-
17 cessity. Miss Phillips was very kind to me. She is an old lady, about
18 50 or more. You need not feel any worry about my being taken care
19 of. The Lord always takes care of His servants; and so long as I am
20 really His servant and not the world's, I am very confident of
21 getting everything that would be good for me. The Guernseys love
22 me very much, and there are many families in New York and
23 Brooklyn who would take the best care of me.

24 I had a beautiful letter from Mr. Snell,³²¹ saying that a sudden
25 change for the better has taken place in his fortunes and offering
26 me thrice the money I lent him as a contribution to my work. And he
27 also has beautiful letters from Dharmapala and others from India.
28 But, of course, I politely refused his repayment.

29 So far so good. I have seen Mr. [Walter Hines] Page, the
30 editor of the Forum here. He was so sorry not to get the article on
31 missionaries. But I have promised to write on other interesting
32 subjects. Hope I will have patience to do so.

33 I had a letter yesterday from Miss Harriet,³²² from which I
34 learn that they are enjoying Kenosha³²³ very much. Lord bless you
35 and yours, Mother Church, for ever and ever. I cannot even express
36 my gratitude to you.

37 As for me, you need not be troubled in the least. My whole
38 life is that of a vagabond—homeless, roving tramp; any fare, good or
39 bad, in any country, is good enough for me.

1 320 ?

2 Original letter: your debt.

3
4 321 ?

5 Mr. Merwin-Marie Snell, who had been the President of the Scientific
6 Section of the Chicago World's Parliament of Religions.

7
8 322 ?

9 Mrs. Hale's daughter.

10
11 323 ? A port in southwest Wisconsin, on Lake Michigan.

12

1 Yours ever in love and obedience,
 2 Swami Vivekananda
 3
 4
 5 XXV
 6 To Mrs. G. W. Hale
 7 Swampscott, Massachusetts
 8 23 July 1894
 9 Dear Mother,
 10 I think I have all your questions answered and you are in
 11 good humour again.
 12 I am enjoying this place very much; going to Greenacre today
 13 or tomorrow and on our way back I intend to go to Annisquam, to
 14 Mrs. Bagley's—I have written to her. Mrs. Breed³²⁴ says, "You are
 15 very sensitive".
 16 Now, I fortunately did not cash your check³²⁵ in New York. I
 17 wanted to cash it here, when lo! you have not signed your name to
 18 it. The Hindu is a dreamer no doubt, but when the Christian dreams
 19 he dreams with a vengeance.
 20 Do not be distressed. Somebody gave me plenty of money to
 21 move about. I would be taken care of right along. I send herewith
 22 the cheque back to you. I had a very beautiful letter from Miss
 23 Mary. My love to them. What is Father Pope doing? Is it very hot in
 24 Chicago? I do not care for the heat of this country. It is nothing
 25 compared to our India heat. I am doing splendidly. The other day I
 26 had the summer cholera; and cramp, etc. came to pay their calls to
 27 me. We had several hours nice talk and groans and then they
 28 departed.
 29 I am on the whole doing very well. Has the meerscham pipe
 30 reached Chicago?³²⁶ I had nice yachting, nice sea bathing, and am
 31 enjoying myself like a duck. Miss Guernsey went home just now. I
 32 do not know what more to write.
 33 Lord bless you all.
 34 Affectionately,
 35 Vivekananda
 36
 37

1 ³²⁴ ?
 2 Mrs. Francis W. Breed of Lynn, Massachusetts.

3 ³²⁵ ?
 4 British spelling of "cheque" is also used in this letter.
 5

6 ³²⁶ ?
 7 The Swami had purchased this pipe in New York as a gift for Mr. Hale.
 8
 9

1 XXVI
2 To Mrs. G. W. Hale
3 Greenacre Inn
4 Eliot, Maine
5 5 August 1894

6 Dear Mother,

7 I have received your letter and am very much ashamed at my
8 bad memory. I unfortunately forgot all about the cheque. Perhaps
9 you have come to know by this time of my being in Greenacre. I had
10 a very nice time here and am enjoying it immensely. In the fall I am
11 going to lecture in Brooklyn, New York. Yesterday I got news that
12 they have completed all the advertising there. I have an invitation
13 today from a friend in New York to go with him to some mountains
14 north of this state of Maine. I do not know whether I will go or not. I
15 am doing pretty well. Between lecturing, teaching, picnicking and
16 other excitements the time is flying rapidly. I hope you are doing
17 very well and that Father Pope is in good trim. It is a very beautiful
18 spot—this Greenacre—and [I] have very nice company from Boston:
19 Dr. Everett Hale,³²⁷ you know, of Boston, and Mrs. Ole Bull, of
20 Cambridge. I do not know whether I will accept the invitation of my
21 friend of New York or not.

22 So far only this is sure, that I will go to lecture in New York
23 this coming fall. And Boston, of course, is a good field. The people
24 here are mostly from Boston and they all like me very much. Are
25 you having a good time, and Father Pope? Has your house-painting
26 been finished? The Babies, I am sure, are enjoying their Mudville.

27 I am in no difficulty for money. I have plenty to eat and drink.

28 With my best love and gratitude to you and Father Pope and
29 the Babies.

30 Yours affectionately,

31 Vivekananda

32

33 Excuse this hasty scrawl. The pen is very bad.

34 V.

35 The Harrison people sent me two "nasty standing" photos—

36 that is all I have out of them, when they ought to give me 40
37 minus the 10 or 15 I have got already!!!

38 V.

39

40

41 XXVII

1 327 ?

2 Edward Everett Hale (1822-1909), a famous clergyman and author.

1 To Mrs. G. W. Hale
2 Greenacre Inn
3 Eliot, Maine
4 8 August 1894

5 Dear Mother,

6 I have received the letter you sent over to me coming from
7 India.

8 I am going to leave this place on Monday next for Plymouth
9 [Massachusetts], where the Free Religious Association³²⁸ is holding
10 its session. They will defray my expenses, of course.

11 I am all right, enjoying nice health, and the people here are
12 very kind and nice to me. Up to date I had no occasion to cash any
13 cheque as everything is going on smoothly. I have not heard
14 anything from the Babies. Hope they are doing well. You also had
15 nothing to write; however, I feel that you are doing well.

16 I would have gone over to another place, but Mr.
17 Hig-ginson's³²⁹ invitation ought to be attended to. And Plymouth is
18 the place where the fathers of your country first landed. I want,
19 therefore, to see it.

20 I am all right. It is useless reiterating my love and gratitude
21 to you and yours—you know it all. May the Lord shower His choicest
22 blessings on you and yours.

23 This meeting is composed of the best professors of your
24 country and other people, so I must attend it; and then they would
25 pay me. I have not yet determined all my plans, only I am going to
26 lecture in New York this coming fall; every arrangement is
27 complete for that. They have printed advertisements at their own
28 expense for that and made everything ready.

29 Give my best love to the Babies, to Father Pope, and believe
30 me ever in gratitude and love,

31 Your Son,
32 Vivekananda.

33 P.S. I am very much obliged to the sisters for asking me to
34 tell them if I want anything. I have no want anyway—I have
35 everything I require and more to spare.

36 "He never gives up His servants."

1 328 ?

2 The Free Religious Association, founded in 1867, was a liberal offshoot of the
3 then conservative Unitarian Church. Among its members were some of the best
4 thinkers of America.

5 329 ?

6
7 Colonel Thomas Wentworth Storrow Higginson (1823-1911), President of
8 the Free Religious Association, was a well-known writer and liberal reformer. He
9 had made Swami Vivekananda's acquaintance at the Chicago World's Parliament
10 of Religions.
11

1 My thanks and gratitude eternal to the sisters for their kind-
2 ness in asking about my wants.

3 V.

4
5
6 XXVIII

7 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

8 C/o Mrs. J. J. Bagley, Annisquam

9 20 August 1894

10 Dear Mother,

11 Your letters just now reached me. I had some beautiful letters
12 from India. The letter from Ajit Singh³³⁰ shows that the phonograph
13 has not reached yet, and it was dated 8th June. So I do not think it
14 is time yet to get an answer. I am not astonished at my friends'
15 asking Cook & Sons to hunt for me; I have not written for a long
16 time.

17 I have a letter from Madras which says they will soon send
18 money to Narasimha³³¹—in fact, as soon as they get a reply to their
19 letter written to Narasimha. So kindly let Narasimha know it. The
20 photographs have not reached me—except two of Fishkill when I
21 was there last. Landsberg³³² has kindly sent over the letters. From
22 here I will probably go over to Fishkill. The meerschaum³³³ was not
23 sent over by me direct, but I left it to the Guernseys. And they are a
24 lazy family in that respect.

25 I have beautiful letters from the sisters.

26 By the by, your missionaries try to make me a malcontent
27 before the English government in India, and the Lieutenant
28 Governor of Bengal in a recent speech hinted that the recent
29 revival of Hinduism was against the government. Lord bless the
30 missionary. Everything is fair in love and (religion?).

31 The word *Shri* means "of good fortune", "blessed", etc.
32 Paramahansa is a title for a Sannyâsi who has reached the goal, i.e.
33 realized God. Neither am I blessed nor have I reached the goal; but
34 they are courteous, that is all. I will soon write to my brothers in
35 India. I am so lazy, and I cannot send over the newspaper nonsense
36 day after day.

37 I want a little quiet, but it is not the will of the Lord, it seems.

1 330 ?

2 The Raja of Khetri, a very devoted disciple of the Swami.

3
4 331 ?

5 Narasimhacharaya. *Vide* the letter dated February 14, 1894.

6
7 332 ? Leon Landsberg. *Vide* the letter dated June 28, 1894.

8
9 333 ? Swami Vivekananda had bought a meerschaum pipe in New York as a
10 present for Mr. Hale.
11

1 At Greenacre I had to talk on an average 7 to 8 hours a day—that
2 was rest, if it ever was. But it was of the Lord, and that brings
3 vigour along with it.

4 I have not much to write, and I do not remember anything of
5 what I said or did all these places over. So I hope to be excused.

6 I will be here a few days more at least, and therefore I think it
7 would be better to send over my mail here.

8 I have now almost become dizzy through the perusal of a
9 heavy and big mail, so excuse my hasty scrawl.

10 Ever affectionately yours,

11 Swami Vivekananda.

12
13
14 XXIX

15 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

16 Annisquam

17 23 August 1894

18 Dear Mother,

19 The photographs reached safely yesterday. I cannot tell
20 exactly whether Harrison ought to give me more or not. They had
21 sent only two to me at Fishkill³³⁴—not the pose I ordered, though.

22 Narasimha has perhaps got his passage by this time. He will
23 get it soon, whether his family gives him the money or not. I have
24 written to my friends in Madras to look to it, and they write me they
25 will.

26 I would be very glad if he becomes a Christian or
27 Mohammedan or any religion that suits him; but I am afraid for
28 some time to come none will suit our friend. Only if he becomes a
29 Christian he will have a chance to marry again, even in India

30 —the Christians there permitting it. I am so sorry to learn that
31 it is the "bondage of heathen India" that, after all, was the cause of
32 all this mischief. We learn as we live. So we were all this time
33 ignorantly and blindly blaming our much suffering, persecuted,
34 saintly friend Narasimha, while all the fault was really owing to the
35 "bondage of heathen India"!!!!

36 But to give the devil his due, this heathen India has been
37 supplying him with money to go on a spree again and again. And
38 this time too "heathen India" will [take] or already has taken our
39 "enlightened" and persecuted friend from out of his present scrape,
40 and not "Christian America"!! Mrs. Smith's plan is not bad after
41 all—to turn Narasimha into a missionary of Christ. But unfortunately
42 for the world, many and many a time the flag of Christ has been

1 334 ?

2 Fishkill Landing, a resort in New York State where the Swami had spent
3 some days with his friends Dr. and Mrs. Guernsey of New York City.
4

entrusted to such hands. But I would beg to add that he will then be only a missionary of Smithian American Christianity, not Christ's. Arrant humbug! That thing to preach Lord Jesus!!! Is He in want of men to uphold His banner? Pooh! the very idea is revolting. Do good to India indeed! Thank your charity and call back your dog—as the tramp said. Keep such good workers for America. The Hindus will have a quarantine against all such [outcasting] to protect their society. I heartily advise Narasimha to become a Christian—I beg your pardon, a convert to Americanism—because I am sure such a jewel is unsaleable in poor India. He is welcome to anything that will fetch a price. I know the gentleman whom you name perfectly well, and you may give him any information about me you like. I do not care for sending scraps³³⁵ and getting a boom for me. And these friends from India bother me enough for newspaper nonsense. They are very devoted, faithful and holy friends. I have not much of these scraps now. After a long search I found a bit in a Boston Transcript. I send it over to you.³³⁶ This public life is such a botheration. I am nearly daft.

Where to fly? In India I have become horribly public—crowds

³³⁵ ?

Apparently Swami Vivekananda meant newspaper clippings providing proof of Hindu India's approval and support of his work in America.

³³⁶ ? Two newspaper clippings—neither one from the Boston Transcript—were enclosed with this letter and are given below.

(From the Indian Mirror, July 14, 1894): "There has been some lively correspondence between Swami Vivekananda and a retired Christian Missionary on the work and prospects of Christianity in India. Among other things, the Swami is reported to have said that 'the way of converting is absolutely absurd'; 'Missionary doctors do no good, because they are not in touch with the people.' 'They accomplish nothing in the way of converting, although they may have nice sociable times among themselves, etc.' The reverend gentleman took exception to the words, maintaining that, speaking the vernaculars well, nobody of foreigners understands and sympathises with Indians better than Missionaries. The Missionaries are undoubtedly good and well-meaning people; but we think, the statement of the Swami that they are seldom in touch with the people is not without foundation. With the revival of Hinduism, manifested in every part of the country, it is doubtful whether Christianity will have any sway over the Hindus. The present is a critical time for Christian Missions in India. The Swami thanked the Missionary for calling him his fellow-countryman. 'This is the first time,' he wrote, 'any European foreigner, born in India though he be, has dared to call a detested Native by that name—Missionary or no Missionary. Would you dare to call me the same in India?' Would he, indeed?"

(From the Amrita Bazar Patrika, August 24, 1894): "The insinuation that Swami Vivekananda is not an 'orthodox' Hindu owes its origin to missionary influence. It is simply impossible for the missionaries to love Vivekananda, and it is therefore natural that they should try to bring him down. And why is Vivekananda not an orthodox Hindu? It is because, say they, he has crossed the ocean and eaten un-Hindu food. But the restriction which Hinduism imposes upon its members has no forces upon the liberated the Sannyasis, to which class the Swami belongs. The Hindu who has cut off his connection with the world has liberty to take anything and to go anywhere he pleases. Vivekananda deserves well of the world. The world is now governed by the West, and Vivekananda has opened out a new world to the people of that West. In the West, especially in America, every man is a monarch. To make any impression in such a country is beyond the means of the ablest of our species. Vivekananda's work in America is a miracle, and he is no doubt an instrument in the hands of God."

1 will follow me and take my life out. I got an Indian letter from
2 Landsberg. Every ounce of fame can only be bought at the cost of a
3 pound of peace and holiness. I never thought of that before. I have
4 become entirely disgusted with this blazoning. I am disgusted with
5 myself. Lord will show me the way to peace and purity. Why,
6 Mother, I confess to you: no man can live in an atmosphere of
7 public life, even in religion, without the devil of competition now
8 and then thrusting his head into the serenity of his heart. Those
9 who are trained to preach a doctrine never feel it, for they never
10 knew religion. But those that are after God, and not after the world,
11 feel at once that every bit of name and fame is at the cost of their
12 purity. It is so much gone from that ideal of perfect unselfishness,
13 perfect disregard of gain or name or fame. Lord help me. Pray for
14 me, Mother. I am very much disgusted with myself. Oh, why the
15 world be so that one cannot do anything without putting himself to
16 the front; why cannot one act hidden and unseen and unnoticed?
17 The world has not gone one step beyond idolatry yet. They cannot
18 act from ideas, they cannot be led by ideas. But they want the
19 person, the man. And any man that wants to do something must pay
20 the penalty—no hope. This nonsense of the world. Shiva, Shiva,
21 Shiva.

22 By the by, I have got such a beautiful edition of Thomas à
23 Kempis. How I love that old monk. He caught a wonderful glimpse
24 of the "behind the veil"—few ever got such. My, that is religion. No
25 humbug of the world. No shilly-shallying, tall talk, conjecture—I
26 presume, I believe, I think. How I would like to go out of this piece
27 of painted humbug they call the beautiful world with Thomas à
28 Kempis—beyond, beyond, which can only be felt, never expressed.

29 That is religion. Mother, there is God. There all the saints,
30 prophets and incarnations meet. Beyond the Babel of Bibles and
31 Vedas, creeds and crafts, dupes and doctrines—where is all light, all
32 love, where the miasma of this earth can never reach. Ah! who will
33 take me thither? Do you sympathize with me, Mother? My soul is
34 groaning now under the hundred sorts of bondage I am placing on
35 it. Whose India? Who cares? Everything is His. What are we? Is He
36 dead? Is He sleeping? He, without whose command a leaf does not
37 fall, a heart does not beat, who is nearer to me than my own self. It
38 is bosh and nonsense—to do good or do bad or do fuzz. We do
39 nothing. We are not. The world is not. He is, He is. Only He is. None
40 else is. He is.

41 Om, the one without a second. He in me, I in Him. I am like a
42 bit of glass in an ocean of light. I am not, I am not. He is, He is, He
43 is.

44 Om, the one without a second.

45 Yours ever affectionately,

46 Vivekananda.

47 XXX

48 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

49 Annisquam

1 Date do not know
2 [Postmarked: August 28, 1894]

3 Dear Mother,

4 I have been for three days at Magnolia. Magnolia is one of the
5 most fashionable and beautiful seaside resorts of this part. I think
6 the scenery is better than that of Annisquam. The rocks there are
7 very beautiful, and the forests run down to the very edge of the
8 water. There is a very beautiful pine forest. A lady of Chicago and
9 her daughter, Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Sawyer, were the friends that
10 invited me up there. They had also arranged a lecture for me, out of
11 which I got \$43. I met a good many Boston people—Mrs. Smith
12 Junior, who said she knows Harriet, and Mrs. Smith the elder,
13 [who] knows you well.

14 In Boston the other day I met a Unitarian clergyman who said
15 he lives next to you in Chicago. I have unfortunately forgotten his
16 name. Mrs. Smith is a very nice lady and treated me with all
17 courtesy. Mrs. Bagley is kind as ever, and I will have to remain here
18 a few days more, I am afraid. Prof. Wright and I are having a good
19 time. Prof. Bradley of Evanston³³⁷ has gone home. If you ever meet
20 him at Evanston, give him my best love and regards. He is really a
21 spiritual man.

22 I do not find anything more to write.

23 Some unknown friend has sent me from New York a fountain
24 pen. So I am writing with it to test it. It is working very smoothly
25 and nicely as you can judge from the writing. Perhaps Narasimha's
26 difficulties have been settled by this time, and "heathen India" has
27 helped him out yet, I hope.

28 What is Father Pope doing? What the Babies are doing and
29 where are they? What news of our Sam?³³⁸ Hope he is prospering.
30 Kindly give him my best love. Where is Mother Temple now?

31 Well, after all, I could fill up two pages. Yes, there was a Miss
32 Barn (?) who said she met me at your house. She is a young lady of
33 Chicago.

34 Magnolia is a good bathing place and I had two baths in the
35 sea. A large concourse of men and women go to bathe there every
36 day—the most part men. And strange, women do not give up their
37 coat of mail even while bathing. That is how these mailclad
38 she-warriors of America have got the superiority over men.

39 Our Sanskrit poets lavish all the power of expression they
40 have upon the soft body of women—the Sanskrit word for women is
41 "Komala", the soft body; but the mailclad ones of this country are
42 "armadillas", I think. You cannot imagine how ludicrous it appears
43 to a foreigner who never saw it before. Shiva, Shiva.

1 337 ?

2 A city in northeastern Illinois on Lake Michigan, near Chicago.

3
4 338 ?

5 Sam Hale, the only son of Mrs. Hale.

6

1 Now Narasimha's Mrs. Smith does not torture you anymore
2 with letters, I hope. Did I tell you I met your friend Mrs. H. O.
3 Quarry at Swampscott?—she can swamp a house for all that, not to
4 speak of a cott—and that I met there the woman that pulls by the
5 nose Mr. Pullman?³³⁹ And I also heard there the best American
6 singer,³⁴⁰ they said—she sang beautifully; she sang "Bye Baby Bye". I
7 am having a very, very good time all the time, Lord be praised.

8 I have written to India not to bother me with constant letters.
9 Why, when I am travelling in India nobody writes to me. Why should
10 they spend all their superfluous energy in scrawling letters to me in
11 America? My whole life is to be that of a wanderer—here or there or
12 anywhere. I am in no hurry. I had a foolish plan in my head
13 unworthy of a Sannyasin. I have given it up now and mean to take
14 life easy. No indecent hurry. Don't you see, Mother Church? You
15 must always remember, Mother Church, that I cannot settle down
16 even at the North Pole, that wander about I must—that is my vow,
17 my religion. So India or North Pole or South Pole—don't care where.
18 Last two years I have been travelling among races whose language
19 even I cannot speak. "I have neither father nor mother nor brothers
20 nor sisters nor friends nor foes, nor home nor country—a traveller in
21 the way of eternity, asking no other help, seeking no other help but
22 God."

23 Yours ever affectionately,
24 Vivekananda.

25
26
27 XXXI

28 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

29 [Gloucester, Massachusetts]

30 4 September 1894

31 Dear Mother,

32 The bundle was the report of the meeting. Hope you will
33 succeed in publishing some in the Chicago papers.

34 Here is a letter from Dewanji³⁴¹ to you which will explain his
35 sending a pamphlet to Mr. Hale.³⁴² The rugs are coming. When they

1 339 ?

2 Possibly Mrs. George Mortimer Pullman, wife of the wealthy and powerful
3 Pullman of the Pullman Palace Car Company.

4
5 340 ? Miss Emma Thursby.

6
7 341 ?

8 Shri Haridas Viharidas Desai, or Haridasbhai, the Dewan of Junagadh.

9
10 342 ? Enclosed in the above letter was a letter from the Dewan of Junagadh,
11 Haridas Viharidas Desai, addressed to Mr. Hale and dated August 2, 1894. In
12 view of the slander being heaped upon Swami Vivekananda at the time, the
13 Dewan vouched for his sincerity and probity. The pamphlet referred to gave the
14 Dewan's references.

1 come, take them in, even paying the duty if any. I will pay it to you
2 afterwards. I have plenty of money, more than \$150 in pocket. Will
3 get more tonight. Here are some newspaper clippings, and an
4 Indian Mirror I will send later on. Some have been sent to Mr.
5 Barrows;³⁴³ don't hope he will give them publicity. Now for your
6 Mrs. Bartlett.

7 I am in haste. [Will] write more with the clippings. Write to
8 me always, kind Mother—I become very anxious when I do not hear
9 from you. Write, whether I reply sharp or not.

10 Your son,

11 Vivekananda
12
13

14 XXXII

15 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

16 Annisquam

17 5 September 1894

18 Dear Mother,

19 The news of the arrival of the phonograph from Khetri has not
20 come yet. But I am not anxious, because I just now got another
21 letter from India wherein there is no mention of the photographs I
22 sent, showing that parcels reach later than letters.

23 Herewith I send you an autograph letter of H.H. the
24 Maha-raja of Mysore, the chief Hindu king in India. You may see on
25 the map [that] his territory occupies a very large portion of
26 southern India.

27 I am very glad that he is slowly being gained over to my side.
28 If he wills, he can set all my plans to work in five days. He has an
29 income of \$150 million dollars; think of that.

30 May Jagadambâ [the Mother of the Universe] turn his mind
31 towards the good work. He says he quite appreciates my good
32 words—they were about my plans for educating the poor. Hope he
33 will soon show it in material shape.

34 My love to all. Why the babies do not prattle?

35 Your son,

36 Vivekananda
37
38

39 XXXIII

40 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

1
2 ³⁴³ ? Dr. John Henry Barrows, who had served as Chairman of the General
3 Committee for the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago, 1893.
4

1 Hotel Bellevue, European Plan
2 Beacon Street, Boston
3 12 September 1894

4 Dear Mother,

5 I hope you will immediately send me over the little scrap from
6 the Indian Mirror about my Detroit lectures which I sent you.

7 Yours,

8 Vivekananda

9

10

11 XXXIV

12 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

13 Hotel Bellevue

14 Beacon Street, Boston

15 13 September 1894

16 Dear Mother,

17 Your very kind note came just now. I was suffering for the last
18 few days from cold and fever. I am all right now. I am glad all the
19 papers reached you safe. The newspaper clippings are with Mrs.
20 Bagley; only a copy has been sent over to you. By the by, Mrs.
21 Bagley becomes jealous if I send away everything to you. That is
22 between you and me. The Indian Mirror is with Prof. Wright,³⁴⁴ and
23 he will send it over to you. There is yet no news of the phonograph.
24 Wait one week more and then we will enquire. If you see a letter
25 with the Khetri stamp, then surely the news is coming. I do not
26 smoke one third as much as I used to when Father Pope's eternal
27 box was ready and open day and night. Haridasbhai is to be
28 addressed as Shri only. On the envelope, Dewan Bahadoor ought to
29 be written, as that is a title. Perhaps the note from the Maharaja of
30 Mysore has reached you by this time.

31 I will remain a few days yet in Boston and the vicinity. The
32 bank book is in the bank. We did not take it out, but the cheque
33 book is with me. I am going to write out my thoughts on religion; in
34 that, no missionaries have any place. I am going to lecture in New
35 York in autumn, but I like teaching small circles better, and there
36 will be enough of that in Boston.

37 The rugs I wanted to be sent from India; and they will come
38 from Punjab, where the best rugs are made.

39 I had a beautiful letter from Sister Mary.³⁴⁵

40 Narasimha must have got money or passage by this time, and

1 ³⁴⁴ ? Dr. John Henry Wright, a professor of Greek classics at Harvard Uni-
2 versity.

3 ³⁴⁵ ? Mary Hale.
4
5

1 his people have taken care to send him Thomas Cook's passage
2 from place to place. I think he is gone now.

3 I do not think the Lord will allow his servant to be inflated
4 with vanity at the appreciation of his countrymen. I am glad that
5 they appreciate me—not for my sake, but that I am firmly persuaded
6 that a man is never improved by abuse but by praise, and so with
7 nations. Think how much of abuse has been quite unnecessarily
8 hurled at the head of my devoted, poor country, and for what? They
9 never injured the Christians or their religion or their preachers.
10 They have always been friendly to all. So you see, Mother, every
11 good word a foreign nation says to them has such an amount of
12 power for good in India. The American appreciation of my humble
13 work here has really done a good deal of benefit to them. Send a
14 good word, a good thought—at least to the down-trodden, vilified,
15 poor millions of India instead of abusing them day and night. That is
16 what I beg of every nation. Help them if you can; if you cannot, at
17 least cease from abusing them.

18 I did not see any impropriety in the bathing places at the
19 seashore, but only vanity in some: in those that went into water
20 with their corsets on, that was all.

21 I have not got any copy of the Inter-Ocean yet.³⁴⁶

22 With my love to Father Pope, babies, and to you, I remain

23 Your obedient son,

24 Vivekananda

25
26
27 XXXV

28 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

29 Hotel Bellevue

30 Beacon Street, Boston

31 19 September 1894

32 Dear Mother,

33 The huge packet received. It was a few pamphlets sent over
34 to me from my monastery in Calcutta. No news at all about the
35 phonograph. I think it is high time we make them inquire into it.

36 The two volumes of Todd's [Tod's] history of Rajasthan have
37 been presented to me by Mrs. Potter Palmer. I have asked her to
38 send it over to your care. The babies will like reading it very much,
39 and after they finish I will send it over with my Sanskrit books to
40 Calcutta.

41 I did not ask you to send me the typewritten news clippings at
42 all, but a little slip I sent over some time ago from the Indian
43 Mirror. Perhaps it did not reach you at all. You need not send the
44 typewritten thing at all.

1 ³⁴⁶ ? A leading Chicago newspaper.
2

1 I do not require any clothes here; there are plenty of them. I
2 am taking good care of my cuffs and collars, etc.

3 I have more clothes than are necessary. Very soon I will have
4 to disburse myself of half of them at least.

5 I will write to you before I go to India. I am not flying off
6 without giving you due intimation.

7 Yours,

8 Vivekananda

9 P.S.—My love to Babies and Father Pope.

10
11
12 XXXVI

13 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

14 Hotel Bellevue

15 Beacon Street, Boston

16 24 September 1894

17 Dear Mother,

18 I have not heard from you a long while. I am still in Boston
19 and will be a few days more.

20 I am afraid the phonograph has not reached India at all, or
21 something is the matter with it. Kindly ask Mr. — to inquire. The
22 receipt is with you on which they will enquire.

23 Ever affectionately yours,

24 Vivekananda

25
26
27 XXXVII

28 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

29 Hotel Bellevue

30 Beacon Street, Boston

31 27 September 1894

32 Dear Mother,

33 The bundles all came safely. One was newspapers from India.
34 The other was the short sketch of my Master published by Mr.
35 Mazumdar long ago. In the latter bundle there are two sextos or
36 pamphlets. One, my Master's sketch; the other, a short extract to
37 show how what Mr. [Keshab] Chandra Sen and [Pratap Chandra]
38 Mazumdar preached as their "New Dispensa-tion" was stolen from
39 my Master's life. The latter therefore you need not distribute, but I
40 hope you will distribute my Master's life to many good people.

41 I beg you to send some to Mrs. Guernsey, Fishkill on the
42 Hudson, N.Y.; Mrs. Arthur Smith and Mrs. [Miss Mary A.] Phillips,

1 19 West 38th Street, New York (both); to Mrs. Bagley, Annisquam,
2 Mass.; and Prof. J. Wright, Professor of Greek, Harvard, Mass.

3 The newspapers—you may do whatever you like, and I hope
4 you will send any newspaper scrap you get about me to India.

5 Yours etc.,

6 Vivekananda

7
8
9 XXXVIII

10 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

11 C/o Mrs. Ole Bull

12 168 Brattle Street

13 Cambridge, Mass.

14 5 October 1894

15 Dear Mother,

16 I have not heard from you for long. Have you received the
17 huge packages I sent over to you? Have you heard anything about
18 the phonograph from the express office?

19 I will be with Mrs. Ole Bull a few days, and then I go to New
20 York to Mrs. Guernsey's.

21 Yours ever affectionately,

22 Vivekananda

23
24
25 XXXIX

26 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

27 C/o Mrs. Ole Bull

28 Riverview, 168 Brattle Street

29 Cambridge, Mass.

30 [Postmarked: Oct. 10, 1894, 4:30 a.m.]

31 Dear Mother,

32 Received two letters from you and a large number from India
33 but none from Khetri.

34 I am sorry the sisters have got bad colds and more sorry for
35 your getting worried over it. Nothing can make a Christian worry. I
36 hope Narasimha will be a good boy this time forth. Sister Mary is
37 coming to Boston—good. I am going off from here tomorrow to
38 Baltimore. I had enough to pay all my expenses here; and since I
39 am living with Mrs. Bull, there is no expense. She is a rich and
40 highly cultured lady. She has given me \$500 for my work or
41 anything I like. As I am not going west very soon, I will have a bank
42 account here in Boston. From Philadelphia I go to Washington, and

1 then I will run between New York and Boston. So I do not think I
2 will be able to see you, except perhaps Sister Mary. I want so very
3 much that Mary will see Mrs. Bull and others of my friends here. I
4 have the fat of the land as usual, and my dinner is cooking very well
5 both here and in India. Do not make it public, Mother—that is
6 between you and me and the babies—and do not worry yourself
7 about anything. All things come to him that waits. I am going to
8 send the greater part of the money I have got to India and then
9 money will come faster. I have always found that the faster I spend,
10 the faster it comes. Nature abhors a vacuum. I am in very good
11 spirits, only you must not stop keeping me informed about yourself,
12 Babies and Father Pope from time to time.

13 Perhaps you remember the two letters that came from
14 Mysore—I want one of those envelopes with the Mysore King's seal
15 on the outside to be sent to Miss Phillips, 19 West 38th Street, New
16 York.

17 I cannot go to New York now nor to Chicago, although I had a
18 number of invitations and offers from both the places. I must see
19 now the capital and the other cities. I am in His Hands. If Miss
20 Mary be in Boston, sometime I may hope to see her.

21 I am glad that Narasimha was never fast—hope he will never
22 be.

23 From India they always write me to come, come, come. They
24 do not know the secret. I am acting more from here than I will ever
25 do from there.

26 Kindly send my letters to this address and they will reach me
27 safe wherever I be. This will be one of my homes when I am in
28 Boston.

29 Lord bless you all, dear Mother.

30 Yours ever affectionately,

31 Vivekananda

32
33
34 XL

35 To Mrs. Ole Bull

36 1123 Saint Paul Street, Baltimore,

37 17 October 1894.

38 Dear Mrs. Bull,

39 I could not find time earlier to write you—I was so incessantly
40 knocking about. We had a nice meeting last Sunday at Baltimore
41 and [are] going to have one more next Sunday. Of course, they do
42 not financially help me a bit; but as I promised to help them and like
43 the idea, I speak for them.³⁴⁷

1 ³⁴⁷ ? During his first visit to America, Swami Vivekananda occasionally spoke for
2 other organizations, both American and Indian. This time he had come to
3 Baltimore at the invitation of the Vrooman brothers, who had a project to

1 In the letters you sent over from India was an address sent
2 over to me from Calcutta by my fellow citizens for my work here
3 and a number of newspaper cuttings. I will send them on to you
4 later.

5 Yesterday I went to see Washington and met Mrs. Colville
6 and Miss Young, who were very kind to me.

7 I am going to speak at Washington again and then will go
8 over to Philadelphia and from there to New York.

9 Your affectionate Son,
10 Vivekananda.

11
12
13 XLI

14 To Miss Emma Thursby
15 [Washington D.C.
16 26 October 1894]

17 Dear Miss Thursby,³⁴⁸

18 I received your kind note and the introductory letters. I will
19 make it a point to see the ladies and hope to be benefitted much by
20 it.

21 I had a beautiful letter from Mr. Flagg.³⁴⁹ I am soon coming to
22 N.Y. where I hope to see you.

23 With my deepest love and gratitude,
24 I remain yours faithfully,
25 Vivekananda

26 XLII

27 To Mrs. G. W. Hale
28 [Washington, D.C.
29 October 27, 1894]

30 Dear Mother,

31 I received your very kind note and all the India letters just
32 now. I will make it a point to see Mrs. Whitland [?]. I have been

1 establish an International University of Religions, which the Swami endorsed by
2 speaking on the brothers' behalf. Readers should, however, note that the
3 International University project of the Vrooman brothers of Baltimore and Swami
4 Vivekananda's "Temple Universal" proposed in New York were two entirely
5 different projects.
6

7 ³⁴⁸ ?

8 Emma Thursby, the celebrated singer, a close friend of Mrs. Ole Bull and an
9 ardent admirer of Swami Vivekananda.

10 ³⁴⁹ ? William Joseph Flagg, a well-known lawyer, congressman, author, and a
11 friend of the Swami.
12
13

1 very kindly treated by Mrs. [Enoch] Totten.

2 Will you kindly order 100 photographs from Harrison, and
3 send them over to India to Ramdayal Chakravarty, c/o Swami
4 Ramakrishnananda, Varahanagar Math, Alambazar, Calcutta? I will
5 pay for it when I come to Chicago.

6 I have nothing especial to write—except I had good treatment
7 everywhere. How I long to give up this life of weariness and
8 blazoning day and night.

9 I will go from here to New York and will come back to see you
10 in Chicago before I start for England.

11 Yours etc.,

12 Vivekananda

13

14

15 XLIII

16 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

17 Baltimore, [Maryland]

18 3 November 1894

19 Dear Mother,

20 I do not know what to say about this phonograph business. It
21 takes six months to go to India!! and the company cannot get an
22 inquiry in another six months!!! American express, indeed!!
23 Well—however, they are bound to make good my money. Mother, do
24 not lose the receipt of the express company.

25 I am going to New York as soon as possible.

26 Yours affectionately,

27 Vivekananda

28

29

30 XLIV

31 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

32 New York

33 18 November 1894

34 Dear Mother,

35 I have been very late this time in writing you as Sister Mary³⁵⁰
36 has already written to you, no doubt, about me.

37 The clothes have all reached safe, only I will send over some
38 of the summer and other clothes as it will be impossible to carry the
39 burden all along with me.

40 The certainty about going to Europe this December has gone;

1 ³⁵⁰ ? Mary Hale, the daughter of Mrs. G. W. Hale.

1 so I am uncertain when I go.

2 Sister Mary has improved a great deal from what I saw her
3 last. She lives with a number of fox-hunting squires and is quite
4 happy. I hope she will marry one of those fellows with long pockets.
5 I am going again to see her tomorrow at Mrs. Spalding's—I was
6 there last afternoon. I will be in N.Y. this month; then I go to Boston
7 and perhaps will be there all through December. When I was sick in
8 Boston last spring, I went over to Chicago, and not to Detroit as
9 Mrs. Bagley expected. So this time I am going to Detroit first and
10 then to Chicago, if possible. Else I altogether give up the plan of
11 going to the West soon.

12 There is more chance of working my plans out in the East
13 than in the West, as it now appears.

14 I have got news of the phonograph—it has reached safe, and
15 the Râjâ³⁵¹ wrote to me a very nice letter on that. I have a lot of
16 addresses and other nonsense from India. I have written home to
17 them not to send any more newspapers. My love to the babies at
18 home and I am going to visit the baby³⁵² abroad.

19 Mrs. Guernsey has been at death's door. She is now recov-
20 ering slowly. I have not seen her yet. She is not strong enough to
21 see anybody. Hope she will soon be strong.

22 My love to Father Pope and everyone.

23 Your ever affectionate son,

24 Vivekananda

25

26

27 XLV

28 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

29 C/o Mrs. Ole Bull

30 168 Brattle Street

31 Cambridge, Mass.

32 6 December 1894

33 Dear Mother,

34 I have not heard long from you. What is the matter with you?
35 I am here in Cambridge and will be here for three weeks to come
36 and will have to lecture and hold classes. Here is a Chicago lady,
37 Mrs. [Milward] Adams, who lectures on tone building etc.

1 ³⁵¹ ?

2 Ajit Singh, the Maharaja of Khetri, a devoted disciple of Swami Vivekananda.

3
4 ³⁵² ?

5 The "babies at home" refers to Mrs. Hale's daughter and two nieces: Harriet
6 Hale, and Isabelle and Harriet McKindley. The "baby abroad" refers to Mary
7 Hale.

8

1 Today we had a lecture from Lady Henry Somerset³⁵³ on
2 Woman Suffrage. Miss Willard³⁵⁴ of Chicago was here and Julia
3 Ward Howe.

4 Col. Higginson, Dr. [J. Estlin] Carpenter of Eng. and many
5 other friends were present. Altogether it was a grand affair. I have
6 received a letter from India informing me that the phonograph was
7 duly received.

8 I have sent part of my money to India and intend sending
9 nearly the whole of it very soon. Only, I will keep enough for the
10 passage back. Saw Mother Temple several times in New York. She
11 was kind as usual. So was Mrs. Spalding.

12 Sister Mary wrote me a letter from Brookline
13 [Massachusetts]. I am sure she would have enjoyed Lady
14 Somerset's lecture so much. I wrote her about it, but I have not
15 heard from her yet.

16 I will go to see her the first day I get some time. I am very
17 busy. Hope the sisters at home are enjoying themselves. I will try to
18 run into Chicago for a few days if I can.

19 Please write me all about the holy family as soon as you get
20 time.

21 Mrs. Guernsey was very ill and still so weak that she cannot
22 get out of her room.

23 Miss Helen Bagley³⁵⁵ was seized with diphtheria in New York
24 and suffered a good deal. She has recovered, however, and the
25 Bagleys have gone home to Detroit.

26 With my Love to you all, I remain,

27 Ever yours affectionately,

28 Vivekananda

29 P.S.—Kindly send my India mail c/o Mrs. Sara Ole Bull, 168
30 Brattle Street, Cambridge, Mass.

31 V.

32
33
34 XLVI

35 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

36 [Cambridge, Mass.]

1 353 ?

2 President of the British Women's Temperance Union.

3 354 ?

4 Miss Frances Willard, founder and President of the World's Women's Christian
5 Temperance Union.

6 355 ?

7 The daughter of Mrs. John J. Bagley.

1 21 December 1894]

2 Dear Mother,

3 I am glad that Haridas Viharidas³⁵⁶ has sent the rugs. I am
4 afraid they will take a long time to reach here. The Raja³⁵⁷ was very
5 much pleased with the phonograph, as he writes, and has heard my
6 voice several times. Hope he will bring it into life.

7 I have not seen Sister Mary yet, but hope to see her this week
8 as I am going away to New York next Tuesday. Cannot come by any
9 means to Chicago now, for I expect to go to Washington from New
10 York and hope to be pretty busy in New York.

11 If I can snatch up a few days between the lecture in Brooklyn
12 on the 30th and the next series in New York, I will fly to Chicago for
13 a few days. If I had time just now, it would have been better for me,
14 for the half-fare ticket will expire after this month.

15 I have been kept very busy here this month so could not go to
16 Boston even for a day. Now I have time and hope to see Sister
17 Mary.

18 How are the babies at home? Mrs. M. Adams of Chicago, who
19 lectures on voice building and walking etc., has been lecturing here
20 all this time. She is a very great lady in every respect and so
21 intelligent. She knows all of you and likes the "Hale girls" very
22 much. Sister Isabel[le] knows her especially, I think.

23 Do not you see, Mother—I am determined to work my project
24 out. I must see the light. India can cheer alone—but no money. In
25 the East and South I am getting slowly friends who will help me in
26 my work, I am sure, as they have done already. They all like me
27 more and more.

28 I have made friends of Lady Somerset and Miss Willard, you
29 will be glad to know. So you see, Mother, you are the only
30 attraction in Chicago; and so long I am in this country, wherever
31 you live is my home. As soon as I have time I will run in to see you
32 and the sisters. But I have no other hopes in the West; nor will you
33 advise me to destroy the only hope I have of success in these parts
34 of the country by giving it up and going to Chicago to be idle as the
35 day is long.

36 Mrs. Bull and a few other ladies here who are helping me on
37 are not only sincere and love me but they have the power to do as
38 leaders of society. Would that you had millions.

39 With my love to you all,

40 Your ever affectionate Son,

41 Vivekananda

42

1 ³⁵⁶ ?

2 The Dewan of Junagadh.

3

4 ³⁵⁷ ? Maharaja Ajit Singh, the Raja of Khetri.

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XLVII
To Miss Emma Thursby
Chicago
541 Dearborn Avenue
17 January 1895

Dear Miss Thursby,

I am very sorry to learn about the passing on of Mr. Thorp.³⁵⁸ Mrs. Bull must have felt it deeply. Still he has passed on after a good and useful life. All is for the best.

I have been lecturing every day to a class in Mrs. Adams's³⁵⁹ rooms at the Auditorium. Today I also lecture there and in the Evening to a class of Miss Josephine Locke's³⁶⁰ at the Plaza Hotel.

Have you seen Mrs. Peake³⁶¹ in New York? She is lecturing to a class at Mrs. Guernsey's.

Miss Locke is as kind as usual. She is enamoured of Mrs. Peake as are many of Miss Locke's friends, you will be glad to learn.

Mrs. Peake has made a very favourable impression on Chicago. So she does wherever she goes.

Mrs. Adams invited me to an organ concert in the Auditorium. She is so good and kind to me. Lord bless her.

I have not seen Mr. Young, nor, I am afraid, [will] I have time to see [him,] as I start for New York on Friday next.

I will hear him once in New York.

I was so busy here these two weeks.

I have got a new scarlet coat but can get no orange here.

Ever with blessings,

Your brother,
Vivekananda

XLVIII

³⁵⁸ ?
Joseph G. Thorp, Mrs. Ole Bull's father.

³⁵⁹ ?
Florence Adams, wife of Milward Adams, house manager of the Opera House in Chicago.

³⁶⁰ ? Miss Josephine Locke was Director of Art in the Chicago public schools.

³⁶¹ ?
An itinerant teacher of metaphysics.

1 To Professor John H. Wright
2 54 W. 33 Street
3 New York
4 1 February 1895

5 Dear Adhyapakji,

6 You must be immersed in your work now; however, taking
7 advantage of your kindness to me, I want to bother you a little.

8 What was the original Greek idea of the soul, both philo-
9 sophical and popular? What books can I consult (Translations, of
10 course) to get it?

11 So with the Egyptians and Babylonians and Jews?

12 Will you kindly name me the books? I am sure you are per-
13 fectly well and so are Mrs. Wright and the children.

14 Ever gratefully and fraternally,

15 Yours,

16 Vivekananda

17

18

19 XLIX

20 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

21 54 W. 33., New York

22 18 March [February] 1895

23 Dear Mother,

24 I am sure you are all right by this time. The babies write from
25 time to time and so I get your news regularly. Miss Mary is in a
26 lecturing mood now—good for her. Hope she will not let her
27 energies fritter away now—a penny saved is a penny gained. Sister
28 Isabel[le] has sent me the French Books and the Calcutta
29 pamphlets have arrived, but the big Sanskrit books ought to come. I
30 want them badly. Make them payable here, if possible, or I will
31 send you the postage.

32 I am doing very well. Only some of these big dinners kept me
33 late, and I returned home at 2 o'clock in the morning several days.
34 Tonight I am going to one of these. This will be the last of its kind.
35 So much keeping up the night is not good for me. Every day from 11
36 to 1 o'clock I have classes in my rooms and I talk [to] them till they
37 [grow] tired. The Brooklyn course ended yesterday. Another lecture
38 I have there next Monday.

39 Bean soup and rice or barley is now my general diet. I am
40 faring well. Financially I am making the ends meet and nothing
41 more because I do not charge anything for the classes I have in my
42 rooms. And the public lectures have to go through so many hands.

43 I have a good many lectures planned ahead in New York,
44 which I hope to deliver by and by. Sister Isabel wrote to me a

1 beautiful letter and she does so much for me. My eternal gratitude
2 to her.

3 Baby³⁶² has stopped writing; I do not know why.

4 Kindly tell Baby to send me a little Sanskrit book which came
5 from India. I forgot to bring it over. I want to translate some
6 passages from it.

7 Mr. [Charles M.] Higgins is full of joy. It was he who planned
8 all this for me, and he is so glad that everything succeeded so well.

9 Mrs. Guernsey is going to give up this house and going to
10 some other house. Miss [Florence] Guernsey wants to marry but
11 her father and mother do not like it at all. I am very sorry for her,
12 poor "Sister Jenny"³⁶³—and so many men are after her. Here is a
13 very rich railway gentleman called Mr. [Austin] Corbin; his only
14 daughter, Miss [Anna] Corbin, is very much interested in me. And
15 though she is one of the leaders of the 400,³⁶⁴ she is very
16 intellectual and spiritual too, in a way. Their house is always chock
17 full of swells and foreign aristocracy. Princes and Barons and
18 whatnot from all over the world. Some of these foreigners are very
19 bright. I am sorry your home-manufactured aristocracy is not very
20 interesting. Behind her parlor she has a long arbour with all sorts of
21 palms and seats and electric light. There I will have a little class
22 next week of a score of long-pockets. The Fun is not bad. "This
23 world is a great humbug after all", Mother. "God alone is real;
24 everything else is a dream only." Mother Temple³⁶⁵ says she does
25 not like to be bossed by you and that is why she does not come to
26 Chicago. She is very happy nearby. Between swells and Delmonico
27 and Waldorf dinners, my health was going to be injured. So I
28 quickly turned a thorough vegetarian to avoid all invitations. The
29 rich are really the salt of this world—they are neither food nor drink.
30 Goodbye for the present.

31 Your ever affectionate Son,

32 Vivekananda

33
34 L

35 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

1 362 ?

2 Harriet McKindley, youngest of the "sisters".

3
4 363 ?

5 Perhaps in likening Miss Florence Guernsey to "Sister Jenny", the Swami
6 was referring to the old nursery rhyme, which the Hale sisters may have taught
7 him. Robin Redbreast promised Jenny Wren that if she would be his wife he
8 would dress her "like a goldfinch or any peacock gay". She replied that that is all
9 very nice, but "I must wear my plain brown gown and never go so fine".

10
11 364 ? "The Four Hundred"—a then current term for New York's most exclusive
12 social set.

13
14 365 ?

15 Mrs. James Matthews, a married sister of Mr. Hale.
16

1 54 W. 33rd St., New York

2 11 March 1895

3 Dear Mother,

4 Many thanks for your kind letter. I will be only too glad to
5 have an orange coat, provided it be light as summer is approaching.

6 I do not remember whether the Cook's letters of credit I have
7 are limited as to their time or not. It is high time we look into them.
8 If they are limited, don't you think it is better to put them in some
9 bank? I have about a thousand dollars in the Boston bank and a few
10 hundred in the New York—they all go to India by this week or next.
11 So it is better that I look into the Cook's letters, and it will be
12 foolish to get into trouble by having them past the date.

13 There are a few more Sanskrit books which have not been
14 sent—one pretty thick and broad, the other two very thin. Kindly
15 send them as soon as you can.

16 Mrs. [Milward] Adams, Mrs. [Ole] Bull, and Miss Emma
17 Thursby are gone to Chicago today.

18 With eternal love to the babies and to you and Father Pope.

19 I remain ever your affectionate Son,
20 Vivekananda

21

22

23 LI

24 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

25 [54 W. 33rd St., New York]

26 14 March 1895

27 Dear Mother,

28 The last letter you sent over is a notice from the Chicago post
29 office of a parcel received by them. I think it is some books sent to
30 me from India. The rugs cannot come through the post office (?) I
31 do not know what to do. I send you therefore back this notice, and if
32 they deliver it to you, all right—else I hope you will ask them to send
33 it over to New York and kindly give them my address.

34 Yours obediently,

35 Vivekananda

36

37

38 LII

39 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

40 [New York

41 April 25, 1895]

42 Dear Mother,

1 I was away a long time in the country. Came back day before
2 yesterday.

3 I think the summer coat is in Chicago. If so, will you kindly
4 send it over c/o Miss Phillips, 19 W. 38 Str., New York? It is getting
5 hot here every day.

6 I will remain in New York till the end of May, at least.

7 Hoping you are all in perfect health. I remain yours truly,

8 Vivekananda

11 LIII

12 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

13 54 W. 33.

14 New York

15 [April 26, 1895]

16 Dear Mother,

17 Perhaps you did not receive my letter asking you to send the
18 Calcutta pamphlets about the Paramahansa Ramakrishna. Kindly
19 send them to me at 54 W. 33, and also the pamphlets about the
20 Calcutta meeting if you have any. Also the summer coat to the care
21 of Miss Phillips, 19 W. 38.

22 As I do not see any probability of my going soon to Chicago, I
23 am thinking of drawing all my money from the Chicago bank to
24 New York. Will you kindly ascertain the exact total amount I have in
25 Chicago so that I may draw it out at once and deposit it in some
26 New York bank?

27 Kindly do these and I will bother you no more. I have written
28 to India long ago about the rugs. I do not know whether Dewanji³⁶⁶
29 is alive or dead. I have no information.

30 I am all right and will be more than a month yet in New York.
31 After that I am going to the Thousand Islands—wherever that place
32 may be—for a little summer quiet and rest. Mrs. Bagley has been
33 down here to see me and attended several of my classes.

34 The classes are going on with a boom; almost every day I
35 have one, and they are packed full. But no "money"—except they
36 maintain themselves. I charge no fees, except as the members
37 contribute to the rent etc. voluntarily.

38 It is mostly probable that I will go away this summer.

39 With my love to all,

40 Ever gratefully yours,

41 Vivekananda

1 366 ?

2 Shri Haridas Viharidas Desai, Dewan of Junagadh.
3

1
 2
 3 LIV
 4 To Mrs. G. W. Hale
 5 54 W. 33 New York
 6 The 1st of May 1895
 7 Dear Mother,
 8 Many, many thanks for sending the coat. Now I am well
 9 equipped for summer. I am so sorry the rugs could not come before
 10 I leave this country. They will come if Dewanji is alive.
 11 I have been out of town a few days and have now come back
 12 all right—healthy as ever.
 13 Lord bless you ever and ever for your untiring kindness to
 14 me.
 15 Ever your grateful Son,
 16 Vivekananda
 17 P.S. *The History of Rajasthan*³⁶⁷ I present you, and the satchel
 18 to the babies. Yours,
 19 Vivekananda
 20
 21 LV
 22 To Mr. Francis H. Leggett
 23 54 W. 33rd St.
 24 New York
 25 the 4th May '95
 26 Dear Friend,
 27 Many thanks for your kind present. The cigars are indeed
 28 delicious—and a hundred times so, as coming from you.
 29 With everlasting love and regards,
 30 I remain yours truly,
 31 Vivekananda
 32
 33 LVI
 34 To Mrs. G. W. Hale
 35 54 W. 33
 36 New York

1 367 ?

2 This book by James Tod was given to Swami Vivekananda by Mrs. Potter
 3 Palmer.
 4

1 16th May '95

2 Dear Mother,

3 Your kind note duly reached. The books have arrived safe and
4 more are coming. The Sanskrit books pay no duty, being classics. I
5 expect a big package from Khetri. The big packet was from the Raja
6 of Khetri, sending me an address from a meeting held of Rajput
7 nobility at Mount Abu, for my work in this country.

8 I do not know whether I will be able to come over to Chicago
9 or not. I am trying to get a free pass; in case I succeed I will come,
10 else not. Financially this winter's work was no success at all—I could
11 barely keep myself up—but spiritually very great. I am going to the
12 Thousand Islands for the summer to visit a friend and some of my
13 pupils will be there.

14 I have got plenty of books now to read from India, and I will
15 be quite engaged this summer.

16 The Khetri package will not arrive soon, so kindly make
17 arrangements that it will be received during your absence if you go
18 away. [There] will have to be paid a heavy duty for [it,] I am afraid.

19 Mrs. [Florence] Adams brought me the love from the [Hale]
20 Sisters on her way to Europe. She started this morning. A large
21 package of books also I expect soon. The original Upanishads—there
22 is no duty on them.

23 I have had some trouble with my stomach; hope it will be over
24 in a few days.

25 With love to all, I am ever your affectionate Son,
26 Vivekananda

27

28 LVII

29 To Mrs. Ole Bull

30 New York

31 The 28th May '95

32 Dear Mother,

33 Your last kind letter to hand. This week will be the last of my
34 classes. I am going next Tuesday with Mr. Leggett to Maine. He has
35 a fine lake and a forest there. I will be two or three weeks there.³⁶⁸
36 Thence I go to the Thousand Islands. Also I have an invitation to
37 speak at a parliament of religions at Toronto, Canada, on July 18th.
38 I will go there from Thousand Islands and return back.

39 So far everything is going on well with me.

40 Ever your grateful son,

41 Vivekananda

1 ³⁶⁸ ? On June 4, 1895, Mr. Leggett and his party of five—including Swami
2 Vivekananda—took a train from Portland, Maine, to Mr. Leggett's cabin in Percy,
3 New Hampshire.
4

1 P.S. My regards and love to your daughter and pray for her
2 speedy recovery.

3 V.

4
5 LVIII

6 To Dr. Paul Carus

7 19 W. 38th St.,

8 New York

9 June [May] 28, '95

10 Dr. Paul Carus, La Salle, Ill.

11
12 Dear Sir,

13 I am just now in receipt of your letter and will be very happy
14 to join the religions Congress at Toronto. Only, as you are well
15 aware of, the financial means of a "Bhikshu"³⁶⁹ are very limited. I
16 will be only too glad to do anything in my power to help you and
17 wait further particulars and directions.

18 Hoping to hear from you soon and thanking you very much for
19 your great sympathy with Buddhistic India.

20 I remain ever fraternally your,

21 Vivekananda

22
23 LIX

24 Mrs. Ole Bull

25 4th June '95

26 Dear Mother,

27 Today I leave New York at 5 p.m. by steamer with Mr.
28 Leggett. The classes were closed on Saturday last [June 1] and so
29 far the work has been very successful, no small part of which is due
30 to you.

31 Ever praying for you and yours,

32 I am ever your faithful Son,

33 Vivekananda

34 P.S. I will acquaint you with my whereabouts as soon as I
35 know it myself.

36
37 LX

38 To Dr. Paul Carus

39 c/o Miss Dutcher

1 ³⁶⁹ ? A Hindu or Buddhist monk.
2

1 Thousand Island Park
2 N. Y.
3 [June 1895]

4 Dear Doctor,

5 I am in this place now and had to change some of my plans on
6 account of the Toronto Congress.

7 I am therefore not quite sure whether I will be able to come
8 to Oak Island Conference. It is very possible, however, that I will be
9 able to do so.

10 I also hope Mr. [Charles Carroll] Bonney will come. He is a
11 noble, noble soul—one who sincerely wishes the fellowship of all
12 humanity.

13 Is it not true, Dr., that Mr. Bonney, as I have every reason to
14 think, originated the plan of the parliament of religions?

15 I will certainly try my best to come.

16 Thanking you very much for your kindness, I remain

17 Ever yours in the Lord of Compassion,

18 Vivekananda

19 P.S. Will you kindly inform me what lines of thought you want
20 me to take.

21 V.

22

23 LXI

24 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

25 C/o Miss Dutcher's

26 Thousand Island Park

27 N.Y.

28 2nd July 1895

29

30 Dear Mother—

31 You did not write to me a single line for a long time. Neither
32 did Sister Mary write about the duty paid on the rugs [from the
33 Dewan of Junagadh]. I am afraid the rugs are small.

34 Here is another consignment from Raja Ajit Singh [the
35 Maharaja of Khetri] consisting of carpets, shawls, etc., etc., for
36 which the bill of lading you sent me the other day. This con-
37 signment has no *duty* to pay because it was all prepaid in India, and
38 the bill of lading says so expressly. I will send you the bill of lading
39 and the receipt for the *duty*. Kindly take one more trouble for me
40 and get it out of the express company. And keep it with you till I
41 come. The goods have arrived in New York and I had a notice of
42 that. They are on their way to Chicago.

43 In two or three days I will send the bill of lading and the

1 receipt for duty paid, to you. I foolishly asked Miss Phillips, as soon
2 as I got the Company's³⁷⁰ notice, to get them out before I got the bill
3 of lading. Now the bill of lading shows that it is bound for Chicago.
4 So I am bound to give you this trouble. I am so sorry. Again with my
5 usual business instincts—I forgot to note down the name of the
6 express company. So I have written to New York for the letters of
7 the Company. As soon as that comes I will send over to you.

8 I am going to Europe by the end of August or a little later.

9 I will come to see you by the end of August.

10 Lord bless you and yours for ever and ever.

11 Your ever affectionate Son,

12 Vivekananda

13
14 LXII

15 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

16 Thousand Island Park, N.Y.

17 C/o Miss Dutcher

18 July 3, 1895

19 Dear Mother—

20 Herewith I send you the bill of lading and the inventory of the
21 goods sent from India. The duty, as you will find, has been prepaid,
22 so there is no botheration on that score. The goods have reached
23 Hull.³⁷¹ They will be here by the middle of this month. And if you see
24 a letter with the Morris American Express Co. name on the
25 envelope, tear it open. You need not forward it to me, for that will
26 be the notice of arrival to Chicago. I am sure Dewanji's carpets
27 were too small, but why do you not write to me about the duty if you
28 had to pay it? I insist upon paying it myself. The Raja's things seem
29 to come very quick. I am so glad too I will have something to
30 present to Mrs. Bagley, Mrs. Bull, etc.

31
32
33 [Enclosed in the above letter was the following note.]

34
35 541 Dearborn Ave.

36 Chicago.

37 To the Morris Express Co.—

38 Dear Sir,

39 Please permit Mrs. G. W. Hale of 541 Dearborn Ave.,

1 ³⁷⁰ ?

2 Original letter: Companies'.

3 ³⁷¹ ? England, not New York as the Swami had thought.

1 Chicago, to act for me about the goods sent to me from India and
2 receive the same.

3 I have the honor to be, sir, your most obedient servant,
4 Swami Vivekananda

5
6 LXIII

7 To Mrs. Ole Bull

8 C/o Miss Dutcher

9 Thousand Island Park N.Y.

10 13th [*postmarked 11th*] July '95.

11 Dear Mother,

12 The shirts arrived yesterday; they are nice and fit me well.

13 Everybody liked them.

14 Landsberg arrived this morning with a picture of Shri
15 Ramakrishna.

16 The Toronto affair has fallen through because the clergyman
17 objected to a heathen. There is one invitation from the Christian
18 Union of Oak Beach. I do not know whether I will go there.

19 As I intend to go to Chicago, in August, I ought to give to the
20 people here all the time I can.

21 I do not know yet the exact date when I start [for Europe]

22 –but somewhere at the end of August, I am sure.

23 Landsberg sends his love to all the rest.

24 Ever yours in love and gratitude,

25 Vivekananda

26 LXIV

27 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

28 Thousand Island Park

29 C/o Miss Dutcher

30 N.Y.

31 27th July '95

32 Dear Mother–

33 I will be ever so much obliged if you kindly look into the
34 "bead" affair.³⁷² I think there will be a little duty to pay. I will pay it
35 to you when I come.

36 I start from here next week. I will be in Detroit a day or two
37 on my way. I will be in by the third or fourth of August.

38 With Everlasting love, your Son,

1 ³⁷² ? Rudrâksha beads sent from India. *Vide* the letter dated January 17, 1895,
2 in Complete Works, VI: 296-98.
3

1 Vivekananda

2
3
4 [Enclosed in the above letter was the following note.]

5
6 27th July '95

7 To the United States Express Company
8 Foreign Department.

9 Dear Sir,

10 Herewith I authorize Mrs. George W. Hale to take delivery of
11 the "beads" that have been expressed to me from India. Hoping
12 they will be regularly delivered to her, I remain yours obediently,

13 Swami Vivekananda

14
15 LXV

16 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

17 C/o Miss Dutcher

18 Thousand Island Park

19 30th August [July] '95

20 Dear Mother,

21 I was starting for Chicago, Thursday next [August 1], but your
22 letter stopped me. The letter and the package have safely arrived.

23 Write to me or wire if you want me to come to Chicago. I will
24 then start for Chicago next week, i.e. on Tuesday next [August 6]. I
25 thought Sister Mary was at home. When are the other babies
26 coming? My going to Europe is not yet settled finally. The babies
27 have not written me a line—not one of them.

28 Oh, Mother, my heart is so, so sad. The letters bring the news
29 of the death of Dewanji. Haridas Viharidas has left the body. He
30 was as a father to me. Poor man, he was the last 5 years seeking
31 the retirement from business life, and at last he got it but could not
32 enjoy it long. I pray that he may never come back again to this dirty
33 hole they call the Earth. Neither may he be born in heaven or any
34 other horrid place. May he never again wear a body—good or bad,
35 thick or thin. What a humbug and illusion this world is, Mother,
36 what a mockery this life. I pray constantly that all mankind will
37 come to know the reality, i.e. God, and this "Shop" here be closed
38 for ever.

39 My heart is too full to write more. Write to me or wire if you
40 like.

41 Your ever obedient Son,

42 Vivekananda

43 P.S. We will think of the coming package [from the Maharaja

1 of Khetri] in Chicago. How long will you be in Chicago? If it is only a
2 week or so, I need not come. I will meet you in New York. If more
3 than that, I come to see you.

4 Yours,

5 V.

6 XVI

7 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

8 C/o Miss Dutcher

9 Thousand Island Park

10 N.Y.

11 [July 31, 1895]

12 Dear Mother—

13 I am afraid I can not come to see you and neither will you
14 advise me. I am going with a friend³⁷³ to Europe, at his expense. We
15 go first to Paris and from there to London. My friend will go to Italy
16 and I to London. I will, however, come back to New York in
17 *September*. So I am not going away for good.

18 I start on the 17th. So you see, it is impossible to come and go
19 that way for 3 or 4 days.

20 The package from India ought to have reached by this time. If
21 they come,³⁷⁴ kindly take the delivery and send it back to New York
22 to Miss Mary Phillips, 19 W. 38. If the package does not come to
23 Chicago before you go away, then kindly send the bill of lading etc.
24 to Miss Mary Phillips, 19. W. 38. The babies [the Hale daughters]
25 did not write me a line, nor did they intimate where they are. I
26 absolutely do not know anything about them. As they do not want it,
27 it seems I ought not to disturb them with my letters. But you kindly
28 convey them my love and eternal, undying blessings. So to you,
29 Mother and Father Pope. I will pen a longer epistle in a few days.
30 We will see each other next spring in Chicago, Mother, if we all
31 live.

32 Ever gratefully your Son,

33 Vivekananda

34
35 LXVII

36 To Mr. Francis Leggett

37 [Thousand Island Park, U.S.A.

38 August 1895]

39 Dear Friend,

1 373 ?

2 Mr. Francis Leggett.

3 374 ? The goods mentioned in Swami Vivekananda's letter dated July 2, 1895.

1 I received your note duly.

2 Very kind of you and noble to ask me to have my own time to
3 London. Many thanks for that. But I am in no hurry for London and,
4 moreover, I want to see you married in Paris and then I go over to
5 London.

6 I will be ready, Father Leggett, at hand and in time—never
7 fear.

8 Yours affectionately ever,

9 Vivekananda

10

11 LXVIII

12 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

13 The Western Union Telegraph Company.

14 Received at: Plaza Hotel Drug Store,

15 North Ave. & Clark Street.

16 Thousand Island, N.Y., 2, '95

17 [August 2, 1895]

18 8 jw ws 11 paid 1.33 p.m.

19

20 Mrs. G. W. Hale

21 541 Dearborn Ave.

22 WHY ANY CHARGES DUTY PREPAID³⁷⁵ YOU HAVE DOCUMENTS WRITE
23 FULL PARTICULARS.

24 VIVEKANANDA

25

26 LXIX

27 To Sister Christine

28 19 West 38th Street

29 9th August '95

30 Dear Christina,

31 You must be enjoying the beautiful weather very much. Here,
32 it is extremely hot but it does not worry me much. I had a pleasant
33 journey from Thousand Islands to New York; and though the Engine
34 was derailed, I did not know anything of it, being asleep all the
35 time. Miss Waldo went out of the train at Albany. I did not see her
36 off as I was asleep. I have not heard anything from her yet. Hope to
37 hear soon. Dr. [L. L. Wight] and Miss [Ruth] Ellis must have gone
38 home by this time.

39 We gave them a telepathic message but Miss Ellis has not got

1 ³⁷⁵ ? This evidently again refers to the goods sent by the Maharaja of Khetri.
2 *Vide* the letter addressed to Mrs. G. W. Hale dated July 2, 1895.
3

1 it sure, else she would write.

2 I am making preparations for my departure.

3 I came in time for one of the meetings here and had another
4 one last evening—going to have one more this evening and almost
5 every evening till I go over.

6 What is Mrs. Funkey [Mary Caroline Funke] doing, and Miss
7 [Mary Elizabeth] Dutcher? Do you go to meditate on the mountain
8 as usual? Did you hear from Kripananda?

9 Write to me as soon as you can—I am so anxious to hear from
10 you.

11 Ever yours with blessings and love,

12 Vivekananda

13 P.S. My love and blessings to Mrs. Funkey and Miss Dutcher.

14 V.

15

16 LXX

17 To Mrs. Ole Bull

18 19 West 38th Street

19 New York

20 9th August '95

21 Dear Mother—

22 Your note duly received. I saw also Miss Thursby yesterday.
23 After the *hard work* at the Thousand Islands, I am taking a few days
24 quiet and preparation for my departure. So I cannot come to
25 Greenacre. I am with Miss Phillips and will be till the 17th, on
26 which day I depart for Europe. I have seen Mr. Leggett. You
27 remember Mrs. Sturges, the widow in black in my classes. She is
28 going to marry Mr. Leggett in Paris. They will be married the 1st
29 week we arrive, and then they go on a tour through Europe, and I,
30 to England. I hope to return in a few weeks—back to New York.

31 Kindly give to Miss Hamlin [Elizabeth L. Hamlen], to Miss
32 [Sarah] Farmer, Dr. [L. L. Wight] and Miss Howe, and all our
33 friends my greetings, love and good-bye.

34 Ever sincerely your Son,

35 Vivekananda

36

37 LXXI

38 To Sister Christine

39 [The following telegram was sent on Swami Vivekananda's
40 behalf.]

41

42 Postal Telegraph-Cable Company

1 Received at Main Office, Cor. Griswold
2 and Lafayette Ave., Detroit, Mich.
3 43. NY. FC. W. . . 10 Paid. 12:45 Pm
4 New York, N.Y.
5 [August 17, 1895]

6 Miss Christina Greenstidel,
7 418 Alfred St., Detroit, Mich.
8 Swamm [Swami] leaving sends you and Mrs. Funke love and
9 blessing.

10 Kripananda.

11

12 LXXII

13 To Miss Isabelle McKindley

14 80 Oakley Street

15 Chelsea, S.W.

16 London.

17 24th October '95

18

19 We meet and part. This is the law
20 and ever ever be.

21 I sadly ask O gentle ones

22 Do you remember me?

23 I haven't had any news from Chicago, nor did I write as I did
24 not want to bother you—also I did not know where to.

25 Accompanying is a newspaper notice of a lecture I
26 delivered in London. It is not bad. The London audiences are very
27 learned and critical, and the English nature is far from being
28 effusive. I have some friends here—made some more—so I am going
29 on.

30 My bed is in the foaming deep

31 What care I, friend, the dew!

32 It is a queer life, mine—always travelling, no rest. Rest will be
33 my death—such is the force of habit. Little success here, little
34 there—and a good deal of bumping. Saw Paris a good [deal]. Miss
35 Josephine M'cleod [MacLeod], a New York friend, showed it all
36 over to me for a month. Even there, the kind American girl! Here in
37 England they know us more. Those that do not like the Hindus, they
38 hate them; those that like, they worship them.

39 It is slow work here, but sure. Not frothy, not superficial.
40 English women as a rule are not as highly educated as the
41 American women, nor are so beautiful. They are quite submissive
42 wives or hidden-away daughters or church-going mothers

1 —the embodiments of crystallized conventionality. I am going
2 to have some classes at the above address.

3 Sometimes—and generally when I score a success—I feel a
4 despondence; I feel as if everything is vain—as if this life has no
5 meaning, as if it is a waking dream. Love, friendship, religion,
6 virtue, kindness—everything, a momentary state of mind. I seem to
7 long to go; in spite of myself I say, how far—O how far! Yet the
8 body-and-mind will have to work its *Karma* out. I hope it will not be
9 bad.

10 How are you all going on? Where is Mother Church? Is she
11 interviewing the ghosts of the Thotmeses and Rameses³⁷⁶ in the
12 Pyramids—or calmly going her round of duties at home?

13 Yet the life seems to grow deep and at the same time lose its
14 hold on itself.

15 Not disgust, nor joy for life, but a sort of indifference—
16 things will take their course; who can resist—only stand by
17 and look on. Well, I will not talk about myself so much. Egregious
18 egotist! I always was that, you know. How about you all? Great fun
19 this life, isn't it? Don't go to the extremes. A calm, restful, settled
20 married life is good for the majority of mankind. Mr. [Edward T.]
21 Sturdy, the friend with whom I am living now, was in India several
22 times. He mixed with our monks and is very ascetic in his habits,
23 but he is married at last and has settled down. And [he] has got a
24 beautiful little baby. Their life is very nice. The wife, of course,
25 doesn't much care about metaphysics or Sanskrit, but her whole life
26 is in her husband—and husband's soul is in Sanskrit metaphysics!
27 Yet it is a good combination of theory and practice, I think. Write
28 me all about yourselves if you have time and inclination, and give
29 Mother Church my eternal gratitude.

30 My movements are so, so uncertain. Yet I will be a month
31 more in London.

32 With never-ending gratitude and love,

33 Vivekananda

34
35 LXXIII

36 To Sister Christine

37 228 W. 39th Street

38 [New York]

39 8th Dec. '95

40 Dear Christina,

41 I am once more on American Soil and have taken lodgings at
42 228 W. 39, where I begin work from Monday next. Sometime after

1 ³⁷⁶ ? "Thotmeses" refers to the four Egyptian pharaohs of the 18th dynasty
2 (Thutmose I, II, III and IV), who reigned from 1504 B.C. till 1391 B.C. The
3 Rameses were pharaohs of the 19th dynasty. Neither of these families built
4 pyramids but were all buried in the Valley of the Kings.
5

1 Christmas I intend to make a tour through Detroit and Chicago.

2 I do not care for public lecturings at all—and do not think I
3 shall have any more public lectures charging admission. If you will
4 see Mrs. Phelps and others of our friends and arrange some classes
5 (strictly on nonpayment basis), it will facilitate things a good deal.

6 Write at your earliest opportunity and give Mrs. Phunkey
7 [Funke] and all our friends my deepest love and gratitude.

8 Yours ever in the Lord,

9 Vivekananda

10 P.S. Kripananda is over full of praise of you and Mrs. Funkey
11 [Funke] and sends his loving regards for you.

12
13 LXXIV

14 To Sister Christine

15 228 W. 39th Street

16 [New York]

17 Dec. 10, 1895

18 Dear Christina,

19 Perhaps by this time you have received my first letter. I
20 received yours just now.

21 I had a splendid success in England and have left a *nucleus*
22 there to work till my arrival next summer. You will be aston-ished to
23 learn that some of my strongest friends are big "guns" of the
24 Church of England.

25 This Christmas I am going away a week, from 24th Decem., to
26 the country with Mr. and Mrs. Leggett—after that I resume my
27 work. In the meanwhile the classes have begun.

28 I have written to you my intention of taking a quick turn
29 through Detroit and Chicago in the meanwhile and [then] return
30 back.

31 Give Mrs. Phelps my love and kindly arrange the classes [in
32 Detroit] with her. The best thing is to arrange for a public lecture
33 where I give out my general plan of work. The Unitarian church is
34 available; and if the lecture is free, there will be a big crowd. The
35 collection most possibly will cover the expenses. Then out of this we
36 will get the materials of a big class and then hurry them through,
37 leaving Mrs. Phelps and you and Mrs. Funkey [Funke] to work on
38 with them.

39 This plan is entirely feasible and if Mrs. Phelps and Mrs.
40 Bagley desire it, they can work it out very quickly.

41 Ever yours with love and blessings,

42 Vivekananda

43
44 LXXV

1 To Sister Christine
2 228 W. 39th Street
3 New York
4 12 December 1895

5 Dear Christina,

6 I am going away out of town from the 24th of this month and
7 will come back on the 2nd of January. From the 24th-

8 the 2nd I will not be here. I will settle the dates for Detroit
9 and Chicago after hearing from you and from Chicago.

10 [Paragraph excised from the original letter.]

11 My love to Mrs. Phunkey [Funke] [excised] and all other
12 friends.

13 Ever yours in the Lord,
14 Vivekananda

15

16 LXXVI

17 To the Maharaja of Limdi,
18 Cathiawad, Bombay

19 Chicago
20 14th Dec. '95

21 Your Highness,

22 The gentleman whom I have the pleasure of introducing to
23 you was the chairman of the Parliament of Religions held in
24 Chicago.

25 He is a holy and noble gentleman. We owe him a deep debt of
26 gratitude; and as he is going to make a tour through India, I hope
27 your Highness will extend him the same hospitality as he has to us.

28 Yours with blessings,
29 Vivekananda

30

31 LXXVII

32 To the Dewan of Mysore, Madras³⁷⁷

33 Chicago,
34 the 14th Dec. '95

35 Dear Sir-

36 The gentleman I have the pleasure of introducing to you was
37 the chairman of the Chicago Parliament of religions.

38 All India owes him a deep debt of gratitude. He is now on a

1 377 ?

2 His Excellency Seshadhari Iyar, K.C.S.I.
3

1 tour through our country, and I am sure you will help him in seeing
2 your part of the country and oblige.

3 Yours with blessings,
4 Vivekananda

5
6 LXXVIII

7 To Sister Christine
8 228 W. 39th Street
9 New York

10 December 24, 1895

11 Dear Christina—

12 Merry Christmas and happy New Year to you. I am going
13 today to the country. I return in 10 days.

14 About the tour through Detroit—I will fix it later on. I am
15 afraid if I go just now, everything here will fall to pieces.

16 I will come anyway, but I am afraid it will be later than I
17 expected.

18 My love to Mrs. Phelps, Mrs. Phunkey [Funke] and all our
19 friends and Christmas greetings.

20 Ever yours in the Lord,

21 Vivekananda

22 P.S. Kripananda sends his greetings too.

23 V.

24
25 LXXIX

26 To Mrs. Ole Bull

27 228 W. 39

28 New York

29 24 December 1895

30
31 Merry Christmas and happy New Year to you, dear Mrs. Bull.
32 And may peace and health rest on you and yours for ever. I am
33 going out of town today and will be back in ten days.

34 My love to all.

35 Yours affectionately,

36 Vivekananda

37
38 LXXX

39 To the Editor of Light of the East

40 1896.

1 Dear Sir,³⁷⁸

2 Many thanks for your kindly sending me several copies of the
3 Light of the East. I wish the paper all success.

4 As you have asked for my suggestion [that] I can make
5 towards improving the paper—I must frankly state that in my
6 life-long experience in the work, I have always found "Occult-ism"
7 injurious and weakening to humanity. What we want is strength.
8 We Indians, more than any other race, want strong and vigorous
9 thought. We have enough of the superfine in all concerns. For
10 centuries we have been stuffed with the mysterious; the result is
11 that our intellectual and spiritual digestion is almost hopelessly
12 impaired, and the race has been dragged down to the depths of
13 hopeless imbecility—never before or since experienced by any other
14 civilised community. There must be freshness and vigour of thought
15 behind to make a virile race. More than enough to strengthen the
16 whole world exists in the Upanishads. The Advaita is the eternal
17 mine of strength. But it requires to be applied. It must first be
18 cleared of the incrustation of scholasticism, and then in all its
19 simplicity, beauty and sublimity be taught over the length and
20 breadth of the land, as applied even to the minutest detail of daily
21 life. "This is a very large order"; but we must work towards it,
22 nevertheless, as if it would be accomplished to-morrow. Of one
23 thing I am sure—

24 that whoever wants to help his fellow beings through genuine
25 love and unselfishness will work wonders.

26 Yours truly,
27 Vivekananda

28
29 LXXXI
30 To Mrs. Ole Bull
31 228 W. 39th street
32 New York
33 the 3rd Jan. '96

34 Dear Mrs. Bull—

35 I have had a letter from Mr. Trine³⁷⁹ asking me to have some
36 classes at the Procopeia³⁸⁰ in February. I do not see my way to go to

1 ³⁷⁸ ? This letter was published in the December 1896 issue of Light of the East,
2 a well-known monthly journal of those days, published in Calcutta. The editor,
3 Satishchandra Mukherjee, Swami Vivekananda's boyhood friend, was the third
4 son of Ishanchandra, a very dear disciple of Shri Ramakrishna.

5
6 ³⁷⁹ ?
7 Ralph Waldo Trine, a journalist who later became a well-known writer on
8 metaphysics.

9
10 ³⁸⁰ ?
11 A club in Boston that attracted a variety of metaphysicians and served as a
12 platform for their beliefs.
13

1 Boston in February, however I may like it. I have given up for the
2 present my plan of going to Detroit and Chicago in February. Later
3 on I will try. Miss [Josephine] Locke will see to my having classes in
4 Chicago and I have some friends in Detroit. I may go to Baltimore
5 for a few days in the meanwhile. I enjoyed my visit with the
6 Leggetts exceedingly. It has braced me for further work. I am very
7 well both physically and mentally.

8 Wishing you a happy New Year,
9 I remain yours affectionately,
10 Vivekananda
11

12 LXXXII

13 To Mrs. Charles (Mary) Funke
14 228 W. 39
15 New York,
16 the 6th Jan. 1896.

17 Dear Mrs. Funkey [Funke]—

18 Many, many thanks for the sweet flowers. It recalls to me the
19 beautiful times we had at the Thousand Islands and presages many
20 such summer gatherings.

21 The work here had begun in right earnest, and we will
22 advance it farther this year than in the last.

23 I am therefore uncertain as to the exact date of my coming to
24 Detroit. I will come, however, very soon.

25 Yours ever in the Lord,
26 Vivekananda
27

28 LXXXIII

29 To Mrs. Ole Bull
30 228 W. 39th Street
31 New York
32 10 January 1896

33 Dear Mrs. Bull,

34 I have received your letter and also another from the
35 Secre-tary of the Harvard Metaphysical Club.³⁸¹

36 I will be only too glad to come to Boston for the Harvard
37 lecture especially—but these are the difficulties in the way: First,
38 the work here will fall to pieces; secondly, I have begun to write in
39 right earnest. I want to finish some text books to be the basis of

1 381 ?

2 Most probably the graduate Philosophical Club of Harvard, before which
3 Swami Vivekananda spoke in March 1896.
4

1 work when I am gone. I want to hurry through four little text books
2 before I go.

3 Of course it is impossible to come this month as the notices of
4 the four Sunday lectures are out. In the first week of February I
5 have again a lecture at Brooklyn at Dr. Janes's. My idea now is to
6 make a tour to Boston, Detroit, and Chicago in March and then
7 come back to New York a week or so and then start for England. In
8 March I will be able to stay a few weeks at each of these places. Of
9 course it is true that [as] yet I have no competent persons here to
10 carry on the work like Sturdy in England, nor any sincere friend to
11 stand by me except you.

12 I will do anything you want me to, and if you think it is good
13 for me to come to Boston in February, I am ready.

14 Ever yours with gratitude, love, and blessings

15 Vivekananda

16 P.S. I have not much faith in that Procopeia business,³⁸²
17 except as a nucleus to work from.

18 My love to Miss Hamlin and all the other friends there.

19 Yours, V.

20
21 LXXXIV

22 To Sister Christine

23 24th Jan. '95 ['96]

24 Dear Christina,

25 I have not heard from you [for] long. Hope everything is going
26 on well with you and Mrs. Phunkey [Funke].

27 Did you receive my poem?³⁸³ I had a letter from Mrs. Phelps
28 today. I am coming to Detroit next March early, as I will have to
29 finish my February course in New York. The public lectures will be
30 printed as they are delivered right along. The class lectures will
31 very soon be collected and edited in little volumes.

32 May the Lord bless you ever and ever.

33 Yours ever with love and blessings,

34 Vivekananda

35
36 LXXXV

37 To Mrs. Ole Bull

38 228 W. 39

1 ³⁸² ?

2 The Procopeia Club.

3
4 ³⁸³ ?

5 "To an Early Violet", written January 6, 1896. *Vide* Complete Works, VIII:
6 169.

1 New York
2 the 6th of Feb. '96

3 Dear Mrs. Bull—

4 I received your last duly, but owing to many things I have
5 given up the idea of taking rest next month. I go to Detroit the first
6 week of March and then, towards the middle or last week, come to
7 Boston. I have not much faith in working such things as the
8 Procopeia [Club] etc.—because these mixed-up conglomerations of
9 all isms and ities—mostly fads—disturb the steadiness of the mind,
10 and life becomes a mass of frivolities. I am very glad, however, to
11 get an opportunity to talk to the graduates of Harvard. This does
12 not mean that I am not coming to Procopeia. I will come but it will
13 be only for your sake. There is one *if*, however—and that is if I am
14 physically able. My health has nearly broken down. I have not slept
15 even one night soundly in New York since I came; and this year
16 there is incessant work, both with the pen and the mouth. The
17 accumulated work and worry of years is on me now, I am afraid.
18 Then a big struggle awaits me in England. I wish to go to the
19 bottom of the sea and have a good, long sleep.

20 To Detroit I must go, dead or alive, as I have disappointed
21 them several times last year. There were big money offers from
22 near Chicago. I have rejected them as I do not any longer believe in
23 paid lectures and their utility in any country. If after Detroit I feel
24 the body able to drag itself on to Boston, I will come, else I will
25 remain in Detroit or some other quiet place and rest to recuperate
26 for the coming work in England. So far I have tried to work
27 conscientiously—let the fruits belong to the Lord. If they were good
28 they will sprout up sooner or later; if bad, the sooner they die the
29 better. I am quite satisfied with my task in life. I have been much
30 more active than a Sannyasin ought to be. Now I will disappear
31 from society altogether. The touch of the world is degenerating me,
32 I am sure, so it is time to be off. Work has no more value beyond
33 purifying the heart. My heart is pure enough; why shall I bother my
34 head about doing good to others? "If you have known the Atman as
35 the one, only existence and nothing else exists, desiring what?—for
36 whose desire you trouble yourself?"³⁸⁴ This universe is a dream,
37 pure and simple. Why bother myself about a dream? The very
38 atmosphere of the world is poison to the Yogi, but I am waking up.
39 My old iron heart is coming back—all attachments of relatives,
40 friends, disciples are vanishing fast. "Neither through wealth nor
41 through progeny, but by giving up everything as chaff is that
42 immortality attained"³⁸⁵—the Vedas. I am so tired of talking too; I
43 want to close my lips and sit in silence for years. All talk is
44 nonsense.

45 Yours faithfully,

46 Vivekananda

1 ³⁸⁴ ? Brihadâraṇyaka Upanishad 4.4.12 (adapted).
2

3 ³⁸⁵ ? Mahânârâyaṇa Upanishad 12.14 (adapted) and *Taittirīya Aranyaka*
4 10.10.21. (adapted).
5

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LXXXVI

To Miss Emma Thursby
228 West 39th Street
New York,
February 26th, 1896

Dear Miss Thursby,

Will you oblige me by giving Mr. Goodwin any particulars you can with reference to the business arrangements made for my 6 lectures with Miss Corbin. He will see her, with the idea of obtaining payment.

Thanking you in anticipation, and with best regards,
Very truly yours,
Vivekananda

LXXXVII

To Shri Giridharidas Mangaldas Viharidas Desai
228 West 39th Street
New York
2 March 1896

Dear Friend,

Excuse my delay in replying to your beautiful note.

Your uncle³⁸⁶ was a great soul, and his whole life was given to doing good to his country. Hope you will all follow in his footsteps.

I am coming to India this winter, and cannot express my sorrow that I will not see Haribhai once more.

He was a strong, noble friend, and India has lost a good deal in losing him.

I am going to England very soon where I intend to pass the summer, and in winter next I come to India.

Recommend me to your uncles and friends.
Ever always the well-wisher of your family,
Vivekananda

PS: My England address is: C/o E. T. Sturdy, Esq., High View, Caversham, Reading, England.

LXXXVIII

To Sister Christine

³⁸⁶ ? Shri Haridas Viharidas Desai, the deceased Dewan of Junagadh, who had been a loyal friend and supporter of Swami Vivekananda.

1 C/o the Procopeia
2 45 St., Botolph Street
3 Boston, Mass.
4 22nd March '96

5 Dear Christina,

6 Herewith [words excised] to countersign it and put it [words
7 excised]. I am afraid I have made a mistake in writing Miss to your
8 name. In that case you will have to sign also as Miss etc.

9 I am enjoying Boston very much, especially the old friends
10 here.

11 They are all kind. Reply promptly. Write fully later on.

12 With everlasting love and blessings,

13 Yours etc.,

14 Vivekananda

15

16 LXXXIX

17 To Mrs. Charles (Mary) Funke

18 C/o the Procopeia

19 45 St., Botolph Street

20 Boston, Mass.

21 22nd March '96.

22 Dear Mrs. Funkey [Funke]—

23 I had no time to write a line even, I was so busy. I am
24 enjoying Boston immensely, only hard work. The meeting with old
25 friends is very pleasing, no doubt. The so-called class swelled up to
26 500 people last night and, am afraid, will go on increasing.
27 Everything going on splendidly. Mr. Goodwin as nice as ever. We
28 are all friends here. I go next week to Chicago.

29 Hope everything is going on well with you there. Kindly give
30 my love to Mrs. Phelps, Mr. Phelps and all the rest of my friends.

31 With all love and blessings,

32 Yours,

33 Vivekananda

34

35 XC

36 To Sister Christine

37 1628 Indiana Ave.

38 Chicago, Ill.

39 [April 6, 1896]

40 Dear Christina,

1 [Line excised.] reply as soon as possible.

2 I am going forward to New York on Thursday [April 9] and
3 [will] start for England on the 15th of April.

4 Goodby and love to you all—to Mrs. Funkey [Funke], to Mrs.
5 Phelps and all the rest of our friends.

6 In this life we meet and part again and again; but the mind is
7 omnipresent and can be, hear, and feel anywhere.

8 Yours with love and blessings,

9 Vivekananda

10 P.S. Give Kripananda and Miss [Martha] Hamilton my love
11 and blessings when you meet them next.

12 V.

13

14 [Written in the margin:] I will go to New York next Friday
15 [April 10].

16

17 XCI

18 To Sister Christine

19 High View, Caversham

20 Reading, London.

21 26th April '96

22 Dear Christina,

23 How are things going on with you? I am all safe and sound
24 here in England. Going to begin work from May fourth. How is Mrs.
25 Funkey [Funke]?

26 Give them all my Love. Write me all about yourself and Mrs.
27 Funkey when you have time. Address me at 63 St., George's Road,
28 S.W. London.

29 Where is Krip. [Swami Kripananda]? What is he doing now?
30 Has he been able to get up any classes yet? Has his temper gone
31 down?

32 Give them all my love—and [to] Miss Hamilton and to all my
33 friends and to the Rabbi [Grossman of Detroit].

34 Yours ever with love and blessings,

35 Vivekananda

36

37 XCII

38 To Mrs. Ole Bull

39 63 St George's Road

40 London. S.W.

41 May 8, 1896

1 Dear Mrs. Bull—

2 Your last letter to Sturdy at hand. They, I am sorry to say,
3 leave us nowhere. I could not make anything out of them.

4 What are we to do? Is the book going to be published or not?
5 Prof. [William] James's introduction³⁸⁷ is of no use in England. So
6 why wait so long for that; and what use are those long explanations
7 about him?

8 Our hands are tied down. Why do you not write something
9 plain and decisive? Life is short and time is flying. I am so sorry you
10 are losing sight of that. Your letters are full of explanations [and]
11 directions, but not one word *about what is to be done!!!* So much
12 red tape about printing a little book!! Empires are managed with
13 less manipulation than that, I am sure!! So kindly write at your
14 earliest something precise about the book and whether it is going to
15 be printed or not, and pray make the writing a little legible.

16 Poor Sturdy is out of his wits as to what to do; he has gone
17 through the Mss. long ago.

18 Joking apart, I am very sorry you are not coming over this
19 year. We are in Lady Isabel's house.³⁸⁸ Miss [Henrietta] Müller has
20 taken some rooms in it too. Goodwin is here with us. We have not
21 yet made any big stir here. The classes have begun; they are not yet
22 what we expected. We [have] had only two yet.

23 We will work on steadily the next 4 or 5 months. Sturdy is as
24 patient and persevering and hopeful as ever.

25 It is cool enough here yet to have a fire in the grate.

26 Give my love to Mrs. Adams, Miss Thursby and all other
27 friends. My love to Mr. Fox and blessings.

28 Yours with love and blessings,

29 Vivekananda

30

31 XCIII

32 To Mr. Francis Leggett³⁸⁹

33 63 St. George's Road, London, S.W.

34 6th July 1896

35 To Francis Leggett, Esq.

36 Dear Sir,

37 Herewith I constitute you as my attorney and representative

1 ³⁸⁷ ?

2 Preface to Swami Vivekananda's *Râja-Yoga*.

3
4 ³⁸⁸ ?

5 The house was rented from Lady Isabel Margesson.

6
7 ³⁸⁹ ? Swami Vivekananda enclosed the following document in a July 6, 1896
8 letter written to Francis Leggett.
9

1 in regards to all publication pamphlets etc., written or dictated by
2 me, their copyright, sale, etc., in the U.S. of America.

3 Yours affectionately,

4 Vivekananda

5
6 XCIV

7 To Mrs. Ole Bull

8 63 St. George's Road, London, S.W.

9 6th July 1896

10 Dear Mrs. Bull—

11 I have sent to Mr. Leggett by last mail the power of attor-ney,
12 and, as you desired, this is to notify you of the fact and absolve you
13 from the responsibilities of the power of attorney which I gave you
14 in America last year.

15 Yours affectionately,

16 Vivekananda

17 Saradananda and Goodwin have arrived, I am sure, by this
18 time. I have a nice letter from Dr. Jain [Dr. Lewis G. Janes]. I am
19 going to Switzerland for a vacation in a few days. I mean to stay
20 there a month or more. I will return to London in the next fall. I do
21 not know when I go back to India.

22 Things are growing nicely here.

23 With love to all,

24 Yours affectionately,

25 Vivekananda

26
27 XCV

28 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

29 July 7, 1896

30 Dear Mother—

31 [On the] 18th of this month I start for Switzerland for a
32 holiday. I will come back to London again to work in the Autumn.
33 The work in England bids fair to be much better and deeper than in
34 the U.S. And here in London is the heart of India also. Where are
35 you now? I am passing through Geneva on my way to the Hills. I
36 will be there a day or two.

37 If you be somewhere near, I will make it a point to come to
38 see you. Did you hear Annie Besant? How did you like her? What
39 about your plans of going to India next winter? What about the
40 innocents³⁹⁰ at home? I haven't had any news of them. My love to

1 390 ?

2 Mary and Harriet Hale and Isabelle and Harriet McKindley.

1 Father Pope, Mother Temple³⁹¹ and yourself. Kindly answer as I will
2 be only a few days here.

3 Ever yours with love and gratitude,
4 Vivekananda

5
6 XCVI

7 A letter to the editor, which appeared in the July 11, 1896
8 issue of the Light

9 63, St. George's-road, S.W.

10 Sir,

11 Allow me to put a few words in your estimable journal as
12 comments on an article in your paper dated July 4th. I must thank
13 you without reserve for the kind and friendly spirit manifested
14 throughout the article towards me and the philosophy I preach; but,
15 as there is a fear of misconstruction in one part of it—especially by
16 my Spiritualistic friends—I want to clear my position. The truth of
17 correspondence between the living and the dead is, I believe, in
18 every religion, and nowhere more than in the Vedantic sects of
19 India, where the fact of mutual help between the departed and the
20 living has been made the basis of the law of inheritance. I would be
21 very sorry if I be mistaken as antagonistic to any sect or form of
22 religion, so far as they are sincere. Nor do I hold that any system
23 can ever be judged by the frauds and failures that would naturally
24 gather round every method under the present circumstances. But,
25 all the same, I cannot but believe that every thoughtful person
26 would agree with me when I affirm that people should be warned of
27 their dangers, with love and sympathy. The lecture alluded to could
28 but accidentally touch the subject of Spiritualism; but I take this
29 opportunity of conveying my deep admiration for the Spiritualist
30 community for the positive good they have done already, and are
31 doing still: (1) the preaching of a universal sympathy; (2) the still
32 greater work of helping the human race out of doctrines which
33 inculcate fear and not love. Ever ready to co-operate with, and at
34 the service of, all who are striving to bring the light of the spirit,

35 I remain yours sincerely,
36 Vive Kananda

37
38
39 XCVII

40 To Mrs. Ole Bull

41 63 St. George's Road

42 18th July '96

43 Dear Mrs. Bull,

1 391 ?

2 Mrs. James Matthews, Mr. Hale's sister.

1 I received your last note duly—and you already know my
2 gratitude and love for you and that I perfectly agree with most of
3 your ideas and work.

4 I did not understand, however, one point. You speak of Sturdy
5 and myself being members. Members of what? I, as you well know,
6 can not become a member of any society.

7 I am very glad to learn that you have been favourably
8 impressed by Saradananda. There is one big mistake you are
9 labouring under. What do you mean of [my] writing to my workers
10 more confidentially and not to you? I seldom write to

11 anyone—I have no time to write. I have no workers. Everyone
12 is independent to work as one likes. I do not bother my head about
13 these little things at all. I can give ideas—that is all; let people work
14 them out any way they like, and Godspeed to all.

15 "He who works unattached to persons and giving up the fruits
16 of work is a genuine worker"—Gitâ.

17 Yours Ever with love and gratitude,

18 Vivekananda

19
20 XCVIII

21 To Sister Christine

22 [Postmarked: Saas-Fee]

23 Switzerland

24 5th August 1896

25 Blessed and Beloved,

26 Surrounded on all sides by eternal snow peaks, sitting on the
27 grass in a beautiful wood, my thoughts go to those I love—

28 so I write.

29 I am in Switzerland—constantly on the move—getting a much
30 needed rest. It is a miniature Himalayas, and has the same effect of
31 raising the mind up to the Self and driving away all earthly feelings
32 and ties. I am intensely enjoying it. I feel so, so uplifted. I cannot
33 write, but I wish you will have the same for ever—when your feet do
34 not want, as it were, to touch the material earth—when the soul
35 finds itself floating, as it were, in an ocean of spirituality.

36 Prof. Max Müller has written in the *Nineteenth Century* an
37 article on my Master. Read it if you can—August number.

38 I hope you are enjoying this beautiful summer and are per-
39 fectly rested after hard work.

40 My love to all. Blessings to all.

41 Yours ever with love and blessings,

42 Vivekananda

43 P.S. A few Alpine flowers growing almost in the midst of
44 eternal snow I send you, praying that you may attain spiritual

1 hardihood amidst all snows and ice of this life.

2 V.

3

4 XCIX

5 To Sister Christine

6 Airlie Lodge, Ridgeway Gardens

7 Wimbledon, England

8 October 6, 1896

9 Dear Christina,

10 I am sure you got my letter from Switzerland.

11 I am now in London, back after having travelled through
12 Germany and Holland.

13 How are things going with you? Had you a nice summer?
14 How are you physically and spiritually? How is Mrs. Fhunkey
15 [Funke] and all the other friends? Have you any news of Baby?³⁹²
16 Where is Kr [Kripananda] and what is he doing now?

17 I have another Sannyasin over here with me now, who will
18 work here whilst I am away to India, where I go this winter.

19 I will write to you *in extenso* later; tonight it is so late and I
20 am so weary.

21 With all love and blessings,

22 Yours,

23 Vivekananda

24

25 C

26 To Sister Nivedita

27 14, Greycoat Gardens

28 Westminster

29 October 29, 1896

30 Dear Miss [Margaret] Noble—

31 I will be at yours on Friday next, at 4 p.m.

32 I did not know of any arrangements made to meet anybody
33 Friday last, hence my absence.

34 Yours,

35 Vivekananda

36

37 CI

1 ³⁹² ? Stella Campbell, one of Swami Vivekananda's students at Thousand Island
2 Park.
3

1 To Sister Nivedita
2 14, Greycoat Gardens
3 Westminster, S.W.
4 5 December 1896

5 Dear Miss Noble—

6 Many thanks for sending the kind present from Mr. Beatty. I
7 have written to him acknowledging his beautiful gift.

8 As for you, my dear, noble, kind friend, I only would say
9 this—we Indians lack in many things, but there is none on earth to
10 beat us in gratefulness. I remain,

11 Ever yours gratefully,
12 Vivekananda

13
14 CII

15 To Sister Christine

16 On board *PRINZ REGENT LUITPOLD*
17 3rd January 1897.

18 Dear Christina,

19 By two p.m. today I reach Port Said. Asia once more. I have
20 not heard from you [for] long. Hope everything is going on well with
21 you. How are Mrs. Funke, Mrs. Phelps, and all other friends?

22 My love to all. Write when you feel like it.

23 Vivekananda.

24 CIII

25 To the Madras Committee

26 [After Swami Vivekananda arrived at Colombo on Friday,
27 January 15, 1897, the Madras Committee, which was planning a
28 reception for the Swami, sent the following message: "Mother-land
29 rejoices to welcome you back". In reply, Swami Viveka-nanda sent a
30 wire.]

31

32 [Postmarked: January 15, 1897]

33 MY LOVE AND GRATITUDE TO MY COUNTRYMEN.

34

35 CIV

36 To the Hindu Students of Trichinopoly³⁹³

1 ³⁹³ ? A deputation consisting of Messrs. K. S. Krishnamachari and S. M. Raja
2 Ram waited upon Swami Vivekananda in the "Nilgiri Hall", Kumbha-konam, with
3 a memorial signed by about 750 students (representing the students' population
4 of Trichinopoly) requesting the Swami to stay at least one or two days. This was
5 the reply given by Swami Vivekananda. It was published in the Madras Standard
6 of February 16, 1897.

1 [February 16, 1897]

2 Gentlemen,

3 I have received your address with great pleasure and sin-
4 cerely thank you for the kind expressions contained therein.

5 I much regret, however, that time effectually prevents my
6 paying even a short visit to Trichinopoly at present. In the autumn,
7 however, I propose making a lecture tour throughout India, and you
8 may rely upon it that I shall then not fail to include Trichinopoly in
9 the programme.

10 Again thanking you, and with my blessings to all.

11 Sincerely yours,

12 Vivekananda.

13

14 CV

15 To Sister Christine

16 Darjeeling,

17 [Return Address: Alambazar Math, Calcutta]

18 16th March 1897.

19 Dear Christina,

20 Many, many thanks for the photograph and the poem. I never
21 saw anything half as beautiful. The work I had to do to reach
22 Calcutta from Ceylon was so immense that I could not earlier
23 acknowledge your precious gift. The work has broken me down
24 completely, and I have got "diabetes", an incurable disease, which
25 must carry me off—at least in a few years.

26 I am now writing to you from Darjeeling, the nearest hill
27 station to Calcutta, with a climate as cool as London. It has revived
28 me a bit. If I live, I will come to America next year or so.

29 How are things going on with you all? How are Mrs. Funkey
30 [Funke] and Mrs. Phelps?

31 Are you laying by a few dollars whenever you can? That is
32 very important.

33 I am in a hurry for the mail. You will be glad to know that the
34 Indian people have, as it were, risen in a mass to honour me. I am
35 the idol of the day. Mr. Goodwin is going to publish in book form all
36 the addresses given to me and the speeches in reply. The
37 demonstrations all over have been simply unique.

38 Yours with all love,

39 Vivekananda.

40

41 CVI

42 To Mrs. Ole Bull

1 Alambazar Math

2 Calcutta

3 [Darjeeling]

4 26th March 1897

5 Dear Mrs. Bull—

6 The demonstrations and national jubilations over me are
7 over—at least I had to cut them short, as my health broke com-
8 pletely down. The result of this steady work in the West and the
9 tremendous work of a month in India upon the Bengalee consti-
10 tution is "diabetes". It is a hereditary foe and is destined to carry
11 me off, at best, in a few years' time. Eating only meat and drinking
12 no water seems to be the only way to prolong life—and, above all,
13 perfect rest for the brain. I am giving my brain the needed rest in
14 Darjeeling, from where I am writing you now.

15 I am so glad to hear about Saradananda's success. Give him
16 my best love and do not allow him [to] do too *much work*. The
17 Bengalee body is not the same as the American.

18 Mr. Chatterjy (Mohini) came to see me in Calcutta, and he
19 was very friendly. I gave him your message. He is quite willing to
20 work with me. Nothing more to write, only I am bent upon seeing
21 my monastery started; and as soon as that is done, I come to
22 America once more.

23 By the by, I will send to you a young lady from England—

24 one Gertrude Orchard. She has been a governess, but she has
25 talent in art etc., and I wished her to try her chance in America. I
26 will give her a letter to you and Mrs. [Florence] Adams.

27 With my love to Mrs. Adams, Miss Thursby, Miss Farmer (the
28 noble sister) and all the rest of our friends.

29 With eternal love and gratitude,

30 Yours affectionately,

31 Vivekananda

32
33 CVII*

34 To Pandit Ram Ram Samjami

35 Darjeeling

36 [April] 1897

37 Dear Ram Ram,

38 I received your first letter in Calcutta. I was busy there, and
39 so it seems that I forgot to reply. You have deplored this in your
40 letter, but that is not right. I do not forget anyone—especially those
41 who have received grace from "Him".

42 While I was in England, I received your Avadhuta-Gitâ. It is
43 beautifully printed. You mentioned *Karma-Yoga*—I do not have that
44 book with me. It was printed in Madras. If there are any copies at

1 the Math, I shall ask them to send one to you.

2 I have been very sick, so right now I am staying at
3 Dar-jeeling. As soon as I feel better, I shall return to Calcutta. . . .

4 Please accept my special love. I pray for your welfare always.

5 Yours etc.,

6 Vivekananda

7

8 CVIII

9 To Sister Nivedita

10 Darjeeling,

11 3rd April 1897.

12 Dear Miss Noble,

13 I have just found a bit of important work for you to do on
14 behalf of the downtrodden masses of India.

15 The gentleman I take the liberty of introducing to you is in
16 England on behalf of the Tiyas, a plebeian caste in the native State
17 of Malabar.

18 You will realize from this gentleman what an amount of
19 tyranny there is over these poor people, simply because of their
20 caste.

21 The Indian Government has refused to interfere on grounds
22 of non-interference in the internal administration of a native State.
23 The only hope of these people is the English Parliament. Do kindly
24 everything in your power to help this matter [in] being brought
25 before the British Public.

26 Ever yours in the truth,

27 Vivekananda.

28

29 CIX

30 To Lala Badri Sah of Almora

31 Darjeeling

32 7th April '97.

33 Dear Lalajee,

34 Just received your kind invitation through telegram. Perhaps
35 you have already heard that I have been attacked by "Dia-betes", a
36 fell disease.

37 That unsettled all our plans, and I had to run up to
38 Dar-jeeling, it being very cool and very good for the disease.

39 I have felt much better since, and the doctors therefore do
40 not want me to move about, as that brings about a relapse. If my
41 present state of health continues for a month or two, I think I will
42 be in a condition to come down to the plains and come to Almora to
43 see you all. I am very sorry that I have caused you a good deal of

1 trouble, but you see it could not be helped—the body was not under
2 my control.

3 With all love to yourself and other friends in Almora.

4 Yours affectionately,

5 Vivekananda

6
7 CX

8 To Lala Badri Sah

9 Devaldhar Bagicha,³⁹⁴

10 Thursday, [June 1897]

11 Dear Badri Sah,

12 I have been very sorry to learn that you are not well. It would
13 please me very much if you would come down here for a few days,
14 at any rate, with us; and I am sure it would do you good.

15 Yours with blessings,

16 Vivekananda.

17
18 CXI

19 To Mrs. Francis Leggett

20 Almora

21 20 June '97

22 Dear Mother—

23 Herewith I take the liberty to introduce to you Miss Tremayne
24 of London, a particular friend of mine going over to the States.

25 Any help given to her would greatly oblige.

26 Yours in the Lord,

27 Vivekananda

28
29 CXII

30 To Mrs. Ole Bull

31 Almora

32 20 June '97

33 Dear Mrs. Bull—

34 Herewith I take the liberty of introducing Miss Tremayne of
35 London.

1 ³⁹⁴ ? When Swami Vivekananda visited Almora in the summer of 1897, he was
2 the guest of Lala Badri Sah for about two and a half months. During this period
3 the Swami primarily stayed at Badri Sah's house in the bazaar and occasionally
4 retreated to the garden-house of the Sahs at Devaldhar, about twenty miles north
5 of Almora. In Hindi, the word *Bagicha* means "garden".
6

1 I like nothing so much as being serviceable to young and
2 energetic persons—and any help given to her in America will greatly
3 oblige.

4 Yours in the Lord,
5 Vivekananda

6
7 CXIII

8 To Mr. Sukanathan, Colombo
9 Almora

10 30th June 1897.

11 My dear Friend,

12 The bearer of this note, Swami Shivananda, is [being] sent to
13 Ceylon, as promised by me during my sojourn. He is quite fit for the
14 work entrusted to his care, of course, with your kind help.

15 I hope you will introduce him to other Ceylon friends.

16 Yours ever in the Lord,
17 Vivekananda

18
19 CXIV*

20 To Swami Shivananda
21 Almora,
22 The 9th July 1897

23 Dear Shivananda,³⁹⁵

24 I haven't received any word of your arrival yet. I heard that
25 Alasinga has gone there with his relations by way of Jaipur. We
26 stayed at the Binsar Dak Bungalow [rest-house] for two or three
27 days, and then I left for Shyamdhura. At this, Miss [Henrietta]
28 Müller got infuriated and left for Almora. Terribly upset, Miss
29 Müller accused Shivananda of telling her first that I shall live with a
30 friend as his guest and of renting later such a big house for the
31 season at 80 rupees without consulting her. Very cross with
32 everybody, she has been reproving one and all but

33 has cooled down a little when I said I would pay half of the
34 rent. . . .

35 Shashi himself [Swami Ramakrishnananda] should handle the
36 entire amount of 100 rupees which the Raja of Ramnad is donating
37 (every month); he should send a detailed account of the monthly
38 income and expenditure to the Math—otherwise there won't be any
39 check. Advise him to spend as little as necessary on Thakur's³⁹⁶

1 ³⁹⁵ ? This address was written in English.

2
3 ³⁹⁶ ?

4 *Thakur* is a Bengali word, which means "lord" or "master" and, in this case,
5 refers to Shri Ramakrishna.

1 worship, for the money is [primarily] "for propagation of Truth".³⁹⁷

2 In case Gupta [Swami Sadananda] has lost his mental bal-
3 ance, ask him to come to Almora—but only when the boy selected
4 for Shashi reaches there. I received a letter from R. A. [Rajam
5 Aiyer?]. The money he sent has reached the Math. I have received
6 two volumes of Ramanuja's commentary. Advise him to send me the
7 third. Ask G. G. [Narasimhachari] to send me similar commentaries
8 by Madhva and others, if he can.

9 A public meeting will have to be organized at Madras to
10 present an address of welcome to the Raja [Ajit Singh] of Khetri
11 and to Pratap Singh of Jodhpur for their boldness in visiting
12 England as well as for representing their principalities in India in
13 the Jubilee celebration. This has to be done on their return to India,
14 but for that you have to endeavour from now on. Please go to
15 Colombo and arrange a similar public meeting there.

16 Give my love to Kidi [Singararelu Mudaliar] and Doctor
17 [Nanjunda Rao]; ask Kidi why he hasn't written to me. What is
18 wrong with him? Has he lost his devotion? Bear this in mind that
19 you should not assume a teacher's place in the beginning. Do all
20 your work with humility; otherwise everything will crumble to
21 pieces. Please see that there is no opposition, criticism or obstacles
22 to Shashi's work in Madras, for everybody should obey
23 him—whoever may be in charge of a particular centre. If Shashi
24 goes to Ceylon, he will have to obey your authority, etc. Make sure
25 that every centre sends a weekly report to the Math. I have not
26 seen a single one from Shashi yet. "O Rama! How hard it is to turn
27 a donkey into a horse, even by beating!"

28 Above all "obedience" and "esprit de corps".³⁹⁸ The work
29 cannot succeed unless there is perfect obedience to the authority of
30 the Order and sacrifice of individual views for the sake of the
31 Order. *Trinair gunatvam âpannair badhyante mattadantinah—*

32 "Blades of grass woven into a rope can restrain even
33 mad elephants".

34 With love to Sashi and Gupta,³⁹⁹

35 Vivekananda

36

37 CXV

38 To Sister Christine

39 Khetri,

1

2 ³⁹⁷ ?

3 The phrase "for propagation of Truth" was written in English.

4

5 ³⁹⁸ ?

6 Swami Vivekananda wrote this sentence in English. The French phrase *esprit de*
7 *corps* means "the spirit of loyalty".

8

9 ³⁹⁹ ? This closing was also written in English.

10

1 13th December 1897.

2 My dear Christina,

3 How funny all these dreams and evil prognostications of
4 yours! You don't want to send me evil influences by thinking that
5 way of me! I will be only too glad to lose 50 lbs. of my weight. A
6 little rest puffs me up, and I am the same bloated monk as ever.

7 I am all right except [for] a bad cold the last few days, owing
8 to exposure and travel in the desert. I thank you for the letter
9 though. I am pleased with it enormously, as it shows the mind.

1 Give Mrs. Funkey [Funke], Baby [Stella Campbell], and all the
2 rest my love, and, as you know, yourself—

3 Yours ever in the Lord,

4 Vivekananda.

5 PS—I will write a better note when this cold has left.

6 V.

7 CXVI

8 To Sister Christine

9 Jodhpur, Rajputana,

10 4th January 1898.

11
12 Love and greetings etc. to thee, dear Christina, and a happy
13 New Year. May it find you younger in heart, stronger in body, and
14 purer in spirit.

15 I am still travelling in season and out of season. Lecturing
16 some, working a good deal.

17 Have you seen Mr. [Edward T.] Sturdy of England, who, I
18 learn, has been to Detroit? Did you like him?

19 I am quite well and strong. Hope to meet you this blessed
20 year again in America.

21 I am going to Calcutta in a few days, where I intend to be the
22 rest of this cold weather. Next summer, I start for England or
23 America most probably.

24 Yours ever in the Lord,

25 Vivekananda.

26 CXVII

27 To Sister Nivedita

28 Calcutta

29 30th January 1898

30 My dear Miss Noble,

31 This is to introduce Prof. M. Gupta,⁴⁰⁰ who has been already
32 introduced to you on board the boat that brought you over to shore.

1 ⁴⁰⁰ ? Mahendra Nath Gupta, the writer of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*.
2

1 He has very kindly consented to devote an hour or more every
2 day to teach you Bengali. I need not state that he is a genuine, good
3 and great soul.

4 Ever yours in the Lord,

5 Vivekananda

6 P.S. I am afraid you felt badly today.

7 V.

8 CXVIII

9 To Sister Christine

10 The Math, Beloor, Howrah Dist.,

11 Bengal, India,

12 11th March 1898.

13 My dear Christina,

14 I simply wonder what has become of you. It is an age [that] I
15 did not hear from you, and I expected so much after Sturdy's visit to
16 Detroit. How did you like the man? What about Baby and the
17 Devendorfs? How is Mrs. Funkey [Funke]? What are you going to
18 do this summer? Take rest, dear Christina; I am sure you require it
19 badly.

20 Mrs. Bull of Boston and Miss MacLeod of New York are now
21 in India. We have changed our Math from the old, nasty house to a
22 house on the banks of the Ganges. This is much more healthy and
23 beautiful. We have also got a good piece of land very near on the
24 same side where Mrs. Bull and Miss MacLeod are putting up now.
25 It is wonderful how they accommodate themselves to our Indian life
26 of privation and hardship! My, these Yanks can do anything! After
27 the luxuries of Boston and New York, to be quite content and happy
28 in this wretched little house!! We intend to travel a bit together in
29 Kashmir, and then I come to America with them and am sure to get
30 a hearty welcome from my friends. What do you think? Is it
31 welcome news to you? Of course, I cannot undergo the same
32 amount of work as before; that, dear Christina, I am sorry, I will no
33 more be able to do. I will do a little work and [take] a good deal of
34 rest. No more getting crowds and making noise, but quiet, silent,
35 personal work will be all I intend to do.

1 This time I will quietly come and quietly go away, seeing only
2 my old friends, and no noise.

3 Write soon, as I am so anxious.

4 Ever yours in the Lord,

5 Vivekananda.

6 "There are two sorts of persons—one sort has the heart of
7 water, the other of stone. The one easily takes an impression, and
8 as easily throws it off; the other seldom takes an impression, but
9 once it takes, it is there for ever. Nay, the more they struggle to
10 cast it off, the more it cuts deep into the stone soul."—R. K.
11 [Ramakrishna] Paramahansa

12 CXIX

13 To Sister Nivedita

14 Math, Belur.

15 Howrah, Bengal.

16 16th March 1898.

17 My dear Margaret,

18 It is needless to let you know, you have fulfilled all my
19 expectations in your last lecture.

20 It appears to me that the platform is the great field where you
21 will be of great help to me, apart from your educational plans. I am
22 glad to learn that Miss [Henrietta] Müller is going to have a place
23 on the river. Are you also going to Darjeeling? So you will all the
24 better work after a trip up there! Next season I am planning a
25 series of lectures for you all over India.

26 Ever yours with all love and blessings,

27 [Stamp with Swamiji's portrait]

28 The Calcutta Boy.

29 CXX

30 To Mrs. Ole Bull

31 Darjeeling

32 the 4th April '98

33 My dear Dhira Mata—

34 I am afraid you are getting roasted down there in the heat of
35 Calcutta. Here it is nice and cool and rather chill when it rains,

1 which it does almost every day. Yesterday the view of the
2 snows was simply superb, and it is the most picturesque city in the
3 world; there is such a mass of colour everywhere, especially in the
4 dress of the Lepchas and Bhutias and the Paharees. Had it not been
5 for the awful, corrugated iron roofs everywhere, it would have been
6 twenty times more picturesque.

7 My health was not bad in Calcutta; here it is the same—

8 only, the sugar has entirely disappeared, the specific gravity
9 being only 13. I slept very well last night too; but the morning ride
10 up, or climb, of a few miles is proving too much for my adipose
11 tissues. The flannel clothes only made me worse, so I have given
12 them up and have gone to my summer dress and am all right.

13 I have sent you Sturdy's letter already—poor fellow—I do not
14 know what to do for him. He is really "living in a desert of his own
15 making"—you see, one thing is not good for every one. Marriage has
16 indeed proved a hell for Sturdy. And he can not come, although "he
17 is skirting the coast of India". Lord help the poor boy. May He cut
18 all his bonds and make him free soon. Aye, it is good that he is
19 feeling the bondage—and not "hug-ging and kissing its spokes of
20 agony".

21 I gave a little lecture to the Hindus here yesterday, and I told
22 them all their defects purposely and with their permission. I hope it
23 will make them howl.

24 Miss Müller has taken a bungalow here and she is coming on
25 Wednesday. I do not know whether Miss Noble is coming with her.
26 She [Miss Noble] had better be your guest in Kashmir as according
27 to our plan.

28 Have you got that place yet or changed [places]? I am going
29 to Kashmir anyway, as I have promised.

30 I will be here only a few days and then I come to Calcutta, to
31 be there only a week—and [then] I start for the N.W. Of course this
32 is not the time to see anything in the N.W.P.;⁴⁰¹ everything is
33 burning there. Yet that heat is much healthier than that of Bengal.

34 Ever yours in the Lord,

35 Vivekananda

⁴⁰¹ ? North-West Provinces, now Uttar Pradesh.

1 CXXI
 2 To Munshi Jagmohanlal
 3 Ballen Ville
 4 Darjeeling
 5 15 April 1898
 6 My dear Jagmohan,⁴⁰²
 7 If you can find out all the letters that I addressed to H.H. on
 8 my way to—and stay in—Japan, Europe and America, please do send
 9 them carefully packed, under registered cover, to my address in the
 10 Math, as early as possible.
 11 With blessing to you,
 12 I remain,
 13 Yours truly,
 14 Vivekananda
 15 CXXII
 16 To Miss Josephine MacLeod
 17 Darjeeling
 18 19th April '98
 19 My dear Miss MacLeod,
 20 Miss Müller is very glad to learn that you intend inviting Miss
 21 Noble to join our party to Kashmir.
 22 It has her hearty approval. On her way back, Miss Müller will
 23 start something for her in Calcutta. She need not come to
 24 Darjeeling at all.
 25 Hope you are enjoying the baking quite a bit. I start this week
 26 most probably.
 27 Ever yours in the Lord,
 28 Vivekananda

1 ⁴⁰² ? The Dewan and private secretary of Maharaja Ajit Singh of Khetri.
 2

1 CXXIII
 2 To the Officer in Charge of Telegrams, Srinagar
 3 April 19, 1898.
 4 Sir,
 5 Please allow Miss M'cLeod [MacLeod] or her agent to receive
 6 any telegrams that you have received for me and receipt the same.
 7 Yours truly,
 8 Vivekananda

9 CXXIV
 10 To Miss Josephine MacLeod or Mrs. Ole Bull
 11 Seshnag
 12 Chandanbari, Kashmir
 13 [en route from Srinagar to Amarnath]
 14 [End of July 1898]
 15

16 I send back the old Dandi⁴⁰³ as it is difficult to carry it
 17 through. I have got another like Margaret's. Please send it back to
 18 the Tahsildar of Vernag, Khand Chand, Esq., whom you already
 19 know. We are all right. Margot has discovered some new flowers
 20 and is happy. There is not much ice so the road is good.
 21 Yours affectionately,
 22 Vivekananda

23 P.S. Keep this Dandi till I come and pay the coolies (2) 4 Rs.,
 24 2 annas each.
 25 coolie-Tara
 26
 27

28 [Accounts List]

29 [Illegible
 30 word]20

31	Dandi	26		
32	Coolies 16	2 hrs.	=8 Rs.	__ as.
33	Coolies 4	2½ hrs. at 4 as. per hr.	=2	__ 8
34	Dandi 26	3½ hrs. at 6 as. per hr.	34	__ 2
35	4 extra	1 hr. at 4 as. per hr.	=1	__ 0
36	2 ponies	2½ hrs. at 12 as. per hr.	=3	__ 12
37	1 pony	1 hr. at 12 as. per hr.	=0	__ 12

38

1 ⁴⁰³ ? A simple palanquin.
 2

1						
2					50	—
3	2					
4		2 Dandis	3½ hrs.		[Illegible	
5		words]				
6						
8					52	—
9	0					
10			[Illegible words]	8	—	[0]
11						
13					60—	[0]
14		Bed chairs	4			
15		Luggage	25			

1 Dandi 26
 2 _____
 3 55
 4 55 *all inclusive*
 5
 6 Two horses____ 1st stage____ 12 miles
 7 Batacooti____
 8 P
 9 hahalgā
 10 on
 11 [Pahalg
 12 am]____
 13 next
 14 stage
 16 CXXV
 17 To Mr. J. J. Goodwin's mother
 18 [On receiving news of the untimely death of Josiah J.
 19 Goodwin, Swami Vivekananda sent the following paragraph along
 20 with the poem "Requiescat in Pace"⁴⁰⁴ to the newspapers as well as
 21 to Goodwin's mother.]
 22 Almora
 23 August 1898
 24 With infinite sorrow I learn the sad news of Mr. Goodwin's
 25 departure from this life, the more so as it was terribly sudden and
 26 therefore prevented all possibilities of my being at his side at the
 27 time of death. The debt of gratitude I owe him can never be repaid,
 28 and those who think they have been helped by any thought of mine
 29 ought to know that almost every word of it was published through
 30 the untiring and most unselfish exertions of

1 Mr. Goodwin. In him I have lost a friend true as steel, a
2 disciple of never-failing devotion, a worker who knew not what
3 tiring was, and the world is less rich by one of those few who are
4 born, as it were, to live only for others.

5 [unsigned]

6
7 CXXVI

8 To Maharaja Ajit Singh, the Raja of Khetri

9 Srinagar

10 10 August 1898

11 Your Highness—

12 I have long not heard any news of you. How are things going
13 on with you both bodily and mentally?

14 I have been to see Shri Amarnathji.⁴⁰⁵ It was a very enjoyable
15 trip and the Darshana⁴⁰⁶ was glorious.

16 I will be here about a month more, then I return to the plains.
17 Kindly ask Jagmohan to write to the Dewan Saheb of Kishangarh to
18 get for me the copies of Nimbârka Bhâshya which he promised.

19 With all love,

20 Yours,

21 Vivekananda

22 CXXVII

23 To Sister Christine

24 The Math, Beloor, Howrah Dist.,

25 25th October, 1898.

26 My dear Christina,

27 How are you? I am very anxious about your health. I have
28 long not had any letter from you.

1 405 ?

2 A cave temple in the Kashmir Himalayas, where an ice Lingam of Shiva is
3 worshipped.

4 406 ?

5 Paying respects to a holy place or person by a ceremonial visit; also the
6 blessings or purification felt in the presence of holiness.
7
8

1 My health again failed badly. I had, therefore, to leave
2 Kashmir in haste and come to Calcutta. The doctors say I ought not
3 go tramping again this winter. That is such a disappointment, you
4 know. However, I am coming to the U. S. this sum-mer. Mrs. Bull
5 and Miss MacLeod enjoyed this year's trip to Kashmir immensely,
6 and now they are having a glimpse of the old monuments and
7 buildings of Delhi, Agra, Jeypore [Jaipur], etc.

8 Do write a nice, long letter if you have time, and do not work
9 yourself to death. Duty is duty, no doubt; but we have our duties,
10 not only to our mother etc., but to others also. Sometimes one duty
11 asks for physical sacrifice, whilst the other insists on great care for
12 our health. Of course, we follow the stronger motive, and [I] do not
13 know which will prove stronger in your case. Anyhow, take great
14 care of your body, now that your sisters have come to your help.

15 How do you manage the family?—the expenses etc? Write me
16 all you like to write. Give me a long chat, will you? Do!

17 I am getting better every day—and then the long months
18 before I can start for the U.S. Never mind, "Mother" knows what is
19 best for us. She will show the way. I am now in Bhakti. As I am
20 growing old, Bhakti is taking the place of Jnâna. Did you get the
21 new Awakened India? How do you like it?

22 Ever yours in the Lord,

23 Vivekananda.

24 CXXVIII

25 Maharaja Ajit Singh, the Raja of Khetri

26 Math Belur

27 22 November 1898

28 Your Highness—

29 Many thanks for your kind note and the Nimbarka Bhashya

30 —reached through Jaga Mohan Lalji.

31 I approach your Highness today on a most important business
32 of mine, knowing well that I have not the least shame in opening my
33 mind to you, and that I consider you as my *only friend* in this life. If
34 the following appeals to you, good; if not, pardon my foolishness as
35 a friend should.

1 As you know already, I have been ailing since my return. In
2 Calcutta your Highness assured me of your friendship and help for
3 me personally and [advised me] not to be worried about this
4 incurable malady. This disease has been caused by nervous
5 excitement; and no amount of change can do me good, unless the
6 worry and anxiety and excitement are taken off me.

7 After trying these two years a different climate, I am getting
8 worse every day and now almost at death's door. I appeal to your
9 Highness's work, generosity and friendship. I have one great sin
10 rankling always in my breast, and that is [in order] to do a service
11 to the world, I have sadly neglected my mother. Again, since my
12 second brother has gone away, she has become awfully worn-out
13 with grief. Now my last desire is to make Sevâ [give service] and
14 serve my mother, for some years at least. I want to live with my
15 mother and get my younger brother married to prevent extinction
16 of the family. This will certainly smoothen my last days as well as
17 those of my mother. She lives now in a hovel. I want to build a little,
18 decent home for her and make some provision for the youngest, as
19 there is very little hope of his being a good earning man. Is it too
20 much for a royal descendent of Ramchandra to do for one he loves
21 and calls his friend? I do not know whom else to appeal to. The
22 money I got from Europe was for the "work", and every penny
23 almost has been given over to that work. Nor can I beg of others for
24 help for my own self. About my own family affairs—I have exposed
25 myself to your Highness, and none else shall know of it. I am tired,
26 heartsick and dying. Do, I pray, this last great work of kindness to
27 me, befitting your great and generous nature and [as] a crest to the
28 numerous kindnesses you have shown me. And as your Highness
29 will make my last days smooth and easy, may He whom I have tried
30 to serve all my life ever shower His choicest blessings on you and
31 yours.

32 Ever yours in the Lord,

33 Vivekananda

34 P.S. This is strictly private. Will you please drop a wire to me
35 whether you will do it or not?

36 Ever yours,

37 Vivekananda

1 CXXIX
2 To Maharaja Ajit Singh, the Raja of Khetri
3 Math Beloor
4 Howrah District
5 1 December 1898

6 Your Highness—

7 Your telegram has pleased me beyond description, and it is
8 worthy of your noble self. I herewith give you the details of what I
9 want.

10 The lowest possible estimate of building a little home in
11 Calcutta is at least ten thousand rupees. With that it is barely
12 possible to buy or build a house in some out-of-the-way quarter of
13 the town—a little house fit for four or five persons to live in.

14 As for the expenses of living, the 100 Rs. a month your
15 generosity is supplying my mother is enough for her. If another 100
16 Rs. a month be added to it for my lifetime for my expenses

17 —which unfortunately this illness has increased, and which, I
18 hope, will not be for long a source of trouble to you, as I expect only
19 to live a few years at best—I will be perfectly happy. One thing more
20 will I beg of you—if possible, the 100 Rs. a month for my mother be
21 made permanent, so that even after my death it may regularly
22 reach her. Or even if your Highness ever gets reasons to stop your
23 love and kindness for me, my poor old mother may be provided
24 [for], remembering the love you once had for a poor Sâdhu.

25 This is all. Do this little work amongst the many other noble
26 deeds you have done, knowing well whatever else can be proved or
27 not, the power of Karma is self-evident to all. The blessings of this
28 good Karma shall always follow you and yours. As for me, what
29 shall I say—whatever I am in the world has been almost all through
30 your help. You made it possible for me to get rid of a terrible
31 anxiety and face the world and do some work. It may be that you
32 are destined by the Lord to be the instrument again of helping yet
33 grander work, by taking this load off my mind once more.

34 But whether you do this or not, "once loved is always loved".
35 Let all my love and blessings and prayers follow you and yours, day
36 and night, for what I owe you already; and may

1 the Mother, whose play is this universe and in whose hands
2 we are mere instruments, always protect you from all evil.

3 Ever yours in the Lord,

4 Vivekananda

5 CXXX

6 To Sister Nivedita

7 3 p.m. Sunday.

8 [Early 1899]

9 My dear Margot,

10 I am sorry I cannot come to see Dr. Mahoney⁴⁰⁷—I am ill. I
11 have not yet broken my fast.

12 Have you stopped teaching my little cousin?

13 Yours with love,

14 Vivekananda.

15 CXXXI

16 To Sister Nivedita

17 [Early 1899?]

18 My dear Nivedita,

19 The address of my cousin is 127 Manicktala Street. The
20 husband's name is Durga Prasanna Bose. The wife's name is most
21 probably not known to the people you will meet in the male
22 department. Therefore it is the custom to ask for the wife of
23 so-and-so.

24 Manicktala Street is that which runs east and west, south of
25 the tank garden.

26 Yours with love,

27 Vivekananda

1 ⁴⁰⁷ ? Dr. Mahoney was the District Medical Officer who used to inspect the
2 sanitary works conducted in Calcutta during the plague relief of early 1899, by
3 the Ramakrishna Mission under the leadership of Sister Nivedita.
4

1 CXXXII

2 To Sister Christine

3 The Math, Belur,

4 Dist. Howrah, Bengal, India,

5 26th January 1899.

6 My dear Christina,

7 Excuse this long delay in replying to your very beautiful note.
8 The fact is, I was once more in the vale of death. The old diabetes
9 has now disappeared. In its place has come what some doctors call
10 asthma, others dyspepsia, owing to nervous prostration. However,
11 it is a most worrying disease, giving one the sensation of
12 suffocation—sometimes for days. I am best only in Calcutta; so I am
13 here for rest and quiet and low diet. If I get well by March, I am
14 going to start for Europe. Mrs. Bull and others are gone; sorry I
15 could not accompany them owing to this disease.

16 I have carefully weighed your plans for coming over. I will be
17 ever so glad to see you, you know it well; but, my dear, the Indian
18 summer will not suit you, and if you start now it will be midsummer
19 when you reach India. Then, you must not hope of making any living
20 here. It is impossible for me to make a living most times in my own
21 country. Then all the surroundings are so, so wretched and
22 different from what you see around you, e.g. you will find me going
23 about in loin-cloth—will that shock you? Three-fourths of the
24 population only wearing a strip of white cloth about their loins—can
25 you bear that?

26 I must stop here; I am so weak. If I do not get well by March,
27 I will write you to come, for I wish it ever so much to see you once
28 before I pass away.

29 Do not be the least anxious, dear. Things must be as "Mother"
30 wishes. Ours is only to obey and work.

31 Ever yours in the Lord,

32 Vivekananda.

33 PS. Mrs. Bull will reach Cambridge, Mass., soon. You may
34 write to her there on the particulars.

35 Yours,

36 V.

1 PPS. I have again lost your address. Please give the correct
2 one in your next.
3 V.
4 CXXXIII
5 To Swami Brahmananda
6 The Math, Belur
7 Friday [March (?) 1899]
8 My dear Raja,
9 Please pay 100 Rs. to Sister Nivedita immediately for plague
10 work and credit it to a separate plague account.
11 Yours affectionately,
12 Vivekananda
13 CXXXIV
14 To Swami Swarupananda, editor of Prabuddha Bharata,
15 Mayavati
16 [March 1899]
17 My dear S[warupananda],
18 I have no objection whether Mrs. Sevier's name goes on top
19 or mine or anybody else's; the prospectus ought to go in the name
20 of the Seviers, mustering my name also if necessary. I send you a
21 few lines⁴⁰⁸ for your consideration in the prospectus. The rest are all
22 right.
23 I will soon send the draft deed.
24 V.

1 ⁴⁰⁸ ? *Vide* Complete Works, V: 435-36 for the prospectus drafted by Swami
2 Vivekananda.
3

1 CXXXV

2 To Sister Nivedita

3 The Math, Belur,

4 March 2nd, 1899

5 My dear Margot,

6 Will you look into your trunks for a Sanskrit book of mine,
7 which was, you know, in your keeping in Kashmir. I do not find it in
8 our library here.

9 I have been thinking of your friend Miss [Sarala] Ghosal's
10 coming to see the Math on Sunday. The difficulty is here. The ebb
11 tide will be on till 5 p.m. In that case our big boat can go down
12 easily to bring the party up; and going back, if the party starts long
13 before 5 p.m., say 4 p.m., will be all right. To come up will take at
14 least two hours from Baghbazar. If the party starts from
15 Baghbazar—say at 12 a.m.—and reaches the Math at 2 p.m. for lunch
16 and then starts back by 4 p.m., it will be nice.

17 If you cannot start as early as that, I will advise you to send
18 the carriage to wait at Baranagore on the other side so that our
19 boat can ferry the party over any time they like. The boat journey in
20 that case will only be on coming.

21 With all love and blessings,

22 Vivekananda

23 CXXXVI

24 To Ishwar Chandra Ghosh

25 Math, Belur

26 Howrah Dist.

27 6th March '99

28 My dear Sir,

29 Many thanks for your kind invitation. I am so sorry that so
30 many days' delay should occur in reply to your note.

31 I was very ill at the time, and the gentleman on whom the
32 duty fell of replying could not do it, it seems. I got notice of it just
33 now.

1 I am not yet sufficiently recovered to take advantage of your
2 kindness. This winter I had made it a point of visiting your part of
3 the country. But my Karma will have otherwise. I will have to wait
4 to give myself the pleasure of visiting the seat of civilisation of
5 ancient Bengal.

6 With my thanks again for all your kindness, I remain,

7 Yours in the Lord,

8 Vivekananda

9 CXXXVII

10 To Sister Nivedita

11 The Math, Belur,

12 April 25th, 1899

13 My dear Margot,

14 I could not come today. I am so, so sorry. The body would not
15 allow—neither can I come to the Boses'.⁴⁰⁹ I have written to them.

16 I have an engagement tomorrow.

17 Possibly I may see you in the evening.

18 With all love and blessings,

19 Vivekananda

20 CXXXVIII

21 To Sister Christine

22 The Math, Belur,

23 Dist. Howrah, Bengal, India,

24 10th May 1899.

25 My dear Christina,

26 I am getting better again. In my mind the whole of my
27 complaint is bad assimilation of food and nervous exhaustion. The
28 first, I am taking care of; the second will completely pass off when I
29 meet you again. The great joy of meeting old, old friends, you know!
30 Cheer up! There is no cause for anxiety. Do

⁴⁰⁹ ? The famous botanist Dr. J. C. Bose and his wife, Abala.

1 not believe a single desponding line I write now, because I
2 am at times not myself. I get so nervous.

3 I start this summer for Europe anyway, as you say in America.
4 With all love and blessings,

5 Yours ever in the Lord,

6 Vivekananda.

7 CXXXIX

8 To Miss Josephine MacLeod

9 [When Swami Vivekananda sailed from Calcutta, he
10 dispatched the following cablegram.]

11 [Calcutta,

12 June 21, 1899]

13 STARTED. WIRE STURDY.

14 CXL

15 To Sister Christine

16 Suez,

17 14th July 1899.

18 My dear Christina,

19 You see this time I am really out, and hope to reach London in
20 two weeks. I am sure to come to America this year and earnestly
21 hope will have the opportunity of seeing you. I am so materialistic
22 yet, you know! Want to see my friends in the gross body.

23 I had a beautiful letter from Baby [Stella Campbell] before I
24 left. I am soon going to pen a reply to your care, as directed. I could
25 not write her earlier.

26 I was so, so bad in health in India. My heart went wrong all
27 the way—what with mountain climbing, bathing in glacier water and
28 nervous prostration! I used to get terrible fits [of asthma]

29 —the last lasting about seven days and nights. All the time I
30 was suffocating and had to stand up.
31

1 This trip has almost made a new man of me. I feel much
2 better and, if this continues, hope to be quite strong before I reach
3 America. How are you? What are you doing? Write everything about
4 yourself, c/o E. T. Sturdy Esq., 25 Holland Villas Road, London, W.

5 With everlasting love and blessings,

6 Ever yours in the Lord,

7 Vivekananda.

8 CXLI

9 To Sister Christine

10 Marseilles,

11 23rd July 1899.

12 My dear Christina,

13 Your very, very welcome wire just came. By next Sunday⁴¹⁰
14 we arrive in London, Albert Dock.⁴¹¹ We are a party of four: myself,
15 another Sannyasin,⁴¹² a Calcutta boy⁴¹³ going to study in America,
16 and Miss [Margaret] Noble. Miss Noble is a young lady from
17 Wimbledon, near London, who has been working in India on the
18 education of girls.

19 Our stay in England will not be long, I am afraid, as this is
20 neither the season nor am I in fit condition to work much. Anyhow,
21 we will be in London a few weeks—at least myself—then go to the
22 U.S. We will talk over all this and infinite things besides when we
23 meet. I do not think even English summer days are long enough for
24 all the chatter I will assail you with.

25 We go to Wimbledon for a day or two, and then I come back
26 to London and find lodgings for myself and make plans.

1 ⁴¹⁰ ?

2 Perhaps at Marseilles Swami Vivekananda received information that their ship,
3 the S.S. Golconda, would reach London on Sunday (July 30, 1899); however, he
4 later learned that it would reach there on Monday (July 31, 1899). In order to
5 inform Christina of the change, the Swami sent her a telegram from Camberwell,
6 B.O., on July 30: "Golconda due docks 6 a.m. Monday".
7

8 ⁴¹¹ ? The S.S. Golconda actually arrived at the Tilbury Dock in London, instead
9 of the Albert Dock, on Monday morning.

10 ⁴¹² ? Swami Vivekananda's brother-disciple Swami Turiyananda.

11 ⁴¹³ ?

12 Satish Chandra Chakravarty, Swami Saradananda's brother.
13
14
15

1 Come to the Dock if that is possible and discreet. Yes, it is
2 discreet, as there is a lady in the party and others will come to meet
3 her. Only, Christina, don't if you feel the least tired or unwell. I
4 hope you are enjoying London immensely.

5 The Orientals do not like any effusion of feeling. They are
6 trained to hide all expression.

7 Is Mrs. Funkey [Mary Caroline Funke] with you? If so, give
8 her my best love.

9 I am much, much better just now. I am really quite another
10 man this time. I was nearly dead in Calcutta when I started, but this
11 voyage has improved me immensely.

12 Hoping soon to see you,

13 Ever yours in the Lord,

14 Vivekananda.

15 CXLII

16 To Sister Christine

17 TELEGRAM

18 to: Christina Grinnstidel [Greenstidel]

19 23 Crowhurst Rd., Angell Rd.

20 Briaton, Ldn.

21 30 July 1899

22 GOLCONDA DUE DOCKS 6 AM MONDAY.⁴¹⁴

23 CXLIII

24 To Mrs. Ole Bull

25 The Lymes, Woodside

26 Wimbledon, England

27 6 August 1899

28 My dear Mother,

29 Your letter directed to Sturdy at hand. I am very thankful for
30 your kind words. As for me, I don't know what I am to do next or
31 anything to do at all. On board the steamer I was all right, but since
32 landing [I am] feeling quite bad again. As to mental worry, there
33 has been enough of late. The aunt whom

⁴¹⁴ ? *Vide* Swami Vivekananda's letter dated July 23, 1899.

1 you saw had a deep-laid plan to cheat me, and she and her
2 people contrived to sell me a house for 6,000 Rs., or £400, and I
3 bought [it] for my mother in good faith. Then they would not give
4 me possession, hoping that I would not go to court for the shame of
5 taking forcible possession as a Sannyasin.

6 I do not think *I have spent even one rupee from what you and*
7 *others gave me for the work.* Cap. Sevier gave me 8,000 Rs. with
8 the express desire of helping my mother. This money, it seems, has
9 [also] gone to the dogs. Beyond this, nothing has been spent on my
10 family or even on *my own personal* expenses

11 —my food etc. being paid for by the Khetri Raja, and more
12 than half of that went to the Math every month. Only, if Brah-
13 mananda spends some in the lawsuit [against the aunt], as I must
14 not be robbed that way—if he does, I will make it good anyway, if I
15 live to do it.

16 The money which I got in Europe and America by *lecturing*
17 alone, I spent just as I like; but every cent I got for the work has
18 been accounted for and is in the Math, and the whole thing ought to
19 be clear as daylight if Brahmananda never cheated me. I don't
20 believe he will ever cheat me. I got a letter at Aden from
21 Saradananda that they were preparing an account. I have not
22 received any yet.

23 I have no plans yet, nor care to make any. Neither do I wish
24 to work. Let the Mother find other workers. I have my burden
25 enough already.

26 Ever your devoted son,

27 Vivekananda

28 CXLIV

29 To Miss Isabelle McKindley

30 Ridgely Manor

31 Stone Ridge, N.Y.

32 31st August '99

33 M dear Isabel—

34 Many thanks for your kind note. I will be so, so glad to see
35 you. Miss M'cleod [MacLeod] is going to write you to stop a day
36 and a night here on your way to the West.

1 My love to the holy family in Chicago, and hope surely to be
2 able to come West and have great fun.

3 So you are in Greenacre at last. Is this the first year you have
4 been there? How do you like the place? [You have] seen Miss
5 Farmer, of course. Kindly convey her my kindest regards and to all
6 the rest of my friends there.

7 Ever yours affectionately,

8 Vivekananda

9 CXLV

10 To Sister Christine

11 Ridgely Manor,

12 20th September 1899.

13 Dear Christina,

14 I am much better, thank you. Hitherto, excepting three days,
15 there has not been any wet weather to speak of here. Miss
16 [Margaret] Noble came yesterday, and we are having a jolly good
17 time. I am very, very sorry to say I am growing fat again. That is
18 bad. I will eat less and grow thin once more.

19 You are again at work—so do I find—only with a little variation
20 of the old occupation. Better rest than mere idling. Do you like my
21 new poem?¹ Miss Noble thinks it is nice. But that is her way with
22 everything I do. So you also say. I will now send my writings to
23 missionary papers to get a fierce criticism.

24 With all love to you and Mrs. Funkey [Funke],

25 Ever yours affectionately,

26 Vvekananda.

1 CXLVI

2 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

3 Ridgely Manor

4 5 October 1899

5 My dear Mother Church,

6 Many, many thanks for your kind words.

7 I am so glad you are working on as ever. I am glad because
8 the wave of optimism has not caught you yet. It is all very well to
9 say everything is right, but that is apt to degenerate into a sort of
10 laissez-faire. I believe with you that the world is evil –

11 made more hideous with a few dashes of good.

12 All our works have only this value, that they awaken some to
13 the reality of this horror—and [those] flee for refuge to some place
14 beyond, which is called God, or Christ, or Brahma, or Buddha, etc.
15 Names do not make much difference.

16 Again, we must always remember ours is only to work—

17 we never attain results. How can we? Good can never be
18 done without doing evil. We cannot breathe a breath without killing
19 thousands of poor little animals. National prosperity is another
20 name for death and degradation to millions of other races. So is
21 individual prosperity the beggaring of many. The world is evil

22 —and will ever remain so. It is its nature, and cannot be
23 changed—"Which one of you by taking thought . . ." etc.²

24 Such is truth. The wisdom is therefore in renunciation, that is,
25 to make the Lord our all in all. Be a true Christian, Mother-like
26 Christ, renounce everything and let the heart and soul and body
27 belong to Him and Him alone. All this nonsense which people have
28 built round Christ's name is not His teaching. He taught to
29 renounce. He never says the earth is an enjoyable place. And your
30 time has come to get rid of all vanities

31 —even the love of children and husband—and think of the Lord
32 and Him alone.

33 Ever your Son,

34 Vivekananda

1 CXLVII

2 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

3 [Ridgely Manor], New York, N.Y.

4 23 October 1899

5 My dear Mother,

6 I was taking a few days' complete rest and so am late in
7 replying to your very kind note. Accept my congratulations on the
8 anniversary of your marriage. I pray many, many such returns may
9 come to you.

10 I am sure my previous letter was coloured by the state of my
11 body, as indeed is the whole of existence to us. Yet, Mother, there is
12 more pain than pleasure in life. If not, why do I remember you and
13 your children almost every day of my life, and not many others?
14 Happiness is liked so much because it is so rare, is it not? Fifty
15 percent of our life is mere lethargy, ennui; of the rest, forty percent
16 is pain, only ten happiness—

17 and this for the exceptionally fortunate. We are oft-times
18 mixing up this state of ennui with pleasure. It is rather a negative
19 state, whilst both pleasure and pain are nearer positive, though not
20 positive.

21 Pleasure and pain are both feeling, not willing. They are only
22 processes which convey to the mind excitements or motives of
23 action. The real positive action is the willing, or impulse to work, of
24 the mind—begun when the sensation has been taken in (pleasure
25 and pain); thus the real is neither pleasure nor pain. It has no
26 connection with either. Quite different from either. The barking of
27 the dog awakens his master to guard against a thief or receive his
28 dearest friend. It does not follow, therefore, that the dog and his
29 master are of the same nature or have any degree of kinship. The
30 feelings of pleasure or pain similarly awaken the soul to activity,
31 without any kinship at all.

32 The soul is beyond pain, beyond pleasure, sufficient in its own
33 nature. And no hell can punish it, nor any heaven can bless it. So far
34 philosophy.

35 I am coming soon to Chicago, and hope to say "Lord bless
36 you" to you and your children. All love as usual to my Christian
37 relatives, scientific or quacks.

38 Vivekananda

1 CXLVIII

2 To Sister Christine

3 C/o F. H. Leggett, Esq.,

4 Ridgely Manor,

5 Stone Ridge, Ulster Co., N.Y.

6 25th October 1899.

7 Dear Christina,

8 What is the matter with you? Write me a line to tell me how
9 you are and what you are doing now.

10 I am tired of this place, and will come down to New York for a
11 few days soon. I start thence for Chicago and, if you like, will stop
12 at Detroit on my way to How-do-you-do. I am much better, indeed
13 quite a different man, though not completely cured—for that, time is
14 necessary.

15 Yours,

16 Vivekananda.

17 CXLIX

18 To Sister Christine

19 Rdgely Manor,

20 30th October 1899.

21 My dear Christina,

22 Did you not get my last letter? I am very anxious to know how
23 you are. Write a line to tell me you are in very good health.

24 I am afraid the previous one was misdirected, so I send this
25 c/o Mrs. Funkey [Funke].

26 Do write soon. I am thinking of Battle Creek food.³ Baby
27 insists on that. Do you think it will do me any good? Write soon.

28 Ever yours in the Lord,

29 Vivekananda.

1 PS—Where is this Battle Creek? Is it near Detroit? I am
2 seriously thinking of giving it a trial. I am not bad, but unfit for any
3 exertion, even for a walk. This sort of life is no good to live. I [will]
4 try Battle Creek, and if that fails, get out quick.

5 V.

6 Write me about Battle Creek.

7 V.

8 CL

9 To Sister Christine

10 Ridgely Manor,

11 4th November 1899.

12 My dear Christina,

13 The letter was all right in reaching. It was only my ner-
14 vousness. I am sure you will understand and excuse this. I eagerly
15 expect to see you in Cambridge. I am going to New York next week.
16 Thence I go for a few days to Washington and then to Cambridge.
17 Do come. And mind you, I must learn German. I am determined to
18 be a French and German scholar. French, I think, I can manage
19 with the help of a dictionary. If I can do that much German in a
20 month, I will be so glad.

21 It naturally takes time for a letter to reach from here. We
22 have one delivery and one posting a day.

23 With all love,

24 Ever yours in the Lord,

25 Vivekananda.

26 My eternal love and blessings to Mrs. Funkey [Funke].

27 CLI

28 To Sister Christine

29 21 West 34th Street,

30 New York,

31 10th November 1899.

32 My dear Christina,

33 I received your letter just now. I am now in New York. Dr.
34 [Egbert] Guernsey analysed my urine yesterday, and there was no
35 sugar or albumen in it. So my kidneys are all right, at least at

1 present. The heart is only nervous, requires calming!—some
2 cheerful company and good, loving friends and quiet. The only
3 difficulty is the *dyspepsia*, and that is the evil. For instance, I am all
4 right in the morning and can walk miles, but in the evening it is
5 impossible to walk after a meal—the gas—that depends entirely upon
6 food, does it not? I ought to try the Battle Creek food. If I come to
7 Detroit, there will be quiet and Battle Creek food for me.

8 But if you come to Cambridge with all the instructions of the
9 Battle Creek food, I will have it prepared there; or, between you
10 and me, we will cook it. I am a good hand at that. You don't know a
11 thing about cooking. Well, you may help in cleaning the plates etc. I
12 always get money when I need it badly. "Mother" always sees to
13 that. So, no danger on that head. I am not in the least danger of life,
14 the Doctors agree—only if this dyspepsia goes away. And that is
15 "food", "food", "food", and no worry. Oh, what a worry I have had!
16 Say we go somewhere else and make a little party and keep house
17 ourselves. In Cambridge, Mrs. Bull has a quiet separate place—her
18 studio house. You can have rooms there. I wish you to know Mrs.
19 Bull. She is a saint, a real saint, if ever there was one. Wait for my
20 next letter. I will write today again, or tomorrow after seeing Mrs.
21 Bull.

22 Ever yours in the Lord,

23 Vivekananda.

24 CLII

25 To Sister Christine

26 C/o Dr. E. Guernsey,

27 180 West 59th Street,

28 New York,

29 12th November 1899.

30 Christina—

31 Mrs. Bull has gone to Boston without seeing me. I am with
32 the Guernseys. All today laid up with colds.

1 Oh, these nasty colds. The doctor here declares my case as
2 entirely one of nervous exhaustion. Even the dyspepsia is entirely
3 nervous.

4 I will be a few days yet here, and then I don't know where I
5 go. I have a great mind to try health food. As for you, write
6 unreservedly where you [would] like me to be. If you think it best
7 for me to come to Detroit, write or wire on receipt of this. I will
8 come immediately. Only difficulty is now the dyspepsia.

9 With love to Mrs. Funkey [Funke],

10 Ever yours with blessings,

11 Vivekananda.

12 P.S. If Cambridge is best, say that immediately.

13 V.

14 CLIII

15 To Mrs. Ole Bull

16 180 W. 59,

17 C/o E. Guernsey, M.D.,

18 12 November 1899

19 Dear Mrs. Bull—

20 I am laid up with a bad cold. The clothes are not ready—
21 they will be next week. I don't know what my next step will
22 be. Dr. Guernsey is very kind. Several Doctors have examined me
23 and none could detect any organic disease.

24 Even the kidney complications for the present have dis-
25 appeared.

26 Well, the whole thing is then dyspepsia. I want ever so much
27 to try Battle Creek food. There is a restaurant which cooks only
28 Battle Creek food. Do you think it should be best for me to try it just
29 now? If so, I go to Detroit. In that case, send me my terracotta,
30 thick cashmere coat.

31 Ever yours in the Lord,

32 Vivekananda

1 Had three treatments already from Helmer.⁴ Going to take
2 some next week. None can do anything for this "wind". That is why
3 dieting should be tried at any cost.

4 V.

5 CLIV

6 To Sister Christine

7 21 West 34th Street,

8 New York,

9 21st November 1899.

10 My dear Christina,

11 Circumstances have so fallen that I have to start for Cali-
12 fornia tomorrow. It is for my physical benefit too; as the doctor
13 says, I had better be off where the severe winter of the North
14 cannot reach.

15 Well, thus my plans are made and marred. Anyway—come
16 over to Cambridge when you feel like it. Mrs. Bull will only be too
17 happy to do anything for you she can.

18 I hope to stop in Detroit on my way back. The Lord's will
19 —as we say.

20 Ever yours in the Lord,

21 Vivekananda.

22 CLV

23 To Mrs. Ole Bull

24 Chicago

25 30 November 1899

26 My dear Dhira Mata—

27 I am going to leave this place tonight. They have given me a
28 new trunk—a big one. The Maspero book⁵ is with me, only the
29 second volume. The first volume must be in Boston. Kindly send it
30 c/o Joe [Miss Josephine MacLeod].

1 They have been very kind. Madame [Emma] Calvé came to
2 see me day before yesterday. She is a great woman.

3 I have nothing to write here except that Margo [Sister
4 Nivedita] is doing very well, except some people were complaining
5 last night that she frightened them with her assertion that Swami
6 can not make mistakes!!!

7 Hope things are going on with you very well. This is in haste.
8 I write in length from California.

9 Ever your son,

10 Vivekananda

11 My love to Mrs. [Olea] Vaughn.⁶

12 CLVI

13 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

14 *THE CALIFORNIA LIMITED*

15 Santa Fe Route

16 1 December 1899

17 My dear Mother,

18 Excuse this scrawl as the train is dancing.

19 I passed a good night and hope to have a good time all
20 through. With all love for the sisters and Mr. [Clarence] Woolley⁷
21 and Bud and Father Pope.

22 With love,

23 Vivekananda

24 CLVII

25 To Sister Nivedita

26 *THE CALIFORNIA LIMITED*

27 Santa Fe Route

28 December 2nd, 1899

29 My dear Margot,

30 Two nights are passed—today the third will come. If it proves
31 as pleasant and somnolent as the last two, I [shall] rejoice.

1 The scenery today I am passing through is much like the
2 neighborhood of Delhi, the beginning of a big desert, bleak hills,
3 scanty, thorny shrubs, very little water. The little streams are
4 frozen, but during the middle of the day it is hot. Must be [illegible]
5 I presume, in summer.

6 I send this to the care of Mrs. Adams,⁸ as I don't know your
7 address. The Chicago work will not give you much, I am sure,
8 except in education in the methods here, which I am sure will work
9 out soon.

10 With all love and blessings,

11 Vivekananda

12 CLVIII

13 To Mrs. G. W. Hale

14 Los Angeles

15 6 December 1899

16 My dear Mother,

17 A few lines to say my safe arrival and am going to resume my
18 usual work of lecturing here.

19 I am much better than I was in Chicago and hope soon to
20 become well again.

21 I cannot tell you how I enjoyed once more the little visit with
22 my American Mother and Sisters.

23 Harriet has scored a triumph really. I am charmed with Mr.
24 Woolley—only hope Mary will be equally fortunate. It gives me a
25 new lease of life to see people happy. May they all be happy.

26 Ever with love, your son,

27 Vivekananda

1 CLIX
2 To Sister Christine
3 921 West 21st Street,
4 Los Angeles,
5 9th December 1899.

6 My dear Christina,

7 After all, it is good for me, and good for those I love, that I
8 should come here. Here at last in California! One of our poets says:
9 "Where is Benares, where is Kashmir, where Khorasan, where
10 Gujarat! O Tulsi! thus, man's past Karma drags him on". And I am
11 here. After all it is best, isn't it? Are you going to Boston? I am
12 afraid you are not. I have not unsettled any of your plans, have I?
13 –unnecessary expenses? Well, if any, I will make it up. Only the
14 trouble is yours. I am ashamed of my eccentricities. Well, how are
15 you? What are you doing? How are things going with you? Sleep if
16 you can; it is better to sleep than get awakened. I pray that all good
17 may come to thee—all peace, all strength to do and suffer. I have a
18 great deal of strength to do, but very little to suffer.

19 I am so selfish again, always thinking of my own sufferings
20 and paying no heed to others. Pray for me; send strong thoughts
21 that I may have strength to suffer. I know you will. Now, I mean to
22 remain a few weeks in this city. After that, "Mother" knows. I am
23 physically much better now than I have been for months. The
24 weakness of the heart is nearly gone. The dyspepsia is also much
25 better, and [there is] very little. I can walk miles now without
26 feeling it in the heart. If this continues, I expect to have a new lease
27 on life. I am so, so sorry of asking you to come to Boston and flying
28 away. If you are there, I hope you will enjoy the place and the
29 meetings. If you have given it up—well, did you take leave and not
30 go to Boston? My! what a bungle! Well, I ask a thousand pardons, if
31 such is the case. Things must look brighter anyway, sooner or later.
32 What of these little, few days of life!

33 How is Mrs. Funke? Loads of love for her. How long a leave
34 [do] you get at Christmas? When does it begin? If you feel inclined
35 and willing, write me a long note, will you? But don't tell my friends
36 my whereabouts. I want to be off from the world

1 for a time, if I can. Will you kindly send Mr. Freer's address to
2 Mrs. Bull? She needs it. I had a lecture here last night. The hall was
3 not crowded, as there was very little ad[vertisement], but a fairly
4 good-sized audience though. I hope they were pleased. If I feel
5 better, I am going to have classes in this city soon. I am on the
6 business path this time, you know. Want a few dollars quick, if I
7 can.

8 Ever yours in the Lord,
9 Vivekananda.

10 CLX

11 To Swami Brahmananda

12 [Swami Vivekananda sent the following cablegram to his
13 brother-monk.]

14
15 *[Postmarked: December 13, 1899]*

16 PERFECTLY CURED. BLESS ALL. VIVEKANANDA.

17
18 CLXI

19 To Sister Christine

20 921 West 21st Street,

21 Los Angeles,

22 27th December 1899.

23 Dear Christina,

24 So you are awake and can't go to sleep any more. Good! Keep
25 awake, wide awake. It was good I came here. For, in the first place,
26 I am cured. What do you think of this—able to walk, and every day
27 walk three miles after a heavy dinner! Good! Isn't it?

28 I am making money fast—twenty-five dollars a day now. Soon I
29 will work more and get fifty dollars a day. In San Francisco I hope
30 to do still better—where I go in two or three weeks. Good
31 again—better, say I—as I am going to keep the money all to myself
32 and not squander it any more. And then I will buy a little place in
33 the Himalayas—a whole hill—about say, six thousand feet high with a
34 grand view of the eternal

1 snows. There must be springs and a tiny lake. Cedars—the
2 Himalayan cedar forests—and flowers, flowers everywhere. I will
3 have a little cottage; in the middle, my vegetable gardens, which I
4 will work myself—and—and—and—my books—and see the face of man
5 only once in a great while. And the world may go to ruin round
6 about my ears, I would not care. I will have done with all my
7 work—secular or spiritual—and retire. My! how restless I have been
8 all my life! Born nomad. I don't know; this is the present vision. The
9 future is to come yet. Curious—all my dreams about my own
10 happiness are, as it were, bound to come to nothing; but about
11 others' well-being—

12 they as a rule prove true.

13 I am so glad you are happy and peaceful under Mrs. Bull's
14 hospitable roof. She is a great, great woman—one whom to see is a
15 pilgrimage.

16 No snow here—exactly like northern India in winter. Some
17 days, even warmer—cool in the morning and evening, in the middle
18 of the day, warm, in the sun, hot. The roses are about us, gardens
19 everywhere, and the beautiful palms. But I like the snow: crisp,
20 crackling under the feet, white, white, white—all round white!

21 I don't think I have anything with the kidneys or the heart.
22 The whole thing was about indigestion and it is now nearly cured. A
23 month more, and I will be strong like a lion and hardy like a mule.
24 The poor English are getting it hot from the Boers. Mourning in
25 every home in England and still the war goes on. Such is human
26 folly. How long will it take for man to become civilized! Will wars
27 ever cease? Mother knows! The New Year is sure to bring about a
28 great change. Pray some good may come to India. I send you all joy,
29 all love, all success for the New Year and many, many more to
30 come.

31 So you did well, you think, by coming to Mrs. Bull. I am glad. I
32 wanted you to know Mrs. Bull thoroughly. Remain there as long as
33 you can. It will do you good, I am sure. Take heart and be of cheer,
34 for next year is sure to bring many joys and a hundred blessings.

35 Yours truly,

36 Vivekananda.

1 CLXII
2 To Sister Nivedita
3 Los Angeles
4 [Early February 1900]
5 Dear Margo [Margot],
6 You have the Gopâla.⁴¹⁵ Add the Sâvitri story⁴¹⁶ to that. I send
7 you four more herewith. They ought to make a nice volume. Work
8 on them a bit, will you. If you get a publisher in Chicago, all right; if
9 not, Mr. Leggett promised to publish them sometime ago.
10 Yours,
11 Vivekananda
12 P.S. The preliminary parts should be struck off.
13
14 CLXIII
15 To Miss Josephine MacLeod
16 1231 Pine Street
17 San Francisco.
18 March 2nd 1900
19 Dear Joe—
20 Your note enclosing two from France and three from India
21 just received. I have had general good news and am happy.
22 Financially, I have got \$300 in Los Angeles. About Mrs.
23 Bowler,⁴¹⁷ she has about a hundred odd dollars in cash. Mrs.
24 Hendrick and she have not paid up as yet. That money—\$300 in
25 all—is with her. She will send it to me whenever I write.
26 Rev. Benjamin Fay Mills,⁴¹⁸ a very popular Unitarian preacher
27 in Oakland, invited me from here and paid the fare to

1 415 ?
2 Gopala is the name of Baby Krishna.
3
4 416 ? The Indian queen Savitri, whose life is recorded in the Mahâbhârata,
5 typifies the ideal of conjugal love.
6
7 417 ?
8 Mrs. Emeline F. Bowler, president of the Pasadena Shakespeare Club and
9 a friend of Swami Vivekananda in southern California.
10
11 418 ?
12 Minister of the First Unitarian Church in Oakland, where Swami
13 Vive-kananda spoke several times.
14

1 San Francisco. I have spoken twice in Oakland to 1500 people
2 each time. Last time I got from collection \$30. I am going to have
3 classes at 50 cents admission each.

4 San Francisco had one lecture the other night [February 23]
5 at 50¢ each. It paid its expenses. This Monday [Sunday?] I am going
6 to speak free—after that a class.

7 I went to see Mrs. Hurst [Hearst].⁴¹⁹ She was not at home. I
8 left a card—so with Prof. Le Conte.⁴²⁰

9 Mary [Hale] writes that you wrote her of my coming any day
10 to the East. I don't know. Here I have a large following—

11 ready-made by my books. Will get some money, not much. St.
12 Francis [Francis Leggett] may put the money in the bank for
13 me—but can that be done without my signature? And I am here? It is
14 good if it can be done. Did you see any possibility of my books being
15 sold for good to any publisher?

16 The French invitation⁴²¹ is all right. But it seems impossible to
17 write any decent paper on the subject we chose. Because if I have
18 to lecture and make money, very little time will be left for anything
19 else. Again, I can not find any books (Sanskrit) here. So let me try
20 to make a little money if I can and go to France all the same, but
21 send them no paper. No scholarly work can be done in this
22 haphazard and hurried fashion. It means time and study.

23 Shall I write to Mr. [Gerald] Nobel an acknowledgement and
24 thanks? Write to me fully on these subjects if you can before you
25 leave [for Europe]. My health is going on the same way. The gas is
26 there more or less and this city is all climbing up[hill]—that tires me
27 much.

28 With all love,

29 Yours affectionately,

30 Vivekananda

31 P.S. Did anybody else respond to Mrs. Leggett's call?

1 ⁴¹⁹ ?

2 Mrs. Phoebe Apperson Hearst, mother of the newspaper tycoon William
3 Randolph Hearst.

4 ⁴²⁰ ? Probably Joseph Le Conte, a well-known geologist, then in his seventies,
5 and a professor at the University of California at Berkeley.

6 ⁴²¹ ? An invitation to speak in September at the Congress of the History of
7 Religions at the Paris Exposition.

1 CLXIV

2 To Sister Christine

3 1719 Turk Street,

4 San Francisco, California,

5 12th March 1900.

6 Dear Christina,

7 Just now received a letter from you through New York. I, the
8 other day, wrote you one c/o Mrs. Funke, as I was not sure which of
9 your addresses in my notebook was the correct one! Mental
10 telepathy or foolishness—what is it?

11 By this time you must have got mine. There is nothing par-
12 ticular about me, except things are going on at the same rate—

13 very little money-making, a good deal of work, and moving
14 about. I leave here in April and come to Chicago for a few days,
15 then to Detroit and then, through New York, go to England. I hope
16 you are all right. I am very calm and peaceful mentally, and hope to
17 remain so for the rest of my life.

18 How are Mrs. Funkey [Funke] and the rest of our friends?

19 With all love,

20 Vivekananda.

21 CLXV

22 To Sister Christine

23 1719 Turk Street,

24 San Francisco,

25 [April 9, 1900]

26

27 Hello! What's the matter with you—gone to sleep? Have not
28 had any news of you for a long time.

29 I am getting better every day, and one of these days—say in a
30 few weeks—I am coming straight to say how-d'you-do. Well, I will be
31 here two weeks more, then to a place called Stockton—thence to the
32 East. I may stop a few days in Chicago. I may not.

33 Beginning of May, I come [for] sure to Detroit. I will, of
34 course, write to you. How is life going on with you—grinding,

1 as usual? Any improvements? Write a chatty letter if you feel
2 like. I am dying to get news.

3 Ever yours in the Truth,
4 Vivekananda.

5 CLXVI

6 To Sister Nivedita

7 C/o Dr. Logan,
8 770 Oak Street,
9 San Francisco, California,
10 17th May [1900].

11 Dear Margot,

12 I am sorry, I cannot come to Chicago yet for a few days. The
13 doctor (Dr. Logan) says I must not undertake a journey till
14 completely strong. He is bent on making me strong. My stomach is
15 very, very good and nerves fine. I am getting on. A few days more
16 and I will be all right. I received your letter with the enclosed.

17 If you leave for New York soon, take my mail with you. I am
18 coming to New York direct. If you leave New York before I leave,
19 put my mail in a cover and deposit with Turiyananda, and tell him to
20 keep it for me and not to open it on any account, nor any one of my
21 Indian letters. Turiyananda will take charge. Also see that my
22 clothes and books are at the Vedanta Society's rooms in New York.

23 I will write you more soon—an introduction to Mrs.
24 Huntington.⁴²² This affair should be private.

25 With love and blessings,

26 Vivekananda.

27 P.S. As I have got to stop at Chicago for my ticket, will you
28 ask anybody to take me in for a day or two, if Mrs. Hale is gone
29 East by that time?

30 V.

1 ⁴²² ? Mrs. Collis Potter Huntington, wife of one of the wealthy "Big Four" of the
2 Central Pacific Railroad in the United States.
3

1 CLXVII

2 To Sister Nivedita

3 770 Oak Street,

4 San Francisco, California,

5 18th May 1900.

6 Dear Margot,

7 Enclosed find the letter of introduction to Mrs. Huntington.
8 She can, if she likes, make your school a fact with one stroke of her
9 pen. May Mother make her do it!

10 I am afraid I will have to go direct to New York, as by that
11 time the Hales will be off. I cannot start for two weeks at least yet.
12 Give the Hales my love.

13 With love and blessings,

14 Yours,

15 Vivekananda.

16 P.S. I received your letter, including Yum's [Miss Josephine
17 MacLeod's].

18 V.

19 CLXVIII

20 To Mrs. Ole Bull (in London)

21 San Francisco

22 18 May 1900

23 My dear Mother,

24 Many thanks for Joe's [Miss Josephine MacLeod's] and your
25 letters. I have again a bad relapse—and [am] struggling out of it.
26 This time I am perfectly certain that with me all diseases are
27 nervous. I want rest for two, three years—and not the least bit of
28 work between. I will take rest with the Seviars in the Himalayas.

29 Mrs. [James Henry] Sevier gave me 6,000 Rs. for family—

30 this was distributed between my cousin, aunt, etc. The 5,000
31 Rs. for buying the house was borrowed from the Math funds. Do not
32 stop the remittance you send to my cousin, whatever Saradananda
33 may say to the contrary. Of course I do not know what he says.

1 I have long given up the idea of a little house on the Ganges,
2 as I have not the money.

3 But I have got some in Calcutta and some with the Leggetts,
4 and if you give a thousand more, that will be a fund for my own
5 personal expenses (as you know I never took Math money) as well
6 as for my mother. Kindly write to Saradananda to give up the little
7 house plan. I am not going to write any more for weeks yet—till I
8 completely recover. I hope to get over [it] in a few weeks from
9 now—it was a terrible relapse. I am with a Doctor friend [Dr.
10 Milburn H. Logan], and he is taking every care of me.

11 Tell Joe that going amongst different people with a message
12 also does not belong to the Sannyasin; for a Sannyasin, [there] is
13 quiet and retirement, scarcely seeing the face of man.

14 I am now ripe for that, physically at least. If I don't go into
15 retirement, nature will force me to it. Many thanks that temporal
16 things have been so well arranged by you.

17 With all love to Joe and yourself—

18 Your Son,

19 Vivekananda

20 CLXIX

21 To Sister Christine

22 C/o Dr. Logan,

23 770 Oak Street,

24 San Francisco, California,

25 19th May 1900.

26 Dear Christina,

27 How are you? When is your vacation to commence? I am still
28 in California. Hope to start for the East in two or three weeks more.

29 Write me all about yourself and how things are going on. How
30 is Mrs. Funkey [Funke]? And the other friends?

31 Yours as ever,

32 Vivekananda.

1 CLXX
2 To Swami Abhedananda
3 770 Oak Street
4 San Francisco, Cal.
5 C/o Dr. Logan, M.D.
6 [May 19, 1900?]
7 My dear Abhedananda
8 I am very, very glad to hear about the new home of the
9 Vedanta Society. As things stand, I will have to come to New York
10 direct from here—without stoppage—but it will be two or three
11 weeks yet, I am afraid. Things are coming up so fast that I can not
12 but change my plans and stop a few more days.
13 I am trying my best to get one of you for a flying visit to this
14 Coast—it is a great country for Vedanta.
15 Get all my books and clothes etc., in your home. I am coming
16 soon. My love to Mrs. Crane. Is she still living on beef-steak and hot
17 water? Miss [Sarah Ellen] Waldo and Mrs. Coulston⁴²³ write about
18 the publication of a new edition of *Karma-Yoga*. I have written to
19 Miss Waldo all about it. The money in hand from the sale of books
20 ought to be spent, of course.
21 Do you see my books and clothes all safe there? They were
22 with Mrs. Bull in Boston.
23 With all love,
24 Vivekananda

1 ⁴²³ ? Mrs. Mary B. Coulston was secretary, in 1898, and later treasurer, in 1899,
2 while serving on the executive committee of the New York Vedanta Society,
3 founded by Swami Vivekananda in 1894. She was given the name Brahmacharini
4 Sevaputa by Swami Abhedananda, who, on April 2, 1899, gave her the
5 Brahmacharya vows with five others, including Gurudasa (Swami Atulananda).
6

1 CLXXI
2 To Sister Christine
3 Vedanta Society,
4 102 East 58th Street,
5 New York,
6 9th June 1900.

7 Dear Christina,

8 I could not write more, as the last few weeks of my stay in
9 California was one more relapse and great suffering. However, I
10 got one great benefit out of it inasmuch as I came to know I have
11 really no disease, except worry and fear. My kidneys are as sound
12 as any other healthy man's. All the symptoms of Bright's disease
13 etc., are only brought on by nerves.

14 I wrote you one, however, from 770 Oak Street, San
15 Francisco, to which I did not get any reply. Of course, I was
16 bedridden then and my address book was not in the place I was in.
17 There was a mistake in number. I cannot believe you did not reply
18 willingly.

19 As you see, now I am in New York, and will be here a few
20 days. I have an invitation from Mrs. Walton of Cleveland, Ohio. I
21 have accepted it. She writes me you are also invited and have
22 accepted her invitation. Well, we will meet in Cleveland then. I am
23 sure to see you before I go to Europe—either there or anywhere you
24 wish. If you don't think it would be possible for you to come to Ohio,
25 I will come to any other place you want me to come to say goodbye.

26 When is your school going to close? Write me all about your
27 plans—do!

28 Miss Noble wants me very much to go to Cleveland. I would
29 be very, very glad to get a few weeks' seclusion and rest before I
30 start with friends who do not disturb me at all. I know I will find
31 rest and peace that way, and you can help me any amount in that.
32 In Cleveland, of course, there will be a few friends always and
33 much talkee-talkee as a matter of course. So if you think I will have
34 real peace and rest elsewhere, just write all about it.

35 My reply to the Cleveland lady depends on your letter.

1 How I wish I were in Detroit or elsewhere just now, among
2 friends who I know are good and true always. This is weakness; but
3 when the physical vitality is lowered and the nerves all unstrung, I
4 feel so, so much to depend upon somebody. You will be glad to
5 learn I made a little money in the West. So I will be quite able to
6 pay my expenses.

7 Write soon.

8 Yours affectionately,

9 Vivekananda.

10 CLXXII

11 To Sister Christine

12 Vedanta Society,

13 102 East 58th Street,

14 New York,

15 13th June 1900.

16 Dear Christina,

17 There is no cause for any anxiety. As I wrote, I am healthier
18 than ever; moreover, all the past fear of kidney troubles has passed
19 away. "Worry" is the only disease I have, and I am conquering it
20 fast.

21 I will be here a week or two, and then I come to Detroit. If
22 things so happen that I cannot come, I will sure send for you.
23 Anyway, I am not going to leave this country before seeing you.
24 Sure, sure—I must see you first, and then go to Europe.

25 Things are looking cheerful once more, and good luck, like ill,
26 also comes in bunches. So I am sure it will be smooth sailing every
27 way now, for some time at least.

28 With love to Mrs. Funkey [Funke],

29 Ever yours in the Truth,

30 Vivekananda.

1 CLXXIII

2 To Sister Christine

3 Vedanta Society,

4 102 East 58th Street,

5 New York,

6 15 June 1900.

7 My dear Christina,

8 I am getting better every day, only this New York is a bad
9 place for sleep. Again, I am working some, though not hard, to get
10 the old friends together and put the thing in shape.

11 Now, you know, I will in a week or so finish this work and
12 then be ready for a real quiet of a week or two or more.

13 Detroit, alas! will be no better than New York. With so many
14 old friends! How can you avoid friends whom you really love?

15 I will have perfect freedom at yours—sure—but how can I avoid
16 seeing friends and the eternal visiting and paying visits and much
17 talkee-talkee? Do you know any other place within eight or ten
18 hours (I want to avoid night rides) of riding from New York where I
19 can be quiet and free from the people? (Lord bless them.) I am
20 dead tired seeing people just now. Just think of that and everything
21 else; if, after all, you think Detroit is the best place for me, I am
22 ready to come.

23 Yours truly,

24 Vivekananda.

25 PS—I am also thinking of a quiet place.

26 V.

27 CLXXIV

28 To Sister Christine

29 Vedanta Society,

30 102 East 58th Street,

31 New York,

32 27th June 1900.

33 Dear Christina,

34 This is my plan just now. I will have to remain in New York a
35 few days yet to see my books through. I am going to

1 publish another edition of Karma-Yoga and the London
2 lectures in a book form. Miss Waldo is editing them, and Mr.
3 Leggett will publish.

4 Then, I think, if I am to remain in this country a few weeks
5 more, it is better that you get a rest and change. Newport⁹ is a
6 celebrated seaside place—four hours from New York. I am invited
7 there. I will go there this week and, as promised, I [will] find quiet
8 and retirement and freedom. I will try to find a place for you and
9 wire you as soon as found.

10 I am sure in Detroit you cannot have rest. A little change of
11 place and quiet from time to time is a great factor in renewing one's
12 vigour.

13 Well, if you think that you would have better rest and quiet in
14 Detroit, drop a line and I come. It is only seventeen hours from New
15 York to Detroit, and I am quite strong to undertake it. I am free to
16 go already; only I really want you to take a good, long rest for some
17 weeks at least.

18 Don't be afraid of expenses. Mother has amply provided that
19 and will provide, so long I am unselfish.

20 Think [over] all the pros and cons, and write at your earliest
21 convenience.

22 I am going to Newport anyway, just to see what it looks like. I
23 will write you all about [it] as soon as I am there.

24 Ever yours in the Lord,

25 Vivekananda.

26 CLXXV

27 To Mrs. Alice (Shanti) Hansbrough

28 The Vedanta Society,

29 102 E. 58th Street, New York, N.Y.

30 [End of June 1900]

31 Dear Mrs. Hansbrough—

32 I have not written you a line since you left San Francisco. I
33 am well and things are going on well with me.

1 I am in New York once more, where they have got now a
2 home for the Society and their headquarters. I and the other
3 Swamis also live there.

4 A San Francisco lady [Miss Minnie C. Boock] now here owns
5 a plot of land near Mt. Hamilton, 12 miles east of Lick
6 observatory—160 acres in area. She is going to make us a present of
7 it. It would be nice for a summer gathering for us in California. If
8 friends like to go there *now*, I will send them the written authority.
9 Will you write to Mrs. Aspinall and Miss Bell etc., about it? I am
10 rather desirous it should be occupied this summer as soon as
11 possible. There is only a log cabin on the land; for the rest they
12 must have tents.

13 I am sorry I can not spare a Swami yet.

14 With all love to you and Mrs. [Carrie Mead] Wyckoff and the
15 baby of the family.

16 Ever yours in the Truth,

17 Vivekananda

18
19 P.S. Tell Helen [the youngest Mead sister]—I thank her for her
20 kind invitation, but [am] so sorry [I] can not accept it now. After all,
21 you three sisters have become a part of my mind forever. What
22 about the club?

23 V.

24 CLXXVI

25 To Sister Christine

26 [On July 3, 1900, before departing for Detroit with Swami
27 Turiyananda and Miss Minnie Boock, Swami Vivekananda dis-
28 patched a telegram.]

29
30 [Postmarked: New York

31 July 3, 1900]

32 STARTED REACH TOMORROW WEDNESDAY 2 P.M. COME STATION
33 WABASH.

34 Swami Vivekananda

1 CLXXVII

2 To Mrs. Alice (Shanti) Hansbrough

3 102 E. 58th Street

4 New York

5 3rd July 1900

6 My dear Mrs. Hansbrough—

7 This is to introduce Swami Turiyananda. The lady who gave
8 the piece of land for Vedanta work belongs to Los Angeles. She has
9 taken Turiyananda with her. He is a great spiritual teacher—but has
10 no experience in platform work.

11 The best thing would be to help him to start a centre for quiet
12 and rest and meditation in the land near San Jose.

13 With all love to the holy Trinity.¹⁰

14 Ever yours in the Lord,

15 Vivekananda

16 CLXXVIII

17 To Swami Abhedananda

18 102 E. 58th Street

19 New York, N.Y.

20 24 July 1900

21 Dear Abhedananda,

22 I would have gladly remained here, but sastây kisti mâ¹¹. Got
23 a fine berth—one room all to myself—on a fine vessel.¹² As soon as
24 August comes it will be a terrible Bhida [crowd] as the companies
25 are reducing prices.

26 Things are going quite all right. Mr. Johnson has returned to
27 their house, and all the rooms are full except two. You write to Mrs.
28 Crane whether you want to get them or not.

1 You need not feel the least anxiety about the N.Y. work; it will
2 go as a marriage bull next season. Give my love to Mrs. [Mary B.]
3 Coulston and explain to her the circumstances.

4 With all love,

5 Vivekananda

6 CLXXIX

7 To Sister Christine

8 a Bord de Paquebot la Champagne,

9 Friday morning, 9 a.m.,

10 3rd August 1900.

11 Dear Christina,

12 It is foggy this morning. We are in the channel—expect to
13 reach [Le Havre] at 12 a.m. [noon]. It has been a very bad voy-
14 age—rolling and raining and dark nearly all the time. Terrible rolling
15 all through. Only last night I had good sleep. On other occasions the
16 rolling makes me sleep well, but this time I don't know what was
17 the matter; the mind was so whirling. Anyway, I am well and soon
18 to reach land.

19 Hope to reach Paris this evening.

20 I send this to Detroit, expecting you there.

21 With all love and blessings,

22 Vivekananda.

23 CLXXX

24 To Mrs. Francis Leggett

25 [Swami Vivekananda sent the following telegram on Friday,
26 August 3, 1900, when the *S.S. Champagne* (which he had boarded
27 in New York on July 26) docked at Le Havre, France.]

28
29 [Postmarked: Friday, August 3, 1900]

30 ARRIVE A HUIT HRES STLAZARE—VIVEKANANDA

31
32 [Translation: "I arrive at eight o'clock (p.m.) St. Lazare—
33 VIVEKANANDA".]

1 CLXXXI

2 To Sister Christine

3 6, Place des Etats-Unis

4 14th August 1900

5 Dear Christine,

6 Your letter from New York reached just now. You must have
7 got mine from France, directed to 528 Congress.

8 Well—it was a dreary, funeral-like time. Just think what it is to
9 a morbid man like me!

10 I am going to the Exposition, etc., trying to pass time. Had a
11 lecture here. Père Haycint [Hyacinthe], the celebrated clergy-man
12 here, seems to like me much. Well, well what? Nothing. Only, you
13 are so good, and I am a morbid fool—that is all about it. But
14 "Mother"—She knows best. I have served Her through weal or woe.
15 Thy will be done. Well, I have news of my lost brother
16 [Mahendranath Datta]. He is a great traveller, that is good. So you
17 see, the cloud is lifting slowly. My love to your mother and sister
18 and to Mrs. Funkey [Funke].

19 With love,

20 Vivekananda

21 CLXXXII

22 To Sister Nivedita

23 6, Place des Etats Unis,

24 Paris,

25 23rd August 1900.

26 Dear Nivedita,

27 The manuscript accounts of the Math just reached. It is
28 delightful reading. I am so pleased with it.

29 I am going to print a thousand or more to be distributed in
30 England, America and India. I will only add a begging paragraph in
31 the end.

32 What do you think the cost will be?

33 With love to you and Mrs. Bull,

34 Vivekananda.

1 CLXXXIII

2 To Sister Christine

3 6, Place des Etats-Unis, Paris

4 23rd August 1900

5 Dear Christine,

6 What is the matter with you? Are you ill? Unhappy? What
7 makes you silent? I had only one little note from you in all this time.

8 I am getting a bit nervous about you—not much. Otherwise I
9 am enjoying this city. Did Mrs. A. P. Huntington write you?

10 I am well—keeping well as far as it is possible with me.

11 With love,

12 Vivekananda

13 CLXXXIV

14 To Sister Christine

15 6 Place des Etats Unis,

16 Paris,

17 15th September 1900.

18 Dear Christina,

19 Your letter was very reassuring. I am so glad this summer did
20 you good. So you did not get enamoured of New York City.

21 Well, I am getting enamoured of Paris. I now am living with a
22 M. Jules Bois, a French savant, who has been a student and admirer
23 of my works.

24 He talks very little English; in consequence, I have to trot out
25 my jargon French and am succeeding well, he says. I can now
26 understand if he will talk slowly.

27 Day after tomorrow I go to Bretagne [Brittany] where our
28 American friends are enjoying the sea breeze—and the massage.¹³

29 I go with M. Bois for a short visit; après ça [after that] I don't
30 know where I go. I am getting quite Frenchy, connaissez-vous [do
31 you know]? I am also studying grammaire and hard at

1 work. [Sentence torn off] In a few months I hope to be
2 Frenchy, but by that time I will forget it by staying in England.

3 I am strong, well and content—no morbidity.

4 Au revoir,

5 Vivekananda.

6 CLXXXV

7 To Mrs. Ole Bull

8 66, Rue Ampère

9 22nd October 1900

10 Dear Mother,

11 I am sorry to learn you are not well. Hope you will soon be
12 better. Things seem to turn out better for me.

13 Mr. Maxim of the gun fame is very much interested in me,
14 and he wants to put in his book on China and the Chinese
15 something about my work in America.¹⁴ I have not any documents
16 with me; if you have, kindly give them to him. He will come to see
17 you and talk it over with you. Canon Hawes [Reverend Hugh
18 Reginald Haweis] also keeps track of my work in England. So much
19 about that. It may be that Mother will now work up my original plan
20 of international work. In that case, you will find your work of the
21 Conference¹⁵ has not been in vain.

22 It seems that after this fall in my health, physical and mental,
23 it is going to open out that way—larger and more international work.
24 Mother knows best.

25 My whole life has been divided into successive depressions
26 and rises—and so, I believe, is the life of everyone. I am glad, rather
27 than not, these falls come. I understand it all; still, I suffer and
28 grumble and rage!! Perhaps that is a part of the cause of the next
29 upheaval.

1 I think you will be in America by the time we return; if not, I
2 will see you in London again. Anyhow, adieu for the present. We
3 start day after tomorrow for Egypt etc. And all blessings ever be on
4 you and yours is, as always, my prayer.

5 Your son,

6 Vivekananda

7 PS: To Margot [Sister Nivedita] my love, and I am sure she
8 will succeed.

9 V.

10 CLXXXVI

11 To Miss Alberta Sturges

12 [Swami Vivekananda sent the following postcard.]

13
14 [Constantinople,

15 November 1, 1900]

16 Dear Alberta,

17 How are you? I am having a grand Turkish time.

18 Yours,

19 Vivekananda

20 CLXXXVII

21 To Sister Christine

22 [On a postcard, picturing the old decayed fortress walls of
23 Istanbul, Swami Vivekananda wrote the following note.]

24
25 [Postmarked: November 1, 1900]

26 Dear Christina—

27 I am having a good time here. So I hope you also are having
28 in Detroit—

29 Yours truly,

30 VIVEKANANDA.

1 CLXXXVIII

2 To Sister Nivedita

3 [On a picture postcard showing dervishes and local fish mer-
4 chants, Swami Vivekananda wrote the following note.]

5

6 [Postmarked: Constantinople

7 November 1, 1900]

8 Dear Margo [Margot], the blessings of the howling dervishes
9 go with you—Yours in the Lord,

10 VIVEKANANDA.

11 P.S. All love to Mrs. Bull.

12 V.

13 CLXXXIX

14 To Sister Christine

15 [On a postcard, showing the temple of Hepaistos, popularly
16 called Thesion, Swami Vivekananda wrote.]

17

18 [Postmarked: Athens,

19 November 11, 1900]

20 Great fun. I write without the possibility of being written to,
21 as I am changing place all the time. How do you do?

22 Vivekananda

23 CXC

24 To Maharaja Ajit Singh, the Raja of Khetri

25 The Math

26 Beloor

27 Howrah Dist.

28 [December 1900]

29 Your Highness—

30 Very glad to learn that you and the Coomar [the Royal Prince]
31 are enjoying good health. As for me, my heart has become very
32 weak. Change, I do not think, will do me any

1 good, as for the last 14 years I do not remember to have
2 stopped at one place for three months at a stretch. On the other
3 hand, if by some chance I can live for months in one place, I hope it
4 will do me good. I do not mind this, however; I feel that my work in
5 this life is done. Through good and evil, pain and pleasure, my
6 life-boat has been dragged on. The one great lesson I was taught is
7 that life is misery, nothing but misery. Mother knows what is best.
8 Each one of us is in the hands of Karma—it works out itself, and no
9 nay. There is only one element in life which is worth having at any
10 cost—and it is love. Love immense and infinite, broad as the sky and
11 deep as the ocean. This is the one great gain in life. Blessed is he
12 who gets it.

13 Ever yours in the Lord,

14 Vivekananda

15 CXCI

16 To Mrs. Ole Bull (in London)

17 Dacca,

18 20 March 1901.

19 My dear Mother,

20 At last I am in Eastern Bengal. This is the first time I am here,
21 and never before knew Bengal was so beautiful. You ought to have
22 seen the rivers here—regular rolling oceans of fresh water, and
23 everything so green—continual production. The villages are the
24 cleanest and prettiest in all India.

25 Joe [Miss Josephine MacLeod] is perhaps by this time in
26 Japan. I received a long and beautiful letter from Margot. Tell
27 Margot that there has been of late a regular fall of fortune on the
28 Kashmir Raja; things are all changing to his benefit. Mr.
29 Mookherjey is now Governor of Kashmir. Saradananda had a bad
30 fever. He is well now, but weak. He possibly goes to Darjeeling for
31 a change. Mrs. [M. N.] Banerjey, who is at Calcutta, is very anxious
32 to take him to the hills. Mohin [Mahendranath Datta], my brother,
33 is in India, in Karachi near Bombay, and he corresponds with
34 Saradananda. He writes to say he is going to Burma, China, etc.
35 The traders who lure him have shops in all

1 those places. I am not at all anxious about him. He is a very
2 selfish man.

3 I have no news from Detroit. I received one letter from
4 Christina nine months ago, but I did not reply. Perhaps that may
5 have vexed her.

6 I am peaceful and calm—and am finding every day the old
7 begging and trudging life is the best for me after all.

8 Mrs. Sevier I left at Belur. She is the guest of Mrs. Banerjey,
9 who has rented Nilambar Mookherjey's house on the river (the old
10 Math). She goes very soon to Europe.

11 Things are going on, as is in the nature of things. To me has
12 come resignation.

13 With all love,

14 Ever your Son,

15 Vivekananda.

16 PS—All blessings on Margot's work. Mother is leading, I am
17 sure.

18 V.

19 CXCII

20 To Ramesh Chandra Dutta¹⁶

21 The Math, P.O. Belur,¹⁷

22 Dist. Howrah, Bengal,

23 4 April 1901.

24 Dear Sir,

25 I am so very glad to learn from a person of your authority of
26 the good work Sister Nivedita is doing in England. I join in earnest
27 prayer with the hopes you entertain of her future services to India
28 by her pen.

29 I have not the least desire that she should leave her present
30 field of utility and come over to India.

1 I am under a deep debt of gratitude to you, Sir, for your
2 befriending my child, and hope you will never cease to advise her
3 as to the length of her stay in England and the line of work she
4 ought to undertake.

5 Her book on Kâli has been very popular in India. The debt our
6 Motherland already owes you is immense, and we are anxiously
7 awaiting the new book of yours.

8 May all blessings ever attend you and yours is the constant
9 prayer of—

10 Yours humbly,

11 Vivekananda.

12
13 CXCI

14 To Sister Nivedita

15 The Math, Belur,

16 Howrah District, Bengal,

17 4th April 1901.

18 Dear Margot,

19 A letter came just now from Mr. R. Dutt [Ramesh Dutta]
20 praising you and your work in England very much and asking me to
21 wish you to stop longer in England.

22 It requires no imagination to learn that I am overjoyed at all
23 the news about you Mr. Dutt so kindly sends.

24 Of course, you stay as long as you think you are working well.
25 Yum [Miss Josephine MacLeod] had some talk about you with
26 Mother [Holy Mother, Sarada Devi], and she desired you to come
27 over. Of course, it was only her love and anxiety to see you—that
28 was all; but poor Yum has been much too serious for once, and
29 hence all these letters. However, I am glad it should happen, as I
30 learnt so much about your work from Mr. Dutt, who can't be
31 accused of a relative's blind love.

32 I have written to Mrs. Bull already about this matter. I am
33 now at last in Dacca and had some lectures here. I depart for
34 Chandranath tomorrow, near Chittagong, the farthest eastern
35 extremity of Bengal. My Mother, aunt, cousin, another cousin's
36 widow, and nine boys are with me. They all send you love.

1 I had just now a few lines from Mrs. Bull, also a letter from
2 Mr. Sturdy. As it would be almost impossible for me to write for
3 some days now, I ask you to thank Mrs. Bull for me for her letter,
4 and tell her kindly that I have just now a long letter from Miss
5 [Christina] Greenstidel of Detroit. She mentions a beautiful letter
6 from Mrs. Bull. Sturdy writes about the publication of any further
7 edition of Raja-Yoga by Longmans. I leave that consideration with
8 Mrs. Bull. She may talk over the matter with Sturdy and do what
9 she thinks proper.

10 Please give Sturdy my best love, and tell him I am on the
11 march and will take time to reply to his letter; in the meanwhile the
12 business will be looked after by Mrs. Bull.

13 With everlasting love and blessings,

14 Vivekananda.

15 CXCIV

16 To Sister Christine

17 The Math, Belur,

18 Howrah Dist., Bengal,

19 [April 4, 1901]

20 Dear Christine,

21 The subsequent proceedings have been so much interesting;
22 and the interest has been growing so rapidly of late, that one could
23 scarcely utter a word.⁴²⁴

24 I am glad to learn of Mrs. [Ole] Bull's sweet letter to you; she
25 is an angel. You are peaceful and happy-good. I am growing
26 towards it too.

27 I am en route to Chandranath on pilgrimage.

28 I have been anxiously awaiting a letter from you, and it
29 seemed it would never come.

30 I am sure to be happy-can't help thinking so. After so much
31 struggle, the result must come. Things take their own course; it is I
32 who am to brighten up, I find. And I am trying

1 ⁴²⁴ ? As there was no known communication between Swami Vivekananda and
2 Christine during the first quarter of 1901, perhaps the Swami was referring to
3 the fact that he was then on pilgrimage to East Bengal, with a large party, and
4 was too busy to write to anyone during this period.
5

1 my best. And you can help me by writing nice letters now and
2 then; will you?

3 Margot [Sister Nivedita] is doing splendid work in England
4 with Mrs. Bull's backing. Things are going on nicely.

5 I am sleeping better and the general health is not bad.

6 With everlasting love and blessings,

7 Vivekananda.

8 P.S. Please enquire of Miss [Sarah Ellen] Waldo about the
9 publication of Karma and Jnâna Yogas and write.

10 CXCXV

11 Letter of Introduction

12 Gauhati

13 April 17, 1901

14
15 I have great pleasure in certifying the great amiability and
16 helpfulness of the brothers Shiva-kanta and Lakshmi-kanta, Pandas
17 of Shri Kamakhya Peetham.

18 They are men who help most and are satisfied with the least.

19 I can unhesitatingly recommend them to the Hindu public
20 visiting this most holy shrine.

21 Swami Vivekananda

22 CXCXVI

23 To Sister Christine

24 The Math, Belur,

25 Howrah Dist., Bengal,

26 13th May 1901.

27 Dear Christine,

28 I arrived in the Math yesterday. This morning came your
29 short note. You must have got my letters by this time, and [I] hope
30 this will give you a taste of how sometimes silence is gold.

31 I have beautiful letters from everywhere this morning and am
32 quite happy. I paid a long visit of two months to Assam and

1 different parts of eastern Bengal. For combined mountain and
2 water scenery, this part of the country is unrivalled.

3 Either I am to go to Europe this summer, and thence to the
4 U.S., or you come over to India—things are all getting ready to that
5 end. Mother knows Her ways. For one thing, I am calm, very calm,
6 and hope to keep a hold on this state for a long time; and you are
7 my best help to keep this poise, are you not? I will write more in my
8 next; just now these few lines—and a hundred pardons I beg for
9 their scantiness. Yet silence tells more sometimes than all the
10 speech in the world.

11 With all love and blessings,
12 Ever yours in the Lord,
13 Vivekananda.

14 CXCVII

15 To Mrs. Ole Bull

16 The Math, Belur

17 13 May 1901

18 Dear Mother,

19 I reached Calcutta yesterday. This morning arrived your
20 letter containing three cheques for my cousin. They shall reach her
21 regularly.

22 I have not had any letter from Joe [Miss Josephine MacLeod]
23 from Japan, but several I find awaiting me from on board steamer.
24 She also sends me a newspaper cutting to be sent to Professor
25 Geddes. I enclose it in this letter and expect you to direct it to Prof.
26 Geddes.

27 Saradananda has been three weeks in Darjeeling, where he
28 has improved greatly. I wish he will remain some time longer there.
29 Mr. Bannerjy is the kindest of hosts.

30 Mrs. Sevier is in London at 2, Maisemore Mansions, Canfield
31 Gardens, London, N.W.

32 You are right: my experiences are bringing about calmness
33 —great calmness.

34 Mrs. Patterson and children are off to Europe. General

35 [C. B. Patterson] is alone and very desirous that I would call. I
36 will the next time I go to town.

1 My cousin and mother and the rest send love, and my eternal
2 love you know always.

3 Ever your son,

4 Vivekananda

5 P.S. All love and blessings for Margot [Sister Nivedita].

6 CXCVIII

7 To Mrs. Alice (Shanti) Hansbrough

8 The Math

9 Howrah Dist.,

10 Bengal, India

11 3rd June 1901

12 Dear Mrs. Hansbrough—

13 The contribution of six pounds and three shillings to the Math
14 by the Los Angeles club has duly reached. Swami Brahmananda will
15 write to you a separate acknowledgement. But as I happen to be
16 here just now and have not had long any direct communication with
17 you, I feel like having a chat with you as of yore, even though it be
18 through the post. Now how are you and the Baby and the holy
19 Trinity and the oldest who brings up the rear?

20 How are all our Los Angeles friends? Poor Mrs. [Emeline F.]
21 Bowler, I hear, has passed away. She was an angel. Where is Miss
22 Strickney? Please tender her my sincerest love, gratitude and
23 prayers when you meet her next.

24 How are all the San Francisco friends? How is our Madam⁴²⁵

25 —the noble, the unselfish? What is she doing now? Quietly
26 gone back to her Home of Truth work?

27 Are you pleased with Turiyananda and his work? Is the
28 [Shânti] Ashrama progressing?

29 With everlasting love and blessings,

30 Ever yours in the Lord,

31 Vivekananda

1 ⁴²⁵ ? Mrs. Benjamin Aspinall.
2

1 CXCIX
2 To Mr. Okakura Kakuzo
3 The Math, Belur
4 Howrah Dis.
5 Bengal, India
6 18th June 1901

7 Dear friend—

8 Allow me to call you a friend. We must have been such in
9 some past birth. Your cheque for 300 rupees duly reached and
10 many thanks for the same.

11 I am just thinking of going to Japan, but with one thing or
12 another and my precarious health, I cannot expedite matters as I
13 wish.

14 Japan to me is a dream—so beautiful that it haunts one all his
15 life.

16 With all love and blessings,
17 Vivekananda
18 Kakudzo [Kakuzo] Okakura Esq.
19 Tokyo, Japan
20

21 CC

22 To Sister Christine
23 The Math, Belur,
24 Dist. Howrah, Bengal, India,
25 [End of June 1901]

26 Dear Christina,

27 Your very welcome letter just reached. A few days ago a
28 precious little bit of poem also reached. I wish it ever so much you
29 were the writer thereof. Anyhow, most of us feel, though unable to
30 express; and then, "There are thoughts that lie too deep for tears".
31 Regularity in anything is not in my line of life, but that need not
32 make you irregular. I pray you to drop a few lines every now and
33 then. Of course, when I am not in this body, I am sure the news will
34 reach you, and then you will have to stop writing.

1 Miss MacLeod wishes me to join her in Japan, but I am not
2 sure. Most probably I am not going, especially as I expect both her
3 and Mrs. Ole Bull in India, in November. Two whole months
4 consumed in coming and going; only one month's stay in Japan—that
5 does not pay, I am afraid.

6 Say, I am getting enormously fat about the middle—alas!

7 Mrs. [Charlotte] Sevier, who is now in England, returns in a
8 few months to India. She has invited Mrs. Bull etc. to be her guests
9 in the Himalayas. I wish they could be there during summer.

10 I have manfully borne the terrific heat of my country in the
11 plains, and now I am facing the deluging rains of my country. Do
12 you know how I am taking rest? I have got a few goats and sheep
13 and cows and dogs and cranes! And I am taking care of them the
14 whole day! It is not trying to be happy; what for? Why should one
15 not be unhappy as well—both being nonsense?—but just to kill time.

16 Do you correspond with Mrs. Bull or Nivedita?

17 Don't worry, don't be anxious; for me the "Mother" is my
18 protection and refuge; and everything must come round soon,
19 better than my fondest dreams can paint.

20 With all love,

21 Vivekananda.

22 CCI

23 To Sister Christine

24 The Math, Belur,

25 Dist. Howrah, Bengal,

26 6th August 1901.

27
28 Letters are sometimes, dear Christina, like mercy—good to the
29 one that sends and the other that receives.

30 I am so happy that you are calm and resigned as ever. You
31 are ever that. "Mother knows", indeed; only I know that "Mother"
32 not only knows, but does—and is going to do something very fine for
33 me in the near future. What do you think will be very good for me
34 on earth? Silver? Gold? Pooh! I have got

1 something infinitely better; but a little gold will not be amiss
2 to keep my jewel in proper surroundings, and it is coming, don't you
3 think so?

4 I am a man who frets much, but waits all the same; and the
5 apple comes to my mouth by itself. So, it is coming, coming,
6 coming.

7 Now, how are you? Growing ever thinner, thinner, thinner,
8 eh? Do have a very good appetite and good sleep in anticipation of
9 the coming good time—to be in trim for welcoming its advent.

10 How did the heat feel this year? We read all sorts of horrible
11 stories about American heat waves. You have beaten the world's
12 records, even in heat—that's Yankee push, surely.

13 Well, you are right as about taste: I renounce the yellow of
14 gold and the white of silver, but stick to amber always—that is to my
15 taste.

16 Amber and corals I always hated; but of late I am awakening
17 to their beauty. One learns as he lives, is it not?

18 I am going to Darjeeling tomorrow for a few days and will
19 write to you from there. Now gute Nacht [good night] and au revoir
20 [good-bye] for the present.

21 Ever yours truly,

22 Vivekananda.

23 CCII

24 To Sister Christine

25 The Math, Belur,

26 Dist. Howrah, Bengal,

27 27th August 1901.

28 Dear Christine,

29 I am expecting a long, long letter from you; and, like all
30 expectations of mine, [it] will not be realized, I fear.

31 Well, I need not bother you with the usual string of questions:
32 How are you? What are you doing all this summer? etc. I am sure
33 the Mother will [do] so much as to keep you in good health at least.

1 Now, Christina, for many reasons this letter happens to be
2 short, very. It is written with the special purpose that as soon as
3 you get this, send me your latest photograph.

4 Did you write to Miss [Sarah Ellen] Waldo about the publi-
5 cation of the books? I get no news and, what is more important, no
6 money (that is between you and me) from the sale.

7 Did you have any news of Margot [Sister Nivedita], of Mrs.
8 [Ole] Bull etc.? And are you happy? I sometimes feel I am, other
9 times it is clouded. Well, it is all the body, after all—

10 material. Goodbye.

11 Yours with love and blessings,

12 Vivekananda.

13 PS—Do send the photo as soon as possible.

14 V.

15 CCIII

16 To Sister Christine

17 The Math, Belur,

18 Dist. Howrah, Bengal,

19 2nd September 1901.

20 My dear Christine,

21 I have been looking at one of your old photos—the only one
22 you sent four or five years ago; and then I remember how changed
23 and reduced you looked last summer; and it came to me that you
24 must be awfully thin now, as it seems very hard for you to get rid of
25 anxieties. This is simply foolish. Things will, of course, take their
26 shape. We only make ourselves miserable by moping. It is very hard
27 to manipulate one's philosophy to contribute to one's daily need. So
28 it is with you, as with me. But it is easiest to take the teacher's
29 chair and read a lecture. And that has been my life's business!!
30 Indeed, that is the reason why there are more disciples up to the
31 mark than teachers. The upshot of all this is that you must create a
32 huge appetite, then gorge, then sleep and grow fat, fat, fat. Plump
33 is the English word, is it not?

1 As for me, I am very happy. Of course, Bengal brings the
2 asthma now and then, but it is getting tame, and the terrible
3 things—Bright's disease and diabetes—have disappeared altogether.
4 Life in any dry climate will stop the asthma completely, I am sure. I
5 get reduced, of course, during a fit, but then it takes me no time to
6 lay on a few layers of fat. I have a lot of cows, goats, a few sheep,
7 dogs, geese, ducks, one tame gazelle, and very soon I am going to
8 have some milk buffaloes. These are not your American bison, but
9 huge things—hairless, half-aquatic in habits, and [that] give an
10 enormous quantity of very rich milk.

11 Within the last few months, I got two fits [of asthma] by going
12 to two of the dampest hill stations in Bengal—Shillong and
13 Darjeeling. I am not going to try the Bengalee mountains any more.

14 Mrs. Bull and Nivedita are in Norway. I don't know when they
15 [will] come over to India. Miss MacLeod is in Japan. I have not
16 heard from her [for] a long while. They all are expected here in
17 November, and will have a "hot time in this old town"⁴²⁶ etc. I pray
18 you can come, and the Mother will open the door for it. I cannot but
19 say my prayers mostly have been heard, up to date.

20 Well now, Christina, send me one of your latest photos next
21 mail, will you? I want to see how much of fat you have accumulated
22 in one year.

23 Anyhow, I will have to go to America with Mrs. Bull, I am
24 sure. [Excision]⁴²⁷ By the by, excusez-moi,⁴²⁸ our Calcutta is never so
25 hot as your Detroit or New York, with its added advantage

26 —we are not required by our society to wear many things. The
27 old Greeks used to think that wearing too many clothes and
28 [feeling] shame to show any part of the body a peculiarity of
29 barbarians! So the Hindus think, down to the present day. We

1 ⁴²⁶ ?
2 The quotation is from a song entitled "Camptown Races" by the American
3 composer Stephen Foster.

4 ⁴²⁷ ?
5 The paper of the original letter is so old and brittle that some portions
6 have disintegrated.
7

8 ⁴²⁸ ?
9 A French expression which means "excuse me".
10
11

1 are the most scantily clothed people in the whole world. Bless
2 the Lord! How one would live otherwise in our climate!

3
4 3rd September—

5 I left the letter unfinished last night. The foreign English mail
6 starts day after tomorrow. So begin again. The moon is not up yet,
7 but there is a sunless glow upon the river. Our mighty Ganges (She
8 is indeed mighty now, during the rains) is splashing against the
9 walls of the house. Numerous tiny boats are flitting up and down in
10 the dark; they have come to fish for our shads, which come up the
11 river this season.

12 How I wish you were here to taste our shads—one of the most
13 delicate fish in the world. It is raining outside—pouring. But the
14 moment this downpour ceases, I rain through every pore

15 —it is so hot yet. My whole body is covered by big patches of
16 prickly heat. Thank goodness there are no ladies about! If I had to
17 cover myself in this state of things, I surely would go crazy.

18 I have also my theme, but I am not despondent. I am sure
19 very soon to pan it out into a beautiful ecstasy [excision]. I am half
20 crazy by nature; then my overtaxed nerves make me outrageous
21 now and then. As a result I don't find anybody who would patiently
22 bear with me! I am trying my best to make myself gentle as a lamb.
23 I hope I shall succeed in some birth. You are so gentle. Sometimes I
24 did frighten you very much, did I not, Christina? I wish I were as
25 gentle as you are. Mother knows which is best.

26 I would not take any supper tonight, as I ate rather heartily of
27 the aforesaid shad! Then I have to think, think, think on my theme;
28 and some subjects I think best in bed because the whole is made
29 clear to me in dream. Therefore, I am going to bed, and gute Nacht,
30 bon soir,⁴²⁹ etc., etc. No, no, it is now about 10 a.m. in Detroit.
31 Therefore, a very happy day to you. May all good realities reach you
32 today while I am expecting dreams.

33 Ever yours with love and blessings,

34 Vivekananda.

1 ⁴²⁹ ? German and French expressions which mean "good night" and "good
2 evening", respectively.
3

1 CCIV

2 To Sister Christine

3 The Math, Belur,

4 Dist. Howrah, Bengal,

5 25th September 1901.

6 Dear Christine,

7 I could not write you last mail, excusez [excuse]. But I have
8 been expecting one from you for a long time. Hope one will come
9 this mail.

10 I am just thinking of going over to Japan, as Miss [Josephine]
11 MacLeod is so insistent. Perhaps something will be done; who
12 knows?

13 From Japan, of course, a peep into America seems inevitable.

14 Not much news of Mrs. [Ole] Bull or Margot [Sister Nivedita].
15 Margot is rested, well, and strong. She will come to India some day,
16 perhaps. I am soon expecting Mrs. [Charlotte] Sevier though. Her
17 work is needing her. Her beautiful home in the Himalayan forests is
18 a temptation, especially now when a huge tiger is roaming in her
19 compound and killed a horse, a buffalo, and her pair of mastiffs in
20 broad daylight; a number of bears [are] playing havoc with her
21 vegetable garden; and lots of porcupines [are] doing mischief
22 everywhere!!! She went out of the way to buy land in a forest—she
23 and her husband liked it so much.

24 There is not much to write this week. Words only tire one,
25 except one which is inexhaustible, infinite.

26 So, goodbye till next week.

27 Ever with love and blessings,

28 Vivekananda.

29 PS—Just now comes a telegram from Miss MacLeod and a
30 letter also. She is so insistent that I am thinking of going over to
31 Japan. In that case, we cross over to America this winter, and
32 thence to England.

33 Yours,

34 V.

1 CCV

2 To Sister Christine

3 The Math, Belur,

4 Dist. Howrah, Bengal,

5 8th October 1901.

6 Dear Christina,

7 Yours of September 9 came to hand yesterday. I congratulate you on your successful visit to the Huron
8 Lake; a few more of them (according to your letter) will force you to sympathize with our condition—oh, the
9 gasping and the melting and the puffing and all the rest of them!

10 However, nothing in the world like a plump, ripe fruit.

11 I had to give up my trip to Japan: firstly, because I am not in a working trim yet; secondly, [I] don't
12 much care to make such a long voyage (one month) alone; thirdly, what am I to talk to them, I wonder.

13 Our heat too has been fierce and is continuing unusually long this year. I am blacker than a Negro by
14 this time.

15 The California work is progressing famously. They want one or two men more. I would send, if I could,
16 but I have not any more spare men. Poor Turiyananda is suffering from malaria yet, and is awfully
17 overworked.

18 Do you know whether they published my Jnana-Yoga or not? I got a copy of a second edition of
19 Karma-Yoga only.

20 I am bobbing up and down in the current of life. Today it is rather down, so I finish the letter here.

21 Yours with all love and blessings,

22 Vivekananda.

23 CCVI

24 To Sister Christine

25 The Math, Belur,

26 Dist. Howrah, Bengal,

27 14th October 1901.

1 My dear Christina,

2 Just now came a letter from Mrs. Bull, but none from you, as I expected one this mail.

1 Mrs. Bull writes, "I wrote Christina recently to ask her if she were to be free in case the opportunity
2 opened for her to go to the East. I send you her reply".

3 I went through several times your letter to Mrs. Bull. It surely was horrible; and you have been all this
4 time hiding the real state of affairs from me and posing great cheerfulness!!

5 You will be a precious fool to lose the opportunity if such comes and is offered by Mrs. Bull. You will
6 only have to take a year's leave. The rest will all be arranged by Mrs. Bull, including, I am sure, all your
7 anxiety for those you will have to leave behind in Detroit.

8 You have been good, too good to be human, and you are so, still. But it is no use making oneself
9 unnecessarily miserable. "Mother's will", surely, if the chance comes; and it has got to come, I know.

10 I would not write you about my health; for after all this hide and seek, even though it was for my good,
11 I think you have not much of a right to know the truth about my health.

12 But to some things you have eternal rights, and amongst others, to my eternal love and blessings,

13 Vivekananda.

14 CCVII

15 To Sister Nivedita

16 The Math,

17 P.O. Belur, Howrah,

18 12th November 1901.

19 My dear Margo [Margot],

20 Since the Durgâ Pujâ I have been very ill, and so could not reply to your letter earlier.

21 We had a grand Puja here of Durga, lasting nearly four days; but, alas, I was down with fever all the
22 time.

23 We had a grand image, and a huge Puja it was. Then we had the Lakshmi Puja following close, and
24 then night before yesterday, we had the Kali Puja. It is always after midnight—

25 this Puja. I am better now, and we will find a house for you as soon as you come.

1 I am so glad you are accompanying Mrs. [Ole] Bull. She requires all care; and she always thinks of
2 herself the last. Joe [Miss Josephine MacLeod] is coming to India shortly—at Christmas time with some
3 Japanese friends. I am expected to meet her in Madras.

4 I am going off to the N.W.P. [North-Western Provinces] etc. soon, as Bengal is malarious—now that the
5 rains are over.

6 Mrs. Bull has been a mother to us all, and any time and service spent for her is as nothing to what she
7 has been doing for us all. Remain with her as long as she wants you—the work can wait well; "Mother" sees
8 to her work. We needn't be anxious.

9 By the by, Miss [Henrietta] Müller is here in Calcutta. She wrote a letter to Akhandananda, with whom
10 she has been in regular correspondence—care of the Math. So I sent some flowers and fruits and a letter of
11 welcome to her hotel. I have not had a reply yet.

12 Mrs. [Charlotte] Sevier, I expect, has already started. Swarupananda had his heart weakened by the
13 constant uphill and downhill. He is here and improving.

14 Things are going on well with us, slowly but surely. The boys of late have been very active, and it is
15 work only that tells and nothing else.

16 Yours with all love and blessings,

17 Vivekananda.

18 CCVIII

19 To Sister Christine

20 The Math, P.O. Belur, Howrah,

21 12th November 1901.

22 Dear Christina,

23 The morning's mail brought me a photograph from Detroit. I thank the sender very much for
24 promptness. Well, I liked it much. But the old one is the profile view; this, the front. Then again, the
25 phenomenal fat seems to be only imaginary on somebody's part. In a way, I am more used to the old one,
26 and, as such, I cannot slight an old friend. So let me say both are good. The one is an evolution of the
27 other—for the better. I expected

1 a line but it has not arrived yet; [it] may tomorrow. We have a proverb here: "One river is equal to forty
2 miles". There is only a river between Calcutta and our Math, and yet such a round-about way for the mail.
3 Sometimes it comes dribbling for days.

4 Mrs. [Ole] Bull and Nivedita must have started for the U.S. by this time. Nivedita is sure to see you in
5 Detroit. Mrs. Bull is anxious to induce you to join her Indian party via Japan. If you can take leave for some
6 months, do come. Mother will arrange anyhow; I need not trouble myself.

7 Mrs. Sevier has started already, it seems—alone.

8 We had grand Pujas (worships) here in our Math this year. The biggest of our Pujas is the Mother
9 worship, lasting nearly four days and nights. We brought a clay image of Mother with ten hands, standing
10 with one foot on a lion, the other on a demon. Her two daughters—the Goddess of Wealth and the Goddess of
11 Learning and Music—on either side on lotuses; beneath, her two sons—the God of War and that of Wisdom.

12 Thousands of people were entertained, but I could not see the Puja, alas! I was down with high fever
13 all the time. Day before yesterday, however, came the Puja of Kali. We had an image, too, and sacrificed a
14 goat and burned a lot of fireworks. This night every Hindu home is illuminated, and the boys go crazy over
15 fireworks. There are, of course, several cases of severe burns in the hospitals. We had less fireworks but
16 more Puja, recitation of Mantras, offering of flowers, food and songs. It lasted only one night.

17 I am expected to leave Calcutta and Bengal in a few days, as this country becomes very malarious this
18 month, after the rains. It is pleasant and cool now, and the north Himalayan wind is blowing.

19 We have fenced in a lot of our grounds to protect our vegetables from our cows and goats and sheep.
20 The other day one of my [a portion excised] . . . but the mother was either so wicked or [a portion
21 excised] . . . that she would not look at her young. I tried to keep them alive on cow's milk, but the poor
22 things died in the night! Two of my ducks are sitting on their eggs. As this is their first time, and the male
23 does not help them a bit, I am trying my best to keep up their strength by good

1 feeding. We cannot keep chickens here—they are forbidden to us.

2 With all love,

3 Vivekananda.

4 CCIX

5 To Sister Christine

6 The Math, P.O. Belur, Howrah,

7 25th November 1901.

8 Dear Christine,

9 It seems your bottle of nerve tonic did not do you much good, your assurances to the contrary. It must
10 have been a curious error. I must have been down with fever or asthma or something else at that time. Still a
11 thousand, thousand pardons. This was my first, and it will be my last, offence. Your letter that went to Miss
12 [Josephine] MacLeod has not come back yet. Perhaps Miss MacLeod is bringing the letter with her, as she is
13 coming over to India from Japan herself, accompanied by her Japanese converts (male, of course, as she is a
14 lady missionary).

15 Well, well, I so wish things would so arrange themselves that I could see you once more. Mother
16 knows. By the by, my right eye is failing me badly. I see very little with that one. It will be hard for me for
17 some time either to read or write; and as it is getting worse every day, my people are urging me to go to
18 Calcutta and consult a doctor. I will go soon, as soon as I recover from a bad cold I have on.

19 I am so glad you were so taken by Abhedananda; only I thought one Hindu was good for a lifetime.

20 Poor Miss Joe [Miss Josephine MacLeod]—so she remains ignorant as to the real cause of my not going
21 over to Japan! You need not be the least anxious—there is no harm done; and if there were, Joe and especially
22 Mrs. [Ole] Bull make it their life's duty to befriend those I love.

23 I will try your tonic when it arrives; and the gift, I pray, will even be followed by the giver, for surely a
24 [words excised] . . . is more stimulating and healing than dead drugs.

25 With all love,

26 Vivekananda.

1 CCX

2 To Sister Christine

3 The Math, P.O. Belur, Howrah,

4 27th November 1901.

5 Dear Christine,

6 It is almost sure, I did not write any letter to you that week in which [I] made that infamous blunder. As
7 I wrote you two letters a few days previously, it is not at all probable that I wrote you another. Then Miss
8 [Josephine] MacLeod [would have] sent the letter back. I must have written only one letter that week to Miss
9 MacLeod, giving her my reasons for not going to Japan; and somehow it so happened that the hand wrote the
10 most familiar name on the envelope. So you need not expect any letter of yours back from Japan, as there
11 was none; and if there were, you shall have it.

12 I am just under another spell of catarrh and asthma. Yesterday a cyclone blew over the place, and
13 several trees and a bit of the roof are damaged. It is gloomy yet and cold. You know it is almost impossible to
14 write with the asthma on. So au revoir [good-bye].

15 Vivekananda.

16 CCXI

17 To Sister Christine

18 The Math, P.O. Belur, Howrah

19 12th December 1901

20 Dear Christine,

21 Well, then, you wanted to know all about my state of health, and you insist. You shall have it.

22 You know, the last three years I have been getting albuminuria now and then. It is not constant, nor is
23 it yet of any organic character. The kidneys are structurally all right. Only they throw out albumen now and
24 then.

25 This is worse than throwing out sugar in diabetes. Albumen poisons the blood, attacks the heart and
26 does all sorts of mischief. Catching cold always increases it. This time it has caused

1 a small blood vessel in the right eye to burst, so that I scarcely see with that eye.

2 Then the circulation has become very rapid. The doctors have put me to bed; and I am forbidden to eat
3 meat, to walk or even stand up, to read and write.

4 Already there is some benefit in this lying-down process, as I sleep a lot and have a good appetite and
5 am digesting my meals. Curious, is it not, that inactivity should bring on sleep and appetite? There is no
6 cause to be anxious at all.

7 Mrs. [Charlotte] Sevier arrived in Calcutta three days ago; and by the last advice from Nivedita, Mrs.
8 Bull and she will start on the 13th December, if they can secure berths, or on the 30th December at least. I
9 pray Mrs. Bull has already invited you and that you have got your year's leave and are coming over, and that
10 you will get this letter in India redirected. If Mother does not fulfil this prayer, sure She will take me across
11 the wayter soon, and [line excised] The doctor says if I keep to my bed for three months, I will get
12 completely cured.

13 Now, don't worry. If good days are not coming, we will make them, that is all. Hang it! I must have
14 good days now and, that too, very soon. You know, I always keep my word. Mother must do it, or I throw Her
15 overboard. I am not so submissive as you are.

16 Our old-school physicians pour in tons of iron and other metals—including gold, silver, pearls,
17 etc.—down our throats. I should be a man of iron by this time; perhaps yours will be the last touch to make
18 my body one of steel.

19 This is our best season for eating turtles, but they are all black. The green [ones] can only be found in
20 America. Alas! I am prevented from the taste of meat.

21 Now, noble heart, take courage. Don't mope: you have buffeted [too] many a storm in life, old war
22 horse, to be like a silly boarding-school girl. Things must go all right. I am not going to die or to be ill just
23 now; I am determined to be healthy. You know my grit.

24 Miss [Josephine] MacLeod sent you your letter. What was it about? Was there anything queer? I am
25 glad she had it. She writes beautifully about you. She has already started, and we will have a jolly good
26 company this winter here in Calcutta.

1 Mrs. [Ole] Bull, Miss MacLeod, Mrs. Sevier and Nivedita and I will be overjoyed if somebody else will
2 be thrown into the bargain. I can't get any more value, eh? I must stop. Am going to look after my geese and
3 ducks just for five minutes, breaking the doctor's command to lie down all the time. One of the geese is a
4 silly, fearful bird, always despondent and anxious. She likes to be all alone by herself and is miserable—very
5 much like another goose I know in another place.

6
7 Here my story ends

8 And spinach top bends.

9 Why is spinach withering?

10 Because the goat is browsing.

11 Why is the goat browsing?

12 Because no grass is growing.

13 Why no grass is growing?

14 The gardener is not watering.

15 Why there is no watering?

16 The Master is not commanding.

17 Why is he not commanding?

18 An ant has bitten the Master!

19
20 This is a nursery rhyme told after a story, and it is true of us all. It is only an ant bite, after all—the
21 trouble here; is it not?

22 Ever yours,

23 Vivekananda.

24 CCXII

25 To Sister Christine

26 The Math, Belur,

27 Dist. Howrah, Bengal, India,

1 18th December 1901.

2 Dear Christine,

3 I am much better, and the rest is doing me good. I have found out that lying in bed all the time gives
4 me as much sleep

1 as wanted and good digestion too. Albumen and sugar vanish immediately [when] I begin taking rest.

2 Mrs. Bull and Nivedita start for India from Marseilles today, and unless they change their plan, [they]
3 must be in India before this reaches you—two weeks before.

4 Herewith I send you four hundred and eighty dollars by cheque drawn on Thomas Cook & Son,
5 Broadway, New York. They have no branch office in Detroit. On receipt of this, you write to Thomas Cook &
6 Son, Broadway, New York, that you have got a cheque from India—mentioning the amount and
7 number—drawn by Thomas Cook & Son on the firm of Thomas Cook & Son, and want to be advised as to how
8 to cash it. Don't send the cheque ahead. (Excuse all these details. I feel you are a baby in business, though I
9 am worse.) This is to pay your "passage to India"⁴³⁰ if you think fit to accept Mrs. Sevier's invitation. If you
10 get leave and come, I am sure you will find somebody who is coming to England, at least. Then from there,
11 again, somebody who is coming to Egypt. You come with them as far as Italy, thence direct on a boat to
12 India.

13 Second-class passage across the Atlantic is all right, but the second class from Italy to Bombay is
14 rather bad. There are always a few rough men and fast women. There is money enough for travelling first
15 class all through, if you so like.

16 The Mother will see to it, even as [She did when] this money came. Drop me a line as soon as you
17 engage your passage—better a week ahead; otherwise I don't see how the letter can reach me. The vessel to
18 India you get from London; and possibly a letter may reach me with the name of the vessel, etc. In any case,
19 however, you wire me as soon as you land and get into a good hotel. You will find many persons to receive
20 you

21 —and me too, most probably.

22 In case, however, things take another turn and you cannot come, no matter. Do with the money just as
23 it pleases you.

24 It is very probable that after Miss [Josephine] MacLeod and Mrs. [Ole] Bull have been through India,
25 they are going home via Japan; and, of course, I am going with them. In that case I will be in California next
26 fall.

1 ⁴³⁰ ? Probably the Swami placed this phrase in quotation marks because it is the title of a poem in Walt Whitman's Leaves of
2 Grass.
3

1 It will be a nice trip, and would it not be a fine tour round the world if you get leave and come?
2 Do just as the Mother opens the way for you, and do not worry.

3 Yours with all love and blessings,
4 Vivekananda

5 CCXIII

6 To Sister Christine

7 The Math, Belur,
8 Dist. Howrah, Bengal, India,
9 25th December 1901.

10
11 A Merry Christmas and Happy New Year is the usual congratulation. Alas! The stars brought you a
12 tremendous blow.⁴³¹ Blessed be the name of the Lord. After all, it is only "Thy will be done"—our only refuge. I
13 will not insult you by offering you consolation—you know it all already. Only this line to remind you of one who
14 is in entire sympathy with you and who knows that all your plans must be good in joy or sorrow, as you are
15 dedicated to the eternal Mother. Well, the Mother phenomenal has merged in the Mother absolute, eternal.
16 Thy will be done.

17 By this time you must have made a decision, or, rather, the "Mother" has shown you the way, surely. I
18 rest content.

19 The soldier of the Queen has gone abroad to fight for Her cause, leaving all he loves to Her care. The
20 soldier is to look to his duty. The Queen of the Universe knows the rest.

21 With all love as usual,
22 Vivekananda.

⁴³¹ ? Sister Christine's mother had passed away.

1 CCXIV

2 To Sister Christine

3 The Math, Belur, Dist. Howrah,

4 23rd January 1902.

5 My dear Christine,

6 By this time you must have settled your plans. Don't worry, however, on my account. I only want to see
7 you rested and well rested, wherever you be.

8 Excuse this rather long delay in writing. Owing to various reasons I could not, but [was] mentally
9 sending you good wishes all along.

10 Miss [Josephine] MacLeod has arrived with her Japanese friends: Mr. Okakura [Kakuzo], a professor of
11 art, and Mr. Hori, a Brahmachârin. The latter has come to India to study Sanskrit and English. The former
12 came to see India, the Motherland of Japanese culture and art. Well, Mrs. [Ole] Bull and Nivedita are also
13 expected in a few days. As it seems now, this whole party is going to Japan—minus Nivedita. She remains
14 here to work.

15 Now, I am going to try my hand in Japan and, if possible, in China. Oh, how I wish you were coming
16 with Nivedita to make one of the party to Japan! Yet, do not put yourself to unnecessary trouble for that.
17 There is Japan, and there is the U.S., after all, where we meet. You will only break yourself in trying to
18 "hustle up". No Hurry, No Worry. I am rather anxious in not hearing from you for weeks. I pray you are not
19 ill, anyway.

20 To Mother have I given you over. She protects Her own, ever and ever, I have no fear.

21 With all love and blessings,

22 Vivekananda.

1 CCXV

2 To Miss Josephine MacLeod

3 Gopal Lal Villa, Benaras Cantonment

4 7th Feb. 1902.

5 My dear Joe—

6 We have safely reached Benaras, and Mr. Okakura [Kakuzo] has already done Benaras. He goes to see
7 Sarnath (the old Buddhistic place) today and starts on his tour tomorrow.

8 He has asked Niranjan [Swami Niranjanananda] to accompany him and he has consented.

9 Kanay [Nirbhayananda] has supplied him with everything he asked for—and he asks me also to send
10 you the accounts. This, on the other page.

11 I hope Nivedita and Mrs. [Ole] Bull have safely arrived. I am rather better than at Buddha Gaya. This
12 house is nice—well furnished and has a good many rooms and parlours. There is a big garden all round and
13 beautiful roses—and gigantic trees. It is rather cooler here than at Gaya. There was no hitch to our friends
14 being admitted into the chief temple and [allowed to] touch the Sign of Shiva and to worship. The Buddhists,
15 it seems, are always admitted.

16 With all love and welcome to Mrs. Bull and Nivedita—if they have arrived—and all to you,

17 Vivekananda

18
19
20 [Enclosed in the above letter was the following accounts list.]

21
22 4th February 1902. Rs 100

		Rs.	As.	P.
23				
24	Train hire from Gaya to Benares	20	4	0
25	Cab hire		5	0
26	Tel message		2	0
27	Refreshment Room (Morning)	1	8	0

1	Cooly hire Gaya	0	10	0	
2	Tobacco etc.		0	5	0
3	Refreshment Room (Evening)	2	0	3	
4	Cooly hire (at Benares)	1	1	0	
5	Cab hire at Benares		1	10	0
6					
7	Total	34	6	3	

1	5th February				
2	Paid to Medicine for Mr. K. Okakura	1	8	0	
3	" [Ditto] Oatmeal & corn-flour	1	4	0	
4	" Tobacco etc.		0	6	3
5	" Bread etc.	0	2	0	
6	Paid to Barber		0	3	0
7	" Fish		0	7	6
8					
9	Total	3	14	9	
10					
11					
12	6th February 1902				
13	Pickles		1	0	0
14	Sweetmeats		0	9	0
15	Carriage hire		1	8	0
16	Priests of Vishvanâth etc.	10	4	0	
17					
18	Total	13	5	0	
19					
20	" Things purchased for store at				
21	Gopal Lal Villa before Swamiji's arrival	17	11	9	
22					
23	Total	69	5	9	
24	Paid to Expenses from Calcutta to Buddh-				
25	Gaya		30	10	3

1
2 Rs. 100 0 0⁴³²
3 CCXVI
4 To Miss Josephine MacLeod
5 Gopal Lal Villa
6 Benaras Cantonment
7 14 February 1902.
8 Dear Joe—
9 I received a note yesterday from Mr. Okakura [Kakuzo]. They have seen Agra on their way to Gwalior.
10 They must be there now.

1
2

⁴³² ? "P." stands for pie-s, twelve of them making one anna (As.) and sixteen annas making one rupee (Rs.).

1 The wire he sent to Japan was to Mr. [Tokuno] Oda to come immediately. There was a work. "Six" in it
2 also.

3 It is quite cool here even now—and will remain so for this month at least. Is it getting warm in Calcutta?

4 I hope Mrs. [Ole] Bull and Nivedita are getting well rested after that tremendous journey.

5 I am so so.

6 The boys all send love.

7 Ever Yours with love and blessings,

8 Vivekananda.

9 CCXVII

10 To Mrs. Alice (Shanti) Hansbrough

11 Benaras

12 14 Feb. 1902

13 My dear Mrs. Hansbrough,

14 I am eternally indebted to you for what you did for me in the past, and infinitely more now for what you
15 are doing for Turiyananda.

16 A gloom came over the Math when news reached Calcutta of his severe illness. Now, I hope, he has
17 recovered completely, and I will be so glad to get the news from you.

18 It seems the American climate does not suit him. In that case it will be better for him to come over to
19 India whenever he thinks fit.

20 In all probability I am going to Japan in a month or two. Ramakrishnananda accompanies me.
21 Turiyananda may come over to Japan and I go to America. "Mother" knows best, however, and we obey.

22 I am just now in Benaras for a few days. All letters should, however, be addressed to the Belur Math.

23 Kindly convey my best love to Turiyananda and to yourself, the holy family and the other friends.

24 Ever yours in the Lord,

25 Vivekananda

1 PS. Let Turiyananda take rest all the time now. He must not work at all till I reach Japan or America.

2 CCXVIII

3 To Sister Nivedita

4 Gopal Lal Villa,

5 Benares Cantonment,

6 4th March 1902.

7 My dear Margo [Margot],

8 It is night now, and I can hardly sit up or write, yet still feel duty bound to write to you this letter,
9 fearing lest it becomes my last, it may put others to trouble.

10 My condition is not at all serious, but it may become [so] any time; and I don't know what is meant by a
11 low fever that almost never leaves me and the difficulty of breathing.

12 Well, I sent Christina [Greenstidel] £100 from Mrs. [Charlotte] Sevier for a travel to India, as she lost
13 her mother at that time. Her last letter informs me that she sails on February 15th. In that case, her
14 reaching India is very near. I expect, of course, some information as to the port and steamer next week. In
15 case I pass away, which I would like very much to do in this city of Shiva, do you open her letters directed to
16 me, receive the girl, and send her back home. If she has no money to go back, give her a passage—even if you
17 have to beg.

18 I have spent the little money I brought from Europe in feeding my mother and paying her debts. What
19 little remains I cannot touch, as that is the expense for the pending lawsuit.

20 In case I rally, I will inform you of the time of her arrival, and, in that case, you will have to see that
21 she comes in safe to some station in Bareilly, where I [will] meet her. And she is to be the guest of Mrs.
22 [Charlotte] Sevier. I am also going to take another chance in Almora.

23 Ramakrishnananda came a few weeks before I came away, and the first thing he did was to lay down
24 at my feet 400 Rs. he had collected in so many years of hard work!!! It was the first time such a thing has
25 happened in my life. I can scarcely suppress my tears. Oh, Mother!! Mother! There is not all gratitude,

1 all love, all manliness dead!!! And, dear child, one is enough

2 –one seed is enough to reforest the world.

3 Well, that money is in deposit in the Math. I never mean to touch a penny of that. When I asked
4 Ramakrishnananda to give that money to his people, he replied he did not care a hang to give to anybody
5 except me and was only sorry he could scrape that little in four years! Well, if I pass away, see that 400 Rs. is
6 paid back—every rupee to him. Lord bless you and Ramakrish-nananda.

7 I am quite satisfied with my work. To have left two true souls is beyond the ambition of the greatest.

8 Ever your loving father,

9 Vivekananda.

10 CCXIX

11 To Sister Christine

12 The Math, Belur,

13 Dist. Howrah, Bengal,

14 30th March 1902.

15 My dear Christine,

16 You know how welcome you are—I need not express it. This is a land where expressions are studiously
17 subdued. Margot [Sister Nivedita] and Joe [Miss Josephine MacLeod] have already written and made
18 arrangements at Bombay. I expect and wait for you here in Calcutta. I wish I could be in Bombay to receive
19 you, but all our wishes are not to be fulfilled.

20 Come over straight; only take great, great care of the heat by protecting the back of the head.

21 The trains here are not so safe as in your country, so have a little care of your things during night
22 travel.

23 If you feel tired, take rest in Bombay. Mrs. [Ole] Bull, Joe and Margot are anxiously awaiting you, and
24 so is

25 Vivekananda.

1 CCXX

2 To Mrs. Ole Bull

3 [The Math, P.O. Belur, Howrah,

4 March (?) 1902]

5 Dear Mother,⁴³³

6 I am glad Chinnu has arrived. Any hour you like will suit [me] for your coming tomorrow. But it is
7 ferocious heat here from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

8 I would, therefore, suggest that you start after breakfast and remain the day here and have some
9 Bengalee fish lunch, and go back in the evening.

10 I insist on your taking a cab here and back. A cab to come and go costs quite as much or less than a
11 boat, and there is no change [of transportation]. If the cabby does not understand Belur, tell him to go to a
12 place two miles south of Bally. He must know Bally, and then let him ask his way to the Math.

13 One such drenching and capsizing experience as Mr. Okakura [Kakuzo] had the other day will unsettle
14 your nerves for days; and we expect such rough weather every evening this month. The land route is nearer,
15 easier, and cheaper from where you are. I have also instructed your servant, the bearer of the letter.

16 Ever your Son,

17 Vivekananda.

18 CCXXI

19 To Miss Josephine MacLeod

20 The Math

21 2nd April 1902

22 My dear Joe—

23 The telegram is already gone, and I expect you will fill all arrangements there.

1 ⁴³³ ? At the time of this letter, Mrs. Ole Bull was staying with Sister Nivedita, Mr. Okakura Kakuzo and Miss Josephine MacLeod
2 at the American Consulate in Calcutta. Mrs. Bull had come to India with Sister Nivedita in the second week of February, and she
3 left Calcutta on April 17, 1902.
4

1 The Dak bungalows en route to Mayavati provide no food, nor have they cooks.

2 Provisions have to be taken at Kathgodam and arrangements made.

3 If you find any difficulty, go straight to Almora and make your arrangements at leisure. The Dak
4 bungalows on the way to Almora provide food and in Almora there is a nice Dak bungalow.

5 Hoping everything will come your way, as it always does

6 –(except Grandpa's⁴³⁴ health).

7 Yours affectionately,

8 Vivekananda

9 I like Mr. [Tokuno] Oda much—he means business.

10 V.

11 CCXXII

12 To Sister Christine

13 The Math, Belur,

14 Dist. Howrah,

15 15th May 1902.

16 My dear Christine,

17 So glad to learn you like Mayavati. The heat here has come in earnest, and no rain. I drink very little
18 water though.

19 I have given up all idea of going to Mayavati or Almora. I bear the heat well, but the rains here are to
20 be avoided. I will remove [myself] to somewhere else then.

21 No news from Calcutta. I am in a hurry. Write me the details of whatever you see or feel there—about
22 men and things.

23 Yours with all love,

24 Vivekananda.

⁴³⁴ ? Here *Grandpa* refers to Swami Vivekananda himself.

1 CCXXIII

2 To Mme. Emma Calvé

3 [This letter of condolence was written upon the death of Mme. Calvé's father and enclosed in a letter
4 to Miss Josephine Mac-Leod.]

5
6 The Math, Belur

7 Howrah District

8 Bengal, India

9 the 15th May 1902

10 My dear Mademoiselle,

11 With great sorrow I learn the sad bereavement that has come upon you.

12 These blows must come upon us all. They are in the nature of things, yet they are so hard to bear.

13 The force of association makes out of this unreal world a reality; and the longer the company, the more
14 real seems the shadow. But the day comes when the unreal goes to the unreal, and, ah, how sad to bear.

15 Yet that which is real, the Soul, is ever with us, omnipresent. Blessed is the person who has seen the
16 real in this world of vanishing shadows.

17 I hope, dear Mademoiselle, you have greatly improved in health since our last meeting in Egypt.

18 May the Lord always shower His choicest blessings on you is the everlasting prayer of

19 Vivekananda

20 CCXXIV

21 To Sister Christine

22 The Math, Belur, Dist. Howrah,

23 27th May 1902.

24 My dear Christine,

25 I am sorry I could not visit the mountains this time. My health, though not improved as much as I [had]
26 wished, is not

1 bad. The liver has been benefited—[that] is a great gain. The rains will commence very soon in the hills.
2 So it is useless for me to take all the trouble of that terrible route.

3 I am so happy to learn the mountains are doing you good. Eat a lot, sleep as much as you can, and get
4 plump. Stuff yourself till you get plump or you burst.

5 So the place did not suit Mr. Okakura [Kakuzo]—why? There must have been something to annoy him
6 very much that he left the place so abruptly. Did he not like the scenery? Was it not sublime enough for him?
7 Or the Japanese do not like sublimity at all? They only like beauty.

8 One of the boys writes that the little boy is getting disobedient etc. Mrs. Sevier wants me to take him
9 down. So I do. I have asked Sadananda and another monk (whom I want for work here) to go to Almora and
10 wait for the monsoon, and when it breaks, to come down.

11 If you feel you are becoming the least burdensome to Mrs. Sevier, write me immediately. It would be a
12 sin to put further pressure on her—she does so much for me. However, she likes you very much and writes
13 that you look be-au-ti-ful in saris.

14 I have just now two kids and three lambs added to the family. There was one more kid, but he got
15 himself drowned in the yellow fish tank. How is Margot? Is she still there, or gone away with Mr. Okakura?
16 How is she pulling on with the boys?

17 What do you do the whole day? How do you pass the day? Write me all details, and frequently; but do
18 not expect long letters from me often.

19 Give my love to Mrs. Sevier, to Margot and the rest, and you may take a few spoonfuls, if you like,
20 with only this,
21 Vivekananda.

22 PS—Have an eye on the little chap. The boys are already jealous of him. They did spoil another boy that
23 way before.

24 V.

1 CCXXV

2 To Sister Christine

3 The Math, Belur, Dist. Howrah,

4 14th June 1902.

5 My dear Christine,

6 Your letters had to wait a few days, as I was out of town in a village.⁴³⁵ Well, many thanks for all the
7 information I got. Mr. Okakura [Kakuzo] has been to the Math, but I was away. He will be in Calcutta a few
8 weeks more and then goes to Bombay. He intends taking a house near the city to learn intimately the
9 customs of Bengalees. I am so glad to learn Margo's [Sister Nivedita's] intention to stop at Mayavati longer.
10 She really requires good rest, and she had none in Europe, I am sure of that. If she were amenable to my
11 advice as of old, I would take away every book and every scrap of paper from her, make her walk some, eat a
12 lot and sleep a lot more. As to talking, I would have the merriest conversation all the while.

13 I have a beautiful letter from Mrs. Sevier, and [am] so happy to learn that she loves you more and
14 more. But plumpness is the criterion, mon amie [my friend], for a' [all] that.

15 So there was a great flutter in our dovecote owing to my letters, but things must have assumed their
16 old form by this time. The boy, my nephew, is going to be sometime yet in the Ashrama; make him talk
17 English with a good accent—do. No foreign language can be learnt properly unless you talk in it from
18 childhood.

19 Mr. Bose⁴³⁶ is still there, I hope; and you must have liked him immensely. He is a man, a brick. Tender
20 him my best regards, will you?

21 Have you any water in the lakes now? Do you get the snows clearer? It has been raining all through
22 this summer here. We

1 ⁴³⁵ ?

2 According to Swami Brahmananda's diary, Swami Vivekananda left for Boro Jagulia on June 6. First he travelled by train from
3 Sealdah to Kanchrapara, a distance of about thirty-four miles. From there the Swami went about seven miles by bullock-cart to
4 Boro Jagulia village at the request of his disciple Shrimati Mrinalini Basu, at whose home he stayed.

5
6 ⁴³⁶ ? Mr. A. M. Bose, President of the Sadharan Brahmo Samaj, had come to Mayavati on May 23.
7

1 had very few burning days, only a number of stuffy ones. Our rains also have nearly set in. In a week
2 the deluge will commence in earnest.

3 As for me, I am much stronger than before; and when seven miles of jolting in a bullock-cart and
4 railway travel of thirty-four miles did not bring back the dropsy to the feet, I am sure it is not going to return.

5 But anyway, it is the Math that suits me best just now.

6 With all love,

7 Vivekananda.

8 CCXXVI

9 To Sister Christine

10 The Math, Belur, Dist. Howrah,

11 15th June 1902.

12 Dear Christine,

13 Just now received your note. I am quite easy in my mind so long [as] you live with Mrs. [Charlotte]
14 Sevier at Mayavati. You know, anxiety is one thing I must avoid to recover. I will be very anxious if you are in
15 Calcutta, at Baghbazar. I am slowly recovering. Stay with Mrs. Sevier as long as you can. Don't come down
16 with Margot [Sister Nivedita].

17 With love,

18 Vivekananda.

19 CCXXVII

20 To Sister Christine

21 The Math, Belur, Dist. Howrah,

22 21st June 1902.

23 My dear Christine,

24 You have not the least cause to be anxious. I am getting on anyhow and am quite strong. As to diet, I
25 find I have to restrict myself and not follow the prescription of my doctor to eat anything I like. The pills
26 continue, however. Will you ask the boys if they can get "Amalaki" [Emblic myrobalan] fruits in the

1 place now? We cannot get them in the plains now. They are rather sour and puckery eaten raw; but
2 make marmalade of whole [ones]—delicious. Then they are the best things for fermentation I ever get.

3 No anxiety on the score of Marie Louise's⁴³⁷ arrival in Calcutta. She has not yet made any noise.

4 Things go on the same. I am trying to go to Monghyr—a place near Calcutta and said to be very
5 salubrious.

6 We will think of your coming to Baghbazar after Nivedita has fairly started; till then keep quiet and lay
7 on food.

8 With all love to yourself, the boys and Mother [Mrs. Charlotte Sevier],

9 Vivekananda.

10 PS—I am laying on adipose tissues fast—especially about the abdominal regions: "It is fearful to see!"

⁴³⁷ ? Swami Abhayananda, one of Swami Vivekananda's Sannyasin disciples.

1

2

lectures and discourses

1
2 THE WOMEN OF INDIA⁴³⁸
3

4 The following lecture was delivered at Cambridge, December 17, 1894, and recorded by Miss Frances
5 Willard's stenographer.

6 Swami Vivekananda faced bigotry in America on several issues of Indian culture—one was the Indian
7 woman. Naturally he sought to correct Western misconceptions. When he lectured in his own country,
8 however, there was no greater advocate for improving the life of Indian women than the Swami.
9

10 In speaking about the women of India, ladies and gentlemen, I feel that I am going to talk about my
11 mothers and sisters in India to the women of another race, many of whom have been like mothers and sisters
12 to me. But though, unfortunately, within very recent times there have been mouths only to curse the women
13 of our country, I have found that there are some who bless them too. I have found such noble souls in this
14 nation as Mrs. [Ole] Bull and Miss [Sarah] Farmer and Miss [Frances] Willard, and that wonderful
15 representative of the highest aristocracy of the world, whose life reminds me of that man of India, six
16 hundred years before the birth of Christ, who gave up his throne to mix with the people. Lady Henry
17 Somerset has been a revelation to me. I become bold when I find such noble souls who will not curse, whose
18 mouths are full of blessing for me, my country, our men and women, and whose hands and hearts are ever
19 ready to do service to humanity.

20 I first intend to take a glimpse into times past of Indian history, and we will find something unique. All
21 of you are aware, perhaps, that you Americans and we Hindus and this lady from Iceland [Mrs. Sigrid
22 Magnusson] are the descendants of one common ancestry known as Aryans. Above all, we find

1 ⁴³⁸ ? *New Discoveries*, Vol. 2, pp. 411-26.
2

1 three ideas wherever the Aryans go: the village community, the rights of women and a joyful
2 religion.⁴³⁹

3 The first [idea] is the system of village communities—as we have just heard from Mrs. Bull concerning
4 the North. Each man was his own [lord?] and owned the land. All these political institutions of the world we
5 now see, are the developments of those village systems. As the Aryans went over to different countries and
6 settled, certain circumstances developed this institution, others that.

7 The next idea of the Aryans is the freedom of women. It is in the Aryan literature that we find women
8 in ancient times taking the same share as men, and in no other literature of the world.

9 Going back to our Vedas—they are the oldest literature the world possesses and are composed by your
10 and my common ancestors (they were not written in India—perhaps on the coast of the Baltic, perhaps in
11 Central Asia—we do not know).

12 Their oldest portion is composed of hymns, and these hymns are to the gods whom the Aryans
13 worshipped. I may be pardoned for using the word *gods*; the literal translation is "the bright ones". These
14 hymns are dedicated to Fire, to the Sun, to Varuna and other deities. The titles run: "such-and-such a sage
15 composed this verse, dedicated to such-and-such a deity".

16 In the tenth chapter comes a peculiar hymn—for the sage is a woman—and it is dedicated to the one
17 God who is at the background of all these gods. All the previous hymns are spoken in the third person, as if
18 someone were addressing the deities. But this hymn takes a departure: God [as the Devi] is speaking for
19 herself. The pronoun used is "I". "I am the Empress of the Universe, the Fulfiller of all prayers."⁴⁴⁰

20 This is the first glimpse of women's work in the Vedas. As we go on, we find them taking a greater
21 share—even officiating as priests. There is not one passage throughout the whole mass of literature of the
22 Vedas which can be construed even indirectly

1 ⁴³⁹ ? Since Swami Vivekananda's time there has been more research on the spread of the Aryan culture.
2

3 ⁴⁴⁰ ? *Vide* "Devi Sukta", Rig-Veda 10.125.
4

1 as signifying that woman could never be a priest. In fact, there are many examples of women
2 officiating as priests.

3 Then we come to the last portion of these Vedas—which is really the religion of India—the concentrated
4 wisdom of which has not been surpassed even in this century. There, too, we find women preeminent. A
5 large portion of these books are words which have proceeded from the mouths of women. It is there—

6 recorded with their names and teachings.

7 There is that beautiful story of the great sage Yâjñavalkya, the one who visited the kingdom of the
8 great king Janaka. And there in that assembly of the learned, people came to ask him questions. One man
9 asked him, "How am I to perform this sacrifice?" Another asked him, "How am I to perform the other
10 sacrifice?" And after he had answered them, there arose a woman who said, "These are childish questions.
11 Now, have a care: I take these two arrows, my two questions. Answer them if you can, and we will then call
12 you a sage. The first is: What is the soul? The second is: What is God?"⁴⁴¹

13 Thus arose in India the great questions about the soul and God, and these came from the mouth of a
14 woman. The sage had to pass an examination before her, and he passed well.

15 Coming to the next stratum of literature, our epics, we find that education has not degenerated.
16 Especially in the caste of princes this ideal was most wonderfully held.

17 In the Vedas we find this idea of marrying—the girls chose for themselves; so the boys. In the next
18 stratum they are married by their parents, except in one caste.

19 Even here I would ask you to look at another side. Whatever may be said of the Hindus, they are one of
20 the most learned races the world has ever produced. The Hindu is the metaphysician; he applies everything
21 to his intellect. Everything has to be settled by astrological calculation.

22 The idea was that the stars govern the fate of every man and woman. Even today when a child is born,
23 a horoscope is cast. That determines the character of the child. One child is born of a divine nature, another
24 of a human, others of lower character.

1 ⁴⁴¹ ? Brihadâraṇyaka Upanishad 3.8.1-12.
2

1 The difficulty was: If a child who was of a monster-character was united with a child of a
2 god-character, would they not have a tendency to degenerate each other?

3 The next difficulty was: Our laws did not allow marriage within the same clans. Not only may one not
4 marry within his own family—or even one of his cousins—but one must not marry into the clan of his father or
5 even of his mother.

6 A third difficulty was: If there had been leprosy or phthisis or any such incurable disease within six
7 generations of either bride or bridegroom, then there must not be a marriage.

8 Now taking [into account] these three difficulties, the Brahmin says: "If I leave it to the choice of the
9 boy or girl to marry, the boy or girl will be fascinated with a beautiful face. And then very likely all these
10 circumstances will bring ruin to the family". This is the primary idea that governs our marriage laws, as you
11 will find. Whether right or wrong, there is this philosophy at the background. Prevention is better than cure.

12 That misery exists in this world is because we give birth to misery. So the whole question is how to
13 prevent the birth of miserable children. How far the rights of a society should extend over the individual is
14 an open question. But the Hindus say that the choice of marriage should not be left in the hands of the boy or
15 girl.

16 I do not mean to say that this is the best thing to do. Nor do I see that leaving it in their hands is at all
17 a perfect solution. I have not found a solution yet in my own mind; nor do I see that any country has one.

18 We come next to another picture. I told you that there was another peculiar form of marriage
19 (generally among the royalty) where the father of the girl invited different princes and noblemen and they
20 had an assembly. The young lady, the daughter of the king, was borne on a sort of chair before each one of
21 the princes in turn. And the herald would repeat: "This is Prince So-and-so, and these are his qualifications".
22 The young girl would either wait or say, "Move on". And before the next prince, the crier would also give a
23 description, and the girl would say, "Move on". (All this would be arranged beforehand; she already had the
24 liking for somebody before this.) Then at last she would ask one of the servants to throw the garland over

1 the head of the man, and it would be thrown to show he was accepted. (The last of these marriages
2 was the cause of the Mohammedan invasion of India.)⁴⁴² These marriages were specially reserved for the
3 prince caste.

4 The oldest Sanskrit poem in existence, the Râmâyana, has embodied the loftiest Hindu ideal of a
5 woman in the character of Sitâ. We have not time to go through her life of infinite patience and goodness.
6 We worship her as God incarnate, and she is named before her husband, Râma. We say not "Mr. and Mrs.",
7 but "Mrs. and Mr." and so on, with all the gods and goddesses, naming the woman first.

8 There is another peculiar conception of the Hindu. Those who have been studying with me are aware
9 that the central conception of Hindu philosophy is of the Absolute; that is the background of the universe.
10 This Absolute Being, of whom we can predicate nothing, has Its *powers* spoken of as *She*—that is, the real
11 personal God in India is She. This Shakti of the Brahman is always in the feminine gender.

12 Rama is considered the type of the Absolute, and Sita that of Power. We have no time to go over all the
13 life of Sita, but I will quote a passage from her life that is very much suited to the ladies of this country.

14 The picture opens when she was in the forest with her husband, whither they were banished. There
15 was a female sage whom they both went to see. Her fasts and devotions had emaciated her body.

16 Sita approached this sage and bowed down before her. The sage placed her hand on the head of Sita
17 and said: "It is a great blessing to possess a beautiful body; you have that. It is a greater blessing to have a
18 noble husband; you have that. It is the greatest blessing to be perfectly obedient to such a husband; you are
19 that. You must be happy".

20 Sita replied, "Mother, I am glad that God has given me a beautiful body and that I have so devoted a
21 husband. But as to the third blessing, I do not know whether I obey him or he obeys me. One thing alone I
22 remember, that when he took me by the hand before the sacrificial fire—whether it was a reflec-

1 442 ?

2 *Vide* pp. 198-99 for the story of Samyuktâ, the daughter of a Rajput prince, who became the Queen of Delhi.
3

1 tion of the fire or whether God himself made it appear to me—I found that I was his and he was mine.
2 And since then, I have found that I am the complement of his life, and he of mine".

3 Portions of this poem have been translated into the English language. Sita is the ideal of a woman in
4 India and worshipped as God incarnate.

5 We come now to Manu the great lawgiver. Now, in this book there is an elaborate description of how a
6 child should be educated. We must remember that it was compulsory with the Aryans that a child be
7 educated, whatever his caste. After describing how a child should be educated, Manu adds: "Along the same
8 lines, the daughters are to be educated—exactly as the boys".⁴⁴³

9 I have often heard that there are other passages where women are condemned. I admit that in our
10 sacred books there are many passages which condemn women as offering temptation; you can see that for
11 yourselves. But there are also passages that glorify women as the power of God. And there are other
12 passages which state that in that house where one drop of a woman's tear falls, the gods are never pleased
13 and the house goes to ruin. Drinking wine, killing a woman and killing a Brahmin are the highest crimes in
14 the Hindu religion. I admit there are condemnatory sentences [in some of our books]; but here I claim the
15 superiority of these Hindu books, for in the books of other races there is only condemnation and no good
16 word for a woman.

17 Next, I will come to our old dramas. Whatever the books say, the dramas are the perfect
18 representation of society as it then existed. In these, which were written from four hundred years before
19 Christ onward, we find even universities full of both boys and girls. We would not [now] find Hindu women,
20 as they have since become cut off from higher education.⁴⁴⁴ But [at that time], they were everywhere pretty
21 much the same as they are in this country—going out to the gardens and parks to take promenades.

1 ⁴⁴³ ?

2 Note: The text of this sentence is not found in the extant Manu Samhitâ. *Vide* Mahânirvâna Tantra 8.47.

3
4 ⁴⁴⁴ ? Since Swami Vivekananda's time, higher education among women in India has spread rapidly.
5

1 There is another point which I bring before you and where the Hindu woman is still superior to all
2 other women in the world—her rights. The right to possess property is as absolute for women in India as for
3 men—and has been for thousands and thousands of years.

4 If you have any lawyer friend and can take up commentaries on the Hindu law, you will find it all for
5 yourselves. A girl may bring a million dollars to her husband, but every dollar of that is hers. Nobody has any
6 right to touch one dollar of that. If the husband dies without issue, the whole property of the husband goes to
7 her, even if his father or mother is living. And that has been the law from the past to the present time. That is
8 something which the Hindu woman has had beyond that of the women of other countries.

9 The older books—or even newer books—do not prohibit the Hindu widows from being married; it is a
10 mistake to think so. They give them their choice, and that is given to both men and women. The idea in our
11 religion is that marriage is for the weak, and I don't see any reason to give up that idea today. They who find
12 themselves complete—what is the use of their marrying? And those that marry—they are given one chance.
13 When that chance is over, both men and women are looked down upon if they marry again; but it is not that
14 they are prohibited. It is nowhere said that a widow is not to marry. The widow and widower who do not
15 marry are considered more spiritual.

16 Men, of course, break through this law and go and marry; whereas women—they being of a higher
17 spiritual nature—keep to the law. For instance, our books say that eating meat is bad and sinful, but you may
18 still eat such-and-such a meat—mutton, for instance. I have seen thousands of men who eat mutton, and
19 never in my life have I seen a woman of higher caste who eats meat of any kind. This shows that their nature
20 is to keep the law—keeping more towards religion. But do not judge too harshly of Hindu men. You must try
21 to look at the Hindu law from my position too, for I am a Hindu man.

22 This non-marriage of widows gradually grew into a custom. And whenever in India a custom becomes
23 rigid, it is almost impossible to break through it—just as in your country, you

1 will find how hard it is to break through a five-day custom of fashion. In the lower castes, except two,
2 the widows remarry.

3 There is a passage in our later law books [which states] that a woman shall not read the Vedas. But
4 they are prohibited to even a weak Brahmin. If a Brahmin boy is not strong-minded, the law is applied to him
5 also. But that does not show that education is prohibited to them, for the Vedas are not all that the Hindus
6 have. Every other book women can read. All the mass of Sanskrit literature, that whole ocean of
7 literature—science, drama, poetry—is all for them. They can go there and read everything, except the [Vedic]
8 scriptures.⁴⁴⁵

9 In later days the idea was that woman was not intended to be a priest; so what is the use of her
10 studying the Vedas? In that, the Hindus are not so far behind other nations. When women give up the world
11 and join our Order, they are no longer considered either men or women. They have no sex. The whole
12 question of high or low caste, man or woman, dies out entirely.

13 Whatever I know of religion I learned from my master, and he learned it of a woman.

14 Coming back to the Rajput woman, I will try to bring to you a story from some of our old books—how
15 during the Mohammedan conquest, one of these women was the cause of what led to the conquest of India.

16 A Rajput prince of Kanauj—a very ancient city—had a daughter [Samyukta]. She had heard of the
17 military fame of Prithvi Rai [King of Ajmere and Delhi] and all his glory, and she was in love with him.

18 Now her father wanted to hold a Râjasuya sacrifice, so he invited all the kings in the country. And in
19 that sacrifice, they all had to render menial service to him because he was superior over all; and with that
20 sacrifice he declared there would be a choice by his daughter.

21 But the daughter was already in love with Prithvi Rai. He was very mighty and was not going to
22 acknowledge loyalty to the king, her father, so he refused the invitation. Then the king made a golden statue
23 of Prithvi Rai and put it near the door. He

1 445 ?

2 Today Indian women are no longer barred from reading any scripture—Vedic or non-Vedic.
3

1 said that that was the duty he had given him to perform—that of a porter.

2 The upshot of the whole affair was that Prithvi Rai, like a true knight, came and took the lady behind
3 him on his horse, and they both fled.

4 When the news came to her father, he gave chase with his army, and there was a great battle in which
5 the majority of both armies was killed. And [thus the Rajputs were so weakened that] the Mohammedan
6 empire in India began.

7 When the Mohammedan empire was being established in northern India, the Queen of Chitore [Râni
8 Padmini] was famed for her beauty. And the report of her beauty reached the sultan, and he wrote a letter
9 for the queen to be sent to his harem. The result was a terrible war between the King of Chitore and the
10 sultan. The Mohammedans invaded Chitore. And when the Rajputs found they could not defend themselves
11 any more, the men all took sword in hand and killed and were killed, and the women perished in the flames.

12 After the men had all perished, the conqueror entered the city. There in the street was rising a horrible
13 flame. He saw circles of women going around it, led by the queen herself. When he approached near and
14 asked the queen to refrain from jumping into the flames, she said, "This is how the Rajput woman treats
15 you", and threw herself into the fire.

16 It is said that 74,500 women perished in the flames that day to save their honour from the hands of the
17 Mohammedans. Even today when we write a letter, after sealing it we write "74½" upon it, meaning that if
18 one dares to open this letter, that sin of killing 74,500 women will be upon his head.

19 I will tell you the story of another beautiful Rajput girl.⁴⁴⁶ There is a peculiar custom in our country
20 called "protection". Women can send small bracelets of silken thread to men. And if a girl sends one of these
21 to a man, that man becomes her brother.

22 During the reign of the last of the Mogul emperors—the cruel man who destroyed that most brilliant
23 empire of India—he

1 ⁴⁴⁶ ? Chârumati, or Rupamati, daughter of Vikram Singh, King of Kishan-garh, in Rajasthan. Charumati is the heroine of
2 *Râjasimha*, a Bengali historical novel written by Bankim Chandra Chatterjee.
3

1 similarly heard of the beauty of a Rajput chieftain's daughter. Orders were sent that she should be
2 brought to the Mogul harem.

3 Then a messenger came from the emperor to her with his picture, and he showed it to her. In derision
4 she stamped upon it with her feet and said, "Thus the Rajput girl treats your Mogul emperor". As a result,
5 the imperial army was marched into Raj-putana.

6 In despair the chieftain's daughter thought of a device. She took a number of these bracelets and sent
7 them to the Rajput princes with a message: "Come and help us". All the Rajputs assembled, and so the
8 imperial forces had to go back again.

9 I will tell you a peculiar proverb in Rajputana. There is a caste in India called the shop class, the
10 traders. They are very intelligent—some of them—but the Hindus think they are rather sharp. But it is a
11 peculiar fact that the women of that caste are not as intelligent as the men. On the other hand, the Rajput
12 man is not half as intelligent as the Rajput woman.

13 The common proverb in Rajputana is: "The intelligent woman begets the dull son, and the dull woman
14 begets the sharp son". The fact is, whenever any state or kingdom in Rajputana has been managed by a
15 woman, it has been managed wonderfully well.

16 We come to another class of women. This mild Hindu race produces fighting women from time to time.
17 Some of you may have heard of the woman [Lakshmi Bâi, Queen of Jhansi] who, during the Mutiny of 1857,
18 fought against the English soldiers and held her own ground for two years—leading modern armies,
19 managing batteries and always charging at the head of her army. This queen was a Brahmin girl.

20 A man whom I know lost three of his sons in that war. When he talks of them he is calm, but when he
21 talks of this woman his voice becomes animated. He used to say that she was a goddess—she was not a
22 human being. This old veteran thinks he never saw better generalship.

23 The story of Chand Bibi, or Chand Sultana [1546-1599], is well known in India. She was the Queen of
24 Golconda, where the diamond mines were. For months she defended herself. At last, a breach was made in
25 the walls. When the imperial army tried to

1 rush in there, she was in full armour, and she forced the troops to go back.⁴⁴⁷

2 In still later times, perhaps you will be astonished to know that a great English general had once to
3 face a Hindu girl of sixteen.

4 Women in statesmanship, managing territories, governing countries, even making war, have proved
5 themselves equal to men—if not superior. In India I have no doubt of that. Whenever they have had the
6 opportunity, they have proved that they have as much ability as men, with this advantage—that they seldom
7 degenerate. They keep to the moral standard, which is innate in their nature. And thus as governors and
8 rulers of their state, they prove—at least in India—far superior to men. John Stuart Mill mentions this fact.

9 Even at the present day, we see women in India managing vast estates with great ability. There were
10 two ladies where I was born who were the proprietors of large estates and patronesses of learning and art
11 and who managed these estates with their own brains and looked to every detail of the business.

12 Each nation, beyond a general humanity, develops a certain peculiarity of character—so in religion, so
13 in politics, so in the physical body, so in mental habitude, so in men and women, so in character. One nation
14 develops one peculiarity of character, another takes another peculiarity. Within the last few years the world
15 has begun to recognize this.

16 The very peculiarity of Hindu women, which they have developed and which is the idea of their life, is
17 that of the *mother*. If you enter a Hindu's home, you will not find the wife to be the same equal companion of
18 the husband as you find her here. But when you find the mother, she is the very pillar of the Hindu home.
19 The wife must wait to become the mother, and then she will be everything.

20 If one becomes a monk, his father will have to salute him first because he has become a monk and is
21 therefore superior to him. But to his mother he—monk or no monk—will have to go

1 447 ?

2 The soldiers were so impressed with Chand Bibi's military prowess and courage that they referred to her as Chand Sultana,
3 which means "Chand—the Empress".
4

1 down on his knees and prostrate himself before her. He will then put a little cup of water before her
2 feet, she will dip her toe in it, and he will have to drink of it. A Hindu son gladly does this a thousand times
3 over again!⁴⁴⁸

4 Where the Vedas teach morality, the first words are, "Let the mother be your God"⁴⁴⁹—and that she is.
5 When we talk of woman in India, our idea of woman is mother. The value of women consists in their being
6 mothers of the human race. That is the idea of the Hindu.

7 I have seen my old master taking little girls by the hands, placing them in a chair and actually
8 worshipping them—placing flowers at their feet and prostrating himself before these little children—because
9 they represented the mother God.

10 The mother is the God in our family. The idea is that the only real love that we see in the world, the
11 most unselfish love, is in the mother—always suffering, always loving. And what love can represent the love of
12 God more than the love which we see in the mother? Thus the mother is the incarnation of God on earth to
13 the Hindu.

14 "That boy alone can understand God who has been first taught by his mother." I have heard wild
15 stories about the illiteracy of our women. Till I was a boy of ten, I was taught by my mother. I saw my
16 grandmother living and my great-grandmother living, and I assure you that there never was in my line a
17 female ancestor who could not read or write, or who had to put "her mark" on a paper. If there was a woman
18 who could not read or write, my birth would have been impossible. Caste laws make it imperative.

19 So these are wild stories which I sometimes hear—such as the statement that in the Middle Ages
20 reading and writing were taken away from Hindu women. I refer you to Sir William Hunter's *History of the*
21 *English People*, where he cited Indian women who could calculate a solar eclipse.

22 I have been told that either too much worship of the mother makes the mother selfish or too much love
23 of the children from

1 ⁴⁴⁸ ? This custom is a gesture meant to acknowledge the mother not only as the first teacher and preceptor in one's life, but also
2 as the embodiment of the all-loving God.
3

4 ⁴⁴⁹ ? Taittiriya Upanishad 1.11.
5

1 the mother makes them selfish. But I do not believe that. The love which my mother gave to me has
2 made me what I am, and I owe a debt to her that I can never repay.

3 Why should the Hindu mother be worshipped? Our philosophers try to find a reason and they come to
4 this definition: We call ourselves the Aryan race. What is an Aryan? He is a man whose birth is through
5 religion. This is a peculiar subject, perhaps, in this country; but the idea is that a man must be born through
6 religion, through prayers. If you take up our law books you will find chapters devoted to this—the prenatal
7 influence of a mother on the child.

8 I know that before I was born, my mother would fast and pray and do hundreds of things which I could
9 not even do for five minutes. She did that for two years. I believe that whatever religious culture I have, I
10 owe to that. It was consciously that my mother brought me into the world to be what I am. Whatever good
11 impulse I have was given to me by my mother—and consciously, not unconsciously.

12 "A child materially born is not an Aryan; the child born in spirituality is an Aryan." For all this
13 trouble—because she has to make herself so pure and holy in order to have pure children

14 —she has a peculiar claim on the Hindu child. And the rest [of her traits] is the same with all other
15 nations: she is so unselfish. But the mother has to suffer most in our families.

16 The mother has to eat last. I have been asked many times in your country why the [Hindu] husband
17 does not sit with his wife to eat—if the idea is, perhaps, that the husband thinks she is too low a being. This
18 explanation is not at all right. You know, a hog's hair is thought to be very unclean. A Hindu cannot brush his
19 teeth with the brushes made of it, so he uses the fibre of plants. Some traveller saw one Hindu brushing his
20 teeth with that and then wrote that "a Hindu gets up early in the morning and gets a plant and chews it and
21 swallows it!" Similarly, some have seen the husband and wife not eating together and have made their own
22 explanation. There are so many explainers in this world, and so few observers—as if the world is dying for
23 their explanations! That is why I sometimes think the invention of printing was not an unmixed blessing. The
24 real fact is: just as in your country many things must not be done by ladies before

1 men, so in our country the fact is that it is very indecorous to munch and munch before men. If a lady
2 is eating, she may eat before her brothers. But if the husband comes in, she stops immediately and the
3 husband walks out quickly. We have no tables to sit at, and whenever a man is hungry he comes in and takes
4 his meal and goes out. Do not believe that a Hindu husband does not allow his wife to sit at the table with
5 him. He has no table at all.

6 The first part of the food—when it is ready—belongs to the guests and the poor, the second to the lower
7 animals, the third to the children, the fourth to the husband, and last comes the mother. How many times I
8 have seen my mother going to take her first meal when it was two o'clock. We took ours at ten and she at
9 two because she had so many things to attend to. [For example], someone knocks at the door and says,
10 "Guest", and there is no food except what was for my mother. She would give that to him willingly and then
11 wait for her own. That was her life and she liked it. And that is why we worship mothers as gods.

12 I wish you would like less to be merely petted and patronized and more to be worshipped! [You], a
13 member of the human race!—the poor Hindu does not understand that [inclination of yours]. But when you
14 say, "We are mothers and we command", he bows down. This is the side then that the Hindus have devel-
15 oped.

16 Going back to our theories—people in the West came about one hundred years ago to the point that
17 they must tolerate other religions. But we know now that toleration is not sufficient toward another religion;
18 we must accept it. Thus it is not a question of subtraction, it is a question of addition. The truth is the result
19 of all these different sides added together. Each of all these religions represents one side, the fullness being
20 the addition of all these. And so in every science, it is addition that is the law. Now the Hindu has developed
21 this side. But will this side be enough? Let the Hindu woman who is the mother become the worthy wife also,
22 but do not try to destroy the mother. That is the best thing you can do. Thus you get a better view of the
23 universe instead of going about all over the world, rushing into

1 different nations and criticizing them and saying, "The horrid wretches—all fit to be barbecued for
2 eternity!"

3 If we take our stand on this position—that each nation under the Lord's will is developing one part of
4 human nature—no nation is a failure. So far they have done well, now they must do better! [Applause]

5 Instead of calling the Hindus "heathens", "wretches", "slaves", go to India and say, "So far your work is
6 wonderful, but that is not all. You have much more to do. God bless you that you have developed this side of
7 woman as a mother. Now help the other side—the wife of men".

8 And similarly, I think (I tell it with the best spirit) that you had better add to your national character a
9 little more of the mother side of the Hindu nature! This was the first verse that I was taught in my life, the
10 first day I went to school: "He indeed is a learned man who looks upon all women as his mother, who looks
11 upon every man's property as so much dust, and looks upon every being as his own soul".

12 There is the other idea of the woman working with the man. It is not that the Hindus had not those
13 ideals, but they could not develop them.

14 It is alone in the Sanskrit language that we find four words meaning husband and wife together. It is
15 only in our marriage that they [both] promise, "What has been my heart now may be thine". It is there that
16 we see that the husband is made to look at the Pole-star, touching the hand of his wife and saying, "As the
17 Pole-star is fixed in the heavens, so may I be fixed in my affection to thee". And the wife does the same.

18 Even a woman who is vile enough to go into the streets can sue her husband and have a maintenance.
19 We find the germs of these ideas in all our books throughout our nation, but we were not able to develop that
20 side of the character.

21 We must go far beyond sentiment when we want to judge. We know it is not emotion alone that
22 governs the world, but there is something behind emotion. Economic causes, surrounding circumstances and
23 other considerations enter into the development of nations. (It is not in my present plan to go into the causes
24 that develop woman as wife.)

1 So in this world, as each nation is placed under peculiar circumstances and is developing its own type,
2 the day is coming when all these different types will be mixed up—when that vile sort of patriotism which
3 means "rob everybody and give to me" will vanish. Then there will be no more one-sided development in the
4 whole world, and each one of these [nations] will see that they had done right.

5 Let us now go to work and mix the nations up together and let the new nation come.

6 Will you let me tell you my conviction? Much of the civilization that comprises the world today has
7 come from that one peculiar race of mankind—the Aryans.⁴⁵⁰

8 [Aryan] civilization has been of three types: the Roman, the Greek, the Hindu. The Roman type is the
9 type of organization, conquest, steadiness—but lacking in emotional nature, appreciation of beauty and the
10 higher emotions. Its defect is cruelty. The Greek is essentially enthusiastic for the beautiful, but frivolous and
11 has a tendency to become immoral. The Hindu type is essentially metaphysical and religious, but lacking in
12 all the elements of organization and work.

13 The Roman type is now represented by the Anglo-Saxon; the Greek type more by the French than by
14 any other nation; and the old Hindus do not die! Each type has its advantage in this new land of promise.
15 They have the Roman's organization, the power of the Greek's wonderful love for the beautiful, and the
16 Hindu's backbone of religion and love of God. Mix these up together and bring in the new civilization.

17 And let me tell you, this should be done by women. There are some of our books which say that the
18 next incarnation, and the last (we believe in ten), is to come in the form of a woman.

19 We see resources in the world yet remaining because all the forces that are in the world have not come
20 into use. The hand was acting all this time while other parts of the body were remaining silent. Let the other
21 parts of the body be awakened and perhaps in harmonious action all the misery will be cured. Perhaps, in
22 this new land, with this new blood in your veins,

⁴⁵⁰ ? Today many historians and anthropologists would describe the Aryans as a linguistic group rather than a race.—Publisher.

1 you may bring in that new civilization—and, perhaps, through American women.

2 As to that ever blessed land which gave me this body, I look back with great veneration and bless the
3 merciful being who permitted me to take birth in that holiest spot on earth. When the whole world is trying
4 to trace its ancestry from men distinguished in arms or wealth, the Hindus alone are proud to trace their
5 descent from *saints*.

6 That wonderful vessel which has been carrying for ages men and women across this ocean of life may
7 have sprung small leaks here and there. And of that, too, the Lord alone knows how much is owing to
8 themselves and how much to those who look down with contempt upon the Hindus.

9 But if such leaks there are, I, the meanest of her children, think it my duty to stop her from sinking
10 even if I have to do it with my life. And if I find that all my struggles are in vain, still, as the Lord is my
11 witness, I will tell them with my heartfelt benediction: "My brethren, you have done well—nay, better than
12 any other race could have done under the same circumstances. You have given me all that I have. Grant me
13 the privilege of being at your side to the last and let us all sink together".

1 the first step towards jnana⁴⁵¹

2 [A Jnâna-Yoga class delivered in New York, Wednesday, December 11, 1895, and recorded by Swami
3 Kripananda]

4 The word *Jnâna* means knowledge. It is derived from the root *Jnâ*—to know—the same word from which
5 your English word *to know* is derived. Jnana-Yoga is Yoga by means of knowledge. What is the object of the
6 Jnana-Yoga? Freedom. Freedom from what? Freedom from our imperfections, freedom from the misery of
7 life. Why are we miserable? We are miserable because we are bound. What is the bondage? The bondage is
8 of nature. Who is it that binds us? We, ourselves.

9 The whole universe is bound by the law of causation. There cannot be anything, any fact—either in the
10 internal or in the external world—that is uncaused; and every cause must produce an effect.

11 Now this bondage in which we are is a fact. It need not be proved that we are in bondage. For
12 instance: I would be very glad to get out of this room through this wall, but I cannot; I would be very glad if I
13 never became sick, but I cannot prevent it; I would be very glad not to die, but I have to; I would be very glad
14 to do millions of things that I cannot do. The will is there, but we do not succeed in accomplishing the desire.
15 When we have any desire and not the means of fulfilling it, we get that peculiar reaction called misery. Who
16 is the cause of desire? I, myself. Therefore, I myself am the cause of all the miseries I am in.

17 Misery begins with the birth of the child. Weak and helpless, he enters the world. The first sign of life
18 is weeping. Now, how could we be the cause of misery when we find it at the very beginning? We have
19 caused it in the past. [Here Swami Viveka-

1 ⁴⁵¹ ? The Vedanta Society of Northern California archives. *Vide New Discoveries*, Vol. 3, pp. 358-63. The title of this class has
2 been provided by the Publisher.
3

1 nanda entered into a fairly long discussion of "the very interesting theory called Reincarnation". He
2 continued:]

3 To understand reincarnation, we have first to know that in this universe something can never be
4 produced out of nothing. If there is such a thing as a human soul, it cannot be produced out of nothing. If
5 something can be produced out of nothing, then something would disappear into nothing also. If we are pro-
6 duced out of nothing, then we will also go back into nothing. That which has a beginning must have an end.
7 Therefore, as souls we could not have had any beginning. We have been existing all the time.

8 Then again, if we did not exist previously, there is no explanation of our present existence. The child is
9 born with a bundle of causes. How many things we see in a child which can never be explained until we
10 grant that the child has had past experience—for instance, fear of death and a great number of innate
11 tendencies. Who taught the baby to drink milk and to do so in a peculiar fashion? Where did it acquire this
12 knowledge? We know that there cannot be any knowledge without experience, for to say that knowledge is
13 intuitive in the child, or instinctive, is what the logicians would call a "petitio principii".⁴⁵²

14 It would be the same [logic] as when a man asks me why light comes through a glass, and I answer
15 him, "Because it is transparent". That would be really no answer at all because I am simply translating his
16 word into a bigger one. The word "transparent" means "that through which light comes"—and that was the
17 question. The question was why light comes through the glass, and I answered him, "Because it comes
18 through the glass".

19 In the same way, the question was why these tendencies are in the child. Why should it have fear of
20 death if it never saw death? If this is the first time it was ever born, how did it know to suck the mother's
21 milk? If the answer is "Oh, it was instinct", that is simply returning the question. If a man stands up and says,
22 "I do not know", he is in a better position than the man who says, "It is instinct" and all such nonsense.

1 ⁴⁵² ? "Petitio principii" refers to a logical fallacy in which a conclusion is taken for granted in the premise.
2

1 There is no such thing as instinct; there is no such thing as nature separate from habit. Habit is one's
2 second nature, and habit is one's first nature too. All that is in your nature is the result of habit, and habit is
3 the result of experience. There cannot be any knowledge but from experience.

4 So this baby must have had some experience too. This fact is granted even by modern materialistic
5 science. It proves beyond doubt that the baby brings with it a fund of experience. It does not enter into this
6 world with a "tabula rasa"—a blank mind upon which nothing is written—as some of the old philosophers
7 believed, but ready equipped with a bundle of knowledge. So far so good.

8 But while modern science grants that this bundle of knowledge which the child brings with it was
9 acquired through experience, it asserts, at the same time, that it is not its own—but its father's and its
10 grandfather's and its great-grandfather's. Knowledge comes, they say, through hereditary transmission.

11 Now this is one step in advance of that old theory of "instinct", that is fit only for babies and idiots. This
12 "instinct" theory is a mere pun upon words and has no meaning whatsoever. A man with the least thinking
13 power and the least insight into the logical precision of words would never dare to explain innate tendencies
14 by "instinct", a term which is equivalent to saying that something came out of nothing.

15 But the modern theory of transmission through experience

16 —though, no doubt, a step in advance of the old one—is not sufficient at all. Why not? We can
17 understand a physical transmission, but a mental transmission is impossible to understand.

18 What causes me—who am a soul—to be born with a father who has transmitted certain qualities? What
19 makes me come back? The father, having certain qualities, may be one binding cause. Taking for granted
20 that I am a distinct soul that was existing before and wants to reincarnate—what makes my soul go into the
21 body of a particular man? For the explanation to be sufficient, we have to assume a hereditary transmission
22 of energies and such a thing as my own previous experience. This is what is called Karma, or, in English, the
23 Law of Causation, the law of fitness.

1 For instance, if my previous actions have all been towards drunkenness, I will naturally gravitate
2 towards persons who are transmitting a drunkard's character. I can only take advantage of the organism
3 produced by those parents who have been transmitting a certain peculiar influence for which I am fit by my
4 previous actions. Thus we see that it is true that a certain hereditary experience is transmitted from father to
5 son, and so on. At the same time, it is my past experience that joins me to the particular cause of hereditary
6 transmission.

7 A simply hereditary transmission theory will only touch the physical man and would be perfectly
8 insufficient for the internal soul of man. Even when looking upon the matter from the purest materialistic
9 standpoint—viz. that there is no such thing as a soul in man, and man is nothing but a bundle of atoms acted
10 upon by certain physical forces and works like an automaton

11 —even taking that for granted, the mere transmission theory would be quite insufficient.

12 The greatest difficulties regarding the simple hypothesis of mere physical transmission will be here: If
13 there be no such thing as a soul in man, if he be nothing more than a bundle of atoms acted upon by certain
14 forces, then, in the case of transmission, the soul of the father would decrease in ratio to the number of his
15 children; and the man who has five, six or eight children must, in the end, become an idiot. India and
16 China—where men breed like rats—would then be full of idiots. But, on the contrary, we find that the least
17 amount of lunacy is in India and China.

18 The question is, What do we mean by the word *transmission*? It is a big word, but, like so many other
19 impossible and nonsensical terms of the same kind, it has come into use without people understanding it. If I
20 were to ask you what *transmission* is, you would find that you have no real conception of its meaning
21 because there is no idea attached to it.

22 Let us look a little closer into the matter. Say, for instance, here is a father. A child is born to him. We
23 see that the same qualities [which the father possesses] have entered into his child. Very good. Now how did
24 the qualities of the father come to be in the child? Nobody knows. So this gap the modern physicists

1 want to fill with the big word *transmission*. And what does this *transmission* mean? Nobody knows.

2 How can mental qualities of experience be condensed and made to live in one single cell of
3 protoplasm? There is no difference between the protoplasm of a bird and that of a human brain. All we can
4 say with regard to physical transmission is that it consists of the two or three protoplasmic cells cut from the
5 father's body. That is all. But what nonsense to assume that ages and ages of past human experience got
6 compressed into a few protoplasmic cells! It is too tremendous a pill they ask you to swallow with this little
7 word *transmission*.

8 In olden times the churches had prestige, but today science has got it. And just as in olden times
9 people never inquired for themselves—never studied the Bible, and so the priests had a very good opportunity
10 to teach whatever they liked—so even now the majority of people do not study for themselves and, at the
11 same time, have a tremendous awe and fear before anything called scientific. You ought to remember that
12 there is a worse popery coming than ever existed in the church—the so-called scientific popery, which has
13 become so successful that it dictates to us with more authority than religious popery.

14 These popes of modern science are great popes indeed, but sometimes they ask us to believe more
15 wonderful things than any priest or any religion ever did. And one of those wonderful things is that
16 transmission theory, which I could never understand. If I ask, "What do you mean by *transmission*?" they
17 only make it a little easier by saying, "It is hereditary transmission". And if I tell them, "That is rather Greek
18 to me", they make it still easier by saying, "It is the adherence of paternal qualities in the protoplasmic cells".
19 In that way it becomes easier and easier, until my mind becomes muddled and disgusted with the whole
20 thing.

21 Now one thing we see: we produce thought. I am talking to you this evening and it is producing
22 thought in your brain. By this act of transmission we understand that my thoughts are being transmitted into
23 your brain and your mind, and producing other thoughts. This is an everyday fact.

24 It is always rational to take the side of things which you can understand—to take the side of fact.
25 Transmission of thought is

1 perfectly understandable. Therefore we are able to take up the [concept of] transmission of thought,
2 and not of hereditary impressions of protoplasmic cells alone. We need not brush aside the theory, but the
3 main stress must be laid upon the transmission of thought.

4 Now a father does not transmit thought. It is thought alone that transmits thought. The child that is
5 born existed previously as thought. We all existed eternally as thought and will go on existing as thought.

6 What we think, that our body becomes. Everything is manufactured by thought, and thus we are the
7 manufacturers of our own lives. We alone are responsible for whatever we do. It is foolish to cry out: "Why
8 am I unhappy?" I made my own unhappiness. It is not the fault of the Lord at all.

9 Someone takes advantage of the light of the sun to break into your house and rob you. And then when
10 he is caught by the policeman, he may cry: "Oh sun, why did you make me steal?" It was not the sun's fault at
11 all, because there are thousands of other people who did much good to their fellow beings under the light of
12 the same sun. The sun did not tell this man to go about stealing and robbing.

13 Each one of us reaps what we ourselves have sown. These miseries under which we suffer, these
14 bondages under which we struggle, have been caused by ourselves, and none else in the universe is to
15 blame. God is the least to blame for it.

16 "Why did God create this evil world?" He did not create this evil world at all. We have made it evil, and
17 we have to make it good. "Why did God create me so miserable?" He did not. He gave me the same powers
18 as [He did] to every being. I brought myself to this pass.

19 Is God to blame for what I myself have done? His mercy is always the same. His sun shines on the
20 wicked and the good alike. His air, His water, His earth give the same chances to the wicked and the good.
21 God is always the same eternal, merciful Father. The only thing for us to do is to bear the results of our own
22 acts.

23 We learn that, in the first place, we have been existing eternally; in the second place that we are the
24 makers of our own lives. There is no such thing as fate. Our lives are the result of

1 our previous actions, our Karma. And it naturally follows that having been ourselves the makers of our
2 Karma, we must also be able to unmake it.

3 The whole gist of Jnana-Yoga is to show humanity the method of undoing this Karma. A caterpillar
4 spins a little cocoon around itself out of the substance of its own body and at last finds itself imprisoned. It
5 may cry and weep and howl there; nobody will come to its rescue until it becomes wise and then comes out,
6 a beautiful butterfly. So with these our bondages. We are going around and around ourselves through
7 countless ages. And now we feel miserable and cry and lament over our bondage. But crying and weeping
8 will be of no avail. We must set ourselves to cutting these bondages.

9 The main cause of all bondage is ignorance. Man is not wicked by his own nature—not at all. His nature
10 is pure, perfectly holy. Each man is divine. Each man that you see is a God by his very nature. This nature is
11 covered by ignorance, and it is ignorance that binds us down. Ignorance is the cause of all misery. Ignorance
12 is the cause of all wickedness; and knowledge will make the world good.

13 Knowledge will remove all misery. Knowledge will make us free. This is the idea of Jnana-Yoga:
14 knowledge will make us free! What knowledge? Chemistry? Physics? Astronomy? Geology? They help us a
15 little, just a little. But the chief knowledge is that of your own nature. "Know thyself." You must know what
16 you are, what your real nature is. You must become conscious of that infinite nature within. Then your
17 bondages will burst.

18 Studying the external alone, man begins to feel himself to be nothing. These vast powers of nature,
19 these tremendous changes occurring—whole communities wiped off the face of the earth in a twinkling of
20 time, one volcanic eruption shattering to pieces whole continents—perceiving and studying these things, man
21 begins to feel himself weak. Therefore, it is not the study of external nature that makes [one] strong. But
22 there is the internal nature of man—a million times more powerful than any volcanic eruption or any law of
23 nature—which conquers nature, triumphs over all its laws. And that alone teaches man what he is.

1 "Knowledge is power", says the proverb, does it not? It is through knowledge that power comes. Man
2 has got to know. Here is a man of infinite power and strength. He himself is by his own nature potent and
3 omniscient. And this he must know. And the more he becomes conscious of his own Self, the more he
4 manifests this power, and his bonds break and at last he becomes free.

5 How to know ourselves? the question remains now. There are various ways to know this Self, but in
6 Jnana-Yoga it takes the help of nothing but sheer intellectual reasoning. Reason alone, intellect alone, rising
7 to spiritual perception, shows what we are.

8 There is no question of believing. Disbelieve everything—
9 that is the idea of the Jnâni. Believe nothing and disbelieve everything—that is the first step. Dare to be
10 a rationalist. Dare to follow reason wherever it leads you.

11 We hear everyday people saying all around us: "I dare to reason". It is, however, a very difficult thing
12 to do. I would go two hundred miles to look at the face of the man who dares to reason and to follow reason.
13 Nothing is easier to say, and nothing is more difficult to do. We are bound to follow superstitions all the
14 time—old, hoary superstitions, either national or belonging to humanity in general—superstitions belonging to
15 family, to friends, to country, to fashion, to books, to sex and to what-not.

16 Talk of reason! Very few people reason, indeed. You hear a man say, "Oh, I don't like to believe in
17 anything; I don't like to grope through darkness. I must reason". And so he reasons. But when reason
18 smashes to pieces things that he hugs unto his breast, he says, "No more! This reasoning is all right until it
19 breaks my ideals. Stop there!" That man would never be a Jnani. That man will carry his bondage all his life
20 and his lives to come. Again and again he will come under the power of death. Such men are not made for
21 Jnana. There are other methods for them—such as Bhakti-Yoga, Karma-Yoga, or Râja-Yoga—but not
22 Jnana-Yoga.

23 I want to prepare you by saying that this method can be followed only by the boldest. Do not think that
24 the man who believes in no church or belongs to no sect, or the man who

1 boasts of his unbelief, is a rationalist. Not at all. In modern times it is rather bravado to do anything
2 like that.

3 To be a rationalist requires more than unbelief. You must be able not only to reason, but also to follow
4 the dictates of your reason. If reason tells you that this body is an illusion, are you ready to give it up?
5 Reason tells you that heat and cold are mere illusions of your senses; are you ready to brave these things? If
6 reason tells you that nothing that the senses convey to your mind is true, are you ready to deny your sense
7 perception? If you dare, you are a rationalist.

8 It is very hard to believe in reason and follow truth. This whole world is full either of the superstitious
9 or of half-hearted hypocrites. I would rather side with superstition and ignorance than stand with these
10 half-hearted hypocrites. They are no good. They stand on both sides of the river.

11 Take anything up, fix your ideal and follow it out boldly unto death. That is the way to salvation.
12 Half-heartedness never led to anything. Be superstitious, be a fanatic if you please, but be something. Be
13 something, show that you have something; but be not like these shilly-shallyers with truth—these
14 jacks-of-all-trades who just want to get a sort of nervous titillation, a dose of opium, until this desire after the
15 sensational becomes a habit.

16 The world is getting too full of such people. Contrary to the apostles who, according to Christ, were the
17 salt of the earth, these fellows are the ashes, the dirt of the earth. So let us first clear the ground and
18 understand what is meant by following reason, and then we will try to understand what the obstructions are
19 to our following reason.

20 The first obstruction to our following reason is our unwillingness to go to truth. We want truth to come
21 to us. In all my travels, most people told me: "Oh, that is not a comfortable religion you talk about. Give us a
22 comfortable religion!"

23 I do not understand what they mean by this "comfortable religion". I was never taught any comfortable
24 religion in my life. I want truth for my religion. Whether it be comfortable or not, I do not care. Why should
25 truth be comfortable always? Truth many times hits hard—as we all know by our experience. Gradually, after
26 a long intercourse with such persons, I came to find out what they meant by their stereotypical phrase.
27 These

1 people have got into a rut, and they do not dare to get out of it. Truth must apologize to them.

2 I once met a lady who was very fond of her children and her money and her everything. When I began
3 to preach to her that the only way to God is by giving up everything, she stopped coming the next day. One
4 day she came and told me that the reason for her staying away was because the religion I preached was very
5 uncomfortable. "What sort of religion would be comfortable to you?" I asked in order to test her. She said: "I
6 want to see God in my children, in my money, in my diamonds".

7 "Very good, madam", I replied. "You have now got all these things. And you will have to see these
8 things millions of years yet. Then you will be bumped somewhere and come to reason. Until that time comes,
9 you will never come to God. In the meantime, go on seeing God in your children and in your money and your
10 diamonds and your dances."

11 It is difficult, almost impossible, for such people to give up sense enjoyment. It has grown upon them
12 from birth to birth. If you ask a pig to give up his sty and to go into your most beautiful parlour, why it will be
13 death to the pig. "Let go, I must live there", says the pig.

14 [Here Swami Vivekananda explained the story of the fish-wife: "Once a fishwife was a guest in the
15 house of a gardener who raised flowers. She came there with her empty basket, after selling fish in the
16 market, and was asked to sleep in a room where flowers were kept. But, because of the fragrance of the
17 flowers, she couldn't get to sleep for a long time. Her hostess saw her condition and said, 'Hello! Why are
18 you tossing from side to side so restlessly?' The fishwife said: 'I don't know, friend. Perhaps the smell of the
19 flowers has been disturbing my sleep. Can you give me my fish-basket? Perhaps that will put me to
20 sleep'."]⁴⁵³

21 So with us. The majority of mankind delights in this fish smell—this world, this enjoyment of the senses,
22 this money and wealth and chattel and wife and children. All this nonsense of the world—this fishy smell—has
23 grown upon us. We can hear

⁴⁵³ ? M., *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, trans. Swami Nikhilananda (New York: Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, 1952), p. 433.

1 nothing beyond it, can see nothing beyond it; nothing goes beyond it. This is the whole universe.

2 All this talk about heaven and God and soul means nothing to an ordinary man. He has heaven already
3 here. He has no other idea beyond this world. When you tell him of something higher, he says, "That is not a
4 comfortable religion. Give us something comfortable". That is to say that religion is nothing but what he is
5 doing.

6 If he is a thief and you tell him that stealing is the highest thing we can do, he will say, "That is a
7 comfortable religion". If he is cheating, you have to tell him that what he is doing is all right; then he will
8 accept your teaching as a "comfortable religion". The whole trouble is that people never want to get out of
9 their ruts—never want to get rid of the old fish-basket and smell, in order to live. If they say, "I want the
10 truth", that simply means that they want the fish-basket.

11 When have you reached knowledge? When you are equipped with those four disciplines [i. e. the four
12 qualifications for attainment discussed in Vedantic literature: discrimination between the real and the
13 unreal, renunciation, the six treasures of virtue beginning with tranquillity, and longing for liberation]. You
14 must give up all desire of enjoyment, either in this life or the next. All enjoyments of this life are vain. Let
15 them come and go as they will.

16 What you have earned by your past actions none can take away from you. If you have deserved wealth,
17 you can bury yourself in the forest and it will come to you. If you have deserved good food and clothing, you
18 may go to the north pole and they will be brought to you. The polar bear will bring them. If you have not
19 deserved them, you may conquer the world and will die of starvation. So, why do you bother about these
20 things? And, after all, what is the use of them?

21 As children we all think that the world is made so very nice, and that masses of pleasures are simply
22 waiting for our going out to them. That is every schoolboy's dream. And when he goes out into the world, the
23 everyday world, very soon his dreams vanish. So with nations. When they see how every city is built upon
24 ruins—every forest stands upon a city—then they become convinced of the vanity of this world.

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All the power of knowledge and wealth once made has passed away—all the sciences of the ancients, lost, lost forever. Nobody knows how. That teaches us a grand lesson. Vanity of vanities; all is vanity and vexation of the spirit. If we have seen all this, then we become disgusted with this world and all it offers us. This is called Vairâgya, non-attachment, and is the first step towards knowledge.

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The natural desire of man is to go towards the senses. Turning away from the senses takes him back to God. So the first lesson we have to learn is to turn away from the vanities of the world.

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How long will you go on sinking and diving down and going up for five minutes, to again sink down, again come up and sink, and so on—tossed up and down? How long will you be whirled on this wheel of Karma—up and down, up and down? How many thousands of times have you been kings and rulers? How many times have you been surrounded by wealth and plunged into poverty? How many thousands of times have you been possessed of the greatest powers? But again you had to become men, rolling down on this mad rush of Karma's waters. This tremendous wheel of Karma stops neither for the widow's tears nor the orphan's cry.

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How long will you go on? How long? Will you be like that old man who had spent all his life in prison and, when let out, begged to be brought back into his dark and filthy dungeon cell? This is the case with us all! We cling with all our might to this low, dark, filthy cell called this world—to this hideous, chimerical existence where we are kicked about like a football by every wind that blows.

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We are slaves in the hands of nature—slaves to a bit of bread, slaves to praise, slaves to blame, slaves to wife, to husband, to child, slaves to everything. Why, I go about all over the world—beg, steal, rob, do anything—to make happy a boy who is, perhaps, hump-backed or ugly-looking. I will do every wicked thing to make him happy. Why? Because I am his father. And, at the same time, there are millions and millions of boys in this world dying of starvation—boys beautiful in body and in mind. But they are nothing to me. Let them all die. I am apt to

1 kill them all to save this one rascal to whom I have given birth. This is what you call love. Not I. Not I.
2 This is brutality.

3 There are millions of women—beautiful in body and mind, good, gentle, virtuous—dying of starvation
4 this minute. I do not care for them at all. But that Jennie who is mine—who beats me three times a day, and
5 scolds me the whole day—for that Jennie I am going to beg, borrow, cheat and steal so that she will have a
6 nice gown.

7 Do you call that love? Not I. This is mere desire, animal desire—nothing more. Turn away from these
8 things. Is there no end to these hideous dreams? Put a stop to them.

9 When the mind comes to that state of disgust with all the vanities of life, it is called turning away from
10 nature. This is the first step. All desires must be given up—even the desire of getting heaven.

11 What are these heavens anyhow? Places where to sing psalms all the time. What for? To live there and
12 have a nice healthy body with phosphorescent light or something of this kind coming out of every part, with a
13 halo around the head, and with wings and the power to penetrate the wall?

14 If there be powers, they must pass away sooner or later. If there is a heaven—as there may be many
15 heavens with various grades of enjoyment—there cannot be a body that lives forever. Death will overtake us,
16 even there.

17 Every conjunction must have a disjunction. No body, finer or coarser, can be manufactured without
18 particles of matter coming together. Whenever two particles come together, they are held by a certain
19 attraction; and there will come a time when those particles will separate. This is the eternal law. So, wher-
20 ever there is a body—either grosser or finer, either in heaven or on earth—death will overcome it.

21 Therefore, all desires of enjoyment in this life, or in a life to come, should be given up. People have a
22 natural desire to enjoy; and when they do not find their selfish enjoyments in this life, they think that after
23 death they will have a lot of enjoyment somewhere else. If these enjoyments do not take us towards
24 knowledge in this life, in this world, how can they bring us knowledge in another life?

1 Which is the goal of man? Enjoyment or knowledge? Certainly not enjoyment. Man is not born to have
2 pleasure or to suffer pain. Knowledge is the goal. Knowledge is the only pleasure we can have.

3 All the sense pleasures belong to the brute. And the more the pleasure in knowledge comes, these
4 sense pleasures fall down. The more animal a man is, the more he enjoys the pleasures of the senses. No
5 man can eat with the same gusto as a famished dog. No man was ever born who could feel the same
6 pleasure in eating as an ordinary bull. See how their whole soul is in that eating. Why, your millionaires
7 would give millions for that enjoyment in eating—but they cannot have it.

8 This universe is like a perfectly balanced ocean. You cannot raise a wave in one place without making a
9 hollow in another one. The sum total of energy in the universe is the same throughout. You spend it in some
10 place, you lose it in another. The brute has got it, but he spent it on his senses; and each of his senses is a
11 hundred times stronger than that of man.

12 How the dog smells at a distance! How he traces a footstep! We cannot do that. So, in the savage man.
13 His senses are less keen than the animal's, but keener than the civilized man's.

14 The lower classes in every country intensely enjoy everything physical. Their senses are stronger than
15 those of the cultured. But as you go higher and higher in the scale, you see the power of thought increasing
16 and the powers of the senses decreasing, in the same ratio.

17 Take a [brute], cut him [as it were] to pieces, and in five days he is all right. But if I scratch you, it is
18 ten to one you will suffer for weeks or months. That energy of life which he displays—you have it too. But with
19 you, it is used in making up your brain, in the manufacture of thought. So with all enjoyments and all
20 pleasures. Either enjoy the pleasure of the senses—live like the brute and become a brute—or renounce these
21 things and become free.

22 The great civilizations—what have they died of? They went for pleasure. And they went further down
23 and down until, under the mercy of God, savages came to exterminate them, lest we would see human brutes
24 growling about. Savages killed off

1 those nations that became brutalized through sense enjoyment, lest Darwin's missing link would be
2 found.

3 True civilization does not mean congregating in cities and living a foolish life, but going Godward,
4 controlling the senses, and thus becoming the ruler in this house of the Self.

5 Think of the slavery in which we are [bound]. Every beautiful form I see, every sound of praise I hear,
6 immediately attracts me; every word of blame I hear immediately repels me. Every fool has an influence over
7 my mind. Every little movement in the world makes an impression upon me. Is this a life worth living?

8 So when you have realized the misery of this physical existence—when you have become convinced that
9 such a life is not worth living—you have made the first step towards Jnana.

1 BHAKTI-YOGA⁴⁵⁴

2 [A Bhakti-Yoga class delivered in New York, Monday morning, January 20, 1896, and recorded by Mr.
3 Josiah J. Goodwin]

4 We finished in our last [class the subject] about Pratikas. One idea more of the preparatory Bhakti, and
5 then we will go on to the Parâ, the Supreme. This idea is what is called Nishthâ, devotion to one idea.

6 We know that all these ideas of worship are right and all good, and we have seen that the worship of
7 God, and God alone, is Bhakti. The worship of any other being will not be Bhakti, but God can be worshipped
8 in various forms and through various ideas. And we have seen that all these ideas are right and good, but the
9 difficulty is here: If we just stop with this last conclusion, we find that in the end we have frittered away our
10 energies and done nothing.

11 It is a great tendency among liberal people to become a jack-of-all-trades and master of none—to nibble
12 a little here and there and, in the long run, find they have nothing. In this country it many times grows into a
13 sort of disease—to hear various things and do nothing.

14 Here is the advice of one of our old Bhaktas: "Take the honey from all flowers, mix with all with
15 respect, say yea, yea to all, but give not up your seat". This giving not up your own seat is what is called
16 Nishtha. It is not that one should hate, or even criticize, the ideals of other people; he knows they are all
17 right. But, at the same time, he must stick to his own ideal very strictly.

18 There is a story of Hanumân, who was a great worshipper of Râma. Just as the Christians worship
19 Christ as the incarnation of God, so the Hindus worship many incarnations of God. According to them, God
20 came nine times in India and will come once more. When he came as Rama, this Hanuman was his great
21 worshipper. Hanuman lived very long and was a great Yogi.

1 ⁴⁵⁴ ? *New Discoveries*, Vol. 3, pp. 543-54.
2

1 During his lifetime, Rama came again as Krishna; and Hanuman, being a great Yogi, knew that the
2 same God had come back again as Krishna. He came and served Krishna, but he said to him, "I want to see
3 that Rama form of yours". Krishna said, "Is not this form enough? I am this Krishna; I am this Rama. All these
4 forms are mine". Hanuman said, "I know that, but the Rama form is for me. The Lord of Jânaki⁴⁵⁵ and the
5 Lord of Shri⁴⁵⁶ are the same. They are both the incarnations of the Supreme Self. Yet the lotus-eyed Rama is
6 my all in all". This is Nishtha—knowing that all these different forms of worship are right, yet sticking to one
7 and rejecting the others. We must not worship the others at all; we must not hate or criticize them, but
8 respect them.

9 The elephant has two teeth coming out from his mouth. These are only for show; he cannot eat with
10 them. But the teeth that are inside are those with which he chews his food. So mix with all, say yea, yea to
11 all, but join none. Stick to your own ideal of worship. When you worship, worship that ideal of God which is
12 your own Ishta, your own Chosen Ideal. If you do not, you will have nothing. Nothing will grow.

13 When a plant is growing, it is necessary that it should be hedged round lest any animal should eat it
14 up. But when it has become strong and a huge gigantic tree, do not care for any hedges—it is perfect in itself.
15 So when just the seed of spirituality is growing, to fritter away the energies on all sorts of religious ideas—a
16 little of this and a little of that: a little of Christianity, a little of Buddhism, and, in reality, of nothing—

17 destroys the soul.

18 This [acceptance] has its good side; and in the end we will come to it. Only do not put the cart before
19 the horse.

20 In the first place, we are bound to become sectarians. But this should be the ideal of sectarianism—not
21 to avoid anyone. Each of us must have a sect, and that sect is our own Ishta—our own chosen way. However,
22 that should not make us want to kill other people—only to hold onto our own way. It is sacred and it should
23 not be told to our own brothers, because my choice is

1 455 ?

2 Janaki is a name of Sitâ.

3 456 ?

5 Shri is a name of Lakshmi.

1 sacred, and his [also] is sacred. So keep that choice as your own. That should be the [attitude of]
2 worship of everyone. When you pray to your own Ideal, your own Ishta, that is the only God you shall have.
3 God exists in various phases, no doubt, but for the time being, your own Ishta is the only phase for you.

4 Then, after a long course of training in this Ishta—when this plant of spirituality has grown and the soul
5 has become strong and you begin to realize that your Ishta is every-where—[then] naturally all these
6 bondages will fall down. When the fruit becomes ripe, it falls of its own weight. If you pluck an unripe fruit it
7 is bitter, sour. So we will have to grow in this thought.

8 Simply hearing lectures and all this nonsense—making the Battle of Waterloo in the brain, simply
9 unadjusted [undigested?] ideas—is no good. Devotion to one idea—those that have this will become spiritual,
10 will see the light. You see everyone com-plaining: "I try this" and "I try that", and if you cross-question them
11 as to what they try, they will say that they have heard a few lectures in one place and another, a handful of
12 talks in one corner and another. And for three hours, or a few days, they worshipped and thought they had
13 done enough. That is the way of fools, not the way to perfection—not the way to attain spirituality.

14 Take up one idea, your Ishta, and let the whole soul be de-voted to it. Practise this from day to day
15 until you see the result, until the soul grows. And if it is sincere and good, that very idea will spread till it
16 covers the whole universe. Let it spread by itself; it will all come from the inside out. Then you will say that
17 your Ishta is everywhere and that He is in everything.

18 Of course, at the same time, we must always remember that we must recognize the Ishtas of others
19 and respect them—the other ideas of God—or else worship will degenerate into fanaticism. There is an old
20 story of a man who was a worshipper of Shiva. There are sects in our country who worship God as Shiva, and
21 others who worship Him as Vishnu. This man was a great worshipper of Shiva, and to that he added a
22 tremendous hatred for all worshippers of Vishnu and would not hear the name of Vishnu pronounced. There
23 are a great number of wor-

1 shippers of Vishnu in India, and he could not avoid hearing the name. So he bored two holes in his ears
2 and tied two little bells onto them. Whenever a man mentioned the name of Vishnu, he moved his head and
3 rang the bells, and that prevented his hearing the name.

4 But Shiva told him in a dream, "What a fool you are! I am Vishnu, and I am Shiva; they are not
5 different—only in name. There are not two Gods". But this man said, "I don't care. I will have nothing to do
6 with this Vishnu business".

7 He had a little statue of Shiva and made it very nice, built an altar for it. One day he bought some
8 beautiful incense and went home to light some of the incense for his God. While the fumes [smoke] of his
9 incense were rising in the air, he found that the image was divided into two: one half remained Shiva, and
10 the other half was Vishnu. Then the man jumped up and put his finger under the nostril of Vishnu so that not
11 a particle of the smell could get there.

12 Then Shiva became disgusted, and the man became [was turned into] a demon. He is [known as] the
13 father of all fanatics, the "bell-eared" demon. He is respected by the boys of India, and they worship him. It
14 is a very peculiar kind of worship. They make a clay image and worship him with all sorts of horrible smelling
15 flowers. There are some flowers in the forests of India which have a most pestilential smell. They worship
16 him with these and then take big sticks and beat the image. He [the "bell-eared" demon] is the father of all
17 fanatics who hate all other gods except their own.

18 This is the only danger in this Nishthâ Bhakti—becoming this fanatical demon. The world gets full of
19 them. It is very easy to hate. The generality of mankind gets so weak that in order to love one, they must
20 hate another; they must take the energy out of one point in order to put it into another. A man loves one
21 woman and then loves another; and to love the other, he has to hate the first. So with women. This
22 characteristic is in every part of our nature, and so in our religion. The ordinary, undeveloped weak brain of
23 mankind cannot love one without hating another. This very [characteristic] becomes fanaticism in religion.
24 Loving their own ideal is synonymous with hating every other idea.

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This should be avoided and, at the same time, the other danger should be avoided. We must not fritter away all our energies, [otherwise] religion becomes a nothing with us—just hearing lectures. These are the two dangers. The danger with the liberals is that they are too expansive and have no intensity. You see that in these days religion has become very expansive, very broad. But the ideas are so broad that there is no depth in them. Religion has become to many merely a means of doing a little charity work, just to amuse them after a hard day's labour—

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they get five minutes religion to amuse them. This is the danger with the liberal thought. On the other hand, the sectarians have the depth, the intensity, but that intensity is so narrow. They are very deep, but with no breadth to it. Not only that, but it draws out hatred to everyone else.

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Now, if we can avoid both these dangers and become as broad as the uttermost liberals and as deep as the bluest fanatic, then we will solve the problem. Our idea is how that can be done. It is by this theory of Nishtha—knowing that all these ideals that we see are [good] and true, that all these are so many parts of the same God and, at the same time, thinking that we are not strong enough to worship Him in all these forms, and therefore must stick to *one* ideal and make that ideal our life. When you have succeeded in doing that, all the rest will come. Here ends the first part of Bhakti: the formal, the ceremonial and the preparatory.

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You must remember that the first lesson in this Bhakti was on the disciple. Who is the disciple? What are the necessary qualifications for a disciple? You read in the scriptures: "Where the speaker is wonderful, so is the listener. When the teacher is wonderful, so is the taught. Then alone will this spirituality come".

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Mankind generally thinks that everything is to be expected from the teacher. Very few people understand that they are not fit to be taught. In the disciple first this is necessary: that he must want—he must really want spirituality.

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We want everything but spirituality. What is meant by want? Just as we want food. Luxuries are not wants, but necessities are wants. Religion is a necessary thing to very few; and to the vast mass of mankind it is a luxury. There are a hundred

1 things in life without which they can live, until they come to the shop and see a new and artistic
2 something and they want to buy it. Ninety-nine and nine-tenths per cent of mankind comes to religion in this
3 way. It is one of the many luxuries they have in life. There is no harm in this. Let them have all they want; but
4 they are entirely mistaken if they think they can fool God. He cannot be fooled. They will only fool themselves
5 and sink down lower and lower until they become like brutes. Those therefore will become spiritual who
6 want [spirituality]—who feel the necessity of religion, just as they feel the necessity of clothes, the necessity
7 of work, the necessity of air to breathe.

8 A necessary thing is that without which we cannot live; and a luxury is that which is simply the
9 gratification of a momentary desire.

10 The second qualification in the disciple is that he must be pure; and the other is that he must be
11 persevering—he must work. Hearing is only one part; and the other part is *doing*.

12 The second necessity in Bhakti was the teacher. The teacher must be properly qualified. The main idea
13 in that lecture was that the teacher must have the seed of spirituality. The teacher is not a talker, but the
14 transmitter of spiritual force which he has received from his teacher, and he from others, and so on, in an
15 unbroken current. He must be able to transmit that spiritual current.

16 When the teacher and the taught are both ready, then the first step in Bhakti-Yoga comes. The first
17 part of Bhakti-Yoga is what is called the preparatory [stage], wherein you work through forms.

18 The next lecture was on the Name—how in all scriptures and in all religions Name has been exalted and
19 how that Name does us good. The Bhakti-Yogi must always think that the Name itself is God—nothing
20 different from God. The Name and God are one.

21 Next, it was taught how, for the Bhakti-Yogi, humility and reverence are necessary. The Bhakti-Yogi
22 must hold himself as a dead man. A dead man never takes an insult, never retaliates; he is dead to everyone.
23 The Bhakti-Yogi must reverence all good people, all saintly people, for the glory of the Lord shines always
24 through His children.

1 The next lesson was on the Pratikas. In that it was taught that Bhakti is only when you worship God.
2 Worshipping anyone else is not Bhakti. But we can worship anything we like if we think it is God. If we do not
3 think it is God, that worship is not Bhakti. If you think it is God, it is all right.

4 There was a certain Yogi who used to practise meditation in a lonely part of the forest, on the banks of
5 a river. There was a poor cowherd, a very ignorant man, who used to tend his herd in that forest. Every day
6 he used to see this same Yogi meditating by the hour, practising austerities, living alone and studying.
7 Somehow the cowherd got curious as to what he did. So he came to the Yogi and said, "Sir, can you teach me
8 the way to God?" This Yogi was a very learned, great man, and he replied, "How will you understand
9 God—you common cowherd? Blockhead, go home and tend your cows and don't bother your head with such
10 things".

11 The poor fellow went away, but somehow a real want had come to him. So he could not rest, and he
12 came again to the Yogi and said, "Sir, won't you teach me something about God?"

13 Again he was repulsed: "Oh, you blockhead, what can you understand of God? Go home". But the
14 cowherd could not sleep; he could not eat. He must know something about God.

15 So he came again; and the Yogi, in order to quiet the man, as he was so insisting, said, "I'll teach you
16 about God".

17 The man asked, "Sir, what sort of being is God? What is His form? How does He look?"

18 The Yogi said, "God is just like the big bull in your herd. That is just God. God has become that big
19 bull".

20 The man believed him and went back to his herd. Day and night he took that bull for God and began to
21 worship it. He brought the greenest grass for that bull, rested close to it and gave it light, sat near it and
22 followed it. Thus days and months and years passed. His whole soul was there [in the bull].

23 One day he heard a voice, as it were, coming out of the bull. "The bull speaks!" [the cowherd thought.]

24 "My son, my son."

25 "Why, the bull is speaking! No, the bull cannot speak."

1 Again he went away, and sat near meditating in great misery of his heart. He did not know anything.
2 Again he heard the voice coming out of the bull: "My child, my child".

3 He went near. "No, the bull cannot speak." Then he went back again and sat despondent.

4 Again the voice came, and that time he found it out. It was from his own heart. He found that God was
5 in him. Then he learned the wonderful truth of the Teacher of all teachers: "I am with thee always". And the
6 poor cowherd learned the whole mystery.

7 Then he goes back to the Yogi, and when he is at some distance the Yogi sees him. The Yogi has been
8 the most learned man in the country, practising austerity for years—meditating, studying. And this cowherd,
9 an ignorant blockhead, never studied a book nor learned his letters. But he comes—his whole body, as it
10 were, transfigured, his face changed, the light of heaven shining round his face. The Yogi got up. "What is
11 this change? Where did you get this?"

12 "Sir, you gave me that."

13 "How? I told you that in joke."

14 "But I took it seriously. And I got everything I wanted out of that bull, for is He not everywhere?"

15 So that bull was the Pratika. And that man worshipped the bull as his Pratika—as God—and he got
16 everything out of it. So that intense love—that desire—brings out everything. Everything is in ourselves, and
17 the external world and the external worship are the forms, the suggestions that call it out. When they
18 become strong, the Lord within awakens.

19 The external teacher is but the suggestion. When faith in the external teacher is strong, then the
20 Teacher of all teachers within speaks; eternal wisdom speaks in the heart of that man. He need not go any
21 more to any books or any men or any higher beings; he need not run after supernatural or preternatural
22 beings for instruction. The Lord Himself becomes his instructor. He gets all he wants from himself. [There is]
23 no more need to go to any temple or church. His own body has become the greatest temple in the world, and
24 in that temple lives the Lord of Creation. In every country great saints have been born, wonderful lives have
25 been [lived]—coming out of the sheer power of love.

1 So all these external forms of Bhakti—this repetition of the Name, worship of Pratika, this Nishtha, this
2 Ishta—are but the preparations until that eternal power wakes up. Then alone comes spirituality—when one
3 goes beyond these laws and bounds. Then all laws fall down, all forms vanish, temples and churches crumble
4 into dust and die away. It is good to be born in a church, but it is the worst possible fate to die in a church. It
5 is good to be born in a sect, and the worst possible thing to die in a sect with sectarian ideas.

6 What sect can hold a child of the Lord? What laws bind him? What forms shall he follow? What man
7 shall he worship? He worships the Lord Himself. He Himself teaches him. He lives in the temple of all
8 temples, the Soul of man.

9 So this is the goal towards which we are going—the supreme Bhakti—and all that leads up to this is but
10 preparation. But it is necessary. It prepares the infinite Soul to come out of this bondage of books and sects
11 and forms; these [ultimately] fly away and leave but the Soul of man. These are superstitions of an infinite
12 amount of time. This "my father's religion", "my country's religion", or "my book", or my this and that, are but
13 the superstition of ages; they vanish. Just as when one is pricked with a thorn he takes another thorn to get
14 the first out and then throws both of them away, so this superstition is in us.

15 In many countries—even into the soft brains of little babies

16 —are put the most horrible and diabolical nonsense, as sect ideas. Parents think they are doing good to
17 the child, but they are merely murdering it to satisfy Mrs. Grundy. What selfishness! There is nothing that
18 men out of fear of themselves or out of fear of society will not do. Men will kill their own children, mothers
19 will starve their own families, brothers will hate brothers to satisfy forms—because Mrs. So-and-so will be
20 pleased and satisfied.

21 We see that the vast mass of mankind is born in some church or temple of [some religious] form and
22 never comes out of it. Why? Have these forms helped the growth of spirituality? If through these forms we
23 step onto the highest platform of love, where forms vanish and all these sectarian ideas go away, how is it
24 that the vast majority of men are always grovelling in some

1 form or another? They are all atheists; they do not want any religion.

2 If a man comes to this country without any friend or without knowing anyone—supposing he is a
3 blackguard in his own country—the first thing he will do in this country will be to join a church. Will that
4 fellow ever have religion?

5 Do you mean to say that those women who go to churches to show their dresses will ever have religion
6 or will come out of forms? They will go back and back. And when they die, they will become like animals.

7 Do you mean to say that those men who go to church to look at the beautiful faces of women will ever
8 have religion? Those who have certain social religions—because society requires that they shall belong to Mr.
9 So-and-so's church or because that was their father's church—will they ever have religion? They understand
10 certain broad views, but they must keep a certain social position—and will keep it through eternity.

11 What you want, you get. The Lord fulfils all desires. If you want to keep a certain position in society
12 you will do so; if you want the church, you will get that and not Him. If you want to play the fool all your life
13 with all these churches and foolish organizations, you will have them and have to live in them all your lives.
14 "Those that want the departed, go to the departed and get ghosts; but those that love Him, all come to Him."
15 So those that love Him alone will come to Him, and those that love others will go to wherever they love.

16 That drill business in the temples and churches—kneeling down at a certain time, standing at ease, and
17 all that drill nonsense, all mechanical, with the mind thinking of something else

18 —all this has nothing to do with real religion.

19 There was a great prophet in India, Guru Nânak, born [some] four hundred years ago. Some of you
20 have heard of the Sikhs—the fighting people. Guru Nanak was [the founder and also] a follower of the Sikh
21 religion.

22 One day he went to the Mohammedans' mosque. These Mohammedans are feared in their own
23 country, just as in a Christian country no one dare say anything against their reli-gion. . . . So Guru Nanak
24 went in and there was a big mosque, and the Mohammedans were standing in prayer. They stand in

1 lines: they kneel down, stand up, and repeat certain words at the same times, and one fellow leads. So
2 Guru Nanak went there. And when the mullah was saying "In the name of the most merciful and kind God,
3 Teacher of all teachers", Guru Nanak began to smile. He says, "Look at that hypocrite". The mullah got into a
4 passion. "Why do you smile?"

5 "Because you are not praying, my friend. That is why I am smiling."

6 "Not praying?"

7 "Certainly not. There is no prayer in you."

8 The mullah was very angry, and he went and laid a complaint before a magistrate and said, "This
9 heathen rascal dares to come to our mosque and smiles at us when we are praying. The only punishment is
10 instant death. Kill him".

11 Guru Nanak was brought before the magistrate and asked why he smiled.

12 "Because he was not praying."

13 "What was he doing?" the magistrate asked.

14 "I will tell you what he was doing if you will bring him before me."

15 The magistrate ordered the mullah to be brought. And when he came, the magistrate said, "Here is the
16 mullah. [Now] explain why you laughed when he was praying".

17 Guru Nanak said, "Give the mullah a piece of the Koran [to swear on]. [In the mosque] when he was
18 saying 'Allah, Allah', he was thinking of some chicken he had left at home".

19 The poor mullah was confounded. He was a little more sincere than the others, and he confessed he
20 was thinking of the chicken, and so they let the Sikh go. "And", said the magistrate [to the mullah], "don't go
21 to the mosque again. It is better not to go at all than to commit blasphemy there and hypocrisy. Do not go
22 when you do not feel like praying. Do not be like a hypocrite, and do not think of the chicken and say the
23 name of the Most Merciful and Blissful God".

24 A certain Mohammedan was praying in a garden. They are very regular in their prayers. When the
25 time comes, wherever they are, they just begin, fall down on the ground and get up and fall down, and so on.
26 One of them was in a garden when the call for prayer came, so he knelt there prostrate on the ground to

1 pray. A girl was waiting in the garden for her lover, and she saw him on the other side. And in her
2 hurry to reach him, she did not see the man prostrate and walked over him. He was a fanatical
3 Mohammedan—just what you call here a Presbyterian, the same breed. Both believe in barbecuing eternally.
4 So you can just imagine the anger of this Mohammedan when his body was walked over—he wanted to kill
5 the girl. The girl was a smart one, and she said, "Stop that nonsense. You are a fool and a hypocrite".

6 "What! I am a hypocrite?"

7 "Yes, I am going to meet my earthly lover, and I did not see you there. But you are going to meet your
8 heavenly lover and should not know that a girl was passing over your body."

1 the mundaka upanishad⁴⁵⁷

2 [A Jnâna-Yoga class delivered in New York, January 29, 1896,

3 and recorded by Mr. Josiah J. Goodwin]

4 In the last Jnana-Yoga⁴⁵⁸ lecture, we read one of the Upanishads; we will read another [the Mundaka
5 Upanishad]. Brahmâ was the first of the Devas, the Lord of this cycle and its protector. He gave this
6 knowledge of Brahman, which is the essence of all knowledge, to his son Atharvan. The latter handed it over
7 to his son Angiras, he to his son, Bharadvâja, and so on.

8 There was a man called Shaunaka, a very rich man, who went to this Angiras as a learner. He
9 approached the teacher and asked him a question. "Tell me, sir, what is that which, being known, everything
10 else is known?"

11 One [knowledge] is supreme and the other is inferior. The Rig-Veda is the name of one of the different
12 parts of the Vedas. Shikshâ is the name of another part. All different sciences are inferior. What is the
13 supreme science? That is the only science, the supreme science, by which we reach the Unchangeable One.
14 But that cannot be seen, cannot be sensed, cannot be specified. Without colour, without eyes, without ears,
15 without nose, without feet—the Eternal, the Omnipresent, the "Omnipenetrating", the Absolute—He from
16 whom everything comes. The sages see Him, and that is the supreme knowledge.

17 Just as the *Urnanâbhi*, a species of spider, creates a thread out of his own body and takes it back, just
18 as the plants grow by their own nature, and all these things are yet separate and apparently different (the
19 heart is, as it were, different from the other parts of a man's body; the plants are different from the earth;
20 the thread is different from the spider—yet they [the earth, the spider and so on] were the causes, and in
21 them these things act), so from this Unchangeable One has come this universe.

1 457 ?

2 *New Discoveries*, Vol. 3, pp. 557-68.

3 458 ?

4 *Vide Complete Works*, II: 406-15.
5
6

1 First, out of Brahman comes the knowledge of desire and from that comes the manifestation of
2 Creator, or the Golden Womb. From that comes intelligence, from that, matter and all these different worlds.

3 This is the truth—that for those who want to come to salvation or attain to other enjoyments, various
4 ways are told in the Vedas.

5 Then it [the Mundaka Upanishad] goes on to say how they will reach these blessings. When they die
6 they will go through the sun's rays to places which are very beautiful, where after death they will go to
7 heaven and live for some time, but from there they will again fall.

8 Here are two words—*Ishtam* and *Purtam*. Sacrificial and other rituals are called Ishtam, and Purtam is
9 making roads, building hospitals and so on. "Fools are they who think that rituals and doing good work are
10 high and that there is nothing higher." They get what they desire and go to heaven, but every enjoyment and
11 every sorrow must have an end. And so that ends, and they fall back and back and become men again, or still
12 lower. Those that give up the world and learn to control the senses live in a forest. Through the rays of the
13 sun they reach that immortality where lives He who is the Absolute.

14 Thus the sage, examining all desires of good or evil works, throws away all duties and wants to know
15 that, getting which there is no more return, no more change. And to know that, he goes to the Guru, the
16 teacher, with fuel in his hand.

17 There is a myth in our country about going to the Guru with fuel in one's hands as a sign of helping him
18 in making sacrifices, as he will not take presents.

19 Who is a teacher? He who knows the secrets of the scriptures, he whose soul has gone unto Brahman,
20 who does not care for works or going to heaven or all these things.

21 Unto such a disciple, who has controlled his mind, has become peaceful and calm, has given up all this
22 tremendous wave that rises in the mind by desire ("I will do this and that" and all those desires which are at
23 best only disturbing, such as name and fame, which impel mankind to do all sorts of things)—to that disciple
24 in whom all these vexatious desires have been calmed down, the teacher teaches the way which is

1 the science of Brahman, by which he can know that One who never changes and who is the Truth.

2 Then comes what he [Angiras] taught:

3
4 This is the truth, O gentle one, as from a mass of burning flame myriads of sparks come out of the
5 same nature as the fire, even so from this Unchangeable One all these forms, all these ideas, all this
6 creation, come out; and unto Him it [the creation] goes back.

7 But the Eternal One is everlasting, formless, without beginning, inside and outside of every
8 being—beyond all life, beyond all mind, the Pure One, beyond even the unchangeable, beyond everything.

9 From Him is born the vital principle. From Him comes the mind. From Him come all organs of the
10 senses. From Him are air, light, water and this earth which holds all beings. These heavens are, as it were,
11 His head; His eyes, the sun and moon. The cardinal points are, as it were, His ears. The eternal knowledge of
12 the Vedas is, as it were, His manifested speech. His life is the air. His heart is this universe; His feet, this
13 world. He is the Eternal Self of every being.

14 From Him have come the different Vedas. From Him have come the gods of the Sâdhyas. The latter are
15 superior men, much higher than ordinary men and very much like the gods.

16 From Him are all men. From Him are all animals. From Him is all life; from Him, all the forces in the
17 mind; from Him all truth, all chastity.

18 The seven organs are all from Him. The seven objects of perception are from him; the seven actions of
19 perception are from Him.

20 From Him are the seven worlds in which the life currents flow. From Him are all these seas and
21 oceans. From Him are all rivers that roll into the sea; from Him are all plants and all liquids.

22 He is the inside. He is the inner Soul of every being. This great Purusha, this great One—He is this
23 universe, He is the work, He is the sacrifice. He is Brahman, and He is the

1 trinity. He who knows Him frees his own soul from the bond of ignorance and becomes free.

2 He is the bright one. He is inside every human soul. From Him are all name and form; all the animals
3 and men are from Him. He is the one Supreme. He who knows Him becomes free.

4 How to know Him? Take this bow, which is the Upanishad, the knowledge of the Vedanta; place upon
5 that bow the sharpened rod [arrow] of worship; stretch that bow by what?—by making the mind of the same
6 form as He, by knowing that you are He. Thus strike at it; strike at that Brahman with this rod.

7 This One is the bow. This human mind is the rod [arrow]. Brahman is the object which we want to hit.
8 This object is to be hit by concentrating the mind. And just when the rod has hit [its mark], the rod
9 penetrates into the object and becomes one with it—a unity. Even so, this soul, the rod, is to be thrown upon
10 the object so that it will become one with It—in Whom are the heavens, this earth and the skies, in Whom are
11 the mind and all that lives.

12
13 In the Upanishads there are certain passages which are called the great words,⁴⁵⁹ which are always
14 quoted and referred to.

15
16 In Him, that One—in Him alone, the Atman—exist all other worlds. What is the use of all other talk?
17 Know Him alone. This is the bridge over this life to reach universality.

18
19 He [Angiras] goes on to show a practical way. So far it is very figurative.

20
21 Just as all the spokes of a wheel meet at the axle, even so in this body is that place from which all the
22 arteries flow and

1 ⁴⁵⁹ ? In each of the four Vedas there is one such "great word", or great utterance, called Mahâvâkya: "Prajnânam Brahma"
2 ("Consciousness is Brahman"); "Aham Brahmâsmi" ("I am Brahman"); "Tat Twam Asi" ("That thou art"); and "Ayam Atmâ Brahma "
3 ("This Self is Brahman").
4

1 at which they all meet. There, meditate upon the Om that is in the heart. May thou succeed.

2 May the gentle one with success attain the goal. May you go beyond all darkness to Him who is
3 omniscient, the All-Knowing. His glory is in heaven, on earth and everywhere.

4 He who has become the mind, the Prânâ, He who is the leader in the body, He who is established in
5 the food, the energy of life. By supreme knowledge the sages see Him whose nature is bliss, who shines as
6 immortality.⁴⁶⁰ (This is another of the sentences very much quoted.)

7
8 There are two words: one is *Jnâna*, the other *Vijnâna*. Jnana may be translated as science—this means
9 intellectual [knowledge] only—and Vijnana as realization. God cannot be perceived by intellectual knowledge.
10 He who has realized [the Self] by that supreme knowledge—what will become of that man?

11
12 All the knots of the heart will be cut asunder. All darkness will vanish forever when you have seen the
13 Truth.

14
15 How can you doubt? How foolish and childish you will think these fights and quarrels of different
16 sciences and different philosophies and all this. You will smile at them. All doubts will vanish, and all work
17 will go away. All work will vanish.

18
19 Beyond, the golden sheath is there—without any impurity, without parts [indivisible]—He, the Brahman.
20 His is the brightness, the Light of all light—the knowers of the Atman realize Him as such.

21 And when you have done that, the sun cannot illumine, nor the moon, nor the stars. A flash of lightning
22 cannot illumine the place; it is mental—away, deep in the mind. He shining, everything else shines; when He
23 shines within, the whole man shines. This universe shines through His light.

1 ⁴⁶⁰ ? Mundaka Upanishad 2.2.8.
2

1 Take such passages [for memorizing] later on, when studying the Upanishads.

2 The difference between the Hindu mind and the European mind is that whereas in the West truths are
3 arrived at by examining the particular, the Hindu takes the opposite course. There is no [such] metaphysical
4 sublimity as in the Upanishads.

5 It [the Mundaka Upanishad] leads you on, beyond the senses—ininitely more sublime than the suns and
6 stars. First Angiras tried to describe God by sense sublimities—that His feet are the earth, His head the
7 heavens. But that did not express what he wanted to say. It was in a sense sublime. He first gave that idea to
8 the student and then slowly took him beyond, until he gave him the highest idea—the negative—too high to de-
9 scribe.

10
11 He is immortal, He is before us, He is behind us, He is on the right side, He is on the left, He is above,
12 He is beneath.

13
14 Upon the same tree there are two birds with most beautiful wings, and the two birds always go
15 together—always live together. Of these, one is eating the fruits of the tree; the other, without eating, is
16 looking on.

17 So in this body are the two birds always going together. Both have the same form and beautiful wings.
18 One is the human soul, eating the fruits; the other is God Himself, of the same nature. He is also in this body,
19 the Soul of our soul. He eats neither good nor evil fruits, but stands and looks on.

20
21 But the lower bird knows that he is weak and small and humble, and tells all sorts of lies. He says he is
22 a woman, or he is a man or a boy. He says he will do good or do bad; he will go to heaven and will do a
23 hundred sorts of things. In delirium he talks and works, and the central idea of his delirium is that he is
24 weak.

25 Thus he gets all the misery because he thinks he is nobody. He is a created little being. He is a slave to
26 somebody; he is governed by some god or gods, and so is unhappy.

1 But when he becomes joined with God, when he becomes a Yogi, he sees that the other bird, the Lord,
2 is his own glory. "Why, it was my own glory whom I called God, and this little "I", this misery, was all
3 hallucination; it never existed. I was never a woman, never a man, never any one of these things." Then he
4 gives up all his sorrow.

5
6 When this Golden One, who is to be seen, is seen—the Creator, the Lord, the Purusha, the God of this
7 universe

8 —then the sage has washed off all stains of good and bad deeds. (Good deeds are as much stains as bad
9 deeds.) Then he attains to total sameness with the Pure One.

10 The sage knows that He who is the Soul of all souls—this Atman—shines through all.

11
12 He is the man, the woman, the cow, the dog—in all animals, in the sin and in the sinner. He is the
13 Sannyâsin, He is in the ruler, He is everywhere.

14
15 Knowing this the sage speaks not. (He gives up criticizing anyone, scolding anyone, thinking evil of
16 anyone.) His desires have gone into the Atman. This is the sign of the greatest knowers of Brahman—that
17 they see nothing else but Him.

18
19 He is playing through all these things. Various forms—

20 from the highest gods to the lowest worms—are all He. The ideas want to be illustrated.

21 First of all the writer showed us the idea that if we want to get to heaven and all these places, we will
22 get there. That is to say, in the language of the Vedas, whatever one desires that he sees.

23 As I have told you in previous lectures, the Atman neither comes nor goes. It has neither birth nor
24 death. You are all omnipresent, you are the Atman. You are at this moment in heaven and in the darkest
25 places too. You are everywhere. Where are you not? Therefore how can you go anywhere? These comings
26 and goings are all fictions—the Atman can never come nor go.

1 These visions change. When the mind is in a particular condition it sees a certain vision, dreams a
2 certain dream. So in this condition, we are all seeing this world and man and animals and all these things.
3 But in this very place, this condition will change. And the very thing we are seeing as earth, we shall see as
4 heaven, or we may see it as the opposite place or as any place we like.

5 All this depends on our desires. But this dream cannot be permanent, just as we know that any dream
6 in the night must break. Not one of these dreams will be permanent. We dream that which we think we will
7 do. So these people who are always thinking in this life of going to heaven and meeting their friends, will
8 have that as soon as their dream of this life is ended. And they will be compelled by their desires of this life
9 to see these other dreams. And those who are superstitious and are frightened into all such ideas as hell will
10 dream that they are in the hot place. Those whose ideas in this life are brutal—when they die, will become
11 pigs and hogs and all these things. With each one, what he desires he finds.

12 This book starts by telling us that those who know nothing better than a little road-making or
13 hospital-building and such good works will have a good dream when they die. They will dream that they are
14 in a place where they will have god-bodies and can eat anything they like, jump about, go through walls and
15 so on, and sometimes come down and startle someone.

16 In our mythology there are the Devas, who live in heaven, and the Devakas, who are very much the
17 same but a little more wicked. The Devas are like your angels, only some of them from time to time become
18 wicked and find that the daughters of men are good. Our deities are celebrated for this sort of thing. What
19 can you expect of them? They are here—simply hospital-makers—and have no more knowledge than other
20 men. They do some good work with the result that they become Devas. They do their good work for fame or
21 name or some reward and get this reward, dreaming that they are in heaven and doing all these things.

22 Then there are demons who have done evil in this life. But our books say that these dreams will not
23 last very long, and then they will either come back and take the old dream again as hu-

1 man beings, or still worse. Therefore, according to these books, it behooves every sensible,
2 right-thinking man, once and for all, to brush aside all such foolish ideas as heavens and hells.

3 Two things exist in the world—dream and reality. What we call life is a succession of dreams—dream
4 within dream. One dream is called heaven, another earth, another hell, and so on. One dream is called the
5 human body, another the animal body, and so on—all are dreams. The reality is what is called Brahman, that
6 Being who is Existence, Knowledge, Bliss.

7 He is the Guru—the sage who wants to get rid of all these dreams, to stand aside and know his own
8 nature—who wants to go beyond this self-hypnotism.

9 When we desire, we are hypnotizing ourselves. Just as I desire "I will go to heaven", that hypnotizes
10 me, and I begin to find I am in heaven directly I die, and will see angels and all sorts of things. I have seen
11 about fifty people who have come from death's door, and they all have told me stories about being in heaven.
12 These are the mythologies of our country, and it shows that it is all hypnotism.

13 Where Western people make a great mistake is here. So far as you have these ideas of heaven and
14 hell, we agree with you. But you say this earth is real. That cannot be. If this is real, heavens and hells are
15 real, because the proof of each of these is the same. If one is a hypnotic condition, the whole of it must be so.

16 Vedantists say that not only are heavens hypnotic, but so is this life and everything here. Some people
17 want to go from one hypnotic condition to another, and these are what we call the fools of the world—the
18 Samsârin, the travellers who go from dream to dream, from one hypnotic trance to another. For fifty years
19 they are under the idea that they are men and women.

20 What nonsense is [this—] a man or a woman in the soul? It is terrible hypnotism. How can the soul have
21 any sex? It is self-hypnotism. You have hypnotized yourself and think you are men and women. If we are
22 fools, we will again hypnotize ourselves and want to go to heaven, and hear all this trash of gods and
23 goddesses and all sorts of humbug, and will kneel down and pray, and have god-bodies by the millions to
24 worship on thrones. At the end, we have to hypnotize ourselves again.

1 We are all in the same boat here, and all who are in the same boat see each other. Stand aside—free,
2 beyond dream and hypnotism. Some fools have hypnotized themselves that they have bodies and wives and
3 all these things. I also am a fool and have hypnotized myself that I have senses and all these things. So we
4 are all in the same boat and see each other. Millions of people may be here whom we do not see, touch or
5 feel. Just as in hypnotism there may be three books before you, but you are hypnotized and are told that one
6 of them does not exist. And you may live for a year in that condition and never see it. Suppose thirty men are
7 under the same hypnotic influence and are told that this book does not exist. Those who are in this condition
8 will all fail to see the book. Men, women, animals are all hypnotized, and all see this dream because they are
9 all in the same boat.

10 The Vedanta philosophy says that this whole universe—
11 mental, physical, moral—is hypnotic. Who is the cause of this hypnotism? You yourself are to blame.
12 This weeping and wailing and knocking your heads into corners [against brick walls, as it were] will not do
13 you the least good.

14 However, knocking everything [that is hypnotic] on the head [leads to] what is called non-attachment;
15 and clinging to more and more hypnotism is attachment. That is why in all religions you will find they wanted
16 to give up the world, although many of them do not understand it. These fellows used to starve themselves in
17 a forest and see the devil coming to them.

18 You have heard those wonderful stories of India—of how those magicians can make a man see a rope
19 rise from the ground to the skies. I have not seen any of them. One of the Mogul emperors, Jahangir,
20 mentions it. He says, "Allah, what do these devils do? They take a rope or a chain, and the chain is thrown up
21 and up until it becomes firm—as if it were stuck to something. Then they let a cat go up the chain—then a dog,
22 then a wolf, then a tiger, then a lion. All walk up the chain and vanish. Sometimes they will send men up the
23 chain. Two men will go up and begin to fight, and then both of them vanish. And after a while you hear a
24 noise of fighting—and [then] a head, a hand, and a foot fall. And, mind you, there are two or three thousand

1 people present. The fellow showing it has only a loincloth on". They say this is hypnotism—throwing a
2 net over the audience.

3 That is what they call their science. It exists within a certain limit. But if you go beyond this limit or
4 come within it, you do not see it. The man who is playing does not see anything. So if you stand near him, you
5 do not see anything. Such is the hypnotism here.

6 So we have first to get beyond the circle (Jnana) or stand within the circle of the hypnotism (Bhakti)
7 with God, the great Player who is playing all these things—the whole universe He projects.

8 Chapter after chapter comes and goes. This is called Mâyâ, the power which creates all these
9 tremendous things. He who is the ruler of this Maya, is God; and he who is ruled by Maya [is the soul]. Just
10 as in the case of that chain—so the man who was standing in the centre had the power and was not deluded,
11 but all that audience was governed by Maya. So that portion of Atman which rules Maya is called God, and
12 the little bits of the Atman deluded by it are called souls—you and I.

13 The Bhakta says, Crawl nearer and nearer to the hypnotist, and when you get to the centre you do not
14 see anything. You get clear of it.

15 The Jnâni does not care to undergo all this trouble—it is a dangerous way. Unless a man becomes a
16 lunatic, when he finds himself covered with mud, will he take more mud to wash himself? So why increase
17 the hypnotism? Get out of the circle; cut it off and be free. When you are free you will be able to play, even
18 without being caught yourself. Now you are caught, then you will catch—that will be all the difference.

19 Therefore in the first part of this book, we are told that we must give up all this idea of heaven and of
20 birth and death and so on. It is all nonsense; no man was ever born or ever died. They are all in hypnotism.
21 So is eternal life and all this nonsense. Heaven is hypnotism and so is earth.

22 It is not as materialists say: that heaven is a superstition and God is a superstition, but he himself is
23 not a superstition. If one

1 is superstition—if one link is nonexistent—the whole chain is nonexistent. The existence of the whole
2 chain depends on the existence of one link—and that of one link, on the whole.

3 If there is no heaven, there is no earth; and if there is no God, there is no man. You are under this
4 hypnotism; and as long as you are under it, you will have to see God and nature and the soul. And when you
5 are beyond this hypnotism, God will vanish⁴⁶¹—so will nature, and so will the soul.

6 Therefore, first of all, we will have to give up all these ideas of God and heaven and enjoying the fruits
7 of these; and all that going to heaven will be one more dream.

8 Next, after showing these things, the book goes on to tell us how to get out of this hypnotism. And the
9 one idea that is brought out through all these ideas is to be one with that Universal Being. The thing
10 manifested—the Universal Being—is not anything of these; these are all nonsense—Maya.⁴⁶² But that upon
11 which all these things are being played—the background upon which all this picture is written—[is we
12 ourselves]; we are one with Him [that Universal Being]. You know you are one with Him, only you must
13 realize it.

14 He gave us two words: one is *intellectual knowledge*, and the other is *realization*. That is to say,
15 intellectual assent is within this realization, and realization is beyond it. Therefore intellectual assent is not
16 sufficient.

17 Every man can say this theory is right, but that is not realization; he must realize it. We can all say we
18 understand that this is hypnotism, but that is not realization. That will be when the hypnotism will
19 break—even for a moment. It will come in a flash; it must come. If you struggle it will come.

20 When it does vanish, all idea of body will go along with it—that you have sex or body—just as a lamp
21 blows out. Then what will become of you? If some part of your Karma remains, this world will come back
22 again—but not with the same force. You have known that it is what it is; you will know no more

1 461 ?

2 Here Swami Vivekananda is referring to Ishvara, or the Personal God.

3
4 462 ? The Swami has been discussing two aspects of Maya. On the previous page, he described Maya as the power of Brahman;
5 here he is referring to Maya as the world-appearance.
6

1 bondage. So long as you have eyes you will have to see; or ears [you will have to] hear—but not with the
2 same force.

3 I had read all sorts of things about the mirage, but had never seen it before until about four years ago
4 when I was travelling in western India. Of course, as a Sannyasin I was travelling on foot, making my slow
5 marches. So it took me about a month to travel through that country. Every day I saw such beautiful lakes
6 and the shadows of trees on the shores of those lakes, and the whole thing was quivering in the breeze—and
7 birds flying, and animals. Every day I saw this and thought what a beautiful country it was. But when I
8 reached some village, I found it was all sand. I said, How is it?

9 One day I was very thirsty and thought I would drink a little water at the lake. But when I approached,
10 it disappeared, and with a flash [the thought] came into my mind: "This is the mirage about which I read all
11 my life". But the strange thing is that I was travelling for a month and could never recognize that it was a
12 mirage—and in one moment it vanished. I was very glad to know this was the mirage about which I had read
13 all my life.

14 Next morning I saw the lake again, and along with it came the idea: "That is the mirage". All that
15 month I had been seeing the mirage and could not distinguish between reality and mirage. But in that one
16 moment I caught the idea.

17 From that time, when I see a mirage, I will say, "That is a mirage", and never feel it. Such will it be
18 with this world when the whole thing will vanish once; and after that, if you have to live out your past work,
19 you will not be deceived.

20 Take a carriage with two wheels. Suppose I cut one of the wheels from the axle. The other wheel will
21 run for some time by its past momentum and will then fall. The body is one wheel, and the soul another; and
22 they are joined by the axle of delusion. Knowledge is the axe which will cut the axle, and the soul will stop
23 immediately—will give up all these vain dreams.

24 But upon the body is that past momentum, and it will run a little, doing this and that, and then it will
25 fall down. But only good momentum will be left, and that body can only do good. This is to warn you not to
26 mistake a rascal for a free man. It

1 will be impossible for that [free] man to do evil. So you must not be cheated.

2 When you become free the whole hypnotism has vanished and you know the distinction between the
3 reality and the mirage. [The mirage] will no more be a bondage. The most terrible things will not be able to
4 daunt you. A mountain [could] fall upon you, but you will not care. You will know it for a mirage.

1 history of the aryan race⁴⁶³

2
3 [A Jnâna-Yoga class delivered in London, England, on Thursday morning, May 7, 1896, and recorded
4 by Mr. Josiah J. Goodwin]

5 I have told you how I would divide the subject into four Yogas, but, as the bearing of all these various
6 Yogas is the same—the goal they want to arrive at is the same—I had better begin with the philosophical
7 portion: the Jnana-Yoga. Jnâna means knowledge, and, before going into the principles of the Vedanta
8 philosophy, I think it is necessary to sketch in a few words the origin and the beginning and the
9 development—the historical portion of that system. Most of you are now familiar with the words *Arya* and
10 *Aryan*, and many things have been written on these words.

11 About a century ago there was an English judge in Bengal, Sir William Jones. In India, you know, there
12 are Mohammedans and Hindus. The Hindus were the original people, and the Mohammedans came and
13 conquered them and ruled over them for seven hundred years. There have been many other conquests in
14 India; and whenever there is a new conquest, the criminal laws of the country are changed. The criminal law
15 is always the law of the conquering nation, but the civil law remains the same. So when the English
16 conquered India, they changed the criminal law; but the civil law remained. The judges, however, were
17 Englishmen and did not know the language of the country in which the civil laws were written, and so they
18 had to take the help of interpreters, lawyers of India, and so on. And when any question about Indian law
19 arose, these scholars would be referred to.

20 One of these judges, Sir William Jones, was a very ripe scholar, and he wanted to go to the
21 fountain-head himself, to take up the language himself and study it, instead of relying

1 ⁴⁶³ ? Vedanta Society of Northern California archives. *Vide New Discoveries*, Vol. 4, pp. 154-56 for extracts of this class.
2

1 upon these interpreters who, for instance, might be bribed to give any verdict. So he began to study
2 the law of the Gentoos, as the Hindus were called. *Gentoo* is probably a form of the word *gentile*, used by the
3 Portuguese and Spaniards—or "heathen", as you call it now. When the judge began to translate some of the
4 books into English, he found that it was very hard to translate them correctly into English at first hand. What
5 was his surprise when he found that if he translated them first into Latin, and next into English, it was much
6 easier. Then he found in translating that a large number of Sanskrit words were almost the same as in Latin.
7 It was he who introduced the study of Sanskrit to the Europeans. Then as the Germans were rising in
8 scholarship—as well as the French—they took up the language and began to study it.

9 With their tremendous power of analysis, the Germans found that there was a similarity between
10 Sanskrit and all the European languages. Among the ancient languages, Greek was the nearest to it in
11 resemblance. Later, it was found that there was a language called Lithuanian, spoken somewhere on the
12 shores of the Baltic—an independent kingdom at that time and unconnected with Russia. The language of the
13 Lithuanians is strikingly similar to Sanskrit. Some of the Lithuanian sentences are less changed from
14 Sanskrit forms than the northern Indian languages. Thus it was found that there is an intimate connection
15 between all the various languages spoken in Europe and the two Asiatic languages—Persian and Sanskrit.
16 Many theories are built upon it as to how this connection came. Theories were built up every day, and every
17 day smashed. There is no knowing where it is going to stop.

18 Then came the theory that there was one race in ancient times who called themselves Aryans. They
19 found in Sanskrit literature that there was a people who spoke Sanskrit and called themselves Aryans, and
20 this is mentioned also in Persian literature. Thus they founded the theory that there was in ancient times a
21 nation [of people] who called themselves Aryans and who spoke Sanskrit and lived in Central Asia. This
22 nation, they said, broke into several branches and migrated to Europe and Persia; and wherever they went,
23 they took their own languages.

1 German, Greek and French are but remnants of an old tongue, and Sanskrit is the most highly
2 developed of these languages.

3 These are theories and have not been proved yet; they are mere conjectures and guesses. Many
4 difficulties come in the way

5 –for instance, how the Indians are dark and the Europeans are fair. Even within the same nations
6 speaking these languages—in England itself—there are many with yellow hair and many with black. Thus
7 there are many questions which have not yet been settled.

8 But this is certain, that all the nations of Europe except the Basques, the Hungarians, the Tartars and
9 the [Finns?]⁴⁶⁴—ex-

10 cepting these, all the Europeans, all the northern Indians and the Persians speak branches of the same
11 language. Vast masses of literature are existing in all these Aryan tongues: in Greek, in Latin, in modern
12 European languages—German, English, French—in ancient Persian, in modern Persian and in Sanskrit.

13 But in the first place, Sanskrit literature alone is a very big mass. Although, perhaps, three-fourths of it
14 has been destroyed and lost through successive invasions, yet, I think, the sum total of the amount of
15 literature in Sanskrit would outbalance any three or four European languages taken together, in number of
16 books. No one knows how many books are there yet and where they are, because it is the most ancient of all
17 these Aryan languages. And that branch of the Aryan race which spoke the Sanskrit language was the first to
18 become civilized and the first to begin to write books and literature. So they went on for thousands of years.
19 How many thousands of years they wrote no one knows. There are various guesses—from 3000 B.C. to 8000
20 B.C.—but all of these dates are more or less uncertain.

21 Each man in writing about these ancient books and dates is first of all prejudiced by his earlier
22 education, then by his religion, then by his nationality. If a Mohammedan writes about the Hindus, anything
23 that does not glorify his own religion he very scrupulously pushes to one side. So with the Christians—

24 you can see that with your own writers. In the last ten years your literature has become more
25 respectable. So long as they [the Christians] had full play, they wrote in English and were

1 ⁴⁶⁴ ? *Vide* Complete Works, VIII: 241.
2

1 safe from Hindu criticism. But, within the last twenty years, the Hindus have begun writing in English,
2 so they are more careful. And you will find that the tone has quite changed within the last ten or twenty
3 years.

4 Another curiosity about the Sanskrit literature is that it, like any other language, has undergone many
5 changes. Taking all the literature in these various Aryan languages—the Greek or the Latin or all these
6 others—we find that all the European branches were of very recent date. The Greek came much later

7 –a mere child in comparison with the Egyptian or the Babylonian.

8 The Egyptians and the Babylonians, of course, are not Aryans. They are separate races, and their
9 civilizations antedate all the European civilization. But with the exception of the ancient Egyptians, they were
10 almost coeval [with the Aryans]; in some accounts, they were even earlier. Yet in Egyptian literature, there
11 are certain things to be accounted for—the introduction of the Indian lotus on old temples, the lotus Gangetic.
12 It is well known that this only grows in India. Then there are the references to the land of Punt. Although
13 very great attempts have been made to fix that land of Punt on the Arabs, it is very uncertain. And then there
14 are the references to the monkeys and sandalwood of southern India—only to be found there.

15 The Jews were of a much later date than the Greek Aryans. Only one branch of the Semitic race of
16 Babylon and this nondescript, unknowable race—the Egyptians—were much older than the Aryans, except the
17 Hindus.

18 So this Sanskrit has undergone very much change as a matter of course, having been spoken and
19 written through thousands of years. It necessarily follows that in other Aryan languages, as in Greek and
20 Roman, the literature must be of much later date than Sanskrit. Not only so, but there is this peculiarity, that
21 of all regular books that we have in the world, the oldest are in Sanskrit—and that is the mass of literature
22 called the Vedas. There are very ancient pieces in the Babylonian or Egyptian literature, but they cannot be
23 called literature or books, but just a few notes, a short letter, a few words, and so on. But as finished,
24 cultured literature, the Vedas are the oldest.

1 These Vedas were written in the peculiar archaic Sanskrit, and for a long time—even today—it is
2 thought by many European antiquarians that these Vedas were not written, but were handed down by father
3 to son, learned by rote, and thus preserved. Within the last few years, opinion is veering round, and they are
4 beginning to think that they must have been written in most ancient times.

5 Of course they have to make theories in this way. Theory after theory will have to be built up and
6 destroyed until we reach truth. This is quite natural. But when the subject is Indian or Egyptian, the
7 Christian philosophers rush in to make theories; while if the subject is nearer home, they think twice first.
8 That is why they fail so much and have to keep on making fresh theories every five years. But this much is
9 true, that this mass of literature, whether written or not, was conveyed and, not only that, but is at the
10 present day conveyed by word of mouth. This is thought to be holy.

11 You find in every nation when a new idea, a new form, a new discovery or invention comes in, the old
12 things are not brushed aside all at once, but are relegated to the religion of holiness. The ancient Hindus
13 used to write on palm leaves and birch bark; and when paper was invented they did not throw aside all the
14 palm leaves, but used to consider writing on palm leaves and birch bark holy. So with the Jews—they used to
15 write only on parchment, and parchment is now used for writing in their temples. So you find when new
16 customs come in, the old ones become holy. So this form of transmitting the literature of the Vedas from
17 teacher to disciple by word of mouth, although antiquated and almost useless now, has become holy. The
18 student may refresh his memory by books, but has to learn by word of mouth of a teacher. A great many
19 modifications will always gather round such a fact to make its holiness more rational, but this is the law.

20 These Vedas are a vast mass of literature by themselves. That is to say, in those ancient times, in every
21 country, religion was the first ideal to spring out of the heart of man, and all the secular knowledge that men
22 got was made over to religion.

23 Secondly, people who deal with religion and in later times came to be called priests—being the first
24 thinkers of every

1 nation—not only thought about religious subjects, but secular matters also; and, as such, all knowledge
2 was confined to them. These masses of knowledge—both secular and religious—will always be gathered
3 together and made into a vast mass of literature.

4 In much later times, this is the case. For instance, in studying the Bible of the Jews, we find the same
5 thing. The Talmud contained a vast mass of information on all subjects and so did the Pentateuch. In the
6 same way, the Vedas give information on various subjects. They have come together and form one book. And
7 in later times, when other subjects were separated from religion—when astronomy and astrology were taken
8 out of religion—these subjects, being connected with the Vedas and being ancient, were considered very holy.

9 Almost the largest portion of the Vedas has been lost. The priests who carried it down to posterity
10 were divided into so many families; and, accordingly, the Vedas were divided into so many parts. Each part
11 was allotted to a family. The rituals, the ceremonies, the customs, the worship of that family were to be
12 obtained from that [respective] portion of the Vedas. They preserved it and performed all the ceremonies
13 according to that. In course of time, [some of] these families became extinct; and with them, their portion of
14 the Vedas was lost, if these old accounts be true.

15 Some of you know that the Vedas are divided into four parts. One is called the Rig-Veda, another
16 Yajur-Veda, another Sâma-Veda, and the fourth Atharva-Veda. Each one of these, again, was divided into
17 many branches. For instance, the Sama-Veda had one thousand branches, of which only about five or six
18 remain; the rest are all lost. So with the others. The Rig-Veda had 108, of which only one remains; and the
19 rest are all lost.

20 Then [there were] these various invasions. India has been the one country to which every nation that
21 has become strong wants to go and conquer—it being reputed to be very rich. The wealth of the people had
22 become a fable, even in the most ancient history. [Many foreign invaders] rushed to become wealthy in India
23 and conquered the country. Every one of these invasions destroyed one or more of these families, burned
24 many

1 libraries and houses. And when that was so, much literature was lost. It is only within the last few
2 years that ideas have begun to spring up about the retention of these various religions and books. Before
3 that, mankind had to suffer all this pillaging and breaking down. Most stupendous creations of art were lost
4 forever. Wonderful buildings—where, from a few bits of remnants now in India, it can be imagined how
5 wonderful they were—are completely gone.

6 . . . [The fanatical belief of many of these invaders into India is] that those who do not belong to their
7 sect have no right to live. They will go to a place where the fire will never be quenched when they die; in this
8 life they are only fit to be made into slaves or murdered; and that they have only the right to live as slaves to
9 "the true believers", but never as free men. So in this way, when these waves burst upon India, everything
10 was submerged. Books and literature and civilization went down.

11 But there is a vitality in that race which is unique in the history of humanity, and perhaps that vitality
12 comes from non-resistance. Non-resistance is the greatest strength. In meekness and mildness lies the
13 greatest strength. In suffering is greater strength than in doing. In resisting one's own passions is far higher
14 strength than in hurting others. And that has been the watchword of the race through all its difficulties, its
15 misfortunes and its prosperity. It is the only nation that never went beyond its frontiers to cut the throats of
16 its neighbours. It is a glorious thing. It makes me rather patriotic to think I am born a Hindu, a descendant of
17 the only race that never went out to hurt anyone, and whose only action upon humanity has been giving and
18 enlightening and purifying and teaching, but never robbing.

19 Three-quarters of the wealth of the world has come out of India, and does even now. The commerce of
20 India has been the turning point, the pivot, of the history of the world. Whatever nation got it became
21 powerful and civilized. The Greeks got it and became the mighty Greeks; the Romans got it and became the
22 mighty Romans. Even in the days of the Phoenicians it was so. After the fall of Rome, the Genoese and the
23 Venetians got it. And then the Arabs rose and created a wall between Venice and India; and in the struggle
24 to find a new way there, America was discovered. That is how America was discovered; and the origi-

1 nal people of America were called Indians, or "Injuns", for that reason. Even the Dutch got it—and the
2 barbarians—and the English and they became the most powerful nation on earth. And the next nation that
3 gets it will immediately be the most powerful.

4 Think of all this mass of energy that our nation displays—

5 where does it get it? In India, they are the producers and you are the enjoyers, no doubt. They
6 produced this—the patient, toiling millions of Hindus under the whip and slavery of everyone. Even the
7 missionaries, who stand up to curse the millions of India, have been fattened upon the work of these millions,
8 and they do not know how it has been done. Upon their blood the history of the world has been turning since
9 we know history, and will have to turn for thousands of years more. What is the benefit? It gives that nation
10 strength. They are, as it were, an example. They must suffer and stand up through all, fighting for the truths
11 of religion—as a signpost, a beacon—to tell unto mankind that it is much higher not to resist, much higher to
12 suffer, that if life be the goal, as even their conquerors will admit, we are the only race that can be called
13 immortal, that can never be killed.⁴⁶⁵

14 Where are the Greeks today—they whose armies marched over the whole world? Gone, thousands of
15 years—nobody knows where. Vanished, as soon as the barbarians of the north came and attacked them.
16 Where are the mighty Romans, whose cohorts came and trampled the face of the earth? Where are they
17 today? Gone—vanished like the morning dew, and left behind in the march.

18 But here are the Hindus—three hundred million strong. And think of the fertility of the race! They can
19 increase more than the whole world can kill them. This is the vitality of the race. Although not belonging very
20 much to our subject, I wanted to bring these things before you.

21 Generally the uneducated minds, the vulgar minds of every nation, like the vulgar mobs in every big
22 city, cannot grasp, cannot see, cannot understand, any fine movement. The causes, the real movements in
23 this world of ours, are very fine; it is

⁴⁶⁵ ? *Vide Complete Works*, IV: 160.

1 only the effects that are gross and muscular. The mind is the real cause of this body, the fine
2 movements behind. The body is the gross, the external. But everyone sees the body; very few see the mind.
3 So with everything; the masses, the brutal, ignorant masses of every race, see a triumphant procession,
4 stampeding horses, arms and cannonades, and these they understand. But those fine, gentle workings that
5 are going on behind—it is only the philosopher, the highly cultivated man or woman, that can understand.

6 To return to our Vedanta, I have said that the Sanskrit in which the Vedas were written is not the same
7 Sanskrit in which books were written about a thousand years later than the Vedas

8 —the books that you read in your translations of poets and other classical writers of India. The Sanskrit
9 of the Vedas was very simple, archaic in its composition, and possibly it was a spoken language. But the
10 Sanskrit that we have now was never a spoken language, at least for the last three thousand years. Curiously
11 enough, the vast mass of literature was written in a language which was dead, covering a period of three
12 thousand years. Dramas and novels were written in this dead language. And all the time it was not spoken in
13 the homes; it was only the language of the learned.

14 Even in the time of Buddha, which was about 560 years before the Christian era, we find that Sanskrit
15 had ceased to be a spoken language. Some of his disciples wanted to teach in Sanskrit, but the master
16 studiously refused. He wanted to teach in the language [of the people], because he said he was the prophet
17 of the people. And that is how it has come about that the Buddhistic literature is in Pali, which was the
18 vernacular of that time.

19 This vast mass of literature—the Vedas—we find in three groups. The first group is the Samhitâs, a
20 collection of hymns. The second group is called the Brâhmanas, or the [group dealing with different kinds of]
21 sacrifice. The word *Brahmana* [by usage] means [what is achieved by means of] the sacrifice. And the other
22 group is called the Upanishads (sittings, lectures, philosophic books). Again, the first two parts together—the
23 hymns and the rituals—are called the Karmakânda, the work portion; and the second, or philosophic portion
24 (the Upanishads), is

1 called the Jnânakânda, the knowledge portion. This is the same word as your English word *knowledge*
2 and the Greek word *gnos*—just as you have the word in *agnostic*, and so on.

3 The first portion is a collection of hymns in praise of certain gods, as Agni, fire; Mitra, the sun; and so
4 forth. They are praised and oblations are offered to them. I have said these hymns are to the gods. I have
5 used the word *gods* until I make you familiar with the Sanskrit word *Deva*, because the word *gods* is very
6 misleading. These Devas mean the "bright ones", and gods in India are less persons than positions. For
7 instance, Indra and Agni are not names of particular persons, but particular posts in this universe. There is
8 the post of President, the presiding post over certain elements, the presiding post over certain worlds, and
9 so forth. According to these theologians, you and I—most of us—probably have been some of these gods
10 several times. It is only temporarily that a soul can fill one of these positions. And after his time is over, he
11 gives way; another soul is raised from this world by good works and takes that position

12 —he becomes [for example] Agni. In reading Sanskrit philosophy or theology, people always get
13 bothered by the changing of these gods. But this is the theory—that they are names of positions, that all souls
14 will have to fill them again and again; and these gods, when the soul has attained to that position, can help
15 mankind. So gifts and praise are offered to them. How this idea came to the Aryans we do not know, but in
16 the earliest portion of the Rig-Veda we find this idea perfected and completed.

17 Behind and beyond all these Devas and men and animals and worlds is the Ruler of this universe,
18 Ishvara—somewhat similar to what in the New Testament is called God the Creator, Preserver, the Ruler of
19 this universe. These Devas are not to be confused with Ishvara at all, but in the English language you have
20 the same word for both. You use the word *God* in the singular and the plural. But the gods are the bright
21 ones—the Devas—and God is Ishvara. This we find even in the oldest portions of the Vedas.

22 Another peculiarity is that this Ishvara, this God, is manifesting Himself in all these various forms of
23 bright ones. This idea—that the same God manifests Himself in various forms—

24 is a very rudimentary idea of the Vedas, even in the oldest por-

1 tions. There was a time when a sort of monotheistic idea entered the Vedas, but it was very quickly
2 rejected. As we go on, perhaps you will agree with me that it was very good that it was rejected.

3 So we find in these oldest portions of the Samhitas that there were these various Devas—[being praised
4 as] the manifestations of someone very much higher than they [had left] behind, so that sometimes each one
5 of them was taken up and adjectives piled on it and at last it was said, "You are the God of the universe".
6 Then such passages as this occurred: "I am God, worshipped as the fire", and so forth. "It is the One; sages
7 call Him variously." "He is that one existence; the sages call Him by various names." This I ask you to
8 remember, because this is the turning point, the key-note of all thought that India has produced—"He is that
9 One Being; sages call Him variously." All Hindu philosophy—either theistic or atheistic or monotheistic,
10 dualistic or nondualistic—has that as the core, the centre. And by thousands of years of culture in the race, it
11 is impossible for the Hindu race to go [away from] that idea.

12 That germ became a big tree; and that is why there was never a religious persecution in India, at least
13 by the Hindus. That explains their liberality and welcome to any religion from any part of the world which
14 came to settle there. That is how, even at the present day, Indian Râjâs go and perform Mohammedan
15 ceremonies and enter Mohammedan mosques, although [some] Mohammedans took the first opportunity to
16 kill a number of "the heathens".

17 "He is the One Being; sages call Him variously."

18 There have been two theories advanced in modern times with regard to the growth of religions. The
19 one is the tribal theory; the other is the spirit theory. The tribal theory is that humanity in its savage state
20 remains divided into many small tribes. Each tribe has a god of its own—or sometimes the same god divided
21 into many forms, as the god of this city came to that city, and so on; Jehovah of this city and of such-and-such
22 mountain [came to such-and-such city or mountain]. When the tribes came together, one of them became
23 strong.

24 Take the case of the Jews. They were divided into so many tribes, and each tribe had a god called
25 either Baal or Moloch,

1 which in your Old Testament is translated as "the Lord". There was the Moloch of this state and that
2 state, of this mountain and that mountain, and there was the Moloch of the chest, who used to live in a chest.
3 This latter tribe became strong and conquered the surrounding tribes and became triumphant. So that
4 Moloch was proclaimed the greatest of all Molochs. "Thou art the Java [?] of the Molochs. Thou art the ruler
5 of all the Baals and Molochs." Yet the chest remained. So this idea was obtained from tribal gods.

6 There is the other theory of Spiritualism—that religion begins with the worship of ancestors. Ancestor
7 worship was among the Egyptians, among the Babylonians, among many other races—the Hindus, the
8 Christians. There is not one form of religion among which there has not been this ancestor worship in some
9 form or other.

10 Before that they thought that this body had a double inside it and that when this body dies the double
11 gets out and lives so long as this body exists. The double becomes very hungry or thirsty, wants food or
12 drink, and wants to enjoy the good things of this world. So he [the double] comes to get food; and if he does
13 not get it, he will injure even his own children. So long as the body is preserved the double will live.
14 Naturally the first attempt, as we see, was to preserve the body, mummify the body, so that the body will live
15 forever.

16 So with the Babylonians was this sort of spirit worship. Later on as the nations advanced, the cruel
17 forms died out and better forms remained. Some place was given to that which is called heaven, and they
18 placed food here so that it might reach the double there. Even now the pious Hindus must, one day a year at
19 least, place food for their ancestors. And the day they leave off [this habit] will be a sorry day for the
20 ancestors. So you also find this ancestor worship to be one cause of religion. There are in modern times
21 philosophers who advance the theory that this has been the root of all religions. There are others who
22 advance the theory that the root of all religions was the tribal assimilation of gods into one.

23 Among the Jews of the Old Testament you do not find any mention of soul. It is only in the Talmud that
24 it is found. They got it from the Alexandrians, and the Alexandrians from the

1 Hindus—just as the Talmud had [developed] later on the idea of transmigration of the soul. But the old
2 Jews had grand ideas of God. The God of the Jews developed into the Great God—the Omnipotent,
3 Omniscient, All-Merciful—and all this came to them from the Hindus, but not through the idea of the soul. So
4 Spiritualism could not have played any part in that, because how could the man who did not believe in any
5 soul after death have anything to do with Spiritualism?

6 On the other hand, in the oldest portion of the Vedas, there is very little of Spiritualism, if anything at
7 all. These Devas [of the Vedas] were not [related to Spiritualism]—although later on they became so; and this
8 idea of Someone behind them, of whom they were manifestations, is in the oldest parts.

9 Another idea is that when the body dies, the soul [which] is immortal remains beatified. The very oldest
10 Aryan literature—

11 whether German or Greek—has this idea of soul. The idea of soul has come from the Hindus.

12 Two people have given all the religion to the world—the Hindus and the Jews. But it is only with the
13 Hindus that the idea of soul comes at first, and that was shared by the Aryan races.

14 The peculiarity you find is that the Semitic races and the Egyptians try to preserve the dead bodies,
15 while the Aryans try to destroy them. The Greeks, the Germans, the Romans—your ancestors before they
16 became Christians—used to burn the dead. It was only when Charlemagne made you Christians with the
17 sword—and when you refused, [he] cut off a few hundred heads, and the rest jumped into the water—that
18 burying came here. You see at once the metaphysical significance of burning the dead. The burying of the
19 dead⁴⁶⁶ can only remain when there is no idea of the soul, and the body is all. At best there came the idea
20 later on that this very body will have another lease of life, after so many years—mummies will come out and
21 begin to walk the streets again.

22 But with the Aryans the idea was from the first that the soul is not the body, but would live on. There
23 are some old hymns in the Rig-Veda: when the bodies are burnt they say, "Take him gently, purify him, give
24 him a bright body, take him to the land

1 ⁴⁶⁶ ?

2 Preserving the dead by the burying of the body.
3

1 where the fathers live—where there is no more sorrow and where there is joy forever".⁴⁶⁷

2 It is curious that though in modern times many hideous and cruel forms of religion crept into India,
3 there is one peculiar idea that divides the Aryan from all other races of the world: that their religion, in the
4 Hindu form, accepted this Indra as one [with the Ultimate Reality]. Three-quarters of the mythology of the
5 Vedas is the same as that of the Greeks; only the old gods became saints in the new religion. But they were
6 originally the gods of the Samhitas.

7 One other peculiarity we remark—that it is a cheerful, joyful, at times almost hilarious religion; there is
8 not a bit of pessimism in it. The earth is beautiful, the heavens are beautiful, life is immortal. Even after
9 death they get a still more beautiful body, which has none of the imperfections of this body, and they go to
10 live with the gods and enjoy heaven forever.

11 On the other hand, with the Semitic races, the very first inception of religion was one of horror. A man
12 crouched in his little house for fear. All round his house were those doubles. The family ancestors of the Jews
13 were there, ready to pounce upon anybody and tear him to pieces if bloody sacrifices were not given to them.
14 Even when you find that this [double] idea coagulated into one—"Thou art the Elohim of the Jews, Thou art
15 the Elo[him] of the [Babylonians?]"⁴⁶⁸—even then the idea of sacrifice remained.

16 The idea of sacrifice in India was not with this first portion. But in the next portion we find the same
17 idea in India too, in the Brahmanas. The idea of sacrifice was originally simply giving food [to the gods], but
18 gradually it was raised and raised until it became a sacrifice to God. Philosophy came in to mystify it still
19 more and to spin webs of logic round it. Bloody sacrifices came into vogue. Somewhere we read that three
20 hundred bullocks have been roasted, or the gods are smelling the sacrifices and becoming very glad. Then all
21 sorts of mystical notions got about—how the sacrifice was to be made in the form of a tri-

1 ⁴⁶⁷ ? Rig-Veda 10.16.4.

2
3 ⁴⁶⁸ ? The square brackets in this paragraph mark illegible portions of Mr. Goodwin's original typescript.
4

1 angle or a square, a triangle within a square, a pentagon, and all sorts of figures. But the great benefit
2 was the evolution of geometry. When they had to make all these figures—and it was laid down strictly how
3 many bricks should be used, and how they should be laid, and how big they should be—naturally geometry
4 came [into being]. The Egyptians evolved geometry [by] their [irrigation]—[they] made canals to take the Nile
5 water inside their fields—and the Hindus, by their altars.

6 Now there is another particular difference between the idea of sacrifice in India and [that] of the Jews.
7 The real meaning of sacrifice is worship, a form of worship by oblations. At first it was simply giving food to
8 the bright ones, or the higher beings. They had gross food just as we have. Later on philosophy stepped in
9 and the idea came that they, being higher beings, could not eat the same food as we do. Their bodies are
10 made of finer particles. Our bodies cannot pass through a wall; theirs find no resistance in gross material. As
11 such, they cannot be expected to eat in the same gross way as we do.

12
13
14 [Some parts of the transcription of the remaining portion of this lecture, recorded by Mr. J. J. Goodwin,
15 were found in a severely damaged condition. Hence we have reproduced below only the legible fragments as
16 they appeared in the original.]

17
18 . . . "O Indra, I offer you this oblation. O Agni, I offer you this oblation." The answer is that these
19 words have a mystical power in Sanskrit. And when a man, in a certain state of mind, pronounces these
20 words, he sets in motion a set of psychological causes, and these causes produce a certain effect. That is the
21 evolution of thought.

22 To make it clearer, suppose a man was childless and wanted a son. He worshipped Indra, and if he got
23 a son he said Indra gave him the son. Later on they said Indra did not exist. Who, then, gave him the son?
24 The whole thing is a matter of cause and effect. . . .

25 . . . They said it was not giving the gods food, but simply laying my sins upon the head of another
26 victim. "My sins go upon the goat's head, and, if the goat be killed, my sins are for-

1 given." That idea of sacrifice of the Jews never entered India, and perhaps that has saved us many a
2 pang, many a trouble.

3 Human nature is selfish, and the vast majority of men and women weak; and to teach vicarious
4 sacrifice makes us more and more weak. Every child is taught that he is nothing until the poor fellow
5 becomes hypnotized into nothing. He goes in search of somebody to cling onto, and never thinks of clinging
6 to himself. . . .⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁹ ? *Vide* Complete Works, VIII: 209 for similar ideas.

1 Swami Vivekananda delivered scores of lectures and classes during his relatively short ministry.
2 Unfortunately the Swami was not always accompanied by a professional stenographer who could keep pace
3 with the exceptional speed of his extempore deliveries. However, a few students managed to take notes of
4 some lectures and classes, which are today the only available records of works that would otherwise have
5 been lost to the world.

6 The original quotation marks of the note-takers have been reproduced.

7 __Publisher

1
2 the religion of india⁴⁷⁰
3

4 These notes of daily morning classes delivered at Greenacre, Maine, in the summer of 1894 and
5 recorded by Miss Emma Thursby were discovered among Miss Emma Thursby's papers at the New-York
6 Historical Society. They have been lightly edited in order to conform to the style of the Complete Works.
7

8 Notes taken miscellaneously from discourses given by Swami Vivekananda under the "Pine" at
9 Greenacre in July and August 1894.

10 The name of Swami's master was Ramakrishna Paramahansa. The signification of *Vivekananda* is
11 conscious bliss.

12 Meditation is a sort of prayer and prayer is meditation. The highest meditation is to think of nothing. If
13 you can remain one moment without thought, great power will come. The whole secret of knowledge is
14 concentration. Soul best develops itself by loving God with all the heart. Soul is the thinking principle in man,
15 of which mind is a function. Soul is only the conduit from Spirit to mind.

16 All souls are playing, some consciously, some unconsciously. Religion is learning to play consciously.

17 The Guru is your own higher Self.

18 Seek the highest, always the highest, for in the highest is eternal bliss. If I am to hunt, I will hunt the
19 rhinoceros. If I am to rob, I will rob the treasury of the king. Seek the highest.

20 *[Some of the following passages are the Swami's free translations from Indian scriptures, including the*
21 *Avadhuta-Gitâ of Dattâtreyâ.]*
22

23 If you know you are bound [you are bound]; if you know you are free, you are free. My mind was never
24 bound by yearnings of this world; for like the eternal blue sky, I am

1 ⁴⁷⁰ ? *New Discoveries*, Vol. 2, pp. 145-49, 155-56.
2

1 the essence of Knowledge, of Existence and of Bliss. Why weepest thou, Brother? Neither death nor
2 disease for thee. Why weepest thou, Brother? Neither misery nor misfortune for thee. Why weepest thou,
3 Brother? Neither change nor death was predicated of thee. Thou Art Existence Absolute.

4 I know what God is; I cannot speak [of] Him to you. I know not [what] God is; how can I speak [of] Him
5 to you? But seest not thou, my brother, that thou wert He, thou wert He? Why go seeking God here and
6 there? Seek not, and that is God. Be your own Self–One that cannot be confessed or described, One that can
7 be perceived in our heart of hearts. One beyond all compare, beyond limit, unchangeable like the blue sky.
8 Oh! learn the All Holy One. Seek for nothing else.

9 Where changes of nature cannot reach, thought beyond all thought, unchangeable, immovable, whom
10 all books declare, all sages worship, O Holy One! Seek for nothing else.

11 Beyond compare, Infinite Oneness–no comparison is possible. Water above, water beneath, water on
12 the right, water on the left. No wave on that water, no ripple. All silence, all eternal bliss. Such will come to
13 thy heart. Seek for nothing else. Thou art our father, our mother, our dear friend. Thou bearest the burden of
14 this world. Help us to bear the burden of our lives. Thou art our friend, our lover, our husband. Thou art
15 ourselves.

16 Four sorts of people worship Me. Some want the delights of the physical world. Some want money,
17 some want religion. Some worship Me because they love Me.

19 Real love is love for love's sake. I do not ask health or money or life or salvation. Send me to a
20 thousand hells, but let me love Thee for love's sake. Mirâ Bâi, the great queen, taught the doctrine of love for
21 love's sake.

22 Our present consciousness is only a little bit of an infinite sea of mind. Do not be limited to this
23 consciousness.

24 Three great things [are] to be desired to develop the soul: First, human birth; second, thirst for the
25 highest; third, to find one who has reached the highest—a Mahâtmâ, one whose mind, word and deed are full
26 of the nectar of virtue, whose only plea-

1 sure is in doing good to the universe, who looks upon others' virtues, be they only as a mustard seed,
2 even as though they were a mountain, thus expanding his own self and helping others to expand. Thus is the
3 Mahatma.

4 The word *Yoga* is the root of which our word *yoke* is a derivation—meaning "to join"—and Yoga means
5 "joining ourselves with God"—joining me with my real Self.

6 All actions now involuntary or automatic were once voluntary, and our first step is to gain a knowledge
7 of the automatic actions—the real idea being to revivify and make voluntary all automatic actions, to bring
8 them into consciousness. Many Yogis can control the actions of their hearts.

9 To go back into consciousness and bring out things we have forgotten is ordinary power, but this can
10 be heightened. All knowledge—all that—can be brought out of the inner consciousness, and to do this is Yoga.
11 The majority of actions and thoughts is automatic, or acting behind consciousness. The seat of automatic
12 action is in the medulla oblongata and down the spinal cord.

13 The question is, how to find our way back to our inner consciousness. We have come out through spirit,
14 soul, mind, and body, and now we must go back from body to spirit. First, get hold of the air [breath], then
15 the nervous system, then the mind, then the Atman, or spirit. But in this effort we must be perfectly sincere
16 in desiring the highest.

17 The law of laws is concentration. First, concentrate all the nerve energies and all power lodged in the
18 cells of the body into one force and direct it at will. Then bring the mind, which is thinner matter, into one
19 center. The mind has layer after layer. When the nerve force concentrated is made to pass through the spinal
20 column, one layer of the mind is open. When it is concentrated in one bone [plexus, or "lotus"], another part
21 of the world is open. So from world to world it goes until it touches the pineal gland in the center of the
22 brain. This is the seat of conservation of potential energy, the source of both activity and passivity.

23 Start with the idea that we can finish all experience in this world, in this incarnation. We must aim to
24 become perfect in this life, this very moment. Success only comes to that life

1 amongst men who wants to do this, this very moment. It is acquired by him who says, "Faith, I wait
2 upon faith come what may". Therefore, go on knowing you are to finish this very moment. Struggle hard and
3 then if you do not succeed, you are not to blame. Let the world praise or blame you. Let all the wealth of the
4 earth come to your feet, or let you be made the poorest on earth. Let death come this moment or hundreds of
5 years hence. Swerve not from the path you have taken. All good thoughts are immortal and go to make
6 Buddhas and Christs.

7 Law is simply a means of [your] expression [of] various phenomena brought into your mind. Law is
8 your method of grasping material phenomena and bringing them into unity. All law is finding unity in variety.
9 The only method of knowledge is concentration on the physical, mental, and spiritual planes; and
10 concentrating the powers of the mind to discover one in many, is what is called knowledge.

11 Everything that makes for unity is moral, everything that makes for diversity is immoral. Know the One
12 without a second, that is perfection. The One who manifests in all is the basis of the universe; and all
13 religion, all knowledge, must come to this point.

14
15
16 [The following are some of the disconnected notes taken by Miss Emma Thursby during the last of the
17 Swami's Greenacre classes, delivered Sunday morning, August 12, 1894.]

18
19 I am Existence Absolute Kundalini

20 Bliss Absolute Circle mother

21 I am He, Shivoham

22 I am He, Shivoham

23 He is the learned man who sees that every man's property is nothing. Every woman his Mother.

24 Shânti—peace—

26 —

1 We meditate on the Glory of Hrim⁴⁷¹
2 Mother
3 Buddhistic Prayer
4 I bow to all the saint[s] on Earth
5 I bow down to the founders of Religion
6 to all holy men and women
7 Prophets of Religion
8 who have been on Earth
9 Hindu prayer
10 I meditate on the Glory of the producer of this Universe
11 may He enlighten our minds.
12 christ's message to the world⁴⁷²
13

14 [From Mr. Frank Rhodehamel's notes of a lecture delivered in
15 San Francisco, California, on March 11, 1900]
16

17 Everything progresses in waves. The march of civilization, the progression of worlds, is in waves. All
18 human activities likewise progress in waves—art, literature, science, religion.

19 Great waves succeed each other, and between these great waves is a quiet, a calm, a period of rest, a
20 period of recuperation.

21 All manifest life seems to require a period of sleep, of calm, in which to gain added strength, renewed
22 vigour, for the next manifestation, or awakening to activity. Thus is the march of all progress, of all manifest

1 ⁴⁷¹ ?

2 A Bija Mantra, or seed word, for the Divine Mother.

3
4 ⁴⁷² ?

5 *New Discoveries*, Vol. 5, p. 379.
6

1 life—in waves, successive waves, [of] activity and repose. Waves succeed each other in an endless chain of
2 progression.

3 Religion, like everything else, progresses in waves; and at the summit of each great wave stands an
4 illumined soul, a mighty spiritual leader and teacher of men. Such a one was Jesus of Nazareth.

1 mohammed's message to the world⁴⁷³

2 [Excerpts of Ida Ansell's first transcript of Swami Vivekananda's

3 San Francisco lecture delivered Sunday, March 25, 1900]

4 Mohammed

5 [After stating that he would "take Mohammed and bring out the particular work of the great Arabian
6 prophet", Swami Viveka-nanda continued his lecture.]

7
8 Each great messenger not only creates a new order of things, but is himself the creation of a certain
9 order of things. There is no such thing as an independent, active cause. All causes are cause and effect in
10 turn. Father is father and son in turn. Mother is mother and daughter in turn. It is necessary to understand
11 the surroundings and circumstances into which they [the great messengers] come. . . .

12 This is the peculiarity of civilization. One wave of a race will go from its birthplace to a distant land and
13 make a wonderful civilization. The rest will be left in barbarism. The Hindus came into India and the tribes of
14 Central Asia were left in bar-barism. Others came to Asia Minor and Europe. Then, you remember the
15 coming out of Egypt of the Israelites. Their home was the Arabian desert. Out of that springs a new work.

16 . . . All civilizations grow that way. A certain race becomes civilized. Then comes a nomad race.
17 Nomads are always ready to fight. They come and conquer a race. They bring better blood, stronger
18 physiques. They take up the mind of the conquered race and add that to their body and push civilization still
19 further. One race becomes cultured and civilized until the body is worn out. Then like a whirlwind comes a
20 race strong in the physical, and they take up the arts and the sciences and the mind, and push civilization
21 further. This must be. Otherwise the world would not be.

22 * * * *

23 The moment a great man rises, they build a beautiful [mythology] around him. Science and truth is all
24 the religion

1 ⁴⁷³ ?

2 *New Discoveries*, Vol. 5, pp. 401-3.

3 Cf. "Mohammed", Complete Works, I: 481-84.

1 that exists. Truth is more beautiful than any mythology in the world. . . .

2 The old Greeks had disappeared already, the whole nation [lay] under the feet of the Romans who
3 were learning their science and art. The Roman was a barbarian, a conquering man. He had no eye for
4 poetry or art. He knew how to rule and how to get everything centralized into that system of Rome and to
5 enjoy that. That was sweet. And that Roman Empire is gone, destroyed by all sorts of difficulties, luxury, a
6 new foreign religion, and all that. Christianity had been already six hundred years in the Roman Empire. . . .

7 Whenever a new religion tries to force itself upon another race, it succeeds if the race is uncultured. If
8 it [the race] is cultured, it will destroy the [religion]. . . . The Roman Empire was a case in point, and the
9 Persian people saw that. Christianity was another thing with the barbarians in the north. [But] the
10 Christianity of the Roman Empire was a mixture of everything, something from Persia, from the Jews, from
11 India, from Greece, everything.

12 * * * *

13 The race is always killed by [war]. War takes away the best men, gets them killed, and the cowards are
14 left at home. Thus comes the degeneration of the race. . . . Men became small. Why? All the great men
15 became [warriors]. That is how war kills races, takes their best into the battlefields.

16 Then the monasteries. They all went to the desert, to the caves for meditation. The monasteries
17 gradually became the centres of wealth and luxury. . . .

18 The Anglo-Saxon race would not be Anglo-Saxon but for these monasteries. Every weak man was
19 worse than a slave.

20 . . . In that state of chaos these monasteries were centres of light and protection.

21 Where [cultures] differ very much they do not quarrel. All these warring, jarring elements [were
22 originally] all one.

23 In the midst of all this chaos was born the prophet. . . .

24
25 [This concluded the first part of the Swami's lecture. Vide "Mohammed", Complete Works, *Vol. I*, for
26 the remainder of the lecture.]

class lessons in Meditation
by Swami Vivekananda⁴⁷⁴

[Mr. Frank Rhodehamel's notes of a class delivered in San Francisco, California, on Monday, March 26, 1900]

The first point is the position. Sit with the spine perfectly free, with the weight resting on the hips. The next step is breathing. Breathe in the left nostril and out the right. Fill the lungs full and eject *all* the breath. Clear the lungs of all impure air. Breathe full and deep. The next thing is to think of the body as luminous, filled with light. The next thing is to concentrate on the base of the spine, not from the outside, but look down the spinal column inside to the base of the spine.

the gita⁴⁷⁵

[Mr. Frank Rhodehamel's notes of a *Bhagavad-Gitâ* class delivered Thursday, May 24, 1900, in San Francisco, California]

The Gitâ is the gist of the Vedas. It is not our Bible; the Upanishads are our Bible. It [the Gita] is the gist of the Upanishads and harmonizes the many contradictory parts of the Upanishads.

The Vedas are divided into two portions—the work portion and the knowledge portion. The work portion contains ceremonials, rules as to eating, living, doing charitable work, etc. The knowledge came afterwards and was enunciated by kings.

The work portion was exclusively in the hands of the priests and pertained entirely to the sense life. It taught to do good works that one might go to heaven and enjoy eternal happiness. Anything, in fact, that one might want could be provided for him by the work or ceremonials. It provided for all classes of

⁴⁷⁴ ?

New Discoveries, Vol. 6, p. 10.

⁴⁷⁵ ? Ibid., pp. 175-76.

1 people good and bad. Nothing could be obtained through the ceremonials except by the intercession of
2 the priests. So if one wanted anything, even if it was to have an enemy killed, all he had to do was to pay the
3 priest; and the priest through these ceremonials would procure the desired results. It was therefore in the
4 interests of the priests that the ceremonial portion of the Vedas should be preserved. By it they had their
5 living. They consequently did all in their power to preserve that portion intact. Many of these ceremonials
6 were very complicated, and it took years to perform some of them.

7 The knowledge portion came afterwards and was promulgated exclusively by kings. It was called the
8 Knowledge of Kings. The great kings had no use for the work portion with all its frauds and superstitions and
9 did all in their power to destroy it. This knowledge consisted of a knowledge of God, the soul, the universe,
10 etc. These kings had no use for the ceremonials of the priests, their magical works, etc. They pronounced it
11 all humbug; and when the priests came to them for gifts, they questioned the priests about God, the soul,
12 etc., and as the priests could not answer such questions they were sent away. The priests went back to their
13 fathers to enquire about the things the kings asked them, but could learn nothing from them, so they came
14 back again to the kings and became their disciples. Very little of the ceremonials are followed today. They
15 have been mostly done away with, and only a few of the more simple ones are followed today.

16 Then in the Upanishads there is the doctrine of Karma. Karma is the law of causation applied to
17 conduct. According to this doctrine we must work forever, and the only way to get rid of pain is to do good
18 works and thus to enjoy the good effects; and after living a life of good works, die and go to heaven and live
19 forever in happiness. Even in heaven we could not be free from Karma, only it would be good Karma, not
20 bad.

21 The philosophical portion denounces all work however good, and all pleasure, as loving and kissing
22 wife, husband or children, as useless. According to this doctrine all good works and pleasures are nothing
23 but foolishness and in their very nature impermanent. "All this must come to an end sometime, so end it now;
24 it is vain." So says the philosophical portion of the

1 Upanishads. It claims all the pain in the world is caused by ignorance, therefore the cure is knowledge.

2 This idea of one being held down fast by past Karma, or work, is all nonsense. No matter how dense
3 one may be, or how bad, one ray of light will dissipate it all. A bale of cotton, however large, will be utterly
4 destroyed by a spark. If a room has been dark for untold ages, a lamp will end it all. So with each soul,
5 however benighted he may be, he is not absolutely bound down by his past Karma to work for ages to come.
6 "One ray of Divine Light will free him, reveal to him his true nature."

7 Well, the Gita harmonizes all these conflicting doctrines. As to Krishna, whether or not he ever lived, I
8 do not know. "A great many stories are told of him, but I do not believe them."

9 "I doubt very much that he ever lived and think it would be a good thing if he never did. There would
10 have been one less god in the world."

11 The Gitâ—I⁴⁷⁶

12
13 [Mr. Frank Rhodehamel's notes of a *Bhagavad-Gitâ* lecture de-
14 livered Saturday, May 26, 1900, in San Francisco, California]

15
16 The Gitâ is to the Hindus what the New Testament is to the Christians. It is about five thousand years
17 old, and the day of religious celebrations with the Hindus is the anniversary of the Battle of Kurukshetra
18 about five thousand years ago. As I said, the Vedas are divided into two great divisions, the philosophical and
19 the Karmakânda, or work portion.

20 Between the kings, who promulgated the philosophic portion, and the priests a great conflict arose.
21 The priests had the people on their side because they had all the utility which appealed to the popular mind.
22 The kings had all the spirituality and none of the economic element; but as they were powerful and the rulers
23 of the nation, the struggle was a hard and bitter

1 ⁴⁷⁶ ? *New Discoveries*, Vol. 6, pp. 205-7.

2 Cf. Ida Ansell's notes of "The Gita I", *Complete Works*, I: 446-58.

1 one. The kings gradually gained a little ground, but their ideas were too elevated for the masses, so the
2 ceremonial, or work portion, always had the mass of the people.

3 Always remember this, that whenever a religious system gains ground with the people at large, it has a
4 strong economic side to it. It is the economic side of a religion that finds lodgement with the people at large,
5 and never its spiritual, or philosophic, side. If you should preach the grandest philosophy in the streets for a
6 year, you would not have a handful of followers. But you could preach the most arrant nonsense, and if it had
7 an economic element, you would have the whole people with you.

8 None knows by whom the Vedas were written; they are so ancient. According to the orthodox Hindus,
9 the Vedas are not the written words at all, but they consist of the words themselves orally spoken with the
10 exact enunciation and intonation. This vast mass of religion has been written and consists of thousands upon
11 thousands of volumes. Anyone who knows the precise pronunciation and intonation knows the Vedas, and no
12 one else. In ancient times certain royal families were the custodians of certain parts of the Vedas. The head
13 of the family could repeat every word of every volume he had, without missing a word or an intonation.
14 These men had giant intellects, wonderful memories.

15 The strictly orthodox believers in the Vedas, the Karmakanda, did not believe in God, the soul or
16 anything of the sort, but that we as we are were the only beings in the universe, material or spiritual. When
17 they were asked what the many allusions to God in the Vedas mean, they say that they mean nothing at all;
18 that the words properly articulated have a magical power, a power to create certain results. Aside from that
19 they have no meaning.

20 Whenever you suppress a thought, you simply press it down out of sight in a coil, like a spring, only to
21 spring out again at a moment's notice with all the pent up force as the result of the suppression, and do in a
22 few moments what it would have done in a much longer period.

23 Every ounce of pleasure brings its pound of pain. It is the same energy that at one time manifests itself
24 as pleasure and at another time as pain. As soon as one set of sensations stops,

1 another begins. But in some cases, in more advanced persons, one may have two, yes, or even a
2 hundred different thoughts enter into active operation at the same time. When one thought is suppressed, it
3 is merely coiled up ready to spring forth with pent up fury at any time.

4 "Mind is of its own nature. Mind activity means creation. The thought is followed by the word, and the
5 word by the form. All of this creating will have to stop, both mental and physical, before the mind can reflect
6 the soul."

7 "My old master⁴⁷⁷ could not write his own name without making a mistake. He made three mistakes in
8 spelling, in writing his own name."

9 "Yet that is the kind of man at whose feet I sat."

10 "You will break the law of nature but once, and it will be the last time. Nature will then be nothing to
11 you."

12 the Gitâ—iii⁴⁷⁸

13 [Mr. Frank Rhodehamel's notes of the *Bhagavad-Gitâ* lecture delivered Tuesday, May 29, 1900, in San
14 Francisco, California]

15 1. "If you know everything, disturb not the childlike faith of the innocent."

16 2. "Religion is the realization of Spirit as Spirit. Not spirit as matter."

17 3. "You are spirit. Realize yourselves as spirit. Do it any way you can."

18 4. "Religion is a growth": each one must experience it himself.

19 5. "Everyone thinks 'my method is the best'. That is so, but it is the best for you."

20 6. "Spirit must stand revealed as spirit."

1 ⁴⁷⁷ ?

2 Shri Ramakrishna.

3
4 ⁴⁷⁸ ? *New Discoveries*, Vol. 6, pp. 213-16.

5 Cf. Ida Ansell's notes of "The Gita III", *Complete Works*, I: 467-80.

6

- 1 7. "There never was a time when spirit could be identified with matter."
2 8. "What is real in nature is the spirit."
3 9. "Action is in nature."
4 10. "'In the beginning there was That Existence. He looked and everything was created.'"
5 11. "Everyone works according to his own nature."
6 12. "You are not bound by law. That is in your nature. The mind is in nature and is bound by law."
7 13. "If you want to be religious, keep out of religious arguments."
8 14. "Governments, societies, etc., are evils."
9 "All societies are based on bad generalizations."
10 "A law is that which cannot be broken."
11 15. "Better never love, if that love makes us hate others."
12 16. "The sign of death is weakness; the sign of life is strength."
13
14

15 [The following numbered paragraphs are correlated with the preceding numbered sentences.]
16

17 4. The Christian believes that Jesus Christ died to save him. With you it is belief in a doctrine, and this
18 belief constitutes your salvation. With us, doctrine has nothing whatever to do with salvation. Each one may
19 believe in whatever doctrine he likes or in no doctrine. With us realization is religion, not doctrine. What
20 difference does it make to you whether Jesus Christ lived at a certain time? What has it to do with you that
21 Moses saw God in a burning bush? The fact that Moses saw God in the burning bush does not constitute your
22 seeing Him, does it? If it does, then the fact that Moses ate is enough for you; you ought to stop eating. One
23 is just as sensible as the other. Records of great spiritual men of the past do us no good whatever except that
24 they urge us onward to do the same, to experience religion ourselves. Whatever Christ or Moses or anybody
25 else did does not help us in the least except to urge us on.

26 5. Each one has a special nature peculiar to himself which he must follow and through which he will
27 find his way to free-

1 dom. Your teacher should be able to tell you what your particular path in nature is and to put you in it.
2 He should know by your face where you belong and should be able to indicate it to you. We should never try
3 to follow another's path for that is his way, not yours. When that path is found, you have nothing to do but
4 fold your arms and the tide will carry you to freedom. Therefore when you find it, never swerve from it. Your
5 way is the best for you, but that is no sign it is the best for another.

6 6. The truly spiritual see spirit as spirit, not as matter. Spirit as such can never become matter, though
7 matter is spirit at a low rate of vibration. It is spirit that makes nature move; it is the Reality in nature, so
8 action is in nature but not in the spirit. Spirit is always the same, changeless, eternal. Spirit and matter are
9 in reality the same, but spirit, as such, never becomes matter, and matter, as such, never becomes spirit.
10 Matter, as such, never becomes spirit as such, for it is simply a mode of spirit, or spirit at a low rate of
11 vibration. You take food and it becomes mind, and mind in turn becomes the body. Thus mind and body,
12 spirit and matter are distinct though either may give place to the other; but they are not to be identified.

13 8. "What is real in nature is the Spirit." The spirit is the life in all action in nature. It is the spirit that
14 gives nature its reality and power of action.

15 9. "Action is in nature." "The spirit never acts. Why should it?" It merely is, and that is sufficient. It is
16 pure existence absolute and has no need of action.

17 12. All nature is bound by law, the law of its own action; and this law can never be broken. If you could
18 break a law of nature, all nature would come to an end in an instant. There would be no more nature. He
19 who attains freedom breaks the law of nature and for him nature fades away and has no more power over
20 him. Each one will break the law but once and forever and that will end his trouble with nature. "You are not
21 bound by law. That is in your nature. The mind is in nature and is bound by law."

22 14. The moment you form yourselves into an organization, you begin to hate everybody outside of that
23 organization. When you join an organization you are putting bonds upon yourself, you are limiting your own
24 freedom. Why should you form your-

1 selves into an order having rules and regulations, thus limiting every one as to his independent action?
2 If one breaks a law of an order or society he is hated by the rest. What right has anyone to lay down rules
3 and laws governing others? Such laws are not laws at all. If it were a law it could not be broken. The fact
4 that these so-called laws are broken shows clearly they are not laws.

5 gita class⁴⁷⁹

6 [Sister Nivedita's notes of a *New York Bhagavad-Gitâ* class, recorded in a June 16, 1900 letter to Miss
7 Josephine MacLeod]

8 This morning the lesson on the Gitâ was grand. It began with a long talk on the fact that the highest
9 ideals are not for all. Non-resistance is *not* for the man who thinks the replacing of the maggot in the wound
10 by the leprous saint with "Eat, Brother!" disgusting and horrible. Non-resistance is practised by a mother's
11 love towards an angry child. It is a travesty in the mouth of a coward, or in the face of a lion.

12 Let us be true. Nine-tenths of our life's energy is spent in trying to make people *think* us that which we
13 are not. That energy would be more rightly spent in *becoming* that which we would like to be. And so it
14 went—beginning with the salutation to an incarnation:

15 Salutation to thee—the Guru of the universe,

16 Whose footstool is worshipped by the gods.

17 Thou one unbroken Soul,

18 Physician of the world's diseases.

19 Guru of even the gods,

20 To thee our salutation.

21 Thee we salute. Thee we salute. Thee we salute.

22 In the Indian tones—by Swami himself.

23 There was an implication throughout the talk that Christ and Buddha were inferior to Krishna—in the
24 grasp of problems—

25 inasmuch as they preached the highest ethics as a world path,

1 ⁴⁷⁹ ? *New Discoveries*, Vol. 6, pp. 275-76.
2

1 whereas Krishna saw the right of the *whole*, in all its parts—to its own differing ideals.
2 remarks from various lectures⁴⁸⁰

3 [Mr. Frank Rhodehamel's random lecture notes, most of which seem to pertain to chapter two of the
4 *Bhagavad-Gitâ*]

5 "Spirituality can never be attained until materiality is gone."

6 The first discourse in the *Gitâ* can be taken allegorically.

7 "The Vedas only teach of things in nature, only teach of nature."

8 We are always letting sentiment usurp the place of duty, and flattering ourselves that we are acting in
9 response to true love.

10 We must get beyond emotionalism if we would be able to renounce. Emotion belongs to the animals.
11 They are creatures of emotion entirely.

12 It is not sacrifice of a high order to die for one's young. The animals do that, and just as readily as any
13 human mother ever did. It is no sign of real love to do that; merely blind emotion.

14 We are forever trying to make our weakness look like strength, our sentiment like love, our cowardice
15 like courage, etc.

16 Say to your soul in regard to vanities, weaknesses, etc., "This does not befit thee. This does not befit
17 thee".

⁴⁸⁰ ? *New Discoveries*, Vol. 6, pp. 209-10.

- 1
- 2 writings: prose and poems
- 3 (Original and translated)

1
2 THE ETHER⁴⁸¹
3

4 This article first appeared anonymously in the February 1895 issue of the New York Medical Times, a
5 prestigious monthly medical journal founded and edited by Dr. Egbert Guernsey.
6

7 Classification or grouping of phenomena by their similarities is the first step in scientific
8 knowledge—perhaps it is all. An organized grouping, revealing to us a similarity running through the whole
9 group, and a conviction that under similar circumstances the group will arrange itself in the same form—

10 stretched over all time, past, present and future—is what we call law.

11 This finding of unity in variety is really what we call knowledge. These different groups of similars are
12 stowed away in the pigeon-holes of the mind, and when a new fact comes before us we begin to search for a
13 similar group already existing in one of the pigeon-holes of the mind. If we succeed in finding one
14 ready-made, we take the newcomer in immediately. If not, we either reject the new fact, or wait till we find
15 more of his kind, and form a new place for the group.

16 Facts which are extraordinary thus disturb us; but and when we find many like them, they cease to
17 disturb, even when our knowledge about their cause remains the same as before.

18 The ordinary experiences of our lives are no less wonderful than any miracles recorded in any sacred
19 book of the world; nor are we any more enlightened as to the cause of these ordinary experiences than of the
20 so-called miracles. But the miraculous is "extraordinary", and the everyday experience is "ordinary". The
21 "extraordinary" startles the mind, the "ordinary" satisfies.

22 The field of knowledge is so varied, and the more the difference is from the centre, the more widely the
23 radii diverge.

1 ⁴⁸¹ ? Reprinted in *New Discoveries*, Vol. 3, pp. 55-59.

2 Because the Swami's original handwritten article is unavailable, we have made the spelling, punctuation and grammar of his
3 published version conform to the style of the *Complete Works*.—Publisher.
4

1 At the start the different sciences were thought to have no connection whatever with each other; but
2 as more and more knowledge comes in—that is, the more and more we come nearer the centre—the radii are
3 converging more and more, and it seems that they are on the eve of finding a common centre. Will they ever
4 find it?

5 The study of the mind was, above all, the science to which the sages of India and Greece had directed
6 their attention. All religions are the outcome of the study of the inner man. Here we find the attempt at
7 finding the unity, and in the science of religion, as taking its stand upon general and massive propositions,
8 we find the boldest and the most vigorous manifestation of this tendency at finding the unity.

9 Some religions could not solve the problem beyond the finding of a duality of causes, one good, the
10 other evil. Others went as far as finding an intelligent personal cause, a few went still further beyond
11 intellect, beyond personality, and found an infinite being.

12 In those, and only those systems which dared to transcend beyond the personality of a limited human
13 consciousness, we find also an attempt to resolve all physical phenomena into unity.

14 The result was the "Akâsha" of the Hindus and the "Ether" of the Greeks.

15 This "Akasha" was, after the mind, the first material manifestation, said the Hindu sages, and out of
16 this "Akasha" all this has been evolved.

17 History repeats itself; and again during the latter part of the nineteenth century, the same theory is
18 coming with more vigour and fuller light.

19 It is being proved more clearly than ever that as there is a co-relation of physical forces there is also a
20 co-relation of different [branches of] knowledge, and that behind all these general groups there is a unity of
21 knowledge.

22 It was shown by Newton⁴⁸² that if light consisted of material particles projected from luminous bodies,
23 they must move faster

1 482 ?

2 Isaac Newton, 1642-1727.
3

1 in solids and liquids than in air, in order that the laws of refraction might be satisfied.

2 Huyghens,⁴⁸³ on the other hand, showed that to account for the same laws on the supposition that light
3 consisted in the undulating motion of an elastic medium, it must move more slowly in solids and fluids than in
4 gases. Fizeau⁴⁸⁴ and Foucault⁴⁸⁵ found Huyghens's predictions correct.

5 Light, then, consists in the vibrating motion of a medium, which must, of course, fill all space. This is
6 called the ether.

7 In the fact that the theory of a cosmic ether explains fully all the phenomena of radiation, refraction,
8 diffraction and polarization of light is the strongest argument in favour of the theory.

9 Of late, gravitation, molecular action, magnetic, electric, and electro-dynamic attractions and
10 repulsions have thus been explained.

11 Sensible and latent heat, electricity and magnetism themselves have been of late *almost* satisfactorily
12 explained by the theory of the all-pervading ether.

13 Zöllner,⁴⁸⁶ however, basing his calculations upon the data supplied by the researches of Wilhelm
14 Weber,⁴⁸⁷ thinks that the transmission of life force between the heavenly bodies is effected both ways, by the
15 undulation of a medium and by the actual evidence of particles.

16
17 Weber found that the molecules, the smallest particles of bodies, were composed of yet smaller
18 particles, which he called the electric particles, and which in the molecules are in a constant circular motion.
19 These electric particles are partly positive, partly negative.

1 483 ?

2 Christian Huyghens, 1629-1695.

3
4 484 ? Armand Hippolyte Louis Fizeau, 1819-1896.

5
6 485 ? Jean Bernard Léon Foucault, 1819-1868.

7
8 486 ?

9 Johann K. F. Zöllner, 1834-1882.

10
11 487 ?

12 Wilhelm Eduard Weber, 1804-1891.

13

1 Those of the same electricity repulse those of different electricity; attracting each other, each molecule
2 contains the

1 same amount of electric particles, with a small surplus of either positive or negative quickly changing
2 the balance.

3 Upon this Zöllner builds these propositions:

4 (1) The molecules are composed of a very great number of particles—the so-called electric particles,
5 which are in constant circular motion around each other within the molecule.

6 (2) If the inner motion of a molecule increases over a certain limit, then electric particles are emitted.
7 They then travel from one heavenly body through space until they reach another heavenly body, where they
8 are either reflected or absorbed by other molecules.

9 (3) The electric particles thus traversing space are the ether of the physicist.

10 (4) These ether particles have a twofold motion: first, their proper motion; second, an undulatory
11 motion, for which they receive the impulse from the ether particles rotating in the molecules.

12 (5) The motion of the smallest particles corresponds to that of the heavenly bodies.

13 The corollary is:

14 The law of attraction which holds good for the heavenly bodies also holds good for the smallest
15 particles.

16 Under these suppositions, that which we call space is really filled with electric particles, or ether.

17 Zöllner also found the following interesting calculation for the electric atoms:

18 Velocity: 50,143 geographical miles per second.

19 Amount of ether particles in a water molecule: 42,000 million.

20 Distance from each other: 0.0032 millimeter.

21
22 So far as it goes, then, the theory of a universal cosmic ether is the best at hand to explain the various
23 phenomena of nature.

24 As far as it goes, the theory that this ether consists of particles, electric or otherwise, is also very
25 valuable. But on all suppositions, there must be space between two particles of ether, however small; and
26 what fills this inter-ethereal space? If par-

1 ticles still finer, we require still more fine ethereal particles to fill up the vacuum between every two of
2 them, and so on.

3 Thus the theory of ether, or material particles in space, though accounting for the phenomena in
4 space, cannot account for space itself.

5 And thus we are forced to find that the ether which comprehends the molecules explains the molecular
6 phenomena, but itself cannot explain space because we cannot but think of ether as in space. And, therefore,
7 if there is anything which will explain this space, it must be something that comprehends in its infinite being
8 the infinite space itself. And what is there that can comprehend even the infinite space but the Infinite Mind?

9 notes⁴⁸⁸

10 [An undated and untitled, one-page manuscript in Swami Vivekananda's own handwriting]

11 My nerves act on my brain—the brain sends back a reaction which, on the mental side, is this world.

12 Something—x—acts on the brain through the nerves, the reaction is this world.

13 Why not the x be also in the body—why outside?

14 Because we find the *already created outside* world (as the result of a previous *reaction* of the brain)
15 acts on us calling on a further reaction.

16 Thus inside becomes outside and creates another action, which interior action created another
17 reaction, which again becomes outside and again acts inside.

18 The only way of reconciling idealism and realism is to hold that one brain can be affected by the *world*
19 created as reaction by another brain from inside, i.e., the mixture x + mind which one brain throws out can
20 affect another, to which it's similarly external.

21 Therefore as soon as we come within the influence of this hypnotic circle, or influence, created by
22 hundreds of preceding brains we begin to feel this world as they see it.

1 488 ?

2 *New Discoveries*, Vol. 3, pp. 440-41.
3

1 Mind is only a phase of matter, i.e., of the ever-changing phenomena of which matter and mind are
2 different states or views. There must be something in whose presence this eternal, phenomenal net is
3 spread—that is the Substance, the Brahman.

4 lecture notes⁴⁸⁹

5
6 Probably at the turn of the century, Miss Ellen Waldo gave these undated notes in Swami
7 Vivekananda's handwriting to her friend Sister Devamata, a member of the Boston Vedanta Centre, where
8 they were later made available for publication.

9
10 Man will need a religion so long as he is constituted as at present.

11 The forms will change from time to time

12 The dissatisfaction with the senses.

13 The yearning beyond.

14 There were encroachments of religion on the domains of physical science—these [encroachments]
15 religion is giving up every day.

16 Yet there is a vast field covered by religion where physical science[s] are mute.

17 The [vain?] attempt to keep man strictly within the limits of the senses—

18 Because—there are men who catch a glimpse now and then of the infinite beyond.

19 The types of men.

20 The worker—the mystic the emotional the intellectual.

21 Each type is necessary for the well-being of society. The dangers of each—

22 A mixture minimizes the danger

23 The East is too full of mystics and meditative the West of workers—

24 An exchange will be for the good of both.

1 489 ?

2 *New Discoveries*, Vol. 4, pp. 213-14.

1 —
2
3 The necessity of religion—
4 The four types of men
5 that come to religion—
6 the basis of Unity—the Divinity
7 in man. Why use this term?
8 the western Society has work
9 and intellectual philosophy—
10 But work must not be destructive
11 of others.
12 Philosophy—must not be only dry intellectuality
13 Macrocosm and Microcosm⁴⁹⁰
14

15 After his experience of the macrocosm within the microcosm while absorbed in meditation under the
16 peepul tree at Kakrighat, in 1890, Swami Vivekananda jotted down in Bengali fragments of his realization in
17 his notebook.

18
19 In the beginning was the Word etc.

20 The microcosm and the macrocosm are built on the same plan. Just as the individual soul is encased in
21 the living body, so is the universal Soul in the Living Prakriti [Nature]—the objective universe. Shivâ [i.e. Kâli]
22 is embracing Shiva: this is not a fancy. This covering of the one [Soul] by the other [Nature] is analogous to
23 the relation between an idea and the word expressing it: they are one and the same; and it is only by a
24 mental abstraction that one can distinguish them. Thought is impossible without words. Therefore, in the
25 beginning was the Word etc.

1 490 ?

2 *The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. I, p. 250.
3

1 This dual aspect of the Universal Soul is eternal. So what we perceive or feel is this combination of the
2 Eternally Formed and the Eternally Formless.

3 swami vivekananda's footnotes

4 to ***The imitation of christ***⁴⁹¹

5
6
7
8 In 1889, Swami Vivekananda translated into Bengali selections from Book I, chapters 1-6 of Thomas à
9 Kempis's The Imitation of Christ. They were published along with a preface in a now-defunct Bengali
10 monthly magazine, Sâhitya Kalpadruma. The Swami's preface and Bengali translation, entitled
11 "Ishânu-sharana",⁴⁹² were later published in the Bengali Complete Works (first edition), VI, pp. 16-28.
12 However, only the preface to The Imitation of Christ was published in the English edition of the Complete
13 Works, VIII.

14 Swami Vivekananda's partial Bengali translation of The Imitation of Christ includes as footnotes
15 quotations from Hindu scriptures that parallel à Kempis's ideas, comments or commentary. For the sake of
16 clarity, these footnotes (numbered 1 through 17) have been appended to their respective verses in The
17 Imitation of Christ (indicated in parentheses), arranged under their appropriate chapter headings in the
18 book, and reproduced here in bold.

19 Many of the Sanskrit footnotes to the Bengali translation were later rendered into English during the
20 course of Swami Vivekananda's lecturing or writing. For the sake of interest, these English translations have
21 also been added to the Swami's restored footnote text. Otherwise, Sanskrit verses have been translated by
22 the Publisher for the convenience of the reader.

23 –Publisher

1 491 ?

2 *Prabuddha Bharata*, September 1982, pp. 390-93.

3
4 492 ? In Bengali, the word Ishâ means "Christ" and Anusharana, "to follow"; hence Ishânusharana means "to follow Christ".
5

1
2 book i⁴⁹³
3
4

5 CHAPTER 1
6

7 Of the Imitation of Christ and Contempt of all the Vanities of the World
8

9 1. "He that followeth Me, walketh not in darkness", saith the Lord [John 8.12]. (*The Imitation of Christ*
10 V.1.)
11

12 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S FOOTNOTE: Bhagavad-Gitâ 7.14
13
14
15

16 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S TRANSLATION: This My Mâyâ is divine, made up of qualities and very difficult to
17 cross. Yet those who come unto Me, cross the river of life.⁴⁹⁴
18
19
20

21 2. Let therefore our chief endeavour be to meditate upon the life of Jesus Christ. (*The Imitation of*

1 ⁴⁹³ ? Verses are cited from Thomas à Kempis's *Of the Imitation of Christ* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961).

2 This translation—based on that of F.B. (the Jesuit Anthony Hoskins), which first appeared c. 1613—has been lightly edited in
3 order to conform to the grammar, punctuation and style of the Complete Works.—Publisher.
4

5 ⁴⁹⁴ ?

6 *Vide* "Maya and Freedom", *Complete Works*, II: 123.
7

1 *Christ V.1.)*

2

3 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S FOOTNOTE: *Adhyâtma Râmâyana*,

4 Uttara-Kânda 5.54 (Râmagitâ)

5

6

7

1 ***PUBLISHER'S TRANSLATION: Thus meditating upon the Self day and night, let the sage abide***
2 ***free from all bondage.***

3
4
5
6 ***3. The doctrine of Christ exceedeth all the doctrines of holy men; and he that hath the Spirit***
7 ***will find therein the hidden manna. (The Imitation of Christ V.2.)***

8
9 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S FOOTNOTE:

10 **When the Israelites were afflicted by want of food in a desert, God showered on them a kind**
11 **of "manna".**

12
13
14
15 4. But it falleth out, that many who often hear the Gospel of Christ, are yet but little affected, because
16 they are void of the Spirit of Christ. But whosoever would fully and feelingly understand the words of Christ,
17 must endeavour to conform his life wholly to the life of Christ. (*The Imitation of Christ V.2.*)

18
19 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S FOOTNOTE (a): Bhagavad-Gita 2.29

20
21
22 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S TRANSLATION: Others, hearing of It, do not understand.⁴⁹⁵

23
24

1 ⁴⁹⁵ ?

2 *Vide* "The Gitâ II", Complete Works, I: 462.
3

1 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S FOOTNOTE (b): *Vivekachudâmani* 62

2
3
4
5 PUBLISHER'S TRANSLATION: A disease does not leave the body by simply repeating the name of the
6 medicine; one must take the medicine. Similarly, liberation does not come by merely saying the word
7 *Brahman*. Brahman must be experienced.

1 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S FOOTNOTE (c): Mahâbhârata
2 (critical edition) 12.309.91
3
4

5 PUBLISHER'S TRANSLATION: Of what avail is reading the Vedas without practising religion?
6
7
8

9 5. What will it avail thee to dispute profoundly of the Trinity if thou be void of humility and art thereby
10 displeasing to the Trinity? (*The Imitation of Christ* V.3.)
11

12 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S FOOTNOTE:

13 **According to the Christians, God the Father, Holy Ghost, and God the Son are One in three**
14 **and Three in One.**
15
16
17

18 6. Surely great words do not make a man holy and just; but a virtuous life maketh him dear to God.
19 (*The Imitation of Christ* V.3.)
20

21 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S FOOTNOTE: *Vivekachudamani* 58
22
23
24

25 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S TRANSLATION: Wonderful methods of joining words, rhetorical powers, and
26 explaining texts of the books in various ways—these are only for the enjoyment of the learned, and not

1 religion.⁴⁹⁶

2
3
4
5 7. If thou didst know the whole Bible by heart and the sayings of all the philosophers, what would it
6 profit thee without the love of God and without grace? (*The Imitation of Christ* V.3.)

1 496 ?

2 *Vide* "Realization", Complete Works, II: 164.
3

1 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S FOOTNOTE: [reference only]

2 **–I Corinthians 13.2.**

3
4
5
6 8. "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity" (Eccles.) except to love God and to serve Him only. (*The Imitation of*
7 *Christ* V.3.)

8
9 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S FOOTNOTE: *Maniratnamâlâ*

10
11
12
13 PUBLISHER'S TRANSLATION: They alone are holy men (Sâdhus) who are devoid of any longing for worldly
14 objects, free from delusion and are devoted to the truth of Shiva.

15
16
17
18 9. Call often to mind that proverb "The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing".
19 (*The Imitation of Christ* V.5.)

20
21 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S FOOTNOTE: [reference only]

22 **–Eccles. 1.8.**

23
24
25
26 10. Endeavour, therefore, to withdraw thy heart from the love of visible things and to turn thyself to

1 the invisible. For they that follow their lusts stain their own consciences and lose the grace of God. (*The*
2 *Imitation of Christ* V.5.)

3
4 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S FOOTNOTE: Mahabharata, 2.63
5 (Yayâtigâthâ)
6
7
8

1 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S TRANSLATION: Desire is never satisfied by the enjoyment of desires; it only
2 increases the more, as fire when butter is poured upon it.⁴⁹⁷

3
4
5
6 CHAPTER 3

7
8 *Of the Doctrine of Truth*
9

10 11. What availeth it to cavil and dispute much about dark and hidden things; for ignorance of which we
11 shall not be reproved at the day of judgement? (*The Imitation of Christ* V.1.)
12

13 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S FOOTNOTE:

14 **According to the Christian view, God will judge all beings on the last day (the day of the**
15 **dissolution of the world), and will award heaven or hell according to the virtues or vices of different**
16 **individuals.**
17
18
19

20 12. He to whom the Eternal Word speaketh is delivered from many an opinion. (*The Imitation of Christ*
21 V.2.)
22

23 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S FOOTNOTE:

24 **This *Word* is somewhat similar to the Maya of the Vedantists. This Itself was manifested in**
25 **the form of Christ.**

1 ⁴⁹⁷ ?

2 *Vide* "Maya and Illusion", Complete Works, II: 100.
3

1
2
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8

CHAPTER 5

Of the Reading of Holy Scriptures

13. Truth, not eloquence, is to be sought for in Holy Scripture. Each part of the Scripture is to be read with the same Spirit wherewith it was written. (*The Imitation of Christ* V.1.)

1 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S FOOTNOTE: Katha Upanishad 1.2.9

2
3
4 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S TRANSLATION: Neither is the mind to be disturbed by vain arguments, for it is no
5 more a question of argument; it is a question of fact.⁴⁹⁸
6
7
8

9 14. Let not the authority of the writer offend thee, whether he be of great or small learning; but let the
10 love of pure truth draw thee to read. (*The Imitation of Christ* V.1.)
11

12 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S FOOTNOTE: Laws of Manu 2.238
13
14

15 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S TRANSLATION: Learn supreme knowledge with service even from the man of low
16 birth.⁴⁹⁹
17
18
19

20 CHAPTER 6
21

22 *Of Inordinate Affections*

1 ⁴⁹⁸ ? *Vide* "Realization", Complete Works, II: 162.
2

3 ⁴⁹⁹ ?
4 *Vide* "The Common Bases of Hinduism", Complete Works, III: 381-82.
5

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8

15. Whensoever a man desireth anything inordinately, he becometh presently disquieted in himself.
(*The Imitation of Christ* V.1.)

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S FOOTNOTE: Bhagavad-Gita 2.67

1 **SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S TRANSLATION: For the mind which fol-lows in the wake of the wandering**
2 **senses carries away his dis-crimination as a wind (carries away from its course) a boat on the**
3 **waters.**

4
5
6
7 **16. The proud and covetous can never rest. The poor and humble in spirit live together in all**
8 **peace.**

9 **The man that is not yet perfectly dead to himself, is quickly tempted and overcome in small**
10 **and trifling things. (The Imitation of Christ V.1.)**

11
12 **SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S FOOTNOTE: Bhagavad-Gita 2.62-63**

13
14
15
16
17
18 PUBLISHER'S TRANSLATION: By thinking about sense objects, attachment to them is formed. From
19 attachment comes longing, and longing breeds anger. From anger comes delusion, and from delusion,
20 confused memory. From confused memory comes the ruin of discrimination; and from the ruin of
21 discrimination, a man perishes.

22
23
24 17. There is then no peace in the heart of a carnal man, nor in him that is addicted to outward things,
25 but in the spiritual and devout man. (*The Imitation of Christ V.2.*)

26
27 **SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S FOOTNOTE: Bhagavad-Gita 2.60**

1
2
3
4
5

PUBLISHER'S TRANSLATION: The turbulent senses, O son of Kunti, violently carry away the mind of even a wise man striving after perfection.

1 the plague manifesto⁵⁰⁰

2 Om Salutations to Bhagavan Shri Ramakrishna

3 Brothers of Calcutta!

4
5 1. We feel happy when you are happy, and we suffer when you suffer. Therefore, during these days
6 of extreme adversity, we are striving and ceaselessly praying for your welfare and an easy way to save you
7 from disease and the fear of an epidemic.

8
9 2. If that grave disease-fearing which both the high and the low, the rich and the poor are all
10 fleeing the city-ever really comes in our midst, then even if we perish while serving and nursing you, we will
11 consider ourselves fortunate because you are all embodiments of God. He who thinks otherwise-out of
12 vanity, superstition or ignorance-offends God and incurs great sin. There is not the slightest doubt about it.

13
14 3. We humbly pray to you-please do not panic due to unfounded fear. Depend upon God and calmly
15 try to find the best means to solve the problem. Otherwise, join hands with those who are doing that very
16 thing.

17
18 4. What is there to fear? The terror that has entered people's hearts due to the occurrence of the
19 plague has no real ground. Through God's will, nothing of the terrible form that plague takes, as seen in
20 other places, has occurred in Calcutta. The government authorities have also been particularly helpful to us.
21 So what is there to fear?

22
23 5. Come, let us give up this false fear and, having faith in the infinite compassion of God, gird our
24 loins and enter the field

1 500 ?

2 *Udbodhan*, Chaitra 1329, Vol. 25, Number 3, p. 169 (March 1926).

3 In May 1898, when a plague epidemic broke out in Calcutta and numbers of terror-stricken residents fled the city in panic,
4 Swami Vivekananda wrote this manifesto in Bengali, which was printed and freely distributed amongst the people.
5

1 of action. Let us live pure and clean lives. Disease, fear of an epidemic, etc., will vanish into thin air by
2 His grace.

3
4 6. (a) Always keep the house and its premises, the rooms, clothes, bed, drain, etc., clean.

5 (b) Do not eat stale, spoiled food; take fresh and nutritious food instead. A weak body is more
6 susceptible to disease.

7 (c) Always keep the mind cheerful. Everyone will die once. Cowards suffer the pangs of death
8 again and again, solely due to the fear in their own minds.

9 (d) Fear never leaves those who earn their livelihoods by unethical means or who cause harm
10 to others. Therefore, at this time when we face the great fear of death, desist from all such behaviour.

11 (e) During the period of epidemic, abstain from anger and from lust—even if you are
12 householders.

13 (f) Do not pay any heed to rumours.

14 (g) The British government will not vaccinate anyone by force. Only those who are willing will
15 be vaccinated.

16 (h) There will be no lack of effort in treating the afflicted patients in our hospital under our
17 special care and supervision, paying full respect to religion, caste and the modesty (Purdah) of women. Let
18 the wealthy run away! But we are poor; we understand the heartache of the poor. The Mother of the
19 Universe is Herself the support of the helpless. The Mother is assuring us: "Fear not! Fear not!"

20
21 7. Brother, if there is no one to help you, then send infor-mation immediately to the servants of
22 Shri Bhagavan Ramakrishna at Belur Math. There will be no dearth of help that is physically possible. By the
23 grace of the Mother, monetary help will also be possible.

24
25 N. B. In order to remove the fear of the epidemic, you should sing Nâma Sankirtanam [the name of the
26 Lord] every evening and in every locality.

1
 2 one circle more⁵⁰¹
 3 [A fragmentary poem composed at Ridgely Manor, in 1899]
 4 One circle more the spiral path of life ascends
 5 And time's restless shuttle—running back and fro
 6 Through maze of warp and woof
 7 of shining
 8 threads of life—spins out a stronger piece.⁵⁰²
 9
 10 Hand in hand they stand—and try to
 11 fathom depths whence
 12 springs eternal love, each in other's eyes;
 13
 14 And find
 15 No hold o'er that age but brings the youth anew—
 16 And time—the good, the pure, the true.

1 ⁵⁰¹ ? Vedanta Society of Southern California archives.

2 Mrs. Frances Leggett found this document on Ridgely Manor stationery and sent it to the Vedanta Society of Southern California
 3 in the summer of 1962. The title of the poem has been supplied by the editors of the *Vedanta Kesari* (May 1973).
 4

5 ⁵⁰² ? Cf. a slightly different version of the first three lines of this poem, which appeared in Swami Vivekananda's own handwriting
 6 on the left-hand side of the folded letter paper containing the original draft (*Vide* the facsimile on the following page):
 7

8 One circle more the spiral path of life ascends
 9 And Time's relentless shuttle running
 10 back and fro
 11 through maze of warp and woof spins out a
 12 stronger piece.
 13

1 an untitled poem on Shri Ramakrishna⁵⁰³

2
3
4
5
6 He who was praised by the Brâhmanas, those knowers of the Vedas who made the sky
7 reverberate with the sacred sounds of the sacrifice and caused the darkness of delusion to vanish through
8 well-performed rituals and the knowledge known as Vedanta—he whose greatness was sung in the sweet
9 chants of the Sâma-Veda etc., with voices thundering like clouds⁵⁰⁴—to that Shri Ramakrishna, I offer my
10 eternal worship.

11
12 An unfinished poem⁵⁰⁵

13
14
15 From life to life I am waiting here at the gates—they
16 open not.
17 My tongue is parched with ceaseless prayers and dim
18 my eyes have grown
19 With constant straining through the gloom to catch
20 one ray long sought;

1 503 ?

2 Complete Works (Bengali edition), VI, p. 256.

3
4 504 ? In Indian mythology clouds can cause both thunder and lightning.

5
6 505 ? *New Discoveries*, Vol. 3. p. 490. This undated poem is preserved in the archives of the Vedanta Centre, Cohasset,
7 Massachusetts.

8 Cf. "My Play is Done", Complete Works, VI: 175.
9

1 My heart is seized with dark despair, all hope well-
2 nigh has flown.
3 —
4
5 And standing on life's narrow ridge, beneath the
6 chasm I see—
7 Strife and sorrow, darkness deep of whirling life and
8 death,
9 Of mad commotion, struggles vain, of folly roaming
10 free.
11
12
13 On one side this dark abyss—I shudder to see it even—
14 On the other this wall . . .

BHARTRIHARI'S VERSES ON RENUNCIATION⁵⁰⁶

This is Swami Vivekananda's free translation of verses from Bhartrihari's Sanskrit poem Vairâgya Shatakam.

The Swami's translation is from Sister Nivedita's Unpublished Notes of Some Wanderings with the Swami Vivekananda—

selected verses recorded almost verbatim, but not necessarily in Bhartrihari's order, by Sister Nivedita as Swami Vivekananda translated them orally for some of his Western disciples during a Himalayan pilgrimage in 1898.

For the researcher's benefit, verses 14-15, 18, 24-26, 31, and 33 have been footnoted as corresponding verses taken from Swami Vivekananda's original handwritten translation, which was given to the Vedanta Society of Southern California by Miss Josephine MacLeod, shortly before her passing away in 1948. This footnoted handwritten version was first published in the collection of poetry entitled In Search of God and Other Poems (Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama, 1968).

Stylistic differences in Swami Vivekananda's overall translation of Bhartrihari's poem are due to those variations inherent in the two aforementioned sources. Obvious typographical and punctuation errors have been corrected.

The verse numbers, as available, correspond to Bhartrihari's numbering.

—Publisher

⁵⁰⁶ ? Sister Nivedita's *Unpublished Notes of Some Wanderings with the Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Bangiya Sahitya Parishad, 1983) pp. 13-20, 41-42.

1
2
3 bhartrihari's verses on renunciation
4 [A translation of verses from Bhartrihari's Sanskrit poem
5 Vairagya Shatakam]
6 I have travelled in many countries, hard to travel in,
7 And got no result;
8 Giving up pride of birth and position,
9 I have served all.
10 Like a crow stealing into a kitchen,
11 With fear I have eaten the bread of others in their homes,
12 Yet thou, Desire, who leadest to evil deeds,
13 Leavest me not!
14 (Verse 2)
15
16 I have crossed oceans to find wealth.
17 I have blasted mountains to get jewels.
18 I have spent whole nights in graveyards
19 repeating Mantras
20 And have obtained—not the broken cowrie
21 of blessedness
22 Ah, Desire, give me up now.
23 (Verse 3)
24
25 I have borne the wicked words of the wicked;

1 To please fools, when my heart is weeping,
2 my lips ever laughed.
3 Stopping my judgment, I have with folded hands
4 Stood before unworthy persons.
5 Even now, my Desire, why do you make me dance
6 like a fool?

7 (Verse 4)

8

1 For this life, which is like a drop of water
2 on a lotus leaf,
3 We have not enjoyed, but enjoyments have enjoyed us.
4 We did not penance, but penances burnt us up.
5 Time did not fly, yet we are gone.
6 We become decrepit with age, but not so Desire.
7 Infirmary assails us, the skin wrinkles,
8 The hair whitens, the body becomes crooked,
9 Old age comes on.
10 Desire alone grows younger every day.

(Verses 5-8)

13 Hope is the name of this river, whose water is Desire,
14 And Thirst the waves thereof.
15 Passion is the crocodile living in that water,
16 Vain resolves are the birds that reside
17 In the tree of virtue on the shores and kill it.
18 But there are the whirlpools of Delusion
19 And Despondence, the high banks.
20 The great Yogis are blissful because they,
21 With their pure minds, never crossed this river.

(Verse 10)

24 Blessed are they that, living even in the
25 caves of mountains,

1 Meditate on the supreme Light.
2 Even the birds will fearlessly drink of the
3 tears of pleasure
4 That flow from their eyes.
5 Alas,⁵⁰⁷ our minds grow familiar, even in imagination, With palaces and pleasure-gardens,
6 And thus our lives fleet by.
7 (Verse 14)
8

1 ⁵⁰⁷ ? Here Swami Vivekananda's handwritten translation begins.
2

1 Even when the only food is gained by begging,
2 and that is tasteless;
3 One's bed, the dry earth;
4 One's whole family, his own body;
5 His only clothing, a ragged bit of cloth—
6 Alas, alas, the desire for enjoyment does not leave a man.

7 (Verse 15)

8
9 Not knowing the power of flame, the insect falls into it.
10 The fish swallows the bait, not knowing the hook inside.
11 That, well aware of the vanity and dangers of the world,
12 We cannot give it up—
13 Such is the power of Delusion.

14 (Verse 18)

15
16 Have such places in the Himalayas become extinct
17 That a man should go begging at others' doors?
18 Have the roots in the mountain forests all disappeared?
19 Are the springs all dry?
20 Are the trees all withered that bear sweet fruits
21 And bark for garments
22 That a man should look with fear on the face of a fool, Whose head is turned by a little wealth?
23 (Lit., "Whose eyebrows are dancing with the wind of the pride of a little wealth".)

24 (Verses 24-25)

25

1 Arise! Let us go into the forest
2 Where pure roots and fruits will be our food,
3 Pure water our only drink,
4 Pure leaves our bed,
5 And where the little-minded, the thoughtless,
6 And those whose hearts are cramped with wealth
7 Do not exist.
8 (Verse 26)

1
2 In enjoyment is the fear of disease;
3 In high birth, the fear of losing caste;
4 In wealth, the fear of tyrants;
5 In honour, the fear of losing her;
6 In strength, the fear of enemies;
7 In beauty, the fear of the other sex;⁵⁰⁸
8 In knowledge, the fear of defeat;
9 In virtue, the fear of scandal;
10 In the body, the fear of death.
11
12 In this life, all is fraught with fear.
13 Renunciation alone is fearless.
14 (Verse 31)
15
16 The root of health has always round about it
17 A thousand worms in the form of dangers and disease. Where fortune falls, open a hundred gates of
18 danger.
19 Whosoever is born, him death will surely swallow.
20 Say, where is that Providence who ever created
21 Anything that died not?
22 (Verse 33)⁵⁰⁹

508 ?

The literal Sanskrit translation is: "In beauty there is the fear of old age".

509 ?

Here ends Swami Vivekananda's handwritten translation. The edited version published in *In Search of God and Other*

1
2 Life is like a wave upon the waters,
3 Youth only remains a few days.
4 Wealth is like a fancy of the mind,
5 It immediately vanishes.

1 *Poems* follows in this footnote:

2 Alas our minds [dally but] in imagination with palaces and pleasure gardens, and thus our lives are spent. [One's] only food
3 is by begging—and that too is tasteless; one's bed, the dry earth; all of one's family, one's own body; and the only clothing a tattered
4 piece of cloth around the waist—alas, still the desire for enjoyment does not leave a man.

5 (Verses 14-15)

6 Not knowing the power of flame,

7 The insect falls into it.

8 The fish swallows the bait,

9 Not knowing the hook inside.

10 And knowing full well the vanities

11 and dangers of the world,

12 We cannot give it up—

13 Such is the power of delusion.

14 [With rocks cooled by] the spray of the Ganga's waters,

15 Where the Vidyâdharas love to sport—

16 Have such places in the Himalayas become extinct

17 That a man should beg (in disgrace) at others' doors?

(Verses 18, 24)

19 Have the roots in the mountain forests all disappeared?

20 Are the springs all dry? Are the trees all withered

21 That bear sweet fruits and bark for garments

22 That a man should look with fear on the face

23 Of the fool, whose eyebrows are dancing

24 [In] the wind of the pride of a little wealth?

(Verse 25)

26 Arise, let us go into the forest, where pure roots and fruits will be our food, pure water our only drink, and pure leaves our
27 bed—And where the little-minded, the thoughtless, and those whose hearts are cankered with wealth do not exist.

(Verse 26)

29 In enjoyment is the fear of disease,

30 In high birth, the fear of losing caste,

31 In wealth, the fear of tyrants,

32 In honour the fear of losing [it],

33 In strength, the fear of enemies,

1 Enjoyment is like a flash of lightning
2 amongst dark clouds.
3 Our most beloved one is only for a moment.
4 Knowing this, O man, give your heart unto Brahman
5 To cross this ocean of life.
6 (Verse 36)

1 In beauty, the fear of [old age],
2 In knowledge, the fear of defeat,
3 In virtue, the fear of scandal,
4 In the body, the fear of death.
5 In this life all is fraught with fear:
6 Renunciation alone is fearless.

7 (Verse 31)

8 [A person's] health [is uprooted by] thousands of [worries] and disease. Where fortune falls open a hundred gates of danger.
9 Whosoever is born, him death will surely swallow. Say, [has] Providence ever created anything that died not?

10 (Verse 33)

11

1 . . . Living in whom gods like Indra, Brahmâ
2 and others appear like a blade of grass,
3 Whose anger can destroy the worlds in a moment.
4 O sage, know Him, that One Supreme
5 Who dies not,
6 And give not your mind to false enjoyment.
7 (Verse 40)
8
9 Ah, where is happiness in this life?
10
11 (At best it lasts but a hundred years, of which half is spent in sleep; of the other half, half in
12 decrepitude; of what remains—
13 one half goes in childhood and, of the rest, still half in serving others!)

14
15 O man, in this futile, wave-like life
16 Where is happiness?
17 (Verse 49)
18
19 Now you appear as child
20 And now as a youth, whose whole occupation is love.
21 This moment poor, another wealthy,
22 Now a babe, and again a decrepit old man.
23 O actor man, at last you vanish from the stage
24 When death beckons you behind the scenes!
25 (Verse 50)

1
2 You are a king, but we have served Gurus,
3 Who are great in knowledge.
4 You are known by your wealth as a king,
5 We for our knowledge.
6 There is infinite difference between us and you,
7 Therefore we are not the persons to wait upon you,
8 O Kings!
9 (Verse 51)
10

1 Oh, when will that day come,
2 When in a forest, saying "Shiva", "Shiva",
3 My days shall pass?
4 A serpent and a garland the same,
5 The strong foe and the friend the same,
6 The flower-bed and the stone-bed the same,
7 A beautiful woman and a blade of grass the same!
8 (Verses 85, 90)

9
10 O Shiva, when shall I be able to cut
11 To the very roots of my Karma,
12 By becoming solitary, desireless, quiet–
13 My hands my only plate, and the cardinal points
14 my clothing?
15 (Verse 99)

16
17 The fruits are sufficient food,
18 The waters of the mountain sufficient dinner,
19 The earth a sufficient bed,
20 And bark a sufficient garment–
21 These are all welcome.
22 Only I cannot bear the proud words of fools,
23 Whose organs are all disordered by the drink
24 Of the wine of new wealth!
25 (Verse 54)

1
2 What if you have got the wealth that fulfils every desire?
3 If your foot is on the heads of your foes,
4 What of that?
5 If you have made all your love wealthy,
6 If your body remains a Kalpa⁵¹⁰—what of that?
7 The only thing to be desired is Renunciation
8 Which gives all love to Shiva.
9 (Verse 67)
10

1 ⁵¹⁰ ? A periodic cycle of creation and dissolution.
2

1 Fear only life, that brings Birth and Death,
2 Have no love of friends, no lust, no attachment.
3 Alone, living alone in a forest,
4 What is more to be longed for than this Renunciation.
5 (Verse 68)

6
7 Going searching in the lower regions,
8 Going into the skies,
9 Travelling through all the worlds,
10 This is but the fickleness of the mind.
11 Ah, friend, you never remember the Lord
12 Who resides within you!
13 How can you get happiness?
14 (Verse 70)

15
16 What is there in the reading of Vedas,
17 The Shrutis, the Purânas and doing sacrifices?
18 Freedom alone takes off the weight
19 of this dreadful world,
20 And manifests Self-blessedness.
21 Here is the truth: the rest is all shop-keeping.
22 (Verse 71)

23
24 When the body is still healthy and diseaseless,
25 When old age has not yet attacked it,

1 When the organs have not yet lost their power,
2 And life is still full and undiminished,
3 Now, now, struggle on, rendering great help to yourself!
4 My friend, it is useless to try to dig a well
5 In a house that is already on fire!

6 (Verse 75)

7
8 In Shiva, who is the Lord of this Universe,
9 Or Vishnu, its soul, I see no difference,
10 But still, my love is for Him
11 Who has the young moon on His forehead.

12 (Verse 84)

1 Oh when will that time come,
2 When in a beautiful full-moon night,
3 Sitting on the banks of some river,
4 And in a calm, yet high notes repeating
5 "Shiva! Shiva! Shiva!"
6 All my feelings will come out through the eyes
7 In the form of tears?
8 (Verse 85)
9
10 When, wearing only the Kaupina,⁵¹¹
11 Lying on the sands of the holy Ganges in Benares,
12 When shall I weep aloud, "O Lord of ghouls",
13 Saying this, and whole days shall pass like moments?
14 (Verse 87)
15
16 When, bathing in the pure Ganges water,
17 Worshipping Thee, Omnipresent, with holy fruits
18 and flowers,
19 Stretching myself on stones in a stony cave,
20 My whole soul shall go into meditation,
21 And according to the voice of my Guru,
22 I shall avoid all misery, and purify
23 The mind defiled with serving the rich.

⁵¹¹ ? Loincloth.

(Verse 88)

This whole wide earth my bed,
My beautiful pillows my own two arms,
My wonderful canopy the blue sky,
And the cool evening air to fan me,
The moon and the stars my lamps,
And my beautiful wife, Renunciation, by my side,
What king is there who can sleep like me in pleasure?

(Verse 94)

1 This Universe is only a little circle.
2 What is there to desire in it?
3 Will the ocean go into waves
4 By the jumping of a little [fish?]?
5 (Verse 92)
6
7 There was a time when I could see nothing but Women
8 in this world:
9 And now that my eyes are opened,
10 I can see nothing but Brahman.
11
12
13 Beautiful are the rays of the moon,
14 Beautiful are the lawns in the forest,
15 Beautiful is the meeting of the good,
16 Beautiful is poetry, and
17 Beautiful is the face of the beloved.
18 But to me none of these are beautiful,
19 Knowing that they are evanescent.
20 (Verse 79)
21
22 Oh mother earth, father wind,
23 Friend light, sweetheart water,
24 Brother sky,
25 Here take my last salutation

1 With folded hands!
2 For today I am melting away into Brahman,
3 Because my heart became pure,
4 And all delusion vanished
5 Thro' the power of your good company.
6 (Verse 100)
7
8 Old age watches us, roaring like a tigress.
9 Disease, like enemies, is striking us often.
10 Life is flowing out like water from a broken jar.
11 Curious still how men do evil deeds in this world!
12 (Verse 38)

1 Those beautiful cities.
2 Those mighty monarchs.
3 Those powerful nobles.
4 Those learned assemblies.
5 Those moon-faced women.
6 Those proud princes.
7 And those that sang their praises—
8 They have all been swept away from the memory
9 of man.
10 My salutation, therefore, is to Time who works
11 all these!
12 (Verse 41)
13
14 The sun by his coming and going every hour
15 is lessening the life of man.
16 Time flies without our knowledge,
17 Crushed as we are by the load of many works.
18 Seeing the evils of Birth, Old Age, Danger, and Death
19 We are not afraid.
20 Ah me, drinking the wine of delusion,
21 The world has become mad.
22 (Verse 43)
23
24 I have not learnt that knowledge which defeats all
25 opponents!

1 Nor have been able, at the point of the sword,
2 Which can cut thro' an elephant's back,
3 To send our glory even unto the skies;
4 Nor, under the light of the full moon,
5 Drunk the nectar of the budding lips of the Beloved.
6 My youth is gone fruitless
7 Like a lamp in an empty house.
8 (Verse 46)

1

2

conversations and interviews

1
2 first meeting with madame emma calvé⁵¹²

3 [The story of the first meeting of Swami Vivekananda
4 and Madame Emma Calvé, as told in Calvé's
5 autobiography, My Life]

6 . . . [Swami Vivekananda] was lecturing in Chicago one year when I was there; and as I was at that
7 time greatly depressed in mind and body, I decided to go to him.

8 . . . Before going I had been told not to speak until he addressed me. When I entered the room, I
9 stood before him in silence for a moment. He was seated in a noble attitude of meditation, his robe of
10 saffron yellow falling in straight lines to the floor, his head swathed in a turban bent forward, his eyes on
11 the ground. After a pause he spoke without looking up.

12 "My child", he said, "what a troubled atmosphere you have about you. Be calm. It is essential".

13 Then in a quiet voice, untroubled and aloof, this man who did not even know my name talked to me
14 of my secret problems and anxieties. He spoke of things that I thought were unknown even to my nearest
15 friends. It seemed miraculous, supernatural.

16 "How do you know all this?" I asked at last. "Who has talked of me to you?"

17 He looked at me with his quiet smile as though I were a child who had asked a foolish question.

18 "No one has talked to me", he answered gently. "Do you think that it is necessary? I read in you as in
19 an open book."

20 Finally it was time for me to leave.

21 "You must forget", he said as I rose. "Become gay and happy again. Build up your health. Do not
22 dwell in silence upon your sorrows. Transmute your emotions into some form of external expression. Your
23 spiritual health requires it. Your art demands it."

1 ⁵¹² ? *New Discoveries*, Vol. 1, pp. 484-86.
2

1 I left him deeply impressed by his words and his personality. He seemed to have emptied my brain
2 of all its feverish complexities and placed there instead his clear and calming thoughts. I became once
3 again vivacious and cheerful, thanks to the effect of his powerful will. He did not use any of the hypnotic
4 or mesmeric influences. It was the strength of his character, the purity and intensity of his purpose that
5 carried conviction. It seemed to me, when I came to know him better, that he lulled one's chaotic thoughts
6 into a state of peaceful acquiescence, so that one could give complete and undivided attention to his
7 words.

8 first meeting with john d. rockefeller⁵¹³

9 [As told by Madame Emma Calvé to Madame Drinette Verdier]

10 Mr. X, in whose home Swamiji was staying in Chicago, was a partner or an associate in some
11 business with John D. Rockefeller. Many times John D. heard his friends talking about this extraordinary
12 and wonderful Hindu monk who was staying with them, and many times he had been invited to meet
13 Swamiji but, for one reason or another, always refused. At that time Rockefeller was not yet at the peak of
14 his fortune, but was already powerful and strong-willed, very difficult to handle and a hard man to advise.

15 But one day, although he did not want to meet Swamiji, he was pushed to it by an impulse and went
16 directly to the house of his friends, brushing aside the butler who opened the door and saying that he
17 wanted to see the Hindu monk.

18 The butler ushered him into the living room, and, not waiting to be announced, Rockefeller entered
19 into Swamiji's adjoining study and was much surprised, I presume, to see Swamiji behind his writing table
20 not even lifting his eyes to see who had entered.

21 After a while, as with Calvé, Swamiji told Rockefeller much of his past that was not known to any but
22 himself, and

1 ⁵¹³ ?

2 An excerpt from Madame Verdier's journal quoted in *New Discoveries*, Vol. 1, pp. 487-88.
3

1 made him understand that the money he had already accumulated was not his, that he was only a
2 channel and that his duty was to do good to the world—that God had given him all his wealth in order that
3 he might have an opportunity to help and do good to people.

4 Rockefeller was annoyed that anyone dared to talk to him that way and tell him what to do. He left
5 the room in irritation, not even saying goodbye. But about a week after, again without being announced,
6 he entered Swamiji's study and, finding him the same as before, threw on his desk a paper which told of
7 his plans to donate an enormous sum of money toward the financing of a public institution.

8 "Well, there you are", he said. "You must be satisfied now, and you can thank me for it."

9 Swamiji didn't even lift his eyes, did not move. Then taking the paper, he quietly read it, saying: "It
10 is for you to thank me". That was all. This was Rockefeller's first large donation to the public welfare.

11 A DUSKY PHILOSOPHER FROM INDIA⁵¹⁴

12 *[An interview by Blanche Partington, San Francisco Chronicle, March 18, 1900]*

13

14 . . . Bowing very low in Eastern fashion on his entrance to the room, then holding out his hand in
15 good American style, the dusky philosopher from the banks of the Ganges gave friendly greeting to the
16 representative of that thoroughly Occidental institution, the daily press.

17 . . . I asked for a picture to illustrate this article, and when someone handed me a certain "cut"
18 which has been extensively

1 ⁵¹⁴ ? *New Discoveries*, Vol. 5, pp. 389-94.

2 To preserve the historical authenticity of the newspaper reports in this section, their original spelling has been largely retained;
3 however, their punctuation has been made consistent with the style of the *Complete Works*.

4 —Publisher
5

1 used in lecture advertisements here, he uttered a mild protest against its use.

2 "But that does not look like you", said I.

3 "No, it is as if I wished to kill someone", he said smiling, "like—like—"

4 "Othello", I inserted rashly. But the little audience of friends only smiled as the Swami made
5 laughing recognition of the absurd resemblance of the picture to the jealous Moor. But I do not use that
6 picture.

7 "Is it true, Swami", I asked, "that when you went home after lecturing in the Congress of Religions
8 after the World's Fair, princes knelt at your feet, a half dozen of the ruling sovereigns of India dragged
9 your carriage through the streets, as the papers told us? We do not treat our priests so".

10 "That is not good to talk of", said the Swami. "But it is true that religion rules there, not dollars."

11 "What about caste?"

12 "What of your Four Hundred?" he replied, smiling. "Caste in India is an institution hardly explicable
13 or intelligible to the Occidental mind. It is acknowledged to be an imperfect institution, but we do not
14 recognize a superior social result from your attempts at class distinction. India is the only country which
15 has so far succeeded in imposing a permanent caste upon her people, and we doubt if an exchange for
16 Western superstitions and evils would be for her advantage."

17 "But under such regime—where a man may not eat this nor drink that, nor marry the other—the
18 freedom you teach would be impossible", I ventured.

19 "It is impossible", assented the Swami; "but until India has outgrown the necessity for caste laws,
20 caste laws will remain".

21 "Is it true that you may not eat food cooked by a foreigner

22 —unbeliever?" I asked.

23 "In India the cook—who is not called a servant—must be of the same or higher caste than those for
24 whom the food is cooked, as it is considered that whatever a man touches is impressed by his personality,
25 and food, with which a man builds up the body through which he expresses himself, is regarded as being
26 liable to such impression. As to the foods we eat, it is assumed that certain kinds of food nourish certain
27 properties

1 worthy of cultivation, and that others retard our spiritual growth. For instance, we do not kill to eat.
2 Such food would be held to nourish the animal body, at the expense of the spiritual body, in which the soul
3 is said to be clothed on its departure from this physical envelope, besides laying the sin of bloodguiltiness
4 upon the butcher."

5 "Ugh!" I exclaimed involuntarily, an awful vision of reproachful little lambs, little chicken ghosts,
6 hovering cow spirits

7 —I was always afraid of cows anyway—rising up before me.

8 "You see", explained the Brahmin [Kshatriya], "the universe is all one, from the lowest insect to the
9 highest Yogi. It is all one, we are all one, you and I are one—". Here the Occidental audience smiled, the
10 unconscious monk chanting the oneness of things in Sanskrit and the consequent sin of taking any life.

11 . . . He was pacing up and down the room most of the time during our talk, occasionally standing
12 over the register—it was a chill morning for this child of the sun—and doing with grace and freedom
13 whatever occurred to him, even, at length, smoking a little.

14 "You, yourself, have not yet attained supreme control over all desires", I ventured. The Swami's
15 frankness is infectious.

16 "No, madam", and he smiled the broad and brilliant smile of a child; "Do I look it?" But the Swami,
17 from the land of hasheesh and dreams, doubtless did not connect my query with its smoky origin.

18 "Is it usual among the Hindoo priesthood to marry?" I ventured again.

19 "It is a matter of individual choice", replied this member of the Hindoo priesthood. "One does not
20 marry that he may not be in slavery to a woman and children, or permit the slavery of a woman to him."

21 "But what is to become of the population?" urged the anti-Malthusian.

22 "Are you so glad to have been born?" retorted the Eastern thinker, his large eyes flashing scorn.
23 "Can you conceive of nothing higher than this warring, hungry, ignorant world? Do not fear that the *you*
24 may be lost, though the sordid, miserable

1 consciousness of the now may go. What worth having [would be] gone?

2 "The child comes crying into the world. Well may he cry! Why should we weep to leave it? Have you
3 thought"—here the sunny smile came back—"of the different modes of East and West of expressing the
4 passing away? We say of the dead man, 'He gave up his body'; you put it, 'he gave up the ghost'. How can
5 that be? Is it the dead body that permits the ghost to depart? What curious inversion of thought!"

6 "But, on the whole, Swami, you think it better to be comfortably dead than a living lion?" persisted
7 the defender of populations.

8 "Swâhâ, Swaha, so be it!" shouted the monk.

9 "But how is it that under such philosophy men consent to live at all?"

10 "Because a man's own life is sacred as any other life, and one may not leave chapters unlearned",
11 returned the philosopher. "Add power and diminish time, and the school days are shorter; as the learned
12 professor can make the marble in twelve years which nature took centuries to form. It is all a question of
13 time."

14 "India, which has had this teaching so long, has not yet learned her lesson?"

15 "No, though she is perhaps nearer than any other country, in that she has learned to love mercy."

16 "What of England in India?" I asked.

17 "But for English rule I could not be here now", said the monk, "though your lowest free-born
18 American Negro holds higher position in India politically than is mine. Brahmin and coolie, we are all
19 'natives'. But it is all right, in spite of the misunderstanding and oppression. England is the Tharma
20 [Karma?] of India, attracted inevitably by some inherent weakness, past mistakes, but from her blood and
21 fibre will come the new national hope for my countrymen. I am a loyal subject of the Empress of India!"
22 and here the Swami salaamed before an imaginary potentate, bowing very low, perhaps too low for rev-
23 erence.

24 "But such an apostle of freedom—", I murmured.

1 "She is the widow for many years, and such we hold in high worth in India", said the philosopher
2 seriously. "As to freedom, yes, I believe the goal of all development is freedom, law and order. There is
3 more law and order in the grave than anywhere else—try it."

4 "I must go", I said. "I have to catch a train".

5 "That is like all Americans", smiled the Swami, and I had a glimpse of all eternity in his utter
6 restfulness. "You must catch this car or that train always. Is there not another, later?"

7 But I did not attempt to explain the Occidental conception of the value of time to this child of the
8 Orient, realizing its utter hopelessness and my own renegade sympathy. It must be delightful beyond
9 measure to live in the land of "time enough". In the Orient there seems time to breathe, time to think, time
10 to live; as the Swami says, what have we in exchange? We live in time; they in eternity.

11 "WE ARE HYPNOTIZED INTO WEAKNESS BY OUR SURROUNDINGS"⁵¹⁵

12 [*An interview by the San Francisco Examiner, March 18, 1900*]

13 Hindoo Philosopher Who Strikes at the Root of Some Occidental Evils and Tells How We Must
14 Worship God Simply and Not with Many Vain Prayers.

15
16

17 One American friend he may be assured of—the Swami is a charming person to interview.

18 Pacing about the little room where he is staying, he kept the small audience of interviewer and
19 friend entertained for a couple of hours.

20 "Tell you about the English in India? But I do not wish to talk of politics. But from the higher
21 standpoint, it is true that

⁵¹⁵ ? *New Discoveries*, Vol. 5, pp. 396-98.

1 but for the English rule I could not be here. We natives know that it is through the intermixture of
2 English blood and ideas that the salvation of India will come. Fifty years ago, all the literature and religion of
3 the race were locked up in the Sanskrit language; today the drama and the novel are written in the ver-
4 nacular, and the literature of religion is being translated. That is the work of the English, and it is
5 unnecessary, in America, to descant upon the value of the education of the masses."

6 "What do you think of the Boers War?" was asked.

7 "Oh! Have you seen the morning paper? But I do not wish to discuss politics. English and Boers are
8 both in the wrong. It is terrible—terrible—the bloodshed! English will conquer, but at what fearful cost! She
9 seems the nation of Fate."

10 And the Swami with a smile, began chanting the Sanskrit for an unwillingness to discuss politics.

11 Then he talked long of ancient Russian history, and of the wandering tribes of Tartary, and of the
12 Moorish rule in Spain, and displaying an astonishing memory and research. To this childlike interest in all
13 things that touch him is doubtless due much of the curious and universal knowledge that he seems to
14 possess.

15 marriage⁵¹⁶

16
17 From Miss Josephine MacLeod's February 1908 letter to Mary Hale, in which she described Swami
18 Vivekananda's response to Alberta Sturges's question:

19
20 ALBERTA STURGES: Is there no happiness in marriage?

21 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: Yes, Alberta, if marriage is entered into as a great austerity—and everything is
22 given up—even principle!

3 ⁵¹⁶ ? *New Discoveries*, Vol. 5, p. 138.
4

1 conversations and interviews 348

1 line of demarcation⁵¹⁷

2
3 From Mrs. Alice Hansbrough's reminiscences of a question-answer exchange following the class
4 entitled "Hints on Practical Spirituality":

5
6 Q: Swami, if all things are one, what is the difference between a cabbage and a man?

7 A: Stick a knife into your leg, and you will see the line of demarcation.

8
9 god is!⁵¹⁸

10
11 Alice Hansbrough's record of a question-answer session after a class lecture:

12
13 Q: Then, Swami, what you claim is that all is good?

14 A: By no means. My claim is that all is not—only God is! That makes all the difference.

15
16 renunciation⁵¹⁹

3 517 ?

4 *New Discoveries*, Vol. 5, p. 225.

5
6 518 ?

7 *Ibid.*, p. 276.

8
9 519 ?

10 *New Discoveries*, Vol. 6, p. 11-12.

1 conversations and interviews 349
2

1
2 From Alice Hansbrough's reminiscences of a question-answer session following one of Swami
3 Vivekananda's San Francisco classes pertaining to renunciation:

4
5 WOMAN STUDENT: Well, Swami, what would become of the world if everyone renounced?

6 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: Madam, why do you come to me with that lie on your lips? You have never
7 considered anything in this world but your own pleasure!

shri ramakrishna's disciple⁵²⁰

Mrs. Edith Allan described a teacher-student exchange in one of Swami Vivekananda's San Francisco classes:

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: I am the disciple of a man who could not write his own name, and I am not worthy to undo his shoes. How often have I wished I could take my intellect and throw it into the Ganges!

STUDENT: But, Swami, that is the part of you I like best.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: That is because you are a fool, Madam—like I am.

the master's divine incarnation⁵²¹

From Mrs. Edith Allan's reminiscences:

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: I have to come back once more. The Master said I am to come back once more with him.

MRS. ALLAN: You have to come back because Shri Ramakrishna says so?

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: Souls like that have great power, Madam.

a private admission⁵²²

520 ?

New Discoveries, Vol. 6, p. 12.

521 ?

Ibid., p. 17.

522 ?

1 conversations and interviews 351
2

1
2 From Mrs. Edith Allan's reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda's stay in northern California, 1900:

3
4 WOMAN STUDENT: Oh, if I had only lived earlier, I could have seen Shri Ramakrishna!

5 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA (turning quietly to her): You say that, and you have seen me?

3
4

Ibid., p. 121.

1 A Greeting⁵²³

2
3 From Mr. Thomas Allan's reminiscences of Swami Viveka-nanda's visit to Alameda, California, 1900:

4
5 MR. ALLAN: Well, Swami, I see you are in Alameda!

6 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: No, Mr. Allan, I am not in Ala-meda; Alameda is in me.

7 "this world is a circus ring"⁵²⁴

8
9 From Mrs. Alice Hansbrough's reminiscences of Swami Viveka-nanda's conversation with Miss Bell
10 at Camp Taylor, California, in May 1900:

11
12 MISS BELL: This world is an old schoolhouse where we come to learn our lessons.

13 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: Who told you that? [Miss Bell could not remember.] Well, I don't think so. I
14 think this world is a circus ring in which we are the clowns tumbling.

15 MISS BELL: Why do we tumble, Swami?

16 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: Because we like to tumble. When we get tired, we will quit.

17 on kali⁵²⁵

3 523 ?

4 *New Discoveries*, Vol. 6, p. 136.

5
6 524 ?

7 Ibid., p. 156.

8
9 525 ?

10 *The Complete Works of Sister Nivedita*, Vol. I, p. 118.

1 conversations and interviews 353
2

1
2 Sister Nivedita's reminiscence of a conversation with Swami Vivekananda at the time she was
3 learning the Kâli worship:

4
5 SISTER NIVEDITA: Perhaps, Swamiji, Kali is the vision of Shiva! Is She?

6 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: Well! Well! Express it in your own way. Express it in your own way!

1 training under shri ramakrishna⁵²⁶

2
3 While on board a ship to England, Swami Vivekananda was touched by the childlike devotion of the
4 ship's servants:

5
6 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: You see, I love our Mohammedans!

7 SISTER NIVEDITA: Yes, but what I want to understand is this habit of seeing every people from their
8 strongest aspect. Where did it come from? Do you recognize it in any historical character? Or is it in some
9 way derived from Shri Ramakrishna?

10 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: It must have been the training under Ramakrishna Paramahansa. We all went
11 by his path to some extent. Of course it was not so difficult for us as he made it for himself. He would eat
12 and dress like the people he wanted to understand, take their initiation, and use their language. "One
13 must learn", he said, "to put oneself into another man's very soul". And this method was his own! No one
14 ever before in India became Christian and Mohammedan and Vaishnava, by turn!

3 ⁵²⁶ ? *The Complete Works of Sister Nivedita*, Vol. I, pp. 159-60.
4

1 conversations and interviews 355
2

1 notes of some wanderings with the
2 swami vivekananda

3 [Excerpts from the book by Sister Nivedita]

1 conversations and interviews 356

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3
4 ⁵²⁷ ? In the following work only those extracts which present Swami Vivekananda's ideas or direct quotations have been printed.
5 Descriptions marking the background context of these talks have also been retained for the sake of clarity and continuity. Ellipses
6 mark the deleted portions. Spelling and punctuation have been made to conform to the style of the Complete Works.
7

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3

1
2 FOREWORD

3
4 PERSONS: The Swami Vivekananda, Gurubhais,⁵²⁸ and a party of European guests and disciples,
5 amongst whom were Dhira Mata, the "Steady Mother" [Mrs. Ole Bull]; one whose name was Jaya [Miss
6 Josephine MacLeod]; and Sister Nivedita.⁵²⁹

7 PLACE: Different parts of India.

8 TIME: The year 1898.

9
10 Beautiful have been the days of this year. In them the Ideal has become the Real. First in our
11 riverside cottage at Belur; then in the Himalayas, at Naini Tal and Almora; afterwards wandering here and
12 there through Kashmir—everywhere have come hours never to be forgotten, words that will echo through
13 our lives forever, and once, at least, a glimpse of the Beatific Vision.

14 It has been all play.

15 We have seen a love that would be one with the humblest and most ignorant, seeing the world for
16 the moment through his eyes, as if criticism were not; we have laughed over the colossal caprice of
17 genius; we have warmed ourselves at heroic fires; and we have been present, as it were, at the awakening
18 of the Holy Child.

19 But there has been nothing grim or serious about any of these things. Pain has come close to all of
20 us. Solemn anniversaries have been and gone. But sorrow was lifted into a golden light, where it was
21 made radiant and did not destroy.

3 528 ?

4 Spiritual brethren; disciples of one and the same master are so called.

5
6 529 ?

7 Dhira Mata and Jaya were Americans; Nivedita was British.—Publisher.
8

1 Fain, if I could, would I describe our journeys. Even as I write I see the irises in bloom at Baramulla;
2 the young rice beneath the poplars at Islamabad; starlight scenes in Himalayan forests; and the royal
3 beauties of Delhi and the Taj. One longs to attempt some memorial of these. It would be worse than use-
4 less. Not, then, in words, but in the light of memory they are enshrined forever, together with the kindly
5 and gentle folk who

1 dwell among them and whom we trust always to have left the gladder for our coming.

2 We have learnt something of the mood in which new faiths are born and of the persons who inspire
3 such faiths. For we have been with one who drew all men to him—listening to all, feeling with all and
4 refusing none. We have known a humility that wiped out all littleness, a renunciation that would die for
5 scorn of oppression and pity of the oppressed, a love that would bless even the oncoming feet of torture
6 and of death. We have joined hands with that woman who washed the feet of the Lord with her tears and
7 wiped them with the hairs of her head. We have lacked not the occasion, but her passionate consciousness
8 of self.

9 Seated under a tree in the garden of dead emperors there came to us a vision of all the rich and
10 splendid things of Earth, offering themselves as a shrine for the great of soul. The storied windows of
11 cathedrals and the jewelled thrones of kings, the banners of great captains and the vestments of the
12 priests, the pageants of cities and the retreats of the proud—all came and all were rejected.

13 In the garments of the beggar, despised by the alien, worshipped by the people, we have seen him;
14 and only the bread of toil, the shelter of cottage roofs, and the common road across the cornfields seem
15 real enough for the background to this life.

16 . . . Amongst his own the ignorant loved him as much as schol-ars and statesmen. The boatmen
17 watched the river, in his ab-sence, for his return, and servants disputed with guests to do him service. And
18 through it all the veil of playfulness was never dropped. "They played with the Lord" and instinctively they
19 knew it.

20 To those who have known such hours, life is richer and sweeter, and in the long nights even the
21 wind in the palm trees seems to cry: "Mahâdeva! Mahadeva! Mahadeva!"

1
2 CHAPTER I

3
4 The House on the Ganges

5
6 PLACE: A cottage at Belur, beside the Ganges.

7 TIME: March to May, 1898.

8
9 Of the home by the Ganges the Master had said to one, "You will find that little house of Dhira Mata
10 like heaven, for it is all love, from beginning to end".

11 It was so indeed. Within, an unbroken harmony, and without, everything alike beautiful—the green
12 stretch of grass, the tall cocoanut palms, the little brown villages in the jungle, and the Nilkantha that
13 built her nest in a tree-top beside us, on purpose to bring us the blessings of Shiva. In the morning the
14 shadows lay behind the house, but in the afternoons we could sit in front worshipping the Ganges
15 herself—great leonine mother!—

16 and in sight of Dakshineswar.

17 There came one and another with traditions of the past, and we learnt of the Master's eight years'
18 wanderings; of the name changed from village to village; of the Nirvikalpa Samâdhi; and of that sacred
19 sorrow, too deep for words or for common sight, that one who loved had alone seen. And there too came
20 the Master himself, with his stories of Umâ and Shiva, of Râdhâ and Krishna, and his fragments of song
21 and poetry.

22 It seemed as if he knew that the first material of a new consciousness must be a succession of vivid
23 but isolated experi-ences, poured out without proper sequence so as to provoke the mind of the learner to
24 work for its own conception of order and relation. . . . For the most part it was the Indian religions that he
25 portrayed for us—today dealing with one and tomorrow with another—his choice guided, seemingly, by the
26 whim of the moment. But it was not religion only that he poured out upon us. Sometimes it would be

1 history. Again, it would be folk-lore. On still another occasion it would be the manifold anomalies and
2 inconsistencies of race, caste and custom. In fact India herself became, as heard in him, as the last and
3 noblest of the Purânas, uttering itself through his lips.

1 Another point in which he had caught a great psychological secret was that of never trying to soften
2 for us that which would at first sight be difficult or repellent. In matters Indian he would rather put
3 forward, in its extreme form at the beginning of our experience, all that might seem impossible for
4 European minds to enjoy. Thus he would quote, for instance, some verses about Gauri and Shankar in a
5 single form:

6
7 On one side grows the hair in long black curls,
8 And on the other, corded like rope.
9 On one side are seen the beautiful garlands,
10 On the other, bone earrings and snake-like coils.
11 One side is white with ashes, like the snow mountains,
12 The other, golden as the light of dawn.
13 For He, the Lord, took a form,
14 And that was a divided form,
15 Half-woman and half-man.

16
17

18 Whatever might be the subject of the conversation, it ended always on the note of the infinite. . . .
19 He might appear to take up any subject—literary, ethnological or scientific—but he always made us feel it
20 as an illustration of the Ultimate Vision. There was for him nothing secular. He had a loathing for bondage
21 and a horror of those who "cover chains with flowers", but he never failed to make the true critic's
22 distinction between this and the highest forms of art.

23 One day we were receiving European guests and he entered into a long talk about Persian poetry.
24 Then suddenly, finding himself quoting the poem that says, "For one mole on the face of my Beloved, I
25 would give all the wealth of Samarkand!" he turned and said energetically, "I would not give a straw, you

1 know, for the man who was incapable of appreciating a love song!" His talk too teemed with epigrams.

2 It was that same afternoon, in the course of a long political argument, that he said, "In order to
3 become a nation, it appears that *we need a common hate* as well as a common love".

4 Several months later he remarked that before one who had a mission he never talked of any of the
5 gods save Uma and Shiva.

1 For Shiva and the Mother made the great workers. Yet I have sometimes wondered if he knew at
 2 this time how the end of every theme was Bhakti. Much as he dreaded the luxury of spiritual emotion for
 3 those who might be enervated by it, he could not help giving glimpses of what it meant to be consumed
 4 with the intoxication of God. And so he would chant for us such poems as:

5

6 They have made Radha queen, in the beautiful
 7 groves of Vrindaban.

8 At her gate stands Krishna, on guard.

9 His flute is singing all the time:

10 "Radha is about to distribute infinite wealth of love.

11 Though I am guard, all the world may enter.

12 Come all ye who thirst! Say only 'Glory unto Radha!'

13 Enter the region of love!"

14

15 Or he would give us the great antiphonal Chorus of the Cowherds, written by his friend:⁵³⁰

16

17 Men: Thou art the Soul of souls,

18 Thou yellow-garbed,

19 With thy blue eyes.

20 Women: Thou dark One! Thou

21 Shepherd of Vrindaban!

3 ⁵³⁰ ? The Bengali dramatist Girish Chandra Ghosh.

1 conversations and interviews 366
2

1 Kneeling at the feet of the Shepherdesses.

2 Men: My soul sings the praise of the glory
3 of the Lord,

4 Who took the human form.

5 Women: Thy beauty for us, the Gopis.

6 Men: Thou Lord of Sacrifice.

7 Saviour of the weak.

8 Women: Who lovest Radha and thy body floats on its
9 own tears.

10

11

1 MARCH 25.

2 . . . At this time the Swami kept the custom of coming to the cottage early and spending the morning
3 hours there, and again returning in the late afternoon. On the second morning of this visit,
4 however—Friday, the Christian feast of the Annunciation—he took us all three back to the Math, and there
5 in the worship-room was held a little service of initiation where one was made a Brahmachârini. That was
6 the happiest of mornings.

7 After the service we were taken upstairs. The Swami put on the ashes and bone-earrings and matted
8 locks of a Shiva-Yogi and sang and played to us—Indian music on Indian instruments
9 —for an hour.

10 And in the evening in our boat on the Ganges, he opened his heart to us and told us much of his
11 questions and anxieties regarding the trust that he held from his own Master.

12 Another week and he was gone to Darjeeling; and till the day that the plague declaration brought
13 him back, we saw him again no more.

14 MAY 3.

15 Then two of us met him in the house of our Holy Mother. The political sky was black. It seemed as if
16 a storm were about to burst. . . . Plague, panic and riot were doing their fell work. And the Master turned
17 to the two and said, "There are some who scoff at the existence of Kâli. Yet today She is out there amongst
18 the people. They are frantic with fear, and the soldiery have been called to deal out death. Who can say
19 that God does not manifest Himself as evil as well as good? But only the Hindu dares to worship Him in
20 the evil".

21 He had come back and the old life was resumed once more, as far as could be, seeing that an
22 epidemic was in prospect and that measures were on hand to give the people confidence. As long as this
23 possibility darkened the horizon, he would not leave Calcutta. But it passed away, and those happy days
24 with it, and the time came that we should go.

1
2 CHAPTER II

3
4 AT NAINI TAL AND ALMORA

5
6 PERSONS: The Swami Vivekananda, Gurubhâis, and a party of Europeans and disciples, amongst
7 whom were Dhira Mata, the "Steady Mother"; one whose name was Jaya; and Nivedita.

8 PLACE: The Himalayas.

9 TIME: May 11 to May 25, 1898.

10
11 We were a large party, or, indeed, two parties, that left Howrah station on Wednesday evening and
12 on Friday morning came in sight of the Himalayas. . . .

13 Naini Tal was made beautiful by three things—the Master's pleasure in introducing to us his disciple
14 the Raja of Khetri; the dancing girls who met us and asked us where to find him, and were received by him
15 in spite of the remonstrances of others; and by the Mohammedan gentleman who said, "Swamiji, if in
16 after-times any claim you as an Avatâra, an especial incarnation of the Deity—remember that I, a
17 Mohammedan, am the first!"

18 It was here too that we heard a long talk on Ram Mohan Roy in which he pointed out three things as
19 the dominant notes of this teacher's message—his acceptance of the Vedanta, his preaching of patriotism,
20 and the love that embraced the Mussulman equally with the Hindu. In all these things he claimed himself
21 to have taken up the task that the breadth and foresight of Ram Mohan Roy had mapped out.

22 The incident of the dancing girls occurred in consequence of our visit to the two temples at the head
23 of the tarn. . . . Here, offering worship, we found two nautch-women. When they had finished, they came
24 up to us, and we, in broken language, entered into conversation with them. We took them for respectable
25 ladies of the town and were much astonished later at the storm which had evidently passed over the
26 Swami's audience at his refusal to have them turned away. Am I mistaken in thinking that it was in

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2

1 connection with these dancing-women of Naini Tal that he first told us the story, many times repeated, of
2 the nautch-girl

1 of Khetri? He had been angry at the invitation to see her, but being prevailed upon to come, she
2 sang:

3
4 O Lord, look not upon my evil qualities!
5 Thy name, O Lord, is Same-Sightedness.
6 Make us both the same Brahman!

7
8 One piece of iron is the knife in the hand of the butcher,
9 And another piece of iron is the image in the temple.
10 But when they touch the philosopher's stone,
11 Both alike turn to gold!

12
13 One drop of water is in the sacred Jamuna,
14 And one is foul in a ditch by the roadside.
15 But when they fall into the Ganges,
16 Both alike become holy!

17
18 So, Lord, look not upon my evil qualities!
19 Thy name, O Lord, is Same-Sightedness.
20 Make us both the same Brahman!

21
22 And then, said the Master of himself, the scales fell from his eyes, and seeing that all are indeed
23 one, he condemned no more. . . .

1 It was late in the afternoon when we left Naini Tal for Almora, and night overtook us while still
2 travelling through the forest. . . . till we reached a quaintly placed Dak bungalow, on the mountain side in
3 the midst of trees. There after some time Swamiji arrived with his party, full of fun and keen in his ap-
4 preciation of everything that concerned the comfort of his guests. . . .

5 From the day that we arrived at Almora the Swami renewed his habit of coming over to us at our
6 early breakfast and spending some hours in talk. Then and always he was an exceedingly light sleeper,
7 and I imagine that his visit to us, early as the hour might be, was often paid during the course of his
8 return with his monks from a still earlier walk. Sometimes, but rarely, we saw him again in the evening,
9 either meeting him when out for a walk or going ourselves to Captain Sevier's, where he and his

1 party were staying, and seeing him there. And once he came at that time to call on us.

2 Into these morning talks at Almora a strange new element, painful but salutary to remember, had
3 crept. There appeared to be on the one side a curious bitterness and distrust, and on the other, irritation
4 and defiance. The youngest of the Swami's disciples at this time, it must be remembered, was an English
5 woman, and of how much this fact meant intellectually—what a strong bias it implied, and always does
6 imply, in the reading of India, what an idealism of the English race and all their deeds and history—the
7 Swami himself had had no conception till the day after her initiation at the monastery. Then he had asked
8 her some exultant question, as to which nation she now belonged, and had been startled to find with what
9 a passion of loyalty and worship she regarded the English flag, giving to it much of the feeling that an
10 Indian woman would give to her Thakur. His surprise and disappointment at the moment were scarcely
11 perceptible. A startled look, no more. Nor did his discovery of the superficial way in which this disciple
12 had joined herself with his people in any degree affect his confidence and courtesy during the remaining
13 weeks spent in the plains.

14 But with Almora it seemed as if a going-to-school had commenced. . . . It was never more than this;
15 never the dictating of opinion or creed; never more than emancipation from partiality. Even at the end of
16 the terrible experience when this method, as regarded race and country, was renounced, never to be
17 taken up systematically again, the Swami did not call for any confession of faith, any declaration of new
18 opinion. He dropped the whole question. His listener went free. But he had revealed a different standpoint
19 in thought and feeling, so completely and so strongly as to make it impossible for her to rest, until later,
20 by her own labours, she had arrived at a view in which both these partial presentments stood rationalized
21 and accounted for.

22 "Really, patriotism like yours is sin!" he exclaimed once, many weeks later, when the process of
23 obtaining an uncoloured judgement on some incident had been more than commonly exasperating. "All
24 that I want you to see is that most people's actions are the expression of self-interest, and you constantly

1 oppose to this the idea that a certain race are all angels. Ignorance so determined is wickedness!" . .

2 .

3 These morning talks at Almora, then, took the form of assaults upon deep-rooted

4 preconceptions—social, literary and artistic—or of long comparisons of Indian and European history and

5 sentiments, often containing extended observations of very great value. One characteristic of the Swami

6 was the habit of attacking the abuses of a country or society openly and vigorously when he was in its

7 midst, whereas after he had left it, it would often seem as if nothing but its virtues were remembered by

8 him. He was always testing his disciples, and the manner of these particular discourses was probably

9 adopted in order to put to the proof the courage and sincerity of one who was both woman and European.

1
2 CHAPTER III

3
4 MORNING TALKS AT ALMORA

5
6 PLACE: Almora.

7 TIME: May and June, 1898.

8
9 The first morning the talk was that of the central ideals of civilization—in the West, truth; in the East,
10 chastity. He justified Hindu marriage customs as springing from the pursuit of this ideal and from the
11 woman's need of protection, in combination. And he traced out the relation of the whole subject to the
12 philosophy of the Absolute.

13 Another morning he began by observing that as there were four main castes—Brahmin, Kshatriya,
14 Bâniyâ [Vaishya], Shudra—so there were four great national functions: the religious or priestly, fulfilled by
15 the Hindus; the military, by the Roman Empire; the mercantile, by England today; and the democratic, by
16 America in the future. And here he launched off into a glowing prophetic forecast of how America would
17 yet solve the problems of the Shudra—the problems of freedom and co-operation—and turned to relate to a
18 non-American listener the generosity of the arrangements which that people had attempted to make for
19 their aborigines.

20 Again it would be an eager *résumé* of the history of India or of the Moguls, whose greatness never
21 wearied him. Every now and then throughout the summer he would break out into descriptions of Delhi
22 and Agra. Once he described the Taj as "a dimness, and again a dimness, and there—a grave!"

23 Another time he spoke of Shah Jehan, and then, with a burst of enthusiasm: "Ah! *He* was the glory of
24 his line! A feeling for and discrimination of beauty that are unparalleled in history. And an artist himself! I
25 have seen a manuscript illuminated by him which is one of the art treasures of India. What a genius!"

26 Oftener still, it was Akbar of whom he would tell, almost with tears in his voice and a passion easier

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2

1 to understand, beside

1 that undomed tomb, open to sun and wind—the grave of Secundra at Agra.

2 But all the more universal forms of human feeling were open to the Master. In one mood he talked of
3 China as if she were the treasure-house of the world, and told us of the thrill with which he saw
4 inscriptions in old Bengali (Kutil?) characters over the doors of Chinese temples.

5 Few things could be more eloquent of the vagueness of Western ideas regarding Oriental peoples
6 than the fact that one of his listeners alleged untruthfulness as a notorious quality of that race. . . . The
7 Swami would have none of it. Untruthfulness! Social rigidity! What were these, except very, very relative
8 terms? And as to untruthfulness in particular, could commercial life or social life or any other form of
9 co-operation go on for a day if men did not trust men? Untruthfulness as a necessity of etiquette? And how
10 was that different from the Western idea? Is the Englishman always glad and always sorry at the proper
11 place? But there is still a difference of degree? Perhaps—but only of degree!

12 Or he might wander as far afield as Italy, that "greatest of the countries of Europe—land of religion
13 and of art; alike of imperial organization and of Mazzini; mother of ideas, of culture and of freedom!"

14 One day it was Shivaji and the Mahrattas and the year's wandering as a Sannyâsin that won him
15 home to Raigarh. "And to this day", said the Swami, "authority in India dreads the Sannyasin, lest he
16 conceals beneath his yellow garb another Shivaji".

17 Often the enquiry "Who and what are the Aryans?" ab-sorbed his attention; and holding that their
18 origin was complex, he would tell us how in Switzerland he had felt himself to be in China, so like were
19 the types. He believed too that the same was true of some parts of Norway. Then there were scraps of
20 information about countries and physiognomies, an impassioned tale of the Hungarian scholar who traced
21 the Huns to Tibet, and lies buried in Darjeeling and so on. . . .

22 Sometimes the Swami would deal with the rift between Brahmins and Kshatriyas, painting the whole
23 history of India as a struggle between the two and showing that the latter had

1 always embodied the rising, fetter-destroying impulses of the nation. He could give excellent reason
 2 too for the faith that was in him that the Kâyasthas of modern Bengal represented the pre-Mauryan
 3 Kshatriyas. He would portray the two opposing types of culture: the one, classical, intensive and saturated
 4 with an ever-deepening sense of tradition and custom; the other, defiant, impulsive and liberal in its
 5 outlook. It was part of a deep-lying law of the historic development that Râma, Krishna and Buddha had all
 6 arisen in the kingly, and not in the priestly caste. And in this paradoxical moment Buddhism was reduced
 7 to a caste-smashing formula—"a religion invented by the Kshatriyas" as a crushing rejoinder to
 8 Brahminism!

9 That was a great hour indeed when he spoke of Buddha; for, catching a word that seemed to identify
 10 him with its anti-Brahminical spirit, an uncomprehending listener said, "Why, Swami, I did not know that
 11 you were a Buddhist!"

12 "Madam", he said, rounding on her, his whole face aglow with the inspiration of that name, "I am the
 13 servant of the servants of the servants of Buddha. Who was there ever like him?—the Lord—who never
 14 performed one action for himself—with a heart that embraced the whole world! So full of pity that
 15 he—prince and monk—would give his life to save a little goat! So loving that he sacrificed himself to the
 16 hunger of a tigress!—to the hospitality of a pariah and blessed him! And he came into my room when I was
 17 a boy and I fell at his feet! For I knew it was the Lord Himself!"

18 Many times he spoke of Buddha in this fashion, sometimes at Belur and sometimes afterwards. And
 19 once he told us the story of Ambâpâli, the beautiful courtesan who feasted him. . . .

20 National feeling did not have it all its own way. For one morning when the chasm seemed to be
 21 widest, there was a long talk on Bhakti—that perfect identity with the Beloved that the devotion of Ray
 22 Ramananda, the Bengali nobleman, before Chaitanya so beautifully illustrates:

23

24 Four eyes met. There were changes in two souls.

25 And now I cannot remember whether he is a man

26 And I a woman, or he a woman and I a man!

1 All I know is, there were two, Love came, and
2 there is one!

3
4 It was that same morning that he talked of the Babists of Persia, in their era of martyrdom—of the
5 woman who inspired and the man who worshipped and worked. And doubtless then he expatiated on that
6 theory of his—somewhat quaint and surprising to unaccustomed minds, not so much for the matter of the
7 statement as for the explicitness of the expression—of the greatness and goodness of the young, who can
8 love without seeking personal expression for their love, and their high potentiality.

9 Another day coming at sunrise when the snows could be seen, dawn-lighted, from the garden, it was
10 Shiva and Umâ on whom he dwelt—and that was Shiva up there, the white snow-peaks, and the light that
11 fell upon Him was the Mother of the World! For a thought on which at this time he was dwelling much was
12 that God is the Universe—not within it or outside it and not the universe God or the image of God, but He
13 it, and the All.

14 Sometimes all through the summer he would sit for hours telling us stories, those cradle-tales of
15 Hinduism whose function is not at all that of our nursery fictions, but much more like the man-making
16 myths of the old Hellenic world. Best of all these I thought was the story of Shuka, and we looked on the
17 Shiva-mountains and the bleak scenery of Almora the evening we heard it for the first time. . . .

18 Shuka was indeed the Swami's saint. He was the type, to him, of that highest realization to which
19 life and the world are merely play. Long after, we learned how Shri Ramakrishna had spoken of him in his
20 boyhood as "my Shuka". And never can I forget the look, as of one gazing far into depths of joy, with which
21 he once stood and quoted the words of Shiva in praise of the deep spiritual significance of the
22 Bhagavad-Gitâ and of the greatness of Shuka: "I know the real meaning of the teachings of the
23 Bhagavad-Gita, and Shuka knows, and *perhaps* Vyâsa knows

24 —a little!"

25 Another day in Almora the Swami talked of the great humanizing lives that had arisen in Bengal, at
26 the long inrolling

1 wash of the first wave of modern consciousness on the ancient shores of Hindu culture. Of Ram
2 Mohan Roy we had already heard from him at Naini Tal. And now of the Pundit Vidyâsâgar he exclaimed,
3 "There is not a man of my age in northern India on whom his shadow has not fallen!" It was a great joy to
4 him to remember that these men and Shri Ramakrishna had all been born within a few miles of each
5 other.

6 The Swami introduced Vidyasagar to us now as "the hero of widow remarriage and of the abolition
7 of polygamy". But his favourite story about him was of that day when he went home from the Legislative
8 Council, pondering over the question of whether or not to adopt English dress on such occasions. Sud-
9 denly someone came up to a fat Mogul who was proceeding homewards in leisurely and pompous fashion
10 in front of him, with the news "Sir, your house is on fire!" The Mogul went neither faster nor slower for
11 this information, and presently the messenger contrived to express a discreet astonishment, whereupon
12 his master turned on him angrily. "Wretch!" he said. "Am I to abandon the gait of my ancestors because a
13 few sticks happen to be burning?" And Vidyasagar, walking behind, determined to stick to the Châdar,
14 Dhoti and sandals, not even adopting coat and slippers.

15 The picture of Vidyasagar going into retreat for a month for the study of the Shâstras, when his
16 mother had suggested to him the remarriage of child-widows, was very forcible. "He came out of his
17 retirement of opinion that they were *not* against such remarriage, and he obtained the signatures of the
18 pundits that they agreed in this opinion. Then the action of certain native princes led the pundits to
19 abandon their own signatures so that, had the government not determined to assist the movement, it
20 could not have been carried—and now", added the Swami, "the difficulty has an economic rather than a
21 social basis".

22 We could believe that a man who was able to discredit polygamy by moral force alone, was
23 "intensely spiritual". And it was wonderful indeed to realize the Indian indifference to a formal creed when
24 we heard how this giant was driven by the famine of 1864—when 140,000 people died of hunger and
25 disease—to have nothing more to do with God and become entirely agnostic in thought.

With this man, as one of the educators of Bengal, the Swami coupled the name of David Hare, the old Scotsman and atheist to whom the clergy of Calcutta refused Christian burial. He had died of nursing an old pupil through cholera. So his own boys carried his dead body and buried it in a swamp and made the grave a place of pilgrimage. That place has now become College Square, the educational centre, and his school is now within the university. And to this day Calcutta students make pilgrimage to the tomb.

On this day we took advantage of the natural turn of the conversation to cross-question the Swami as to the possible influence that Christianity might have exerted over himself. He was much amused to hear that such a statement had been hazarded, and told us with much pride of his only contact with missionary influences, in the person of his old Scotch master, Mr. Hastie. This hot-headed old man lived on nothing and regarded his room as his boys' home as much as his own. It was he who had first sent the Swami to Shri Ramakrishna, and towards the end of his stay in India he used to say, "Yes, my boy, you were right, you were right!—It is true that all is God!" "I am *proud* of him!" cried the Swami. "But I don't think you could say that he had Christianized me much!" . . .

We heard charming stories too on less serious subjects. There was the lodging-house in an American city, for instance, where he had had to cook his own food, and where he would meet in the course of operations "an actress who ate roast turkey every day, and a husband and wife who lived by making ghosts". And when the Swami remonstrated with the husband and tried to persuade him to give up deceiving people, saying, "You *ought* not to do this!" the wife would come up behind and say eagerly, "Yes, sir! That's just what I tell him; for *he* makes all the ghosts, and Mrs. Williams takes all the money!"

He told us also of a young engineer, an educated man, who, at a spiritualistic gathering, "when the fat Mrs. Williams appeared from behind the screen as his thin mother, exclaimed, 'Mother dear, how you *have* grown in the spirit-world!' "

"At this", said the Swami, "my heart broke, for I thought there could be no hope for the man". But never at a loss, he told the story of a Russian painter who was ordered to paint the pic-

1 ture of a peasant's dead father, the only description given being, "Man! Don't I tell you he had a
2 wart on his nose?" When at last, therefore, the painter had made a portrait of some stray peasant and
3 affixed a large wart to the nose, the picture was declared to be ready, and the son was told to come and
4 see it. He stood in front of it, greatly overcome, and said, "Father! Father! How changed you are since I
5 saw you last!" After this, the young engineer would never speak to the Swami again, which showed at
6 least that he could see the point of a story. But at this the Hindu monk was genuinely astonished.

7 In spite of such general interests, however, the inner strife grew high, and the thought pressed on
8 the mind of one of the older members of our party that the Master himself needed service and peace.
9 Many times he spoke with wonder of the torture of life, and who can say how many signs there were of
10 bitter need? A word or two was spoken—little, but enough—and he, after many hours, came back and told
11 us that he longed for quiet and would go alone to the forests and find soothing.

12 And then, looking up, he saw the young moon shining above us, and he said, "The Mohammedans
13 think much of the new moon. Let us also, with the new moon, begin a new life!" And he blessed his
14 daughter with a great blessing so that she, thinking that her old relationship was broken, nor dreaming
15 that a new and deeper life was being given to it, knew only that the hour was strange and passing sweet. .
16 . .

17 MAY 25

18 He went. It was Wednesday. And on Saturday he came back. He had been in the silence of the
19 forests ten hours each day, but on returning to his tent in the evenings he had been surrounded with so
20 much eager attendance as to break the mood, and he had fled. Yet he was radiant. He had discovered in
21 himself the old-time Sannyasin, able to go barefoot and endure heat, cold and scanty fare, unspoilt by the
22 West. . . .

1 JUNE 2.

2

3 And then, as we sat working on Friday morning the telegram came, a day late, that said: "Goodwin
4 died last night at Ootacamund". Our poor friend had, it appeared, been one of the first victims of what was
5 to prove an epidemic of typhoid fever. And it seemed that with his last breath he had spoken of the Swami
6 and longed for his presence by his side.

7 JUNE 5.

8 On Sunday evening the Swami came home. Through our gate and over the terrace his way brought
9 him, and there we sat and talked with him a moment. He did not know our news, but a great darkness
10 hung over him already, and presently he broke the silence to remind us of that saint who had called the
11 cobra's bite "messenger from the Beloved", one whom he had loved second only to Shri Ramakrishna
12 himself. "I have just", he said, "received a letter that says: 'Pavhari Baba has completed all his sacrifices
13 with the sacrifice of his own body. He has burnt himself in his sacrificial fire'". "Swami!" exclaimed
14 someone from amongst his listeners. "Wasn't that very wrong?"

15 "How can I tell?" said the Swami, speaking in great agitation. "He was too great a man for me to
16 judge. He knew himself what he was doing."

17 Very little was said after this, and the party of monks passed on. Not yet had the other news been
18 broken.

19 JUNE 6.

20 Next morning he came early in a great mood. He had been up, he said afterwards, since four. And
21 one went out to meet him and told him of Mr. Goodwin's death. The blow fell quietly. Some days later he
22 refused to stay in the place where he had received it, and complained of the weakness that brought the
23 image of his most faithful disciple constantly into his mind. It was no more manly, he protested, to be thus
24 ridden by one's

1 memory than to retain the characteristics of the fish or the dog. Man must conquer this illusion and
2 know that the dead are here beside us and with us as much as ever. It is their absence and separation that
3 are a myth. And then he would break out again with some bitter utterance against the folly of imagining
4 Personal Will to guide the universe. "As if", he exclaimed, "it would not be one's right and duty to fight
5 such a God and slay Him for killing Goodwin! And Goodwin, if he had lived, could have done so much!"
6 And in India one was free to recognize this as the most religious, because the most unflinchingly truthful,
7 mood of all!

8 And while I speak of this utterance, I may perhaps put beside it another that I heard a year later,
9 spoken out of the same fierce wonder at the dreams with which we comfort ourselves. "Why!" he said
10 then. "Every petty magistrate and officer is allowed his period of retirement and rest. Only God, the
11 Eternal Magistrate, must sit judging forever and never go free!"

12 But in these first hours the Swami was calm about his loss, and sat down and chatted quietly with
13 us. He was full that morning of Bhakti passing into asceticism, the divine passion that carries the soul on
14 its high tides far out of reach of persons, yet leaves it again struggling to avoid those sweet snares of per-
15 sonality.

16 What he said that morning of renunciation proved a hard gospel to one of those who listened, and
17 when he came again she put it to him as her conviction that to love without attachment involved no pain,
18 and was in itself ideal.

19 He turned on her with a sudden solemnity. "What is this idea of Bhakti without renunciation?" he
20 said. "It is most pernicious!" And standing there for an hour or more, he talked of the awful self-discipline
21 that one must impose on oneself if one would indeed be unattached, of the requisite nakedness of selfish
22 motives, and of the danger that at any moment the most flower-like soul might have its petals soiled with
23 the grosser stains of life. He told the story of an Indian nun who was asked when a man could be certain
24 of safety on this road, and who sent back for answer a little plate of ashes. For the fight against passion
25 was long and fierce, and at any moment the conqueror might become the conquered. . . .

. . . Weeks afterwards in Kashmir, when he was again talking in some kindred fashion, one of us ventured to ask him if the feeling he thus roused were not that worship of pain that Europe abhors as morbid.

"Is the worship of pleasure, then, so noble?" was his immediate answer. "But indeed", he added after a pause, "we worship neither pain nor pleasure. We seek through either to come at that which transcends them both".

JUNE 9.

This Thursday morning there was a talk on Krishna. It was characteristic of the Swami's mind, and characteristic also of the Hindu culture from which he had sprung, that he could lend himself to the enjoyment and portrayal of an idea one day that the next would see submitted to a pitiless analysis and left slain upon the field. He was a sharer to the full in the belief of his people that, provided an idea was spiritually true and consistent, it mattered very little about its objective actuality. And this mode of thought had first been suggested to him in his boyhood by his own master. He had mentioned some doubt as to the authenticity of a certain religious history. "What!" said Shri Ramakrishna. "Do you not then think that those who could conceive such ideas must have been the thing itself?"

The existence of Krishna, then, like that of Christ, he often told us "in the general way" he doubted. Buddha and Mohammed alone amongst religious teachers had been fortunate enough to have "enemies as well as friends", so that their historical careers were beyond dispute. As for Krishna, he was the most shadowy of all. A poet, a cowherd, a great ruler, a warrior and a sage had all perhaps been merged in one beautiful figure holding the Gitâ in his hand.

But today Krishna was "the most perfect of the Avatâras". And a wonderful picture followed of the charioteer who reined in his horses while he surveyed the field of battle and in one brief glance noted the disposition of the forces, at the same moment that he commenced to utter to his royal pupil the deep spiritual truths of the Gita.

And indeed as we went through the countrysides of northern India this summer, we had many chances of noting how deep this Krishna myth had set its mark upon the people. The songs that dancers chanted as they danced in the roadside hamlets were all of Râdhâ and Krishna. And the Swami was fond of a statement, as to which we, of course, could have no opinion, that the Krishna-worshippers of India had exhausted the possibilities of the romantic motive in lyric poetry. . . .

But throughout these days the Swami was fretting to be away and alone. The place where he had heard of Mr. Goodwin's loss was intolerable to him, and letters to be written and received constantly renewed the wound. He said one day that Shri Ramakrishna, while seeming to be all Bhakti, was really within all Jnâna; but he himself, apparently all Jnana, was full of Bhakti, and that thereby he was apt to be as weak as any woman.

One day he carried off a few faulty lines of someone's writing and brought back a little poem, which was sent to the widowed mother as his memorial of her son. . . . [*Vide* "Requi-escat in Pace", *Complete Works*, IV: 389.]

And then, because there was nothing left of the original and he feared that she who was corrected (because *her* lines had been "in three metres") might be hurt, he expatiated, long and earnestly upon the theme, that it was so much greater to feel poetically than merely to string syllables together in rhyme and metre.⁵³¹ He might be very severe on a sympathy or an opinion

⁵³¹ ? In the original manuscript of the book Sister Nivedita added the following note:

"In obedience to the beloved wish of S. Sara, I give here the original lines:

Speed forth, lonely Soul, upon thy star-strewn path,

Spread, lonely soul, upon thy meditative way,

Freed from the mists of time and sense—

Ascend;

Service complete and service accepted, from

Thy home in the deep heart of Love Transcendent find

Incense and flowers and music fill thy place behind thee,

Rest, weary soul!

Severed all bonds that held thee, ended thy quest—

Then lost in the ocean—one with the Life Immortal.

Peace, happy soul!

1 that seemed in his eyes sentimental or false. But an effort that failed found always in the Master its
2 warmest advocate and tenderest defence.

3 And how happy was that acknowledgment of the bereaved mother to him when in the midst of her
4 sorrow she wrote and thanked him for the character of his influence over the son who had died so far
5 away!

6 JUNE 10.

7 It was our last afternoon at Almora that we heard the story of the fatal illness of Shri Ramakrishna.
8 Dr. Mahendra Lal Sarkar had been called in and had pronounced the disease to be cancer of the throat,
9 leaving the young disciples with many warnings as to its infectious nature. Half an hour later "Naren", as
10 he then was, came in and found them huddled together discussing the dangers of the case. He listened to
11 what they had been told and then, looking down, saw at his feet the cup of gruel that had been partly
12 taken by Shri Ramakrishna and which must have contained in it the germs of the fatal discharges of
13 mucus and pus, as it came out in his baffled attempts to swallow the thing on account of the stricture of
14 the food-passage in the throat. He picked it up and drank from it before them all. Never was the infection
15 of cancer mentioned amongst the disciples again.

3 "It has three metres"—said the Master. Again, he said, "The line that really strikes the poetic note is that—"Thy home in the deep
4 heart of Love Transcendent find"."
5

1 CHAPTER IV

3 ON THE WAY TO KATHGODAM

5 JUNE 11.

6 On Saturday morning we left Almora. It took us two days and a half to reach Kathgodam. . . .

7 Somewhere en route near a curious old water-mill and deserted forge, the Swami told Dhira Mata of
8 a legend that spoke of this hill-side as haunted by a race of centaur-like phantoms, and of an experience
9 known to him by which one had first seen forms there and only afterwards heard the folk tale.

10 The roses were gone by this time, but a flower was in bloom that crumbled at a touch, and he
11 pointed this out because of its wealth of associations in Indian poetry.

12 JUNE 12.

13 On Sunday afternoon we rested near the plains in what we took to be an out-of-the-way hotel above
14 a lake and fall, and there he translated for us the Rudra prayer:

16 From the unreal lead us to the Real.

17 From darkness lead us unto light.

18 From death lead us to immortality.

19 Reach us through and through our self.

20 And evermore protect us—O Thou Terrible!—

21 From ignorance, by Thy sweet, compassionate face.

23 He hesitated a long time over the fourth line, thinking of rendering it, "Embrace us in the heart of

1 our heart". But at last he put his perplexity to us, saying shyly, "The real meaning is, Reach us through
2 and through our self". He had evidently feared that this sentence, with its extraordinary intensity, might
3 not make good sense in English. . . . I have understood that a more literal rendering would be, "O Thou
4 who art manifest only unto

1 Thysself, manifest Thysself also unto us!" I now regard his translation as a rapid and direct transcript
2 of the experience of Samâdhi itself. It tears the living heart out of the Sanskrit, as it were, and renders it
3 again in an English form.

4 It was indeed an afternoon of translations, and he gave us fragments of the great benediction after
5 mourning, which is one of the most beautiful of the Hindu sacraments:

6
7 The blissful winds are sweet to us.

8 The seas are showering bliss on us.

9 May the corn in our fields bring bliss to us.

10 May the plants and herbs bring bliss to us.

11 May the cattle give us bliss.

12 O Father in Heaven, be Thou blissful unto us!

13 Thy very dust of the earth is full of bliss.

14
15 And then, the voice dying down into meditation:

16
17 It is all bliss—all bliss—all bliss.

18
19 And again we had Suradâsa's song, which the Swami heard from the nautch-girl at Khetri:

20
21 O Lord, look not upon my evil qualities!

22 Thy name, O Lord, is Same-Sightedness.

23 Make of us both the same Brahman! . . .

1
2 Was it that same day or some other that he told us of the old Sannyâsin in Benares who saw him
3 annoyed by troops of monkeys and, afraid that he might turn and run, shouted, "Always face the brute!"?

4 Those journeys were delightful. We were always sorry to reach a destination. At this time it took us
5 a whole afternoon to cross the Terai by rail—that strip of malarial country on which, as he reminded us,
6 Buddha had been born.

7 As we had come down the mountain roads, we had met parties of country-folk fleeing to the upper
8 hills with their families and all their goods, to escape the fever which would be upon them with the rains.
9 And now in the train there was the

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1 gradual change of vegetation to watch and the Master's pleasure, greater than that of any
2 proprietor, in showing us the wild peacocks, or here and there an elephant or a train of camels. . . .
3

1 **CHAPTER V**

3 **ON THE WAY TO BARAMULLA**

5 PERSONS: The Swami Vivekananda, Gurubhais, and a party of Europeans and disciples, amongst
6 whom were Dhira Mata, the "Steady Mother"; one whose name was Jaya; and Nivedita.

7 PLACE: From Bareilly to Baramulla, Kashmir.

8 TIME: June 14 to 20, 1898.

9 JUNE 14.

10 We entered the Punjab next day, and great was the Swami's excitement at the fact. It almost seemed
11 as if he had been born there, so close and special was his love for this province. He talked of the girls at
12 their spinning wheels listening to the "So'ham! So'ham!"—I am He! I am He! Then, by a swift transition he
13 turned to the far past and unrolled for us the great historic panorama of the advance of the Greeks on the
14 Indus, the rise of Chandragupta and the development of the Buddhistic empire. He was determined this
15 summer to find his way to Attock and see with his own eyes the spot at which Alexander was turned back.
16 He described to us the Gandhara sculptures, which he must have seen in the Lahore Museum the year
17 before, and lost himself in indignant repudiation of the absurd European claim that India had ever sat at
18 the feet of Greece in things artistic.

19 Then there were flying glimpses of long-expected cities—

20 Ludhiana, where certain trusty English disciples had lived as children; Lahore, where his Indian
21 lectures had ended; and so on. We came too upon the dry gravel beds of many rivers and learnt that the
22 space between one pair was called the Doab and the area containing them all, the Punjab.

23 It was at twilight, crossing one of these stony tracts, that he told us of that great vision which came
24 to him years ago, while he was still new to the ways of the life of a monk, giving back

to him, as he always afterwards believed, the ancient mode of Sanskrit chanting.

"It was evening", he said, "in that age when the Aryans had only reached the Indus. I saw an old man seated on the bank of the great river. Wave upon wave of darkness was rolling in upon him, and he was chanting from the Rig-Veda. Then I awoke and went on chanting. They were the tones that we used long ago".

. . . Those who were constantly preoccupied with imagination regarding their own past always aroused his contempt. But on this occasion of telling the story, he gave a glimpse of it from a very different point of view.

"Shankarâchârya", he was saying, "had caught the rhythm of the Vedas, the national cadence. Indeed I always imagine", he went on suddenly with dreamy voice and far-away look, "I always imagine that he had some vision such as mine when he was young, and recovered the ancient music that way. Anyway, his whole life's work is nothing but that, the throbbing of the beauty of the Vedas and Upanishads". . . .

From Rawalpindi to Murree we went by tonga, and there we spent some days before setting out for Kashmir. Here the Swami came to the conclusion that any effort which he might make to induce the orthodox to accept a European as a fellow-disciple, or in the direction of woman's education, had better be made in Bengal. The distrust of the foreigner was too strong in Punjab to admit of work succeeding there. He was much occupied by this question from time to time, and would sometimes remark on the paradox presented by the Bengali combination of political antagonism to the English, and readiness to love and trust. . . .

JUNE 18.

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Most of the afternoon we were compelled by a storm to spend indoors, and a new chapter was opened at Dulai in our knowledge of Hinduism, for the Swami told us gravely and frankly of its modern abuses and spoke of his own uncompro-

1 mising hostility to those evil practices which pass under the name of Vâmâchâra.

2 When we asked how Shri Ramakrishna—who never could bear to condemn the hope of any man—had
3 looked at these things, he told us that "the old man" had said, "Well, well! But every house may have a
4 scavengers' entrance!" And he pointed out that all sects of diabolism in any country belonged to this class.
5 . . .

6 JUNE 19.

7 We took it in turns to drive with the Swami in his tonga, and this next day seemed full of
8 reminiscence.

9 He talked of Brahnavidyâ, the vision of the One, the Alone-Real, and told how love was the only cure
10 for evil. He had had a schoolfellow who grew up and became rich, but lost his health. It was an obscure
11 disease, sapping his energy and vitality daily, yet altogether baffling the skill of the doctors. At last,
12 because he knew that the Swami had always been religious, and men turn to religion when all else fails,
13 he sent to beg him to come to him. When the Master reached him a curious thing happened. There came
14 to his mind a text: "Him the Brahmin conquers who thinks that he is separate from the Brahmin. Him the
15 Kshatriya conquers who thinks that he is separate from the Kshatriya. And him the universe conquers who
16 thinks that he is separate from the universe". And the sick man grasped this and recovered. "And so", said
17 the Swami, "though I often say strange things and angry things, yet remember that in my heart I never
18 seriously mean to preach anything but love! All these things will come right only when we realize that we
19 love each other".

20 Was it then, or the day before, that talking of the great God, he told us how when he was a child his
21 mother would sigh over his naughtiness and say, "So many prayers and austerities, and instead of a good
22 soul, Shiva has sent me you!" till he was hypnotized into a belief that he was really one of Shiva's demons.
23 He thought that for a punishment he had been banished

1 for a while from Shiva's heaven, and that his one effort in life must be to go back there.

2 His first act of sacrilege, he told us once, had been committed at the age of five when he embarked
3 on a stormy argument with his mother, to the effect that when his right hand was soiled with eating, it
4 would be cleaner to lift his tumbler of water with the left. For this or similar perversities her most drastic
5 remedy was to put him under the water tap and, while cold water was pouring over his head, to say
6 "Shiva! Shiva!" This, he said, never failed of its effect. The prayer would remind him of his exile, and he
7 would say to himself, "No, no, not this time again!" and so return to quiet and obedience.

8 He had a surpassing love for Mahâdeva, and once he said of the Indian women of the future that if,
9 amidst their new tasks, they would only remember now and then to say "Shiva! Shiva!" it would be
10 worship enough. The very air of the Himalayas was charged for him with the image of that "eternal
11 meditation" that no thought of pleasure could break. And he understood, he said, for the first time this
12 summer, the meaning of the nature-story that made the Ganges fall on the head of the great God, and
13 wander in and out amongst His matted locks before She found an outlet on the plains below. He had
14 searched long, he said, for the words that the rivers and waterfalls uttered, amongst the mountains,
15 before he had realized that it was the eternal cry "Bom! Bom! Hara! Hara!"

16 "Yes!" he said of Shiva one day, "He is the great God—
17 calm, beautiful, and silent! And I am His great worshipper".

18 Again his subject was marriage, as the type of the soul's relation to God. "This is why", he exclaimed,
19 "though the love of a mother is in some ways greater, yet the whole world takes the love of man and
20 woman as the type. *No other has such tremendous idealizing power.* The beloved actually becomes what
21 he is imagined to be. This love transforms its object".

22 Then the talk strayed to national types, and he spoke of the joy with which the returning traveller
23 greets once more the sight of the men and women of his own country. The whole of life has been a
24 subconscious education to enable one to understand in these every faintest ripple of expression in face
25 and form.

And again we passed a group of Sannyâsins going on foot, and he broke out into fierce invective against asceticism as "savagery" But the sight of wayfarers doing slow miles on foot in the name of their ideals seemed to rouse in his mind a train of painful associations, and he grew impatient on behalf of humanity at "the torture of religion". Then again the mood passed as suddenly as it had arisen and gave place to the equally strong statement of the conviction that were it not for this "savagery", luxury would have robbed man of all his manliness.

We stopped that evening at Uri Dak bungalow, and in the twilight we all walked in the meadows and the bazaar. How beautiful the place was! A little mud fortress—exactly of the European feudal pattern—overhung the footway as it swept into a great open theatre of field and hill. Along the road above the river lay the bazaar, and we returned to the bungalow by a path across the fields, past cottages in whose gardens the roses were in bloom. As we came, too, it would happen that here and there some child more venturesome than others would play with us.

JUNE 20.

The next day, driving through the most beautiful part of the pass and seeing cathedral rocks and an old ruined temple of the sun, we reached Baramulla. The legend is that the Vale of Kashmir was once a lake and that at this point the Divine Boar pierced the mountains with his tusks and let the Jhelum go free. Another piece of geography in the form of myth. Or is it also prehistoric history?

1 CHAPTER VI

3 THE VALE OF KASHMIR

5 PERSONS: The Swami Vivekananda and a party of Europeans and disciples, amongst whom were
6 Dhira Mata, the "Steady Mother"; one whose name was Jaya; and Nivedita.

7 PLACE: The River Jhelum—Baramulla to Srinagar.

8 TIME: June 20 to June 22.

10 "It is said that the Lord Himself is the weight on the side of the fortunate!" cried the Swami in high
11 glee, returning to our room at the Dak bungalow and sitting down with his umbrella on his knees. As he
12 had brought no companion, he had himself to perform all the ordinary little masculine offices, and he had
13 gone out to hire Dungas [houseboats] and do what was necessary. But he had immediately fallen in with a
14 man who, on hearing his name, had undertaken the whole business and sent him back free of
15 responsibility.

16 So we enjoyed the day. We drank Kashmiri tea out of a Samovar and ate the jam of the country, and
17 at about four o'clock we entered into possession of a flotilla of Dungas, three in number, on which
18 presently we set forth for Srinagar. The first evening, however, we were moored by the garden of the
19 Swami's friend. . . .

20 We found ourselves next day in the midst of a beautiful valley ringed round with snow mountains.
21 This is known as the Vale of Kashmir, but it might be more accurately described, perhaps, as the Vale of
22 Srinagar. . . .

23 That first morning, taking a long walk across the fields, we came upon an immense chennaar tree
24 standing in the midst of a wide pasture. It really looked as if the passage through it might shelter the
25 proverbial twenty cows! The Swami fell to architectural visions of how it might be fitted up as a
26 dwelling-place for a hermit. A small cottage might in fact have been built in the hollow of this living tree.

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1 And then he talked of meditation, in a way to consecrate every chennaar we should ever see.

1 We turned with him into the neighbouring farmyard. There we found, seated under a tree, a
2 singularly handsome elderly woman. She wore the crimson coronet and white veil of the Kashmiri wife
3 and sat spinning wool, while round her, helping her, were her two daughters-in-law and their children.
4 The Swami had called at this farm once before in the previous autumn and had often spoken since of the
5 faith and pride of this very woman. He had begged for water, which she had at once given him. Then,
6 before going, he had asked her quietly, "And what, Mother, is your religion?" "I thank God, sir!" had rung
7 out the old voice in pride and triumph. "By the mercy of the Lord, I am a Mussulman!" The whole family
8 received him now as an old friend and were ready to show every courtesy to the friends he had brought.

9 The journey to Srinagar took two to three days, and one evening, as we walked in the fields before
10 supper, one who had seen the Kalighat complained to the Master of the abandonment of feeling there,
11 which had jarred on her. "*Why* do they kiss the ground before the image?" she exclaimed. The Swami had
12 been pointing to the crop of Til—which he thought to have been the original of the English dill—and calling
13 it "the oldest oil-bearing seed of the Aryans". But at this question he dropped the little blue flower from his
14 hands, and a great hush came over his voice as he stood still and said, "Is it not the same thing to kiss the
15 ground before that image as to kiss the ground before these mountains?"

16 Our master had promised that before the end of the summer he would take us into retreat and teach
17 us to meditate. . . . It was decided that we should first see the country and afterwards make the retreat.

18 The first evening in Srinagar we dined out with some Bengali officials, and in the course of
19 conversation one of the Western guests maintained that the history of every nation illustrated and evolved
20 certain ideals to which the people of that nation should hold themselves true. It was very curious to see
21 how the Hindus present objected to this. To them it was clearly a bondage to which the mind of man could
22 not permanently submit itself. Indeed, in their revolt against the fetters of the doctrine, they appeared to
23 be unable to do justice to the idea itself.

1 At last the Swami intervened. "I think you must admit", he said, "that the ultimate unit is
2 psychological. This is much more permanent than the geographical". And then he spoke of cases known to
3 us all, of one of whom he always thought as the most typical "Christian" he had ever seen, yet she was a
4 Bengali woman, and of another, born in the West, who was "a better Hindu than himself". And was not
5 this, after all, the ideal state of things, that each should be born in the other's country to spread the given
6 ideal as far as it could be carried?

1
2 CHAPTER VII

3
4 LIFE AT SRINAGAR

5
6 PLACE: Srinagar.

7 TIME: June 22 to July 15, 1898.

8
9 In the mornings we still had long talks as before—some-times it would be the different religious
10 periods through which Kashmir had passed, or the morality of Buddhism, or the history of Shiva-worship,
11 or perhaps the position of Srinagar under Kanishka.

12 Once he was talking with one of us about Buddhism, and he suddenly said, "The fact is, Buddhism
13 tried to do, in the time of Ashoka, what the world never was ready for till now!" He referred to the
14 federalization of religions. It was a wonderful picture, this, of the religious imperialism of Ashoka, broken
15 down time and again by successive waves of Christianity and Mohammedanism, each claiming exclusive
16 rights over the conscience of mankind and finally to seem to have a possibility, within measurable distance
17 of time, today!

18 Another time the talk was of Genghis, or Chenghis, Khan, the conqueror from Central Asia. "You
19 hear people talk of him as a vulgar aggressor", he cried passionately, "but that is not true! They are never
20 greedy or vulgar, these great souls! He was inspired with the thought of unity, and he wanted to unify his
21 world. Yes, Napoleon was cast in the same mould. And another, Alexander. Only those three, or perhaps
22 one soul manifesting itself in three different conquests!" And then he passed on to speak of that one soul
23 whom he believed to have come again and again in religion, charged with the divine impulse to bring
24 about the unity of man in God.

25 At this time the transfer of the *Prabuddha Bharata* from Madras to the newly established Ashrama at
26 Mayavati was much in all our thoughts. The Swami had always had a special love for this paper, as the

1 beautiful name he had given it indicated. He had always been eager too for the establishment of organs of
2 his own. The value of the journal in the education of modern India was perfectly evident to him, and he felt
3 that his master's message and mode of thought required to be spread by this means as well as by
4 preaching and by work. Day after day, therefore, he would dream about the future of his papers, as about
5 the work in its various centres. Day after day he would talk of the forthcoming first number under the new
6 editorship of Swami Swarupananda. And one afternoon he brought to us, as

we sat together, a paper on which he said he had "tried to write a letter, but it would come this way!" . . . [*Vide "To the Awak-ened India", Complete Works, IV: 387-89.*]

JUNE 26.

The Master was longing to leave us all and go away into some place of quiet, alone. But we, not knowing this, insisted on accompanying him to the Coloured Springs, called "Kshir Bhavâni", or "Milk of the Mother". It was said to be the first time that Christian or Mohammedan had ever landed there, and we can never be thankful enough for the glimpse we had of it since afterwards it was to become the most sacred of all names to us. . . .

JUNE 29.

Another day we went off quietly by ourselves and visited the Takt-i-Suleiman, a little temple very massively built on the summit of a small mountain two or three thousand feet high. It was peaceful and beautiful, and the famous Floating Gardens could be seen below us for miles around. The Takt-i-Suleiman was one of the great illustrations of the Swami's argument when he would take up the subject of the Hindu love of nature as shown in the choice of sites for temples and architectural monuments. As he had declared, in London, that the saints lived on the hill-tops in order to enjoy the scenery, so now he pointed out—citing one example after another—that our Indian people always consecrated places of peculiar beauty and importance by making there their altars of worship. And there was no denying that the little Takt, crowning the hill that dominated the whole valley, was a case in point.

Many lovely fragments of those days come into mind, as:

Therefore, Tulasi, take thou care to live with
all, for who can tell where, or in what garb,
the Lord Himself may next come to thee?

One God is hidden in all these, the Torturer
of all, the Awakener of all, the Reservoir

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2

1 of all being, the One who is bereft of all
2 qualities.

3

4 There the sun does not shine, nor the moon,
5 nor the stars.

1 There was the story of how Râvana was advised to take the form of Râma in order to cheat Sitâ. He
2 answered, "Have I not thought of it? But in order to take a man's form you must meditate on him; and
3 Rama is the Lord Himself; so when I meditate on him, even the position of Brahmâ becomes a mere straw.
4 How, then, could I think of a woman?"

5 "And so", commented the Swami, "even in the commonest or most criminal life, there are these
6 glimpses". It was ever thus. He was constantly interpreting human life as the expression of God, never
7 insisting on the heinousness or wickedness of the act or a character.

8 "In that which is dark night to the rest of the world, there the man of self-control is awake. That
9 which is life to the rest of the world is sleep to him."

10 Speaking of Thomas à Kempis one day, and of how he himself used to wander as a Sannyâsin with
11 the Gitâ and the *Imitation* as his whole library, one word, he said, came back to him, inseparably
12 associated with the name of the Western monk:

13
14 Silence! ye teachers of the world, and silence!
15 ye prophets! Speak Thou alone, O Lord, unto my soul!

16
17 Again:

18
19 The soft Shirisha flower can bear the weight of
20 humming bees, but not of birds—
21 So Umâ, don't you go and make Tapasyâ!
22 Come, Uma, come! delight and idol of my soul!
23 Be seated, Mother, on the lotus of my heart,
24 And let me take a long, long look at you.

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2

1 From my birth up, I am gazing,
2 Mother, at your face—
3 Know you suffering what trouble,
4 and pain?
5 Be seated, therefore, Blessed One,
6 on the lotus of my heart,
7 And dwell there for evermore.

8
9 Every now and then there would be long talks about the Gita—"that wonderful poem, without one
10 note in it of weakness or unmanliness." He said one day that it was absurd to complain that knowledge
11 was not given to women or to Shudras. For the whole gist of the Upanishads was contained in the Gita.
12 Without it, indeed, they could hardly be understood; and women and all castes could read the
13 Mahâbhârata.

1 JULY 4.

2 With great fun and secrecy the Swami and his one non-American disciple prepared to celebrate
3 the Fourth of July. A regret had been expressed in his hearing that we had no American flag with which to
4 welcome the other members of the party to breakfast on their national festival; and late on the afternoon
5 of the third, he brought a Pundit Durzey [Brahmin tailor] in great excitement, explaining that this man
6 would be glad to imitate it if he were told how. The stars and stripes were very crudely represented, I
7 fear, on the piece of cotton that was nailed with branches of evergreens to the head of the
8 dining-room-boat when the Americans stepped on board for early tea on Independence Day! But the
9 Swami had postponed a journey in order to be present at the little festival, and he himself contributed a
10 poem to the addresses that were now read aloud by way of greeting. . . . [*Vide* "To the Fourth of July",
11 *Complete Works*, V: 439-40.]

12 JULY 5.

13 That evening someone pained him by counting the cherry-stones left on her plate, to see when she
14 would be married. He somehow took the play in earnest and came the following morning surcharged with
15 passion for the ideal renunciation.

16 JULY 6.

17 "These shadows of home and marriage cross even *my* mind now and then!" he cried, with that
18 tender desire to make himself one with the sinner that he so often showed. But it was across oceans of
19 scorn for those who would glorify the householder that he sought on this occasion to preach the religious
20 life. "Is it so easy", he exclaimed, "to be Janaka? To sit on a throne absolutely unattached? Caring nothing
21 for wealth or fame, for wife or child? One after another in the West has told me that he had reached this.
22 But I could only say, 'Such great men are not born in India!'"

23 And then he turned to the other side.

24 "Never forget", he said to one of his hearers, "to say to yourself, and to teach to your children: as is
25 the difference between a firefly and the blazing sun, between the infinite ocean and a little pond, between
26 a mustard-seed and the mountain of

1 Meru, such is the difference between the householder and the Sannyasin!"

2 "Everything is fraught with fear: Renunciation alone is fearless."

3 "Blessed be even the fraudulent Sâdhus, and those who have failed to carry out their vows,
4 inasmuch as they also have witnessed to the ideal and so are in some degree the cause of the success of
5 others!"

6 "Let us never, never, forget our ideal!"

7 At such moments he would identify himself entirely with the thought he sought to demonstrate, and
8 in the same sense in which a law of nature might be deemed cruel or arrogant, his exposition might have
9 those qualities. Sitting and listening, we felt ourselves brought face to face with the invisible and absolute.

10 All this was on our return to Srinagar from the real Fourth of July celebration, which had been a visit
11 to Dahl Lake. . . .

12 At nine o'clock on the evening of the following Sunday, July the 10th, the first two [Dhira Mata and
13 Jaya] came back unexpectedly, and presently, from many different sources, we gathered the news that the
14 Master had gone to Amarnath by the Sonamarg route and would return another way. He had started out
15 penniless, but that could give no concern to his friends, in a Hindu native state. . . .

16 JULY 15.

17 What were we setting out for? We were just moving to go down the river on Friday, and it was close
18 on five in the afternoon when the servants recognized some of their friends in the distance, and word was
19 brought that the Swami's boat was coming towards us.

20 An hour later he was with us, saying how pleasant it was to be back. The summer had been
21 unusually hot and certain gla-ciers had given way, rendering the Sonamarg route to Amarnath
22 impracticable. This fact had caused his return.

23 But from this moment dated the first of three great increments of joy and realization that we saw in
24 him during our months in Kashmir. It was almost as if we could verify for ourselves the truth of that saying
25 of his Guru: "There is indeed a certain ignorance. It has been placed there by my Holy Mother that her
26 work may be done. But it is only like a film of tissue paper. It might be rent at any moment".

1
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1

1 CHAPTER VIII

3 THE TEMPLE OF PANDRENTHAN

5 PERSONS: The Swami Vivekananda and a party of Europeans and disciples, amongst whom were
6 Dhira Mata, the "Steady Mother"; one whose name was Jaya; and Nivedita.

7 PLACE: Kashmir.

8 TIME: July 16 to 19, 1898.

9 JULY 16.

10 It fell to the lot of one of the Swami's disciples next day to go down the river with him in a small
11 boat. As it went, he chanted one song after another of Râmprasâd, and now and again he would translate
12 a verse:

14 I call upon thee, Mother.

15 For though his mother strikes him,

16 The child cries, "Mother! Oh, Mother!"

18 Though I cannot see Thee,

19 I am not a lost child!

20 I still cry, "Mother! Mother!"

22 And then with the haughty dignity of an offended child, some-thing that ended, "I am not the son to
23 call any other woman 'Mother'!"

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2

1
2 JULY 17.

3 It must have been next day that he came into Dhira Mata's Dunga and talked of Bhakti. First it was
4 that curious Hindu thought of Shiva and Umâ in one. It is easy to give the words, but without the voice
5 how comparatively dead they seem! And

1 then there were the wonderful surroundings—picturesque Srinagar, tall Lombardy poplars and
2 distant snows. There in that river-valley, some space from the foot of the great mountains, he chanted to
3 us how "the Lord took a form and that was a divided form, half woman and half man. On one side,
4 beautiful garlands; on the other, bone earrings and coils of snakes. On one side, the hair black, beautiful
5 and in curls; on the other, twisted like rope". And then passing immediately into the other form of the
6 same thought, he quoted:

7
8 God became Krishna and Râdhâ—
9 Love flows in thousands of coils.
10 Whoso wants, takes it.
11 Love flows in thousands of coils—
12 The tide of love and loving past,
13 And fills the soul with bliss and joy!

14
15 So absorbed was he that his breakfast stood unheeded long after it was ready, and when at last he
16 went reluctantly—saying, "When one has all this Bhakti what does one want with food?"

17 —it was only to come back again quickly and resume the subject.

18 But either now or at some other time he said that he did not talk of Radha and Krishna where he
19 looked for deeds. It was Shiva who made stern and earnest workers, and to Him the labourer must be
20 dedicated.

21 The next day he gave us a quaint saying of Shri Ramakrishna, comparing the critics of others to bees
22 or flies, according as they chose honey or wounds.

23 And then we were off to Islamabad, and really, as it proved, to Amarnath.

24
25 JULY 19.

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2

1 The first afternoon, in a wood by the side of the Jhelum, we discovered the long-sought temple of
2 Pandrenthan (Pandresthan, place of the Pândavas?).

1 It was sunk in a pond, and this was thickly covered with scum out of which it rose, a tiny cathedral
2 of the long ago, built of heavy grey limestone. The temple consisted of a small cell with four doorways
3 opening to the cardinal points. Externally it was a tapering pyramid—with its top truncated, to give
4 foot-hold to a bush—supported on a four-pierced pedestal. In its architecture, trefoil and triangular arches
5 were combined in an unusual fashion with each other and with the straight-lined lintel. It was built with
6 marvellous solidity, and the necessary lines were somewhat obscured by heavy ornament. . . .

7 For all but the Swami himself, this was our first peep at Indian archaeology. So when he had been
8 through it, he taught us how to observe the interior.

9 In the centre of the ceiling was a large sun-medallion, set in a square whose points were the points
10 of the compass. This left four equal triangles at the corners of the ceiling, which were filled with sculpture
11 in low relief, male and female figures intertwined with serpents, beautifully done. On the wall were empty
12 spaces, where seemed to have been a band of topes.

13 Outside, carvings were similarly distributed. In one of the trefoil arches—over, I think, the eastern
14 door—was a fine image of the Teaching Buddha, standing, with his hand uplifted. Running round the
15 buttresses was a much-defaced frieze of a seated woman with a tree—evidently Mâyâ Devi, the mother of
16 Buddha. The three other door-niches were empty, but a slab by the pond-side seemed to have fallen from
17 one, and this contained a bad figure of a king, said by the country-people to represent the sun.

18 The masonry of this little temple was superb and probably accounted for its long preservation. A
19 single block of stone would be so cut as to correspond not to one brick in a wall, but to a section of the
20 architect's plan. It would turn a corner and form part of two distinct walls, or sometimes even of three.
21 This fact made one take the building as very, very old, possibly even earlier than Marttanda. The theory of
22 the workmen seemed so much more that of carpentering than of building! The water about it was
23 probably an overflow into the temple-court from the sacred spring that the chapel itself may have been
24 placed, as the Swami thought, to enshrine.

To him, the place was delightfully suggestive. It was a direct memorial of Buddhism, representing one of the four religious periods into which he had already divided the history of Kashmir: (1) tree and snake worship, from which dated all the names of the springs ending in Nag, as Verinag, and so on; (2) Buddhism; (3) Hinduism, in the form of sun worship; and (4) Mohammedanism.

Sculpture, he told us, was the characteristic art of Buddhism, and the sun-medallion, or lotus, one of its commonest ornaments. The figures with the serpents referred to pre-Buddhism. But sculpture had greatly deteriorated under sun worship, hence the crudity of the Surya figure. . . .

It was the time of sunset—such a sunset! The mountains in the west were all a shimmering purple. Further north they were blue with snow and cloud. The sky was green and yellow and touched with red—bright flame and daffodil colours, against a blue and opal background. We stood and looked, and then the Master, catching sight of the throne of Solomon—that little Takt which we already loved—exclaimed, "What genius the Hindu shows in placing his temples! He always chooses a grand scenic effect! See! The Takt commands the whole of Kashmir. The rock of Hari Parbat rises red out of blue water, like a lion couchant, crowned. And the temple of Marttanda has the valley at its feet!"

Our boats were moored near the edge of the wood, and we could see that the presence of the silent chapel, of the Buddha, which we had just explored, moved the Swami deeply. That evening we all foregathered in Dhira Mata's houseboat, and a little of the conversation has been noted down.

Our master had been talking of Christian ritual as derived from Buddhist, but one of the party would have none of the theory.

"Where did Buddhist ritual itself come from?" she asked.

"From Vedic", answered the Swami briefly.

"Or as it was present also in southern Europe, is it not better to suppose a common origin for it and the Christian and the Vedic rituals?"

"No! No!" he replied. "You forget that Buddhism was entirely within Hinduism! Even caste was not attacked—it was not

yet crystallized, of course!—and Buddha merely tried to restore the ideal. *He who attains to God in this life*, says Manu, *is the Brahmin*. Buddha would have had it so, if he could."

"But how are Vedic and Christian rituals connected?" persisted his opponent. "How could they be the same? You have nothing even corresponding to the central rite of our worship!"

"Why, yes!" said the Swami. "Vedic ritual has its Mass, the offering of food to God; your Blessed Sacrament, our Prasâdam. Only it is offered sitting, not kneeling, as is common in hot countries. They kneel in Tibet. Then too Vedic ritual has its lights, incense, music."

"But", was the somewhat ungracious argument, "has it any common prayer?" Objections urged in this way always elicited some bold paradox which contained a new and unthought-of generalization.

He flashed down on the question. "No! And neither has Christianity! That is pure Protestantism and Protestantism took it from the Mohammedans, perhaps through Moorish influence!

"Mohammedanism is the only religion that has completely broken down the idea of the priest. The leader of prayer stands with his back to the people, and only the reading of the Koran may take place from the pulpit. Protestantism is an approach to this.

"Even the tonsure existed in India, in the shaven head. I have seen a picture of Justinian receiving the Law from two monks, in which the monks' heads are entirely shaven. The monk and nun both existed in pre-Buddhistic Hinduism. Europe gets her orders from the Thebaid."

"At that rate, then, you accept Catholic ritual as Aryan!"

"Yes, almost all Christianity is Aryan, I believe. I am inclined to think Christ never existed. I have doubted that ever since I had my dream—that dream off Crete!⁵³² Indian and Egyp-

⁵³² ? In travelling from Naples to Port Said, on his way back to India, in January 1897, the Swami had a dream of an old and bearded man who appeared before him, saying, "This is the island of Crete", and showing him a place in the island that he might afterwards identify. The vision went on to say that the religion of Christianity had originated in the island of Crete and in connection with this gave him two European words—one of which was *Therapeutae*—which it declared were derived from Sanskrit. *Therapeutae* meant "sons" (from the Sanskrit *Putra*) of the Theras, or Buddhist monks. From this the Swami was to understand that Christianity had originated in a Buddhist mission. The old man added, "The proofs are all here", pointing to the ground. "Dig and you will see!"

As he awoke, feeling that this was no common dream, the Swami rose and tumbled out on deck. Here he met an officer turning in

tian ideas met at Alexandria and went forth to the world, tintured with Judaism and Hellenism, as Christianity.

"The Acts and Epistles, you know, are older than the Gospels, and S. John is spurious. The only figure we can be sure of is S. Paul, and he was not an eye-witness, and according to his own showing was capable of Jesuitry—'by all means save souls'—isn't it?

"No! Buddha and Mohammed, alone amongst religious teachers, stand out with historic distinctness—having been fortunate enough to have, while they were living, enemies as well as friends. Krishna—I doubt; a Yogi, a shepherd, and a great king have all been amalgamated in one beautiful figure, holding the Gitâ in his hand.

"Renan's life of Jesus is mere froth. It does not touch Strauss, the real antiquarian. Two things stand out as personal living touches in the life of Christ—the woman taken in adultery, the most beautiful story in literature, and the woman at the well. How strangely true is this last to Indian life! A woman coming to draw water finds, seated at the well-side, a yellow-clad monk. He asks her for water. Then he teaches her and does a little mind-reading and so on. Only in an Indian story, when she went to call the villagers to look and listen, the monk would have taken his chance and fled to the forest!

"On the whole, I think old Rabbi Hillel is responsible for the teachings of Jesus, and an obscure Jewish sect of Nazarenes

from his watch. "What o'clock is it?" said the Swami. "Midnight!" was the answer. "Where are we?" he then asked, when to his astonishment the answer came back: "Fifty miles off Crete!"

Our master used to laugh at himself for the strength of the impression that this dream had made on him. But he could never shake it off. The fact that the second of the two etymologies has been lost is deeply to be regretted. The Swami had to say that before he had this dream, it had never occurred to him to doubt that the personality of Christ was strictly historic. We must remember, however, that according to Hindu philosophy, it is the completeness of an idea that is important, and not the question of its historical authenticity. The Swami once asked Shri Ramakrishna, when he was a boy, about this very matter. "Don't you think", answered his Guru, "that those who could invent such things were themselves that?"

2
1 –a sect of great antiquity—suddenly galvanized by S. Paul, furnished the mythic personality as a
2 centre of worship.

3 "The resurrection, of course, is simply spring-cremation. Only the rich Greeks and Romans had had
4 cremation anyway, and the new sun-myth would only stop it amongst the few.

5 "But Buddha! Buddha! Surely he was the greatest man who ever lived. He never drew a breath for
6 himself. Above all, he never claimed worship. He said, 'Buddha is not a man, but a state. I have found the
7 door. Enter, all of you!'

8 "He went to the feast of Ambâpâli, 'the sinner'. He dined with the pariah, though he knew it would
9 kill him, and sent a message to his host on his death-bed, thanking him for the great deliverance. Full of
10 love and pity for a little goat, even before he had attained the truth! You remember how he offered his
11 own head, that of prince and monk, if only the king would spare the kid that he was about to sacrifice, and
12 how the king was so struck by his compassion that he saved its life? Such a mixture of rationalism and
13 feeling was never seen! Surely, surely, there was none like him!"

14

1
2
3 CHAPTER IX

4
5 WALKS AND TALKS BESIDE THE JHELUM

6
7 PERSONS: The Swami Vivekananda and a party of Europeans and disciples, amongst whom were
8 Dhira Mata, the "Steady Mother"; one whose name was Jaya; and Nivedita.

9 PLACE: Kashmir.

10 TIME: July 20 to July 29, 1898.

11 JULY 20.

12

13 That morning the river was broad and shallow and clear, and two of us walked with the Swami
14 across the fields and along the banks about three miles. He began by talking of the sense of sin, how it
15 was Egyptian, Semitic and Aryan. It appears in the Vedas, but quickly passes out. The devil is recognized
16 there as the Lord of Anger. Then, with the Buddhists he became Mâra, the Lord of Lust, and one of the
17 most loved of the Lord Buddha's titles was "Conqueror of Mara". (*Vide* the Sanskrit lexicon Amarkosha
18 that Swami learnt to patter as a child of four!) But while Satan is the Hamlet of the Bible, in the Hindu
19 scriptures the Lord of Anger never divides creation. He always represents defilement, never duality.

20 Zoroaster was a reformer of some old religion. Even Ormuzd and Ahriman with him were not
21 supreme; they were only manifestations of the Supreme. That older religion must have been Vedantic. So
22 the Egyptians and Semites cling to the theory of sin while the Aryans, as Indians and Greeks, quickly lose
23 it. In India righteousness and sin become Vidyâ and Avidyâ—

24 both to be transcended. Amongst the Aryans, Persians and Europeans become Semitized by religious

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2

1 ideas; hence the sense of sin.⁵³³

3 533 ?
4 One of those who listened to this talk had a wonderful opportunity later of appreciating the accuracy as well as the breadth of the
5 Swami's knowledge, when she saw two Parsis glad to sit at his feet and learn from him the history of their own religious ideas.–N.
6

And then the talk drifted, as it was always so apt to do, to questions of the country and the future. What idea must be urged on a people to give them strength? The line of their own development runs in one way, A. Must the new accession of force be a compensating one, B? This would produce a development midway between the two, C—a geometrical alteration merely. But it was not so.

National life was a question of organic forces. We must reinforce the current of that life itself, and leave it to do the rest. Buddha preached renunciation, and India heard. Yet within a thousand years she had reached her highest point of national prosperity. The national life in India has renunciation as its source. Its highest ideals are service and Mukti. The Hindu mother eats last. Marriage is not for individual happiness, but for the welfare of the nation and the caste. Certain individuals of the modern reform, having embarked on an experiment which could not solve the problem, "are the sacrifices over which the race has to walk".

And then the trend of conversation changed again and became all fun and merriment, jokes and stories. And as we laughed and listened, the boats came up and talk was over for the day.

The whole of that afternoon and night the Swami lay in his boat, ill. But next day, when we landed at the temple of Bijbehara—already thronged with Amarnath pilgrims—he was able to join us for a little while. "Quickly up and quickly down", as he said of himself, was always his characteristic. After that he was with us most of the day, and in the afternoon we reached Islamabad. . . .

In the dusk that evening one came into the little group amongst the apple trees and found the Master engaged in the rarest of rare happenings, a personal talk with Dhira Mata and her whose name was Jaya. He had taken two pebbles into his hand and was saying how, when he was well, his mind might direct itself to this and that, or his will might seem less firm; but let the least touch of pain or illness come, let him look death in

the face for a while, and "I am as hard as that (knocking the stones together), for I *have* touched the feet of God".

And one remembered, apropos of this coolness, the story of a walk across the fields in England, where he and an Englishman and woman had been pursued by an angry bull. The Englishman frankly ran and reached the other side of the hill in safety. The woman ran as far as she could and then sank to the ground, incapable of further effort. Seeing this, and unable to aid her, the Swami—thinking "So *this* is the end, after all"—

took up his stand in front of her, with folded arms. He told afterwards how his mind was occupied with a mathematical calculation as to how far the bull would be able to throw. But the animal suddenly stopped a few paces off and then, raising his head, retreated sullenly.

A like courage—though he himself was far from thinking of these incidents—had shown itself in his early youth when he quietly stepped up to a runaway horse and caught it in the streets of Calcutta, thus saving the life of the woman who occupied the carriage behind.

The talk drifted on, as we sat on the grass beneath the trees, and became, for an hour or two, half grave, half gay. We heard much of the tricks the monkeys could play in Vrindaban. And we elicited stories of two separate occasions in his wandering life when he had had clear previsions of help which had been fulfilled. One of these I remember. It may possibly have occurred at the time when he was under the vow to ask for nothing, and he had been several days (perhaps five) without food. Suddenly, as he lay almost dying of exhaustion in a railwaystation, it flashed into his mind that he must rise up and go out along a certain road and that there he would meet a man bringing him help. He obeyed and met one carrying a tray of food. "Are you he to whom I was sent?" said this man, coming up to him and looking at him closely.

Then a child was brought to us, with its hand badly cut, and the Swami applied an old wives' cure. He bathed the wound with water and then laid on it, to stop the bleeding, the ashes of a piece of calico. The villagers were soothed and consoled, and our gossip was over for the evening.

JULY 23.

The next morning a motley gathering of coolies assembled beneath the apple-trees and waited some hours to take us to the ruins of Marttanda. It had been a wonderful old building—

evidently more abbey than temple—in a wonderful position; and its great interest lay in the obvious agglomeration of styles and periods in which it had grown up. . . . Its presence is a perpetual reminder that the East was the original home of monasticism. The Swami was hard at work in an instant on observations and theories, pointing out the cornice that ran along the nave from the entrance to the sanctuary, to the west, surmounted by the high trefoils of the two arches and also by a frieze; or showing us the panels containing cherubs; and before we had done, had picked up a couple of coins. The ride back through the sunset light was charming. From all these hours, the day before and the day after, fragments of talk come back to me.

"No nation, not Greek or another, has ever carried patriotism so far as the Japanese. They don't talk, they act—give up all for country. There are noblemen now living in Japan as peasants, having given up their princedoms without a word to create the unity of the empire.⁵³⁴ And not one traitor could be found in the Japanese war. Think of that!"

Again, talking of the inability of some to express feeling, "Shy and reserved people, I have noticed, are always the most brutal when roused".

Again, evidently talking of the ascetic life and giving the rules of Brahmacharya—"The Sannyâsin who thinks of gold, to desire it, commits suicide", and so on.

JULY 24.

The darkness of night and the forest, a great pine-fire under the trees, two or three tents standing out white in the blackness, the forms and voices of many servants at their fires in the distance, and the Master with three disciples, such is the next pic-

⁵³⁴ ? This is, perhaps, a mistake. It was their political privileges, not their estates, that the Japanese samurais renounced.

1 ture. . . . Suddenly the Master turned to one member of the party and said, "You never mention your
2 school now. Do you sometimes forget it? You see", he went on, "I have much to think of. One day I turn to
3 Madras and think of the work there. Another day I give all my attention to America or England or Ceylon
4 or Calcutta. Now I am thinking about yours".

5 At that moment the Master was called away to dine, and not till he came back could the confidence
6 he had invited be given.

7 He listened to it all, the deliberate wish for a tentative plan, for smallness of beginnings, and the
8 final inclination to turn away from the idea of inclusiveness and breadth and to base the whole of an
9 educational effort on the religious life and on the worship of Shri Ramakrishna.

10 "Because you must be sectarian to get that enthusiasm, must you not?" he said. "You will make a
11 sect in order to rise above all sects. Yes I understand".

12 There would be obvious difficulties. The thing sounded on this scale almost impossible for many
13 reasons. But for the moment the only care need be to will rightly; and if the plan was sound, ways and
14 means would be found to hand, that was sure.

15 He waited a little when he had heard it all, and then he said, "You ask me to criticize, but that I
16 cannot do. For I regard you as inspired, quite as much inspired as I am. You know that's the difference
17 between other religions and us. Other people believe their founder was inspired, and so do we. But so am
18 I also, just as much so as he, and you as I; and after you, your girls and their disciples will be. So I shall
19 help you to do what you think best".

20 Then he turned to Dhira Mata and to Jaya and spoke of the greatness of the trust that he would
21 leave in the hands of that disciple who should represent the interests of women when he should go West,
22 of how it would exceed the responsibility of work for men. And he added, turning to the worker of the
23 party, "Yes, you have faith, but you have not that burning enthusiasm that you need. You want to be
24 consumed [with] energy. Shiva! Shiva!" And so, invoking the blessing of Mahâdeva, he said goodnight and
25 left us, and we presently went to bed.

1 JULY 25.

2 The next morning we breakfasted early in one of the tents and went on to Achhabal. One of us had
3 had a dream of old jewels lost and restored, all bright and new. But the Swami, smiling, stopped the tale,
4 saying, "Never talk of a dream as good as that!"

5 At Achhabal we found more gardens of Jehangir. Was it here or at Verinag that had been his
6 favourite resting-place?

7 We roamed about the gardens and bathed in a still pool opposite the Pathan Khan's Zenana, and
8 then we lunched in the first garden and rode down in the afternoon to Islamabad.

9 As we sat at lunch, the Swami invited his daughter to go to the cave of Amarnath with him and be
10 dedicated to Shiva. Dhira Mata smiled permission, and the next half-hour was given to pleasure and
11 congratulations. It had already been arranged that we were all to go to Pahalgam and wait there for the
12 Swami's return from the pilgrimage. So we reached the boats that evening, packed and wrote letters, and
13 next day in the afternoon started for Bawan.

1
2 CHAPTER X

3
4 THE SHRINE OF AMARNATH

5
6 PLACE: Kashmir.

7 TIME: July 29 to August 8, 1898.

8 JULY 29.

9 From this time we saw very little of the Swami. He was full of enthusiasm about the pilgrimage and
10 lived mostly on one meal a day, seeking no company much, save that of Sâdhus. Sometimes he would come
11 to a camping-ground, beads in hand. Tonight two of the party went roaming about Bawan, which was like
12 a village fair, all modified by a religious tendency centering in the sacred springs. Afterwards with Dhira
13 Mata it was possible to go and listen at the tent door to the crowd of Hindi-speaking Sadhus who were
14 plying the Swami with questions.

15 On Thursday we reached Pahalgam and camped down at the lower end of the valley. We found that
16 the Swami had to encounter high opposition over the question of our admission at all. He was supported
17 by the Naked Swamis, one of whom said, "It is true you have this strength, Swamiji, but you ought not to
18 manifest it!" He yielded at the word. That afternoon, however, he took his daughter round the camp to be
19 blessed, which really meant to distribute alms—and whether because he was looked upon as rich or
20 because he was recognized as strong, the next day our tents were moved up to a lovely knoll at the head
21 of the camp. . . .

22 JULY 30.

23

24 How beautiful was the route to the next halt, Chandanwari! There we camped on the edge of a
25 ravine. It rained all afternoon, and I was visited by the Swami only for a five-minutes'

1 chat. But I received endless touching little kindnesses from the servants and other pilgrims. . . .

2 . . . Close to Chandanwari the Swami insisted on my doing my first glacier on foot and took care to
3 point out every detail of interest. A tremendous climb of some thousands of feet was the next experience.
4 Then a long walk along a narrow path that twisted round mountain after mountain, and finally another
5 steep climb. At the top of the first mountain, the ground was simply carpeted with edelweiss. Then the
6 road passed five hundred feet above Sheshnag with its sulky water, and at last we camped in a cold damp
7 place amongst the snow-peaks, 18,000 feet high. The firs were far below, and all afternoon and evening
8 the coolies had to forage for juniper in all directions. The Tahsildar's, Swami's and my own tents were all
9 close together, and in the evening a large fire was lighted in front. But it did not burn well, and many feet
10 below lay the glacier. I did not see the Swami after we camped.

11 Panchatarani—the place of the five streams—was not nearly such a long march. Moreover, it was
12 lower than Sheshnag, and the cold was dry and exhilarating. In front of the camp was a dry riverbed, all
13 gravel, and through this ran five streams, in all of which it was the duty of the pilgrim to bathe, walking
14 from one to the other in wet garments. Contriving to elude observation completely, Swamiji nevertheless
15 fulfilled the law to the last letter in this respect. . . .

16 At these heights we often found ourselves in great circles of snow-peaks, those mute giants that
17 have suggested to the Hindu mind the idea of the ash-encovered God.

18 AUGUST 2.

19 On Tuesday, August the 2nd, the great day of Amarnath, the first batch of pilgrims must have left
20 the camp at two! We left by the light of the full moon. The sun rose as we went down the narrow valley. It
21 was not too safe at this part of the journey. But when we left our Dandies and began to climb, the real
22 danger began. . . . Then, having at last reached the bottom of the

farther slope, we had to toil along the glacier mile after mile to the cave. . . .

The Swami, exhausted, had by this time fallen behind. . . . He came at last and with a word sent me on; he was going to bathe. Half an hour later he entered the cave. With a smile he knelt first at one end of the semi-circle, then at the other. The place was vast, large enough to hold a cathedral; and the great ice-Shiva, in a niche of deepest shadow, seemed as if throned on its own base. A few minutes passed, and then he turned to leave the cave.

To him, the heavens had opened. He had touched the feet of Shiva. He had had to hold himself tight, he said afterwards, lest he "should swoon away". But so great was his physical exhaustion that a doctor said afterwards that his heart ought to have stopped beating, but had undergone a permanent enlargement instead. How strangely near fulfilment had been those words of his Master, "When he realizes who and what he is, he will give up this body!"

"I have enjoyed it so much!" he said half an hour afterwards, as he sat on a rock above the stream-side, eating lunch with the kind Naked Swami and me. "I thought the ice Linga was Shiva Himself. And there were no thievish Brahmins, no trade, nothing wrong. It was all worship. I never enjoyed any religious place so much!"

Afterwards he would often tell of the overwhelming vision that had seemed to draw him almost into its vertex. He would talk of the poetry of the white ice-pillar; and it was he who suggested that the first discovery of the place had been by a party of shepherds, who had wandered far in search of their flocks one summer day and had entered the cave to find themselves before the unmelting ice, in the presence of the Lord Himself. He always said too that the grace of Amarnath had been granted to him there, not to die till he himself should give consent. And to me he said, "You do not now understand. But you have made the pilgrimage, and it will go on working. Causes must bring their effects. You will understand better afterwards. The effects will come".

How beautiful was the road by which we returned next morning to Pahalgam! We struck tents that night immediately on

1 our return to them and camped later for the night in a snowy pass a whole stage further on. We paid
2 a coolie a few annas here to push on with a letter; but when we actually arrived next afternoon we found
3 that this had been quite unnecessary, for all morning long relays of pilgrims had been passing the tents
4 and dropping in, in the most friendly manner, to give the others news of us and our impending arrival. In
5 the morning we were up and on the way long before dawn. As the sun rose before us, while the moon
6 went down behind, we passed above the Lake of Death, into which about forty pilgrims had been buried
7 one year by an avalanche which their hymns had started. After this we came to the tiny goat-path down
8 the face of a steep cliff by which we were able to shorten the return journey so much. This was little
9 better than a scramble, and everyone had perforce to do it on foot. At the bottom the villagers had
10 something like breakfast ready. Fires were burning, Chapatties baking, and tea was ready to be served
11 out. From this time on parties of pilgrims would leave the main body at each parting of the ways, and the
12 feeling of solidarity that had grown up amongst us all throughout the journey became gradually less and
13 less.

14 That evening on the knoll above Pahalgam, where a great fire of pine-logs was lighted and Dhurries
15 spread, we all sat and talked. Our friend the Naked Swami joined us and we had plenty of fun and
16 nonsense, but presently, when all had gone save our own little party, we sat on with the great moon
17 overhead and the towering snows and rushing rivers and the mountain-pines. And the Swami talked of
18 Shiva and the cave and the great verge of vision.

19

20 AUGUST 8.

21 We started for Islamabad next day, and on Monday morning as we sat at breakfast, we were towed
22 safely into Srinagar.

1 CHAPTER XI

3 AT SRINAGAR ON THE RETURN JOURNEY

5 PERSONS: The Swami Vivekananda and a party of Europeans and disciples, amongst whom were
6 Dhira Mata, the "Steady Mother"; one whose name was Jaya; and Nivedita.

7 PLACE: Kashmir–Srinagar.

8 TIME: August 9 to August 13, 1898.

10 AUGUST 9.

11 At this time the Master was always talking of leaving us. And when I find the entry "The river is pure
12 that flows, the monk is pure that goes", I know exactly what it means—the passionate outcry "I am always
13 so much better when I have to undergo hardships and beg my bread", the longing for freedom and the
14 touch of the common people, the picture of himself making a long circuit of the country on foot and
15 meeting us again at Baramulla for the journey home.

16 His family of boat-people, whom he had staunchly befriended through two seasons, left us today.
17 Afterwards he would refer to the whole incident of their connection with him as proof that even charity
18 and patience could go too far.

19 AUGUST 10.

20 It was evening, and we all went out to pay some visit. On the return he called his disciple Nivedita to
21 walk with him across the fields. His talk was all about the work and his intentions in it. He spoke of the
22 inclusiveness of his conception of the country and its religions; of his own distinction as being solely in his
23 desire to make Hinduism active, aggressive, a missionary faith; of "don't-touch-ism" as the only thing he
24 repudiated. Then he talked with depth of feeling of the gigantic

1 spirituality of many of those who were most orthodox. India wanted practicality, but she must never
2 let go her hold on the old meditative life for that. "To be as deep as the ocean and as broad as the sky",
3 Shri Ramakrishna has said, was the ideal. But this profound inner life in the soul encased within orthodoxy
4 is the result of an accidental, not an essential, association. "And if we set ourselves right here, the world
5 will be right, for are we not all one? Ramakrishna Paramahansa was alive to the depths of his being, yet
6 on the outer plane he was perfectly active and capable."

7 And then of that critical question of the worship of his own master, "My own life is guided by the
8 enthusiasm of that great personality, but others will decide for themselves how far this is true for them.
9 Inspiration is not filtered out to the world through one man".

10 AUGUST 11.

11 There was occasion this day for the Swami to rebuke a member of this party for practising
12 palmistry. It was a thing he said that everyone desired, yet all India despised and hated. Yes, he said, in
13 reply to a little special pleading, even of character-reading he disapproved. "To tell you the truth, I should
14 have thought even your incarnation more honest if he and his disciples had not performed miracles.
15 Buddha unfrocked a monk for doing it." Later, talking on the subject to which he had now transferred his
16 attention, he spoke with horror of the display of the least of it as sure to bring a terrible reflex.

17 AUGUST 12 AND 13.

18 The Swami had now taken a Brahmin cook. Very touching had been the arguments of the Amarnath
19 Sâdhus against his willingness to let even a Mussulman cook for him. "Not in the land of Sikhs at least,
20 Swamiji", they had said, and he had at last consented. But for the present he was worshipping his little
21 Mohammedan boat-child as Umâ. Her whole idea of love was service, and the day he left Kashmir she, tiny
22 one, was fain to

1 carry a tray of apples for him all the way to the tonga herself. He never forgot her, though he
2 seemed quite indifferent at the time. In Kashmir itself he was fond of recalling the time when she saw a
3 blue flower on the towing path and sitting down before it, and striking it this way and that, "was alone
4 with that flower for twenty minutes".

5 There was a piece of land by the riverside on which grew three chennaars, towards which our
6 thoughts turned with peculiar love at this time. For the Mahârâjâ was anxious to give it to Swamiji, and we
7 all pictured it as a centre of work in the future

8 –work which should realize the great idea of "by the people, for the people, as a joy to worker and to
9 served".

10 In view of Indian feeling about a homestead blessed by women, it had been suggested that we
11 should go and annex the site by camping there for a while. One of our party, moreover, had a personal
12 wish for special quiet at this time. So it was decided that we should establish "a women's Math", as it
13 were, before the Maharaja should require the land to confer it on the Swami. And this was possible
14 because the spot was one of the minor camping grounds used by Europeans.

1 CHAPTER XII

3 THE CAMP UNDER THE CHENNAARS

5 PERSONS: The Swami Vivekananda and a party of Europeans and disciples, amongst whom were
6 Dhira Mata, the "Steady Mother"; one whose name was Jaya; and Nivedita.

7 PLACE: Kashmir—Srinagar.

8 TIME: August 14 to August 20, 1898.

9 AUGUST 14.

10 It was Sunday morning and next afternoon the Swami was prevailed on to come up to tea with us in
11 order to meet a European guest who seemed to be interested in the subject of Vedanta. He had been little
12 inclined to concern himself with the matter, and I think his real motive in accepting was probably to afford
13 his too-eager disciples an opportunity of convincing themselves of the utter futility of all such attempts as
14 this. Certainly he took infinite pains with the enquirer and, as certainly, his trouble was wasted.

15 I remember his saying, amongst other things, "How I wish a law could be broken. If we were really
16 able to break a law we should be free. What you call breaking the law is really only another way of
17 keeping it". Then he tried to explain a little of the superconscious life. But his words fell on ears that could
18 not hear.

19 AUGUST 16.

20 On Tuesday he came once more to our little camp to the midday meal. Towards the end it began to
21 rain heavily enough to prevent his return, and he took up Tod's *History of Rajasthan*, which was lying
22 near, and drifted into talk of Mirâ Bâi. "Two-thirds of the national ideas now in Bengal", he said, "have
23 been gathered from this book".

But the episode of Mira Bai, the queen who would not be queen, but would wander the world with the lovers of Krishna, was always his favourite, even in Tod. He talked of how she preached submission, prayerfulness, and service to all in contrast to Chaitanya, who preached love to the name of God, and mercy to all.

Mira Bai was always one of his great patronesses. He would put into her story many threads with which one is now familiar in other connections, such as the conversation of two great robbers, and the end by an image of Krishna opening and swallowing her up. I heard him on one occasion recite and translate one of her songs to a woman. I wish I could remember the whole, but it began in his rendering with the words "Cling to it, cling to it, cling to it, Brother", and ended with "If Ankâ and Bankâ, the robber brothers; Sujan, the fell butcher; and the courtesan who playfully taught her parrot to repeat the name of the Lord Krishna were saved, there is hope for all".

Again, I have heard him tell that marvellous tale of Mira Bai in which on reaching Vrindaban, she sent for a certain famous Sâdhu.⁵³⁵ He refused to go on the ground that women might not see men in Vrindaban. When this had happened three times, Mira Bai went to him herself saying that she had not known that there were such beings as men there; she had supposed that Krishna alone existed. And when she saw the astonished Sadhu, she unveiled herself completely, with the words "Fool, do you call yourself a man?" And as he fell prostrate before her with a cry of awe, she blessed him as a mother blesses her child.

Today the Swami passed on to the talk of Akbar and sang us a song of Tânsen, the poet-laureate of the emperor:

Seated on the throne, a god amongst men,
Thou, the Emperor of Delhi.
Blessed was the hour, the minute, the second,
When thou ascendest the throne,

⁵³⁵ ? Sanâtana, the famous Sannyâsin disciple of Shri Chaitanya of Bengal who gave up his office of minister to the Nawab of Bengal to become a religious devotee.

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2

1 O God amongst men,
2 Thou, the Lord of Delhi.

1 Long live thy crown, thy sceptre, thy throne,
2 O God amongst men,
3 Thou, Emperor of Delhi.
4 Live long, and remain awakened always,
5 O son of Humayoon,
6 Joy of the sun, God amongst men,
7 Thou, the Emperor of Delhi!

8

9 Then the talk passed to "our national hero" Pratâp Singh, who never could be brought to submission.
10 Once indeed he was tempted to give in, at that moment when having fled from Chitore and the queen
11 herself having cooked the scanty evening meal, a hungry cat swooped down on that cake of bread which
12 was the children's portion, and the King of Mewar heard his babies cry for food. Then, indeed, the strong
13 heart of the man failed him. The prospect of ease and relief tempted him. And for a moment he thought of
14 ceasing from the unequal conflict and sending his alliance to Akbar, only for an instant. The Eternal Will
15 protects its own. Even as the picture passed before his mind, there appeared a messenger with those
16 despatches from a famous Rajput chief that said, "There is but one left amongst us who has kept his blood
17 free from admixture with the alien. Let it never be said that his head has touched the dust". And the soul
18 of Pratap drew in the long breath of courage and renewed faith; and he arose and swept the country of its
19 foes and made his own way back to Udaipur.

20 Then there was the wonderful tale of the virgin princess Krishna Kumâri, whose hand was sought by
21 various royal suitors at once. And when three armies were at the gate, her father could think of nothing
22 better than to give her poison. The task was entrusted to her uncle, and he entered her room, as she lay
23 asleep, to do it. But at the sight of her beauty and youth, remembering her too as a baby, the soldier's
24 heart failed him, and he could not perform his task. But she was awakened by some sound, and being told
25 what was proposed, stretched out her hand for the cup and drank the poison with a smile. And so on, and
26 so on. For the stories of Rajput heroes in this kind are endless.

1 AUGUST 20.

2 On Saturday the Swami and he whose name was Soong went to the Dahl Lake to be the guests of the
3 American consul and his wife for a couple of days. They returned on Monday, and on Tuesday the Swami
4 came up to the new Math, as we called it, and had his boat moved close by ours so that he could be with
5 us for a few days before leaving for Ganderbal.

6
7 CONCLUDING WORDS OF THE EDITOR

8
9 From Ganderbal the Swami returned by the first week of October and announced his intention of
10 leaving for the plains in a few days for urgent reasons. The European party had already made plans to
11 visit the principal cities of northern India, e.g., Lahore, Delhi, Agra, etc., as soon as the winter set in. So
12 both parties decided to return together and came to Lahore. From here the Swami and his party returned
13 to Calcutta, leaving the rest to carry out their plans for sight-seeing in northern India.

14
15

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2

1
2 sayings and utterances

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1
2
3 List of abbreviations
4
5

6 In this section, only Swami Vivekananda's direct words have been placed within quotation marks.
7 References have been identified by the following abbreviations:
8

9 *ND* Burke, Marie Louise. *Swami Vivekananda in the West: New Discoveries*. 6 vols. Calcutta:
10 Advaita Ashrama, 1983-87.
11

12 *CWSN* Nivedita, Sister. *The Complete Works of Sister Nivedita*. Vol. 1. Calcutta: Advaita
13 Ashrama, 1982.
14

15 *LSN* Nivedita, Sister. *Letters of Sister Nivedita*. 2 vols. Compiled and edited by Sankari Prasad
16 Basu. Calcutta: Nababharat Publishers, 1982.
17

18 *VIN* Basu, Sankari Prasad and Ghosh, Sunil Bihari, eds. *Vivekananda in Indian Newspapers:*
19 *1893-1902*. Calcutta: Dineshchandra Basu, Basu Bhattacharya and Co., 1969.
20

2
3 1. From Mrs. Prince Woods's description of Swami Viveka-nanda's departure from the Woods's
4 residence in Salem, Massachusetts, in August 1893. Swami Vivekananda gave his staff, his most precious
5 possession, to Dr. Woods, who was at that time a young medical student, and his trunk and his blanket to
6 Mrs. Kate T. Woods, saying:

7 "Only my most precious possessions should I give to my friends who have made me at home in this
8 great country." (*ND* 1: 42)

9 2. On the back of Swami Vivekananda's transcription from Louis Rousselet's book *India and Its*
10 *Native Princes—Travels in Central India and in the Presidencies of Bombay and Bengal*, dated February
11 11, 1894:

12 "I say there is but one remedy for one too anxious for the future—to go down on his knees." (*ND* 1:
13 225)

14 3. An extract from a prayer Swami Vivekananda delivered at the Chicago World's Parliament of
15 Religions:

16
17 "Thou art He that beareth the burdens of the universe; help me to bear the little burden of this life."
18 (*ND* 2: 32)

19 4. An extract from another prayer offered by Swami Viveka-nanda at the Chicago World's
20 Parliament of Religions:

21
22 "At the head of all these laws, in and through every particle of matter and force, stands One through
23 whose command the wind blows, the fire burns, the clouds rain, and death stalks upon the earth. And
24 what is His nature? He is everywhere the pure and formless One, the Almighty and the All Merciful. Thou
25 art our Father. Thou art our beloved Friend." (*ND* 2: 33)

1 5. From Mary T. Wright's journal entry dated Saturday, May 12, 1894:

2
3 The widows of high caste in India do not marry, he said; only the widows of low caste may marry,
4 may eat, drink, dance, have as many husbands as they choose, divorce them all, in short enjoy all the
5 benefits of the highest society in this country. . . .

6 "When *we* are fanatical", he said, "we torture ourselves, we throw ourselves under huge cars, we cut
7 our throats, we lie on spiked beds; but when *you* are fanatical you cut other people's throats, you torture
8 them by fire and put *them* on spiked beds! You take very good care of your own skins!" (*ND* 2: 58-59)

9 6. An 1894 extract from the Greenacre Voice, quoting one of the Swami's teachings delivered at
10 Greenacre, Maine:

11
12 "You and I and everything in the universe are that Absolute, not parts, but the whole. You are the
13 whole of that Absolute." (*ND* 2: 150)

14 7. In a March 5, 1899 letter from Sister Nivedita to Miss Josephine MacLeod:

15
16 "I am at heart a mystic, Margot, all this reasoning is only apparent—I am really always on the lookout
17 for signs and things—and so I never bother about the fate of my initiations. If they want to be Sannyâsins
18 badly enough I feel that the rest is not my business. Of course it has its bad side. I have to pay dearly for
19 my blunder sometimes—but it has one advantage. It has kept me still a Sannyasin through all this—and that
20 is my ambition, to die a real Sannyasin as Ramakrishna Paramahansa actually was—free from lust—

21 and desire of wealth, and thirst for fame. That thirst for fame is the worst of all filth." (*ND* 3: 128-29)

1 8. From John Henry Wright's March 27, 1896 letter to Mary Tappan Wright, in which Swami
2 Vivekananda stated that England is just like India with its castes:

3
4 "I had to have separate classes for the two castes. For the high caste people—Lady This and Lady
5 That, Honourable This and Honourable That—I had classes in the morning; for the low caste people, who
6 came pell-mell, I had classes in the evening." (*ND* 4: 73)

7 9. While Swami Vivekananda was offering flowers at the feet of the Virgin Mary in a small chapel
8 in Switzerland in the summer of 1896, he said:

9
10 "For she also is the Mother." (*ND* 4: 276)

11 10. From Mr. J. J. Goodwin's October 23, 1896 letter to Mrs. Ole Bull, quoting Swami Vivekananda's
12 conversation at Greycoat Gardens in London:

13
14 "It is very good to have a high ideal, but don't make it too high. A high ideal raises mankind, but an
15 impossible ideal lowers them from the very impossibility of the case." (*ND* 4: 385)

16 11. A November 20, 1896 entry from Swami Abhedananda's diary, quoting Swami Vivekananda's
17 observation of the English people:

18
19 "You can't make friends here without knowing their cus-toms, behaviour, politics. You have to know
20 the manners of the rich, the cultured and the poor." (*ND* 4: 478)

21 12. In Mr. J. J. Goodwin's November 11, 1896 letter to Mrs. Ole Bull, quoting Swami Vivekananda's
22 unpublished statement toward the end of "Practical Vedanta—IV":

1 "A Jiva can never attain absolutely to Brahman until the whole of Mâyâ disappears. While there is
2 still a Jiva left in Maya, there can be no soul absolutely free. . . . Vedantists are divided on this point." (*ND*
3 4: 481)

4 13. From Swami Saradananda's letter to a brother-disciple, concerning Swami Vivekananda's last
5 days:

6
7 Sometimes he would say, "Death has come to my bedside; I have been through enough of work and
8 play; let the world realize what contribution I have made; it will take quite a long time to understand that".
9 (*ND* 4: 521)

10 14. In an October 13, 1898 letter to Mrs. Ashton Jonson, written from Kashmir, Sister Nivedita
11 described Swami Viveka-nanda's spiritual mood:

12
13 To him at this moment "doing good" seems horrible. "Only the Mother does anything. Patriotism is a
14 mistake. Everything is a mistake. It is all Mother. . . . *All* men are good. Only we cannot *reach* all. . . . I am
15 never going to teach any more. Who am I that I should teach anyone? . . . Swamiji is dead and gone." (*ND*
16 5: 3-4)

17 15. From Mr. Sachindranath Basu's letter recounting Swami Vivekananda's closing remarks in his
18 talk to swamis and novices assembled at Belur Math, June 19, 1899:

19
20 "My sons, all of you be men. This is what I want! If you are even a little successful, I shall feel my
21 life has been meaningful." (*ND* 5: 17)

22 16. During an evening talk with Swami Saradananda in the spring of 1899:

23
24 "Men should be taught to be practical, physically strong. A dozen such lions will conquer the world,
25 not millions of

1 sheep. Men should not be taught to imitate a personal ideal, however great." (ND 5: 17)

2 17. From Mrs. Mary C. Funke's reminiscences of her August 1899 voyage to America with Swamis
3 Vivekananda and Turiya-nanda:

4
5 "And if all this Maya is so beautiful, think of the wondrous beauty of the Reality behind it!" (ND 5:
6 76)

7
8 "Why recite poetry when there [pointing to sea and sky] is the very essence of poetry?" (Ibid.)

9 18. In Miss Josephine MacLeod's September 3, 1899 letter to Mrs. Ole Bull:

10
11 "In one's greatest hour of need *one stands alone*." (ND 5: 122)

12 19. From Sister Nivedita's October 27, 1899 diary entry at Ridgely Manor, in which Swami
13 Vivekananda expressed his concern for Olea Bull Vaughn:

14
15 "Nightmares always begin pleasantly—only at the worst point [the] dream is broken—so death breaks
16 [the] dream of life. Love death." (ND 5: 138)

17 20. In a December 1899 letter from Miss Josephine MacLeod to Sister Nivedita:

18
19 "All the ideas the Californians have of me emanated from Chicago." (ND 5: 179)

20 21. From Mrs. Alice Hansbrough's reminiscences which quoted Swami Vivekananda as telling Mr.
21 Baumgardt:

1 "I can talk on the same subject, but it will not be the same lecture." (*ND* 5: 230)

2 22. Mrs. Alice Hansbrough's reminiscences relating Swami Vivekananda's response to her
3 sight-seeing attempts:
4

5 "Do not show me sights. I have seen the Himalayas! I would not go ten steps to see sights; but I
6 would go a thousand miles to see a [great] human being!" (*ND* 5: 244)

7 23. From Mrs. Alice Hansbrough's reminiscences relating Swami Vivekananda's interest in the
8 problem of child training:
9

10 He did not believe in punishment. It had never helped him, he said, and added, "I would never do
11 anything to make a child afraid". (*ND* 5: 253)

12 24. Mrs. Alice Hansbrough's record of Swami Vivekananda's explanation of God to
13 seventeen-year-old Ralph Wyckoff:
14

15 "Can you see your own eyes? God is like that. He is as close as your own eyes. He is your own, even
16 though you can't see Him." (*ND* 5: 254)

17 25. Mrs. Alice Hansbrough's reminiscences regarding Swami Vivekananda's opinion of the low-caste
18 English soldiers who occupied India:
19

20 "If anyone should despoil the Englishman's home, the Englishman would kill him, and rightly so. But
21 the Hindu just sits and whines!

22 "Do you think that a handful of Englishmen could rule India if we had a militant spirit? I teach
23 meat-eating throughout the length and breadth of India in the hope that we can build a militant spirit!"
24 (*ND* 5: 256)

26. Mrs. Alice Hansbrough's reminiscences of a picnic in Pasa-dena, California when a Christian Science woman suggested to Swami Vivekananda that one should teach people to be good:

"Why should I desire to be 'good'? All this is His handiwork [waving his hand to indicate the trees and the countryside]. Shall I apologize for His handiwork? If you want to reform John Doe, go and live with him; don't try to reform him. If you have any of the Divine Fire, he will catch it." (*ND* 5: 257)

27. From Mrs. Alice Hansbrough's reminiscences:

"When once you consider an action, do not let anything dissuade you. Consult your heart, not others, and then follow its dictates." (*ND* 5: 311)

28. From Mr. Frank Rhodehamel's notes taken during a March 1900 lecture in Oakland, California:

"Never loved a husband the wife for the wife's sake, or the wife the husband for the husband's sake. It is God in the wife the husband loves, and God in the husband the wife loves.⁵³⁶ It is God in everyone that draws us to that one in love. [It is] God in everything, in everybody that makes us love. God is the only love. . . . In everyone is God, the Atman; all else is but dream, an illusion." (*ND* 5: 362)

29. From Mr. Frank Rhodehamel's notes taken during a March 1900 lecture in Oakland, California:

"Oh, if you only knew yourselves! You are souls; you are gods. If ever I feel [that I am] blaspheming, it is when I call you man." (*ND* 5: 362)

⁵³⁶ ? Cf. *Brihadâraṇyaka Upanishad* II.4.5.

1
2 30. An excerpt from Mr. Thomas J. Allan's reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda's March 1900 San
3 Francisco lecture series on India:

4
5 "Send us mechanics to teach us how to use our hands, and we will send you missionaries to teach
6 you spirituality." (*ND* 5: 365)

7 31. Mrs. Edith Allan's reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda's philosophical observations while
8 cooking at the Turk Street flat:

9
10 "'The Lord dwells in the hearts of all beings, O Arjuna, by His illusive power causing all beings to
11 revolve as though mounted on a potter's wheel.' [Bhagavad-Gitâ XVIII.61] This has all happened before,
12 like the throw of a dice, so it is in life; the wheel goes on and the same combination comes up; that pitcher
13 and glass have stood there before, so, too, that onion and potato. What can we do, Madam, He has us on
14 the wheel of life." (*ND* 6: 17)

15 32. From Mrs. Edith Allan's reminiscences of an after-lunch conversation:

16
17 "The Master said he would come again in about two hundred years—and I will come with him. When
18 a Master comes, he brings his own people." (*ND* 6: 17)

19 33. Mrs. Edith Allan's reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda's "kitchen" counsel while he was staying
20 in San Francisco, California, in 1900:

21
22 "If I consider myself greater than the ant that crawls on the ground I am ignorant." (*ND* 6: 19)

23
24 "Madam, be broad-minded; always see two ways. When I am on the heights I say, 'Shivoham,
25 Shivoham: I am He, I am He!' and when I have the stomachache I say, 'Mother have mercy on me!'" (*Ibid.*)

1 "Learn to be the witness. If two dogs are fighting on the street and I go out there, I get mixed up in
2 the fight; but if I stay quietly in my room, I witness the fight from the window. So learn to be the witness."
3 (Ibid.)

4 34. From Mr. Thomas J. Allan's reminiscences of a private talk with Swami Vivekananda in San
5 Francisco, California, 1900:

6
7 "We do not progress from error to truth, but from truth to truth. Thus we must see that none can be
8 blamed for what they are doing, because they are, at this time, doing the best they can. If a child has an
9 open razor, don't try to take it from him, but give him a red apple or a brilliant toy, and he will drop the
10 razor. But he who puts his hand in the fire will be burned; we learn only from experience." (*ND* 6: 42)

11 35. From Mrs. Alice Hansbrough's reminiscences of a walk home with Swami Vivekananda after one
12 of his lectures in San Francisco in 1900:

13
14 "You have heard that Christ said, 'My words are spirit and they are life'. So are my words spirit and
15 life; they will burn their way into your brain and you will never get away from them!" (*ND* 6: 57-58)

16 36. From Mrs. Alice Hansbrough's reminiscences in San Francisco, 1900—referring to Swami
17 Vivekananda's great heart:

18
19 "I may have to be born again because I have fallen in love with man." (*ND* 6: 79)

20 37. From Mrs. George Roorbach's reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda at Camp Taylor, California,
21 in May 1900:

1 "In my first speech in this country, in Chicago, I addressed that audience as 'Sisters and Brothers of
2 America', and you know that they all rose to their feet. You may wonder what made them do this, you may
3 wonder if I had some strange power. Let me tell you that I did have a power and this is it

4 –never once in my life did I allow myself to have even one sexual thought. I trained my mind, my
5 thinking, and the powers that man usually uses along that line I put into a higher channel, and it
6 developed a force so strong that nothing could resist it." (*ND* 6: 155)

7 38. In a conversation with Swami Turiyananda, which probably took place in New York:

8
9 "The call has come from Above: 'Come away, just come away—no need of troubling your head to
10 teach others'. It is now the will of the Grand Old Lady⁵³⁷ that the play should be over." (*ND* 6: 373)

11 39. In a July 1902 Prabuddha Bharata eulogy, "a Western disciple" wrote:

12
13 The Swami had but scant sympathy with iconoclasts, for as he wisely remarked, "The true
14 philosopher strives to destroy nothing, but to help all". (*VIN*: 638)

15 40. Sister Nivedita's reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda in an October 9, 1899 letter to Miss
16 Josephine MacLeod:

17
18 He has turned back on so much—"Let your life in the world be nothing but a thinking to yourself".
19 (*LSNI*: 213)

20 41. Swami Vivekananda's luncheon remarks to Mrs. Ole Bull, recorded by Sister Nivedita in an
21 October 18, 1899 letter to Miss Josephine MacLeod:

3 ⁵³⁷ ? The "Grand Old Lady" was a figure in a children's game, whose touch put one outside the game.
4

1 "You see, there is one thing called love, and there is another thing called union. And union is greater
2 than love.

3 "I do not *love* religion. I have become identified with it. It is my life. So no man loves that thing in
4 which his life has been spent, in which he really has accomplished something. That which we love is not
5 yet ourself. Your husband did not love music for which he had always stood. He loved engineering in
6 which as yet he knew comparatively little. This is the difference between Bhakti and Jnâna; and this is why
7 Jnana is greater than Bhakti." (*LSN* I: 216)

8 42. Swami Vivekananda's remarks on his spiritual ministry, recorded in Sister Nivedita's October
9 15, 1904 letter to Miss Josephine MacLeod:

10
11 "Only when they go away will they know how much they have received." (*LSN* II: 686)

12 43. Sister Nivedita's reminiscences in a November 5, 1904 letter to Alberta Sturges (Lady
13 Sandwich) of Swami Vivekananda's talk on renunciation while he was staying at Ridgely Manor:

14
15 "In India we never say that you should renounce a higher thing for a lower. It is better to be
16 absorbed in music or in literature than in comfort or pleasure, and we *never* say otherwise." (*LSN* II: 690)

17 44. In Sister Nivedita's November 19, 1909 letter to Miss Jose-phine MacLeod:

18
19 "The fire burns if we plunge our hand in—whether we feel it or not—so it is with him who speaks the
20 name of God." (*LSN* II: 1030)

1
2 45. Swami Vivekananda's reminiscences of Shri Ramakrishna, recorded in Sister Nivedita's July 6,
3 1910 letter to Dr. T. K. Cheyne:

4
5 "He could not imagine himself the *teacher* of anyone. He was like a man playing with balls of many
6 colours, and leaving it to others to select which they would for themselves." (*LSN* II: 1110)

7 46. Sister Nivedita's reminiscences of a conversation with Swami Vivekananda at Ridgely Manor,
8 recorded in an 1899 letter written from Ridgely Manor to Miss Josephine MacLeod:

9
10 I have never heard the Prophet talk so much of Shri Rama-krishna. He told us what I had heard
11 before of [his master's] infallible judgement of men. . . .

12 "And so", Swami said, "you see my devotion is the dog's devotion. I have been wrong so often and he
13 has always been right, and now I trust his judgement blindly". And then he told us how he would hypnotize
14 anyone who came to him and in two minutes know all about him, and Swami said that from this he had
15 learnt to count our consciousness as a very small thing. (*LSN* II: 1263)

16 47. From Sister Nivedita's January 27, 1900 letter to Sister Christine:

17
18 Swami said today that he is beginning to see the needs of humanity in quite a different light—that he
19 is already sure of the principle that is to help, but is spending hours every day in trying to solve the
20 methods. That what he had known hitherto is for men living in a cave—alone, undisturbed—

21 but now he will give "humanity something that will make for strength in the stress of daily life".
22 (*LSN* II: 1264)

23 48. In a July 7, 1902 letter to Sister Christine, Sister Nivedita recorded one of Swami Vivekananda's
24 remarks made while giving a class to the monks at Belur Math on July 4, 1902:

1 "Do not copy me. Kick out the man who imitates." (*LSN II*: 1270)

2 *49. The Swami's comment after he made a statement concerning the ideal of the freedom of the*
3 *soul, which brought it into apparent conflict with the Western conception of the service of humanity as the*
4 *goal of the individual:*

5
6 "You will say that this does not benefit society. But before this objection can be admitted you will
7 first have to prove that the maintenance of society is an object in itself." (*CWSN 1*: 19)

8 50. Sister Nivedita wrote:

9
10 He touched on the question of his own position as a wandering teacher and expressed the Indian
11 diffidence with regard to religious organization or, as someone expresses it, "with regard to a faith that
12 ends in a church". "We believe", he said, "that organization always breeds new evils".

13 He prophesied that certain religious developments then much in vogue in the West would speedily
14 die, owing to love of money. And he declared that "Man proceeds from truth to truth, and not from error to
15 truth". (*CWSN 1*: 19-20)

16 51. "The universe is like a cobweb and minds are the spiders; for mind is one as well as many."
17 (*CWSN 1*: 21)

18 52. "Let none regret that they were difficult to convince! I fought my Master for six years with the
19 result that I know every inch of the way! Every inch of the way!" (*CWSN 1*: 22)

20 *53. Swami Vivekananda was elucidating to what heights of selflessness the path of love leads and*
21 *how it draws out the very best faculties of the soul:*

1 "Suppose there were a baby in the path of the tiger! Where would your place be then? At his
2 mouth—any one of you

3 –I am sure of it." (*CWSN* 1: 24)

4 54. "*That* by which all this is pervaded, know *That* to be the Lord Himself!" (*CWSN* 1: 27)

5 55. Concerning Swami Vivekananda's attitude toward religion:

6
7 Religion was a matter of the growth of the individual, "a question always of being and becoming".
8 (*CWSN* 1: 28)

9 56. "Forgive when you also can bring legions of angels to an easy victory." While victory was still
10 doubtful, however, only a coward to his thinking would turn the other cheek. (*CWSN* 1: 28-29)

11 57. "Of course I would commit a crime and go to hell forever if by that I could really help a human
12 being!" (*CWSN* 1: 34)

13 58. To a small group, including Sister Nivedita, after a lecture:

14
15 "I have a superstition—it is nothing, you know, but a personal superstition!—that the same soul who
16 came once as Buddha came afterwards as Christ." (*CWSN* 1: 35)

17 59. After Swami Vivekananda was told of Sister Nivedita's willingness to serve India:

18
19 "For my own part I will be incarnated two hundred times, if that is necessary, to do this work
20 amongst my people that I have undertaken." (*CWSN* 1: 36)

21 60. Sister Nivedita's memory of an incident:

He was riding on one occasion with the Raja of Khetri, when he saw that his arm was bleeding profusely and found that the wound had been caused by a thorny branch which he had held aside for himself to pass. When the Swami expostulated, the Rajput laughed the matter aside. "Are we not always the defenders of the faith, Swamiji?" he said.

"And then", said the Swami, telling the story, "I was just going to tell him that they ought not to show such honour to the Sannyasin, when suddenly I thought that perhaps they were right after all. Who knows? Maybe I too am caught in the glare of this flashlight of your modern civilization, which is only for a moment".

"—I have become entangled", he said simply to one who protested that to his mind the wandering Sâdhu of earlier years, who had scattered his knowledge and changed his name as he went, had been greater than the abbot of Belur, burdened with much work and many cares. "I have become entangled." (CWSN 1: 43)

61. Sister Nivedita wrote:

One day he was talking in the West of Mirâ Bâi—that saint who once upon a time was Queen of Chitore—and of the freedom her husband had offered her if only she would remain within the royal seclusion. But she could not be bound. "But why should she not?" someone asked in astonishment. "Why should she?" he retorted. "Was she living down here *in this mire*?" (CWSN 1: 44)

62. As years went by, the Swami dared less and less to make determinate plans or dogmatize about the unknown:

"After all, what do we know? Mother uses it all. But we are only fumbling about." (CWSN 1: 44)

63. Quoting Swami Vivekananda, Sister Nivedita remembered:

1 Love was not love, it was insisted, unless it was "without a reason" or without a "motive"
2 (*CWSN* 1: 52)

3 64. About Swami Vivekananda, Sister Nivedita wrote:

4
5 When asked by some of his own people what he considered, after seeing them in their own country,
6 to be the greatest achievement of the English, he answered "that they had known how to combine
7 obedience with self-respect". (*CWSN* 1: 54)

8 65. Swami Sadananda reported that early in the morning, while it was still dark, Swami
9 Vivekananda would rise and call the others, singing:

10
11 "Awake! Awake! all ye who would drink of the divine nectar!" (*CWSN* 1: 56)

12 66. Sister Nivedita remembered:

13
14 At this time [during the Swami's itinerant days, near Almora] he passed some months in a cave
15 overhanging a mountain village. Only twice have I known him to allude to this experience. Once he said,
16 "Nothing in my whole life ever so filled me with the sense of work to be done. It was as if I were *thrown*
17 *out* from that life in caves to wander to and fro in the plains below". And again he said to someone, "It is
18 not the form of his life that makes a Sadhu. For it is possible to sit in a cave and have one's whole mind
19 filled with the question of how many pieces of bread will be brought to one for supper!" (*CWSN* 1: 61)

20 67. About his own poem "Kâli the Mother":

21
22 "Scattering plagues and sorrows", he quoted from his own verses,

1 Dancing mad with joy,
2 Come, Mother, come!
3 For terror is Thy name!
4 Death—is in Thy breath.
5 And every shaking step
6 Destroys a world for e'er.

7
8 "It all came true, every word of it", he interrupted himself to say.

9
10 Who dares misery love.
11 Dance in Destruction's dance,
12 And hug the form of death, . . .

13
14 "To him the Mother does indeed come. I have proved it. For I have hugged the form of Death!"
15 (*CWSN* 1: 98-99)

16 68. Sister Nivedita, referring to her plans for a girls' school:

17
18 Only in one respect was he [Swami Vivekananda] inflexible. The work for the education of Indian
19 women, to which he would give his name, might be as sectarian as I chose to make it. "You wish through a
20 sect to rise beyond all sects." (*CWSN* 1: 102)

21 69. Commenting on Sister Nivedita's visit to Gopaler-Ma's dwelling—a small cell:

22
23 "Ah! this is the old India that you have seen, the India of prayers and tears, of vigils and fasts, that is

1 conversations and interviews 416
2

1 passing away, never to return!" (*CWSN* 1: 109)

2 70. About the aims of the Ramakrishna Order:

3

4 The same purpose spoke again in his definition of the aims of the Order of Ramakrishna—"to effect
5 an exchange of the highest ideals of the East and the West and to realize these in practice" (*CWSN* 1:
6 113)

2
3 71. After teaching Sister Nivedita the worship of Shiva, Swami Vivekananda then culminated it in an
4 offering of flowers at the feet of the Buddha. He said, as if addressing each soul that would ever come to
5 him for guidance:

6 "Go thou and follow Him, who was born and gave His life for others *five hundred times* before He
7 attained the vision of the Buddha!" (CWSN 1: 114)

8 72. Upon returning from a pilgrimage in Kashmir:

9 "These gods are not merely symbols! They are the forms that the Bhaktas have seen!" (CWSN 1:
10 120)

11 73. Sister Nivedita's reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda's words heard long before:

12
13 "The Impersonal God seen through the mists of sense is personal." (CWSN 1: 120)

14 74. Swami Vivekananda's comment when he was reminded of the rareness of criminality in India:

15
16 "Would God it were otherwise in my land, for this is verily the virtuousness of death!" (CWSN 1:
17 123)

18 75. Swami Vivekananda said:

19
20 "The whole of life is only a swan song! Never forget those lines:

21
22 The lion, when stricken to the heart,
23 gives out his mightiest roar.

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2

1 When smitten on the head, the cobra lifts its hood.
2 And the majesty of the soul comes forth,
3 only when a man is wounded to his depths."
4 (*CWSN* 1: 124)

1 76. *After hearing of the death of Shri Durga Charan Nag (Nag Mahashay):*

2
3 "[He] was one of the greatest of the works of Ramakrishna Paramahansa." (CWSN 1: 129)

4 77. About Shri Ramakrishna's transformative power, Swami Vivekananda said:

5
6 "Was it a joke that Ramakrishna Paramahansa should touch a life? *Of course* he made new men and
7 new women of those who came to him, even in these fleeting contacts!" (CWSN 1: 130)

8 78. While speaking on the true spirit of a Sannyasin, Swami Vivekananda said:

9
10 "I saw many great men in Hrishikesh. One case that I remember was that of a man who seemed to
11 be mad. He was coming nude down the street, with boys pursuing and throwing stones at him. The whole
12 man was bubbling over with laughter while blood was streaming down his face and neck. I took him and
13 bathed the wound, putting ashes on it to stop the bleeding. And all the time with peals of laughter he told
14 me of the fun the boys and he had been having, throwing the stones. 'So the Father plays', he said.

15 "Many of these men hide, in order to guard themselves against intrusion. People are a trouble to
16 them. One had human bones strewn about his cave and gave it out that he lived on corpses. Another threw
17 stones. And so on. . . .

18 "Sometimes the thing comes upon them in a flash. There was a boy, for instance, who used to come
19 to read the Upanishads with Abhedananda. One day he turned and said, 'Sir, is all this really true?'

20 "'Oh yes!' said Abhedananda, 'It may be difficult to realize, but it is certainly true'.

21 "And next day, that boy was a silent Sannyasin, nude, on his way to Kedarnath!

1 "What happened to him? you ask. He became silent!

2 "But the Sannyasin needs no longer to worship or to go on pilgrimage or perform austerities. What
3 then is the motive of all this going from pilgrimage to pilgrimage, shrine to shrine, and austerity to
4 austerity? He is acquiring merit and giving it to the world!" (CWSN 1: 133)

5 79. Referring to the story of Shibi Rana:

6
7 "Ah yes! These are the stories that are deep in our nation's heart! Never forget that the Sannyasin
8 takes two vows: one to realize the truth and one to help the world—and that the most stringent of stringent
9 requirements is that he should renounce any thought of heaven!" (CWSN 1: 134)

10 80. To Sister Nivedita:

11
12 "The Gitâ says that there are three kinds of charity: the Tâmasic, the Râjasic and the Sâttvic.
13 Tamasic charity is performed on an impulse. It is always making mistakes. The doer thinks of nothing but
14 his own impulse to be kind. Rajasic charity is what a man does for his own glory. And Sattvic charity is
15 that which is given to the right person, in the right way, and at the proper time. . . .

16 "When it comes to the Sattvic, I think more and more of a certain great Western woman in whom I
17 have seen that quiet giving, always to the right person in the right way, at the right time, and never
18 making a mistake.

19 "For my own part, I have been learning that even charity can go too far. . . .

20 "As I grow older I find that I look more and more for greatness in *little* things. I want to know what a
21 great man eats and wears, and how he speaks to his servants. I want to find a Sir Philip Sidney⁵³⁸
22 greatness! Few men would remember the thirst of others, even in the moment of death.

3 ⁵³⁸ ? Sir Philip Sidney (1554-1586): English poet, soldier and politician.
4

1 "But anyone will be great in a great position! Even the coward will grow brave in the glare of the
2 footlights. The world looks on. Whose heart will not throb? Whose pulse will not quicken till he can do his
3 best?

4 "More and more the true greatness seems to me that of the worm doing its duty silently, steadily,
5 from moment to moment and from hour to hour." (*CWSN* 1: 137)

6 81. Referring to the great individual—the divine incarnation, the Guru, and the Rishi:

7
8 "You do not yet understand India! We Indians are MAN-worshippers, after all! Our God is man!"
9 (*CWSN* 1: 144)

10 82. On another occasion, Swami Vivekananda used the word "man-worshippers" in an entirely
11 different sense:

12
13 "This idea of man-worship exists in nucleus in India, but it has never been expanded. You must
14 develop it. Make poetry, make art, of it. Establish the worship of the feet of beggars as you had it in
15 Mediaeval Europe. Make man-worshippers." (*CWSN* 1: 144-45)

16 83. To Sister Nivedita:

17
18 "There is a peculiar sect of Mohammedans who are reported to be so fanatical that they take each
19 newborn babe and expose it, saying, 'If God made thee, perish! If Ali made thee, live!' Now this, which
20 they say to the child, I say, but in the opposite sense, to you tonight: 'Go forth into the world and there, if I
21 made you, be destroyed! If Mother made you, live!'" (*CWSN* 1: 151)

2
3 84. Long after Southern magnates in America had apologized to Vivekananda when they learned
4 that he had been mistaken for a Negro and was thus refused admission into hotels, the Swami remarked
5 to himself:

6 "What! rise at the expense of another! I didn't come to earth for that! . . . If I am grateful to my
7 white-skinned Aryan ancestor, I am far more so to my yellow-skinned Mongolian ancestor and, most so of
8 all, to the black-skinned Negritoid!" (*CWSN* 1: 153)

9 85. Commenting on the dungeon-cages of mediaeval prisoners on Mont-Saint-Michel:

10 "What a wonderful place for meditation!" (*CWSN* 1: 154)

11
12 "Oh, I know I have wandered over the whole earth, but in India I have looked for nothing save the
13 cave in which to meditate!" (*Ibid.*)

14 86. Though he considered offspring of the Roman Empire to be brutal and the Japanese notion of
15 marriage a horror, Swami Vivekananda nevertheless summed up the constructive ideals, never the
16 defects, of a community:

17
18 "For patriotism, the Japanese! For purity, the Hindu! And for manliness, the European! There is no
19 other in the world who understands, as does the Englishman, what should be the glory of a man!" (*CWSN*
20 1: 160)

21 87. Swami Vivekananda said of himself before he left for America in 1893:

22
23 "I go forth to preach a religion of which Buddhism is nothing but a rebel child and Christianity, with
24 all her pretensions, only a distant echo!" (*CWSN* 1: 161)

1 88. Describing the night Buddha left his wife to renounce the world, Swami Vivekananda said:

2
3 "What was the problem that vexed him? Why! It was *she* whom he was about to sacrifice for the
4 world! *That* was the struggle! He cared nothing for himself!" (CWSN 1: 172)

5 89. After describing Buddha's touching farewell to his wife, the Swami said:

6
7 "Have you never thought of the hearts of the heroes? How they were great, great, great—and soft as
8 butter?" (CWSN 1: 172)

9 90. Swami Vivekananda's description of Buddha's death and its similarity with that of Shri
10 Ramakrishna's:

11
12 He told how the blanket had been spread for him beneath the tree and how the Blessed One had lain
13 down, "resting on his right side like a lion" to die, when suddenly there came to him one who ran for
14 instruction. The disciples would have treated the man as an intruder, maintaining peace at any cost about
15 their Master's death-bed, but the Blessed One overheard, and saying, "No, no! He who was sent⁵³⁹ is ever
16 ready", he raised himself on his elbow and taught. This happened four times and then, and then only,
17 Buddha held himself free to die. "But first he spoke to reprove Ananda for weeping. The Buddha was not a
18 person but a realization, and to that any one of them might attain. And with his last breath he forbade
19 them to worship any."

20 The immortal story went on to its end. But to one who listened, the most significant moment had
21 been that in which the teller paused—at his own words "raised himself on his elbow and taught"—and said,
22 in brief parenthesis, "*I saw this, you know, in the case of Ramakrishna Paramahansa*". And there rose
23 before the mind the story of one,

3 ⁵³⁹ ? Lit., "the Tathâgata". "A word", explained Swami Vivekananda, "which is very like your 'Messiah'".
4

2
3 destined to learn from that teacher, who had travelled a hundred miles, and arrived at Cossipore
4 only when he lay dying. Here also the disciples would have refused admission, but Shri Ramakrishna
5 intervened, insisting on receiving the new-comer, and teaching him. (*CWSN* 1: 175-176)

6 91. Commenting on the historic and philosophic significance of Buddhistic doctrine:

7 "Form, feeling, sensation, motion and knowledge are the five categories in perpetual flux and fusion.
8 And in these lies Maya. Of any one wave nothing can be predicated, for it *is not*. It but was and is gone.
9 *Know, O Man, thou art the sea!* Ah, this was Kapila's philosophy, but his great disciple [Buddha] brought
10 the heart to make it live!" (*CWSN* 1: 176)

11 92. Concerning the Buddhist First Council and the dispute as to its President:

12 "Can you *imagine* what their strength was? One said it should be Ananda, because he had loved Him
13 most. But someone else stepped forward and said no! for Ananda had been guilty of weeping at the
14 death-bed. And so he was passed over!" (*CWSN* 1: 177)

15 93. Considering reincarnation a "scientific speculation" rather than an article of faith:

16
17 "Why, one life in the body is like a million years of confinement, and they want to wake up the
18 memory of many lives! Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof! . . . Yes! Buddhism must be right!
19 Reincarnation is only a mirage! But this vision is to be reached by the path of Advaita alone!" (*CWSN* 1:
20 180-81)

1 94. "Had I lived in Palestine, in the days of Jesus of Nazareth, I would have washed his feet, not with
2 my tears, but with my heart's blood!" (*CWSN* 1: 189)

3 95. "For the Advaitin, therefore, the *only* motive is love. . . . It is the Saviour who should go on his
4 way rejoicing, not the saved!" (*CWSN* 1: 197-98)

5 96. On the necessity of restraint in a disciple's life:

6
7 "Struggle to realize yourself without a trace of emotion! . . . Watch the fall of the leaves, but gather
8 the sentiment of the sight from within at some later time!" (*CWSN* 1: 207)

9
10 "Mind! No loaves and fishes! No glamour of the world! All this must be cut short. It must be rooted
11 out. It is sentimentality—the overflow of the senses. It comes to you in colour, sight, sound, and
12 associations. Cut it off. Learn to hate it. It is utter poison!" (*Ibid.*, 207-208)

13 97. On the value of types:

14
15 "A strong and distinct type is always the physical basis of the horizon. It is all very well to talk of
16 universalism, but the world will not be ready for that for millions of years!

17 "Remember! if you want to know what a ship is like, the ship has to be specified as it is—its length,
18 breadth, shape, and material. And to understand a nation, we must do the same. India *is* idolatrous. You
19 must help her *as she is*. Those who have left her can do nothing for her!" (*CWSN* 1: 209)

20 98. Describing the Indian ideal of Brahmacharya in the student's life, Swami Vivekananda said:

21
22 "Brahmacharya should be like a burning fire within the veins!" (*CWSN* 1: 216)

1 99. Concerning marriage by arrangement instead of choice, Swami Vivekananda said:
2

3 "There is such pain in this country! Such pain! Some, of course, there must always have been. But
4 now the sight of Europeans with their different customs has increased it. Society knows that there is
5 another way!

6 [To a European] "We have exalted motherhood and you, wifeness; and I think both might gain by
7 some interchange.

8 "In India the wife must not dream of loving even a son as she loves her husband. She must be Sati.
9 But the husband ought not to love his wife as he does his mother. Hence a reciprocated affection is not
10 thought so high as one unreturned. It is 'shopkeeping'. The joy of the contact of husband and wife is not
11 admitted in India. This we have to borrow from the West. Our ideal needs to be refreshed by yours. And
12 you, in turn, need something of our devotion to motherhood." (*CWSN* 1: 221-22)

13 100. Speaking to a disciple with great compassion:
14

15 "You need not mind if these shadows of home and marriage cross your mind sometimes. Even to me,
16 they come now and again!" (*CWSN* 1: 222)

17 101. On hearing of the intense loneliness of a friend:
18

19 "Every worker feels like that at times!" (*CWSN* 1: 222)

1 102. Concerning the Hindu and Buddhist monastic and non-monastic ideals:

2
3 "The glory of Hinduism lies in the fact that while it has defined ideals, it has never dared to say that
4 any one of these alone was the one true way. In this it differs from Buddhism, which exalts monasticism
5 above all others as the path that must be taken by all souls to reach perfection. The story given in the
6 Mahâbhârata of the young saint who was made to seek enlightenment, first from a married woman and
7 then from a butcher, is sufficient to show this. 'By doing my duty', said each one of these when asked, 'by
8 doing my duty in my own station, have I attained this knowledge'. There is no career then which might not
9 be the path to God. The question of attainment depends only, in the last resort, on the thirst of the soul."
10 (*CWSN* 1: 223)

11 103. With reference to the idea that the lover always sees the ideal in the beloved, Swami
12 Vivekananda responded to a girl's newly avowed love:

13
14 "Cling to this vision! As long as you can both see the ideal in one another, your worship and
15 happiness will grow more instead of less." (*CWSN* 1: 224)

16 104. "The highest truth is always the simplest." (*CWSN* 1: 226)

17 105. Swami Vivekananda's remarks on American séances:

18
19 "Always the greatest fraud by the simplest means." (*CWSN* 1: 233)

20 106. On Western and Eastern views of a person as a body or a soul:

21
22 "Western languages declare that man is a body and has a soul; Eastern languages declare that he is
23 a soul and has a body." (*CWSN* 1: 236-37)

1 107. Concerning Swami Vivekananda's reverence for his Guru:

2
3 "I can criticize even an Avatâra [divine incarnation] without the slightest diminution of my love for
4 him! But I know quite well that most people are not so; and for them it is safest to protect their own
5 Bhakti!" (*CWSN* 1: 252)

6
7 "Mine is the devotion of the dog! I don't want to know why! I am contented simply to follow!" (*Ibid.*,
8 252-53)

9 108. "Ramakrishna Paramahansa used to begin every day by walking about in his room for a couple
10 of hours, saying 'Sat-chidânanda!' or 'Shivoham!' or some other holy word." (*CWSN* 1: 255)

11 109. A few months before his passing away, Swami Vivekananda said:

12
13 "How often does a man ruin his disciples by remaining always with them! When men are once
14 trained, it is essential that their leader leaves them; for without his absence they cannot develop
15 themselves!" (*CWSN* 1: 260)

16 110. A few days before his passing away, the Swami said:

17
18 "I am making ready for death. A great Tapasyâ and meditation has come upon me, and I am making
19 ready for death." (*CWSN* 1: 261-62)

20 111. In Kashmir after an illness, Swami Vivekananda said as he lifted a couple of pebbles:

21
22 "Whenever death approaches me, all weakness vanishes. I have neither fear, nor doubt, nor thought
23 of the external. I simply busy myself making ready to die. I am as hard as *that* [the pebbles struck one
24 another in his hand]—for I *have* touched the feet of God!" (*CWSN* 1: 262)

1 conversations and interviews 429
2

1
2 American, European and indian
3 newspaper reports
4 of
5 swami vivekananda's words

To preserve the historical authenticity of these newspaper reports, their original spelling, grammar and punctuation have been retained. For the sake of clarity, Swami Vivekananda's original words have been placed in block quotations and titles supplied by the Publisher have been marked with asterisks. Whenever possible, the original news typescripts have been selected, rather than their belated foreign reprints.

__Publisher

1 Part I:

2 American Newspaper Reports

5 Response to Welcome*⁵⁴⁰

6 [Editorial synthesis of four Chicago newspaper reports from: Herald, Inter Ocean, Tribune, and
7 Record,

8 ca. September 11, 1893] ⁵⁴¹

9 [Sisters and Brothers of America,]

10 It fills my heart with joy unspeakable to rise in response to the grand words of welcome given to us
11 by you. I thank you in the name of the most ancient order of monks the world has ever seen, of which
12 Gautama was only a member. I thank you in the name of the Mother of religions, of which Buddhism and
13 Jainism are but branches; and I thank you, finally, in the name of the millions and millions of Hindoo
14 people of all castes and sects. My thanks also to some of the speakers on the platform who have told you
15 that these different men from far-off nations will bear to the different lands the idea of toleration which
16 they may see here. My thanks to them for this idea.

17 I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal
18 acceptance. We believe not only in universal tolerance but we accept all religions to be true. I am proud to
19 tell you that I belong to a religion in whose sacred language, the Sanskrit, the word exclusion is
20 untranslatable. (Applause) I am proud to belong to a nation which has sheltered the persecuted and the
21 refugees of all religions and all nations of the earth. I am proud to tell you that we have gathered in our
22 bosom the purest remnant of the Israelites, a remnant of which came to southern India and took refuge
23 with us in the very years in which their

3 ⁵⁴⁰ ? *New Discoveries*, Vol. 1, pp. 83-84.

4 ⁵⁴¹ ? Cf. "Response to Welcome", Complete Works, I: 3-4, for a somewhat different
5 version.

holy temple was shattered to pieces by Roman tyranny. I am proud to belong to the religion which has sheltered and is still fostering the remnant of the grand Zoroastrian nation.

I will quote to you, brothers, a few lines from a hymn which every Hindoo child repeats every day. I feel that the very spirit of this hymn, which I remember to have repeated from my earliest boyhood, which is every day repeated by millions and millions of men in India, has at last come to be realized. "As the different streams, having their sources in different places, all mingle their water in the sea; O Lord, so the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee."

The present convention, which is one of the most august assemblies ever held, is in itself an indication, a declaration to the world of the wonderful doctrine preached in the *Gita*: "Whosoever comes to Me, through whatsoever form I reach him, all are struggling through paths that in the end always lead to me." Sectarianism, bigotry and its horrible descendant fanaticism, have possessed long this beautiful earth. It has filled the earth with violence, drenched it often and often with human gore, destroyed civilization and sent whole nations into despair. But its time has come, and I fervently believe that the bell that tolled this morning in honor of the representatives of the different religions of the earth, in this parliament assembled, is the death-knell to all fanaticism (applause), that it is the death-knell to all persecution with the sword or the pen, and to all uncharitable feelings between brethren wending their way to the same goal, but through different ways.

parlor talk*⁵⁴²

[Chicago Record, September 11, 1893]

Four leaders of religious thought were sitting in Dr. Barrow's [Barrows's] parlor—the Jain, George Condin [Candlin],

the missionary who has passed sixteen years in China, Swami Vivekananda, the learned Brahman⁵⁴³ Hindoo, and Dr. John H. Barrows, the Chicago Presbyterian. These four talked as if they were brothers of one faith.⁵⁴⁴

The Hindoo is of smooth countenance. His rather fleshy face is bright and intelligent. He wears an orange turban and a robe of the same color. His English is very good. "I have no home," said he.

I travel about from one college to another in India, lecturing to the students. Before starting for America I had been for some time in Madras. Since arriving in this country I have been treated with utmost courtesy and kindness. It is very gratifying to us to be recognized in this Parliament, which may have such an important bearing on the religious history of the world. We expect to learn much and take back some great truths to our 15,000,000 faithful Brahmins.

religion not the crying need of india*⁵⁴⁵

[A verbatim transcript of the address, delivered at the Parliament of Religions, September 20, 1893]

[*Chicago Inter Ocean*, September 21, 1893]

Suami Vivekananda

At the close of the reading of Mr. Headland's paper on "Religion in Peking" Dr. Momerie announced that the other speakers bulletined for the evening had failed to appear. It was but 9 o'clock, and the main auditorium and galleries were well filled. There was an outburst of applause as they caught sight of

⁵⁴³ ? The Swami was a Kshatriya, not a Brahmin.

⁵⁴⁴ ? An unidentified talk (probably occurring on Sunday, September 10), of which there is no verbatim transcript available.

⁵⁴⁵ ? *New Discoveries*, Vol. 1, pp. 123-26.

⁵⁴⁶ ? Cf. "Religion Not the Crying Need of India", Complete Works, I: 20, for select quotations from the full address.

1 the Hindoo monk, Vivekananda, sitting in his orange robe and scarlet turban upon the platform.

2 This popular Hindoo responded to the generous applause by saying that he did not come to speak to-
3 night. He took occasion, however, to criticise many of the statements made in the paper by Mr. Headland.
4 Referring to the poverty which prevails in China, he said that the missionaries would do better to work in
5 appeasing hunger than in endeavoring to persuade the Chinese to renounce their faith of centuries and
6 embrace Christianity at [as] the price of food. And then the Hindu stepped back on the platform and
7 whispered to Bishop Keane, of the Catholic church, a moment.

8 He then resumed his address by saying that Bishop Keane had told him that Americans would not be
9 offended at honest criticism. He said he had heard of all the terrible things and horrible conditions which
10 prevail in China but he had not heard that any asylums had been erected by Christians for remedying all
11 these difficulties. He said:

12
13 Christian brethren of America, you are so fond of sending out missionaries to save the souls of
14 heathens. I ask you what have you done and are doing to save their bodies from starvation? (Applause). In
15 India, there are 300,000,000 men and women living on an average of a little more than 50 cents a month.
16 I have seen them living for years upon wild flowers. Whenever there was a little famine hundreds of
17 thousands died of starvation. Christian missionaries come and offer life but only on condition that the
18 Hindoos become Christians, abandoning the faith of their fathers and forefathers. Is it right? There are
19 hundreds of asylums, but if the Mohammedans or the Hindoos go there they would be kicked out. There
20 are thousands of asylums erected by Hindoos where anybody would be received. There are hundreds of
21 churches that have been erected with the assistance of the Hindoos, but no Hindoo temples for which a
22 Christian has given a penny.

1 What the East Needs

2 Brethren of America, the crying evil of the East is not religion. We have more than religion enough;
3 what they want is bread, but they are given a stone. (Applause). It is an insult to a suffering man dying of
4 hunger to preach to him metaphysics. Therefore, if you wish to illustrate the meaning of "brotherhood"
5 treat the Hindoo more kindly, even though he be a Hindoo and is faithful to his religion. Send missionaries
6 to them to teach them how better to earn a better piece of bread and not to teach them metaphysical
7 nonsense. (Great applause).

8
9 And then the monk said he was in ill health today and wished to be excused. But there were
10 thunders of applause and cries of "Go on" and Mr. Vivekananda continued.

11
12 The paper just read says something about the miserable and ignorant priest. The same may be said
13 of India. I am one of those monks who have been described as beggarly. That is the pride of my life.
14 (Applause). I am proud in that sense to be Christ-like. I eat what I have today and think not of tomorrow.
15 "Behold the lilies of the field; they toil not, neither do they spin." The Hindoo carries that out literally.
16 Many gentlemen present in Chicago sitting on this platform can testify that for the last twelve years I
17 never knew whence my next meal was coming. I am proud to be a beggar for the sake of the Lord. The
18 idea in the east is [that] to preach or teach anything for the sake of money is low and vulgar, but to teach
19 the name of the Lord for pay is such a degradation as would cause the priest to lose caste and be spat
20 upon. There is one suggestion in the paper that is true: If the priests of China and India were organized
21 there is an enormous amount of potential energy which could be used for regeneration of society and
22 humanity. I endeavored to organize it in India, but failed for lack of money. It may be I shall get the help I
23 want in America.

24 But we know it is very hard for a heathen to get any help from "Christian people". (Great applause).
25 I have heard so

1 much of this land of freedom, of liberty and freedom of thought that I am not discouraged. I thank
2 you, ladies and gentlemen.

3
4 And then the popular visitor bowed gracefully and sought to retire with a graceful smile, but the
5 audience cried to him to proceed. Mr. Vivekananda, fairly bubbling with an expression of good nature,
6 then explained the Hindoo theory of [re]incarna-tion. At the close of the address Dr. Momerie [a delegate
7 from England] said that he now understood why the newspapers had well called this parliament an
8 approach to the millennium. . . .

9 THE CHICAGO LETTER⁵⁴⁷

10 [New York Critic, November 11, 1893]

11 . . . It was an outgrowth of the Parliament of Religions, which opened our eyes to the fact that the
12 philosophy of the ancient creeds contains much beauty for the moderns. When we had once clearly
13 perceived this, our interest in their exponents quickened, and with characteristic eagerness we set out in
14 pursuit of knowledge. The most available means of obtaining it, after the close of the Parliament, was
15 through the addresses and lectures of Suami Vivekananda, who is still in this city. His original purpose in
16 coming to this country was to interest Americans in the starting of new industries among the Hindoos, but
17 he has abandoned this for the present, because he finds that, as "the Americans are the most charitable
18 people in the world," every man with a purpose comes here for assistance in carrying it out. When asked
19 about the relative condition of the poor here and in India, he replied that our poor would be princes there,
20 and that he had been taken through the worst quarter of the city only to find it, from the standpoint of his
21 knowledge, comfortable and even pleasant.

1 A Brahmin of the Brahmins, Vivekananda gave up his rank to join the brotherhood of monks, where
 2 all pride of caste is voluntarily relinquished. And yet he bears the mark of race upon his person. His
 3 culture, his eloquence, and his fascinating personality have given us a new idea of Hindoo civilization. He
 4 is an interesting figure, his fine, intelligent, mobile face in its setting of yellows, and his deep, musical
 5 voice prepossessing one at once in his favor.⁵⁴⁸ So it is not strange that he has been taken up by the
 6 literary clubs, has preached and lectured in churches, until the life of Buddha and the doctrines of his
 7 faith have grown familiar to us. He speaks without notes, presenting his facts and his conclusions with the
 8 greatest art, the most convincing sincerity; and rising at times to a rich, inspiring eloquence. As learned
 9 and cultivated, apparently, as the most accomplished Jesuit, he has also something Jesuitical in the
 10 character of his mind; but though the little sarcasms thrown into his discourses are as keen as a rapier,
 11 they are so delicate as to be lost on many of his hearers. Nevertheless his courtesy is unflinching, for these
 12 thrusts are never pointed so directly at our customs as to be rude. At present he contents himself with
 13 enlightening us in regard to his religion and the words of its philosophers. He looks forward to the time
 14 when we shall pass beyond idolatry—now necessary in his opinion to the ignorant classes,—beyond worship,
 15 even, to a knowledge of the presence of God in nature, of the divinity and responsibility of man. "Work out
 16 your own salvation," he says with the dying Buddha; "I cannot help you. No man can help you. Help
 17 yourself."

RELIGIONS OF INDIA⁵⁴⁹

Viva Kananda, the Hindoo Orator Delivers an Interesting Lecture⁵⁵⁰

[*Daily Cardinal*, University of Wisconsin at Madison, November 21, 1893]

A crowded house greeted Viva Kananda at the Congregational Church last evening. The speaker was attired in native costume, which consisted of a cream turban, with yellow gown and cardinal sash.

The first part of the lecture was devoted to illustrating the many resemblances of Sanscrit [*sic*], the language of the Hindoos, to that of English. They have no word in their language which means salvation; to them it is freedom from bondage. They believe that man's real nature is perfect, and that cause and effect controls all except God. Religion was aptly illustrated by the story of the blind men who each felt of a portion of a huge elephant, and each thought the animal like the particular part he felt of it; so with religion each of the various sects have a part of the whole truth, while truth itself is infinite and no man can say "I have seen it all."

The Hindoo belief was shown to be one of the most charitable of beliefs. Persecution is something unknown in India; there is no such word in their language. The lecturer challenged the world to show an instance in Hindoo progress, of a Christian missionary being persecuted. A Greek historian, writing of them said: "No Hindoo man is dishonest, no Hindoo woman unchaste."

Viva Kananda came to this country from India in the interest of the world's congress of religions, and his lecture last evening on the "Religions of India," was an inspiration to all who heard him. He has a pleasant, clear-cut, dusky face, and a decidedly impressive manner and bearing. His voice is low and

⁵⁴⁹ ? *New Discoveries*, Vol. 1, p. 191.

⁵⁵⁰ ? Of which there is no verbatim transcript available. Cf. Complete Works, III: 481 for a less comprehensive report of the same lecture.

1 pleasant, with a secret something which rivets your attention at the start.

2 ALL RELIGIONS ARE TRUE

3 SUCH IS THE MESSAGE BROUGHT FROM INDIA

4 By a Hindu Monk⁵⁵¹

5 [*Daily Iowa Capitol*, November 28, 1893]

6 Swami Vivekananda Tells of Ancient Faith

7 Speaks again Tonight⁵⁵²

8
9 It was a rare as well as an odd treat which the people of Des Moines enjoyed last evening at the
10 Central Church of Christ. A monk, of the ancient faith of Brahma, made a happy presentation of that faith,
11 not so much of its peculiarities as of its underlying principles. The audience was a good sized one, perhaps
12 500 or 600 persons being present. The main floor being well filled and there were perhaps a couple of
13 hundred in the gallery.

14 The speaker opened by saying that all religious systems were an attempt to answer the question
15 What am I? This and the kindred ones, Whence Come I? and Whither Am I Going? are constantly
16 recurring. Without following the speaker throughout the entire lecture, suffice it to say, that underlying
17 the Hindu religion according to the speaker is the belief that "We are all divine". In each is a conscious
18 spirit that survives the body and the mind and is a part of the absolute. The speaker very ably defended
19 religion against the attacks of science. The latter can use only the five senses, and unless a thing can be
20 proven to be by these senses [it] is disposed to doubt its existence. But does science know that there are
21 only five senses? The speaker contended for the existence of a supersensuous sense; through which man
22 obtains revelations of spiritual truths. The Hindu

3 551 ? *New Discoveries*, Vol. 1, pp. 200-202.

4 552 ? The lecture was "The Hindu Religion", delivered November 27, 1893, of which
5 there is no verbatim transcript available. Cf. Complete Works, III: 482-84, for different
6 highlights of the same lecture.

word for revelation is "Veda". Hence the "Vedas" are the revelations. These writings are not confined to those of the Hindus, but include those of all peoples; because said the speaker, all religions are true.

When "revelations" undertake to tell of material things they enter upon a domain which belongs to science and are not to be accepted. There was an ancient superstition that because Moses gave a revelation of the will of God, therefore everything Moses wrote must be true. There is a modern superstition that, because there are mistakes in the writings of Moses, therefore nothing Moses wrote is true. When Moses wrote the tables of the law he was inspired. When he told of the creation what he said was merely the speculations of Moses the Jew.

The speaker was not favorably impressed with the efforts to make Hindu converts—perverts he calls them—to Christianity, nor the converse. All religions being true, such perversions serve no good end. The Hindu religion the speaker claimed is not disposed to antagonize any belief; it absorbs them. As for tolerating different beliefs, the language of the Hindu has no word corresponding with the English word "intolerance". That language had a word for religion and one for sect. The former embraced all beliefs. The conception of the latter the speaker illustrated by telling the story of the frog, who had no idea there was any world outside the well in which he had always lived.

The speaker urged his hearers to cultivate the divine within them and to discard the "nonsense" of sects.

The lecturer is an able, dignified and forcible speaker. His mastery of English is perfect, there being only the faintest indications of a foreign accent. The lecturer was followed with closest attention by the audience. After the lecture, the speaker consented to answer questions to a portion of the audience that remained for that purpose. In the course of the answers he said that the Hindus were altogether opposed to the destruction of the life of any animal. He admitted the worship of the sacred cow. He said further that the Hindus had nothing answering to

our church organizations. He was his own priest, bishop and pope. . . .

1 A MESSAGE FROM INDIA⁵⁵³

2 Vive Kananda, the Famous Hindoo Monk and Scholar, Appears in Des Moines

3 [*Iowa State Register*, November 28, 1893]

4 A Young Man of Thirty Years

5 and a Big, Active Brain and True Heart

6
7 The people of Des Moines had a glimpse of Oriental life and thought at its best yesterday, from the
8 lips of the famous Hindoo monk, Swami Vive Kananda. A central figure in the great Parliament of
9 Religions at Chicago this summer, where he coped with some of the greatest minds of the country with
10 honor to himself and his people, he gave those who heard him, and especially those who met him at Dr.
11 Breeden's, something new to think about. It was a message from over the sea, from another people of
12 wholly different surroundings, training, customs and traditions, but as the monk says, the basic principles
13 are the same in all religions. It is his doctrine that there is good in all religions and he preaches it with
14 great power. . . .

15 Yesterday afternoon he met a large number of the brightest women in Des Moines, members of the
16 various literary clubs, at the invitation of Mrs. H. O. Breeden, at her home, 1318 Woodland avenue,⁵⁵⁴ and
17 he talked to them for two or three hours about his religion, his view of Christianity, in which he heartily
18 concurs, and of the manners and customs of his people. The thing which Vive Kananda most strongly
19 insists upon is that the Hindoo religion is not to be blamed for all that is bad in India any more than
20 Christianity is to be blamed for all that is bad in America. And he insists that it is absurd to give
21 Christianity credit for all the marvelous undertakings and achievements of the people who cherish it. He
22 joins in the praise of the sublime things in the bible [*sic*], but says that when Moses undertook to speak of
23 the creation of the world, he was merely Moses, the Jew and nothing more.

3 553 ? *New Discoveries*, Vol. 1, pp. 204-6.

4 554 ? An informal talk of which there is no verbatim transcript available.

1 This view from the other side, and a sympathetic side at that, is a most helpful and instructive and
 2 intensely interesting one. Vive Kananda uses the purest English, for he was well educated in the English
 3 university, Calcutta.

4 He praises the American women most enthusiastically.

5
 6 I do not know what would have become of me if it had not been for your women,

7
 8 he said to a reporter for *The Register* last night.

9
 10 They took me up and took care of me and made all necessary arrangements for me. They are the
 11 best women in the world. They have been so kind to me,

12
 13 [the Swami said] with a grateful smile.

14

15 Reincarnation*⁵⁵⁵

16 [*Daily Iowa Capitol*, November 29, 1893]

17 Swami Vivekananda last night talked of reincarnation.⁵⁵⁶ It is based, he contended, on the fact that
 18 there never has been a new creation; that creation has existed coevally with God from all eternity.
 19 Departed souls find bodies to inhabit either better or worse than their former tenement, according as they
 20 made them fit for one or the other. The lecturer will speak again on Thanksgiving evening at the same
 21 place on the manners and customs of India.

3 ⁵⁵⁵ ? *New Discoveries*, Vol. 1, p. 206-7.

4 ⁵⁵⁶ ? Of which there is no verbatim transcript available.

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1

1 An Intellectual Feast⁵⁵⁷

2 [*Iowa State Register*, November 30, 1893]

3 The remarkable discussions started by the famous Hindu monk, Vive Kananda, were the topic of
4 interest in intellectual circles yesterday.⁵⁵⁸ Especially so was his comment on the work of American
5 missionaries in India, and his strong defense of his own people and morals and religion. His position is
6 that the people of India do not need any more religion, but training in the practical things of life that will
7 enable them to cope with the English who have occupied India. Vive Kananda was the guest of Mr. F. W.
8 Lehman and Mr. O. H. Perkins yesterday and in their company visited the state house, which he very
9 much admired. He took a special interest in the portraits of the American Indians that he saw there. . . .

10 A Prayer meeting*⁵⁵⁹

11 [*Des Moines Daily News*, November 30, 1893]

12 Vivekananda attended a prayer meeting Wednesday evening and witnessed the baptism of two
13 young women. The service impressed him very much. He said:

14
15 I see. The sentiment is ennobling and the ceremony beautiful. It is the more impressive that the
16 minister is honest, earnest and believes what he says.

3 557 ? *New Discoveries*, Vol. 1, p. 208.

4 558 ? Of the Swami's discussions, talks and lectures in Des Moines, Iowa,
5 lasting from November 27 until December 1, there are no available verbatim transcripts.

6 559 ? *New Discoveries*, Vol. 1, p. 207.

1 on american women*⁵⁶⁰

2 [*Daily Iowa Capitol*, November 30, 1893]

3 The now celebrated Hindu monk, Swami Vivekananda will lecture for the last time in Des Moines
4 tonight. He will speak on "Life in India" ["Manners and Customs of India"] a most interesting theme. The
5 renowned Hindu is a brilliant man about 30 years old. He says American women are lovely, but American
6 men are entirely too practical.

7 on the Brahmo Samaj*⁵⁶¹

8 [*Iowa State Register*, December 1, 1893]

9 Before he left the city [Des Moines, Iowa], Vive Kananda took occasion to say a warm word of praise
10 for the Bramo-Somaj [*sic*], the work it is doing in India, especially for the women, and of its representative
11 in this country. The visit of Vive Kananda, stirring as it did the intellectual centers of the city to their
12 depths and starting a lively religious discussion, prepared the way for the present visitor [Nagarkar] from
13 the Orient and heightened public interest in whatever he might have to say.

14 A WITTY HINDU⁵⁶²

15 [*Minneapolis Journal*, December 15, 1893]

16 Swami Vivekananda

17 Entertains Another Large Audience

18
19 A large number of people assembled at the Unitarian church last evening for the purpose of
20 listening to Swami Vivekananda

3 ⁵⁶⁰ ? *New Discoveries*, Vol. 1, p. 208.

4 ⁵⁶¹ ? *Ibid.*, p. 215.

5 ⁵⁶² ? *Ibid.*, pp. 216-17.

of India. The customs and manners of the people of that country were described,⁵⁶³ and during his lecture the Brahmin took occasion to show up some of the rough points of America. He is of the humorist order and his quick replies and witty sallies rarely failed to evoke applause. He would not admit that his people were wrong in everything, but there were a great many things peculiar to India which the Americans did not approve of and yet which might be all right. He had never seen husband and wife go before a magistrate to tell their troubles. They grew up with the idea that they were to be married and they loved each other as brothers and sisters.

He described the customs of his country, the temples, the art of the juggler and all of the other peculiarities of oriental countries in a manner that was charming. Following the address a number of questions were asked by persons in the audience.

The Manners and Customs of India*⁵⁶⁴

[*Minneapolis Tribune*, December 15, 1893]

Swami Vive Kananda, the Brahmin priest, was greeted by a packed house last evening at the First Unitarian Church, when he appeared before his second Minneapolis audience. Vive Kananda is a bright, quick witted talker, ready at all points to attack or defend, and inserts a humor into his speeches that is not lost upon his auditors. He spoke last evening under the auspices of the Kappa Kappa Gammas of the University, and the audience embraced a large number of earnest thinking men and women, pleased to be enlightened upon the "Manners and Customs of India," which was his chosen subject.⁵⁶⁵

⁵⁶³ ? The lecture was "The Manners and Customs of India", of which there is no verbatim transcript available. Cf. the following American newspaper report, "The Manners and Customs of India", for other highlights of the lecture.

⁵⁶⁴ ? *New Discoveries*, Vol. 1, pp. 217-19.

⁵⁶⁵ ? Of which there is no verbatim transcript available. Cf. the preceding American newspaper report, "A Witty Hindu", for other highlights of the lecture.

1 Robed in his native garb, with his hands for the most part clasped behind his back, Kananda paces
2 back and forth the narrow platform, talking as he paces, with long pauses between his sentences, as if
3 willing that his words should sink into the deepest soil. His talk is not so weighty that the frivolous mind
4 may not appreciate some of his sayings, but he also speaks a philosophy that carries gravest truth. He
5 tells of the manners and customs of India, of the divided life between the male and female, of the
6 reverence for and holiness of women, and again of their degeneracy; of the calm and peaceful life, that yet
7 is not true life because it is not liberty; he speaks of the Mohammedans, who form one-fifth of the Indian
8 population, and that 65,000,000, equal to the entire population of the United States. He describes the
9 magnificence of the temples, the art of the jugglers, who are the gypsies of the Indian race, and he
10 touches upon the superstitions of the people, of how they fill the water jars and stand them in the doorway
11 before starting on a journey; he speaks of the metaphysical knowledge of the plowman, who yet only
12 knows that he "pays taxes to the government"; he admits the reverence of the Hindu for the river Ganges,
13 and his ever lingering wish that he shall die on its banks; he tells all these things in a quiet, half
14 supercilious voice that presently leads to some remark on the American way of doing things, and then his
15 audience is in a ripple of laughter, and a tremor of clapping expresses amused acknowledgement of his
16 sarcasm. . . .

17 When some one at the close of his lecture asked him "What class of people are reached and
18 converted by the missionaries?" he quickly replied, "You know as much about that, the American sees the
19 reports, we never do", he has turned the query into a cause for smiling, and while the house regains its
20 composure he paces quietly to and fro. The address was followed with the closest attention and was
21 supplemented by several questions and answers among the audience, from whom he invited interrogation.

1 HINDU PHILOSOPHY⁵⁶⁶

2 [*Detroit Tribune*, February 18, 1894]

3 —

4 Its Recent Expression by Vive Kananda.

5 —

6 His Mission Worthy the Serious Attention
7 of Americans.

8 —

9 The Two Remarkable Things in the United States

10 Which Gratifies the Distinguished Pagan—What Environment Will Do for Any People—Rap at
11 Missionaries.

12
13 There has seldom been such a sensation in cultured circles in Detroit, as that created by the advent
14 of Swami Vive Kananda, the learned Hindu monk, whose exceptional command of our own language has
15 enabled us to receive impressions concerning ourselves from an oriental standpoint and to acquire
16 knowledge of a people of whose peculiar civilization and philosophy we have heard so much.

17 Both in public and private the Hindu brother has talked freely and frankly. He acknowledges that
18 the masses in India are very poor, very ignorant and are divided into a diversity of sects, with forms of
19 worship varying from downright idolatry to the broadest and most liberal form of divine conception based
20 on the brotherhood of man and the oneness of God. His mission, he says, is not to proselyte us—to try and
21 make us think as he does—but to get means to start a college in India for the education of teachers who
22 are to go among the common people and work a reform of existing evils, of which there are many. He
23 states that India is priest-ridden to a harrowing degree. It is priest-craft that distorts truth and
24 perpetuates ignorance. It is priest-craft that substitutes its own crude and narrow interpretations for
25 truth, which perverts the people and prevents their moral progression. The Swami regards all sects and

3 ⁵⁶⁶ ? *New Discoveries*, Vol. 1, pp. 366-69.

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1 creeds from

a broad basis. He even sees good in idolatry. It is an ideal, he thinks, for the ignorant whose mental capacity is insufficient to grasp abstract ideas, and who require a direct personification in some material form. He frankly states that we of the occident are also retarded in our progression by too much priest-craft, and that we are not free from idolatrous practices, in that some of our sects worship shrines, figures and pictures and even the sanctity with which the rostrum and pulpit of a modern church is regarded is an ideal idolatry.

Two Remarkable Things in This Country

The Swami notes two most remarkable things in this country, when asked his frank opinion of us: First, the superiority of our women, as regards influence in position and intellect. Second, in our charities and treatment of the poor, he says, we have almost solved the problem as to what shall be done with them. Not only in this, in the direction of hospitals and charitable institutions, but in our tremendous development of labor-saving machinery. He has no admiration for our material progress, as it does not make man better, nor for our boasted civilization, as we only ape and imitate the customs and manners of the English

—sometimes to a very ridiculous extent. We are yet too young, to have a distinctive civilization; we have yet to assimilate the human sewerage of Europe we have allowed to be poured upon us, before we produce a distinct American type.

[The writer goes on to say that the Swami's Indian background makes it difficult for him to understand that Western competitiveness is not undesirable but a primal law of nature itself—the survival of the fittest—and that inasmuch as "the dreamy and sentimental philosophy of the Hindoos" accounts for their poverty, degradation, and domination by a "mere handful of Englishmen," the Swami would do well neither to ignore nor to despise the materialism of the West. Having thus editorialized, he continues:]

His Criticism of Missionaries

If what he states is true about the results accomplished by foreign missions in India, the various boards of these various organizations would do well to consult him and follow his

advice. It is for the betterment of his people he is here. But he says missionary work does no good; only adds additional sects and creeds to an already sect-ridden country; that the teachings of the Vedas, with which every Hindoo is familiar, is identical with the teachings of Christ. He makes the reasonable plea that foreign creeds and dogmas are not consonant with their inherited proclivities or civilization, and are consequently difficult to pro-pagate.

The mission of Kananda is, however, one that should commend it[self] to every lover of humanity. He hopes to see the best of our material philosophy and progress infused into Hindoo civilization, and that, also, we may take lessons from them, until we shall all become, as we once were in ages past, brother Aryans, possessing a common civilization—the exalted philosophy of non-self, being alike without sect or creed in oneness with God.

Fred H. Seymour.⁵⁶⁷

A GOD EVERY DAY⁵⁶⁸

[*Detroit Tribune*, February 19, 1894]

Rabbi Grossman is Refreshed by Swami Vive Kananda

. . . "I take your Jesus," Kananda said last Saturday evening [February 17].⁵⁶⁹

I take him to my heart as I take all the great and good of all lands and of all times. But you, will you take my Krishna to your heart? No—you cannot, you dare not—still you are the cultured and I am the heathen. . . .

⁵⁶⁷ ? One of the guests at Charles L. Freer's dinner party given in honour of Swami Vivekananda, on Saturday, February 17, 1894.

⁵⁶⁸ ? *Vide: New Discoveries*, Vol. 1, p. 348. This extract is from a sermon by Rabbi Grossman, "What Vive Kananda Has Taught Us", delivered February 18, 1894.

⁵⁶⁹ ? *Vide* "The Divinity of Man" (Complete Works, III: 496-501) and "Is India a Benighted Country?" (Complete Works IV: 198-202).

1 VIVE KANANDA LEAVES⁵⁷⁰

2 [*Detroit Journal*, February 23, 1894]

3 —

4 He Tells Something

5 About the Conditions of Hindoo Laborers.

6
7 Swami Vive Kananda repaid the admiration of his lady acquaintances by writing verses, at the same
8 time religious and semi-sentimental, yesterday afternoon.⁵⁷¹ He departed this morning for Ada, O. [Ohio].

9 In a conversation concerning the material condition of the Hindu workingmen, the learned monk
10 said that the poor lived on porridge alone. The laborer ate a breakfast of porridge, went off to his daily toil
11 and returned in the evening to another breakfast of porridge and called it dinner. In most of the provinces
12 the farmers were so poor that they could not afford to eat any of the wheat raised. A day laborer on a farm
13 received only 12 pence a day, but a dollar in India brought 10 times as much as it would in this country.
14 Cotton was raised, but its fiber was so short it had to be woven by hand, and even then it was necessary to
15 import American and Egyptian cotton to mix with it.

16 CULTURE AT HOME⁵⁷²

17 [*Detroit Evening News*, February 25, 1894]

18 —

19 Anecdotes of Swami Vive Kananda's Visit to Detroit.

20
21 Anecdotes of Swami Vive Kananda's visit are numerous and amusing—at least they must have been

3 ⁵⁷⁰ ? *New Discoveries*, Vol. 1, p. 380.

4 ⁵⁷¹ ? At the small farewell tea which Mrs. John J. Bagley held for her departing
5 guest.

6 ⁵⁷² ? *New Discoveries*, Vol. 1, p. 365.

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2

1 amusing to him, al-

1 though a little humiliating to the American self-love. One lady said:

2 "I really was ashamed at the contrast between the knowledge possessed by him and by some of our
3 Detroit men who consider themselves gentlemen of culture. At one dinner party a gentleman asked
4 Kananda what books he would advise him to read on chemistry, whereupon the Hindu monk responded
5 with a long list of English works on this science, which one would naturally expect an American to know
6 more about than a Hindu. Another gentleman followed by a request as to books on astronomy, to which
7 Kananda obligingly answered with another equally good list of English astronomical works. But his grow-
8 ing astonishment reached its climax when a lady spoke of 'The Christ,' and said, 'What do those words
9 mean?' He again furnished the desired information, but in a tone growing slightly sarcastic."

10 Probably the choicest example of nineteenth century civilization and culture was given by a lady,
11 who asked Kananda if he liked the English. He very naturally responded that he did not. Then she
12 continued, with fine tact, to pursue the subject still further by touching references to that pleasant event,
13 the Sepoy rebellion. As the Hindu grew excited she smiled at him ironically and said:

14 "I thought I could disturb your philosophical Eastern calm."

1 KANANDA, THE PAGAN⁵⁷³

2 [*Detroit Tribune*, March 11, 1894]

3 Attacked Christian Missions in Last Night's Lecture.

4 —

5 And his Words were Warmly Applauded

6 by the Audience.

7 —

8 Christian Nations Kill and Murder, He Said, and Import Disease into Foreign Countries, then Add
9 Insult to Injury by Preaching of a Crucified Christ.

10
11 Swami Vive Kananda lectured to a very large audience at the Detroit Opera House last night on
12 "Christian Missions in India."⁵⁷⁴ One could believe that the lecture was intended as an answer to the many
13 statements of missionaries which have been aimed at Kananda during the past two weeks in this city.

14 Kananda was introduced by Honorable Thomas W. Palmer last night, who recited a fable by way of
15 preface. "Two knights of honor once met on the field," he said, "and seeing a shield hanging on a tree they
16 halted. One said: 'What a very fine silver shield.' The other replied that it was not silver but copper. Each
17 disputed the other's statement until at last they got off their horses, tied them to the tree, and drawing
18 their swords fought for several hours. After they were both well spent by the loss of blood they staggered
19 against each other and fell on the opposite sides from where they had been fighting. Then one glanced up
20 at the pendant shield and said: 'You were right, my friend. The shield is copper.' The other looked up and
21 said: 'It is I who was mistaken. The shield is silver.' If they had looked at both sides of the shield in the
22 first place it would have saved the loss of much blood. I think that if we looked at both sides of every
23 question there would be less argument and fighting.

3 ⁵⁷³ ? *New Discoveries*, Vol. 1, pp. 410-16.

4 ⁵⁷⁴ ? Cf. "Christianity in India", Complete Works, VIII: 214-9, for a somewhat less
5 comprehensive report of the same lecture.

1 "We have with us tonight a gentleman who, from the christian standpoint is, I suppose, a pagan. But
2 he belongs to a religion which was old long before ours was thought of by men. I am sure that it will be
3 pleasant to hear from the copper side of the shield. We have looked at it only from the silver side. Ladies
4 and Gentlemen, Swami Vive Kananda."

5 Kananda, who had remained seated on the stage during Mr. Palmer's remarks, stepped to the front,
6 clad in the orange robe and unique turban of the Brahman [*sic*] priest, bowed in acknowledgement of the
7 welcoming applause, and launched at once into his subject.

8
9 What India Is

10 [The Swami said:]
11

12 I do not know about the efforts of christian missionaries in China and Japan except through reading
13 the books and literature on the subject, but I can speak about the efforts of christianizing India. But before
14 I go into this I want to place before you an idea of what India is.

15
16 Then he explained in detail how the 300,000,000 inhabitants of India are divided into castes,
17 between which there can be no affiliation, how the natives of the south cannot understand the language of
18 the ones of the north, and vice versa. He told how the lower caste lived on the flesh of dead animals, and
19 never bathed their bodies, and how impossible it would be for the higher class to mingle with them,
20 although they were granted the protection of the same laws.

21 He referred to the first appearance of the christians in an attempt to evangelize the followers of
22 Buddah [Buddha]. They were Spaniards, he said, and they discovered a temple near Ceylon, in which was
23 presented a tooth of Buddah as a sacred relic. "The Spaniard christians thought that their God com-
24 manded them to go and fight and kill and murder," he said,

25
26 and so they seized the tooth of Buddah and destroyed it. By the way, it was not a tooth of Buddah at

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2

1 all, but a relic manufactured by the priests—it was a foot long. (Laughter)

1 Every religion has its miracles; you needn't laugh because the tooth was a foot long. Well, after the
2 Spaniards took away the tooth they converted a few hundred and killed a few thousands; and there Spain
3 stops in the history of missionary efforts among the Buddhists.

4
5 The Portugese [*sic*] christians, he said, discovered the great temple at Bombay, built in the form of a
6 body with three heads, in representation of the trinity as the Hindoo believes in a trinity.

7 "The Portugese saw it and couldn't explain it," said Kanan-da, with a sarcastic ring in his voice,
8

9 and so they concluded that it was of the devil, and gathered their forces and knocked off the three
10 heads of the temple. The devil is such a handy man. I am sorry to see him so fast disappearing.

11
12 Then Kananda outlined the various stages of christian evangelization in India, and paid very high
13 tribute to two or three missionaries, who, he said, had been great exceptions to the rule, and lived among
14 the people to uplift and minister to their needs.

15
16 Antagonize Native Interests

17 The Hindoo priest told how as soon as the land came into possession of the English people every
18 village had its white colony, which huddled itself together and withdrew from all association with the
19 natives. Then when the missionaries reached the country, he said, they would naturally go at once among
20 the English people, who sympathized with them and with whom they could converse. The missionaries
21 know nothing of the native language, he says, and so they cannot dwell with the people. Most of them are
22 married and for the sake of getting their wives into the English society they identify themselves with all
23 their interests, and in doing so directly antagonize the interests of the natives, and make it impossible to
24 get in touch with them.

25 "We sometimes have famines in India," he said.

And so the young missionaries will hang about the fag end of a famine and give a starving native 5 shillings, and there you have him, a ready-made christian; take him. That was probably a baptist missionary, and so when a methodist missionary comes along he gives the same native 5 shillings, and his name is again registered as a convert. The only band of converts around each missionary is composed of those dependent upon him for a living. They have to be christians or starve. And they are dwindling as the money supply decreases. I am glad if you want to make christians in India by giving work and bread to the poor. God speed you to do that. There is one benefit that must be credited to the missionary movement. It makes education cheap. The missionaries bring some money with them from the people who send them, and the Indian government appropriates some, so that there are some very good colleges and schools available to the natives through missionaries. But I will be frank with you. There are no conversions from the schools to the christian religion. The Hindoo boy is very clever. He takes the bait, but never gets the hook.

The speaker said that the lady missionary goes into certain houses, gets four shillings a month, reads the Bible, while the native girls give indifferent attention, and teaches them to knit while they pay very keen attention. The girls, like the boys, he said are always alert to learn practical things, but they will give little heed to the christian religion, although they will espouse it if necessary to get the other advantages.

Most Missionaries Incompetent

"The most of the men whom you send us as missionaries are incompetent," he said.

I have never known of a single man who has studied Sanscrit [*sic*] before going to India as a missionary and yet all our books and literature are printed in it.

He suggested as an explanation of the visits of the missionaries that "perhaps the atheism and scepticism at home is push-

2
3 ing the missionaries out all over the world." When in India he said he had thought the sole business
4 of christianity [was] to send all people to the fires of hell, but since coming to America he has found that
5 there are a great many liberal men. He referred to the parliament of religions, and told how a certain
6 editor of a presbyterian paper had written an article at the close of the parliament entitled "The Lying
7 Hindoo," in which he had scored him very severely.

8 In the article the editor said that "while in the parliament he was here as our guest, but now that it
9 is over we ought to make an enthusiastic attack against him and his false doctrines."

10 In referring to the medical missionaries in India Kananda said:

11 India requires health, but it must be health for people. And how can you help our people if you do
12 not get in touch with them? When you come to us as missionaries you ought to throw over all idea of
13 nationality. Jesus didn't go about among the English officials attending champagne suppers. He didn't care
14 to have his wife get into high European society. If your missionary does not follow Christ what right has he
15 to call himself a christian? We want missionaries of Christ. Let such come to India by the hundreds and
16 thousands. Bring Christ's life to us and let it permeate the very core of society. Let Him be preached in
17 every village and corner of India. But don't have your missionaries choose their profession as a means of
18 livelihood. Let them have the call of Christ. Let them feel within that they were born for that work.

19 As far as converting India to christianity is concerned, there is no hope. If it were possible it ought
20 not to be done. It would be dangerous; it would mark the destruction of all religions. If the whole universe
21 should come to have the same temperament, physical or mental, destruction would immediately result.
22 Why couldn't you convert the Jew? Why couldn't you make the Persians christians? Why is it that to every
23 African who becomes a christian 100 become followers of Mohammed? Why can't you make an impression
on India and China, and Japan? Because oneness of

1 mental temperament all over the world would be death. Nature is too wise to allow such things.

2
3 Filled the World with Bloodshed

4 [The Swami said:]

5
6 The christian nations have filled the world with bloodshed and tyranny. It is their day now. You kill
7 and murder and bring drunkenness and disease in our country, and then add insult to injury by preaching
8 Christ and Him crucified. What christian voice goes through the land protesting against such horrors? I
9 have never heard any. You drink the idea in your mothers' milk that you are angels and we are devils. It is
10 not enough that there be sunlight; you must have the eyes to see it. It is not only necessary that there be
11 goodness in people; you must have the appreciation of goodness within yourselves in order to distinguish
12 it. This is in every heart until it has been murdered by superstition and hideous blasphemy.

13
14 Then Kananda drew a very beautiful simile to illustrate that the essential truths of all religions are
15 [the] same, and all else is but incidental and unimportant environment. He told how the savage man might
16 find a few jewels, and prizing them, tie them with a rude thong and string them about his neck. As he
17 became slightly civilized he would perhaps exchange the thong for a string. Becoming still more
18 enlightened he would fasten his jewels with a silken cord; and when possessed of a high civilization he
19 would make an elaborate gold setting for his treasures. But throughout all the changes in settings the
20 jewels—the essentials—would remain the same.

21
22 If the Hindoo wishes to criticize the christian religion he talks of the fables and miracles, and all the
23 nonsense of the Bible, but he does not say one word in disparagement of the sermon on the mount, or of
24 the beautiful life of Jesus. And so when the christian criticizes the Hindoo religion he talks about the
25 dogmas and the temples, but he says nothing [should say nothing] against the morality and philosophy of

the Hindoo. Help the Jew and let him help you. Help the Hindoo and let him help you. I deny that any human being has the faculty of seeing good at all who cannot see it in all places. There is the same beauty in the character of Christ and the character of Buddah. It is not an assimilation that we want, but adjustment and harmony. I ask the preachers to give up, first, the idea of nationality; and second, the idea of sects. God's children have no sects.

Much has been said about the ladies of India, and of their faults and condition. There are faults; God help us to make them right. We are thankful for your criticism of our women. But while you are speaking of them I will say that I should be glad to see a dozen spiritual women in America. Nice dress, wealth, brilliant society, operas, novels—. Even intellectuality is not all that there is for a man or woman. There should be also spirituality, but that side is entirely absent from christian countries. They live in India.

Vive Kananda's large audience listened very respectfully to his remarks last night, and once or twice applauded heartily.

AS THE WAVE FOLLOWS WAVE⁵⁷⁵

[*Detroit Tribune*, March 20, 1894]

So Soul Follows Soul, According to Kananda.

Vive Kananda lectured to an audience of about 150 [according to the *Journal*, 500] at the Auditorium last night upon "Buddhism, the Religion of the Light of Asia."⁵⁷⁶ Honorable Don M. Dickinson introduced him to the audience.

"Who shall say that this system of religion is divine and that doomed?" asked Mr. Dickinson in his introductory remarks. "Who shall draw the mystic line?"

⁵⁷⁵ ? *New Discoveries*, Vol. 1, pp. 441-43.

⁵⁷⁶ ? Of which there is no verbatim report available.

2
3 He also said that at one time the followers of Buddha were the unwilling allies of the christian
4 religion. Kananda appeared in a robe of orange yellow with a sash-like cord about the waist, and a turban
5 draped out of some eastern cloth of silken texture, the flowing end of which was brought in front over one
6 shoulder.

7 Vive Kananda reviewed at length the early religions of India. He told of the great slaughter of
8 animals on the altar of sacrifice; of Buddha's birth and life; of his puzzling questions to himself over the
9 causes of creation and the reasons for existence; of the earnest struggle of Buddha to find the solution of
10 creation and life; of the final result.

11 Buddha, he said, stood head and shoulders above all other men. He was one, he said, [of] whom his
12 friends or enemies could never say that he drew a breath or ate a crumb of bread but for the good of all.

13 "He never preached transmigration of the soul," said Kananda,

14 except he believed one soul was to its successor like the wave of the ocean that grew and died away,
15 leaving naught to the succeeding wave but its force. He never preached that there was a God, nor did he
16 deny there was a God.

17 "Why should we be good?" his disciples asked of him.

18 "Because," he said, "you inherited good. Let you in your turn leave some heritage of good to your
19 successors. Let us all help the onward march of accumulated goodness, for goodness' sake."

20 He was the first prophet. He never abused any one or arrogated anything to himself. He believed in
21 our working out our own salvation in religion.

22 "I can't tell you," he said, on his death bed, "nor any one. Depend not on any one. Work out your own
23 religion [salvation]."

24 He protested against the inequality of man and man, or of man and beast. All life was equal, he
25 preached. He was the first man to uphold the doctrine of prohibition in liquors. "Be good and do good," he
said. "If there is a God you have him by being good. If there is no God, being good is

1 good. He is to be blamed for all he suffers. He is to be praised for all his good."

2 He was the first who brought the missionaries into existence. He came as a savior to the
3 downtrodden millions of India. They could not understand his philosophy, but they saw the man and his
4 teachings and they followed him.

5
6 In conclusion Kananda said that Buddhism was the foundation of the christian religion; that the
7 catholic church came from Buddhism.

8
9 wayside stories⁵⁷⁷

10 [*Detroit Evening News*, March 21, 1894]

11 Curiosity, says our Hindoo visitor, is the most conspicuous trait of the American people, but he
12 added that it is the way to knowledge. This has long been the European estimate of the American, or more
13 strictly the Yankee character, and perhaps the Hindoo's comment was an echo of what he had heard the
14 Englishmen in India say of the "Yankee."

15 A HINDOO MONK⁵⁷⁸

16 [*Bay City Times Press*, March 21, 1894]

17 He gave an interesting lecture at the Opera House last evening. It is rarely that Bay City people
18 have the opportunity of listening to a lecture similar to the one given last evening by Swami Vive Kananda.
19 The gentleman is a native of India, hav-

3 577 ?

4 *New Discoveries*, Vol. 1, p. 436.

5
6 578 ?

7 *New Discoveries*, Vol. 2, pp. 6-7. Cf. "Swami Vivekananda on India", Complete Works, II: 479-81.
8

ing been born at Calcutta about 30 years ago. The lower floor of the Opera house was about half filled when the speaker was introduced by Dr. C. T. Newkirk. During his discourse, he scored the people of this country for their worship of the almighty dollar. It is true that there is caste in India. There, a murderer can never reach the top. Here, if he gets a million dollars he is as good as any one. In India, if a man is a criminal once, he is degraded forever. One of the great factors in the Hindoo religion is its tolerance of other religions and beliefs. Missionaries are much more severe on the religions of India than upon that of other Oriental countries, because the Hindoos allow them to be, thus carrying out one of their cardinal beliefs, that of toleration. Kananda is a highly educated and polished gentleman. It is said that he was asked in Detroit if the Hindoos throw their children into the river. Whereupon, he replied that they do not, neither do they burn witches at the stake. The speaker lectures in Saginaw tonight.

KANANDA ARRIVES⁵⁷⁹

[*Saginaw Evening News*, March 21, 1894]

Swami Vive Kananda, the Hindu Monk, arrived this afternoon from Bay City and is registered at the Vincent. He dresses like a well-to-do American and speaks excellent English. He is slightly above the medium height, is stoutly built and his complexion resembles that of an Indian. In answer to a question by a NEWS representative, he said he learned English from private tutors, and by contact with Europeans, who visited Hindustan. He further stated that his talk tonight would be explanatory of the religion of the Hindoo and to show that they are not heathen but believe in a future state.

⁵⁷⁹ ?

New Discoveries, Vol. 2, p. 11.

1 conversations and interviews 466

1 **the manners and customs of india**⁵⁸⁰

2 [*The Lynn Daily Evening Item*, (date?)]

3 NORTH SHORE CLUB

5 **The Meeting, Tuesday Afternoon, Addressed by Suami Vive Kananda, a Learned Monk from**
6 **India—Description of the Manners and Customs of His Country**⁵⁸¹

7 At the meeting of the North Shore Club, Tuesday afternoon, the audience was a large and brilliant
8 one, representing the highest culture, and including many distinguished guests. Suami Vive Kananda,
9 from India, a learned monk, who speaks English with ease and fluency, gave an intensely interesting
10 description of the manners and customs of his country. Suami Vive Kananda, who wore the yellow robe
11 and turban of his order, began by saying that India is divided into two parts, the northern and the
12 southern. In each the language and customs are so different that the speaker who was from the northern
13 portion on meeting a fellow countryman at the Parliament of Religions from the southern, was obliged to
14 converse with him in English, neither being able to understand the other's native language. Throughout
15 the entire country there are nine languages and 100 dialects spoken.

16 There is some uniformity of religion, yet each sect is a religion and a law unto itself. Many erroneous
17 descriptions have been written about India, based on imperfect knowledge from which inferences have
18 been drawn that have been most prejudicial. With the Hindoo everything is subservient to religion and he
19 gives up all that is antagonistic to it, his creed being that he is not to enjoy life but to conquer it and gain a
20 supreme mastery over self, which is the highest type of civilization. Caste distinctions which are being
21 obliterated are simply the Aryans and the un-Aryans—the Brahmins and the Sudras. The Brahmin, who is
22 the child of a thousand years' culture, must lead a life of

3 580 ?

4 *The Vedanta Kesari*, 1987 Annual Issue, pp. 445-46 and *New Discoveries*, Vol. 2, pp. 37-39.

5
6 581 ? Delivered April 17, 1894, of which there is no verbatim transcript available.
7

rigid discipline; but the Sudra, who is ignorant, is allowed great latitude.

Woman in the position of mother is accorded universal reverence in India. When a son who has become a monk returns to his home, his father, when greeting him, must kneel and touch his forehead to the earth; but the monk must kneel before his mother. Women in India do not throw their children into the rivers to be devoured by crocodiles. Widows are not burned on the funeral pyre of their husband unless it is a voluntary act of self-immolation.

There is no divorce allowed for the high class; a woman who leaves her husband, even if she be most degraded, holds still an interest in his property. Suami Vive Kananda recited a beautiful passage from the Legend of the Ramayana, one of the grandest poems of India, which showed what the love of a wife for her husband should be. The love of Sita for Rama. He added, "Much is said in these days of the 'survival of the fittest,'" and western nations use it as an argument against India, reasoning that their own wealth, prosperity and power show them to be greater and their religion higher and purer.

But India has seen mighty nations rise and fall whose aim has been only the power of conquest and the glory of this life. India has been repeatedly despoiled, has worn the yoke of the conqueror and borne the burden of oppression with indomitable patience and has shown tolerance to all, because she has possessed the knowledge that her people hold fast to a religion that stands securely on a high spirituality and not on the shifting sand of present enjoyment.

A LECTURE ON "INDIA AND HINDUISM"⁵⁸²

[*New York Daily Tribune*, April 25, 1894]

Swami Vivekananda lectured before Mrs. Arthur Smith's conversation circle last evening at the Waldorf on "India and

⁵⁸² ?

New Discoveries, Vol. 2, p. 42.

Hinduism."⁵⁸³ Miss Sara Humbert, contralto, and Miss Annie Wilson, soprano, sang several selections. The lecturer wore an orange-colored coat and the accompanying yellow turban, which is called a beggar's suit. This is worn when a Buddhist has given up "everything for God and humanity." The theory of reincarnation was discussed. The speaker said that many clergymen who were more aggressive than learned asked: "Why one is unconscious of a former life if such a thing had been?" The reply was that "It would be childish to lay a foundation for consciousness, as man is unconscious of his birth in this life, and also of much that has transpired."

The speaker said that "no such thing" as "a Judgment Day" existed in his religion, and that his god neither punished nor rewarded. If wrong was done in any way, the natural punishment was immediate. The soul, he added, passed from one body to another, until it had become a perfect spirit, able to do without the limitations of a body. . . .

at smith college, northampton, massachusetts*⁵⁸⁴

[*Smith College Monthly*, May 1894]

On Sunday, April 15, Swami Vivekananda, the Hindoo monk whose scholarly exposition of Brahmanism caused such favorable comment at the Congress of Religions, spoke at Vespers.⁵⁸⁵—We say much of the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God, but few understand the meaning of these words. True brotherhood is possible only when the soul draws so near to the All-Father that jealousies and petty claims of superiority must vanish because we are so much above them. We must take care lest we become like the frog of the well in

⁵⁸³ ? Of which no verbatim transcript is available.

⁵⁸⁴ ?

New Discoveries, Vol. 2, pp. 36-37.

⁵⁸⁵ ? Of which no verbatim transcript is available.

the old Hindoo story, who, having lived for a long time in a small place, at last denied the existence of a larger space.

A LECTURE ON INDIA AND REINCARNATION⁵⁸⁶

[*New York Daily Tribune*, May 3, 1894]

Swami Virekanmda [*sic*] lectured on "India and Reincarnation" last evening at the home of Miss Mary Phillips, No. 19 West Thirty-eighth-st.⁵⁸⁷ He mentioned among other salient points regarding Hindooism, or Brahminism, that their religion bore no distinctive name; that it was considered that a belief in the truth of all creeds was religion, and that the belief that one certain dogma was the real and only religion was sect. The Karmic law of cause and effect was explained, also the external and internal natures in their close relations to each other. The actions in this world, as governed by a previous life and the change to still another life, were dwelt upon in detail.

. . .

LECTURE BY HINDOO MONK⁵⁸⁸

Swami Vivekananda Tells About the Religion of High Caste Indians⁵⁸⁹

[Lawrence, Massachusetts, *Evening Tribune*, May 16, 1894]

Liberty hall was comfortably filled last evening, on the oc-casion of the lecture by Swami Vivekananda, the noted Brahmin monk, who was a prominent personality at the world's parlia-

⁵⁸⁶ ?

New Discoveries, Vol. 2, p. 45.

⁵⁸⁷ ?

Of which no verbatim transcript is available.

⁵⁸⁸ ?

New Discoveries, Vol. 2, pp. 65-68.

⁵⁸⁹ ? Of which there is no verbatim transcript available.

1 ment of religions at Chicago last summer, and who is spending some time in this country, studying
2 its manners and customs. The lecture was under the auspices of the woman's club, and was a novel and
3 interesting occasion. The noted Hindu was pleasantly introduced by the president of the club, Miss
4 Wetherbee, who alluded to the great antiquity of India, its wonderful history and the high intellectual
5 qualities of the Hindu race.

6 The speaker of the evening was attired in native costume, namely, a bright scarlet robe, confined at
7 the waist by a long scarf of the same color, and wore a picturesque white silk turban wound round his
8 head. At the first glance one saw the swarthy complexion, the dark and dreamy eyes and introspective
9 manner of a high caste Brahmin, whose life is devoted to religion and who is also a celibate. That he is a
10 finely educated person, appeared in his wonderful command of English and his power of argument, while
11 an occasional quotation from Milton and Dickens, showed that he was appreciative of the great English
12 classics.

13 He first spoke of that striking peculiarity of the social condition of the Hindu's caste, affirming that it
14 is not now as strict an institution as in the past, although even now everything goes by heredity. Mixture
15 of castes, though not absolutely forbidden, entails disadvantage on the children. The Brahmin or high
16 caste person devotes the first part of his life to the study of the Vedas or sacred books and the latter part
17 to meditating on the divinity, being supposed to have overcome the human in himself, and to be only a
18 soul.

19 The speaker did not hesitate to criticise adversely some western customs, especially some
20 connected with the position of woman. He affirmed that we worship women in the wife, while all women to
21 the Hindu represent the mother element. In America when a woman ceases to be young and beautiful, she
22 has a hard time of it, but in India kings must step aside for an aged woman to pass, so great is the respect
23 in which they are held. He affirmed that some of the most beautiful portions of the Vedas, the Hindu bible,
24 were written by women, but that there was no other bible in this world in which they had any part.

25 Considerable time was given to refuting the statement, which he characterized as untrue, in regard
26 to the cruelty prac-

tised to widows in India, the speaker referring in the course of his remarks to the zenana widows, who have been for some time the objective point of Christian missionaries from other countries. Marriage is an institution very safely guarded and, in addition to the law that a Brahmin must not marry a relative, none are allowed to marry who are known to have such a disease as consumption or any incurable physical ill. The strict rules of caste which prevent a person from drinking from the same glass as another, and other kindred regulations, although [not] part of the religion, were excellent in their result on the physical condition of a country, numbering 285 millions, in the prevention of the spread of contagious diseases. The speaker was horrified, as he might well be, at the promiscuous water drinking seen in railroad trains and stations in this country. The children are, first of all, taught kindness to all living beings and so thoroughly is this training that the smallest child instinctively turns aside from stepping on a worm. A strange thought that among these so called heathen there is no need of the society with the long name which often fails in its mission in Christian lands.⁵⁹⁰ The guest of a house, that is, a man who comes to the door and says, "I am hungry," is God's own image to the Hindu and is treated with the utmost kindness and consideration, being fed before the master and mistress of the establishment.

The speaker alluded sadly to the poverty of his country, for, while the upper caste live in comfort, there are millions whose only food is dried flowers, and who are so low in the scale of existence that they have hardly an identity, and are pitiful objects in the plane of existence. He hinted quite forcibly that food and education would be better than the sermons which Christians and Mohammedans had been throwing at them for the last hundred years. Many of the simple and primitive customs of this peculiar people were told with naivete and innocence that was refreshing in this age when words are used to conceal thoughts. He said there was no flirting or coquetting between their young men and maids, and that the latter did not strut forth into public places with all their bravery [finery?] on for the purpose of securing a husband, all of which made the inhabitants of

⁵⁹⁰ ? Swami Vivekananda may have been referring to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

this great and glorious republic wonder if something were not slightly rotten in the state of Denmark. It is well to see both sides of the shield in order to be able to decide with an unprejudiced eye, and many of the listeners went away quite puzzled in mind at hearing some of their pet American customs arraigned by a Hindu and a heathen.

The address was a most interesting one and was listened to with deep attention by all present. At the close many [questions] were presented to the thoughtful monk, who wasted very few words in social flourishes or unmeaning talk. He seemed much interested in Dr. Bowker, the only one in the audience who had ever visited the strange land which was centuries old before this republic was born.

THE BRAHMAN MONK⁵⁹¹

Swami Vivekananda the Guest of the Woman's Club⁵⁹²

[*Lawrence American and Andover Advertiser*, May 18, 1894]

He Points Out the Better Phases of Brahmanism.

—
And Delivers a Pointed Message to Christians.

Swami Vivekananda, the Brahman monk addressed a most interested audience Tuesday night in Library Hall under the auspices of the Lawrence Woman's Club.

Miss Wetherbee introduced the speaker and prepared the way for a cordial reception which American courtesy rarely fails to give a distinguished visitor from another nation.

Miss Wetherbee wisely referred to him as a prominent personality at the World's Parliament of Religions, also to the strong impression made by him at the World's fair. . . .

⁵⁹¹ ?

New Discoveries, Vol. 2, pp. 68-71.

⁵⁹² ? Of which there is no verbatim transcript available. Cf. the preceding American newspaper report, "Lecture by Hindoo Monk" of the *Lawrence Evening Tribune* (pp. 463-66), for other highlights of the same lecture.

His Iterations

. . . In his own country, in his own class, he addresses all women as mother. The Brahmin is educated thus to think of women as mother and a man may not marry his mother. In that country the mother instinct is developed in woman; in this he thought the wife instinct was cultivated, and the most beautiful thing in his lecture was his tribute to the mother, and not unnoticed was the reference to the kindness of heart of the little Hindoo child which would instinctively cause him to turn aside from his path rather than crush a worm.

The Subject of Marriage

formed a large part of his lecture. Among the high classes, called Aryans, women think of marriage as indecent [?]. A widow is not expected to ever marry again. A man who never marries, is highly praised, and indeed worshipped, but should he marry then in the minutes all would be changed. He who does not marry is looked upon as high-minded, as holy and spiritual.

Among the Aryans no money is paid in marriage [?], and as female children are largely in the majority it is one of most difficult things for a father to marry his daughter, and from the time of her birth he racks his brains to find her a husband.

With the two lower classes the rules in regard to marriage are all different. Widows marry again and wives and husbands if desirous become divorced. When a child is born an astrologer comes and casts a horoscope of the child, he delineates the future character of the boy or girl—it is decided whether he is manly or a devilish child; if devilish—he is married to one next in caste, and thus is obtained a minute chance of bettering the condition of the devilish child.

The matter of marriage is not left to the decision of the child as in that case he might marry because [he was] in love with a good nose or good eyes and so in having his own way would spoil the whole thing. The fact was emphasised that only the higher classes think of a

True Spiritual Life

and of worshiping God instead of thinking of marriage. He spoke of the pitiful condition of the lower classes, their poverty

1 and their ignorance. Millions and millions are [un]able to write their name and yet he said:

2
3 We are all preaching sermons into them, when their hands are reaching out for bread. Poverty is so
4 extreme in the lower classes that fifty cents a month is the average income of a Hindoo. Millions live on
5 one poor meal a day and millions subsist on wild flowers for food.

6
7 He spoke of the idea being prevalent that there were no scholars among the women of India and
8 stated that this was an error as many women of the Brahmins were married but became scholars, and
9 with evident pride he referred to the fact that in no nation could one line be found

10
11 In Any Bible

12 that had been written by a woman excepting his own country alone where many beautiful things in
13 their Bible had been written by women.

14 Swami Vivekananda did not fail to inform the audience in English words which could not be
15 misunderstood, that the effort to raise his people by teaching them the Christian religion was a thankless
16 task. He said:

17
18 We have seen the Greek and the Persian come to us—we have seen the Spaniard with guns come to
19 make us Christians, still we are Hindoos and thus we shall remain.

20
21 Had Vivekananda used all the power of his flashing eyes and his expressive voice it would have been
22 a most dramatic speech when he said:

23
24 I dare here in America to say that we of India shall stand by our religion.

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2

1 He said our customs were good for us and we were welcome to them. He stood before us as he has
2 before many a cultured American audience—he, the learned exponent of the Brahman religion, the only
3 Hindoo who has ever come to this country to

1 tell us—as forcibly as he dared and as politely as he could and yet be forcible,—to say no more to the
2 poor Hindoo but to be so very kind as to mind our own business.

3 After the lecture many of the audience gladly availed themselves of the opportunity offered by Mr.
4 and Mrs. Young to meet Vivekananda at their residence where he has been entertained and has proven
5 himself to be a most delightful guest.

6 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA⁵⁹³

7
8 [Mrs. Ole Bull submitted to the Boston Evening Transcript the following report of Swami
9 Vivekananda's public lecture at Greenacre, Maine, delivered Friday, August 3, 1894, of which there is no
10 verbatim transcript available. Vide the notes from discourses given at Greenacre, Maine, entitled "The
11 Religion of India", in this volume of the Complete Works (pp. 267-71).]

12 [*Boston Evening Transcript*, August 11, 1894]

13 A defense of Mahomet [*sic*] by a Hindu to a Christian audience; the lesson that all prophets are to be
14 revered and their teachings studied reverently; that the followers of these teachers should not confound
15 for us by their behavior the revelation made from God to man by prophecy—was the theme at Greenacre
16 yesterday.

17 Clear thought and statement patiently corrected the crude and superficial adverse criticism and
18 comment that had been made concerning the Eastern belief—reincarnation. The statement was masterful,
19 because simple, and was brought home by illustrations familiar and commonplace. This was followed by a
20 nobly eloquent plea for the judicial spirit in judging the history of the time and the faith of Mahomet
21 himself and the service done the human race by the essentials of this faith as a prophet of God. Men and
22 women present, many of whom fear the hea-

3 593 ?

4 *New Discoveries*, Vol. 2, pp. 144-45.
5

then, were moved as they tell us Wendell Phillips⁵⁹⁴ was wont to move the hard hearts to consider the sin of slavery.

Scorn, wit and intellect did noble service in all gentleness and dignity in this appeal that the defects, the horrors, of each and all religions should be put one side that the essentials common to all—the immortality of the soul, one God, the Father and his prophets sacred, each, to some division of the human family, and each having truth to give needful to all—should be recognized and revered to salvation.

The speaker, Swami Vivekananda, gave what only a great soul is capable of giving. It was an hour never to be forgotten. This man brought those present into the light of truth, whatever their prejudice and training, as Phillips Brooks united Unitarian and Episcopalianism, and all who love the good and true came to hold him for their bishop. So this Hindu, in his constructive thought, when he will give it, can make the power of the prophets known to us by his own presence.

nirvanashatkam*⁵⁹⁵

[*Swami Vivekananda's partial translation of the "Nirvâna-shatkam" by Shankara, recited at Greenacre, Maine, and reported in an 1894 issue of the Greenacre Voice*⁵⁹⁶]

Under the Swami's famous pine at Greenacre, Vivekananda said:

"I am neither body nor changes of the body; nor am I senses nor objects of the senses. I am Existence Absolute. Bliss Absolute. Knowledge Absolute. I am It. I am It.

⁵⁹⁴ ? American orator and reformer (1811-1884).

⁵⁹⁵ ?

New Discoveries, Vol. 2, pp. 149-50 (*Arena*, October 1899, p. 499).

⁵⁹⁶ ?

Vide the notes from discourses delivered at Greenacre, Maine, entitled "The Religion of India", in this volume of the Complete Works (pp. 267-71).

1 "I am neither death nor fear of death; nor was I ever born, nor had I parents. I am Existence
2 Absolute. Bliss Absolute. Knowledge Absolute. I am It. I am It.

3 "I am not misery nor have I misery. I am not enemy nor have I enemies. I am Existence Absolute.
4 Bliss Absolute. Knowledge Absolute. I am It. I am It.

5 "I am without form, without limit, beyond space, beyond time; I am in everything, I am the basis of
6 the universe—

7 everywhere am I. I am Existence Absolute. Bliss Absolute. Knowledge Absolute. I am It. I am It."

8 the nonsense of nations⁵⁹⁷

9 [*Boston Evening Transcript*, August 15, 1894]

10 A short résumé is given below of the last of the talks of Vivekananda under the pines at Eliot,⁵⁹⁸ in
11 the temple of the gods, to paraphrase Bryant's⁵⁹⁹ line—

12 "The groves were God's first Temple."

13
14 What is the nation? What is law? We have laws only that we may become outlaws (above law).

15 There is the freedom of the soul; through this we know the freedom of law. I am of the nation of
16 those who seek the liberty of the soul. I am of the nation of those who worship God.

17 The divine ones of God are all my Masters. I learn of your Christ in learning of Krishna, of Buddha,

3 597 ?

4 *New Discoveries*, Vol. 2, pp. 154-55.

5
6 598 ?

7 Of which no verbatim transcript is available. *Vide* "The Religion of India"—notes from discourses delivered at Greenacre,
8 Maine—in this volume of the Complete Works (pp. 267-71).

9
10 599 ?

11 William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878).

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2

1 in learning of Mohamet. I worship God alone. "I am existence absolute, bliss absolute, Knowledge
2 Absolute." I condemn nothing that I find in nation, state or religion, finding God

1 in all. Our growth is not from evil to good, but from good to better, and so on and on. I learn from all
2 that is called evil or good. The nation and all such nonsense may go. It is love, love, love God and my
3 brother.

4 A HIGH PRIEST OF INDIA⁶⁰⁰

5 [*Baltimore American*, October 13, 1894]

6 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ARRIVES IN BALTIMORE

7 HIS VIEWS ON RELIGION

8
9 Swami Vivekananda, a Brahmin high priest of India, arrived in Baltimore last night, and is the guest
10 of Rev. Walter Vrooman. . . .

11 To an American reporter last night Swami Vivekananda said:

12
13 I have been very favorably impressed with American institutions during my stay in this country. My
14 time has been divided between four cities—Chicago, New York, Boston and Detroit. I never heard of
15 Chicago when in India, but I had frequently heard of Baltimore. The main criticism I have to pass on
16 America is that you have too little religion here. In India they have too much. I think the world would be
17 better if some of India's surplus of religion could be sent over here, while it would be to India's profit if its
18 people could have some of America's industrial advancement and civilization. I am a believer in all
19 religions. I think there is truth in my religion; I think there is truth in your religion. It is the same truth in
20 all religions applying itself through various channels to the same end. I think the great need of the world
21 is less law, and more godly men and women. . . .

3 600 ?

4 *New Discoveries*, Vol. 2, pp. 191-92.
5

1 PRIEST SWAMI IN TOWN⁶⁰¹

2 [*Baltimore News*, October 13, 1894]

3 A High Caste Hindoo Visiting in Baltimore

4 —

5 HIS GORGEOUS GARB ATTRACTS MUCH ATTENTION IN THE LOBBY AT THE RENNERT—HE WHISTLES AND
6 INDULGES IN EAST INDIAN WIT—HE COMES TO BALTIMORE ON A TOUR OF THE COUNTRY AND WILL SPEAK AT THE
7 LYCEUM TOMORROW NIGHT.

8
9 Swami Vivekananda, High Priest of the Hindoos, walked into the lobby of the Hotel Rennert this
10 forenoon attired in a flaming red cloak and a gaudy yellow turban that made him the centre of all eyes. . . .

11
12 His Idea of Humor

13 Swami Vivekananda has the sense of humor about him. He was talking this morning about the Food
14 Show, which he intends to visit. He says he doesn't know much about food except to swallow it, and that is
15 a very representative specimen of the wit of Ormus⁶⁰² and of Ind.

16 Another time he spoke of women's rights and said laughingly that women had more rights the world
17 over than they were credited with having. When he changed his black coat, before going to the Rennert,
18 and put on the cardinal red garment with the yellow turban he came out of his room smiling, and said:

19 "A transformation!"

20 The High Priest can whistle and has enough music in his soul to start the tunes in class-meeting if
21 he were Methodist instead of Hindoo. He whistled a couple of strains in his room this morning for a

3 ⁶⁰¹ ?

4 *New Discoveries*, Vol. 2, pp. 196-200.

5
6 ⁶⁰² ? Hormuz, or Ormuz, an ancient Iranian town.

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2

1 reporter of The News. It was not "Daisy Bell" nor yet "Sweet Marie," and must have been some sort of a
2 heathen Hindoo jingle. . . .
3

1 Views on Topics of the Day

2 Swami is traveling around the country, as he says, lecturing and studying American institutions, but
3 he seems not to have got much into the pith of American sociology, for he knows nothing of such questions
4 as European immigration, divorce, the race problem, etc., which are worrying the economists of the land.

5 He is, however, posted on Oriental immigration, and says the United States has no right to bar out
6 the Chinese. He says the law of love must prevail and force must yield. He predicts the downfall of any
7 nation that uses force. He says also that the United States should open her doors to the world. He believes
8 the Southern part of the continent should be filled with Hindoos and Chinese.

9 "There is no such thing as divorce in India," he said;

10
11 our law does not allow it. Our women are more limited in their sphere than the women of America.
12 Some of them are as highly educated. They are entering the medical profession to some extent now. I see
13 no reason why American women should not vote.

14
15 He evaded a question as to the position of Hindoo women in their homes and their treatment by
16 their husbands. It may be that he does not know much about it. He is not a married man. Priests of his
17 caste do not marry.

18 He mentioned two things which he said had impressed him in America. One was the absence of
19 poverty in the country at large, and the other was the unusual prevalence of ignorance in the South.

20
21 Likes the Elevator

22 When he went to the elevator at the Rennert he said:

23
24 There is an American institution which we do not have to any extent in India. I like it very much.

1 conversations and interviews 484
2

1 A lady was just coming off the elevator. She was somewhat startled by the red and yellow costume
2 of the priest, but his

1 imperturbable countenance gave no sign of consciousness of the attention he attracted.

2 His address tomorrow night at the Lyceum will be mainly introductory of himself and explanatory of
3 the Hindoo nation. He will speak briefly, but will remain in Baltimore and speak more at length a week
4 from tomorrow night.

5 A WISE MAN AMONG US⁶⁰³

6 [*Baltimore Sunday Herald*, October 14, 1894]

7 —

8 Visit of a Distinguished Hindoo Priest to This City

9 —

10 HE IS A GUEST OF THE VROOMAN BROTHERS AND IS INTERESTED IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN
11 INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF RELIGIONS—HIS GORGEOUS GARB.

12
13

14 . . . Mr. Vivecananda conversed with a *Sunday Herald* reporter, speaking English with ease and with
15 an accent similar to that of an educated Italian. He displayed the greatest familiarity with the institutions
16 of this country, religious, political and social.

17 Mr. Vivecananda came to Baltimore at the invitation of the Vrooman brothers, Hiram, Carl and
18 Walter, and while in this city will be their guest. Rev. Hiram Vrooman was seen at his residence, 1122
19 North Calvert Street, yesterday, and talked freely in reference to the visit of the distinguished guest.

20 "Mr. Vivecananda," he said, "is one of the most intelligent men I have ever met. He came to this city
21 at our invitation, and while here will confer with us in reference to the founding of

22 the international university, which it is proposed to establish as an outcome of the World's Congress

3 603 ?

4 *New Discoveries*, Vol. 2, pp. 200-202.

1 conversations and interviews 486
2

1 of Religions, which was such an interesting feature of the World's Fair. This university

is one of Mr. Vivecananda's pet ideas, and has the full sympathy of myself and my brothers, and also a number of gentlemen of wealth and position, including several religions. Among its promoters are members of the Roman Catholic and Hebrew religions. The idea of the university is education in general religion. . . .

"One of Mr. Vivecananda's ideas in the establishing of the university is that it may serve to educate a superior kind of missionary for work in India. While he is steadfast to his own religious belief, he wishes that the present system of sending ignorant men as missionaries to India may be discontinued and men sent there who can teach the Christian religion from an elevated standpoint. In this wish he is animated only by a desire for the good of general religion. . . .

"Mr. Vivecananda told me that his father was a great believer in the Lord Jesus, as he called Him, and that when a boy he had read in the Gospel of St. John the thrilling description of the crucifixion of the Savior and wept over it. He will remain in this city for several weeks. To-morrow evening he will deliver a brief address at our meeting at the Lyceum, and on Sunday week will speak at length at our second meeting on the university plan."

LOVE RELIGION'S ESSENCE⁶⁰⁴

Vive Kananda, a Brahmin Monk,
Preaches at the People's Church

[*Washington Times*, Monday, October 29, 1894]

Vive Kananda, the Brahmin monk, spoke to the congregation of the People's Church, No. 423 G Street northwest, at 11:00 a.m. yesterday.⁶⁰⁵ . . . Dr. Kent introduced the monk. . . .

⁶⁰⁴ ?

Ray and Wanda Ellis, "Swami Vivekananda in Washington D.C.", *The Vedanta Kesari*, 1991, pp. 370-73.

⁶⁰⁵ ? On Sunday, October 28, 1894, Swami Vivekananda delivered two talks at the People's Church, of which there are no verbatim transcripts available. Cf. Complete Works, II: 497-99 for an interview with the Swami given after his morning sermon.

2
1 Vive Kananda, coming forward, said as a boy at the university he studied comparative religion. In
2 India are many religions. One-fifth are Mahomedans. A million are Christians. He studied all. He listened
3 to a great Hindoo preacher, and when he had finished, said:

4
5 "My brother, have you seen God?"

6 The preacher looked up in surprise.

7 "No."

8 "How, then, do you know these things are true?"

9 "My father told me."

10 "Who told your father?"

11 "His father," and so on through his ancestors to the clouds.

12
13 He heard a Christian preacher of great eloquence. This man told the seeker for truth that if he was
14 not immersed in water at once he was in great danger to be roasted alive. Upon further questions this
15 Christian also, through the records of his books, went back to his ancestors, and so back to the clouds.

16
17 The Student Not Satisfied

18 This did not satisfy the student. He set about praying. He prayed sometimes three days and nights
19 with much weeping and without food. He finally found a man who knew no books, not even to write his
20 own name. This sage was preaching his religion. When asked the old question, he replied:

21
22 "Yes, I see God now and I will teach you to see Him."

23
24 This man bore the stamp of God in his features. It was the same certificate that came to the man of

1 Nazareth when the dove descended upon Him at Jordan. He made his hearer to believe that God lives and
2 religion is not a mockery.

3 For twelve years Kananda sat at this man's feet. He was the master. He said one day, "Take up this
4 book." Kananda took up the book and read. It was a calendar. He read in it where the rainfall was
5 foretold. It said that within a certain time so many tons of rain would fall in a certain district. "Now," said
6 the teacher, "close the book and press it." He did so. "Squeeze it

2
1 very hard." He obeyed. "Did any water come from the book?" "None." So are all books. The true
2 religion is here, at the heart.

3 The truth is people do not want God. Far from it. Religion is largely fashionable. My lady has a fine
4 parlor, elegant furniture, a piano, beautiful jewelry, well-fitting, costly dresses, a hat that is the latest
5 thing out. She cannot get along without a dash of religion to keep up with her set. There is much of this
6 religion, but it is hypocrisy, and hypocrisy is the root of all evil. This sort of religion is not of God. It is only
7 the shadow. People with such religion sometimes grow to be in earnest and talk about religious things as
8 if they had some reality. So talking about religion without having it these people fall to quarreling and
9 fighting. "Mine, mine," is the cry, never "thine, thine." "My religion is best." "No, mine," and so they fight
10 as did the savage tribes about their rival gods, Mambo and Jumbo. Competition in religion, as in business,
11 is the bane of all.

12
13 Love Abideth

14 Your own Paul says "all else shall perish, but love abideth." That is the great truth. That false
15 doctrine that my nation shall be aggrandized at the cost of every other nation is not of God.

16 A youth went to his master and said, "I want to know God." The master paid little attention, but the
17 youth persisted and would not be put off. Finally one day the master said: "Let us go down to the river and
18 have a bath." So they went down and the youth plunged in. The master followed and falling upon him held
19 him under. The youth struggled, but the master would not let him up. Finally, when he seemed to be
20 almost dead he desisted, drew him from the water and revived him. "What did you most want when in the
21 water?" the master asked. "Breath," was the answer. "Then you don't want God."

22 So it is with men, what do you want? You want breath, without it you cannot live; you want bread,
23 without it you cannot live; you want a house, without it you cannot live. When you want God as you want
24 these things, He manifests himself to you. It is a great thing to want God.

25 A majority of men and women in this world want the enjoyments of sense. They have been told that
26 there is a God afar off and if they will send him a cartload of words he will

help them get these good things of this world. But in every land there are a few persons who want God. They would be one with the essence of good and truth. Religion is not shopkeeping. Love asks no return; love begs not; love gives.

Religion is not an outgrowth of fear; religion is joyous. It is the spontaneous outburst of the songs of birds and the beautiful sight of the morning. It is an expression of the spirit. It is from within an expression of the free and noble spirit.

If misery is religion, what is hell? No man has a right to make himself miserable. To do so is a mistake; it is a sin. Every peal of laughter is a prayer sent to God.

To go back, what I have learned is this: Religion is not in books, not in forms, not in sects, not in nations; religion is in the human heart. It is engraved there. The proof of it is in ourselves.

I make two points. There are sects. Let them go on increasing in number till each is a sect by himself. None can see God exactly as another; each must believe in Him and serve Him as he sees Him. Then I want a harmonizing of the sects. Individuality is not in a fight with universality.

Let each for himself and all together fight evils. If you have a power of eight and I a power of four, and you come and destroy me, you have lost at least four. You have only four left to conquer evil. It is love alone that can conquer hatred. If there is power in hate there is infinitely more power in love.

THE HINDOO OPTIMISTIC⁶⁰⁶

[*Washington Times*, November 2, 1894]

Vive Kananda Compares Religions and Talks of Reincarnation⁶⁰⁷

Optimism is the feature of the belief of the Aryas or Hindoos as distinguished from Western religions, according to the

⁶⁰⁶ ?

Ray and Wanda Ellis, "Swami Vivekananda in Washington D.C., *The Vedanta Kesari*, 1991, pp. 369-70.

⁶⁰⁷ ? The untranscribed lecture advertised as "Karma and Reincarnation", delivered at the People's Church, Sunday, October 28, 1894.

Brahman monk, Vive Kananda, who spoke to a fair-sized audience at Metzerott Hall last night. His subject was reincarnation. Much of his lecture was devoted to comparison of Hindoo with Christian doctrine.

To illustrate the tenet of reincarnation he compared the human body to a river. Each drop of water passes on and is replaced by another. The entire body of water, he observed, changes wholly in a few moments, but we call it the same river. In the same way the particles of the body are constantly replaced by others and no two days do we have the same body, yet we preserve our identity.

The spirit remains so, the Hindoos believe, that the person may have a different and more sudden and violent change in death and yet pass on in its existence to some other place in the universe, to some other planet or star, and then take on a body of flesh again or of some other kind.

He said there ought to be no talk of sin. The mistakes of the past ought to be used only for guidance in the future, never to be moaned over. When the lesson is learned from them they should be forgotten.

"Strike a light," he said, "sit not in darkness and sorrow. Do always better and be happy." . . .

Vivekananda's Lecture⁶⁰⁸

[*Baltimore News*, November 3, 1894]

Swami Vivekananda, Hindoo high priest, lectured last night at Harris' Academy of Music Concert Hall. His subject was "India and Its Religion."⁶⁰⁹ He explained the belief of the various Eastern religions, including his own, which is Brahminism. He ridiculed the idea of sending missionaries of so many different

⁶⁰⁸ ?

New Discoveries, Vol. 2, p. 223.

⁶⁰⁹ ?

Of which there is no verbatim report available.

faiths to heathen lands, and said that the various religions engaged in missionary work should be united. Mr. Vivekananda explained that the Hindoo religion is optimistic and not pessimistic. His main point was the doctrine of reincarnation, which means that all have existed before and will live again in other forms. The proceeds of the lecture will be applied to the work of founding an international college.

LET INDIA ALONE⁶¹⁰

[*Daily Eagle*, April 8, 1895]

Then It will Come Out All Right,

Says Swami Vivekananda

The English people were given a raking over last night by Swami Vivekananda of India, who lectured to a throng at the Pouch mansion.⁶¹¹ He said that the English used three B's—

Bible, brandy and bayonets—in civilizing India. The preacher went ahead with the Bible to get the lay of the fortifications. The English, he said, had exaggerated the social conditions of India in their writings. They got their ideas from the Pariahs, who were a sort of human scavenger. No self-respecting Hindoo, he declared, would associate with an Englishman. The story about widows throwing themselves under the chariot of Juggernaut he declared to be a myth. Child marriage and caste he agreed were bad. Caste, he said, originated with the mechanics' guilds. What India needed was to be let alone, and it would come out all right.

⁶¹⁰ ?

New Discoveries, Vol. 2, p. 314.

⁶¹¹ ?

Of which no verbatim transcript is available. Cf. the newspaper report "Some Customs of the Hindus", Complete Works, II: 515-17, for a complementary report on the same lecture.

1 ABOU BEN ADHEM'S IDEAL⁶¹²

2 [*New York World*, December 8, 1895]

3 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA THE YOGI, COMES FROM BOMBAY, PREACHING LOVE FOR HIS FELLOW-MAN.

4 To find an ascetic of the Highest Eastern type clad in a red and flowing Hindoo cloak over
5 unmistakable American trousers is necessarily a surprise. But in other things besides dress is Swami
6 Vivekananda astonishing. In the first place he declares that your religion or any one else's religion is just
7 as good as his own, and if you should happen to be a Christian or Mussulman, Baptist or Brahmin, atheist,
8 agnostic or Catholic, it will make no difference to him. All that he asks is that you act righteously
9 according to your lights.

10 The Yogi, with his peculiar notions of dress and worship, arrived Friday on the Brittanic. He went to
11 No. 228 West Thirty-ninth street. While in New York he will lecture upon metaphysics and psychology, and
12 will also disseminate in a general way his ideas on the universal religion which asks no man to take
13 another by the throat because his creed happens to be different. "Let me help my fellowman; that is all I
14 seek," he says.

15 "There are four general types of men," he says, the rational, the emotional, the mystical and the
16 worker. For them we must have their proper worship. There comes the rational man, who says, "I care not
17 for this form of worship. Give me the philosophical, the rational—that I can appreciate." So for the rational
18 man is the rational, philosophic worship.

19 There comes the worker. He says: "I care not for the worship of the philosopher. Give me work to do
20 for my fellow-men." So for him is made a worship, as for the mystical the emotional. In the religion for all
21 these men are the elements of their faith.

3 ⁶¹² ? *New Discoveries*, Vol. 3, pp. 316-18.

4 Abou Ben Adhem, the hero of Leigh Hunt's famous poem, asked a recording angel to list him as loving his fellowmen.

1 "No," said the Swami, very softly, in answer to a question,

2
3 I do not believe in the occult. If a thing be unreal it is not. What is unreal does not exist. Strange
4 things are natural phenomena. I know them to be matters of science. Then they are not occult to me. I do
5 not believe in occult societies. They do no good, and can never do good.

6
7 In fact, the Swami belongs to no society, cult or creed. His is a religion which compasses all
8 worship, all classes, all beliefs.

9 Swami, who is a very dark-featured and good-looking young fellow, explained his creed yesterday in
10 remarkably pure English. One forgot when he spoke that an orthodox choker peered over the Bombay
11 robe which in turn scantily concealed the American trousers. One saw instead a winning smile and a pair
12 of deep, lustrous black eyes.

13 Swami believes in reincarnation. He believes that with the purification of the body the soul rises to a
14 higher condition, and as the purification through matter continues the spirit rises, until released from
15 further migration and is joined with the universal spirit.

16 Such a man as the Jew-baiter [Hermann?] Ahlwardt, who has just arrived in this country, the Swami
17 cannot understand. "You say," he said,

18
19 that he comes here to preach hate against his fellow-men. Is he not of wrong mind? Is he allowed to
20 spread this hate? The doctors should examine his brain to find out the wrong.

21
22 The peculiar name of the Yogi signifies, literally, "The bliss of discrimination." He is the first Indian
23 Yogi who ever came to this country. He comes from Bombay.

1 The Doctrine of the Swami⁶¹³

2 [*New York Herald*, January 19, 1896]

3 The following is a brief sketch of the Swami's fundamental teachings:⁶¹⁴

4
5 Every man must develop according to his own nature. As every science has its methods so has every
6 religion. Methods of attaining the end of our religion are called Yoga, and the different forms of Yoga that
7 we teach are adapted to the different natures and temperaments of men. We classify them in the following
8 way, under four heads:

9 (1) Karma Yoga—The manner in which a man realizes his own divinity through works and duty.

10 (2) Bhakti Yoga—The realization of a divinity through devotion to and love of a personal God.

11 (3) Rajah Yoga—The realization of divinity through control of mind.

12 (4) Gnana Yoga—The realization of man's own divinity through knowledge.

13 These are all different roads leading to the same center—

14 God. Indeed, the varieties of religious belief are an advantage, since all faiths are good, so far as
15 they encourage man to religious life. The more sects there are the more opportunities there are for
16 making successful appeals to the divine instinct in all men.

17 "UNIVERSAL RELIGION"⁶¹⁵

3 613 ?

4 *New Discoveries*, Vol. 3, pp. 340-41.

5
6 614 ?

7 A summary of the Swami's teachings taken from what appears to be a written statement.

8
9 615 ?

10 *New Discoveries*, Vol. 3, pp. 475-79.

1 conversations and interviews 497
2

1 Vivekananda's Lecture on the Creeds of the World
2 [*Hartford Daily Times*, February 1, 1896]

3 A fair house greeted the Hindu monk, Vivekananda, last night. . . . He was introduced by Mr. C. B.
4 Patterson, in some

fitting remarks. . . . His subject last night was "The Ideal, or Universal Religion".⁶¹⁶

Throughout the universe there are two forces constantly at work, the centrifugal and centripetal, positive and negative, action and reaction, attraction and repulsion. We find love and hatred, good and evil. What plane is stronger than the spiritual plane, the plane of religion? The world furnishes no hate stronger than that engendered by religion, and no love stronger. No teachings have brought more unhappiness into the world, nor more happiness. The beautiful teachings of Buddha have been carried across the Himalayas, at a height of 20,000 feet, by his disciples. Five hundred years later came the teachings of your beautiful Christ, and these have been carried on the wings of the wind. On the other hand, look at your beautiful earth deluged in blood in the interest of propagandism and religion. As soon as a man comes into the company of those who do not believe as he does, his very nature changes. It is his own opinions he fights for, not religion. He becomes the very embodiment of cruelty and fanaticism. His religion is all right, but when he starts out to fight for his own selfish opinions he is all wrong. People are up in arms about the Armenian and the Turkish butcheries, but their consciences don't say a word when the butcheries are committed in the interest of their own religion. In human beings we find a curious mixture of God, man, and devil, and religion stirs up the latter more than anything else. When we all think alike, the God side of our nature comes out; but let there be a clash of opinions, and presto, change! the devil has the floor. This has been so from time immemorial, and will be so always. In India we know what fanaticism means, for that country for the last thousand years has been the especial field of missionaries. But above the clash of opinions, and the fight for religions, there comes the voice of peace. For 3,000 years efforts have been made to bring the different religions into harmony. But we know how this effort has failed. And it always will fail, and it ought to fail. We have a network of words about love, peace, and universal brotherhood, which were meant all right originally, but we repeat them like parrots, and to us they

⁶¹⁶ ?

"The Ideal of a Universal Religion" was delivered January 31, 1896, of which there is no verbatim transcript available.

1 mean nothing. Is there a universal philosophy for the world? Not yet. Each religion has its own
2 creeds and dogmas and insists upon propagating them. You can't make one religion for the whole world.
3 That must not be. The Armenians say it will be all right if you will all become Armenians. And the Pope of
4 Rome says: "O yea, it is a very easy thing. If you will all become Roman Catholics, it will be all right." And
5 so with the Greek church, and the Protestant church, and all the rest. There can never be one religion
6 only, it would be death to all other religions. If every one thought alike there would be no more thought to
7 think. If everybody looked alike, what monotony! Look alike and think alike—what could we do but sit down
8 and die in despair? We can't live like a row of chipmunks; variation belongs to human life. One God, one
9 religion is an old sing-song, but there's danger in it. But, thank God, it can never be. Start out with your
10 long purse, and your guns and cannon, to push your propagandism. And suppose you succeed for a while?
11 In ten years your so-called unity would be split into fragments. That is why there are so many sects. Take
12 the largest religion, the Buddhist. They try to help the world to be better. Next come the Christians, with
13 [a] good many things to teach. They have three Gods in one, and one in three, and one of the three took on
14 the sins of the world and was killed. Whoever doesn't believe in him, goes to a very hot place. And
15 Mohammed, whoever doesn't believe in him will have his skin burnt off, and then a fresh one will be
16 furnished to be burnt, that he may know that Allah is the all-powerful. All religions came originally from
17 the Orient. These great teachers or incarnations come in different forms. The Hindus have ten
18 incarnations; the first was a fish, and so on, down to the fifth, and from there, they were all men. The
19 Buddhists say: "We don't care to have so many incarnations; we want only one." The Christians say: "We
20 will have only one, and this is Christ." And they say he is the only one. But the Buddhist says they have the
21 start in time; their great teacher came five hundred years earlier. And the Mohammedans say theirs came
22 last, and therefore is the best. Each one loves his own, just as a mother loves her own child. The Buddhist
23 never sees any fault in Buddha; the Christian never sees any fault in Christ, and the Mohammedan never
24 sees any fault in Mo-

hammed. The Christian says their God took the form of a dove and came down, and that they say is not mythology, but history. The Hindu says his god is manifested in a cow and that he says is not superstition, but history. The Jew thinks his Holy of Holies can be contained in a box or chest, with an angel on guard on either side. But the Christian's God in the form of a beautiful man or woman, is a horrible idol. "Break it down!" they say. One man's prophet did such and such wonderful things, while others call it only superstition. So where's your unity? Then there are your rituals. The Roman Catholic puts on his robe, as I have mine. He has his bells and candles and holy water, and says these are good and necessary, but what you do, he says is only superstition. We can never upset all this and have but one religion for the very life of thought is the differentiation of thought. We must learn to love those who think exactly opposite to us. We have humanity for the background, but each must have his own individuality and his own thought. Push the sects forward and forward till each man and woman are sects unto themselves. We must learn to love the man who differs from us in opinion. We must learn that differentiation is the life of thought. We have one common goal, and that is the perfection of the human soul, the god within us. Religion is the great force to help unfold the god within man. But we have to unfold in our own way. We can't all assimilate the same kind of food. Let your aspirations be of the highest, and your inspirations will be in harmony with reason and all known laws, and the Lord will always be with you.

vivekananda's philosophy⁶¹⁷

[*Tribune*, March 5, 1896]

He Would Have Many Kinds of Religion

Vivekananda, the Hindoo missionary, lectured at the Hotel Richelieu last night.⁶¹⁸ The parlors of the private hotel were filled

⁶¹⁷ ?

New Discoveries, Vol. 4, p. 20.

⁶¹⁸ ? The class was "The Ideal of a Universal Religion", of which there is no verbatim transcript available.

1 to overflowing with a crowd of ladies. When Vivekananda arrived at the hotel it was with difficulty
2 he worked his way in. He went upstairs and very shortly came down again robed in a purple gown, caught
3 about the waist with a purple cord.

4 Vivekananda in his talk said that there were various religions and each believer thought his religion
5 the only true religion. It was a mistake, he said, to suppose that all should have the same religion.

6 "If all were of the same religious opinion," said he,

7
8 there would be no religion. No sooner does a religion start than it breaks into pieces. The process is
9 for the religion to go on dividing until each man has his own religion, until each man has thought out his
10 own thoughts and carved out for himself his own religion.

11
12 Vivekananda will remain in Detroit about two weeks and will give classes every morning at 11
13 o'clock and every evening at 8 o'clock at the hotel. . . .

14 heard swami talk⁶¹⁹

15 [*News Tribune*, March 16, 1896]

16 Vivekananda Lectured in Temple Beth El

17 —

18 Spoke on the Ideal of a Universal Religion

19 He Will Probably Leave Tuesday

20 Temple Beth El was crowded to the doors last night when Swami Vivekananda delivered his address
21 upon "The Ideal of

3 619 ?

4 *New Discoveries*, Vol. 4, p. 41.
5

1 conversations and interviews 502
2

1 a universal religion."⁶²⁰ The time announced for the service was 8 o'clock, but the congregation
2 began to assemble at the temple early in the evening so that the doors had to be opened at

3 ⁶²⁰ ? Of which there is no verbatim transcript available.
4

1 6:25 p.m. They were closed at 7 o'clock and the hundreds that arrived after that time had to be
2 turned away.

3
4 We all hear about universal brotherhood, and how societies stand up and want to preach this. But to
5 what does it amount? As soon as you make a sect you protest against equality, and thus it is no more,

6
7 said Swami.

8
9 Unity in variety is the plan of the universe. Just as we are all men, yet we are all separate. We find
10 then, that if by the idea of a universal religion is meant one set of doctrines should be believed by all
11 mankind, it is impossible, it can never be, any more than there will be a time when all faces will be the
12 same. We must not seek that all of us should think alike, like Egyptian mummies in a museum, looking at
13 each other without thought to think. It is this difference of thought, this differentiation, losing of the
14 balance of thought, which is the very soul of our progress, the soul of thought.

15
16 Swami will probably leave Tuesday [March 17]. At the close of his address last night he thanked the
17 people of Detroit for the kind reception tendered him and his philosophy.

18 philosophy of freedom⁶²¹

19 [*Boston Evening Transcript*, March 21, 1896]

20 —

21 Swami Vivekananda Compares Teachings
22 of Hindu Wisdom and Western Religions

3 621 ?

4 *New Discoveries*, Vol. 4, pp. 56-58.
5

1 conversations and interviews 504
2

1
2 The Swami Vivekananda, who will be remembered as the Hindu delegate to the World's Parliament
3 of Religions, is in the

1 city as the March class lecturer at the Procopeia, 45 St. Botolph street.⁶²² The Swami has been doing
2 some most valuable and successful work in systematic class lecturing in New York, with constantly
3 increasing audiences, during the past two winters, and comes to Boston at a most opportune time.

4 The Swami gives the following description of his work. In explanation of the term sannyasin, he said,
5 [*Vide "The Sannyasin", Complete Works, V: 260*].

6 In giving some idea of his work and its methods, the Swami says he left the world because he had a
7 deep interest in religion and philosophy from his childhood, and Indian books teach renunciation as the
8 highest ideal to which a man can aspire.

9 The Swami['s] teaching, as he expresses it,

10
11 is my own interpretation of our ancient books in the light which my master (a celebrated Hindu
12 sage) shed upon them. I claim no supernatural authority. Whatever in my teachings may appeal to the
13 highest intelligence and be accepted by thinking men, the adoption of that will be my reward. All religions
14 have for their object the teaching of devotion, or knowledge, or activity, in a concrete form. Now, the phi-
15 losophy of Vedanta is the abstract science which embraces all these methods, and this is what I teach,
16 leaving each one to apply it to his own concrete form. I refer each individual to his own experience, and
17 where reference is made to books, the latter are procurable, and may be studied for each one by himself.

18
19 The Swami teaches no authority from hidden beings, through visible objects, any more than he
20 claims learning from hidden books or MSS. He believes no good can come from secret societies.

21
22 Truth stands on its own authority, and truth can bear the light of day.

3 ⁶²² ?

4 There are no verbatim transcripts available of these classes.

He teaches only the Self, hidden in the heart of every individual, and common to all. A handful of strong men, knowing that Self, and living in its light, would revolutionize the world, even today, as has been the case of single strong men before, each in his day.

His attitude towards Western religions is briefly this. He propounds a philosophy which can serve as a basis to every possible religious system in the world, and his attitude towards all of them is one of extreme sympathy. His teaching is antagonistic to none. He directs his attention to the individual, to make him strong, to teach him that he himself is divine, and he calls upon men to make themselves conscious of divinity within. His hope is to imbue individuals with the teachings to which he has referred, and to encourage them to express these to others in their own way; let them modify them as they will; he does not teach them as dogmas; truth, at length, must inevitably prevail. . . .

out of the east⁶²³

[*Boston Daily Globe*, March 24, 1896]

Message Brought by the Swami Vivekananda—

in His Country the Gods Are "Bright Ones" That Help

The Swami Vivekananda is enjoying as great a degree of popularity on his present visit to Boston as he did when society, fashionable, intellectual and faddist, went wild over him on his former visit. . . .

. . . A New York paper published an interview with the Swami, in which he is reported to have expressed the opinion that in Boston "the women are all faddists, all fickle, merely bent on following something new and strange."⁶²⁴ But Swami Vivekananda says that this is an exaggerated and distorted presentation of a criticism which he made upon all American

⁶²³ ?

New Discoveries, Vol. 4, pp. 60-62.

⁶²⁴ ?

Cf. Complete Works, V: 413.

1 women, that they were too superficial and too prone to follow the sensational and to change from
2 one thing to another. This he says his observation has forced upon him. The American women are
3 intellectual, but they are not steady, serious and sincere.

4 The first of the Swami's lectures was delivered before an audience of 400 people in the Allen
5 gymnasium, Saturday evening on "The Science of Work," and the second one of the course on
6 "Devotion"⁶²⁵ was given in the same place, the hall being filled and a number turned away unable to gain
7 admittance.

8 The lecture was exceedingly interesting and the speaker's manner was very magnetic. In his
9 country, said the Swami, the gods were the "bright ones" who gave help to men and received help from
10 them. The gods are only human beings who are somewhat elevated after death, but God, the highest, is
11 never prayed to or asked for help. He is given only love and worship without anything being asked in
12 return. There are two phases of this God, the one, the abstract God behind the substance of the universe,
13 and the other the personal God who is seen through human intellect and given attributes by it.

14 The love which is given to God never takes, but always gives, and it does not depend on anything.
15 The worshiper does not pray for health, money or any other thing, but is content with the lot apportioned
16 to him.

17 People who ask about religion from mere motives of curiosity become faddists, they are always
18 looking for some-thing new and their brains degenerate until they become old rags. It is a religious
19 dissipation with them.

20 It is not the place that makes heaven or hell, but the mind. Love knows no fear, there can be no love
21 where it is. In love of any sort external objects are only suggested by something within

22 –it is one's own ideal projected, and God is the highest ideal that can be conceived of.

23 Hatred of the world does not drive good men from it, but the world slips away from the great and
24 saintly. The world, the family and social life, are all training grounds, that is all.

⁶²⁵ ? Delivered March 21 and March 23, 1896 respectively, of which there are no verbatim transcripts available.

When one realizes that God is love, it does not matter what his other attributes are, that is the only essential.

The more a man throws himself away, the more God comes in, hence self-abnegation, which is the secret of all religion and morality.

Too many people bring down their ideals. They want a comfortable religion, but there is none such. It is all self-surrender and upward striving.

Said a Universal Religion is Impossible⁶²⁶

[*Boston Evening Transcript*, March 27, 1896]

Swami Vivekananda told the large audience that crowded the Allen Gymnasium to hear him speak on the "Ideal of a Universal Religion," last night,⁶²⁷ that the recent Parliament of Religions at Chicago proved, to that date, that universal religion was impossible. "Nature," he said,

is wiser than we have thought her to be. It is competition of ideas, the clash of thought, that keeps thought alive. Sects have always been antithetical, and always will be splitting into little varieties of themselves. And the way to get out of this fight of religions is to let the sects go on subdividing.

There is no unity in the three elements of religion—

philosophy [theology?], mythology and ceremony. Each theologian wants unity, but his idea of unity is the adjustment of all other creeds to his own. I agree with the old prophets as long as they agree with me. But there is an element of religion that towers above all; that is, philosophy. The philosopher seeks truth, which is one and the same always. And it is acceptable to the four sides of every religious nature—the emotional, mystical, active and philosophical. And he who dares to seek the truth for truth's sake is greatest among men.

⁶²⁶ ?

New Discoveries, Vol. 4, pp. 64-65.

⁶²⁷ ? Of which there is no verbatim report available.

for Universal Religion⁶²⁸

[*Boston Evening Transcript*, March 30, 1896]

The Hindu Swami Lectures Before Several Societies.

The Swami Vivekananda has, during the past few days, conducted a most successful work in connection with the Procopeia. During this time he has given four class lectures for the club itself, with constant audiences of between four and five hundred people, at the Allen Gymnasium, 44, St. Botolph street, two at the house of Mrs. Ole Bull in Cambridge, and one before the professors and graduate students of the philosophical department of Harvard University.

The idea, which brought the Swami to America three years ago as Hindu delegate to the Parliament of Religions, and has been the guiding motive of all his subsequent work, both in America and England, is one which appeals strongly to the people whose creation the parliament was, but the methods which he proposes are peculiarly his own. One of his lectures during the week has been "The Ideal of a Universal Religion,"⁶²⁹ but a "harmonious religion" would, perhaps, equally meet the case, if, indeed, it would not more adequately express that for which he is striving. The Swami is not a preacher of theory. If there is any one feature of the Vedanta philosophy, which he propounds, which appears especially refreshing, it is its intense capability of practical demonstration. We have become almost wedded to the idea that religion is a sublime theory which can be brought into practice and made tangible for us only in another life, but the Swami shows us the folly of this. In preaching the Divinity of Man he inculcates a spirit of strength into us which will have none of those barriers between this life and actual realization of the sublime that, to the ordinary man, appear as insurmountable.

⁶²⁸ ?

New Discoveries, Vol. 4, pp. 81-86.

⁶²⁹ ?

Though this was one of Swami Vivekananda's recurring subjects, there is no available verbatim transcript of this March 26, 1896 lecture. Cf. Complete Works, II: 375-96.

In discussing the general lines on which it appears to him universal religion can alone be established, he claims for his plan no super-authority. As he says:

I have also my little plan. I do not know whether it will work or not, and I want to present it to you for discussion. In the first place, I would ask mankind to recognize this maxim: "Do not destroy." Iconoclastic reformers do no good to the world. Help, if you can; if you cannot, fold your hands, stand by, and see things go on. Therefore say not a word against any man's convictions, so far as they are sincere. Secondly, take man where he stands, and from thence give him a lift.⁶³⁰

Unity in variety is the plan of the universe. Just as we are all men, yet we are all separate. As humanity, I am one with you; as Mr. So-and-so, I am different from you. As a man you are separate from woman, but as human beings you are all one; as a living being you are one with animals and all that lives, but as man you are separate. That existence is God, the ultimate unity in this universe. In Him we are all one. We find, then, that if by the idea of a universal religion is meant that one set of doctrines should be believed by all mankind, it is impossible, it can never be, any more than all faces will be the same. Again, if we expect that there will be one universal mythology, that is also impossible; it cannot be. Neither can there be a universal ritual. When this time comes the world will be destroyed, because variety is the first principle of life. What makes us formed beings? Differentiation. Perfect balance will be destruction.⁶³¹

What then do I mean by the ideal of a universal religion? I do not mean a universal philosophy, or a universal mythology, or a universal ritual, but I mean that this world must go on, wheel within wheel. What can we do? We can make it run smoothly, we can lessen friction, we can grease the wheels, as it were. By what? By recognizing variation.

⁶³⁰ ?

Cf. Complete Works, II: 384.

⁶³¹ ?

Cf. Complete Works, II: 381-82.

Just as we have recognized unity, by our very nature so we must also recognize variation. We must learn that truth may be expressed in a thousand ways, and each one yet be true. We must learn that the same thing can be viewed from a hundred different standpoints, and yet be the same thing.⁶³²

In society we see so many various natures of mankind. A practical generalization will be impossible, but for my purpose I have simply characterized them into four. First, the active man; then the emotional man; then the mystical man, and lastly the philosopher.

To be universal, religion must provide possibility of realizing truth through means suitable to any one of these minds, and a religion which says that through one alone all men must struggle, whether these minds are capable of the struggle or not, must end in agnosticism.

In his lecture on Karma Yoga,⁶³³ the Swami dealt with the science of work. The lecture for the most part analyzed the motives men have in work, and particularly the motive of heaven as a reward for good work on earth. This, said the Swami, is shopkeeping religion. Work alone reaches its highest when it is done absolutely without hope of reward, work for work's sake, and without regard to the consequences.

In discussing Bhakti Yoga,⁶³⁴ Devotion, the Swami explained the rationale of a Personal God. This idea of devotion and worship of some being who has to be loved, and who can reflect back the love to man, is universal. The lowest stage of the manifestation of this love and devotion is ritualism, when man wants things that are concrete, and abstract ideas are almost impossible. Throughout the history of the world we find man is trying to grasp the abstract through thought forms, or symbols, and the external manifestations of religion. Bells, music, rituals, books, images come under that head. Man can only think with form and

⁶³² ? Cf. Complete Works, II: 382-83.

⁶³³ ?

Probably the March 21st class entitled "The Science of Work", of which there is no verbatim transcript available.

⁶³⁴ ? Probably the March 23rd class entitled "Devotion", of which there is no verbatim transcript available.

word. Immediately thought comes, form and name flash into the mind with them, so that when we think of God, whether as the Personal God with human shape, or as the Divine Principle, or in any other aspect, we are always thinking of our own highest ideal with some or other form, generally human, because the form of man is the highest of which man can conceive. But, while recognizing this as a necessity of human weakness, and while making proportionate use of rituals, symbols, books and churches, we must always remember that it is very good to be born in a church, but it is very bad to die in a church. If a man dies within the bounds of these forms, it shows that he has not grown, that there has been no uncovering of the real, the Divinity, within him.

True love can be regarded as a triangle. The first angle is, love knows no bargain. So when a man is praying to God, "give me this, and give me that," it is not love. How can it be? "I give you my little prayer, and you give me something in return"; that is mere shopkeeping. The second angle is, love knows no fear. So long as God is regarded as a rewarder or a punisher there can be no love for him. The third angle, the apex, is, love is always the highest ideal. When we have reached the point where we can worship the ideal as the ideal, all arguments and doubts have vanished forever. The ideal can never escape, because it is part of our own nature.

In his lecture at Harvard University,⁶³⁵ the Swami traced the history, so far as is known, of the Vedanta philosophy, and showed to what extent the Vedas (the Hindu scriptures) are accepted as authoritative; merely as the foundation for the philosophy in so far as they appeal to the reason. He compared the three schools, the Dualists, who acknowledge a supreme being, and a lesser being manifesting in men, but eternally separate from men. Next he described the philosophy of the Qualified nondualists, whose particular idea is that there is a God and there is nature, but that the soul and nature is simply the expansion, or the body of God, just as the body of man is to man's soul. They claim, in support of this theory, that the effect is never different from the cause, but that it is the cause repro-

⁶³⁵ ? Cf. "The Vedanta Philosophy", Complete Works, I: 357-65, in which there may be some omissions.

duced in another form, and as God, therefore, is the cause of this universe, he is also the effect. The Monists . . . declare that if there is a God, that God must be both the material and the efficient cause of the universe. Not only is he the Creator; but he is also the created. He himself is this universe, apparently; but, in reality, this universe does not exist—it is mere hypnotisation. Differentiation is in name and form only. There is but one soul in the universe, not two, because that which is immaterial cannot be bounded, must be infinite; and there cannot be two infinities, because one would limit the other. The soul is pure, and the appearance of evil is just as a piece of crystal, which is pure in itself, but appears to be variously colored when flowers are placed before it.

In discussing Raja Yoga,⁶³⁶ the psychological way to union with God, the Swami expanded upon the power to which the mind can attain through concentration, both in reference to the physical and the spiritual world. It is the one method that we have in all knowledge. From the lowest to the highest, from the smallest worm to the highest sage, they have to use this one method. The astronomer uses it in order to discover the mysteries of the skies, the chemist in his laboratory, the professor in his chair. This is the one call, the one knock, which opens the gates of nature and lets out the floods of light. This is the one key, the only power—concentration. In the present state of our bodies we are so much distracted, the mind is frittering away its energies upon a hundred sorts of things. By scientific control of the forces which work the body this can be done, and its ultimate effect is realization. Religion cannot consist of talk. It only becomes religion when it becomes tangible, and until we strive to feel that of which we talk so much, we are no better than agnostics, for the latter are sincere and we are not.

The Twentieth Century Club had the Swami as their guest Saturday [March 28], and heard an address from him on the "Practical Side of the Vedanta Philosophy."⁶³⁷ He leaves Boston

⁶³⁶ ?

Actually "Realization, or the Ultimate of Religion", of which there is no verbatim transcript available.

⁶³⁷ ?

Vide Complete Works, I: 387-92 and 310-11 respectively, for the lecture and the discussion that followed.

1 today, and will, within a few days, sail for England, en route for India.

2 swami vivekananda⁶³⁸

3 Lectures on Hindoo Religion and Philosophy

4 [*Los Angeles Times*, December 9, 1899]

5

6 . . . The well-known expositor of the Hindoo philosophy, dressed in the yellow robe of the Brahmin
7 caste, spoke in part as follows:⁶³⁹

8
9 I come before you, ladies and gentlemen, to bring no new religion. I desire simply to tell you a few
10 points that bind together all religions. I shall touch upon some things in the thought of eastern civilization
11 that will appear strange to you and on others that I hope will appeal to you. All the religions of the world
12 have a backbone of unity. This is the principle of philosophy and of toleration.

13 Very few people in this country understand what India is. It is a country half as large as the United
14 States and containing 300,000,000 people, speaking a number of different tongues, but all bound together
15 by the ideas of a common religion. By these ideas the Hindoos have made their influence felt through the
16 ages, working gently, silently, patiently, while western civilization has been conquering by force of arms.
17 The future will show which is the more powerful—physical force or the power of ideas. The arts and
18 sciences of the Hindoos have found their way over all the earth—their numerals, their mathematical
19 thought, their ethics. Was it not in India, there and there alone, that the doctrine of love was first
20 preached, and not alone the doctrine of love of one's fellow-men, but of love of every living thing, yea,
21 even of the meanest worm that crawls under

3 638 ?

4 *New Discoveries*, Vol. 5, pp. 184-86.

5
6 639 ? This was Swami Vivekananda's first public lecture delivered in California, entitled "The Vedanta Philosophy or Hinduism
7 as a Religion", of which there is no verbatim transcript available.
8

our feet. When you begin to study the arts and institutions of India, you become magnetized, fascinated. You cannot get away.

In India, as elsewhere, we find the earliest condition one of division into little tribes. These different tribes had each its different god, its different ceremonial. But in coming in contact with one another, the tribes did not follow the course that western civilization has taken—they did not persecute each other because of these differences, but endeavored to find the germs of common ideas in all the religions. And from this endeavor arose the habit of toleration which is the keynote of the Indian religion. Truth is one, can be but one, though it may be expressed in different language.

Another great difference between eastern and western religion lies in the reception of a philosophical and scientific view of the universe. In the West, agnosticism has been growing in late years, and with the loss of a hope in individual immortality, which the westerner is always desiring and seeking, a note of despair has crept into western thought. Ages ago, the Hindoo realized that the universe was one of law, and that, under law, all change. Therefore, an imperishable individuality is an impossibility. But this thought is not one of despair to the Hindoo. On the contrary

—and this is what the westerner can least understand of eastern thought—he longs for freedom, for release from the thralldom of the senses, from the thralldom of pain and the thralldom of pleasure.

Western civilization has sought a personal God and despaired at the loss of belief in such. The Hindoo, too, has sought. But God cannot be known to the external senses. The Infinite, the Absolute, cannot be grasped. Yet although it eludes us, we may not infer its non-existence. It exists. What is it that cannot be seen by the outward eye? The eye itself. It may behold all other things, but itself it cannot mirror. This, then, is the solution. If God may not be found by the outer senses, turn your eye inward and find, in yourself, the soul of all souls. Man himself is the All. I cannot

know the fundamental reality, because I am that fundamental reality. There is no duality. This is the solution of all questions of metaphysics and ethics. Western civilization has in vain endeavored to find a reason for altruism. Here it is. I am my brother, and his pain is mine. I cannot injure him without injuring myself, or do ill to other beings without bringing that ill upon my own soul. When I have realized that I myself am the Absolute, for me there is no more death nor life nor pain nor pleasure, nor caste nor sex. How can that which is absolute die or be born? The pages of nature are turned before us like the pages of a book, and we think that we ourselves are turning, while in reality we remain ever the same.

HINDU PHILOSOPHY⁶⁴⁰

—

CONCEPTION OF THE UNIVERSE IN DISTANT INDIA

[*Los Angeles Times*, December 13, 1899]

Swami Vivekananda, the Hindu philosopher, addressed the regular monthly meeting of the Southern California Academy of Sciences at Unity Church last evening.⁶⁴¹ The audience was large and appreciative, and at the end of the lecture a number of questions were asked by members of the audience and answered by the lecturer. . . .

The speaker began with a reference to the mythological tales of the Hindus in which they attempted to explain the origin of the universe, and he told also of the endeavors of the ancients to explain the mysteries which surrounded them.

According to their belief, he said, man's first idea is of himself. His will moves all his members. A child's idea of power is in its will. All movement of the universe has a will

⁶⁴⁰ ?

New Discoveries, Vol. 5, pp. 194-95.

⁶⁴¹ ? Cf. the following December 13, 1899 *Los Angeles Herald* newspaper report on the same lecture (pp. 502-4).

behind it. The Hindus believe, said the speaker, that there is but one God, and he a person like the rest of them, but infinitely greater. Their mind is philosophical enough not to admit the existence of two gods, one bad and one good. With them nature is a unit, unity in all existence is the universe, and God is the same as nature.

"There is not a system of philosophy," said the speaker,

from that of the ancient Egyptians down to that of the Roman Catholic Church, which does not show traces of the same thought. All forces that exist in the mental and physical world have been resolved, in India, into the one word "Father" ["Prâna"?]. Whatever is, has been projected by Him.

In closing, the philosopher said that the ancient voice of India had found an echo in the 19th century in the writings of Herbert Spencer.

conception of the universe⁶⁴²

[*Los Angeles Herald*, December 13, 1899]

—

Swami Vivekananda's lecture before the Academy of Sciences

—

Unity church was filled last evening with a large audience to hear the Swami Vivekananda, a native of India, lecture on the kosmos, or the Veda conception of the universe⁶⁴³ under the auspices of the Southern California Academy of Sciences. . . .

⁶⁴² ?

New Discoveries, Vol. 5, pp. 192-94.

⁶⁴³ ? This was Swami Vivekananda's second lecture in California, entitled "The Cosmos, or the Veda Conception of the Universe", of which there is no verbatim transcript available. Cf. the Swami's two New York lectures on the Cosmos, delivered in 1896, in Complete Works, II ("The Cosmos: The Macrocosm" and "The Cosmos: The Microcosm").

In introducing his subject the speaker reviewed the mythology of the flood, which among the Babylonians, Egyptians, Assyrians and other races is similar to the story of the Hebrew scriptures, showing that all held a similar belief concerning the creation of the universe.

In the worship of the sun and the forces of nature, we see the attempts of ancient peoples to explain the mysteries surrounding them. Man's first idea of force was himself. When a stone fell he saw no force in it but the will behind it, and he conceived the idea that the whole universe was moved by force of wills. Gradually these wills became one, and science begins to rise. Gods begin to vanish, and in their place comes oneness, and now God is in danger of being dethroned by modern science. Science wants to explain things by their own nature and make the universe self-sufficient.

Wills gradually began to disappear, and in their place comes will. This was the process of development in all the nations of the world, and so it was in India. Their ideas and gods were pretty much the same as those of other lands, only in India they did not stop there. They learned that life alone can produce life, and that death can never produce life. In our speculations about God we have got to monotheism. Everywhere else speculation stops there; we make it the be all and end all of everything, but in India it does not stop there. A gigantic will can not explain all this phenomena we see around us. Even in man there is something back of the will. In so common sense a thing as the circulation of the blood, we find will is not the motive power.

We have conceived God as a person like ourselves, only infinitely greater, and because there is goodness and mercy and happiness in the world there must be a being possessing these attributes, but there is also evil. The Hindu mind is too philosophical to admit the existence of two gods, one good and one bad. India remained true to the idea of unity. What is evil to me may be good to someone else; what is good to me may be evil to others. We are all links in a chain. Hence comes the speculation of the Upanishads, the

2 religion of 300,000,000 of the human race. Nature is a unit; unity is in all existence, and God is the
3 same as nature. This is one of the Indian speculations known to all the world outside of India.

4 There is not a system of religion or philosophy in the world that does not show the influence of
5 India's speculation, even to the Catholic church. The conservation of energy, considered a new discovery,
6 has been known there by the name of father [Prâna?]. Whatever is comes from the father. Brahma
7 [Prana?] must energize on something, and that they say is an invisible ether. Brahma [Prana?] vibrating
8 on ether, the solid, the liquid, the luminous, it is all the same ether. The potentiality of everything is there.
9 In the beginning of the next period Brahma [Prana?] will begin to vibrate more and more.

10 Thus this speculation of India's scriptures is very similar to modern science. The same idea is taken
11 up by modern evolution. Even our bodies, different only in dignity, are links in the same chain. In one
12 individual the possibilities of every other individual are there. The living entity contains the possibility of
13 all life, but can only express that which environment demands. The most wonderful speculations are
14 formed in modern science. The one that interests me as a preacher of religion is the oneness of all
15 religions [life?]. When Herbert Spencer's voice says that the same life welling up in the plant is the life
welling up in the individual, the Indian religion has found a voice in the nineteenth century.

1 told about india⁶⁴⁴

2 [*Los Angeles Herald*, January 3, 1900]

3 Lecture last night at Blanchard Hall by

4 Swami Vivekananda

5 Swami Vivekananda, member of an ancient order of Hindu monks, who is giving a series of lessons
6 and lectures in this city, addressed an audience last night at Blanchard hall upon the "History of India"
7 ["The People of India"].⁶⁴⁵ The Swami appeared before his audience in American dress, losing to a great
8 degree the peculiar and characteristic personality given him by the aesthetic silken robes and the turban
9 worn by his order.

10 The speaker said India was not a country, but a continent containing a huge mass of races united by
11 religion. India was of ancient date. It was inhabited, when through a desire to reach it by a shorter
12 passage, Columbus discovered America, and its production of cotton, sugar, indigo and spices have
13 enriched the world. This country inhabited by 200,000,000 of people, is full of little villages that extend
14 through all the valleys and up the mountains thousands of feet above the sea level. The immense fertility
15 of the soil owes much to the tremendous rainfall, which is often 1,800 inches [*sic*] in a season, averaging
16 perhaps 600 inches. Many of the people, however, in spite of the abundant productions, live wholly on
17 millet, a kind of cereal; no animal food is eaten; no meat, eggs or fish.

18 The country from most ancient times has kept its own customs, its own languages and its castes. It
19 has by its religion saved itself while it has seen other sections [nations] rise and decay. The Babylonian
20 civilization was not new, but India dates long before its rise and fall. The most ancient language, Sanskrit,
21 is spoken by the priests, and was spoken once by all the different races. The speaker gave examples of
22 many of our common English words coming from Sanskrit roots, and traced

3 644 ?

4 *New Discoveries*, Vol. 5, pp. 227-29.

5 645 ?

6 Of which there is no verbatim transcript available.

the old religious ideas and even mythology to the ancient Aryan races.

Many of the customs of the country were sketched, and further it was shown how this country was the seat of civilization, the center of arts, the sciences, the philosophical thought of the world.

The people of India have saved themselves by making a wall around themselves by making the castes absolute. An emperor in India is glad to trace his descent from a priest, who is the highest caste. The castes do not exist as they did once, but they are divided into many divisions and sub-divisions. There are hundreds of them. No people of different castes eat together, or cook together. Marriage is not legal if made outside of one's caste. The intricacy of the laws of caste is very great and branch out into the minutest detail. The poorest beggar or the viceroy of India may belong to the same caste.

Shoes are not allowed to be worn, as they are made from the skin of an animal. The women pay even more attention to these details than the men. All these customs have their philosophy. This is the true democracy, it is the socialistic idea, the development of the masses, not the individual.

The speaker closed with comparing the position of women in India with that of this country. In India the whole idea of womanhood is the mother. The mother is revered. She is the giver of life, the founder of the race.

the religious legends of india*⁶⁴⁶

[*Los Angeles Times*, January 17, 1900]

The Swami

Clad in his maroon robe, Swami Vivekananda addressed a small audience composed mostly of women, at the Shakespeare Club this evening [January 16].⁶⁴⁷ He gave an account of the

⁶⁴⁶ ?

New Discoveries, Vol. 5, p. 269.

⁶⁴⁷ ?

Of which there is no verbatim transcript available.

1 religious legends of Brahmanism, which are embodied in the daily lives of the Hindus, of the origin
2 of Shiva and his surrender to the pure spirit of his wife, today the mother of all India, whose worship is
3 carried to such an extent that no female animal can be killed. Vivekananda quoted freely from the
4 Sanskrit, translating as he went along. . . .

5 the science of yoga*⁶⁴⁸

6 [*Los Angeles Herald*, January 26, 1900]

7 Swami Vivekananda, the Oriental seer, lectured at the Shakespeare club this morning [Thursday,
8 January 25] on "The Science of Yoga".⁶⁴⁹ He said that there is no difference in kind between anything in
9 nature, but that all differences are of degree merely. The mind is the supreme power, the motor of the
10 world.

11 SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AT THE

12 LOS ANGELES HOME⁶⁵⁰

13 [*Unity*, February (?) 1900]

14

15 . . . We had eight lectures at the Home by the Swami⁶⁵¹ and all were intensely interesting, though a
16 few malcontents complained because he did not give some short cuts into the King-

3 ⁶⁴⁸ ?

4 *New Discoveries*, Vol. 5, p. 276.

5
6 ⁶⁴⁹ ?

7 Of which there is no verbatim transcript available.

8
9 ⁶⁵⁰ ?

10 *New Discoveries*, Vol. 5, pp. 218-20.

11
12 ⁶⁵¹ ? This newspaper report is an overview of eight class lectures delivered at the Home of Truth in December 1899 and
13 January 1900, of which there is only one verbatim transcript, "Hints on Practical Spirituality", published in Complete Works, II:
14 24-37.
15

1 dom [of Heaven] and show an easy way to the attainment of mental powers; instead he would say,

2
3 Go home and promise yourself that you will not worry for a whole month even though the maid
4 breaks all your best china.

5
6 There is combined in the Swami Vivekananda the learning of a university president, the dignity of an
7 archbishop, with the grace and winsomeness of a free natural child. Getting on the platform without a
8 moment's preparation he would soon be in the midst of his subject, sometimes becoming almost tragic as
9 his mind would wander from deep metaphysics to the prevailing condition in Christian countries today
10 who go and seek to reform Filipinos with the swords in one hand and the Bible in the other, or in South
11 Africa allow children of the same father to cut each other to pieces. To contrast this condition of things he
12 described what took place during the last famine in India where men would die of starvation beside their
13 cattle rather than stretch forth a hand to kill. (Will Unity readers remember the fifty million Hindoos who
14 are starving today and send them a blessing?)

15 Instead of trying to give much of what we heard from the Swami direct, I will append a few of the
16 sayings of his master, Ramakrishna, that will better indicate the nature of his teaching. His chief aim
17 seems to be to encourage people in living simple, quiet wholesome lives—that the life shall be the religion,
18 not something separate and apart.

19 To the true mother he gives the highest place, counting her as more to be esteemed than those who
20 simply run around teaching. "Anyone can talk," he said,

21
22 but if I had to look after a baby, I could not endure existence for more than three days.

23
24 Frequently he would speak of the "mother" as we speak of the "father," and would say "the mother
25 will take care of us," or "the mother will look after things."

We had a lecture on Christmas day from the Swami entitled, "Christ's Mission to the World," and a better one on this subject I never heard. No Christian minister could have presented Jesus as a character worthy (of) the greatest reverence more eloquently or more powerfully than did this learned Hindoo, who told us that in this country on account of his dark skin he has been refused admission to hotels, and even barbers have sometimes objected to shave him. Is it any wonder that our "heathen" brethren never fail to make mention of this fact that even "our" Master was an Oriental?

HINDOO MONK LECTURES⁶⁵²

[*San Francisco Chronicle*, February 24, 1900]

Swami Vivekananda's Topic Is "The Idea of Universal Religion"

At Golden Gate Hall last evening Swami Vivekananda, a Hindoo monk, entertained an audience for an hour and a half with his lecture on "The Idea of Universal Religion."⁶⁵³ . . .

Tracing religion from the commencement of history he spoke of the existence of creeds. Sects were known from the earliest time, he said. As time rolled on there began various contests for a supremacy between the various sects. History, he declared, was a mere repetition of slaughter under the guise of religion. Superstition, he thought, was fast becoming a thing of the past through the expansion of the minds of men. They had more liberality of thought now. They were deeper students of philosophy and through the principles of true philosophy only could religion in its deepest form be found. Until men could accord to others the right of free belief on all subjects, and be willing to believe truth under whatever form it might appear, no universal religion would be manifest to the world, he declared. It would never be promulgated by any society, but would grow instinctively as the intellect of man developed.

⁶⁵² ?

New Discoveries, Vol. 5, pp. 315-16.

⁶⁵³ ? Of which there is no verbatim transcript available.

1 VEDANTISM, AND WHAT IT IS AND WHAT IT IS NOT⁶⁵⁴

2 Lecture of Swami Vivekananda on the Religion of the Hindoos

3 [*Oakland Tribune*, February 26, 1900]

4 It is the Only Creed, He Says, that Can Be Taught Without Lies and Without Compromise

5 The claims of the Brahmin religion, or Vedantism, on the modern world were presented to-night at
6 the Congress of Religions in the First Unitarian Church by Swami Vivekananda,⁶⁵⁵ a remarkably eloquent
7 expounder of that faith. . . .

8 To his auditors to-night he explained Vedantism as the religion of the Vedas, or ancient Hindoo
9 books, which, he asserted, is "the mother of religion."

10 "It may seem ridiculous how a book can be without beginning or end," he said,

11
12 but by the Vedas no books are meant. They signify the accumulated treasury of spiritual laws
13 discovered by different persons in different times. The Hindoo believes he is a spirit. Him the sword
14 cannot pierce, him the fire cannot burn, him the water cannot melt, him the air cannot dry. He believes
15 every soul is a circle whose circumference is nowhere, but whose center is located in a body. Death means
16 the change of this center from body to body. We are the children of God. Matter is our servant.

17 Vedantism is a sort of rebellion against the mockery of the past. Some men are so practical that if
18 they know that by chopping off their heads they could get salvation, there are many who would do so. That
19 is all outward; you must turn your eyes inward to learn what is in your soul. Soul is spirit omnipresent.
20 Where does the soul go after death? Where could the earth fall to? Where can the soul go? Where is it

3 ⁶⁵⁴ ?

4 *New Discoveries*, Vol. 5, pp. 329-31.

5
6 ⁶⁵⁵ ? The lecture was entitled "The Claims of Vedanta on the Modern World", of which there is no verbatim transcript
7 available. Cf. Complete Works, VIII: 231-34 for a somewhat different report, which does not include most of the Swami's direct
8 quotes appearing in the *Oakland Tribune*.
9

not already? The great cornerstone of Vedantism is the recognition of Self. Man, have faith in yourself. The soul is the same in every one. It is all purity and perfection and the more pure and perfect we [you] are the more purity and perfection you will see.

A man or preaching jack who cries, "Oh Lord, I'm only a crawling worm!" should be still and crawl into his hole. His cries only add more misery to the world. I was amused to read in one of your papers, "How would Christ edit a paper!" How foolish. How would Christ cook a meal? Yet you are the advanced people of the West. If Christ came here, you would shut up shop and go into the street with him to help the poor and downtrodden. Vedantism is the only religion that can be taught without lies, without stretching the texts, without compromise.

TRUE RELIGION⁶⁵⁶

[*The Alameda Encinal*, April 5, 1900]

Hindu Philosopher Gives His Ideas

Last evening the Swami Vivekananda gave the first of a series of three public lectures at Tucker Hall on "The Development of Religious Ideas."⁶⁵⁷

The speaker dwelt briefly on the similarity of ideas in the minds of orthodox Christians, Mohammedans and Hindus with regard to the origin of their religions. Each believed his particular prophet or teacher to have been inspired in some mysterious way by a God or Gods, who as it were, regulated or influenced the affairs of this world from a distance. The modern scientific mind, on the contrary, instead of seeking for outside or supernatural causes for phenomena endeavored to find cause in the thing or condition itself.

⁶⁵⁶ ?

New Discoveries, Vol. 6, pp. 405-6.

⁶⁵⁷ ? Of which there is no verbatim transcript available.

1 While at first glance this method of investigation might seem to take from religion some of its vital
2 elements, yet in reality it resulted in man finding that the spiritual attributes of deity and the states of
3 mind producing heaven and hell were all within himself, and although the result of this rational modern
4 inquiry might appear to contradict much that had been handed down in the old religious writings such as
5 Bible, Koran and Vedas, yet the contradiction was more apparent than real, for the prophets and teachers
6 of old had true perceptions, but were mistaken only in attributing their experiences to outside agencies,
7 instead of realizing them to be the development and expression of elements in their own souls before
8 unknown and unrecognized.

9 The lecturer traced some of the common beliefs regarding location of heavens and hells, of various
10 burial rites and customs, and he spoke of the impressions made on the primitive mind that resulted in a
11 personification of the active natural forces in the phenomena with which we are surrounded. . . .

part II: European newspaper reports

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON LOVE⁶⁵⁸

[*Maidenhead Adviser*, October 23, 1895]

On Thursday the Swami Vivekananda delivered a lecture at the Town Hall, Maidenhead, taking as his subject "The Eastern Doctrine of Love."⁶⁵⁹ Owing to other attractions in the town the attendance was not large. Many of the public also associated the lecturer with the Theosophical Society, with which, however, he has, we are informed, nothing whatever to do, nor with any other society, neither does he propose forming any society himself. He believes in expounding his views to whoever will listen to them and leaving those individuals to advocate them as a whole, or with whatever modifications they may deem fitting, or to reject them altogether, believing that out of the strife of all opinions truth at length prevails.

The chair was taken at 8 p.m. by Mr. E. Gardner, J.P., C.C., and he very briefly introduced the lecturer, who was clad in his native costume. The Swami then proceeded to express his view upon devotion to deity, or, as more commonly expressed in the East—love (Bhakti), to the following effect:—Religion may be divided into two forms, the first almost entirely superstitious and the second merely metaphysical, but if either of these is to have any force it must be accompanied by love. Work alone without this element did not satisfy. The land might be covered with hospitals, penetrated by good roads; there might be great social institutions well conducted, and good sanitation, but these were all external physical processes and by themselves brought man no nearer to Divinity. Both the realist and the idealist were necessary and complementary one of the other. The

⁶⁵⁸ ?

New Discoveries, Vol. 3, pp. 237-40.

⁶⁵⁹ ? The lecture, of which no verbatim transcript is available, was delivered October 17, 1895.

1 idealist brought the bold aspiration down to earth, the realist caused it to take form through work.
2 Love cannot be defined in positive terms, only negatively. Its nature is of the form of renunciation. In its
3 more general sense it might be divided threefold: (1) That love which is for one's own pleasure,
4 irrespective of pleasure or pain to others—the purely selfish, the lowest. (2) That love which exchanges—"I
5 will love you if you love me. We will make each other mutually happy"—the partially selfish, the middle
6 path trodden by the great majority of mankind. (3) That love which gives all and asks for nothing, without
7 premeditation and which never regrets, unconquerable by any evil thing done to him from whom it
8 emanates. It is the highest, the divine. Only with this last kind are we concerned here. The first is the path
9 of the sensualist and the animal, the second the path of struggling humanity on its way to better things,
10 the third the real path of love, trodden by those who renounce the world and set out upon that road which
11 leads to Eternal Peace. In that love there is no fear. Love kills fear. A lion might stand over a babe and
12 threaten its life; the mother knows no fear, she does not fly, but she opposes. At that moment love
13 destroys terror; at other times the same woman would run from a small dog. A fierce Mahomedan [*sic*]
14 warrior went to a garden to pray. In the same garden a girl had appointed to meet her lover. The warrior
15 lay prostrate on his face according to the prescribed form of his religion. At that moment the girl espied
16 her lover, and with joy rushing to meet him, trod upon the prostrate form. He jumped up and laying hand
17 upon his sword would have slain the girl. "How dare you?" cried he, "vile wench, disturb my worship, my
18 devotion to God, with your base feet." "Worship! devotion!" cried the girl, "you do not know what they are.
19 You had no devotion, lying there, no spirit of worship. If I, a timid girl, could so forget the presence of an
20 object of dread like you, in my worship and devotion to my earthly lover as to tread upon you and not even
21 know it, how much more should you, if your heart had been absorbed in love and devotion to God, have
22 been ignorant that I touched you?" The warrior was humbled and appeased and went away. Our highest
23 ideal of love is the image

which we form for ourselves of deity. A barbarous people have a tyrannical and cruel god. A wise and noble people see God in ever and ever widening potencies. God is always God, but the views which men and nations may take of Him vary. No higher view is known than that of love. The man who bears in his heart an unrelaxing love to every creature, whether he recognise that that creature is a manifestation of God, in which he is actually present, or whether he look upon it merely as fashioned by Deity, that man is on the path to Deity, on the great path of devotion and renunciation. He cannot injure the creature of God, however repulsive to his narrower view of what should or should not be. He gives in love, not in pride; in loving Deity he loves its manifestations, works with them and abides by them.

The lecture was impressively delivered, and at the close a vote of thanks was accorded the Chairman (on the proposition of Mr. E. T. Sturdy, of Caversham).

The proceedings occupied only a little over half an hour.

an indian ascetic⁶⁶⁰

[*Standard*, October 23, 1895]

Since the days of Ramahoun [Ram Mohan] Roy, says the *Standard*, with the single exception of Keshub Chunder [Keshab Chandra] Sen, there has not appeared on an English platform a more interesting Indian figure than the Brahman who lectured in Princes' [Prince's] Hall last night. . . .

The lecture⁶⁶¹ was a most fearless and eloquent exposition of the pantheistic philosophy of the Vedanta school, and the Swami seems to have incorporated into his system a good deal also of the moral element of the Yoga school, as the closing passage of his lecture presented in a modified form not the advocacy of mortification, which is the leading feature of the latter school,

⁶⁶⁰ ?

New Discoveries, Vol. 3, pp. 246-47.

⁶⁶¹ ? The lecture was "Self-Knowledge", of which there is no verbatim transcript available.

2
3 but the renunciation of all so-called material comforts and blessings, as the only means of entering
4 into perfect union with the supreme and absolute Self. The opening passages of the lecture were a review
5 of the rise of the grosser form of Materialism in the beginning of the present century, and the later
6 development of the various forms of metaphysical thought, which for a time swept materialism away.
7 From this he passed on to discuss the origin and nature of knowledge. In some respects his views on this
8 point were almost a statement of pure Fichteism, but they were expressed in language, and they
9 embodied illustrations, and made admissions which no German transcendentalist would have used. He
10 admitted there was a gross material world outside, but he confessed he did not know what matter was. He
11 asserted that mind was a finer matter, and that behind was the soul of man, which was immovable, fixed,
12 before which outward objects passed, as it were, in a procession, which was without beginning or end—in
13 other words, which was eternal, and finally which was God. He worked out this pantheistic conception of
14 the personal identity of man and God with great comprehensiveness and an ample wealth of illustration,
and in passage after passage of great beauty, solemnity, and earnestness. "There is only one Soul in the
Universe", he said:

15
16 There is no "you" or "me"; all variety is merged into the absolute unity, the one infinite
17 existence—God.

18
19 From this, of course, followed the immortality of the soul, and something like the transmigration of
20 souls towards higher manifestations of perfection. As already stated, his peroration of twenty minutes was
21 a statement of the doctrine of renunciation. In the course of it he made some remorselessly disparaging
22 criticism on the work that factories, engines and other inventions, and books were doing for man,
23 compared with half a dozen words spoken by Buddha or Jesus. The lecture was evidently quite
24 extemporaneous, and was delivered in a pleasing voice, free from any kind of hesitation.

NATIVE INDIAN LECTURER AT PRINCES' HALL⁶⁶²

[*London Morning Post*, October 23, 1895]

—Last night at Princes' [Prince's] Hall, Piccadilly, Swami Vivekananda, an Indian Yogi, who is at present on a visit to this country, delivered what was described as an "oration" on the subject of "Self Knowledge."⁶⁶³ A Yogi, it was explained, is one who formally renounces the world and gives himself up to study and devotion. Swami Vivekananda originally left his native land for the purpose of giving his interpretation of the Vedanta philosophy at the Parliament of Religions which was held two years ago at Chicago, and since that time he has been engaged in delivering lectures on the same subject in America. In the course of his address last night he declared that there were indications in these closing days of the 19th century that the pendulum of scientific thought was swinging back, for men all over the world were rummaging in the pages of ancient records, and ancient religious forms were again coming to the fore. To many this seemed to be a case of degeneration, while others regarded it as one of those outbursts of superstition which periodically visited society, but to the scientific student there was in the present state of things a prognostication of grand future benefit. The lecturer then proceeded at considerable length to describe the peculiar system of philosophy which he teaches, and traced the three different stages of the religion which has grown out of it. He spoke with a good deal of fluency, and his remarks were listened to with attention by the somewhat small audience.

⁶⁶² ?

New Discoveries, Vol. 3, p. 248.

⁶⁶³ ?

Of which no verbatim transcript is available. Cf. the preceding newspaper report "An Indian Ascetic", pp. 515-16, for another report of the same lecture, delivered October 22, 1895.

1 The Christian Commonwealth⁶⁶⁴

2 [*Christian Commonwealth*, November 14, 1895]

3 South Place Chapel Lecture

4 "The Swami Vivekananda" enlightened the congregation at South-place Chapel last Sunday morning
5 on "The Basis of Vedanta Morality."⁶⁶⁵ . . .

6 The Swami explained that in the system of morality which he was expounding actions were not
7 inspired by any hope of reward, here or hereafter, nor by any fear of punishment in this world or in the
8 beyond: "We must work simply from the impetus within, work for work's sake, duty for duty's sake." This
9 idea of morality is claimed to be superior to the religion of Jesus, and so has beguiled some so-called
10 Christians into Buddhism or other Eastern philosophies. But the essence of true Christianity is that, if your
11 actions are inspired by the heavenly kingdom within you, Paradise will be the result, whereas, if you act in
12 harmony with the devil's kingdom without you will land in Perdition. The genuine Christian does not, as
13 the Swami seemed to suggest, act for the purpose of evading punishments, but at the same time he sees
14 the ultimate consequences of all actions. . . .

15 AN UNIVERSAL RELIGION⁶⁶⁶

16 [*The Queen, The Lady's Newspaper*, November 23, 1895]

17 Mrs. Haweis's first autumn At home took place last Saturday at Queen's House, when the Indian
18 Yogi, or ascetic, Swami Vive Kananda (Buddhist [*sic*] delegate at the Parliament of Religions at Chicago in
19 1893) discussed in a liberal spirit, and not without humour, the chances and the charms of an universal

3 664 ?

4 *New Discoveries*, Vol. 3, pp. 267-69.

5
6 665 ?

7 A lecture delivered in London, England, on November 10, 1895, of which there is no verbatim transcript available.

8
9 666 ?

10 *New Discoveries*, Vol. 3, pp. 276-77.

religion.⁶⁶⁷ He showed that the underlying principles of all the great religions of the world resembled one another, and amongst the great prophets he placed the Christian Redeemer very high, implying, however, that His teaching was little borne out sometimes by His professed followers. There was no radical impossibility of reconciliation between sects, now biting and devouring each other from the best motives, if charity and sympathy were carried into the kiosk, the temple, and the church. Canon Basil Wilberforce and the Rev. H. R. Haweis both made interesting speeches in reply to the Swami. . . . The guests numbered 150.

education*⁶⁶⁸

[*Daily Chronicle*, May 14, 1896]

The Sesame Club.—At a meeting of the Sesame Club on Tuesday night [May 12], the chairman, Mr. Ashton Jonson, said he regretted to announce that Mrs. Norman was too unwell to be present to open, as announced, a debate on "Should we return to the land." An address was accordingly given by Swami Vivekananda on the subject of education,⁶⁶⁹ in which he urged that no one could obtain intellectual greatness until he was physically pure. Morality gave strength; the immoral were always weak, and could never raise themselves intellectually, much less spiritually. Directly [as] immorality began to enter the national life its foundations commenced to rot. As the life blood of every nation was to be found in the schools, where boys and girls were receiving their education, it was absolutely essential that the young students should be pure, and this purity must be taught them.

⁶⁶⁷ ? This London talk, of which there is no verbatim transcript available, was delivered November 16, 1895.

⁶⁶⁸ ?
New Discoveries, Vol. 4, p. 157.

⁶⁶⁹ ?
 There is no verbatim transcript available. Cf. the Indian newspaper report "On Education", p. 535.

SPIRITUALISM AND THE VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY⁶⁷⁰

[*Light*, July 4, 1896]

When first we heard that the Swami Vivekananda was coming to London to expound the Vedanta Philosophy, we were hopeful that his teaching would not only confirm the faith of Spiritualists, but might also add to their number. We hoped this, because the very essence of the Hindu Philosophy is that man *is* a spirit, and *has* a body, and not that man *is* a body, and *may* have a spirit also; which is as far as many a Western mind can reach. . . .

It has been the glorious privilege of our modern Spiritualism to prove by actual demonstration the existence of spirit apart from flesh, and it would, therefore, seem reasonable to look for co-operation on the part of the exponents of the Vedanta Philosophy and the supporters of Spiritualism. We are not quite certain, however, that this desirable consummation can be attained, for observations made very recently by the Swami are calculated only to divide the two sects.⁶⁷¹ The Vedanta Philosophy sets before the student an ideal aim! Nothing less, in fact, than the unfolding of the God within him, and nothing could well be more impressive and inspiring than the presentation of this idea by a speaker of the force and eloquence of the Swami. We could only respect and admire, until modern Spiritualism was alluded to, and that in a manner which left upon us the impression that the Swami condemned without reservation all sitting for phenomena. He admitted having sat for observation with professional mediums, and held that one and all had practised fraud. "Spirit voices," according to the Swami, are *never* heard to clash! As the "sepulchral dies away the small child's voice rises up," intimating thus that ventriloquism was invariably respon-sible for the sounds. "Spirit messages," he remarked,

⁶⁷⁰ ?

New Discoveries, Vol. 4, pp. 229-30.

⁶⁷¹ ?

A Thursday evening class delivered in the summer of 1896, at St. George's Road, of which there is no verbatim transcript available.

were quite worthless, for they never rose above the level of "I am well and happy," or "Give John a piece of cake."

This assertion could, of course, only be made in ignorance of the contents of "Spirit Teachings," a book which, we think, can well stand comparison even with the exalted teaching of the Swami Vivekananda. The process of making up sham materialisations and working the figure on the end of a wire was also described in detail.

We were present again the following evening,⁶⁷² when a paper of questions bearing upon the adverse criticism of the Swami was read out to the meeting. Some thirty minutes were then passed in qualifying and explaining his remarks of the night before, and, to our deep satisfaction, the Swami not only confessed his belief in the possibility of spirits communicating with mortals, but even expressed his conviction that at times spirits of a high grade visited earth in order to assist mankind. It is, however, we conceive, no part of the Vedanta Philosophy to recommend the seeking of such intercourse, on account of its possible "dangers." It is commonly held that the undeveloped spirit can most easily communicate with man, consequently the Swami uttered his word of warning and withheld any word of encouragement. . . .

an october class review*⁶⁷³

[*Light*, October 28, 1896]

On the sixth floor of one of the dismal but convenient Victoria-street houses, we lately listened to a discourse by Swami Vivekananda—one of a long series on the Hindoo Reli-

⁶⁷² ?

A Friday evening class delivered in the summer of 1896, at St. George's Road, of which there is no verbatim transcript available.

⁶⁷³ ?

New Discoveries, Vol. 4, pp. 370-71.

gion and Philosophy.⁶⁷⁴ . . . For an hour and a half he spoke, without a note. It is true that the discourse was rather a flow of remarks than a connected study, but it was all keenly interesting.

The subject, in the main, was the Vedas, but we got excursions upon Evolution, Modern Science, Idealism and Realism, the Supremacy of Spirit, &c. On the whole, we gathered that the speaker was a preacher of the universal religion of spiritual ascendancy and spiritual harmony. Certain passages from the Vedas—beautifully translated and read, by the way—were charming in their bearing upon the humanness and sharp reality of a life beyond the veil. One longed for more of this.

We were much impressed with the admission that in the Vedas there were many contradictions, and that devout Hindoos never thought of denying them nor reconciling them. Everyone was free to take what he liked. At different stages and on different planes, all were true. Hence the Hindoos never excommunicated and never persecuted. The contradictions in the Vedas are like the contradictions in life—they are very real, but they are all true. This seems impossible, but there is sound sense in it. At all events, as regards excommunication and persecution, we only wish the Christians could make the Hindoo's claim.

⁶⁷⁴ ?

Probably "Vedic Religious Ideals", delivered in London, England, on Wednesday, October 28, 1896, of which there is no verbatim transcript available.

1 conversations and interviews 523

1 part iii:

2 Indian newspaper reports

5 **a bengali sadhu**⁶⁷⁵

6 [*Madura Mail*, January 28, 1893]

7 A BENGALI SADHU ON HINDU RELIGION AND SOCIOLOGY

9 A young Bengalee Sanyashi [Sannyâsin] of about thirty-two years of age, and a Master of Arts of the
10 Calcutta University was last week interviewed at the Triplicane Literary Society by about a hundred
11 educated Indians among whom was Dewan Bahadur Raghunatha Rao. A summary of what was stated by
12 the Sadhu is published by the *Indian Social Reformer*, from which we make the following extracts:⁶⁷⁶

14 **The Vedic Religion**

15 The perfect religion is the Vedic religion. The Vedas have two parts, mandatory and optional. The
16 mandatory injunctions are eternally binding on us. They constitute the Hindu religion. The optional ones

3 ⁶⁷⁵ ?

4 Basu, Sri Sankari Prasad, "Swami Vivekananda in Madras: 1892-1893
5 –Some New Findings", *Prabuddha Bharata*, 1974, pp. 296-98.

7 ⁶⁷⁶ ? The only verbatim report of Swami Vivekananda's ideas at this period in his life.

8 Though this extract does not mention Swami Vivekananda by name, refers to an M.A. which the Swami never received, and
9 describes him as two years older than his actual age—still there is indubitable internal evidence that the Bengali Sâdhu was
10 Swami Vivekananda. Furthermore, the date coincides accurately with the Swami's stay in Madras, and a back-reference to this
11 event published in the *Indian Social Reformer*, on July 13, 1902, is added confirmation. Incidentally, no copy of the *Indian*
12 *Social Reformer* of 1892-1893 is available today.

1 conversations and interviews 524
2

1 are not so. These have been changing and been changed by the Rishis to suit the times. The Brahmins at
2 one time ate beef and married Sudras. [A] calf was killed to please a guest. Sudras cooked for Brahmins.
3 The food cooked by a male Brahmin was regarded as

polluted food. But we have changed our habits to suit the present yug[a]. Although our caste rules have so far changed from the time of Manu, still if he should come to us now, he would still call us Hindus. Caste is a social organization and not a religious one. It was the outcome of the natural evolution of our society. It was found necessary and convenient at one time. It has served its purpose. But for it, we would long ago have become Mahomedans [*sic*]. It is useless now. It may be dispensed with. Hindu religion no longer requires the prop of the caste system. A Brahmin may interdine with anybody, even a Pariah. He won't thereby lose his spirituality. A degree of spirituality that is destroyed by the touch of a Pariah, is a very poor quantity. It is almost at the zero point. Spirituality of a Brahmin must overflow, blaze and burn [so] as to warm into spiritual life not one Pariah but thousands of Pariahs who may touch him. The old Rishis observed no distinctions or restrictions as regards food. A man who feels that his own spirituality is so flimsy that the sight of a low caste man annihilates it need not approach a Pariah and must keep his precious little to himself.

The Hindu Ideal of Life

The Hindu Ideal of life is "Nivarti" [Nivritti].⁶⁷⁷ Nivarti means subjugation and conquest of evil passions, of *Tamasa* nature of lust, revenge and avarice. It does not mean conquest of all desire. It means only the annihilation of gross desires. Every man is bound to love and sympathize with his fellow-creatures. [A] Sanyasi is one who has vanquished all his selfish passions and vowed to devote his life for the good of others. He loves all. "Pravirti" [Pravritti] means love of God and all his creatures. Sanyasis ought to be fed. They are not like the Christian bishops and Archbishops who must be paid to do their work with thousands of

⁶⁷⁷ ? Nivritti and Pravritti are key concepts in Hindu philosophy, and Swami Vivekananda has frequently interpreted and elaborated on them (e.g., see *Karma-Yoga*, Ch. VI) in their traditional connotations. But the interpretation of the terms here ascribed to him by the *Indian Social Reformer's* reporter is not in accord with what the Swami has said elsewhere.

pounds per annum; all whose earnings are spent upon their own luxury—their wife and children. [The] Sanyasi wants only a morsel of food, and then he places all his knowledge and services at the disposal of the public. He is a wandering missionary. Individuals and society have to work themselves up from "brute through man, into divine". Even the lowest of the Hindus, the Pariah, has less of the brute in him than a Briton in a similar social status. This is the result of an old and excellent religious civilization. This evolution to a higher spiritual state is possible only through discipline and education.

The Shradh [Shrâddha] Ceremony⁶⁷⁸

Every institution, caste, early marriage etc., that stands in the way of education, ought at once to be knocked on the head. Even "Shradh" may be given up, if the performance of it involves waste of time which might be better used for self-education. But "Shradh" should not be given up. The meaning of the Mantras is very edifying. The Mantras depict the suffering and care undergone by our parents on our behalf. The performance of it is an honour paid to the memory of the sum total of the spirit of our forefathers, whose virtues we inherit. Shradh has nothing to do with one's salvation. Yet no Hindu who loves his religion, his country and his past great men should give up Shradh. The outward formalities and the feeding of the Brahmins are not essential. We have no Brahmins in these days worthy of being fed on Shradh days. The Brahmins fed ought not to be professional eaters, but Brahmins who feed disciples *gratis*, and teach them true Vedic doctrines. In these days, Shradh may be performed mentally.

Education of Women

The jealous guardianship of our women shows that we Hindus have declined in our national virtues, that we reverted to the "brutal state". Every man must so discipline his mind as to bring himself to regard all women as his sis-

⁶⁷⁸ ? A religious ceremony in which food and drink are offered to deceased relatives or ancestors.

ters or mothers. Women must have freedom to read, to receive as good an education as men. Individual development is impossible with ignorance and slavery.

Emancipation of the Hindus

Through the slavery of a thousand years, Hindus have at present degenerated. They have forgotten their own self-respect. Every English boy is taught to feel his importance, he thinks that he is a member of a great race, the conquerors of the Earth. The Hindu feels from his boyhood just the reverse that he is born to slave. We can't become a great nation unless we love our religion and try to respect ourselves, and respect our country men and society. The Hindus of modern times are generally hypocrites. They must rise, and combine the faith in the true Vedic religion, with a knowledge of the political and scientific truths of the Europeans. The evils of caste seem to be more prevalent in the South than in Bengal. In Bengal a Brahmin uses the water touched by the Sudras, but here the Sudra is kept at a great distance by the Brahmin. There are no Brahmins in [the] Kali Yug[a]. The Pariahs, our fellow beings, ought to be educated by the higher castes, must [. . .] truths of Hindu religion and be [. . .] Brahmins. The first duty of a Brahmin is to love all. There must first be an amalgamation of the Brahmins, then of all the Dwijas,⁶⁷⁹ and then of the Dwijas and Sudras.

The Parliament of Religions⁶⁸⁰

By H. R. Haweis

[The Indian Mirror (from The Daily Chronicle),

November 28, 1893]

. . . Vivekananda, the popular Hindu monk, whose physiognomy bore the most striking resemblance

⁶⁷⁹ ?

Lit., "twice-born"—applicable to the three higher castes in Hindu society by virtue of the investiture of the sacred thread, signifying spiritual rebirth.

⁶⁸⁰ ?

Vivekananda in Indian Newspapers, p. 4.

1 conversations and interviews 528
2

1 to the classic face

of the Buddha, denounced our commercial prosperity, our bloody wars, and our religious intolerance, declaring that at such a price the "mild Hindu" would have none of our vaunted civilisation. . . . "You come," he cried,

with the Bible in one hand and the conqueror's sword in the other—you, with your religion of yesterday, to us, who were taught thousands of years ago by our *Rishis* precepts as noble and lives as holy as your Christ's. You trample on us and treat us like the dust beneath your feet. You destroy precious life in animals. You are *carnivores*. You degrade our people with drink. You insult our women. You scorn our religion—in many points like yours, only better, because more humane. And then you wonder why Christianity makes such slow progress in India. I tell you it is because you are not like your Christ, whom we could honour and reverence. Do you think, if you came to our doors like him, meek and lowly, with a message of love, living and working and suffering for others, as he did, we should turn a deaf ear? Oh no! We should receive him and listen to him, and as we have done our own inspired *Rishis* (teachers). . . .

parliament of religions in chicago⁶⁸¹

[*The Indian Mirror*, December 7, 1893]

—
Hindu Criticises Christianity

—
Mr. Vivekanunda Says Religion of the Vedas
Is Religion of Love

—
Vivekanunda Says Christianity Is Intolerant

⁶⁸¹ ?

Vivekananda in Indian Newspapers, pp. 5-6.

1 conversations and interviews 530
2

1 Dr. Noble presided at the afternoon session. The Hall of Colombus [Columbus] was badly
2 crowded. . . . Dr. Noble then

presented Swami Vivekananda, the Hindu monk, who was applauded loudly as he stepped forward to the centre of the platform. He wore an orange robe, bound with a scarlet sash, and a pale yellow turban. The customary smile was on his handsome face and his eyes shown with animation. Said he:

We who come from the East have sat here on the platform day after day, and have been told in a patronizing way that we ought to accept Christianity because Christian nations are the most prosperous. We look about us, and we see England, the most prosperous Christian nation in the world, with her foot on the neck of 250,000,000 of Asiatics. We look back into history, and see that the prosperity of Christian Europe began with Spain. Spain's prosperity began with the invasion of Mexico. Christianity wins its prosperity by cutting the throats of its fellowmen. At such a price the Hindu will not have prosperity.⁶⁸²

I have sat here to-day, and I have heard the height of intolerance. I have heard the creed of the Moslem applauded, when to-day the Moslem sword is carrying destruction into India. Blood and the sword are not for the Hindu, whose religion is based on the law of love.⁶⁸³

When the applause had ceased, Mr. Vivekananda went [on] to read his paper, a summary of which follows: [*Vide* "Paper on Hinduism", *Complete Works*, I: 6-20]. . . .

on christian conversion*⁶⁸⁴

[*The Indian Mirror*, June 14, 1894]

There has been some lively correspondence between Swami Vivekanand and a retired Christian Missionary on the work and prospects of Christianity in India. Among other things, the

⁶⁸² ?

Vide "Cantakerous Remarks", *Complete Works*, III: 474.

⁶⁸³ ?

This last paragraph is a heretofore unpublished extract.

⁶⁸⁴ ? *Vivekananda in Indian Newspapers*, p. 25.

1 Swami is reported to have said that "the way of converting is absolutely absurd";

2
3 Missionary doctors do no good, because they are not in touch with the people. . . . They accomplish
4 nothing in the way of converting, although they may have nice sociable times among themselves, &c.

5
6 The reverend gentleman took exception to the words, maintaining that speaking the vernaculars
7 well, nobody of foreigners understands, and sympathises with Indians better than Missionaries. The
8 Missionaries are undoubtedly good and well-meaning people; but we think, the statement of the Swami
9 that they are seldom in touch with the people, is not without foundation. With the revival of Hinduism,
10 manifested in every part of the country, it is doubtful whether Christianity will have any sway over the
11 Hindus. The present is a critical time for Christian Missions in India. The Swami thanked the Missionary
12 for calling him his fellow-countryman. "This is the first time," he wrote,

13
14 any European foreigner, born in India though he be, has dared to call a detested Native by that
15 name—Missionary or no Missionary. Would you dare call me the same in India?

16
17

18 the central idea of the vedas*⁶⁸⁵

19 [*The Indian Mirror*, July 20, 1894]

20 Swami Vivekananda explained in America the central idea of the Vedas as follows:

21
22 I humbly beg to differ from those who see in monotheism, in the recognition of a personal God, apart

3 685 ?

4 *Vivekananda in Indian Newspapers*, p. 30.

1 conversations and interviews 533
2

1 from Nature, the

acme of intellectual development. I believe, it is only a kind of anthropomorphism which the human mind stumbles upon in its first efforts to understand the unknown. The ultimate satisfaction of human reason and custom lies in the realisation of that universal essence which is the All. And I hold an irrefragable evidence that this idea is present in the Vedas, the numerous gods and their invocations notwithstanding. This idea of formless All, the *Sat*, i.e., esse or being, called *Atman* and *Brahman* in the Upanishads, and further explained in the Darsans, is the central idea of the Vedas, nay, the root-idea of the Hindu religion in general.⁶⁸⁶

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA ON THE SEA-VOYAGE MOVEMENT⁶⁸⁷

[*The Bengalee*, May 18, 1895]

There is not a Hindoo who is not proud of Vivekananda Swami—who would not honor him and his teachings. He has done honor to himself, to his race and his religion. If we are right in this view, it follows that the opinions of Vivekananda are entitled to the highest consideration. This is what he says with regard to the sea-voyage movement:—

Expansion is life; contraction is death. Love is life, hatred is death. We began to die the day we began to contract—to hate other races—and nothing can prevent our death, until we come back to life, to expansion. We must mix, therefore, with all the races of the earth and every Hindoo that goes out to travel in foreign parts, does more benefit to his country than hundreds of those bundles of superstition and selfishness whose one aim in life is to be the dog in the manger. Those wonderful structures of national life which the Western nations have raised are supported by pillars of character—and until we can produce such by the hundred,

⁶⁸⁶ ?

Unidentified source.

⁶⁸⁷ ? *Vivekananda in Indian Newspapers*, pp. 260-62.

it is useless to fret and fume against this power or that power. Does anyone deserve liberty who is not ready to give it to others? Let us calmly and in manly fashion go to work—instead of dissipating our energies in unnecessary frettings and fumings and I, for one, thoroughly believe that no power in the universe can withhold from anyone anything he really deserves. The past was great no doubt, but I sincerely believe that the future in store is glorious still.⁶⁸⁸

We must mix with other nations and take from them whatever good they have to give us. It is our exclusiveness, our unwillingness to learn from foreign nations which is mainly responsible for our present degradation. We considered ourselves to be the elect of heaven, and superior to the nations of the earth in all respects. We regarded them as barbarians, their touch as pollution, their knowledge as worse than ignorance. We lived in a world of our own creation. We would teach the foreigner nothing—we would learn nothing from the foreigner. At last the disillusion came. The foreigner became our master—

the arbiter of our destinies. We eagerly took to his learning. We found that there was much in it that was novel, much that was highly useful. We found that so far as the material comforts of life were concerned the foreigner vastly out-distanced us—that his control over the powers of nature was far greater than any we had dreamt of. He had annihilated time and space, and had subordinated the powers of nature to the convenience of man. He had many wonderful things to teach us. We learnt them eagerly. But still we don't visit his country. If we do, we lose caste. We are under a foreign Government. We eagerly study a foreign language and literature and admire all that is good and beautiful in it. We use foreign articles for dress and consumption. But still we dare not visit the country of our rulers, for fear of excommunication. Against this unmeaning prejudice, the great Swami, who is a Hindoo of Hindoos, indignantly raises his voice of protest. The objectors, in his expressive language, are like the dog in the manger. They will not travel to foreign

⁶⁸⁸ ?

Vide Complete Works, IV: 366.

countries,—they will not allow others to travel. Yet the fact remains, says the Swami, that these travelled Hindoos do more benefit to their country than

hundreds of those bundles of superstition and selfishness, whose one aim in life is to be like the dog in the manger.⁶⁸⁹

.

If we had our *Rishis* in this age, as we had them in the ages that are gone by, we are sure they would have withdrawn the interdiction to sea-voyage, if indeed any such interdiction has been laid in the past. Society is an organism which obeys the immutable law of progress; and change, judicious and cautious change, is necessary for the well-being, and indeed the preservation of the social system. However that may be, it is something to know that so high an authority and so good a Hindoo as Swami Vivekananda supports travel to foreign countries. . . .

A summary of "Buddhism, the fulfilment of hinduism"*⁶⁹⁰

[*The Indian Mirror*, June 29, 1895]

Swami Vivekananda's speech, delivered in Chicago at the presentation of the Buddhists on September 26, 1893, is published in MacNeely's edition of the "History of the Parliament of Religions". The following were his concluding words:—

We cannot live without you, nor you without us. Then believe that separation has shown to us, that you cannot stand without the brain and the philosophy of the Brahman [*sic*], nor we without your heart.

⁶⁸⁹ ?

Vide Complete Works, IV: 366.

⁶⁹⁰ ?

Vivekananda in Indian Newspapers, p. 73.

1 conversations and interviews 537
2

1 This separation between the Buddhist and the Brahman [Brahmin] is the cause of the downfall of India.
2 That is why India has been the slave of conquerors for the past 1000 years. Let us then join the

wonderful intellect of the Brahman [Brahmin] with the heart, the noble soul, the wonderful humanising power of the Great Master.⁶⁹¹

Indian philosophy and western society*⁶⁹²

[*The Indian Mirror*, December 1, 1895]

At the weekly meeting of the Balloon Society, an address on "Man and Society in the Light of Vedanta"⁶⁹³ was given by Swami Vivekananda. The Swami who wore the red robe of his sect, spoke with great fluency and in perfect English for more than an hour without the help of a single note. He said that religion was the most wonderful factor in the social organism. If knowledge was the highest gain that science could give, what could be greater than the knowledge of God, of the soul, of man's own nature which was given by the study of religion? It was not only impossible that there should be one religion for the whole world, but it would be dangerous. If the whole of religious thought was at the same level, it would be the death of religious thought; variety was its life. There were four types of religion—(1) the worker, (2) the emotional, (3) the mystical, and (4) the philosophical. Each man unfortunately became so wedded to his own type that he had no eyes to see what existed in the world. He struggled to make others of the same type. That religion would be perfect which gave scope to all the different characters. The Vedantic religion took in all, and each could choose in what his nature required. A discussion followed.

⁶⁹¹ ?

Vide "Buddhism, the Fulfilment of Hinduism", Complete Works, I: 21-23, for a somewhat different summary paragraph.

⁶⁹² ?

Vivekananda in Indian Newspapers, pp. 85-86.

⁶⁹³ ? According to Swami Vivekananda, the topic was "Indian Philosophy and Western Society", of which there is no verbatim transcript available. *Vide New Discoveries*, Vol. 3, p. 262.

1 swami vivekananda in America⁶⁹⁴

2 [*The Indian Mirror* (from the *New York Herald*),

3 March 25, 1896]

4 Many well-known persons are seeking to follow the teaching of Swami Vivekananda's Philosophy.

5

6
7 A Lecture by the Swami

8 Swami Vivekananda sat in the centre, clad in an ochre coloured robe. The Hindu had his audience
9 divided on either side of him and there was between fifty and a hundred persons present. The class was in
10 Karma-Yoga, which has been described as the realisation of one's self as God through works and duty.

11 Its theme was:—

12 "That which ye sow ye reap", whether of good or evil.

13 Following the lecture or instruction the Swami held an informal reception, and the magnetism of
14 the man was shown by the eager manner in which those who had been listening to him hastened to shake
15 hands or begged for the favour of an introduction. But concerning himself the Swami will not say more
16 than is absolutely necessary. Contrary to the claim made by some of his pupils he declares that he has
17 come to this country alone and not so officially representing any order of Hindu monks. He belongs to the
18 Sanyasis he will say; and is hence free to travel without losing his caste. When it is pointed out to him that
19 Hinduism is not a proselytising religion, he says he has a message to the West as Buddha had a message
20 to the East.⁶⁹⁵ When questioned concerning the Hindu religion, and asked whether he intends to introduce
21 its practices and ritual into [t]his country, he declares that he is preaching simply philosophy.

3 694 ?

4 *Vivekananda in Indian Newspapers*, pp. 89-90.

5
6 695 ? *Vide Complete Works*, V: 314.
7

1 On Education*⁶⁹⁶

2 [*The Indian Mirror*, June 19, 1896]

3 Swami Saradananda in a letter from London written to the Editor of the *Brahmavadin* says:—

4 Swami Vivekananda has made a very good beginning here. A large number of the people attend his
5 classes regularly, and the lectures are most interesting. Canon Haweis, one of the leaders of the Anglican
6 Church, came the other day, and was much interested. He saw the Swami before, in the Chicago fairs, and
7 loved him from that time. On Tuesday last, the Swami lectured on "Education" at the Sesame Club. It is a
8 respectable club got up by women for diffusing female education. In this he dealt with the old educational
9 system of India, pointed out clearly and impressively that, the sole aim of the system was "man-making"
10 and not cramming and compared it with the present system. He held that, the mind of the man is an
11 infinite reservoir of knowledge, and all knowledge, present, past or future, is within man, manifested or
12 non-manifested, and the object of every system of education should be to help the mind to manifest it. For
13 instance, the law of gravitation was within man, and the fall of the apple helped Newton to think upon it,
14 and bring it out from within his mind. His class days have been arranged as follows:—

15 Tuesdays, morning and evening; Thursdays, morning and evening; Friday, evening question classes.
16 So the Swami has to do four lectures, and one class on questions every week. In the class lecture, he has
17 begun with Gnan [Jnâna-]Yoga. A short-hand report of these lectures is being taken down by Mr. Goodwin,
18 who is a great admirer of the Swami, and these lectures will be published later on.

3 ⁶⁹⁶ ? *Vivekananda in Indian Newspapers*, p. 101

THE SWAMI VIVEKANANDA IN ENGLAND⁶⁹⁷

[*The Brahmavadin*, July 18, 1896]

Sir,

I feel sure you will be glad to have an idea of the progress of the Swami's work in England, as a supplement to the letter which the Swami Saradananda sent you a few weeks ago. At that time a series of Sunday lectures was being arranged, and three of these have now been given. They are held in one of the galleries of the Royal Institute of Painters in water colours, 191 Piccadilly, and have been so far remarkably successful in attaining their object, that of reaching people who, from one reason or another, cannot attend the class talks. The first of the series was "The Necessity of Religion".⁶⁹⁸ The Swami claimed that religion is and has been the greatest force in moulding the destinies of the human race. Concerning its origin he said that either of the two theories, (1) Spirit origin, (2) Search after the infinite, will meet the case, and, to his mind, neither contradicts the other, because the search after the departed of the Egyptians and Babylonians, and the attempt to peep behind the veil of the dawn, the evening, the thunderstorm, or other natural phenomena, of the Aryans, can both be included as a search after the super-sensuous, and therefore the unlimited. This unlimited, in the course of time became abstracted, first as a person, then as a presence, and lastly as the essence of all existence. To his mind the dream state is the first suggestion of religious inquiry, and inasmuch as the awakened state has always been, and always will be accompanied by the dream state, a suggestion of existence finer than that of the awakened state yet vanishing during it, the human mind will always be predisposed in favour of spiritual existence and a future life. It is in our dream-state that we really find, in a sense, our immortality. Later on, as dreams are found to be only milder manifestations of the awakened state, the search for still deeper planes of the mind begin[s], the

⁶⁹⁷ ?

Vivekananda in Indian Newspapers, pp. 493-95.

⁶⁹⁸ ?

Cf. Mr. J. J. Goodwin's published transcript "The Necessity of Religion", Complete Works, II: 57-69.

super-conscious state of the mind. All religions claim to be founded on facts discovered in this state. The two important points to consider in this connection are, that all facts discovered in this way are, in the highest sense, abstractions, and secondly, that there is a constant struggle in the race to come up to this ideal, and everything which thwarts our progress towards that we feel as a limitation. This struggle soon ends in the discovery that to find infinite happiness, or power, or knowledge, or any other infinity, through the senses, is impossible, and then the struggle for other channels of expansion begins, and we find the necessity of religion. The second lecture was upon the subject "A Universal Religion",⁶⁹⁹ when the Swami gave, in substance, the lecture which most of your readers have seen in print as it was delivered in New York. As this lecture may be termed the Swami's "plan of campaign" we always await its delivery with very great interest, and it is most encouraging to note that the impression made here in London was equally as good as was the case when the lecture was delivered in the Hardman Hall, New York. The third of the series brought us up to Sunday last, June 21st, when "The Real and the Apparent Man"⁷⁰⁰ was the subject under discussion. In this the Swami, link by link, glanced over the thread of thought which has gradually advanced from the consideration of men as separate entities from God and the rest of the universe, up to the point at which we concede the impossibility of more than one Infinity, and the necessary consequence that which we now regard as men, as animals, as the universe of matter, cannot be the real unity; that the real must be something which is indivisible, and unchangeable; and when reason forces us to the conclusion that this phenomenal world can only be an illusion, through which we, as entities in the illusion, have to pass to discover our real nature, "That which exists is one; sages call it variously". But the Swami did not stop with the theory; he showed what would be the practical effect of such a theory, the gradual elimination from society of class distinctions, and distinctions between man and man, by greater unselfishness in the matters of money and power. Answering the objection that such a religion means loss of individuality, he argued that that which is changeful cannot be the real individuality, and that the gradual discovery of the reality behind us would mean the assumption of individuality and not its destruction.

The three lectures thus given have been so favorably received, and there have been so many wishes expressed for their continuation that three further lectures are to be given. . . .

⁶⁹⁹ ? No verbatim transcript available.

⁷⁰⁰ ? Cf. Mr. J. J. Goodwin's published transcript "The Real Nature of Man", Complete Works, II: 70-87.

63, St. George's Rd. Sincerely yours

London, S. W. A DISCIPLE⁷⁰¹

June 23, 1896 (*Correspondence*)

On the Swiss Alps*⁷⁰²

[*The Indian Mirror*, September 22, 1896]

Swami Vivekananda writes from Lake Luzern [Lucerne] Switzerland, under date the 23rd of August last.⁷⁰³ He has been walking over several parts of the Cis-Alpine country, enjoying the pleasing views of nature there. He says that the scenery is in no respect less grand than that of the Himalayas. Still, he makes out two points of difference between the two mountainous regions. In the former the rapid and thick colonization has been marring the beauty of the place. In the latter, there has not yet been any such marked tendency. The former has become a resort mainly for the sanatorists and summer-residents; and the latter mainly for the pilgrims and devotees. The Swami is shortly going to visit Germany, where an interview will take place with Prof. Deussen, after which, by the 24th of September, he will go back to England. To India, most likely, as he says, he is returning by the next winter. He intends to reside in the Himalayas.

⁷⁰¹ ?

Probably Mr. E. T. Sturdy.

⁷⁰² ?

Vivekananda in Indian Newspapers, p. 117.

⁷⁰³ ?

Evidently an unpublished extract from one of the three letters the Swami wrote from Lucerne (*Vide* "Epistles", Complete Works, V and VI).

"THE IDEAL OF UNIVERSAL RELIGION"⁷⁰⁴

[*The Journal of the Maha-Bodhi Society*, November 1896]

We have been presented with a copy of a booklet entitled the "Ideal of Universal Religion", published by the Brahmavadin Publishing Company, Madras. It is a lecture by Swami Vivekananda, delivered in America. The lecture is highly interesting and instructive. It is an attempt at a reconciliation between the diversity of religions. We hail the booklet as the symptom of the times, for it is evident for obvious reasons that men are beginning to awaken to the importance of this problem of religious harmony. Recently, in these countries leaders of different religious sects have attempted in their own way to reconcile this religious diversity, and have failed; they have aspired to defend their dogmas on the ground of distorted views of sectarianism. Swami Vivekananda has propounded a philosophical and at the same time a most practical solution of this problem of religious harmony. According to him, Vedanta is the bond between the ever conflicting religious differences. In the internal world, like the external world, there is also the centripetal and centrifugal action. We repel something, we attract something. Today we are attracted by some, to-morrow we are repelled by some. The same law cannot be applied at all times and in all cases. "Religion is the highest place of human thought and life, and herein the workings of these two forces have been most marked." At the outset, it apparently appears that there cannot reign unbroken harmony in this plane of mighty struggle. In every religion there are three parts, namely, philosophy, mythology and rituals. Every recognised religion [has] all these three things. But there can be no universal philosophy, mythology and rituals for the whole world. Where then the universality? How is it possible then to have a universal form of religion? "We all hear," says Swami Vivekananda, about universal brotherhood, and how societies stand up practically to preach this, Universal brotherhood, that is, we shout like drunken men we are all equal, therefore, let us make a sect. As soon as you make a sect you protest against equality, and thus it is no more.⁷⁰⁵

Mahomedans talk of universal brotherhood, but what comes out of them in reality? Nobody who is

⁷⁰⁴ ? *Vivekananda in Indian Newspapers*, pp. 331-33.

⁷⁰⁵ ? Cf. the American lecture, delivered January 12, 1896 (Complete Works, II, pp. 379-80).

not a Mahomedan will be admitted into the brotherhood, he will have his throat cut. We think we cannot do better than quote his own words, wherein he with his wonderful lucidity and depth of views and in a remarkably catholic mind propounds forcibly the philosophy of the uni-versal religion [*Vide Complete Works*, II: 375-96]. . . .

In society there are various natures of men. Some are active working men, there is the emotional man, then there is the mystic man and lastly there is the philosopher. Vivekananda strikes the key note of

¹. *Vide Complete Works*, IV: 395-96 for the text of the poem "Peace" enclosed in this letter.

². Matthew 6.27.

³. Battle Creek is a city in central Michigan, United States, famous for its Health Centre, which was known since 1876 as Battle Creek Sanitarium. Under the direction of John Harvey Kellogg (1876-1943), the Sanitarium experimented with health foods, which became the main industry of the city.

⁴.
An osteopath recommended by Miss Josephine MacLeod.

⁵. *Histoire Ancienne Orientale* by Sir Gaston Maspero, a French Egyptologist and archaeologist.

⁶.
Mrs. Ole Bull's daughter.

⁷. Husband of Mrs. Hale's daughter Harriet.

⁸. Probably Mrs. Milward Adams.

⁹. Newport is a fashionable seaside resort on the Narragansett River, in Rhode Island. Dr. Kate Stanton (Brahmacharini Shantikama), a disciple of Swami Abhedananda, lived there and probably invited the Swami to visit the town in order to take rest.

his whole philosophy when he declares that the attempt to help mankind to become beautifully balanced in all these four directions, is his ideal of religion and this religion is called in India, Yoga. The worker is called the Karma-yogin; who seeks union through love is called Bhakti-yogin; he who seeks through mysticism is called Raja-yogin; and he who seeks it through philosophy is called Jnan[a]-yogin. The religion which has a place for men of all these natures and a religion which satisf[ies] the thirst of men of different inclination, may be the universal religion, and that religion is Vedanta. Most cordially we recommend this admirable little book to our readers. For it contains some clear and definite expressions

¹⁰.

The three Mead sisters: Mrs. Alice Mead Hansbrough, Mrs. Carrie Mead Wyckoff and Miss Helen Mead.

¹¹.

A Bengali phrase meaning literally "Checkmate when cheap"; that is, "Get while the getting is good".

¹².

On July 26, 1900, Swami Vivekananda was to board the S.S. Champagne, bound for Le Havre, France, and thence travel by train to Paris.

¹³. The magnetic healer Mrs. Melton (also known as Mrs. Walden) was in Brittany at that time.

¹⁴.

Sir Hiram Maxim. In the foreword to his book *L. Hung Chang's Scrap-book* (1913), Maxim wrote at some length of Swami Vivekananda's appearance at the Parliament of Religions. *Vide* Marie Louise Burke's *Swami Vivekananda in the West*, Vol. 6, pp. 319-21.

¹⁵.

The Cambridge Conferences, an annual series of lectures by eminent people, which Mrs. Bull had organized at her home in Cambridge.

¹⁶.

Ramesh Chandra Dutta had become acquainted with Sister Nivedita in England, where he was staying after his retirement from the Indian Civil Service.

of views on the most vital problem that is engaging the serious attention of theologians. The price of the book is As. 3, and may be had at the Brahmavadin Office, Triplicane, Madras. The banquet for ranjit sinjhi*⁷⁰⁶

[*The Indian Mirror*, December 16, 1896]

On the 21st of this month [November], the Cambridge "Indian Majlis" gave a complimentary dinner at the University Arms Hotel [in Cambridge] to Prince Ranjit-sinhji and Mr. Atul Chandra Chatterjee. Mr. Hafiz G. Sarwir of St. John's College, took the chair. There were about fifty Indians present and a few Englishmen. . . .

Swami Vivekananda rose next to respond [to the toast of India] amidst loud and deafening cheers.⁷⁰⁷ The Swami began by saying that he did not know exactly why he should be chosen to respond to the toast unless it be for the reason that he in physical bulk bore a striking resemblance to the national animal of India (laughter). He desired to congratulate the guest of the evening and he took the statement which the Chairman had made that Mr. Chatterjee was going to correct the mistake of past historians of India, to be literally true. For out of the past the future must come and he knew no greater and more permanent foundation for the future than a true knowledge of what had preceded before. The present is the effect of the infinity of causes which represent the past. They had many things to learn from the Europeans but their past, the glory of India which had passed away, should constitute even a still greater source of inspiration and instruction. Things rise and things decay, there is rise and fall everywhere in the world. . . . [*Vide* the block quotation on the following page for the remaining text of this report.]

⁷⁰⁶ ?

New Discoveries, Vol. 4, pp. 479-80.

⁷⁰⁷ ? There is no verbatim transcript available. Cf. the following January 8, 1897 Indian newspaper report, "The Majlis in Cambridge", p. 542.

¹⁷. This letter was written from Dacca, which is now the capital of Bangladesh.

THE MAJLIS IN CAMBRIDGE⁷⁰⁸

[*The Amrita Bazar Patrika*, January 8, 1897]

. . . The gathering was a unique one, for the Indians met together to talk (in the Majlis they all talk), about the successes of Ranjit Sing[h] and Atul Chandra Chatterjee. It is a pity the name of Professor Bose was not associated with the above two; and we think, Swami Vivekananda, who was present on the occasion, also deserved a recognition. We shall, however, not commit the mistake of omitting the last two in noticing to show what the Indians have been able to achieve in the West.

What the Swamiji did was to remove the impression from the minds of the Americans that the Indians were barbarians, superstitious in their beliefs, and addicted to monstrous cruelties. The advent of the Swamiji in the West has done this service, that it has created an impression in many quarters that the Indians are not an inferior race as Sir Charles Elliot called them, and that they can, in such subjects as religion and philosophy say things which are not known even to the West. The advent of the Swamiji in the West has undoubtedly enhanced the character of the Indians in the West. . . .

Said Swami Vivekananda:—

And though India is fallen to-day she will assuredly rise again. There was a time when India produced great philosophers and still greater prophets and preachers. The memory of those days ought to fill them with hope and confidence. This was not the first time in the history of India that they were so low. Periods of depression and degradation had occurred before this but India had always triumphed in the long run and so would she once again in the future.⁷⁰⁹

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Vivekananda in Indian Newspapers, pp. 310-11.

⁷⁰⁹ ?

At this time, there is no complete verbatim transcript available. Cf. the preceding December 16, 1896 Indian newspaper report, "The Banquet to Ranjit Sinjhi", p. 541.

1 vivekananda in the west⁷¹⁰

2 [*The Amrita Bazar Patrika*, January 20, 1897]

3 Swami Vivekananda has received the ovation of a conquering hero, returning home. The last we
4 heard of him in England was when he got a farewell address from his English disciples, who expressed
5 their undying love for India. . . .

6 No one has any accurate knowledge of what Swami Vivekananda was doing in the West. We hear
7 that he has made some impression in America and also in England. . . .

8 The Swami is, however, well aware of the nature of the mission before him. He says that Vedantism
9 teaches the truth, which is that man is a divine being and that the highest and the lowest are the
10 manifestations of the same Lord. He does not, however, admit that knowledge alone is sufficient for the
11 salvation of man. Says he:—

12
13 But his knowledge ought not to be a theory, but life. Religion is a realization, not talk, not doctrines,
14 nor theories, however beautiful all these may be. Religion is being and becoming, not hearing or
15 acknowledging. It is not an intellectual assent; but one's whole nature becoming changed into it. Such is
16 religion. By an intellectual assent we can come to a hundred sort of foolish things, and change the next
17 day, but this being and becoming is what is religion.

18
19 In the above noble sentiments, the Swami shews [shows] that he understands the situation pretty
20 well. That which produces the rebirth of a man is religion. Under the influence of religion a man becomes
21 a quite different being from what he was before. Unless that is the result of his religion, his religion is a
22 myth.

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⁷¹⁰ ? *Vivekananda in Indian Newspapers*, p. 312.

Bhakti*⁷¹¹

[*The Indian Mirror*, February 24, 1898]

Swami Vivekananda has been urging on the people of Lahore and Sialkote the need of practical work.⁷¹² The starving millions, he urged, cannot live on metaphysical speculation; they require bread; and in a lecture he gave at Lahore on Bhakti, he suggested as the best religion for to-day that everyman should, according to his means, go out into the street and search for hungry Narayans, take them into their houses, feed them and clothe them. The giver should give to man, remembering that he is the highest temple of God. He had seen charity in many countries, and the reason of its failure was the spirit, in which it was carried out. "Here take this and go away". Charity belied its name so long as it was given to gain reputation or applause of the world.

OUR MISSION IN AMERICA⁷¹³

[*The Indian Mirror*, April 24, 1898]

Swami Vivekananda, in introducing the lecturer Swami Saradananda, said:

Ladies and Gentlemen,—The speaker of tonight just comes from America. As you all know here that America is for your country, although our countrymen, specially Swami Dayananda Saraswati, used to call this country as *Patal*, inhabited by Laplands, Rakshas and Asurs, &c. (Laughter and loud cheers). Well, Gentlemen, whether it is *Patal* or not you ought to decide that by seeing those few ladies pres-

⁷¹¹ ?

Vivekananda in Indian Newspapers, pp. 203-4.

⁷¹² ?

Cf. "Bhakti" (a report from *The Tribune*), Complete Works, III: 391, for a somewhat different paraphrased passage.

⁷¹³ ? *Vivekananda in Indian Newspapers*, p. 208.

ent here, who have come from the country of your so-called *Patal*, whether they are *Naga Kanyas* or not. (Cheers). Now, America is perfectly a new country. It was discovered by Columbus, the Italian, and before that a prior claim is put forward by the Norwegians who say, that they have discovered the northern part of it, and then before that there is another prior claim of the Chinese, who at one time preached the noble doctrine of Buddhism in all parts of the world, and it is said that Buddhist Missionaries were also sent from India to America, and specially in Washington, where some sort[s] of records are still to be traced by any traveller going there. Well, the table has now been turned at last for a century or more and instead of America being discovered, she discovers persons that go over to her. (Loud applause). It is a phenomenon that we observe every day there, multitudes of persons coming over from every part of the country [world?] and getting themselves discovered in the United States. It is a fact, well-known to you here all that several of our own countrymen have been discovered in that way. (Cheers). To-day, here I present before you one of your Calcutta boys, that has been similarly discovered by the Americans. (Cheers).

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA [on education] AT BELUR⁷¹⁴

[*The Indian Mirror*, February 15, 1901]

A correspondent writes:—"The following is an epitome of Swami Vivekananda's speech made in Belur M.E. School on the prize-distribution day held on the 22nd instant, Sunday, when the Swami was invited to preside. The audience was composed chiefly of the boys of the school and some elderly gentlemen of Belur."

⁷¹⁴ ? *Vivekananda in Indian Newspapers*, p. 215.

1 The modern student is not practical. He is quite helpless. What our students want is not so much
2 muscularity of body as hardihood. They are wanting in self-help. They are not accustomed to use their
3 eyes and hands. No handicraft is taught. The present system of English education is entirely literary. The
4 student must be made to think for himself and work for himself. Suppose there is a fire. He is the first to
5 come forward and put on [out] the fire who is accustomed to use his eyes and hands. There is much truth
6 in the criticism of Europeans touching the laziness of the Bengali, the slipshod way of his doing things.
7 This can be soon remedied if the students be made to learn some handicraft apart from its utilitarian
8 aspect, it is an education in itself.

9 Secondly, how many thousands of students I know who live upon the worst food possible, and live
10 amidst the most horrible surroundings, what wonder that there are so many idiots, imbeciles and cowards
11 among them. They die like flies. The education that is given is onesided, weakening, it is killing by inches.
12 The children are made to cram too much of useless matter, and are incarcerated in school rooms fifty or
13 seventy in each, five hours together. They are given bad food. It is forgotten that the future health of the
14 man is in the child. It is forgotten that nature can never be cheated and things cannot be pushed too early.
15 In giving education to a child the law of growth has to be obeyed. And we must learn to wait. Nothing is
16 more important than that the child must have a strong and healthy body. The body is the first thing to
17 attain to virtue. I know we are the poorest nation in the world, and we cannot afford to do much. We can
18 only work on the lines of least resistance. We should see at least that our children are well fed. The
19 machine of the child's body should never be exhausted. In Europe and America a man with crores of
20 rupees sends his son if sickly, to the farmers, to till the ground. After three years he returns to the father
21 healthy, rosy and strong. Then he is fit to be sent to school. We ought not for these reasons push the
22 present system of education any further.

23 Thirdly, our character has disappeared. Our English education has destroyed everything and left
24 nothing in its place.

Our children have lost their politeness. To talk nicely is degrading. To be reverential to one's elders is degrading. Irreverence has been the sign of liberty. It is high time that we go back to our old politeness. The reformers have nothing to give in place of what they have taken away. Yet in spite of the most adverse surrounding of climate, etc., we have been able to do much, we have to do much more. I am proud of my race, I do not despair, I am seeing daily a glorious and wonderful future in my menial [mental] visions. Take greatest care of these young ones on whom our future depends.

hindu widows*⁷¹⁵

[*The Indian Social Reformer*, June 16, 1901]

A question having arisen in America as to the Swami Vivekananda's attitude towards social questions, a lady writes to an American paper as follows: "In one of his lectures at the Pouch Mansion,⁷¹⁶ he spoke of the Hindu widows, declaring it unjust to state that they were generally subjected to cruelty or oppression in the Indians [*sic*] homes. He admitted that the prejudice against remarriage, and the custom which makes the widow a member of the husband's family instead of that of her own parents inflicted some hardships upon widows in India, and favoured wise efforts for their education which would render them self-supporting and in this way alleviate their condition. He emphasised his desire for the education and elevation of the women of his country, including the widows, by volunteering to give the entire proceeds of one of his lectures in support of the school of Babu Sasipada Banerjee, at Baranagar, near Calcutta, the institution of which preceded that of the Pandita Ramabai, at Poona, and where, if I am not mistaken, the Pandita herself ob-

⁷¹⁵ ?

Vivekananda in Indian Newspapers, p. 458.

⁷¹⁶ ? Probably "India's Gift to the World", delivered February 25, 1895, of which there is no verbatim transcript available. Cf. two American newspaper articles published in Complete Works, II: 510-14 for somewhat different reports of this issue.

1 conversations and interviews 554
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1 tained the first inspiration of her work. This lecture was given, and the proceeds were forwarded to
2 Babu Sasipada Banerjee, and duly acknowledged."

1 conversations and interviews 555
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